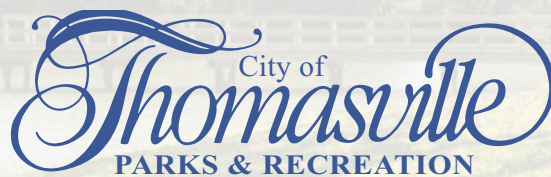

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2023 Thomasville Parks and Recreation Master Plan Thomasville, Georgia

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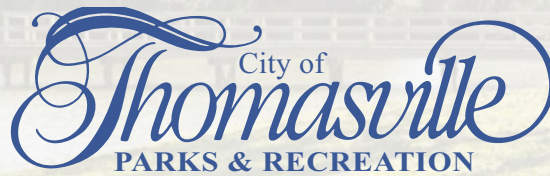


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



THE NEED FOR A PLAN

As Georgia's Rose City, Thomasville is uniquely positioned to showcase remarkable natural landscapes, uphold a rich historic legacy, and champion local culture. The newly re-formed Parks and Recreation Department has a vital role to play in uplifting the city and already brings incredible resources to the community. Known regionally for signature sites like the Big Oak and the Rose Garden, the park system offers residents a wide range of recreation possibilities.

This *2023 Thomasville Parks and Recreation Master Plan* will be critical to the city's future as it clarifies the department's own responsibilities and needs, as well as what partnerships can be leveraged to best deliver parks, facilities, and recreational choices to the citizens of Thomasville.

This plan is important because it...

- Provides a vision for the future of parks and recreation in Thomasville
- Ensures department offerings are aligned with community needs
- Fosters civic engagement and creates a sense of community
- Develops clear priorities based on community needs and desires
- Identifies gaps & inequities in service delivery
- Strengthens fiscal responsibility, sustainability, and efficiency
- Identifies future funding requirements and potential sources
- Ensures no duplication of service, improves partnerships
- Encourages consideration of resources needed in the future

Meant to instill focus, establish priorities, and inspire action over the next 5 to 10 years, this Master Plan was produced with guidance from an active steering committee appointed by the city. It is supported by robust data collection, including hours of in-person engagement. Ultimately, this plan is a guide for the newly re-formed Parks and Recreation Department to begin to work toward the new vision identified through this planning process.

VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES FOR PARKS AND RECREATION IN THOMASVILLE

The Master Plan steering committee, with support from the planning team, worked to craft a strategic plan. This facet of the document solidifies the daily purpose of the agency, its guiding values, and the long-term view of success.

Vision

Exceptional parks and memorable experiences are accessible for everyone

Mission

Enrich the entire community through engaging experiences and diverse amenities

Values

Sustainability

Accessibility

Fun

Excellence

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives will guide the operations, improvements, and services in parks and recreation in Thomasville over the next 10 years.

Goal 1: Beautiful Parks

Offer attractive parks and facilities that encourage fun and enjoyment for all

Goal 2: Accessible Spaces

Build physical and social connections throughout the entire community

Goal 3: Diverse Experiences

Provide a wide array of recreational opportunities that inspire community health and happiness

Goal 4: Responsible Operations

Employ strong leadership to direct an engaged community using efficient management, exceptional customer service, sustainable operations, and productive partnerships

A PATH FORWARD FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

This new vision cannot be accomplished with the resources that are currently allocated to Parks and Recreation, including both budget and staffing.

The city recently re-formed the Parks and Recreation Department which is essential to respond to the desires of the public identified in this Master Plan. An initial focus of this department should be new programming desired by residents and to prepare to offer services again.

Where to Begin

A first step in the building of the department is the hiring of staff to manage programs, initially a single, dedicated staff member. This position (Enterprise Recreation Programmer) would begin to offer city-branded programs through contracts with vendors, which would help fund the employee's salary. Plans for operations and maintenance of the growing system will also be essential to protect the city's investment.

Initial Needs of the New Department

Dedicated staff

- Dedicated full-time staff member to begin to offer programming through contracts and manage some of the duties below

Operations & management plans

- Pricing philosophy, maintenance standards, marketing strategy, and key partners
- Expected life, maintenance and operational requirements (including BMPs), and replacement costs of development

Engagement/promotion

- Continued engagement throughout implementation
- Department brand and awareness, especially as options grow
- Marketing through multiple methods, including social media

Coordination with partners

- Maximize opportunities and avoid duplication of services
- Marketing, fundraising, and volunteer opportunities

Measures of success

- Annual review process for business operations (programs, events rentals, etc.) with budgets
- Evaluation of the success of any program or event

SYSTEMWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations highlight what is needed to address the largest needs in the community. While this plan has a 10-year horizon, many of these items will require more time unless additional resources are found.

1. Upgrade and improve existing parks and facilities
2. Continue to build and establish a brand for the Parks and Recreation Department
3. Add programming to meet unmet community needs through vendor contracts (initially, managed by a dedicated staff position (Enterprise Recreation Programmer)
4. Ensure the new department has the staff and resources needed to operate the department as offerings grow
5. Improve marketing of Parks and Recreation opportunities using multiple methods and utilizing new department branding
6. Improve and add support features throughout the park system (e.g., restrooms, seating, shade, drinking fountains, and landscaping)
7. Invest in overlooked/underinvested parks, addressing equity and access, using existing parkland

8. Continuously engage Thomasville resident throughout the implementation of this plan
9. Ensure all contracts and MOUs benefit Thomasville and its residents with requirements that contractors show how and where city funds were spent
10. Identify alternative funding streams to implement this plan and improve the park system (e.g., parks foundation, grants, tax revenue)
11. Add, upgrade, and replace playground equipment throughout the park system
12. Evaluate opportunities to add trails at parks and identify potential trail linkages throughout the community
13. Ensure ADA accessibility throughout the park system
14. Include technological updates with the renovation and addition of new facilities such as Wi-Fi, charging stations, and lighting
15. Strategically and consistently place signage (entrance, wayfinding, etc.) throughout the park system
16. Address issues identified in the *Golf Course Renovation Master Plan* at Country Oaks Golf Course

Demographic and Benchmarking Analysis

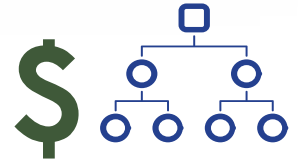


- Population has remained largely the same (1980 - 2026)
- 65+ population growing and nearly as large as the under 18 population

Compared to 36 similar agencies Thomasville has:

(From NRPA Park Metrics database)

- Fewer staff
- Sizeable parkland (due largely to the golf course)
- Differences disappear with county residents included
- Golf course only source of revenue



Service Area Analysis (Gaps)

Maps of service areas for various parks and facilities were used to identify service gaps or underserved areas within Thomasville. Maps were also created to illustrate levels of access to various park categories and facilities. The analysis indicated that about half (50%) of Thomasville residents are within walking distance to a park. Opportunities for connections and bridging the gaps between recreation areas could increase this level of service.



Lastly, a composite service areas map shows the overall level of service for parks and facilities, ranked from high to low, in turn revealing spaces of need and opportunity. Shades of blue indicate high service levels, while red areas show the areas with the lowest level of service to parks and facilities. Forty six percent (46%) of Thomasville's residents live in the highest two categories, with just over a quarter in the medium-low category and very few in the lowest.

Overall, Thomasville has a medium level of service for some type of park access whether that be a Thomasville property or another type of recreation area. Areas with the highest levels of service are those near Remington Park as this park offers a wide variety of amenities.

THE PROCESS – WHY ARE THESE ACTION NEEDED?

Existing Conditions of Parks and Recreation in Thomasville

A park system should be evaluated as a composite of recreation areas with each meeting a particular public need; and should provide a combination of large and small parks. For all residents, whatever their background, parks help provide a variety of passive and active outdoor recreational opportunities. Proximity to these valuable resources invariably improves community health and wellness, not to mention create more adaptable, robust local economies.¹

Thomasville Maintains...

465 Acres of parkland (approx.)

10 Parks - 5 neighborhood, 4 community, 1 natural area

+ a golf course and several small plazas

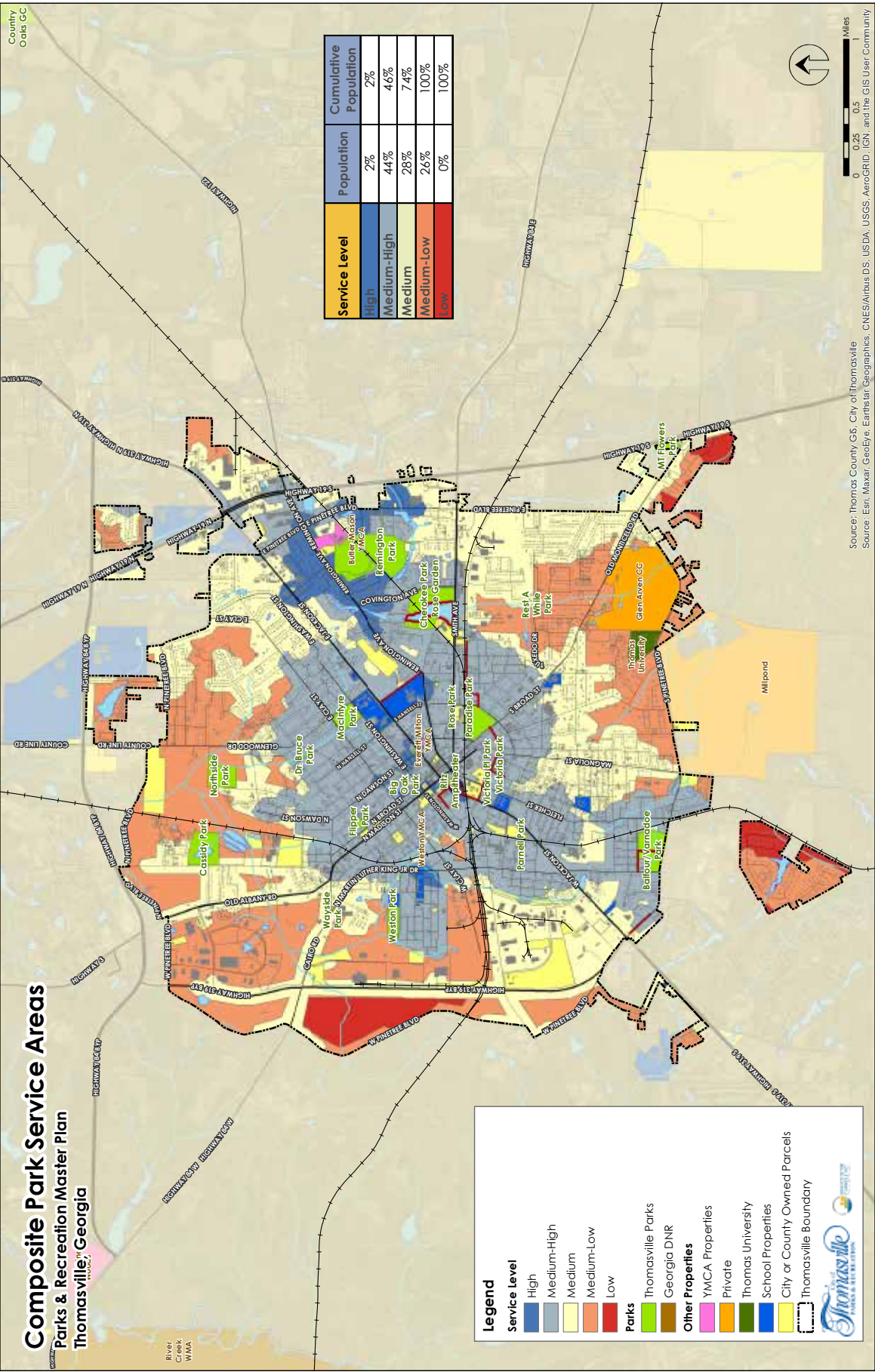
Other recreation spaces managed by others:

Thomasville City Schools
YMCA

A CITIZEN DRIVEN PLAN

To make informed decisions moving forward, Thomasville Parks and Recreation needs meaningful public input in addition to robust statistical and performance analysis. Including resident participation in the planning process gives actual park users a means to share their individual needs, perceptions, concerns, and desires for the park system they themselves use. This Master Plan process used several

¹ Berg, Nate. Great Parks Don't Just Have Rec. Space: They Create Jobs. 2021. Fast Company. https://www.fastcompany.com/90624316/great-parks-dont-just-have-rec-space-they-create-jobs?mc_cid=105f89bd93&mc_eid=6c9b6b28d4



methods to connect with the community. As the department begins to implement this plan, sustained efforts will be necessary to continuously solicit public feedback about development projects; allowing direct participation whenever possible will ensure the community feels heard and has pride in their parks. The following summary indicates the various ways the public was involved throughout this Master Plan process.

WHAT THOMASVILLE RESIDENTS SAID

Information gathered from these public input methods were used to identify the needs of Thomasville residents. And was the primary driver of recommended actions.

Stakeholder Groups

Discussions spanned a diversity of issues:

-  Connectivity & Wayfinding
-  Expanded Programming
-  Prioritize Overlooked Parks
-  Strengthen Connections to Downtown
-  Effective Partnerships for Programming
-  Wi-Fi Availability at Parks
-  Park Maintenance
-  Accessible Spaces & Features
-  Aquatic Opportunities
-  Passive Site Amenities
-  Public Art



Survey Results

Visitation



93%
Visited a Thomasville park
in the past year

Visited 20+ times
39%

Most visited parks:

1. Cherokee Park & Thomasville Rose Garden
2. Remington Park
3. The Ritz Amphitheater
4. Macintyre Park
5. Paradise Park

Physical Condition

75% rated the Condition of parks as good or excellent

Improvements to Existing Parks

- 62%** Restrooms
- 50%** Trails
- 44%** Drinking fountains/bottle Fillers
- 43%** Security
- 43%** Seating



Desired Facilities (Top 4)

- 56%** Walking & hiking trails
- 26%** Bike trails
- 23%** Splash pads
- 21%** Natural areas



Desired Programs

Overall, there is a desire for:

- Community gatherings, including concerts and movies
- Access to nature education and outdoor activities
- Improved fitness, especially 50+
- Farmers markets

Reasons for Not Using Parks

- Lack of restrooms (37%)
- Security concerns (31%)
- Unaware of offerings (31%)

Engagement Key Findings

Results indicate that generally the Thomasville community desires:

Systemwide	Facilities	Programs
 Upgrades to existing parkland	 Upgraded playgrounds with unique equipment	 Fitness & wellness classes
 Increased maintenance at existing parks	 Restrooms & support features (lighting, drinking fountains, etc.)	 Outdoor movies
 Connectivity & trails added to and through parks	 Outdoor aquatic facilities	 Active adult (50+) programs
 Access to natural areas & activities (picnics, fishing, etc.)	 More & upgraded picnic areas/ shelters	 Strategic & collaborative marketing
 Increased ADA accessibility	 Wayfinding & entrance signage	 Partnerships with local organizations
 Golf Course Master Plan implementation		 Concerts, festivals, & live performances

Engagement Summary

- 4 open house workshops** in the spring of 2022
 - 80 attendees
- Meetings with stakeholder groups** (March 2022) representing more than 10 organizations
 - Mayor & City Council
 - TISK/TASK
 - Thomas County NAACP
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - YMCA
 - Archbold Medical Center
 - Thomasville County Family Connection
 - Thomasville Community Resource Center
 - Local Businesses (Thomasville National Bank, ABAC, Hubs & Hops)
- A handout and web survey** – available on the city webpage and shared on social media platforms
 - 1,155 surveys completed



- 60% Thomasville residents
- 32% Thomas County residents
- 7% Outside the county

ACTION PLAN

The 2023 Thomasville Parks and Recreation Master Plan concludes with an Action Plan of 121 strategies and recommendations. These action items, which can be found in Chapter 9, detail specific actions for Thomasville Parks and Recreation and the city itself to take in implementing this long-range master plan.

ONE PAGE SUMMARIES

The final two pages of this executive summary consist of graphic representations of the overall findings of the plan. The first graphic highlights the highest priority improvements at each of the city's major parks with the first projects in bold. The second figure summarizes the whole Master Plan in a single page. These figures can serve as reference materials for anyone looking for a quick summary of the plan.

Park Improvement Highlights

Systemwide Improvements



ADA accessibility assessment



Trees & landscaping



Wayfinding & entrance signage



Support features (drinking fountains, bottle fillers)



Splash pads

First Priority

Second Priority

Third Priority

Bold - First Phase, Unbold - Later Phases

Paradise Park



Gazebo restoration & concert plaza

Restrooms

Carriageway enhancement

Walking Trail

Parking Improvements



Cherokee Park



Parking improvements

Dog park relocation

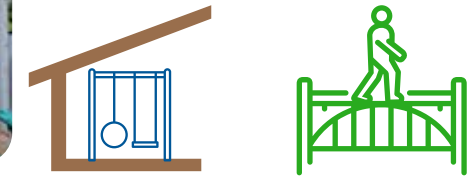


MacIntyre Park



Shade at playground

Trail - 8' wide paved w/ bridges



Cassidy Park



Upgrade to a community park

Picnic shelters (add/improve)

Disc golf course

Walking Trail

Parking Improvements



Northside Park



New playground

Basketball court replacement

Picnic shelter

Parking lot w/ ADA spaces and paved road

Perimeter path



Weston Park



Walking path extension

Ballfield improvements - bleachers, fencing, infield



Balfour/Varnadoe



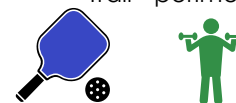
Playground w/ shade

Tennis/pickleball improvements

Basketball Court Improvements

Parking & road upgrades

Picnic shelters (2)
Restroom improvements
Fitness area replacement
Trail - perimeter



Flipper Park



Playground replacement

Basketball court improvements

Perimeter path



Specialty Parks with Regional Impact

Remington Park



ADA Walkways

Concrete Pads at Shelters

Country Oaks Golf Course



Implement Golf Course Renovation Master Plan



2023 Parks & Recreation Master Plan



Introduction

This Master Plan is critical to the city's future as it clarifies the department's responsibilities, the community's desires, and the importance of partnerships.

With the Parks and Recreation Department, the city has great potential to begin offering additional programs and beautiful parks to the Thomasville community.

The Thomasville community desires:

- Improved maintenance**
- Expanded marketing**
- Upgrades & improvements to existing parks/facilities**
 - ADA access
 - Improved parking
 - Technological updates
- Connectivity & trails**
 - Added sidewalks and walking paths
 - Paved bike/walk paths
 - Citywide trails
- Natural Areas**
 - Open space preservation
 - More fishing opportunities
- New spaces & facilities**
 - New playgrounds
 - Splash pads
- Expanded programming & events**
 - Concerts & live performances
 - Farmers markets
 - Nature education classes
 - Fitness programs
 - Active adult (50+) programs
- Support amenities**
 - Restrooms & drinking fountains
 - Shade & seating
 - Improved wayfinding
 - Site security

A Path Forward:

- Building a Parks & Recreation Department Requires:**
- Dedicated staff**
 - Operations & management plans**
 - Engagement/promotion**
 - Coordination with partners**
 - Measures of success**

MISSION

Enrich the entire community through engaging experiences and diverse amenities

VISION

Exceptional parks and memorable experiences are accessible for everyone

VALUES

Sustainability
Accessibility
Fun
Excellence

Goals

- Beautiful Parks**
- Accessible Spaces**
- Diverse Experiences**
- Responsible Operations**

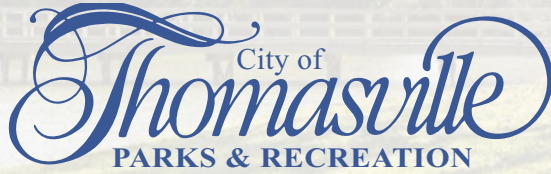
Objectives

- Places Amenities Stewardship**
- Events Wellness Partnerships**
- Gathering Connecting Engaging**
- Structure Operations Funding**

Actions

- Upgrade + Improve existing parks/facilities
- Establish a brand for the department
- Add programming that meets community demand
- Add a dedicated staff member to begin offering programs
- Improve marketing of offerings utilizing branding
- Improve/add support features throughout parks
- Invest in overlooked parks addressing equity
- Continuous community engagement
- Ensure contracts and MOU's are beneficial to the city and residents
- Identify alternative funding streams for park improvements
- Add, upgrade, replace playground equipment
- Evaluate opportunities to add trails & linkages to parks
- Ensure ADA accessibility throughout the system
- Add technological updates during renovations
- Strategically add signage throughout the park system
- Implement the Golf Course Renovation Master Plan

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE NEED FOR A PLAN

The purpose of this 2023 Thomasville Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to provide an ambitious yet feasible roadmap for a better future according to the needs and desires of the people of Thomasville. In the spring of 2022, the City of Thomasville selected Brandstetter Carroll Inc. (a consulting firm out of Lexington, KY) to lead the process to develop this publicly driven plan. The 2023 Thomasville Parks and Recreation Master Plan represents the culmination of the master planning process and will provide guidance for parks, recreation, events, and trails in Thomasville for the next 10 years.

This plan is important because it...

- Defines a path forward for the Parks and Recreation Department
- Provides a vision for the future of parks and recreation in Thomasville
- Ensures department offerings are aligned with community needs
- Fosters civic engagement and creates a sense of community
- Develops clear priorities based on community needs and desires
- Identifies gaps & inequities in service delivery
- Strengthens fiscal responsibility, sustainability, and efficiency
- Identifies future funding requirements and potential sources
- Increases user participation, satisfaction, revenue, and capital investment
- Ensures that the city keeps up with parks and recreation trends
- Ensures no duplication of service, improves partnerships

Parks are part of hyper-local civic infrastructure (so-called “third-spaces”¹) needed now more than ever, where citizens practice the “art of association” and do the work of knitting communities together.²

¹ National Recreation and Park Association, “Health and Wellness,” <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/health-wellness/>, (December, 10 2019).

² Redefining Infrastructure & Public Space. Reimagining the Civic Commons. 2021. <https://medium.com/reimagining-the-civic-commons/redefining-infrastructure-and-public-space-2e311edfde68>

Thomasville, Georgia's Rose City, has a population of approximately 19,000. This population has remained about the same in the past 40 years although, some growth is projected through 2026. The demographics of the city are also expected to continue to change with the city becoming older and more educated.

Thomasville Parks and Recreation provides more than 460 acres of parkland including:

- 5 neighborhood/mini parks
- 4 community parks
- 1 natural area
- 1 golf course

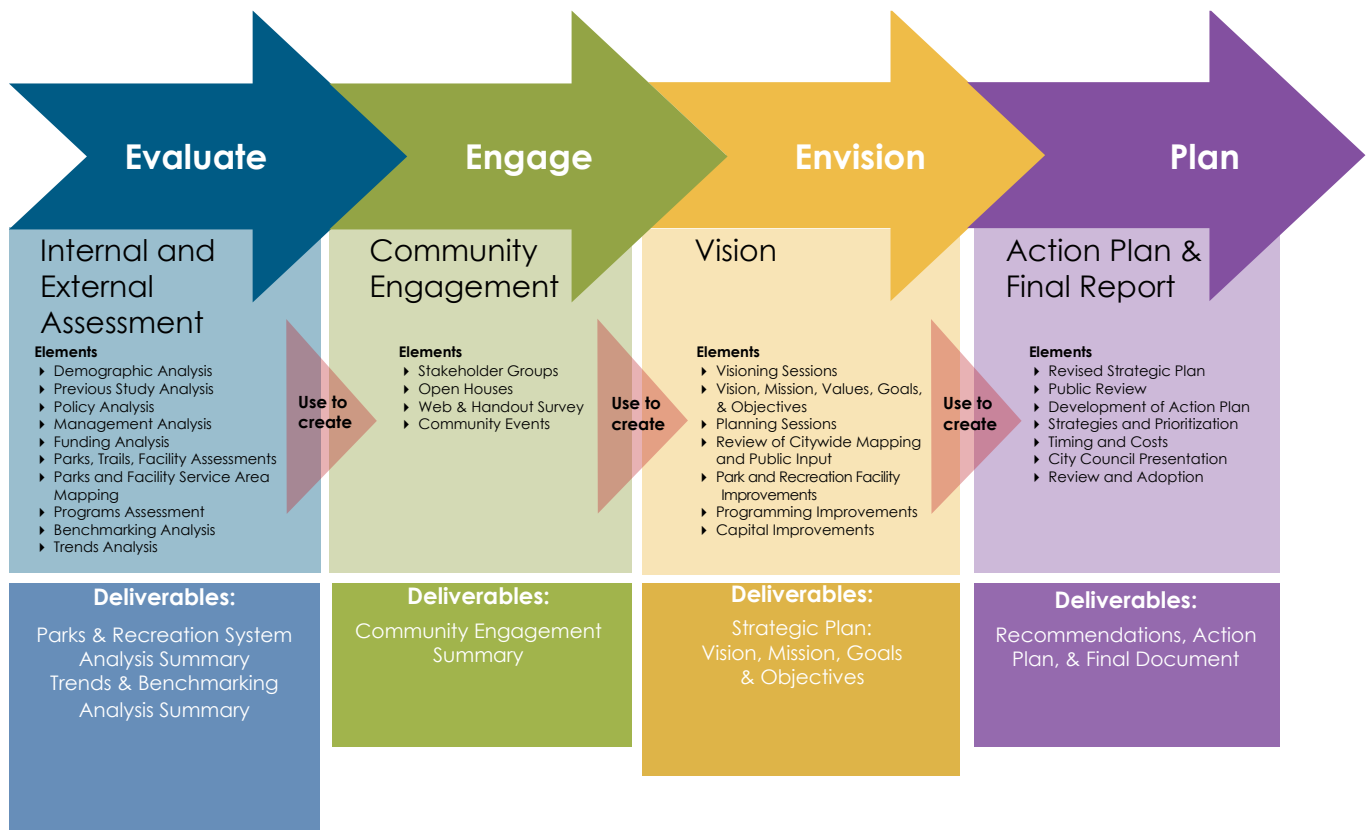
The city has a large amount of parkland with significant potential for strategic and responsible development.

1.2 THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

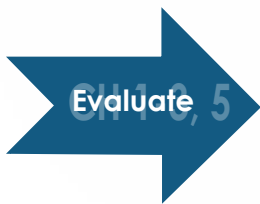
This Master Plan acts as a compass for the department and incorporates findings from the four-phase process including:

- **Phase 1:** Evaluating existing facilities and programs and analyzing current trends and benchmarking
- **Phase 2:** Engaging with a steering committee, community stakeholders, staff, and the public (open house, online survey, and stakeholder meetings)
- **Phase 3:** Envisioning Thomasville's future
- **Phase 4:** Planning implementation strategies and prioritization

Figure 1.1: Planning Process



1.2.1 How to Read the Master Plan



The **EVALUATE** phase is encompassed in Chapters 1 - 3 and 5 and provides a baseline understanding of the existing conditions of Thomasville as a whole, facilities and programs available, and the department. The text evaluates the make-up of the population and the levels of service in the community. Additionally, Chapter 2 includes a benchmarking analysis which reveals how Thomasville measures up to surrounding communities of similar make up. Chapter 5 includes service area mapping and level of service guidelines. Contents include:

- **Parkland and facility inventory & analysis**
- **Program analysis**
- **Benchmark comparisons of similar agencies**
- **Geographic park and facility service area mapping**
- **Trends in parks and recreation**



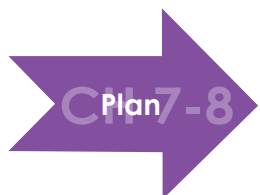
The **ENGAGE** phase is summarized in Chapter 4 and ultimately leads the discussions throughout the rest of the Master Plan. Identifying what the community desires is essential to determine and prioritize the future of the parks, recreation facilities, and special events/programming.

- **Open house workshop**
- **Web/handout surveys**
- **Stakeholder group meetings**



The **ENVISION** phase is driven by the visioning sessions and meetings with the steering committee and can be found in Chapter 6. Findings from the evaluate and engage phase are reviewed and are used to produce a specific vision, mission, values, goals, and objectives for the department in Chapter 6.

- **Steering committee visioning sessions**
- **Needs, standards, & guidelines for parks and recreation**
- **Facility needs analysis & level of service standards**



The **PLAN** phase combines all the information gathered throughout the first three phases of the planning process and formulates operational and capital – both systemwide and individual park related – recommendations to meet the goals for the future of parks and recreation. Chapter 7 discusses these topics at length and help provide the direction for the department for the next 5-10 years. Chapter 8 presents the action plan that can be used as a checklist for implementation.

- **Capital and operational recommendations**
- **Strategic plan**
- **Systemwide recommendations**
- **Individual recommendations**
- **Action plan**

1.3 How to Use THIS PLAN

The action plan is a living document. This plan will act as a guiding document over the next 10 years for future development within the parks and recreation department that should, at least, be revisited annually to measure progress. The recommendations found in the latter half of the plan include capital lists of improvements that prioritize systemwide, departmental, and individual park enhancements.

Upon acceptance of this plan, the action plan provided in **Chapter 8** will begin to guide and bring to life the needs and desires of the department and the community.

Figure 1.2: How to Use this Plan

Assign Responsibility

ACTION PLAN - 2023 Thomasville Parks & Recreation Master Plan													
Legend of Abbreviations/Organizations													
Parks = Thomasville Parks and Recreation					OP = Park Operating Budget								
City = City Council, Other City Departments					CIP = Capital Improvement Budget								
Partners = Other Organizations (county/state, private agencies, schools, state/federal grants, etc.)					Revenue = Items that Generate Additional Revenue								
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies													
Goal 1: Beautiful Parks													
Offer attractive parks and facilities that encourage fun and enjoyment for all													
Objective 1.1 – Places: Provide innovative parks and facilities to serve and engage the community													
Strategy 1.1.1: Utilize existing parkland to meet unmet facility needs and to improve access to park features													
			Timeframe (Years)			Category		Agency		Funding Source		Section References	
			0-2	3-5	6-10								
Strategy 1.1.2: Develop Cassidy Park as a community park with a focus on passive uses to address many unmet needs in the community			Ongoing			Capital/ Planning		Parks/City		CIP		7.6.4	
Strategy 1.1.3: Determine an approach to improving the County Oaks Golf Course to address issues identified in the <i>Golf Course Renovation Master Plan</i>			✓			Capital/ Planning		Parks/City		CIP		7.4	
Strategy 1.1.4: Relocate the existing dog park and consider additional locations to meet the growing needs of Thomasville households			✓			Capital		Parks		CIP		7.6.2 & 7.6.4	
Strategy 1.1.5: Continue to partner with the disc golf group to provide new and expanded opportunities in the city			Ongoing			Capital		Parks/ Partners		CIP/ Partners		7.6	
Strategy 1.1.6: Consider themed playground equipment, such as climbing rocks, sensory features, etc., potentially providing for marketing and resident/visitor photo opportunities			Ongoing			Capital/ Planning		Parks		CIP/OP		7.4	
Strategy 1.1.7: Incorporate nature play elements as part of playground development and replacement, especially in more passive park areas			Ongoing			Capital/ Planning		Parks		CIP/OP		7.4	
Strategy 1.1.8: Continually evaluate opportunities to develop new parks in underserved areas, especially where stormwater can also be addressed			Ongoing			Capital/ Planning		Parks/City		CIP		7.6	
Strategy 1.1.9: Develop a splash pad (possibly more long-term) in Thomasville to expand access to aquatic facilities in the city			✓	✓		Capital		Parks		CIP		7.6	
Strategy 1.1.10: Include a neighborhood determined feature at each neighborhood park, ensuring development aligns with needs and encouraging a sense of local investment and opportunities for placemaking in parks			✓	✓		Capital/ Planning		Parks/City		CIP		7.6	
Strategy 1.1.11: Seek opportunities to install public art in additional parks and develop cultural programming in collaboration with creative, arts-advocacy entities in Thomasville			Ongoing			Capital/ Operations		Parks/ Partners		CIP/OP		7.8.9	

Identify action based on priority and timeframe

Locate Funding Type

Find more information in plan text

1.4 RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

The City of Thomasville has adopted multiple park plans, exemplifying the value placed on parks and recreation planning in the community. In response to the previous plans, current conditions of the existing park system, and the demographic shifts seen within the city, the Thomasville Parks and Recreation Department in partnership with the consultant began the master planning process once again in April of 2021.

This Master Plan supports existing community efforts to revitalize the City of Thomasville. Listed below are supportive documents which were considered during the planning process.³

- Blueprint 2028 (Comprehensive Master Plan)
- Thomas County/Thomasville 2005-2025 Comprehensive Plan
- Country Oaks Golf Master Plan
- MacIntyre Park Vision Plan 2016
- Paradise Park 2019 Planning Document
- Weston Park 2019 Master Plan
- Community Landmarks Trail 2011 Master Plan & Recreation Analysis
- South Pinetree Boulevard Street Improvements
- Creative District Vision Report
- Victoria Park Overlay District

³ Summaries of previous planning efforts can be found in Appendix D



PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Planning Context chapter provides a summary of factors and trends that may influence the delivery of parks and recreation services throughout the City of Thomasville. This chapter begins with a summary of population and demographic trends and concludes with a benchmarking analysis comparing parks and recreation in the City of Thomasville with other cities throughout the United States.

2.2 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

An overall understanding of population trends in Thomasville is necessary to identify current conditions and to anticipate future needs for parks and recreation services and facilities. Needs vary between demographic groups, and these needs also change over time. Each of the following demographic categories examines specific elements of the population.

2.2.1 Population Change

Figure 2.1 illustrates the population change in Thomasville from 1980 to 2026. This table uses U.S. Census Bureau data and figures provided by Esri forecasts. These numbers indicate the population of Thomasville has remained largely the same over the last 40 years, with a slight decrease between 1980 and 1990 and increases between 1990 and 2010. According to Esri forecast, the city will experience some growth by 2026, reaching a population just over 19,000.

2.2.2 Household Size

Table 2.1 shows the number of households (in 2021) plus the average household size between 2000 and 2026 for Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia, and the USA. The table indicates that household size in Thomasville has decreased over the 20 years since 2000. Thomas County has had a similar decline in household size. In contrast, household sizes in Georgia and the USA have remained roughly the same over the same period. Projections for 2026 show Thomasville's average household size will be 2.40 (down from 2.46 in 2000). Prior to the decline in household size in Thomasville, the city already had smaller households than the comparison geographies.

Figure 2.1: City of Thomasville Population

Population of Thomasville, Georgia

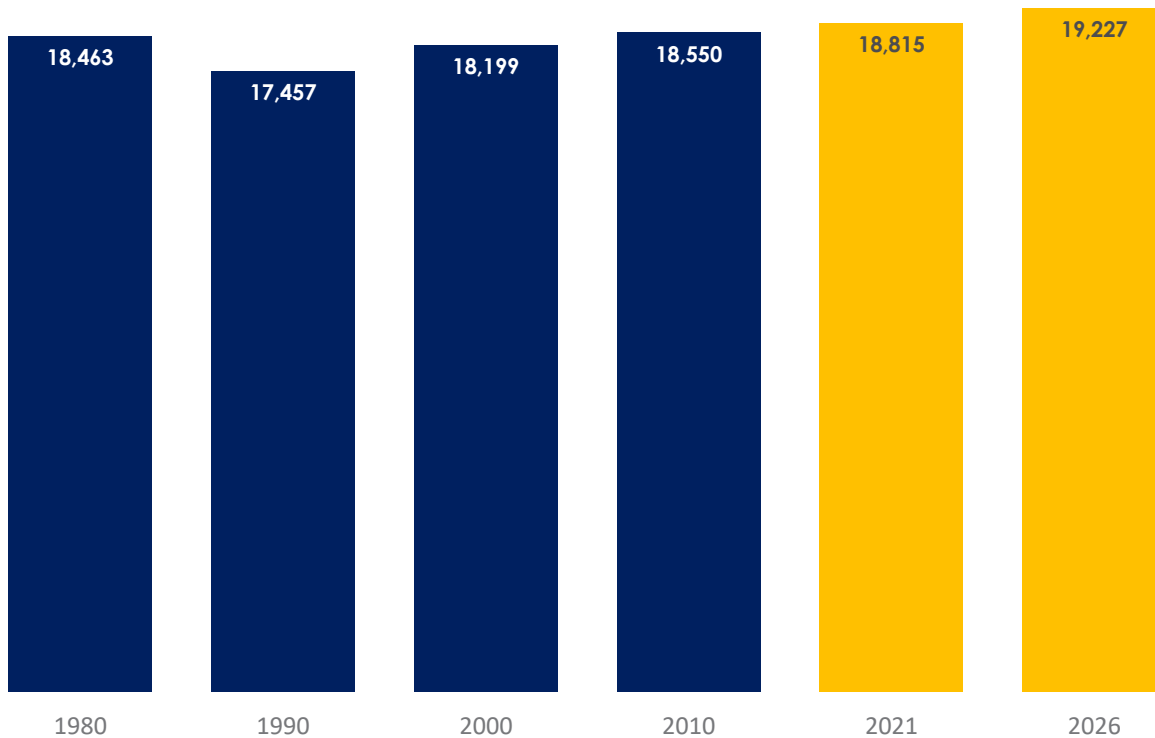


Table 2.1: Average Household Size

	Households	Average Household Size			
	2021	2000	2010	2021	2026
USA	126,470,675	2.59	2.58	2.58	2.58
Georgia	4,013,721	2.65	2.63	2.63	2.63
Thomas County	17,948	2.55	2.50	2.49	2.49
Thomasville	7,706	2.46	2.41	2.40	2.40

Source: Esri forecasts

2.2.3 Age

Table 2.2 shows the median age for Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia, and the USA from 2000 through 2026. The median age in Thomasville has increased since 2010 (from 36.3 to 39.9 in 2021). All geographic levels have risen since 2000, but Thomasville and Thomas County both have higher median ages. As with the other geographies, the average age in Thomasville is projected to continue increasing into 2026. Understanding the age makeup of Thomasville is critical for ensuring that this Master Plan addresses future development and opportunity in a way that best serves the community.

Table 2.3 displays the population age 65 and over from 2000 to 2026 and shows that this age group has considerably increased over the last 20 years, with projected sustained increase (representing 21.4% of Thomasville’s population by 2026). While a similar trend of growth is evident at all other geographic levels, the City of Thomasville shows a higher percentage of residents over 65, with only Thomas County outpacing Thomasville in growth of this demographic. As evident in Table 2.4, the percentage of seniors is approaching the percentage of the city’s population under age 18. This increase Thomasville is experiencing – and will continue experiencing – is evident in all comparison geographies and most communities throughout the nation. This change emphasizes the need for facilities and services for the 65+ population and should guide consideration of future development and opportunities.

Table 2.2: Median Age

	2000	2010	2021	2026
USA	35.3	37.1	38.8	39.5
Georgia	33.4	35.3	37.2	37.9
Thomas County	36.4	39.5	41.5	42.5
Thomasville	36.3	37.7	39.9	40.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

Table 2.3: Population Age 65 and Over

	2000	2010	2021	2026
USA	12.4%	13.0%	17.2%	19.2%
Georgia	9.6%	10.7%	14.8%	16.6%
Thomas County	14.0%	15.1%	19.6%	21.9%
Thomasville	16.3%	15.5%	19.8%	21.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

Table 2.4 presents the population under age 18 from 2000 to 2026. The table indicates that in Thomasville the percentage of children decreased from 26.7% in 2000 to 23.3% in 2021; the percentage of the population within this age group is expected to continue to decrease through 2026. This trend is evident at the state, regional, and national levels as well. Although Thomasville and Thomas County have similar percentages of children as the other geographies, they have more seniors. Even so, children will continue to represent a valuable and significant percentage of the Thomasville community and should be accommodated accordingly.

Table 2.4: Population under Age 18

	2000	2010	2021	2026
USA	25.7%	24.0%	21.7%	21.5%
Georgia	26.5%	25.7%	23.0%	22.8%
Thomas County	27.1%	24.9%	22.1%	22.0%
Thomasville	26.7%	25.9%	23.3%	23.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

2.2.4 Poverty

Table 2.5 shows the percentage of the population living below the poverty line at each of the geographic levels. The table shows that the poverty level in Thomasville is greater than all the comparison geographies for all years listed. Like in the USA, Georgia, and Thomas County, the poverty level in Thomasville has decreased from its peak in 2010 and is currently 25% (as of 2019).

While parks and recreation can play a role in driving economic growth through tourism and special events, the department must also consider the financial burden of programming and services on the poorest of the community (and develop creative ways to disperse these costs).

Table 2.5: Population Under the Poverty Line

	2000	2010	2019
USA	12.4%	15.3%	13.4%
Georgia	13.0%	17.9%	15.1%
Thomas County	17.4%	22.4%	19.2%
Thomasville	19.0%	27.8%	25.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS

2.2.5 Income and Educational Attainment

The median household income in Thomasville (\$38,386 as of 2021) is well below those of the comparison geographies. Additionally, while income has risen since 2000 in Thomasville in absolute numbers, it has decreased substantially when adjusted for inflation (adjusted 2000 to 2021 of \$46,375). The other geographies have largely kept pace with inflation.

Looking at the individual level, per capita income in Thomasville (\$25,726) is again lower than the comparisons, but just below Thomas County. In contrast with household incomes, per capita incomes have increased at all geographic levels, including Thomasville, even after adjusting for inflation. This contrast is likely connected to the decrease in household size.

Table 2.6 indicates modest growth (slower than comparisons) between 2000 and 2026 for both median household and per capita income levels in Thomasville, and the city will still fall short of Thomas County and the nation at large. Understanding per capita income levels in Thomasville will be useful for creating cost-effective solutions and accessible opportunities for all populations in the community.

Table 2.6: Household Income

	2000	2000 Adjusted	2021	2026
Median Household Income				
USA	\$41,994	\$65,076	\$64,730	\$72,932
Georgia	\$42,433	\$65,757	\$60,605	\$68,338
Thomas County	\$31,115	\$48,218	\$47,679	\$53,304
Thomasville	\$29,926	\$46,375	\$38,386	\$42,538
Per Capita Income				
USA	\$21,587	\$33,452	\$35,106	\$39,378
Georgia	\$21,154	\$32,781	\$32,105	\$36,340
Thomas County	\$16,211	\$25,121	\$27,905	\$30,886
Thomasville	\$15,910	\$24,655	\$25,726	\$27,905

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates, Esri forecasts, BLS

Table 2.7 shows the change in educational attainment in Thomasville since 2000. As of 2021, 17.2% of residents age 25 and older have a bachelor's degree, and 11.8% have a master's degree or above. The percentage of Thomasville's population with higher education is slightly greater than Thomas County but below Georgia and the USA. Overall, the City of Thomasville has seen an increase in the percentage of residents over 25 with college degrees since 2000 and a corresponding decrease of those lacking a high school diploma.

Table 2.7: Educational Attainment Age 25 and Over

Educational Attainment (Highest Level)	Thomasville		Thomas County		Georgia		USA	
	2000	2021	2000	2021	2000	2021	2000	2021
No High School Diploma	25.6%	13.7%	26.4%	13.7%	21.4%	11.8%	19.6%	11.1%
High School/GED	30.4%	28.4%	33.6%	30.9%	28.7%	27.2%	28.6%	26.9%
Some College, No Degree	17.3%	20.1%	18.6%	19.8%	20.4%	19.9%	21.0%	19.8%
Associates Degree	4.3%	8.7%	4.5%	8.8%	5.2%	8.1%	6.3%	8.7%
Bachelors Degree	14.6%	17.2%	10.6%	14.9%	16.0%	20.2%	15.5%	20.6%
Graduate/Professional/Doctorate Degree	7.8%	11.8%	6.2%	11.8%	8.3%	12.9%	8.9%	13.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts, ACS 5-year estimates

2.2.6 Population by Race and Hispanic Origin

Unlike much of the USA, the racial demographics have changed only minimally over the last 20 years in Thomasville. The city has a majority Black population which has declined slightly from 55% in 2000 to 53% in 2019. Over that same time period, the white population has also declined slightly as a percentage (42.3% to 41.7%). The multiracial and Hispanic or Latino populations – while still comparatively small – have increased substantially.

Changes in the community's population may correspond with different recreation preferences, especially compared to when the parks were originally constructed. Engagement that reflects the population will be essential for the city's parks and recreation to successfully meet the needs of the entire city's population.

Table 2.8: Population by Race and Hispanic Origin

Year	Total Population	White Alone		Black Alone		Asian or Pacific Islander Alone		Other Race Alone		Two or More Races		Hispanic or Latino	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2000	18,162	7,677	42.3%	9,990	55.0%	93	0.5%	54	0.3%	116	0.6%	232	1.3%
2019	18,539	7,740	41.7%	9,813	52.9%	43	0.2%	9	0.0%	403	2.2%	531	2.9%
# Change	377	63		-177		-50		-45		287		299	
% Change	2.1%	0.8%		-1.8%		-53.8%		-83.3%		247.4%		128.9%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates

2.2.7 Conclusion

These demographic trends indicate aging and increased education of the population but with stagnant incomes in Thomasville. These trends will continue to shape the future of Thomasville. The direction Thomasville chooses for its parks and recreation will determine the availability of opportunities for residents and will help enrich the overall quality of life in the community for years to come.

2.3 BENCHMARKING COMPARISONS

One method for evaluating parks and recreation services offered in a community is to use benchmark comparisons to other communities. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics program provides a variety of data for use in benchmarking. The following analysis uses data from 36 agencies located in Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia (serving populations between 10,000 and 30,000) that participated in the Park Metrics program (Table 2.9). Additionally, NRPA provides an annual report¹ which includes national performance benchmarks; these figures are also used in this evaluation process.

Table 2.9: Benchmark Agencies

Agency	State	Year	Population	Budget
Aberdeen (City of)	MD	2020	16,019	\$17,902,533
Albemarle Parks & Recreation	NC	2020	16,000	\$1,800,000
Athens Parks & Recreation Dept	TN	2020	14,020	\$1,397,700
Callaway Leisure Services Department	FL	2020	15,000	\$736,490
Carrboro (Town of) Recreation and Parks Dept.	NC	2019	22,000	N/A
Cartersville Parks & Rec Dept	GA	2019	20,235	\$3,280,305
Chamblee Parks and Recreation Department	GA	2020	29,000	\$768,036
Christiansburg (Town of) Parks and Recreation Department	VA	2020	23,000	\$1,800,000
Clarkston (City of)	GA	2019	13,757	\$146,267
Collegedale (City of) Parks & Recreation	TN	2020	11,500	\$115,076
Cullman City Parks and Recreation	AL	2020	16,034	N/A
Fort Mill Parks & Recreation Department	SC	2019	17,000	\$1,500,000
Fort Payne Parks & Recreation	AL	2020	14,071	\$2,155,516
Fredericksburg Parks, Recreation & Public Facilities	VA	2020	29,036	\$2,738,444
Fuquay-Varina Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources	NC	2019	28,987	\$2,880,302
Graham Recreation and Parks	NC	2020	15,136	\$1,350,000
Hanahan (City of)	SC	2020	25,000	\$1,440,438
Henderson Parks and Recreation	KY	2020	28,432	\$1,869,790
Herndon (Town of) Parks and Recreation Dept	VA	2020	24,545	\$3,974,441

¹ National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), "2020 NRPA Agency Performance Review Park And Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks," <https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/nrpa-agency-performance-review.pdf> (accessed December 30, 2020).

Table 2.9: Benchmark Agencies (Continued)

Agency	State	Year	Population	Budget
Homewood Parks & Recreation	AL	2020	25,377	N/A
Hopewell Recreation and Parks	VA	2020	23,000	\$1,888,610
Lake Mary (City of) Parks and Recreation	FL	2020	16,000	\$2,985,976
Lewisburg (The City of)	TN	2019	11,000	\$1,349,829
Maitland, Fl. Parks and Recreation	FL	2019	21,096	\$991,609
Mount Airy Parks and Recreation	NC	2020	10,232	\$2,232,158
Naples Community Services Department	FL	2020	22,367	\$14,219,949
North Augusta (City of) Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services	SC	2019	21,435	\$2,788,214
Pinecrest (Village of)	FL	2020	19,000	\$4,049,124
Safety Harbor (City of) Leisure Service	FL	2020	18,016	\$4,153,840
Shelby Parks & Recreation Dept	NC	2019	20,018	\$2,873,645
Starkville Parks and Recreation	MS	2019	24,775	\$1,740,045
Statesville (City of) Recreation and Parks Department	NC	2020	27,528	\$4,430,832
Tamarac (City of) Department of Parks and Recreation	FL	2020	17,644	N/A
Tarpon Springs Recreation Department	FL	2019	25,617	\$787,756
Vienna (Town of) Department of Parks & Recreation	VA	2020	16,556	\$3,870,310
Wilton Manors	FL	2020	12,773	\$4,218,250

Thomasville is not a participant in the NRPA Park Metrics program; figures were calculated based on information provided by the city. Because the data for other park systems was limited to parks and facilities managed by those agencies, only parks and facilities managed by the City of Thomasville are included in this analysis (other agencies, schools, and private facilities were not included). Plazas and inaccessible parkland were not included in the total number of parks for this analysis (See Table 3.2). The figures used in this analysis for Thomasville were those projected for fiscal year 2020, and the figures for the comparison municipalities were those entered for 2019 and 2020.

The comparisons are organized into the following categories: parkland information, trail information, department functions, staffing, operating budget, capital budget, programs, and facilities. The following text details the findings of the benchmark analysis. The values presented in these comparisons are based on information reported to Park Metrics by the municipalities and may vary from actual budgets and measurements. Because the golf course operates very differently from the rest of the park system, some charts also show comparisons without this facility. Only five of the 36 benchmark agencies offer golf courses.

2.3.1 Parkland Information

Table 2.10 shows aspects of parks coverage managed by the City of Thomasville. For instance, the city provides 24.7 acres of parkland per thousand population, roughly triple the benchmark (8.0) and over twice the national median (9.9). Although the comparison is much closer, acres of parkland per thousand is still higher without the golf course. It is also important to note that Thomasville's parks and facilities serve all of Thomas County, more than double the population of the city alone. The acres per 1,000 population drops to 10.3 (or 6.2 without the golf course) if the county population is considered.

As a percentage of the entire jurisdiction, which controls for the different land area of the comparison agencies, 4.8% of land in Thomasville is city-operated parkland, nearly double the benchmark median (2.7%). Without the golf course (located outside of the city), the number is 3.1% and just above the benchmark. Taken together, these values indicate Thomasville has a high amount of parkland given its population and total land area.

While the City of Thomasville has more parkland than the benchmarks, only 64% of that parkland is developed, compared to the benchmark median of 88%. The population served per park (1,568) is slightly better than the benchmark (1,892). With the lower percentage of developed parkland, there is significant potential for improving existing parks through thoughtful development to expand service and availability.

Table 2.10: Parkland Information

PARKLAND INFORMATION	Thomasville	Thomasville w/o Golf	Benchmark	National
Acreage of Parkland				
Lower Quartile			120	
Median/Agency Value	465.4	301.6	151	N/A
Upper Quartile			293	
Acreage of Parkland per 1,000 Population				
Lower Quartile			3.5	5.2
Median/Agency Value	24.7	16.0	8.0	9.9
Upper Quartile			14.5	17.6
Population per Park				
Lower Quartile			1,452	1,302
Median/Agency Value	1,710	1,882	1,892	2,277
Upper Quartile			2,778	4,359
Developed Acreage of Parkland per 1,000 Population				
Lower Quartile			2.5	
Median/Agency Value	15.7	9.6	5.9	N/A
Upper Quartile			10.9	
Parkland as a Percentage of Jurisdiction				
Lower Quartile			1.6%	
Median/Agency Value	4.8%	3.1%	2.7%	N/A
Upper Quartile			3.7%	
Percent of Acreage Developed				
Lower Quartile			44%	
Median/Agency Value	64%	60%	88%	N/A
Upper Quartile			100%	

1. Acreage of parkland & developed acreage can be found in Table 3.2
 2. Population numbers can be found in Figure 2.1

2.3.2 Trail Information

The comparison of total miles of trails managed by the City of Thomasville (Table 2.11) shows 3.6 miles of trails, compared to the benchmark median of 3.0 miles. Total trail miles per jurisdiction square mile is a measurement that controls for differences in the physical size of comparative municipalities. Thomasville has 0.3 miles of trails per square mile of the city, just under the benchmark median of 0.4 mile. The trail miles per 10,000 population measurement, which controls for the population difference between the benchmark communities, shows a value of 2.0 for Thomasville, just above the benchmark median (1.7). However, most of the trails in Thomasville are located outside of parks.

With connectivity an ever-growing demand in communities all over the country, including Thomasville, it will be important for the city to continue to develop its trail system. The city has already prepared extensive plans for a comprehensive trail system throughout the city that just needs implementation. Some existing parks in Thomasville could accommodate recreational trail loops as well.

Table 2.11: Trail Information

TRAILS	Thomasville	Benchmark
Total Trail Miles Managed or Maintained		
Lower Quartile		2.0
Median/Agency Value	3.8	3.0
Upper Quartile		7.3
Total Trail Miles per Jurisdiction Sq. Mi.		
Lower Quartile		0.2
Median/Agency Value	0.3	0.4
Upper Quartile		0.6
Total Trail Miles per 10,000 Population		
Lower Quartile		1.0
Median/Agency Value	2.0	1.7
Upper Quartile		2.8

2.3.3 Department Functions

The list of department functions in Table 2.12 shows the percentage of benchmark and national departments that conduct each service and whether Thomasville currently conducts the service. The City of Thomasville

provides most of the services listed. The most notable function absent in Thomasville is *operate and maintain indoor facilities*, a function provided by over 90% of benchmark communities. However, the YMCA of Thomasville offers indoor facilities in three locations in the city. Similarly, 52% of benchmarks offer outdoor swimming pools, but the YMCA offers these facilities in Thomasville. Most of the benchmark communities (70%) operate, maintain, or contract tennis center facilities, while Thomasville does not, large complexes are offered by other organizations, however.

Table 2.12 shows that the City of Thomasville does provide services that are only offered by fewer than half of the benchmark comparisons: *administer or manage tournament/event quality outdoor sports complexes* (managed by the YMCA but at a city park); and *operate, maintain, or contract golf course*. Development of new facilities must consider additional maintenance responsibilities. Capital improvement and detailed operational measures should be in place to ensure sustainability and quality of service.

Table 2.12: Department Functions

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES	Thomasville	Benchmark	National
The agency...			
Provide recreation programming and services	✓	97%	93%
Operate and maintain park sites	✓	94%	96%
Operate and maintain indoor facilities		94%	89%
Conduct major jurisdiction wide special events	✓	87%	80%
Operate, maintain, or manage trails, greenways, and/or blueways (TGB)	✓	74%	79%
Have budgetary responsibility for its administrative staff	✓	71%	85%
Operate, maintain, or contract tennis center facilities		71%	53%
Operate and maintain non-park sites	✓	65%	68%
Include in its operating budget funding for planning and development	✓	61%	71%
Operate, maintain, or manage special purpose parks and open spaces	✓	58%	73%
Operate, maintain, or contract outdoor swim facilities/water parks		52%	66%
Administer or manage tournament/event quality outdoor sports complexes	✓*	42%	58%
Administer community gardens		32%	43%
Administer or manage farmer's markets		29%	21%
Manage large performance outdoor amphitheaters	✓	23%	35%
Operate, maintain, or contract indoor swim facilities/water parks		23%	32%
Operate, maintain, or contract tourism attractions		19%	34%
Operate, maintain or contract marinas		16%	8%
Maintain, manage or lease indoor performing arts center		16%	18%
Maintain or manage beaches (inclusive of all waterbody types)		13%	17%
Administer or manage tournament/event quality indoor sports complexes		10%	18%
Operate, maintain, or contract golf courses	✓	10%	35%
Operate, maintain, or contract campgrounds		3%	19%
Administer or manage professional or college-type stadium/arena/racetrack		3%	9%
Manage or maintain fairgrounds		0%	6%

*Remington Park fields owned by city and operated by YMCA

2.3.4 Operating Budget

In 2020, the total operating budget (Table 2.13) for parks and recreation in Thomasville was \$2.5 million, just about a half million more than the benchmark median (\$2.0 million). The Thomasville expenditures include the \$900,000 required to operate the Country Oaks Golf Course, and most of the benchmark communities do not offer this type of facility. They may, however, offer amenities not available in Thomasville parks.

The per capita operating expenditure for the City of Thomasville was \$133, slightly above the \$107 median of benchmark municipalities; however, if the golf course is not included, the number is \$85 and below the benchmark. **Thomasville's total operating expenditure per acre of parkland was \$5,381. This number is less than half the benchmark median of \$11,539.** This discrepancy reflects the large amount of parkland in Thomasville compared to the overall budget.

The \$383,000 in earned revenue is just above the benchmark median (\$300,000); however, all revenue is

generated by the golf course. This revenue represents only 15% of the Parks and Recreation budget, which is roughly equivalent to the median revenue brought in by benchmark communities but well below the national number. Thomasville generated \$20 non-tax revenue per capita (through golf) versus the benchmark (\$13) and national (\$19) medians.

Table 2.13: Operating Budget

OPERATING BUDGET	Thomasville	Thomasville w/o Golf	Benchmark	National
Agency's TOTAL Operating Expenditures for the Fiscal Year				
Lower Quartile			\$1,361,925	\$1,863,016
Median/Agency Value	\$2,504,131	\$1,600,225	\$2,022,063	\$4,898,633
Upper Quartile			\$3,722,809	\$13,839,293
Agency's TOTAL Non-Tax Revenue for the Fiscal Year				
Lower Quartile			\$106,000	
Median/Agency Value	\$383,046	\$0	\$300,000	N/A
Upper Quartile			\$650,000	
Revenue as a Percentage of Total Operating Expenditures				
Lower Quartile			8%	10%
Median/Agency Value	15%	0%	16%	23%
Upper Quartile			27%	41%
Operating Expenditures per Capita				
Lower Quartile			\$67	\$49
Median/Agency Value	\$133	\$85	\$107	\$88
Upper Quartile			\$181	\$159
Operating Expenditures per Acre of Parkland				
Lower Quartile			\$6,633	
Median/Agency Value	\$5,381	\$5,306	\$11,539	N/A
Upper Quartile			\$23,329	
Non-Tax Revenue per Capita				
Lower Quartile			\$6	\$6
Median/Agency Value	\$20	\$0	\$13	\$19
Upper Quartile			\$38	\$50

1. Operating expenditures & revenues - City of Thomasville 2020 projected budget

2.3.5 Staffing

Staffing metrics for Thomasville compared to benchmark communities are identified in Table 2.14. Thomasville employs 8.0 full-time equivalent employees, much below the benchmark median (24.0). Additionally, Thomasville has only 4.3 full-time employees for every 10,000 residents, just over a third of the benchmark (11.2) and well below the lower quartile value. This disparity is at least partially explained by the city's contract with the YMCA to offer programming and maintenance of Remington Park.

From a different perspective, acres of parkland per full-time employee, Thomasville has many times the ratio of the benchmark agencies (58.2 acres per FTE vs. 9.1 per FTE). Again, this huge disparity must be considered in the context of the city's contract with the YMCA; however, the numbers do include golf course staff who represent the majority of positions. **Taken together, the two metrics indicate that Thomasville has far fewer staff than the benchmarks.**

The previous table (2.13) indicated that Thomasville had a slightly larger budget than the benchmarks, the staffing numbers indicate a much smaller workforce. Accordingly, the operating expenditures per FTE are much higher in Thomasville. In fact, the \$313,016 expenditure per FTE is more than triple the benchmark and national averages. This number is even higher if the golf course is not included.

In general, Thomasville has a very small level of staff compared to the benchmarks. The city has a sizeable amount of acreage that is currently undeveloped or undermaintained. When pursuing potential development or redevelopment of these acres, the City of Thomasville will need to reassess staffing levels to ensure adequate staffing to maintain the new features.

Table 2.14: Staffing

STAFFING	Thomasville	Thomasville w/o Golf	Benchmark	National
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Employees				
Lower Quartile			15.7	4.5
Median/Agency Value	8.0	3.0	24.0	8.2
Upper Quartile			35.0	14.9
FTE per 10,000 Population				
Lower Quartile			7.4	4.5
Median/Agency Value	4.3	1.6	11.2	8.2
Upper Quartile			17.5	14.9
Acres of Parkland per FTE				
Lower Quartile			4.0	
Median/Agency Value	58.2	100.5	9.1	N/A
Upper Quartile			14.3	
Operating Expenditures per FTE				
Lower Quartile			\$73,736	\$73,391
Median/Agency Value	\$313,016	\$533,408	\$91,838	\$99,016
Upper Quartile			\$106,646	\$141,936

1. Operating Expenditures - City of Thomasville 2020 projected budget

2.3.6 Programs

The list of program categories in Table 2.15 includes the percentage of benchmark departments that offer each type of program listed and whether or not Thomasville offers them. The data in Table 2.16 is separated into two types of programs: “Activities,” which cover programs intended for all users, and “Out-of-School-Time Activities,” which include programs targeted for specific user groups (children, seniors, etc.).

The city – through the Human Resources & Community Relations Department – offers programming in only two of the categories: *social recreation events* and *themed special events*. As noted previously, the city has a contract with the YMCA to offer athletic and fitness programs at Remington Park. Additionally, Downtown Thomasville Main Street and Thomasville Visitors Center, both city departments, partner with a wide variety of groups to offer programs downtown, including cultural arts, social events, music performances, and more.

Because the city currently relies on the YMCA for recreation programming in Thomasville, Table 2.15 also includes their offerings about what is available in Thomasville. The benchmarks show how common various types of programming is in similar communities. The findings of the public input in Chapter 4 provide a better representation of the unmet needs for programs in the city.

Table 2.15: Programs Offered

PROGRAMS	Thomasville	Benchmark	National
Activities			
Fitness enhancement classes	Y	86%	83%
Team sports	Y	83%	87%
Social recreation events	✓	83%	88%
Themed special events	✓	79%	89%
Racquet sports	Y	79%	70%
Health and wellness education		72%	82%
Individual sports	Y	66%	76%
Martial arts	Y	66%	62%
Cultural crafts		62%	62%
Safety training	Y	59%	72%
Trips and tours		52%	61%
Aquatics	Y	48%	71%
Performing arts		45%	65%

Table 2.15: Programs Offered (Continued)

PROGRAMS	Thomasville	Benchmark	National
Visual arts		45%	62%
Natural and cultural history activities		38%	62%
Running/cycling races		34%	48%
Golf	✓	17%	48%
Out-of-School Time (OST) Activities			
Summer camp	Y	79%	83%
Specific senior programs	Y	72%	78%
Specific teen programs	Y	48%	65%
Programs for people with disabilities		45%	62%
STEM programs		45%	54%
After school programs		38%	57%
Preschool		21%	36%
Before school programs		7%	20%
Full daycare		0%	8%

Y=Provided by YMCA

2.3.7 Facilities

Table 2.16 continues the benchmark comparisons with a comparison of facility offerings. Types of facilities are differentiated by outdoor and indoor areas. Thomasville offers all outdoor facilities provided by 50% or more of the benchmark communities. Forty-one percent (41%) of benchmark communities offer outdoor swimming pools. Thomasville currently does not; however, the YMCA offers two of these facilities. The city does offer a golf course and a driving range, facilities offered by very few (3%) of the benchmarks.

Of indoor facilities, Thomasville currently offers none of the different types of facilities, though roughly 70% of benchmark communities provide recreation and community centers. As noted previously, the YMCA offers three locations, reducing the need for the city to offer these facilities. While Table 2.17 highlights how well Thomasville compares to benchmark communities in terms of facilities provided, Tables 2.17 and 2.18 provide a comparison of population per facility to evaluate the existing supply. In other words, **looking at population served per facility can help identify new facilities that the city may want to add in the future.**

Table 2.16: Facilities Offered

FACILITIES	Thomasville	Benchmark	National
Outdoor Activity Areas			
Playgrounds	✓	97%	94%
Basketball courts	✓	83%	87%
Diamond fields: baseball - youth	✓	79%	78%
Rectangular fields: multi-purpose	✓	79%	66%
Tennis courts (outdoor only)	✓	76%	81%
Diamond fields: softball fields - adult	✓	69%	66%
Dog park	✓	59%	65%
Rectangular fields: soccer field - youth	✓	48%	49%
Diamond fields: softball fields - youth	✓	45%	59%
Rectangular fields: soccer field - adult	✓	45%	44%
Diamond fields: baseball - adult	✓	45%	51%
Swimming pools (outdoor only)	Y	41%	53%

Table 2.16: Facilities Offered (Continued)

FACILITIES	Thomasville	Benchmark	National
Community gardens		31%	48%
Rectangular fields: football field		14%	37%
Skate park	Y	14%	39%
Aquatics centers	Y	10%	N/A
Multipurpose synthetic field		7%	21%
Rectangular fields: lacrosse field		3%	11%
Golf course (regulation 18-Holes)	✓	3%	N/A
Driving range	✓	3%	N/A
Ice rink (outdoor only)		0%	N/A
Indoor Activity Areas			
Community centers	Y	72%	59%
Recreation centers (including gyms)	Y	69%	64%
Performance amphitheater	✓	21%	35%
Senior centers		17%	39%
Indoor competitive swimming pool		14%	N/A
Nature centers		10%	32%
Teen centers		3%	13%
Indoor pool designated exclusively for leisure		3%	N/A
Ice rink (indoor)		0%	13%

Y=Provided by YMCA

Tables 2.17 and 2.18 show the numeric values for a range of facilities – outdoor and indoor, respectively – plus upper and lower quartile values. A lower value indicates a higher level of service. Figure 2.2.² shows active use/athletic facilities per 10,000 population (converted from the numbers in Table 2.18) for playgrounds, tennis courts (outdoor), basketball courts (outdoor), ballfields (youth baseball, youth softball, and adult softball diamonds), and rectangular fields.

In terms of simple benchmark comparisons, Thomasville appears to have higher service ratios (facility per 10,000 population) for all but one of the listed facilities (tennis courts). **However, the city also serves county residents. If these residents are included, Thomasville is at or below level for all facilities.** Figure 2.2 highlights this distinction. Additionally, the city offers no swimming pools, skate parks, or community gardens. With the exception of community gardens, these facilities are offered by the YMCA.

Though Thomasville has no indoor facilities with which to compare service levels, Table 2.19 is helpful for illustrating the target service level the city might strive for, should any of the indoor facility types be developed. Based on these numbers, Thomasville has adequate population to potentially support a senior center and a nature center. The three YMCA locations would provide a higher level of service than the benchmarks, although it is possible that some of the benchmark communities also have facilities provided by the YMCA or others.

Figure 2.2 underscores some of the same findings in Table 2.17, showing how Thomasville compares in providing adequate facilities per population. Thomasville has a high level of service for most of these facilities. The notable exception is the lower level of service for basketball courts.

² The analysis was limited to these facilities due to availability of data for comparison departments.

Table 2.17: Population Per Facility (Outdoor)

POPULATION PER FACILITY (OUTDOOR)	Thomasville	Benchmark	National
Playgrounds			
Lower Quartile		2,928	
Median/Agency Value	2,091	3,529	3,607
Upper Quartile		4,812	
Tennis Courts			
Lower Quartile		2,070	
Median/Agency Value	6,272	2,793	5,089
Upper Quartile		4,237	
Basketball Courts			
Lower Quartile		4,525	
Median/Agency Value	2,688	7,021	7,187
Upper Quartile		9,250	
Diamond Fields - Youth Baseball			
Lower Quartile		2,843	
Median/Agency Value	2,352	4,831	6,763
Upper Quartile		8,182	
Diamond Fields - Youth Softball			
Lower Quartile		3,160	
Median/Agency Value	3,136	5,686	11,287
Upper Quartile		14,815	
Diamond Fields - Adult Softball			
Lower Quartile		4,473	
Median/Agency Value	6,272	7,608	13,510
Upper Quartile		17,651	
Rectangular Fields (multipurpose)			
Lower Quartile		5,592	
Median/Agency Value	3,136	7,333	8,750
Upper Quartile		15,136	
Swimming Pools			
Lower Quartile		8,502	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	13,889	43,100
Upper Quartile		26,840	
Skate Parks			
Lower Quartile		15,019	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	20,192	49,750
Upper Quartile		22,842	
Dog Parks			
Lower Quartile		13,889	
Median/Agency Value	18,815	19,000	46,000
Upper Quartile		27,980	
Community Gardens			
Lower Quartile		12,760	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	16,556	31,175
Upper Quartile		25,684	
Trails (miles)			
Lower Quartile			
Median/Agency Value	4,951	5,925	N/A
Upper Quartile			

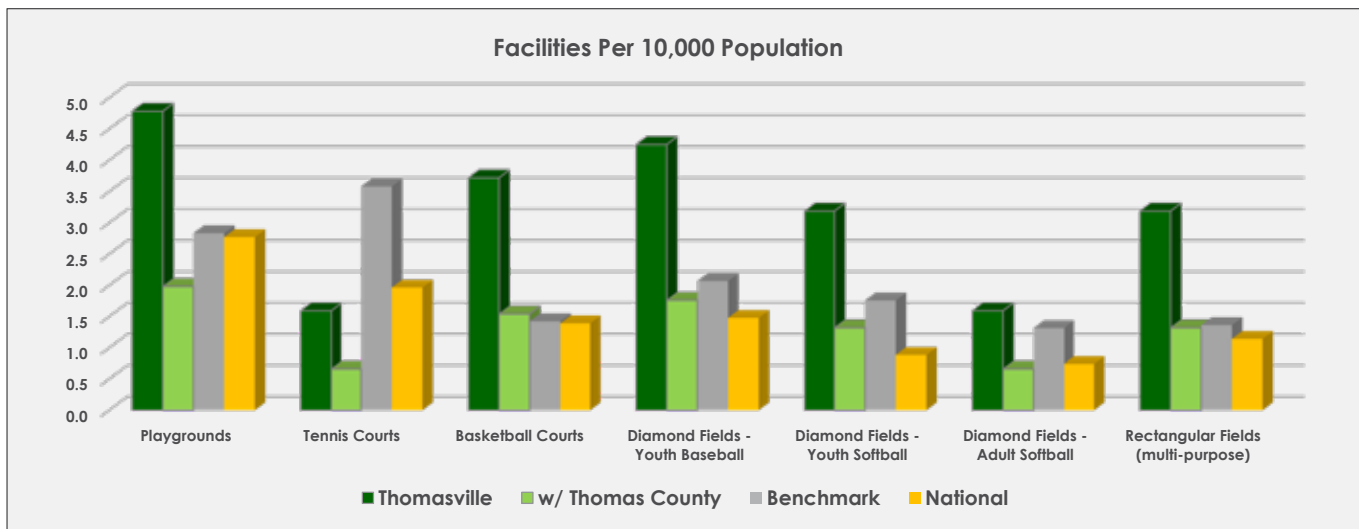
1. Population numbers can be found in Figure 2.1

2. Number of facilities can be found in Table 3.2

Table 2.18: Population Per Facility (Indoor)

POPULATION PER FACILITY (INDOOR)	Thomasville	Benchmark	National
Recreation Centers			
Lower Quartile		10,799	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	15,568	30,709
Upper Quartile		22,049	
Community Centers			
Lower Quartile		7,784	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	16,000	29,000
Upper Quartile		26,573	
Senior Centers			
Lower Quartile		17,008	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	21,096	61,975
Upper Quartile		24,000	
Nature Centers			
Lower Quartile		18,016	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	22,367	109,212
Upper Quartile		29,036	

Figure 2.2: Facilities Per 10,000 Population





INVENTORY OF PARKS AND FACILITIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Master Plan identifies existing conditions of parks and recreation facilities in Thomasville. It begins with a description of park classifications to provide an understanding of their functions. What follows is an inventory of Thomasville's parks and recreation facilities including park locations, facilities offered, and other observations.

3.2 PARKLAND AND RECREATION AREA CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

A park classification system helps to evaluate the overall recreation opportunities that are available to the public. A park system should be evaluated as a composite of recreation areas with each meeting a particular public need; the system should provide a combination of smaller neighborhood parks, larger community parks, special use parks, and natural areas.

The facilities inventory in this chapter identifies each park, assigns a classification, and lists the specific facilities it provides. Table 3.1 defines each park category by its typical size and service area, population served, typical features and facilities, and desirable characteristics. The categories and descriptions were adapted from "Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines," published by the National Recreation and Park Association in 1987 and 1995. These same categories define Level of Service in Chapter 5.

Table 3.1: Park Classifications

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	DEVELOPED ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/ FACILITIES	DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Local Space				
Mini Park (MP)	Size: Less than 2 acres of developed parkland; less than 3 total acres 1/2-mile service area 10-minute walk	Combined with Neighborhood Park	Typical facilities may include playgrounds, small multi-use court area, and benches.	Often provided in association with school facilities. Some developed as part of residential developments. May also provide open space as needed to serve high density neighborhoods where households have limited yard space.

Table 3.1: Park Classifications (Continued)

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	DEVELOPED ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/ FACILITIES	DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Local Space				
Neighborhood Park (NP)	<p>Size: 2-10 acres of developed parkland; 3-15 total acres</p> <p>1-mile service area</p> <p>10-minute walk</p> <p>To serve a population up to 5,000</p>	1.75 Acre/1,000	<p>Suited for intense development</p> <p>Typical facilities include athletic fields, game courts, playgrounds, drinking fountains, picnic areas/shelters, and walking paths.</p>	<p>Easily accessible to neighborhood population (safe walking and bike distance).</p> <p>May be developed as park/school facility or in conjunction with service agency facility.</p> <p>May not be needed in areas served locally by larger parks.</p>
Community Park (CP)	<p>10-30+ acres of developed parkland; 20 or more total acres</p> <p>2-mile service radius</p> <p>5-minute drive</p> <p>To serve several neighborhoods with populations up to 20,000</p>	7.0 Acres/1,000	<p>Typical facilities include all those listed for neighborhood parks, plus swimming pool, field or game court complex, dog park, recreation or community center, etc.</p> <p>May include natural areas or picnicking, walking, etc.</p> <p>May have an active or passive recreation focus or a balance of both. Parks with passive focus will have a higher percentage of undeveloped land</p>	<p>Capable of providing a range of intensive recreational activities or provides one or two activities that attract users from multi-neighborhood areas.</p> <p>May meet neighborhood park needs for users within a 10-minute walk.</p>
Special Use (SU)	Serves community-wide area	N/A (but may contribute to total open space requirement)	Area for specialized or single purpose recreational activities such as plazas, major pools, riverfront park areas, golf courses, athletic complexes, indoor facilities, etc.	Area should be located to meet the specific needs of the intended use.
Natural Area/Open Space (OS)	N/A	N/A (but contributes to total open space requirement)	<p>Areas of low or limited development. Includes undeveloped areas, urban greenspaces, and small designated natural areas.</p> <p>May include urban greenspaces (mowed and landscaped areas) of any size that are considered developed but have predominantly passive uses.</p> <p>Typical facilities include walking/hiking trails, picnic areas, gardens, and open grass areas.</p>	<p>Includes undeveloped properties that may be developed in the future.</p> <p>May also function as small nature parks.</p> <p>Educational opportunities desirable in developed or undeveloped areas.</p>

3.3 INVENTORY OF THOMASVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

Residents of Thomasville are offered a variety of parks, recreation facilities, and programs. The Parks and Recreation Resources Inventory (Table 3.2) provides a summary of all the offerings in Thomasville as well as the classification for each property.

The table indicates the location of the property by park type category as defined in Chapter 2. The Existing Parks and Trails map (Figure 3.1) shows the location of each of the parks and recreation areas offered by the City of Thomasville. The following text provides a detailed narrative summary of these facilities. Aerial photos of each park can be found in Appendix B.

3.4 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

A neighborhood park is a small but highly developed park located within a short (10-minute) walking or biking distance of residents with facilities such as game courts, playgrounds, picnic areas/shelters, athletic fields, and walking trails. A mini park is a small neighborhood park, often located in more densely populated areas where availability of land is limited.

Thomasville Parks and Recreation oversees four neighborhood parks – Flipper Park (mini park), Macintyre Park, Northside Park, Parnell Park (mini park), and Weston Park.

3.4.1 Flipper Park (2.4 acres) – Mini Park

Park Location

Flipper Park is located between N Madison Street and N Crawford Street along E Jerger Street less than a block away from the Thomasville History Center.

Existing Features & Amenities

- Basketball court
- Playground
- Medium shelter
- Picnic area
- Mature trees

Park Issues & Opportunities

- Paved parking could be added, specifically handicap accessible parking spots
- ADA accessibility improvements throughout park
- Improved park connectivity
- Poor condition of basketball court
- Fence could be added between the road and the court
- Dated play equipment
- Security lighting
- Improvements to the memorial for Lt. Flipper



3.4.2 MacIntyre Park (14.7 acres)

Park Location

MacIntyre Park is located between N Mitchell Street and Glenwood Drive across the street from Scholars Academy at MacIntyre Park Middle School.

Existing Features & Amenities

- Playgrounds
- Zip line
- Disc golf (12 holes)
- 3 small shelters
- Historic site
- Mature trees

Park Issues & Opportunities

- Opportunity for walking path
- Creek erosion mitigation
- No restrooms
- Playground mulch needs added under equipment
- New/improved bridges needed
- Shelter repairs – roof, pad added
- Potential to add improved seating
- Wayfinding signage for park amenities could be added
- Frequent maintenance at zipline



3.4.3 Northside Park (23.1 acres)

Park Location

Northside Park is located between Woodland Drive and Glenwood Drive adjacent to St Luke CME Church. This park is made up of primarily wooded natural areas with only about 5 developed acres.

Existing Features & Amenities

- Playground
- Large diamond field (reduced to 200' fence)
- Basketball court
- Restroom building

Park Issues & Opportunities

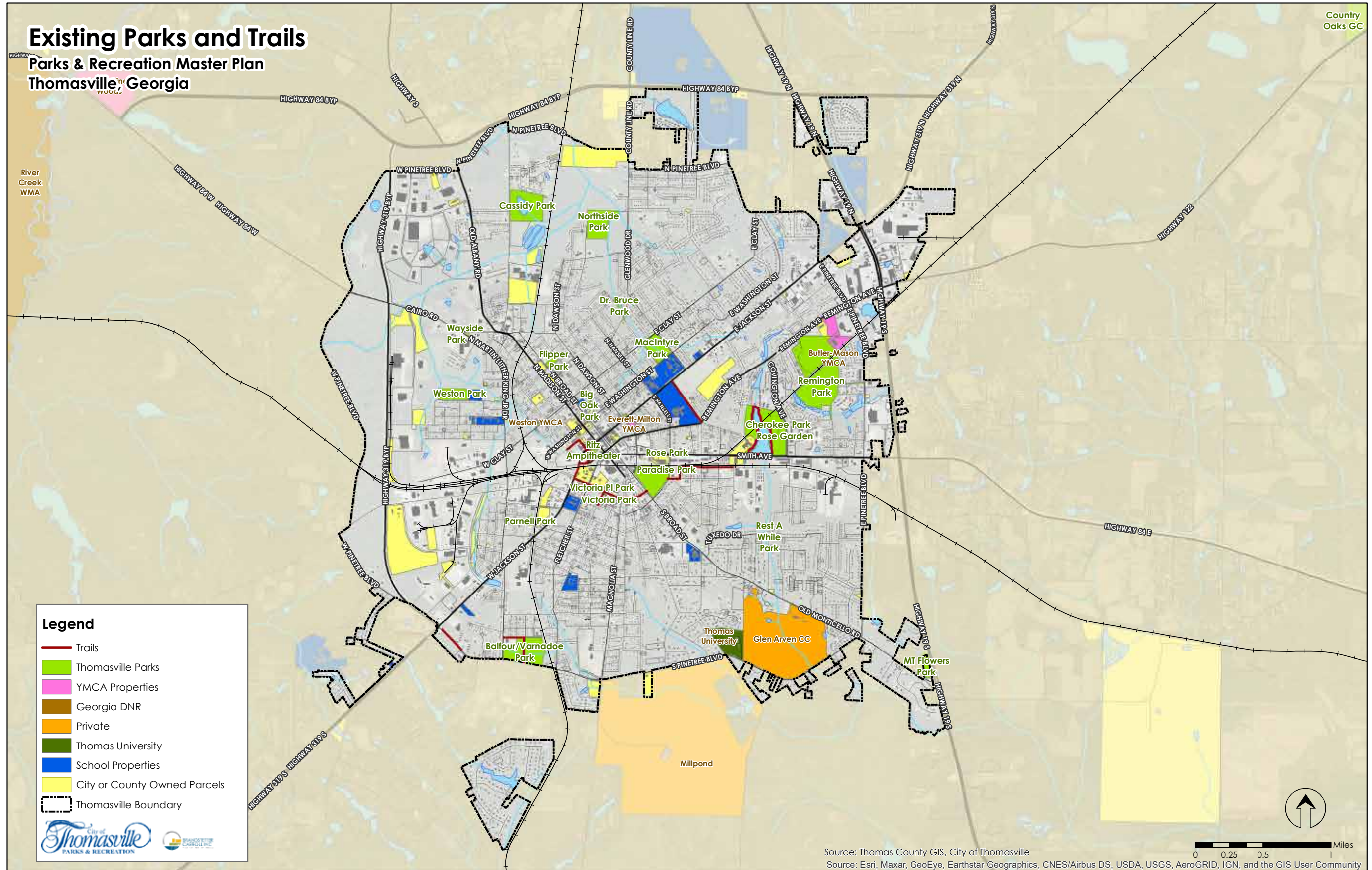
- Opportunities for new features and connections to neighborhoods
- Poor condition of features – need replacement
- Lack of features
- Signage needed for restroom building



Table 3.2: Parks and Recreation Resource Inventory

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	Acreage		Athletic Fields				Game Courts			Outdoor Facilities					Natural		Passive Recreation							Support		Special Feature/Notes
		Total	Developed	Small Diamond	Large Diamond	T-Ball	Rectangular	Basketball Courts	Pickleball Courts	Tennis Courts	Playgrounds	Fitness Stations	Disc Golf (Holes)	FootGolf (Holes)	Golf (Holes)	Fishing Access	Lake/Pond/Stream	Paved Trails	Dog Parks	Stage or Amphitheater	Large Shelters	Medium Shelters	Gazebos/Small Shelters	Picnic Area	Restroom Buildings	Parking (Off-Street)	
Thomasville Parks																											
Neighborhood Parks																											
Flipper Park	Mini	2.4	1.9					1			1										1		X		0		
MacIntyre Park	Neighborhood	14.7	14.7							1		12										3	X		0	Zip line	
Northside Park	Neighborhood	23.1	5.5		1			1		1														1			
Parnell Park	Mini	1.4	0.7					0.5		1															0		
Weston Park	Neighborhood	11.5	5.7	1				2		1						0.2					2	2	X	2	26	Additional unlined parking	
Subtotal - Neighborhood Parks		53.1	28.6	1	1	0	0	4.5	0	0	5	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	3	3	26		
Community Parks																											
Balfour/Varnadoe Park	Community	29.5	26.7	1	1			2	4	1	1	1				0.2	1				4			3		Pickleball shared with tennis	
Cherokee Park	Community/Nature Park	57.2	14.4								1	1			X	X	1.0			1	2			1			
Paradise Park	Community	24.3	19.5								1										4	X				Historic gazebo, story walk	
Remington Park	Community/Sports Complex	90.5	65.4	8	5	5	6		3	2	1	1									3			4		Adjacent YMCA programs fields	
Subtotal - Community Parks		201.6	125.9	9	6	5	6	2	7	3	4	3	0	0	0	1	1	1.2	1	0	1	2	11	1	8	0	
Natural Areas																											
Cassidy Road Park/Fishing Pond	Natural Area	33.1	13.2												X	X					1						
Subtotal - Nature Parks/Natural Areas		33.1	13.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0		
Special Use Parks/Trails																											
Big Oak/Elizabeth Ireland Poe Park	Green Space	0.7	0.7																		1	X					
Country Oaks Municipal Golf Course	Golf Course	163.8	116.0										9	18													
Dr. Bruce Park	Green Space	1.7	0.0																								
Ethal Flowers Neel Park	Plaza	0.4	0.4																								
Maury Tice Flowers Park	Plaza/Green Space	5.1	5.1																								
Rest A While Park	Plaza/Green Space	0.1	0.1																								
Smith Ave. Rose Park	Plaza/Green Space	0.3	0.3																								
The Ritz Amphitheater	Special Use	0.8	0.8																	1				1			
Thomasville Rose Garden	Green Space	3.6	3.6																								
Victoria Park	Green Space	0.4	0.4																								
Victoria Place Pocket Park	Plaza	0.2	0.2																								
Wayside Park	Green Space	0.5	0.5																					X			
Other Trails	Trails	N/A	N/A														2.4										
Subtotal - Special Use Parks		177.5	128.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	18	1	1	2.4	0	1	0	1	2	3	1	0		
Total - Parks		465.4	295.7	10	7	5	6	7	7	3	9	3	12	9	18	3	3	3.8	1	1	1	7	19	7	12	26	

Figure 3.1: Existing Parks and Trails



3.4.4 Parnell Park (1.4 acres) – Mini Park

Park Location

Parnell Park is located between Horrix Street and Gribben Street, along Parnell Street and across from the railroad tracks.

Existing Features & Amenities

- Half basketball court
- Playground

Park Issues & Opportunities

- No park sign – also missing from city website
- Lack of ADA access
- Limited features
- Insufficient playground mulch
- Basketball court improvements – net, goals, paint, pad
- No parking or sidewalks



3.4.5 Weston Park (11.5 acres)

Park Location

Francis Weston Park is located between N Martin Luther King Jr Drive and Roseway Drive along Felix Street. Most of the park was recently renovated and modernized.

Existing Features & Amenities

- Playground
- Paved & lighted walking trail
- Small diamond field
- 2 basketball courts
- 2 medium shelters
- 2 gazebo/small shelters
- Picnic area
- 2 restroom buildings
- 26 parking spaces
- Drinking fountain

Park Issues & Opportunities

- Restroom buildings could use signage
- Potential to extend walking path
- No pads at small gazebos
- Poor condition of ballfield – bleachers, fencing, infield
- ADA access to diamond field and basketball courts



3.5 COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks are larger parks that serve multiple neighborhoods and offer a wider variety of facilities. Community parks should be conveniently located (within approximately a 5-minute drive) and easily accessible with facilities intended to occupy visitors for extended periods of time (field or game court complex, dog park, etc.). Thomasville offers four community parks, Balfour/Varnadoe Park, Cherokee Park, Paradise Park, and Remington Park.

3.5.1 Balfour/Varnadoe Park (29.5 acres)

Park Location

These two adjoining parks form a community park that is located south of Weston Park between S Martin Luther King Drive and the railroad track along S Pinetree Boulevard next to Mt Pilgrim Baptist Church. This park is home to the only dog park in Thomasville. The two ballfields are used by Thomas University for their baseball and softball teams.

Existing Features & Amenities

- 2 diamond fields (1 softball, 1 baseball)
- 2 basketball courts
- 1 tennis court lined for 4 pickleball courts – no nets for pickleball
- Playground (3 areas)
- Fitness stations
- Paved trail (0.2 mi) – connects Balfour Park to Varnadoe fields
- Dog park
- 4 gazebo/small shelters
- 3 restroom buildings

Park Issues & Opportunities

- Small and aged playground equipment
- Large portion of park occupied by dog park
- Lacks ADA accessibility lacking
- Poor condition of shelters – need replacement
- Parking/road improvements needed – ADA parking, clear definition of driving areas
- Wayfinding/site signage needed
- Additional lighting

3.5.2 Cherokee Park (57.2 acres)

Park Location

Cherokee Park is located on the eastern side of the city, adjacent to the Thomasville Police Department on Covington Avenue. The park is one of the city's finest and most scenic recreation spots. It offers a 1-mile paved and lighted walking



path that winds around Cherokee Lake with several piers and sitting areas along the way. The park is also adjacent to the beautiful Thomasville Rose Garden that blooms from early spring to late fall.

Existing Features & Amenities

- Playground
- 1-mile paved trail around Cherokee Lake
- 3 shelters (1 large, 2 medium)
- Fitness equipment area
- Restroom building
- Drinking fountains
- Cherokee lake – fishing and small boats allowed

Park Issues & Opportunities

- ADA accessibility improvements (e.g., paved walkway from parking to shelter)
- Drainage issues at paved trail
- Signage for boat ramp needed
- Parking improvements, add or define existing striping, fill in pot holes, add lighting



3.5.3 Paradise Park (24.3 acres)

Park Location

Paradise Park is located near the downtown district at the intersection of South Hansell Street and Broad Street, southeast of Dawson Street. This historic park was known in the late 1800s and early 1900s as 'Yankee Paradise' Park when it provided the perfect frontage to one of the town's most glamorous Victorian hotels.

Existing Features & Amenities

- Playground
- Small shelters/covered tables (4)
- Historic gazebo
- Picnic area
- Story walk
- Drinking fountain

Park Issues & Opportunities

- No walking paths – opportunity for scenic, shaded path
- Limited ADA accessibility
- Potential for more picnic opportunities
- No concrete pad at small shelters
- Historic gazebo – potential for programs and events
- No restrooms



3.5.4 Remington Park (90.5 acres)

Park Location

Remington Park is located near the eastern edge of Thomasville, just west of GA-300/US-19. The park is the largest in Thomasville and is a partnership between the city and the YMCA. The Butler-Mason YMCA borders the park to the northeast. The fields in Remington Park are managed and programmed by the YMCA.

Existing Features & Amenities

- Playground
- Fitness stations
- 18 diamond fields
 - 5 youth baseball fields (200' fences) w/ lights
 - 3 youth softball fields (200' fences) w/ lights
 - 2 baseball fields (275' fences) w/ lights
 - 3 adult softball fields (300' fences) w/ lights
 - 5 t-ball fields
- 6 large rectangular fields w/ lights
- 3 pickleball courts
- 2 tennis courts
- 3 small shelters
- 4 restroom buildings
- Other amenities provided by YMCA (see Subsection 3.8.2)



Park Issues & Opportunities

- ADA accessibility improvements (e.g., paved walkways to all buildings, fields, seating areas)
- Concrete pads lacking beneath bleachers and bike racks throughout the park
- Aged fitness equipment
- Pavement repairs needed (e.g., parking, courts)

3.6 NATURAL AREA

The City of Thomasville has one park designated as a natural area. This park, Cassidy Road Park, is described below.

3.6.1 Cassidy Road Park/Fishing Pond (33.1 acres)

Park Location

Cassidy Road Park is a large natural area located off Cassidy Road in the northwest portion of Thomasville.

Existing Features & Amenities

- Large pond with a fishing pier
- Medium shelter
- Small parking lot



Park Issues & Opportunities

- Large amount of open space w/ opportunities for more amenities
- Potential trail around pond
- Potential for trail connection to park using service road
- Opportunity for more picnic areas w/ formal access – many cars currently driving on grass
- Lack of ADA accessibility throughout site
- No restrooms
- Parking improvements needed (e.g., expansion, striping)



3.7 SPECIAL USE PARKS

Special use parks are areas designed for specialized or single purpose recreational activities, such as plazas, green spaces, golf courses, or event venues. The most notable special use parks are described in this section.

Thomasville has several other small special use parks, such as Ethal Flowers Neel Park, Mary Tice Flowers Park, Rest A While Park, Smith Ave. Rose Park, and Victoria Place Pocket Park, that have limited use or provide small seating areas.

3.7.1 Big Oak/Elizabeth Ireland Poe Park (0.7 acres)

Site Location and Character

This park is a small greenspace on the corner of North Crawford Street and East Monroe Street and contains a large historical oak tree and gazebo. This property serves as a gathering place for the community.

Existing Features & Amenities

- The Big Oak – a large Southern Live Oak
- Gazebo – reservable for small events and weddings
- Picnic area



Facility Issues & Opportunities

- Potential for more support features (e.g., seating)

3.7.2 Country Oaks Municipal Golf Course (163.8 acres)

Site Location and Character

Country Oaks Golf Course is located about 10 minutes northeast of Thomasville in Thomas County, near the Thomasville Regional Airport. The course is beautifully located in a beautiful wooded setting accented by three lakes and surrounded by areas of wild azaleas, dogwoods, pines, oaks, and magnolias.

Existing Features & Amenities

- 18-hole golf course
- Driving range
- Meeting room
- Pro shop



- Putting green
- Snack bar



Facility Issues & Opportunities

- Usage increased since the COVID-19 pandemic
- Drainage issues
- Balls from driving range landing in road
- Previously prepared *Golf Course Renovation Master Plan*

3.7.3 The Ritz Amphitheater (0.8 acres)

Site Location and Character

The Ritz Amphitheater is located in the Sandy Bottoms District along South Stevens Street behind the South Georgia Career Center. The amphitheater was built as a result of efforts to spur development within the historic district as planned in the *2016 Downtown Strategic Plan*. Multiple community events and programming have since taken place, such as the First Friday Sip and Shop which occurs March through December.



Existing Features & Amenities

- Stage/amphitheater – available for rental
- Restrooms

Park Issues & Opportunities

- Increased signage and wayfinding at/near the amphitheater needed

3.7.4 Thomasville Rose Garden (3.6 acres)

Site Location and Character

Thomasville Rose Garden is located adjacent to Cherokee Park and is accessible from the park via paved trails. Thomasville, Georgia's Official Rose City, maintains a variety of over 1,500 rose bushes at the garden that bloom each spring and are utilized for the Annual Rose Show and Festival in April. The gazebo in the garden is also a common spot for wedding and event photographers.



Existing Features & Amenities

- Gazebo – reservable
- Pergola with paved pad and 2 benches
- Paved parking

Park Issues & Opportunities

- Gazebo has chipped wood/paint on the ceiling, could be patched

3.7.5 Wayside Park (0.5 acres)

Site Location and Character

Wayside Park is located between North Martin Luther King Jr Drive and North Boulevard across the street from the Skandia industrial facility.

Existing Features and Character

- Mature trees
- Picnic area
- Picnic tables w/ grills

Park Issues & Opportunities

- Limited use
- Limited access – no sidewalk



3.8 OTHER PARKS IN THOMASVILLE

In addition to the parks operated by the Parks and Recreation Department, there are other parks and facilities in and near the city that supplement recreational opportunities in Thomasville.

3.8.1 School Parks

There are six schools that function as parks in Thomasville, three operated by Thomasville City Schools and three operated by Thomas County Schools. These schools provide similar features to a neighborhood park but are only available outside of school hours. Additionally, Thomasville High School offers tennis courts that may be available for public use when not in use for school functions.

Thomas County Schools

- Cross Creek Elementary
- Garrison Pilcher Elementary
- Hand-In-Hand Primary

Thomasville City Schools

- Harper Elementary
- Jerger Elementary
- Scott Elementary
- Thomasville High School

3.8.2 YMCA Properties

Four YMCA centers are located in Thomasville and provide amenities that city operated parks and facilities do not currently offer such as a skate park, gymnasium space, and swimming pools.

- Butler-Mason Center
 - Playground
 - Skate park
 - 2 picnic shelters
 - Outdoor pool
 - YMCA center

-
- Camp Piney Woods (not open to public)
 - Basketball court
 - Picnic shelter
 - Fishing access
 - Outdoor pool
 - Everett-Milton Center
 - YMCA Center
 - Indoor pool
 - Francis F. Weston Center
 - Picnic shelter
 - Outdoor pool
 - YMCA Center

3.8.3 Parks by Others In or Near Thomasville

There are three additional parks in or near Thomasville operated by other entities. Each provide unique recreation opportunities that meet the needs of some in the area. However, only the River Creek Wildlife Management Area is public land, and it currently has limited public access.

River Creek Wildlife Management Area, northwest of the city provides fishing access, hiking trails, hunting opportunities, and primitive campsites that are available on a limited basis during scheduled programming. Designated trails and parking areas for public use do not yet exist. Potential partnerships with the DNR may be beneficial to Thomasville Parks and Recreation and residents of the city.

Birdsong Nature Center, located about 20 minutes southwest of Thomasville, offers 565 acres of wildlife area, 10 miles of hiking trails, and both youth and adult nature education programs.

Millpond, located south of the City of Thomasville, is a 7,000+ acre private facility that is not open to the public and is primarily used for various outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing. The property includes 22 quail hunting courses, two dove fields, and a fully stocked 85-acre lake. Wild hogs can also be hunted on this property. Trap shooting and sporting clays are also available.

Another private facility, Glen Arven Country Club, is a member only club that provides 10 tennis courts, an 18-hole golf course, and an outdoor swimming pool with club house. It is located on the south side of the city, accessible from Old Monticello Road.



PUBLIC INPUT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the processes used and the public input gathered throughout the planning process and summarizes the following elements:

1. Open House Workshops
2. Stakeholder Conversations
3. Online and Handout Survey

The public engagement process is essential for identifying the needs and preferences of Thomasville residents. The findings of the public input process are, therefore, integral to the Needs Assessment and Identification (Chapter 5) and serve as the foundation of the recommendations of this Master Plan.

4.2 OPEN HOUSE WORKSHOPS

4.2.1 Methodology

The city held open house workshops in March and April with the first meeting at Thomas County Public Library, Flipper Room and follow-up meetings at the Ritz Amphitheater, Cherokee Park, and the DOJM. Approximately 80 residents attended these meetings. As people entered, they were given a dot to place on a map to illustrate where they lived. This map (Figure 4.1) shows the distribution of attendees at the first meeting. The map indicates that the attendees were generally well-distributed throughout the city.

Participants were shown to three stations where they could provide input and then given dots to vote on their most important park features and programs (3 each). Participants were also given \$1,000 in play money to vote for improvements that should be made to parks. Write in comments were also included at these meetings.

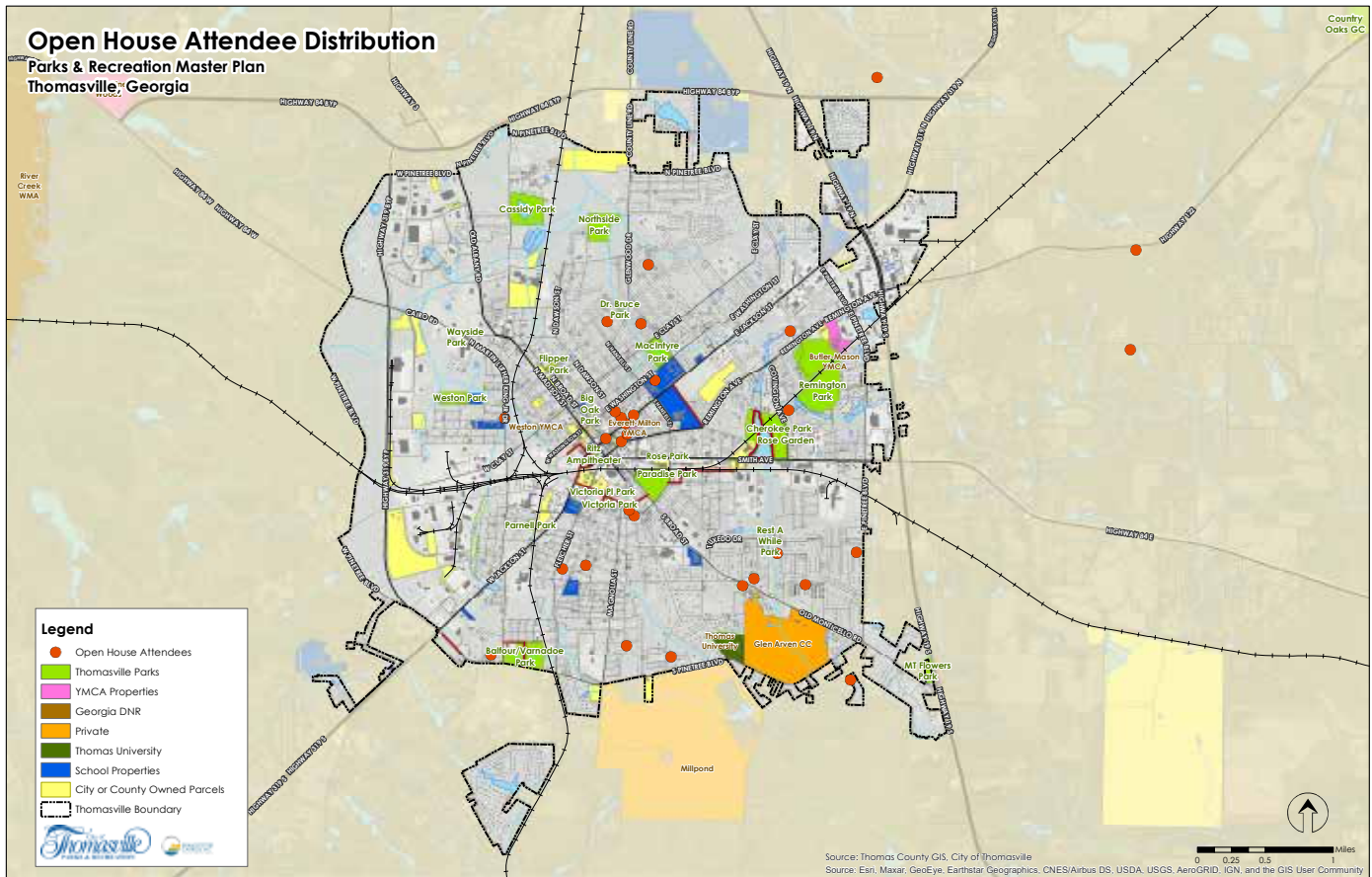


The three open input topics were as follows:

- Parks and Facilities
- Trails and Natural Areas
- Programs and Events

At the three stations, participants were asked to share their responses to two questions: “What makes them great now?” and “What would make them better?” Where appropriate, some comments were reassigned from one station to another (e.g., trails comments assigned to the “Natural Areas and Trails” station if placed at another).

Figure 4.1: Open House Attendee Distribution



4.2.2 Results

Parks and Facilities

This topic represented built amenities and general recommendations for parks. The largest number of interactions were about restrooms, followed by an outdoor pool and improvements at specific parks.

What makes them great now?

- Well-maintained

What would make them better? – 56 comments and checkmarks/likes (# in parentheses)

- Restrooms (11)
- Outdoor pool (9)
- Specific park improvements (9)

-
- Shade (6)
 - Improved ADA access (4)

Natural Areas and Trails

This station encouraged discussion of natural areas and trails. The largest number of comments were related to desire for more trails and better connectivity. Several participants also indicated desire for community gardens and access to nature.

What makes them great now?

- Well-maintained
- Good locations

What would make them better? – 81 comments and checkmarks/likes (# in parentheses)

- Trails (33)
- Connectivity (25)
- Community gardens (13)
- Natural areas (12)
- Nature (10)
- Nature education (9)
- Fishing (8)
- Sidewalks (8)

Programs and Events

This topic provided a location for comments about programs, including athletics and events. Overall, attendees indicated clear desire for nature programs, age 50+ programs, and community events.

What makes them great now?

- Seasonal/special events
- Amphitheater

What would make them better? – 40 comments and checkmarks/likes (# in parentheses)

- Nature education programs (19)
- Senior 50+ programs (11)
- Community events (7)

Overall Open House Comment Summary

Figure 4.2 reflects the topics most mentioned at the three open-ended stations based on the number of times they were mentioned (or liked) by attendees at all of the open house meetings. Responses show that residents value trails and connectivity both within parks and in the community. Nature education and natural areas were also frequently discussed. Some residents would like to see more community gardens; although from the comments, it is unclear if they want plots for personal gardening or public amenities like the Thomasville Rose Garden.

Figure 4.2: Top Topics Discussed at Open House Workshops



4.2.3 Feature/Program Boards

The park features chosen by participants at the open houses are shown in Figure 4.3. Between the meetings, 79 people participated in the activity. Splash pads (17%), trails (15%), and community gardens (9%) prevailed as the top three choices for preferred features.

The programs selected by attendees in Figure 4.4 include a wide variety of choices with the largest number choosing farmers market, followed by nature programs, festivals, and movies/concerts.



Figure 4.3: Preferred Features

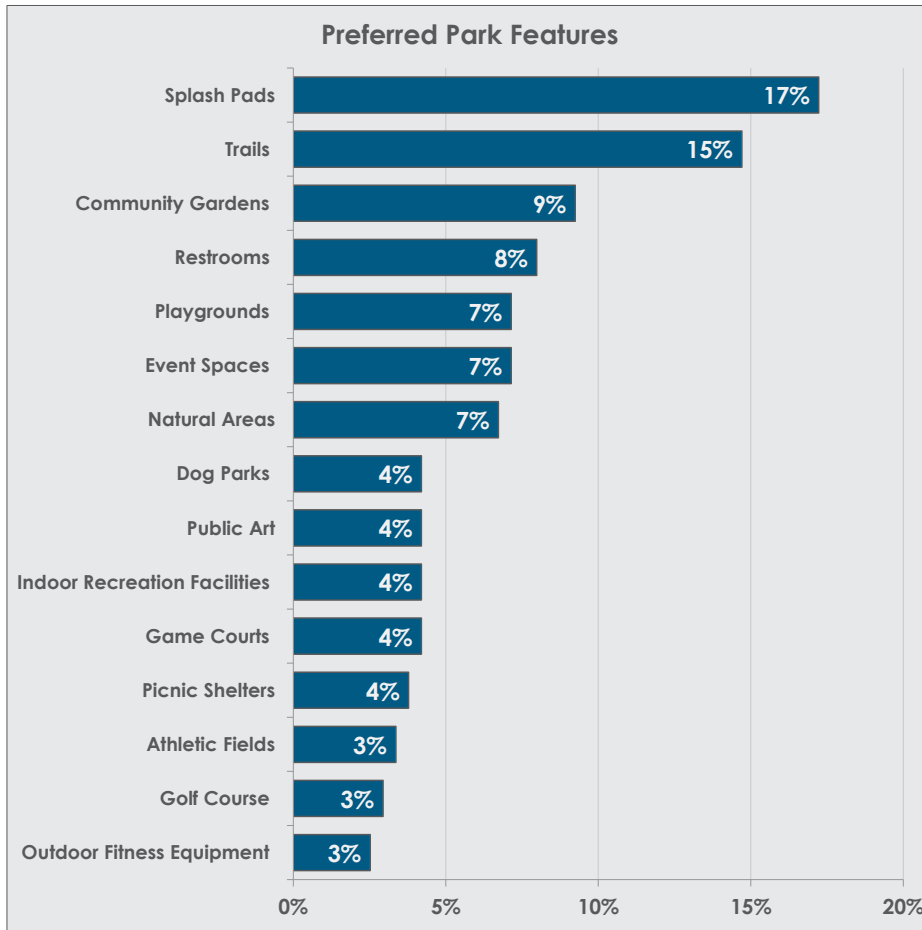
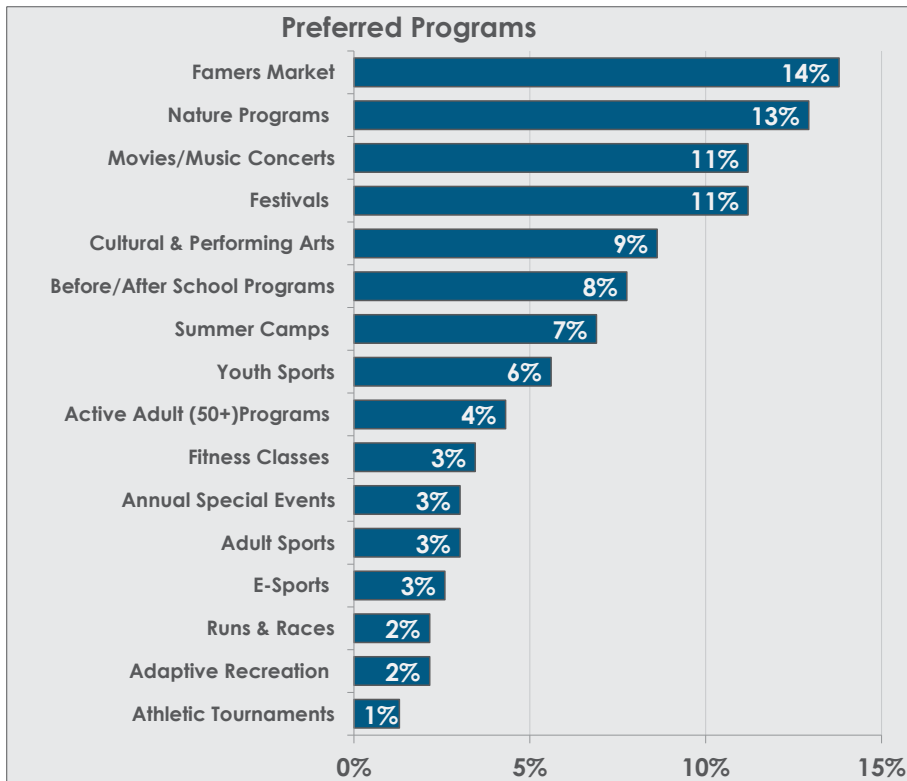


Figure 4.4: Preferred Programs



4.2.4 Dollar Voting

Participants at the open house workshops and the stakeholder groups were given \$1,000 in play money to place into boxes to indicate how they would like Thomasville to allocate funds for parks and recreation. Table 4.1 shows the total allocations for eight categories (or boxes). Participants could also place money into an “other” box to request specific amenities or improvements not included in one of the seven provided categories. The combined results for the 91 participants at the events are presented below with the allocation for each park improvement category and the percentage of the total allocation.

Of the provided options *develop a new splash pad* received the largest allocation at about \$18,000 or 19% of total dollars. *Trails* were second with 17% of the total allocation, and *existing facilities/maintenance* was third with 16%. The “Other” box received the smallest allocation with participants calling out specific improvements they would like to see. Individual comments can be found in Appendix C.

Table 4.1: Dollar Voting Allocation

Action (Box Title)	Event					Total
	Stakeholder Groups	Open House 3/21/22	Open House (Cherokee)	Open House (Ritz)	Open House (DOJM)	
Splash Pad/Pool	\$3,500 21%	\$5,200 14%	\$5,000 33%	\$1,900 15%	\$2,100 19%	\$17,700 19%
Trails	\$3,300 20%	\$7,500 21%	\$1,400 9%	\$2,600 21%	\$700 6%	\$15,500 17%
Existing Facilities/Maintenance	\$2,500 15%	\$6,600 18%	\$200 1%	\$3,100 25%	\$2,500 23%	\$14,900 16%
Programs/Events	\$3,200 19%	\$3,400 9%	\$3,500 23%	\$1,200 10%	\$2,200 20%	\$13,500 15%
Community Gathering Space	\$2,500 15%	\$2,900 8%	\$1,100 7%	\$700 6%	\$1,100 10%	\$8,300 9%
New Parks	\$200 1%	\$2,700 8%	\$1,500 10%	\$1,900 15%	\$1,000 9%	\$7,300 8%
Athletic Fields	\$400 2%	\$2,900 8%	\$1,900 13%	\$300 2%	\$100 1%	\$5,600 6%
New Recreation Facilities	\$1,200 7%	\$2,400 7%	\$400 3%	\$200 2%	\$800 7%	\$5,000 5%
Other	\$100 1%	\$2,300 6%	\$0 0%	\$600 10%	\$600 20%	\$3,600 4%
Total	\$16,900	\$35,900	\$15,000	\$12,500	\$11,100	\$91,400

4.3 STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

In March of 2022, the consultant team met with a series of stakeholders to establish their priorities for Parks and Recreation in Thomasville. More than 10 organizations and several community members participated in these discussions, contributing their respective visions to this Master Plan. At these meetings, stakeholders were asked a series of questions about Thomasville parks, recreation facilities, and programs, beginning first with a discussion of strengths before moving on to a discussion of future opportunities. Summaries of the meetings with complete comments can be found in Appendix C.

4.3.1 Groups Engaged

The following stakeholder group meetings were held as part of this Master Plan:

- Mayor and City Council
- Youth programming
 - TISK/TASK
 - Thomas County NAACP
- Community health & wellness
 - Archbold Medical Center
 - Thomasville County Family Connection
 - Thomasville Community Resource Center (TCRC)

- Tourism/economic development
 - Landmarks
 - Chamber of Commerce
- YMCA
- Local businesses
 - Thomasville National Bank
 - ABAC
 - Hubs & Hops

4.3.2 Stakeholders Broad Recommendations

- Upgraded facilities
 - Improve existing parks and facilities
 - Add passive site amenities such as shelters and picnic areas
 - Proper maintenance of existing restroom facilities
 - Accessible spaces & features
 - Increase aquatics facilities
 - Build and extend sidewalks within parks
 - Expand Wi-Fi access
 - Public art installations
- Connectivity & wayfinding
 - Upgraded, ample signage systemwide
 - Signage within parks that includes amenities
- Expanded programming
 - Nature-oriented
 - Community gatherings
 - Healthy living (e.g., classes held at parks)
 - Children aged focused activities
 - Expand recreation leagues to include youth and adult
- Prioritize overlooked parks
 - Need to focus upgrades and developments of park sites in socially vulnerable neighborhoods
 - Celebrate the uniqueness of each park site
 - Create neighborhood or pocket parks
- Strengthen connections to downtown & tourism
- Partnerships & collaboration
 - Partnering with existing non-profit organizations to deliver programming
 - Partnering with travel leagues
- Develop a path forward for Parks and Recreation in Thomasville
- More trails & linked pathways
 - Develop citywide connections
 - Foster a bike safe community
 - Create a connected parks system

4.4 PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

The following pages summarize the findings of the online and handout survey, the stakeholder meeting, and open houses. The survey results reflect the views of the respondents, not necessarily Thomasville residents as a whole; respondents are often already engaged in some way with the city’s parks and programs. Of the figures that follow, some show only the top results for a survey question; however, full results can be found in Appendix F.

4.4.1 Web Survey – Overview and Methodology

In addition to the input-gathering conducted by the open houses, an online survey was administered during spring of 2022. This survey was powered by PublicInput.com with a total of 1,155 participants. Sixty percent (60%) of those who responded said they live within the City of Thomasville, 32% live in Thomas County (but outside of the city), and 7% live outside of the county.

4.4.2 Results – Visitation of Parks Offered in Thomasville

Survey respondents were asked about their visitation to parks in Thomasville over the last year. Figure 4.5 shows the proportion of those who reported at least one member of their household had visited a city park in the last year. An impressive **93% of respondents visited parks** in Thomasville.

4.4.3 Results – Frequency of Visits to Parks & Recreation Facilities in Thomasville

As a follow-up, respondent households that visited Thomasville Parks and Recreation facilities during the last year were asked how often they have visited those facilities over that time. The results are presented in Figure 4.6.

According to the survey, households who visited the city’s parks and recreation facilities in the last year likely visited many times. **Thirty-nine percent (39%) reported visiting 20 or more times.** Other results were: 22% visited 1-5 times, 24% visited 6-10 times, and 16% visited 11-19 times. Looking at the responses cumulatively, 55% of households visited parks 11 or more times, and 78% visited parks six or more times.

Figure 4.5: Visitation to Thomasville Parks

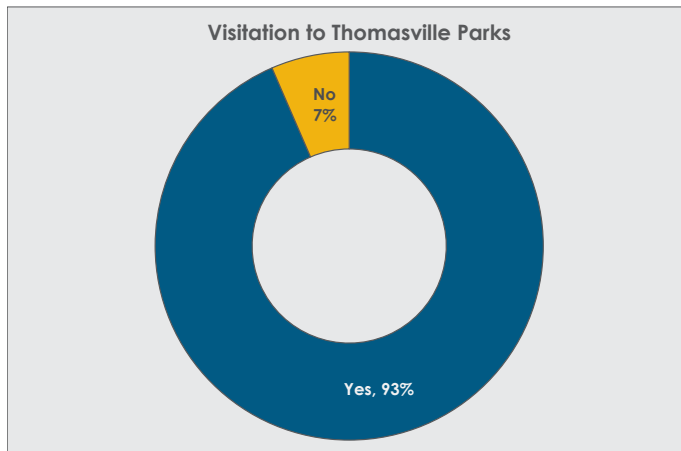
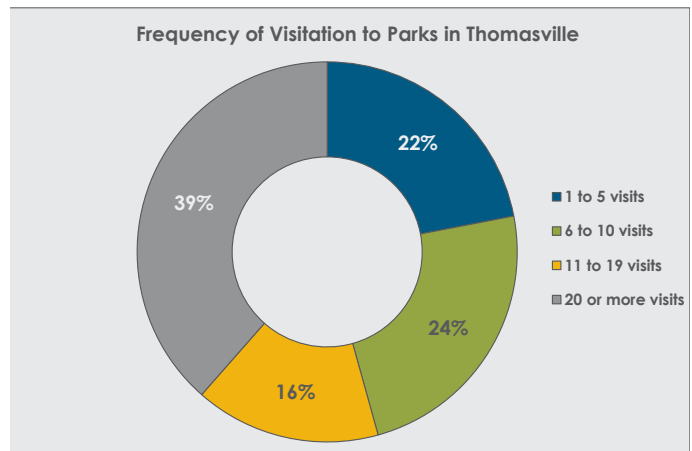


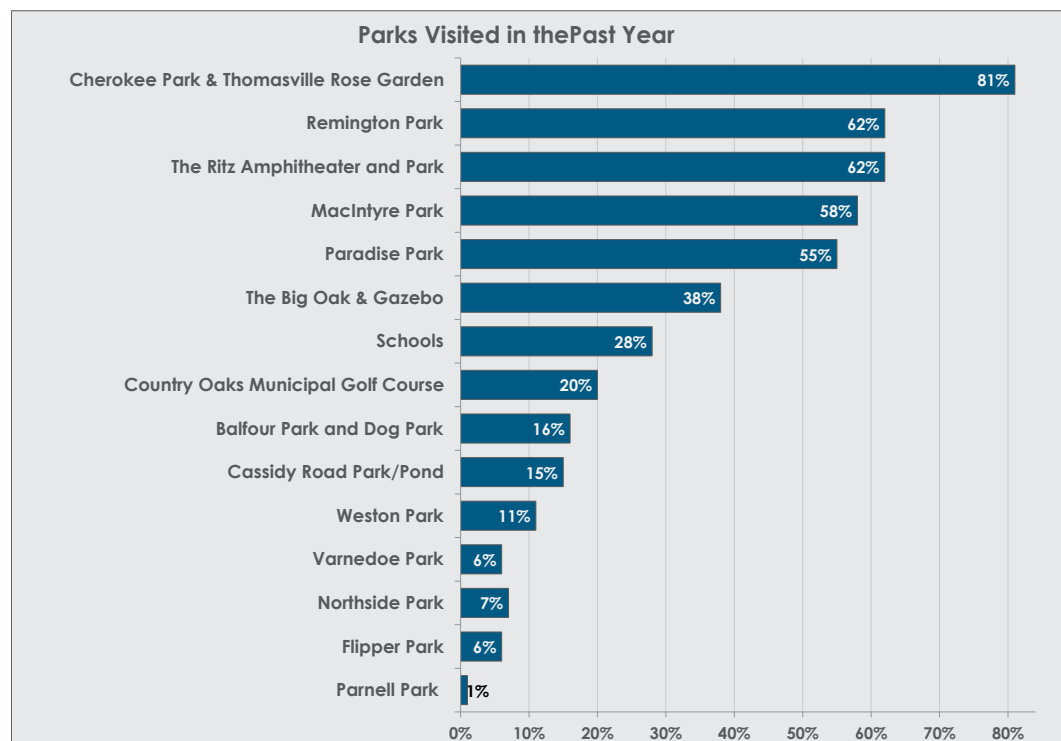
Figure 4.6: Frequency of Visitation



4.4.4 Results – Park Visited Over the Past Year

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which of the parks offered by Thomasville their household visited over the past year. Figure 4.7 shows what percentage of respondents have used each park or facility in the past year.

Figure 4.7: Parks Visited



According to the survey, **81% of respondents visited Cherokee Park & Thomasville Rose Garden** in the past year, followed by Remington Park and The Ritz Amphitheater and park at 62%. MacIntyre Park and Paradise Park were also visited by over 60% of respondents. The Big Oak & Gazebo was visited by 28% of respondents. School parks were visited by just over a quarter (28%) of respondents throughout the past year.

4.4.5 Results – Physical Condition of Facilities Offered by Thomasville

Respondents were asked to rate the physical condition of facilities they visited. Figure 4.8 shows respondents' ratings of the condition of facilities in Thomasville.

According to the survey, 62% of those who visited these facilities over the past year rated the condition of those facilities as good, **13% rated the condition of the facilities as excellent**, with 23% rating the condition as fair, and 2% as poor.

4.4.6 Results – Participation in Programs Offered by Thomasville & YMCA

Respondents were asked if any members of their household participated in programs offered by the City of Thomasville over the past year. These results are shown in Figure 4.9. According to the survey, **38% of Thomasville households participated in programs offered** by the city.

Because the YMCA is responsible for all programming at Remington Park, respondents were also asked about their participation in YMCA provided programs. Figure 4.10 shows that almost half of respondents utilize existing YMCA programming.

Figure 4.8: Condition of Facilities

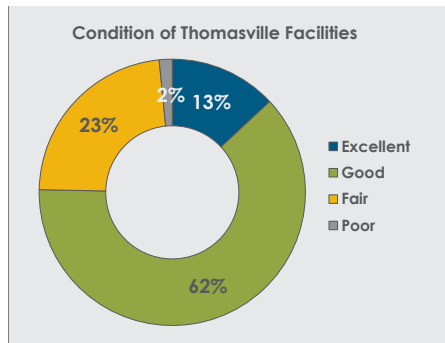


Figure 4.9: Thomasville Program Participation

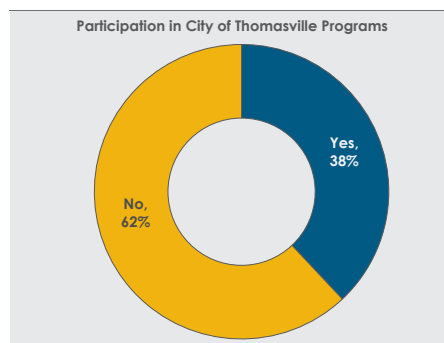
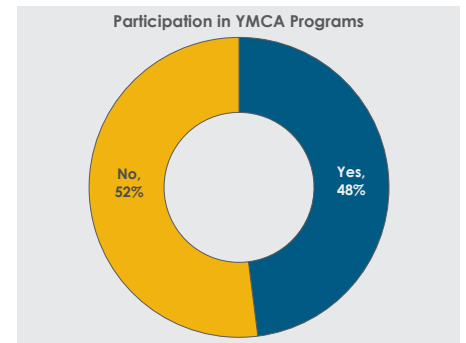


Figure 4.10: YMCA Program Participation



4.4.7 Results – Quality of Programming

Respondents who participated in programs offered by Thomasville were asked to rate the quality of those programs; Figure 4.11 shows the results. Of those who have participated in programs offered by the city, **82% of respondents rated programs as excellent or good**. Fourteen percent (14%) of survey respondents rated the programs as fair, and only 4% rated them as poor. Additionally, respondents rated quality of programs (Figure 4.12) offered by the YMCA, giving them similar ratings as those given for Thomasville's programs. Slightly fewer rated YMCA programs as excellent 15%, compared to 25% for city programs.

Figure 4.11: Thomasville Quality of Programming

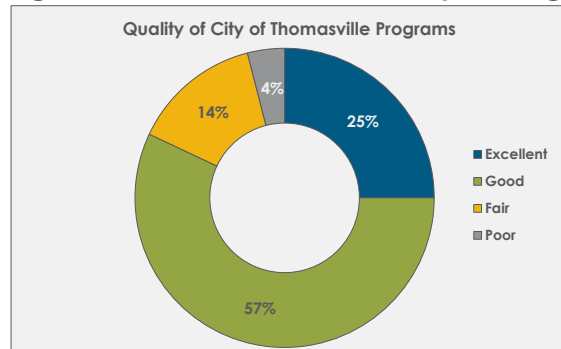
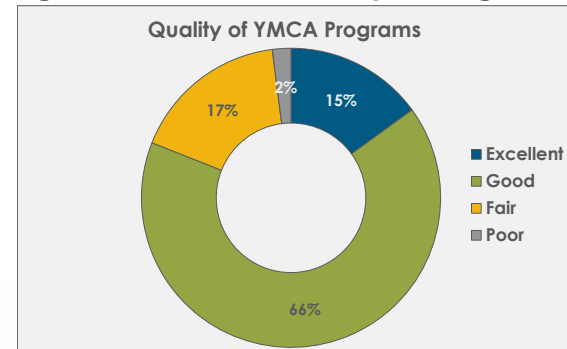


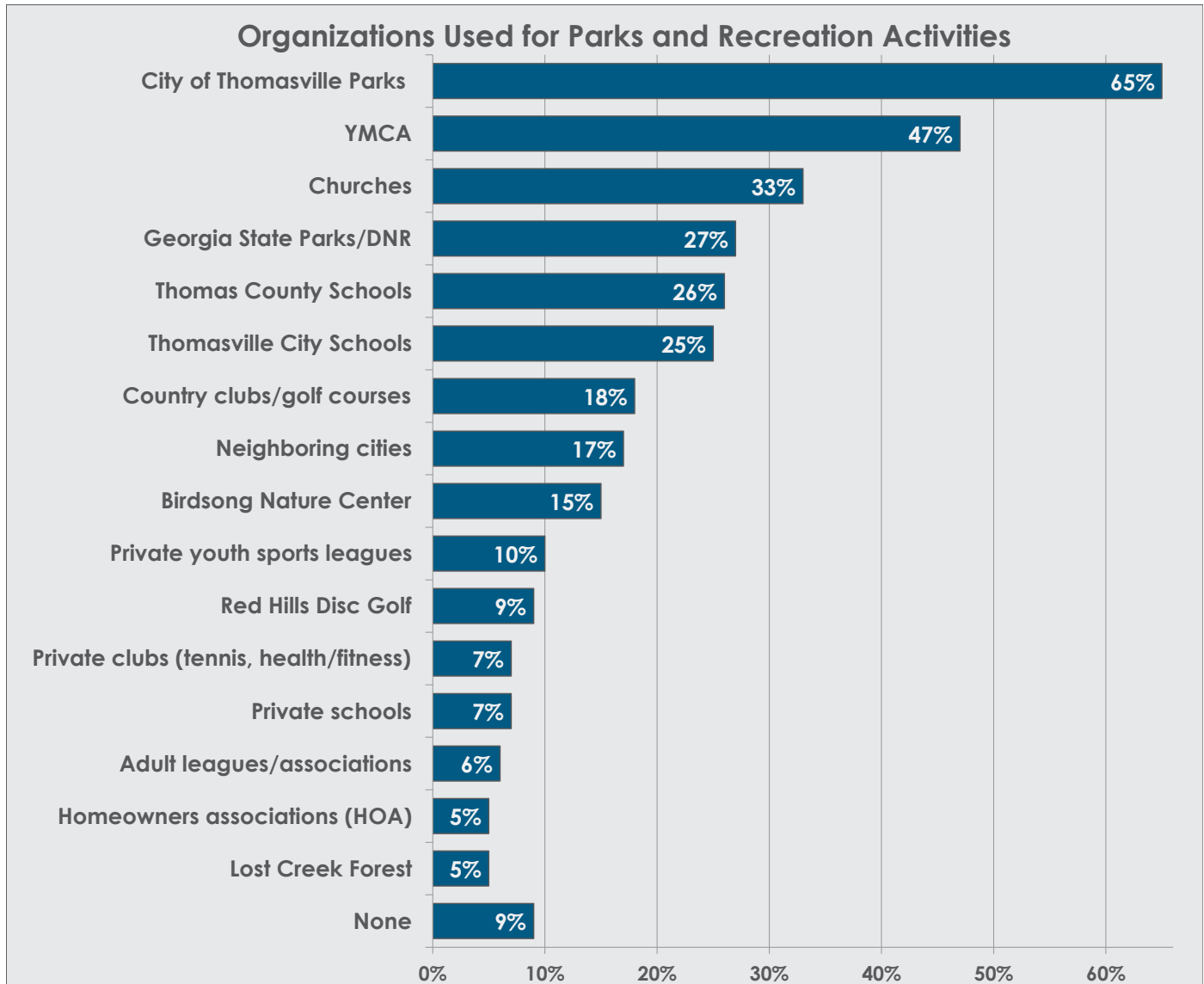
Figure 4.12: YMCA Quality of Programming



4.4.8 Results – Organizations Used for Parks and Recreation

Respondents were asked to identify organizations they currently use for recreation activities. Figure 4.13 illustrates the level of use of organizations in the community that provide recreation opportunities. About two-thirds (65%) of respondents rely on Thomasville’s parks followed by YMCA (47%). Based on these results, it is apparent that most of the community utilizes city parks. The 47% reporting use of the YMCA is near the same as the 48% that reported using YMCA programming in Figure 4.10. Finally, only 9% indicated they did not use any organizations.

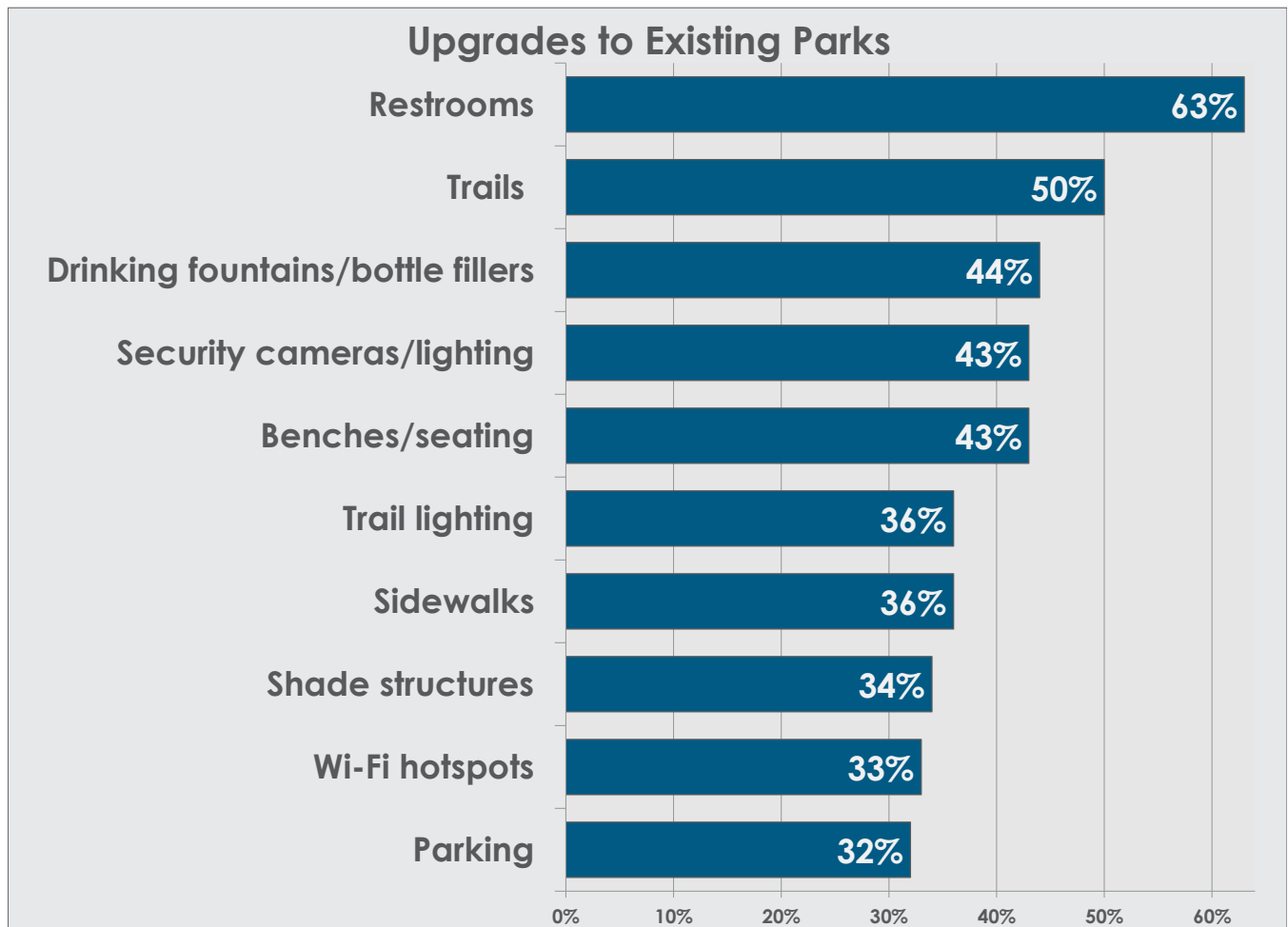
Figure 4.13: Organizations Used for Parks and Recreation



4.4.9 Results – Upgrades to Existing Parks

Respondents were asked to identify upgrades their household would like to see to existing parks, Figure 4.14 shows responses. The **top two responses were restrooms (63%) and trails (50%)**. The next priority ranked items in survey responses (with more than 40%) were support amenities such as *drinking fountains/bottle fillers*, *security cameras/lighting*, and *benches/seating* (all at 43%-44%). In general, the top prioritized items are reflected in both the survey and public meetings.

Figure 4.14: Upgrades to Existing Parks

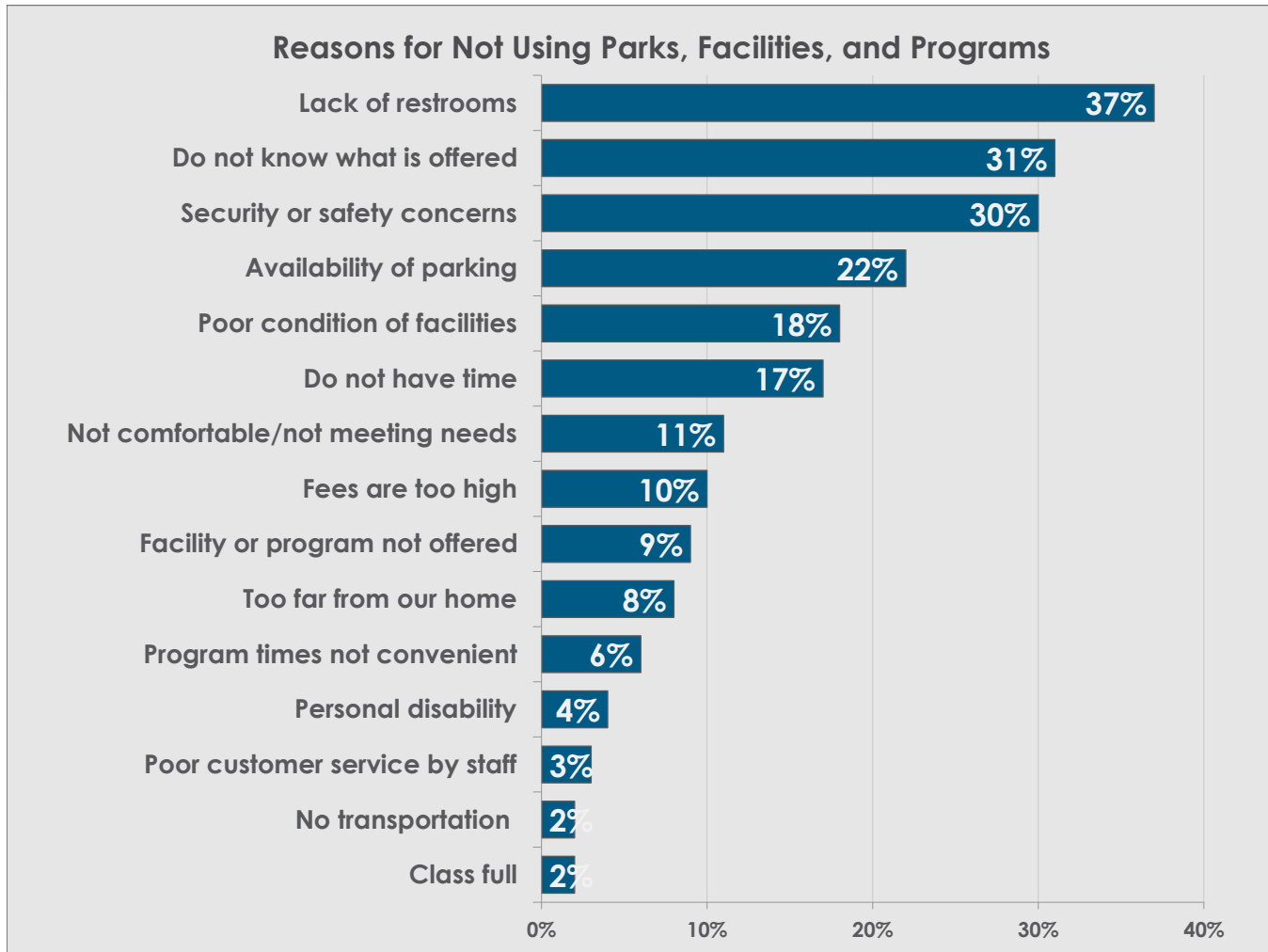


4.4.10 Results – Reasons for Not Using Parks, Facilities, & Programs

In order to identify methods to improve participation in parks and recreation programs and facilities, survey participants were asked to share their reasons for not using offerings provided by the city of Thomasville more often (Figure 4.15). **Lack of restrooms was the top reason for not using the city’s offerings with 37% of respondents selecting this option.** Security or safety concerns and do not know what is offered follow at about 30% each. The reasons for not using parks correlate with the chosen items for upgrades to existing parks (restrooms, security cameras, lighting).

Taking into consideration how the community learns about programming, what amenities they use, event attendance, and how residents would like to connect with parks and recreation in Thomasville, there is opportunity for increased and more effective outreach. While the city has a developed online tourism platform, increasing and elevating the parks and recreation presence could increase use and participation of parks, facilities, and programs offered. Additionally, addressing the extent of deferred maintenance and desired upgrades would increase usage of the system.

Figure 4.15: Reasons for Not Using Parks, Facilities, & Programs



4.4.11 Results – Desired Facilities Developed or Expanded

Respondents were provided with a list of 30 different types of parks and recreation facilities and were asked to indicate if members of their household would like to see the facilities developed or expanded. Figure 4.16 shows the results. According to the survey, **the highest percentage of respondents (56%) would like to see more walking and hiking trails**. *Bike trails* ranked a distant second (26%), followed by *splash pads* (23%) and *natural areas* (21%).

4.4.12 Results – Desired Programs Developed or Expanded

The survey engaged respondents with a similar question focusing on programs in Thomasville. Respondents were asked to choose which programs (from a list of 22) they or household members would like to see developed or expanded. Figure 4.17 shows the results.

According to the survey, a **farmers market easily ranked as the most desired program category at 42%** of respondents. *Outdoor movies* and *concerts/art performances* tied for second (28%), followed by *nature programs* at fourth. The results overall show a desire for activities that encourage community gathering, access to nature, and improved fitness.

Figure 4.16: Desired Facilities Developed or Expanded

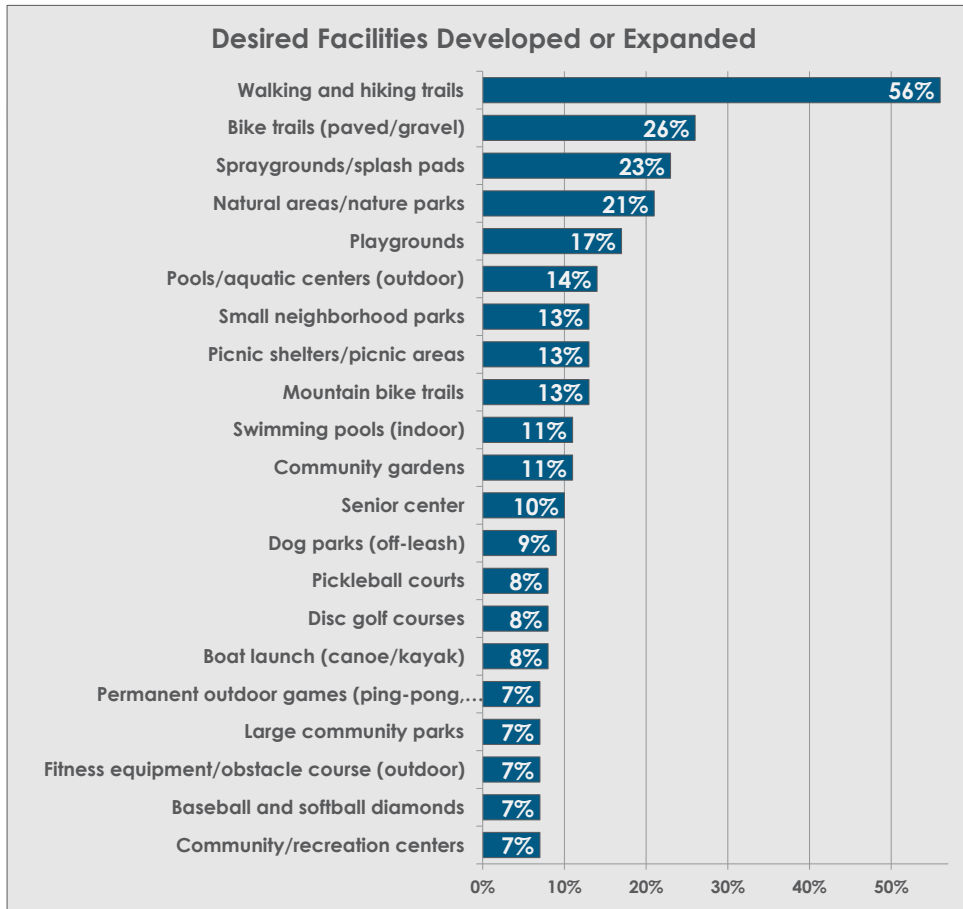
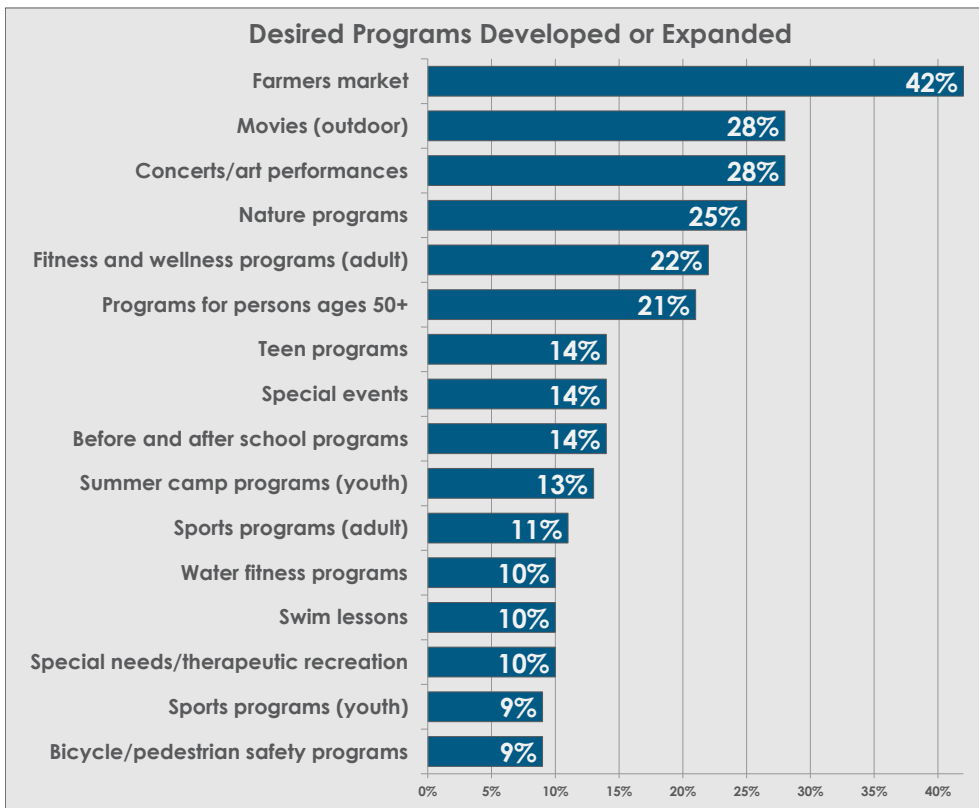


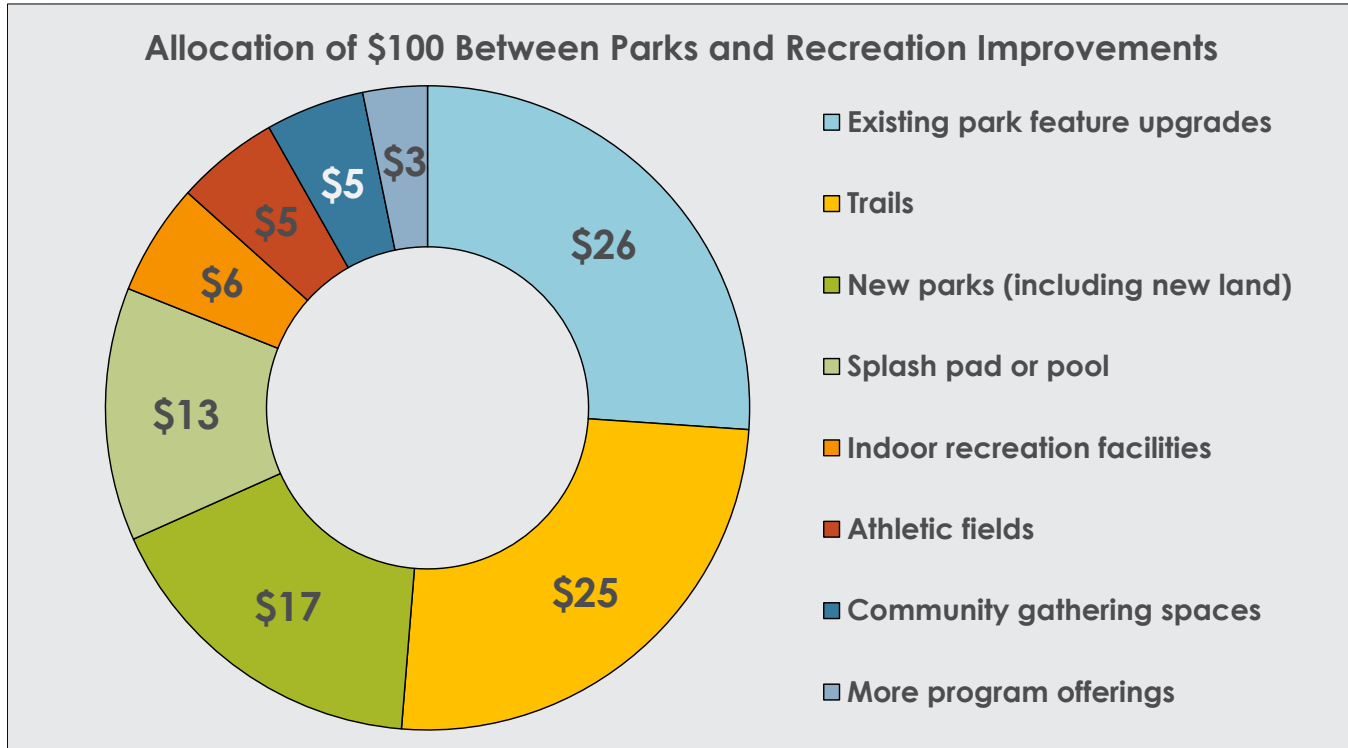
Figure 4.17: Desired Programs Developed or Expanded



4.4.13 Allocation of \$100 Between Parks and Recreation Improvements

Survey respondents were asked to allocate \$100 between eight different parks and recreation improvements in Thomasville. Figure 4.18 shows that **respondents allocated the largest amount to existing park features (\$26), followed by trails (\$25).** New parks had the third highest allocation of the choices (\$17).

Figure 4.18: \$100 Allocation for Park Improvements



4.4.14 Demographics of Survey Households

The demographics (age and income) of respondent households were compared to the most recent estimates¹ to verify the degree to which the demographic representation of the survey corresponds with the population of Thomasville. Figure 4.19 shows the representation by age of members of respondent household and the estimated 2020 Thomasville population of each age cohort.

Survey households generally aligned with the age demographics of Thomasville. However, residents within the 20-34 age range and 55 and over were underrepresented, indicating that the survey was likely heavily utilized by families, overrepresenting those in the 35-54 range and their children. The senior population is frequently more difficult to engage in online surveys, while those 20-34 without children may be less engaged in parks and recreation opportunities.

Because typical online survey respondents are already engaged with the park system, the results in Figure 4.19 also can be seen to provide information about which age groups are heavier users of Thomasville parks and recreation facilities, and, as expected, families with children are major park users and an important demographic for the city to continue engaging and supporting.

The household income levels of survey participants are indicated in Figure 4.20. These numbers indicate that higher income households were more likely to complete the survey. The two lowest income levels were underrepresented, while the two highest levels were overrepresented. These numbers reflect the age demographics as households with children headed by those age 35-54 are likely to have higher incomes than other households. They are also more likely to have more than one earner.

¹ 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4.19: Household Age Demographics Survey Participants

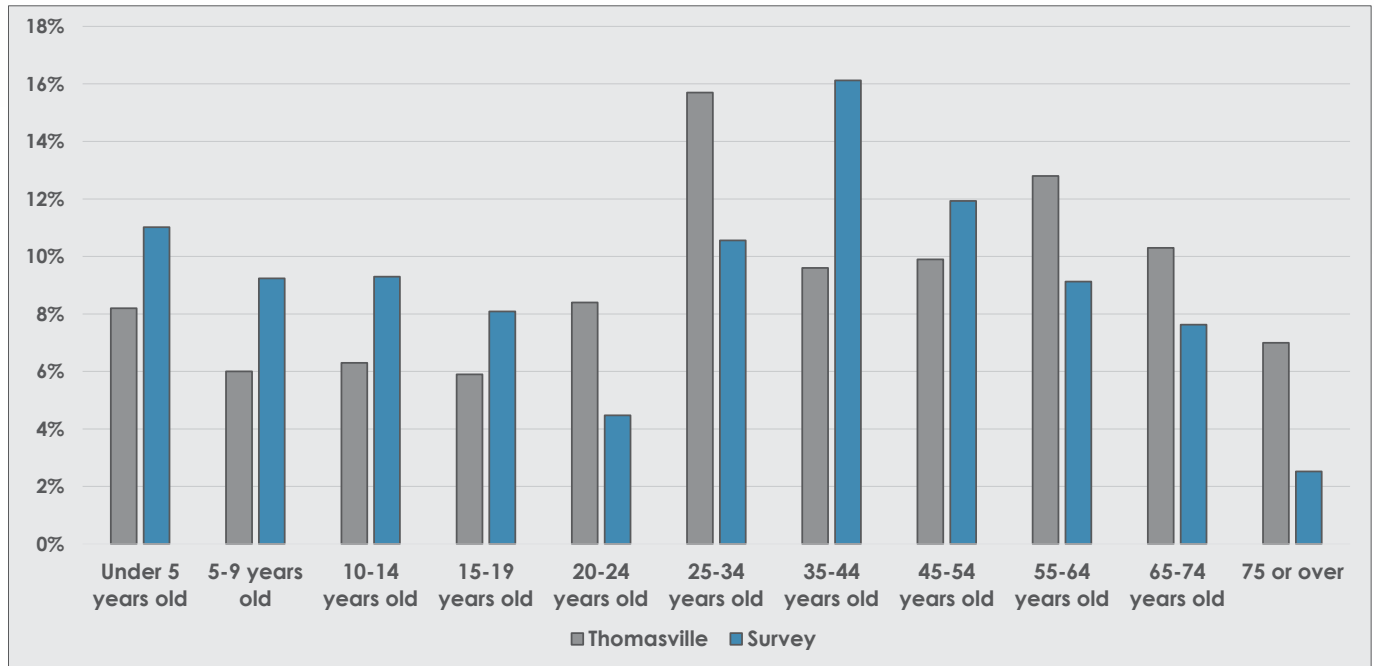
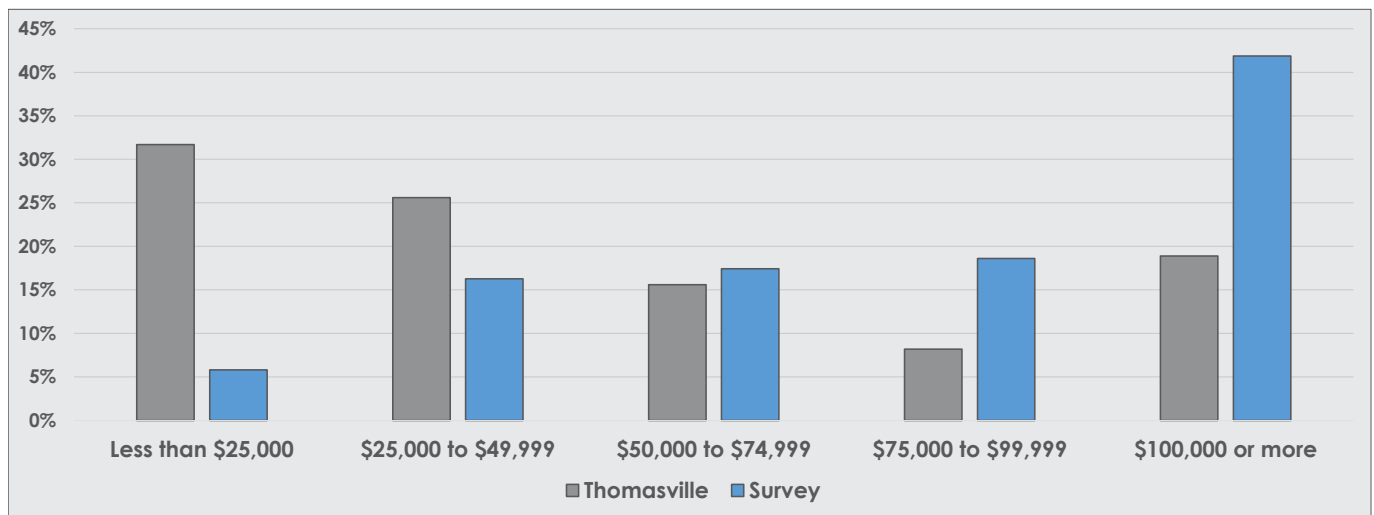


Figure 4.20: Household Income of Survey Participants



4.5 CONCLUSION

Overall, the public engagement process provided an abundance of information about the needs and desires of Thomasville residents. While a variety of methods were used to collect data, some trends do emerge. The data indicates that residents want:

- Upgrades and improvements to existing parks
- Increased maintenance to existing parks and facilities
- Support amenities within parks
 - Restrooms, new and improved
 - Improve wayfinding
 - Site lighting and security
 - Drinking fountains
 - Seating

-
- More shade – trees and structures
 - Parking improvements
 - New trails and pathways
 - Added sidewalks and walking paths
 - Paved walking and bike paths
 - Trail lighting
 - Full accessibility across the system
 - Citywide trail connectivity
 - Access to natural areas and activities
 - Preservation of open space
 - Fishing
 - Community gardens, including decorating and healthy food access
 - Picnic areas
 - More programming and events at a variety of locations — growth of the Parks and Recreation Department
 - Concerts & live performances
 - Cultural arts
 - Outdoor movies
 - Farmers markets
 - Fitness programs
 - Nature classes & activities
 - Active adult (age 50+) activities
 - New and upgraded playgrounds – accessible, adaptive equipment
 - Outdoor aquatics – splash pads and a pool
 - Strategic and collaborative marketing and promotion
 - Partnership to improve facility and programming opportunities

The word cloud image in, Figure 4.21 uses font size to show how frequently a word appears in the public comments (collected from stakeholder conversations, open house workshops, and survey responses). While value is not applied to any one word – for example, whether or not residents spoke positively about facilities – the graphic is valuable because it illustrates the elements of parks and recreation facilities in Thomasville that are most important to the community. This image is provided in conclusion to reinforce the myriad comments, suggestions, and requests heard during the multifaceted public engagement phase.





NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Master Plan identifies and presents an assessment of needs for parks and recreation in Thomasville. It consists of the following elements:

1. Level of service standards and guidelines for parks and open space
2. Level of service standards for facilities
3. Geographic analysis of the distribution of parks and recreation facilities
4. Examination of recent – and relevant – trends in parks and recreation

Analysis of the level of service for parks and recreation in Thomasville requires various perspectives to be able to tell a complete story. A particular service level might be described as adequate by one method of measurement but deficient by another. For example, acreage standards (i.e., measurement based on the total number of acres) are useful for determining the level at which the city is providing parkland. However, total acreage alone does not account for where park acres are located and, therefore, whether residents have convenient access. Accordingly, it is critical to consider the location of the city's parkland in determining the level of service.

The following information, together with the public input collected (Chapter 4), make up the foundation for recommendations in this plan (Chapter 7). Additionally, analysis throughout this chapter makes significant use of the demographic and benchmarking data from Chapter 2.

5.2 STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR PARKLAND IN THOMASVILLE

Service level standards provided here are meant to describe achievable targets (e.g., specific acreage totals and service goals) that can realistically be met over the implementation timeline of this plan. Guidelines are offered to cover more general goals of improvement, acquisition, and maintenance. Standards and guidelines are provided for both developed parkland and total open space in the system. Tailored specifically for Thomasville, they are intended to be obtainable but also sufficient to allow Thomasville Parks and Recreation to continue working to improve quality of life for residents.

Parkland can be either developed or undeveloped. Developed acres include features such as athletic fields and courts, picnic shelters, playgrounds, and any mowed areas, while undeveloped acres are those in their natural state – including woodlands, prairies, and wetlands – without developed features. When acquired and

maintained at a beneficial ratio (specific to the locality) both types of land usage can have a tremendous positive impact on the human population and the environment.

5.2.1 Level of Service Standards for Developed Acres

Chapter 3 describes and assigns classifications to the parks in Thomasville. That inventory – combined with an examination of existing conditions and a thorough analysis of public input – assists with accurately defining the level of service standards (acres per thousand population) for each park classification in Thomasville.

The Table 5.1, Service Level Standards by Park Classification, offers a breakdown of the needs (or target acres) for each type of park in Thomasville based on the classifications in Chapter 3. This table includes only properties offered by Thomasville Parks and Recreation and includes developed acres only. Because these acres represent improved land and may include amenities, they are a better basis than overall parkland for analyzing access to parks and amenities.

Table 5.1: Service Level Standards for Developed Acreage by Park Classification

Park Classification ¹	Existing Developed Acres	Existing Developed Acres per 1000 Population	Target Acres per 1000 Population	2021 Developed Acres Target	2021 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)	2026 Developed Acres Target	2026 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)
Neighborhood	28.6	1.5	1.75	32.9	-4.3	33.6	-5.0
Community	125.9	6.7	7.0	131.7	-5.8	134.6	-8.7
Nature Parks/Open Space	13.2	0.7	0.5	9.4	3.8	9.6	3.6
Special Use Parks	128.0	6.8	6.5	122.3	5.7	125.0	3.0
Total	295.7	15.7	15.8	296.3	-0.6	302.8	-7.1

1. See Chapter 3 for classification definitions and park inventory, existing acreage numbers from Table 3.2

2. See Chapter 2 for population estimates and benchmarking

Table 5.1 identifies the current developed park acreage for Thomasville (see Chapter 2). The population is projected to increase slowly, and there is an ongoing trend of diversification (see Chapter 2) which will likely continue as other racial and ethnic groups grow both in Thomasville and surrounding communities. Existing acreage per 1,000 population (Table 5.1) shows minor deficits for 2021 for neighborhood and community parks.

As noted in Chapter 2, Thomasville has a relatively high amount of parkland, compared to the benchmarks. However, that land is not equally distributed, and some parts of the city lack access to parks. Additionally, some development will be needed at existing parks to address the demands of residents based on the public engagement.

To address these needs, target acres per population indicate a slight increase over the current level. Deficits of 5 acres in 2026 for neighborhood parks and about 9 acres for community parks result from the need to address some community requests. In general, these needs can be addressed at existing parkland (e.g., upgrading Cassidy Pond to a community park) and limited acquisition for neighborhood parks, potentially in conjunction with stormwater improvements.

5.2.2 Guidelines for Open Space

Park systems provide invaluable benefits to public health,¹ economies,² local environment and ecology,³ community social fabric, and overall quality of life.⁴ Beyond the developed park acreage, the park system includes additional undeveloped open space and natural areas. These acres, while easily overlooked, have tremendous potential to benefit the community. Undeveloped open space, or even acres that are lightly developed as parks, can positively impact an entire community through improvements to air and

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Parks, Trails, and Health Resources. [cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/parks_resources.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/parks_resources.htm)

² WeConservePA. (2012). The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation: A Guide. Pennsylvania Land Trust Association.

³ John L. Crompton (2008). Empirical Evidence of the Contributions of Park and Conservation Lands to Environmental Sustainability: The Key to repositioning the Parks Field. World Leisure Journal, 50(3), 154-172

⁴ John L. Crompton (2008). Empirical Evidence of the Contributions of Leisure Services to Alleviating Social Problems: A Key to Repositioning the Leisure Services Field. World Leisure Journal, 50(4), 243-258.

water quality, increased biodiversity, wildlife habitat protection, noise reduction, reduction of erosion, and protection of water resources.⁵

Setting acreage targets – aiming for a certain number of parkland acres overall – is one way of achieving a desired level of open space. Target acreage can be a useful way for evaluating the progress of open space acquisition, but effective conservation requires more intentional acquisitions based on a specific resource and where it is found. In other words, looking at open space acquisitions through a conservation lens, the amount of land preserved depends on aspects of that particular resource not just on the number of acres. Land preservation in general has many benefits, such as increased quality of life for residents and elevated property values. For these benefits to be shared equitably – benefits typically are higher the closer the proximity – open space should be looked at from a holistic perspective taking into additional consideration natural resources and distribution. What follows is an examination of the current state of open space in Thomasville.

Methods of Measurement

There are two common metrics for measuring the level of service of open space: acres per population and percentage of total area. Both are provided below to serve as guidelines for evaluating and measuring open space available in Thomasville. Consistent with the inventory from Chapter 3, Table 5.2 identifies total acres of parks and open space acreage, including both developed and undeveloped land, in Thomasville.⁶ The table shows inventory targets based on 25 acres per 1,000 population and 5% of the total acreage in the city. The 25 acres per 1,000 is only a very slight increase to the current value for Thomasville (24.7), as is the 5% of total area number (up 0.2% from the current 4.8%). Most of the increase for the per 1,000 population target is due to population growth.

These values were chosen because Thomasville is already above the benchmark medians for both metrics (see Chapter 2). However, public input indicates residents of Thomasville desire land preservation (especially of natural areas), and the service area mapping provided later in this chapter (Sections 5.4 and 5.5) shows some areas where service could be improved. Land owned by the two local school districts (i.e., Thomas County Schools and Thomasville City Schools) is shown in the table for reference only. This land is not included in the recommendations because the city has no control over it, and parks by others were not included in the benchmark comparisons. Additionally, many of the benchmark communities have additional parks and recreation agencies, such as county-wide departments.

Acres per Population

Using the target of 25 acres per 1,000 population, Thomasville has (as of 2021) an open space deficit of 5.0 acres. Keeping proportional target acreage would mean that by 2026 the city would need about 15 acres. This amount of land, while limited, would allow the city to address the needs identified in this plan.

Percentage of Total City Area

The percentage of total area is not tied to population which means it can potentially represent a more flexible objective. Thomasville parks currently represent 4.8% of the land in the city. As noted above, Table 5.2 includes targets for the city based on an 5% of total area goal. This target would require the acquisition of roughly 16 additional acres, about the same as the per population target.

Table 5.2: Open Space Guidelines

Park Classification ¹	Existing Developed Acres	Existing Developed Acres per 1000 Population	Target Acres per 1000 Population	2021 Developed Acres Target	2021 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)	2026 Developed Acres Target	2026 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)
Neighborhood	28.6	1.5	1.75	32.9	-4.3	33.6	-5.0
Community	125.9	6.7	7.0	131.7	-5.8	134.6	-8.7
Nature Parks/Open Space	13.2	0.7	0.5	9.4	3.8	9.6	3.6
Special Use Parks	128.0	6.8	6.5	122.3	5.7	125.0	3.0
Total	295.7	15.7	15.8	296.3	-0.6	302.8	-7.1

1. See Chapter 3 for classification definitions and park inventory, existing acreage numbers from Table 3.2
 2. See Chapter 2 for population estimates and benchmarking
 3. Does not include parks by others or school grounds

⁵ F.D.B. (2007). The economic benefits of land conservation. San Francisco, CA: The Trust for Public Land.
⁶ These totals do include some structures, but these features represent a relatively small percentage of the total acreage.

5.2.3 Summary

Overall, the need for additional land, whether developed or undeveloped, is limited in Thomasville, although some demands identified through the public engagement may require new land. Limited acquisitions may also be needed to address equity of services or stormwater concerns. **These level of service guidelines emphasize that priority for Thomasville Parks and Recreation should be improvement of existing parkland over addition of new parks.**

5.3 FACILITIES NEEDS ANALYSIS AND LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Like the recommendations for parkland described previously, level of service standards for individual park facilities are useful for determining the quantity of recreation facilities needed in the community, both at present and in the future. These standards emerge through examination of the benchmarking (Chapter 2) and the public input findings (Chapter 4); common industry standards and guidelines are also taken into consideration. Table 5.3 details the facilities by type and compares the available supply with the amount needed to meet the targets identified in the table.

5.3.1 Facility Level of Service Rationale

The following text provides the basis for the per population targets for each of the facilities in Table 5.3. Each section breaks down individual elements by describing how the per population target compares to the existing per population supply and makes justifications for any recommended change. As with previous elements in this chapter, the following analysis combines benchmarking data (Chapter 2) with public input (Chapter 4).

Outdoor Recreation Areas

- Playgrounds – set at slight increase due to demand and current distribution
- Trails (miles) – set at increase due to high demand, trends, and current distribution
- Skate park – met by YMCA
- Amphitheaters – set at increase due to demand for programs
- Dog park – set at current (1), similar to benchmark
- Community gardens – set at increase to benchmark due to demand
- Splash pads – set at increase due to demand and trends, none currently

Outdoor Fields & Courts

- Youth baseball fields – set at current, well above benchmark
- Youth softball fields – set at current, well above benchmark
- Adult softball fields – set at current, above benchmark
- Multipurpose rectangular fields – set at current, well above benchmark
- Basketball courts – set at benchmark, slight increase
- Pickleball courts – set at increase due to trends and demand
- Tennis courts – set at slight decrease, met by others

Table 5.3: Facility Level of Service Standards

Facility	Per Population Target	Existing per Population	Existing Total Supply	2021 Target	2021 Surplus / Deficit	2026 Target	2026 Surplus / Deficit	Benchmark Median
Outdoor Recreation Areas								
Playgrounds	1,800	2,091	9	10.5	-1.5	10.7	-1.7	3,500
Trails (miles)	3,000	4,951	3.8	6.3	-2.5	6.4	-2.6	5,900
Skate Park	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	20,200
Amphitheaters	10,000	18,815	1	1.9	-0.9	1.9	-0.9	N/A
Dog Park	19,000	18,815	1	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	19,000
Community Gardens	16,600	N/A	0	1.1	-1.1	1.2	-1.2	16,600
Splash Pads	10,000	N/A	0	1.9	-1.9	1.9	-1.9	N/A
Outdoor Fields & Courts								
Youth Baseball Fields	2,400	2,352	8	7.8	0.2	8.0	0.0	4,800
Youth Softball Fields	3,000	3,136	6	6.3	-0.3	6.4	-0.4	5,700
Adult Softball Fields	6,000	6,272	3	3.1	-0.1	3.2	-0.2	7,600
Multipurpose Rectangular Fields	3,136	3,136	6	6.0	0.0	6.1	-0.1	7,300
Basketball Courts	2,700	2,688	7	7.0	0.0	7.1	-0.1	7,000
Pickleball Courts ²	4,000	6,272	3	4.7	-1.7	4.8	-1.8	N/A
Tennis Courts	8,000	6,272	3	2.4	0.6	2.4	0.6	2,800

1. See Chapter 2 for population estimates and benchmarking

2. Dedicated courts only

5.3.2 Facility Level of Service Standards

The values in Table 5.3 illustrate potential need for various facilities. In general, Thomasville compares well to the benchmarks which are also included in the table. The need for additional amenities is mostly limited to those not currently offered or those needed to meet growing trends (see Section 5.7) and program needs. Splash pads, for example, are a growing trend that Thomasville has not yet addressed and a top request of the public input. Pickleball courts will likely continue to see growing demand as well. The demand for trails is unmet in most communities and will likely continue to grow.

While values in Table 5.3 highlight what additional facilities are needed to adequately meet the demand, they do not indicate where in Thomasville these new facilities should be located. The next sections (5.4 and 5.5) help illuminate gaps in service and, therefore, potential areas to locate new facilities in either existing or future parks.

5.4 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

The spatial distribution of parks throughout Thomasville is important to consider; residents are better able and more willing to utilize facilities that are close to their homes. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show Thomasville's existing parks with service areas described for different park classifications. The methodology for this analysis (and the facility analysis in Section 5.5) can be found in Appendix A. Of note, these service areas are not necessarily representative of all users of the city's parks; after all, some users may be more willing to travel greater distances than those defined in the figures below. However, the most frequent users generally do live within the areas indicated and usage rates do tend to decline sharply in relation to travel times.

A 10-minute walking distance represents about a half mile range and is a commonly used measurement for the walkability of an area; most residents can easily travel this distance without using a car. The Trust for Public Land, NRPA, and the Urban Land Institute have all joined forces to develop the "10-minute Walk Campaign" which strives for healthy, walkable communities and easy access to greenspace for everyone in the country. As part of their multi-pronged campaign, cities all over the U.S. are committed to ensuring that by 2050 all residents will have access to a park within a 10-minute walk of their home. Mayors throughout the country have already taken the pledge, and more continue to do so.⁷

Across the whole city, about a half (50%) of residents are within a 10-minute walk to a park with 44% able to walk to a neighborhood park (or larger) offered by the City of Thomasville. This existing degree of walkable

⁷ <https://10minutewalk.org/>

access is above many communities and can be increased by improving access to existing parks, in addition to adding new parks.

Figure 5.1 shows the areas in Thomasville where residents are within a 10-minute walk to neighborhood parks, school parks, and other park types. This map illustrates the locations of walkable access across the city. Walking access to Thomasville's parks is centrally located with notable exceptions in the residential areas of the north and south/southeast.

Figure 5.2 shows how accessible community parks are in Thomasville by motor vehicle. Drivetimes (5-minutes) are indicated in green, showing that most of the city is located within these service areas. The most notable gap in services is in the northwest quadrant of the city as no community parks are currently located there.

5.5 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF FACILITIES

This portion of the needs analysis focuses on the distribution of facilities provided by Thomasville for use by residents. Service areas for these key facilities within Thomasville are illustrated in Figures 5.3 through 5.13. As with the geographic distribution of parks, both drive and walk times are used for defining service areas (dark green indicates areas within 10-minute walking distance, bright green shows 5-minute driving distance).

Larger and unique facilities are intended to serve greater populations; typically, residents are willing to travel longer distances to access these amenities. In contrast, smaller and more common facilities usually serve more localized (smaller) populations and are more often within walking distance. The following sections outline the overall need for facilities in Thomasville; though portions of the city are highlighted that are located outside of facility service areas, a new facility is not necessarily recommended for these areas.

5.5.1 Playgrounds

Figure 5.3 shows the service areas (10-minute walk to parks and school playgrounds, plus 5-minute drive to park playgrounds only) for playgrounds in Thomasville. The city offers nine playgrounds at different parks; residents also have access to several additional playgrounds provided by others within the city, primarily school playgrounds that may be unavailable during school hours. Walkable access is available in many of the most populated areas with the exception of the north and southeast parts of city. The 5-minute drive areas extend to nearly the entire city. School playground access often overlaps with playground access at city parks.

5.5.2 Basketball Courts

Figure 5.4 displays service areas for outdoor basketball courts calculated by the same access measures as playgrounds (10-minute walk and 5-minute drive). Thomasville offers seven basketball courts in five different parks; another court is offered at Cross Creek Elementary. The map shows existing areas of access to basketball courts are similar to the playground access in Figure 5.3, but with fewer options in the eastern half of the city. A significant portion of the city would have to drive beyond a 5-minute drive to reach a basketball court (southeast).

5.5.3 Diamond Fields

Thomasville's diamond ballfield service areas are illustrated in Figure 5.5 with distances defined by 10-minute walk and 5-minute drive access. Most of the city is within 5-minute drive of a diamond field, but 10-minute walking access is limited to small areas around Balfour Park, Remington Park, and Weston Park. There are a few pockets that need more than a 5-minute drive to reach a diamond field including the area north of Cassidy Park and in the southeast between Tuxedo Dr and Old Monticello Rd.

5.5.4 Multipurpose Fields

Figure 5.6 displays the service areas for multipurpose rectangular fields in Thomasville. There are six rectangular fields in the city parks system, all of which are located at Remington Park. The service areas for multipurpose rectangular fields are limited to the northeast and eastern portion of the city with those areas being within at least a 5-minute drive. The south and western portion of the city are beyond a 5-minute drive with some areas beyond a 10-minute drive.

Figure 5.1: Neighborhood Park Service Areas

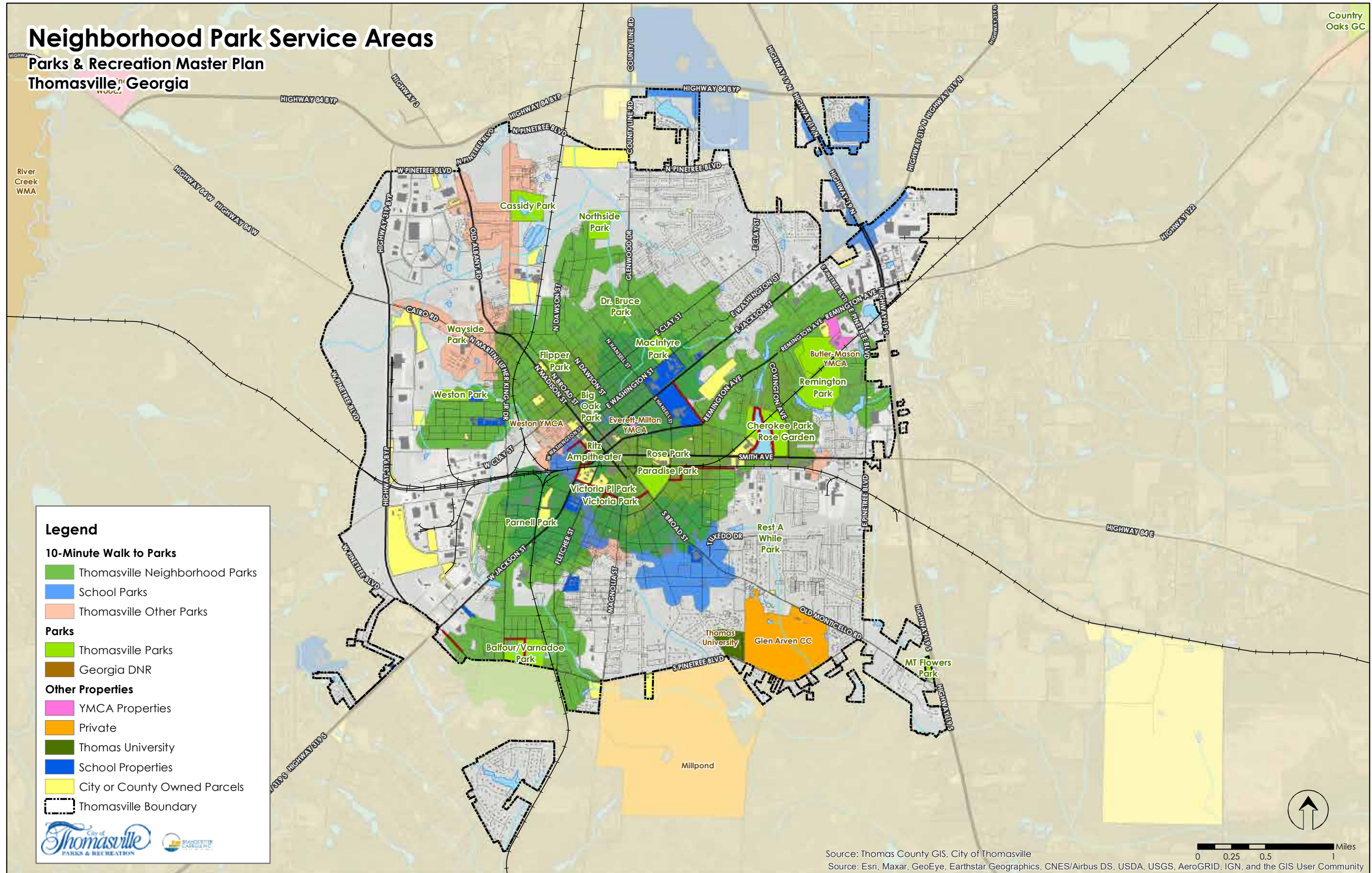
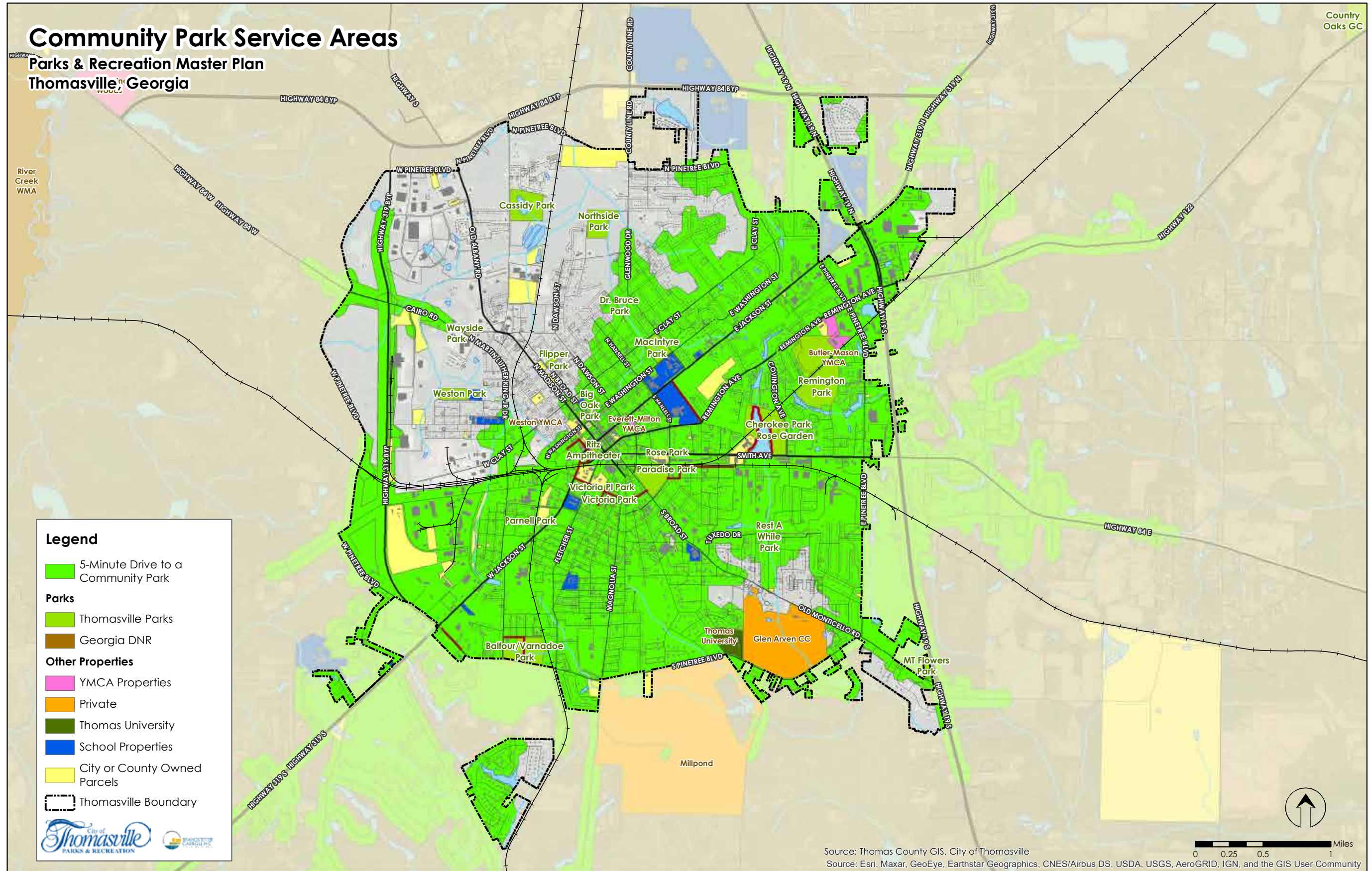


Figure 5.2: Community and Regional Park Service Areas



5.5.5 Golf Course

Figure 5.7 shows the service area for the only public golfing facility in the city, Country Oaks Municipal Golf Course. Because the city's course is outside of city limits, the service area is limited to the northeastern portion of the city. From the center of town, it is about a 10- to 15-minute drive to Country Oaks. Glen Arven Country Club is the only other facility offering golf within a 20-minute drive of downtown Thomasville.

5.5.6 Tennis Courts

Figure 5.8 shows that service areas for tennis courts are focused on the northeastern and southwestern portions of town. A large portion of the city is within a 5-minute drive of a tennis court while a much smaller portion is within a 10-minute walk. The highest accessible areas are those concentrated around Remington Park and Balfour Park where the courts are located.

5.5.7 Disc Golf

Areas within a 10-minute walk or 5-minute drive from the city's 12-hole disc golf course at MacIntyre Park are illustrated in Figure 5.9. Most of the residential population within the central and northern parts of the city is within reasonable access to the disc golf course whereas the southern portion is limited.

5.5.8 Trails

Figure 5.10 shows service areas across the city for trails, including a 10-minute walk to any type and length of trail and a 5-minute drive to a longer trail (greater than 1 mile). Only limited areas within city limits have walkable access to a trail, those living near Weston Park and Cherokee Park and Rose Garden. The eastern half of the city is within a 5-minute drive to a longer trail. There are currently about 2.4 miles of trails in Thomasville outside of parks, which will provide additional recreation opportunities when connected.

5.5.9 Dog Park

As evident in Figure 5.11, quick access to the city's one dog park is restricted to the southwestern half of the community (5-minute drive indicated in light green, 10-minute walk in dark green). Those living nearest Balfour Park have the greatest level of access. Although the dog park is within a 10-minute walk for some, there are no sidewalks leading to the park, making it difficult for foot traffic to reach the entrance. A more central location would provide better access to more residents.

5.5.10 Amphitheater

Figure 5.12 illustrates the service areas to The Ritz Amphitheater with a 10-minute walk in dark green and a 5-minute drive in light green. For the most part, the accessibility of the amphitheater is concentrated around downtown Thomasville with some areas reaching further southwest. Due to its central location, much of the population is within a short drive of the facility. Many attendees at community events at this venue will likely bring lawn chairs and other items, and therefore, are more likely to choose to drive. Thomasville has been and will need to continue to be proactive with informing the public of surrounding parking availability especially as outdoor events are becoming more popular.

5.5.11 Fishing Access

Figure 5.13 shows the fishing access residents of Thomasville have which is concentrated to the northern and eastern half of the city. Two city parks have fishing areas, Cherokee Lake and Cassidy Pond. Small boats are also permitted at Cherokee Lake. At Cassidy Pond, residents can fish along the pier and banks, but boats are not permitted on the water.

Figure 5.3: Playground Service Areas

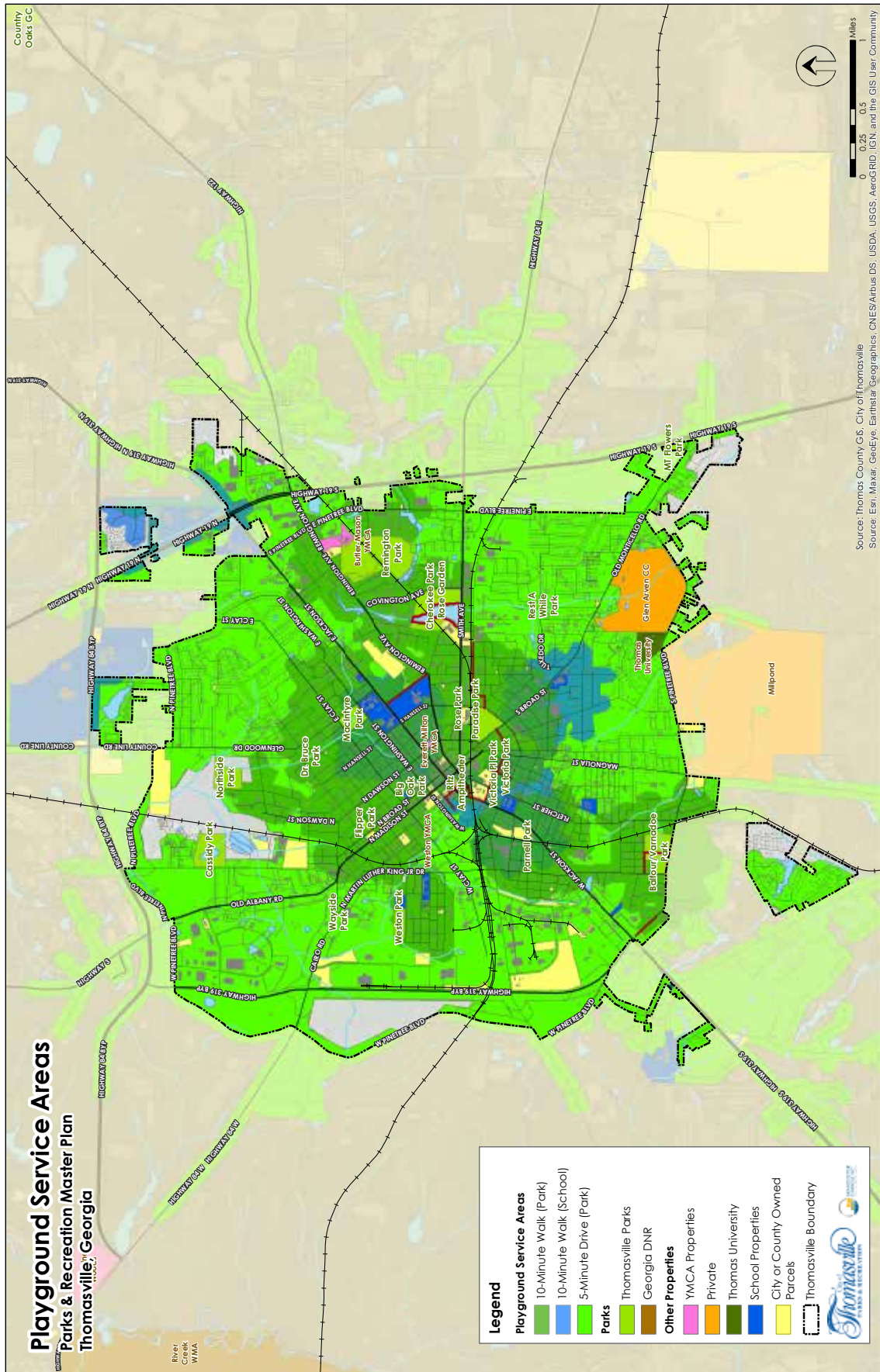


Figure 5.4: Outdoor Basketball Court Service Areas

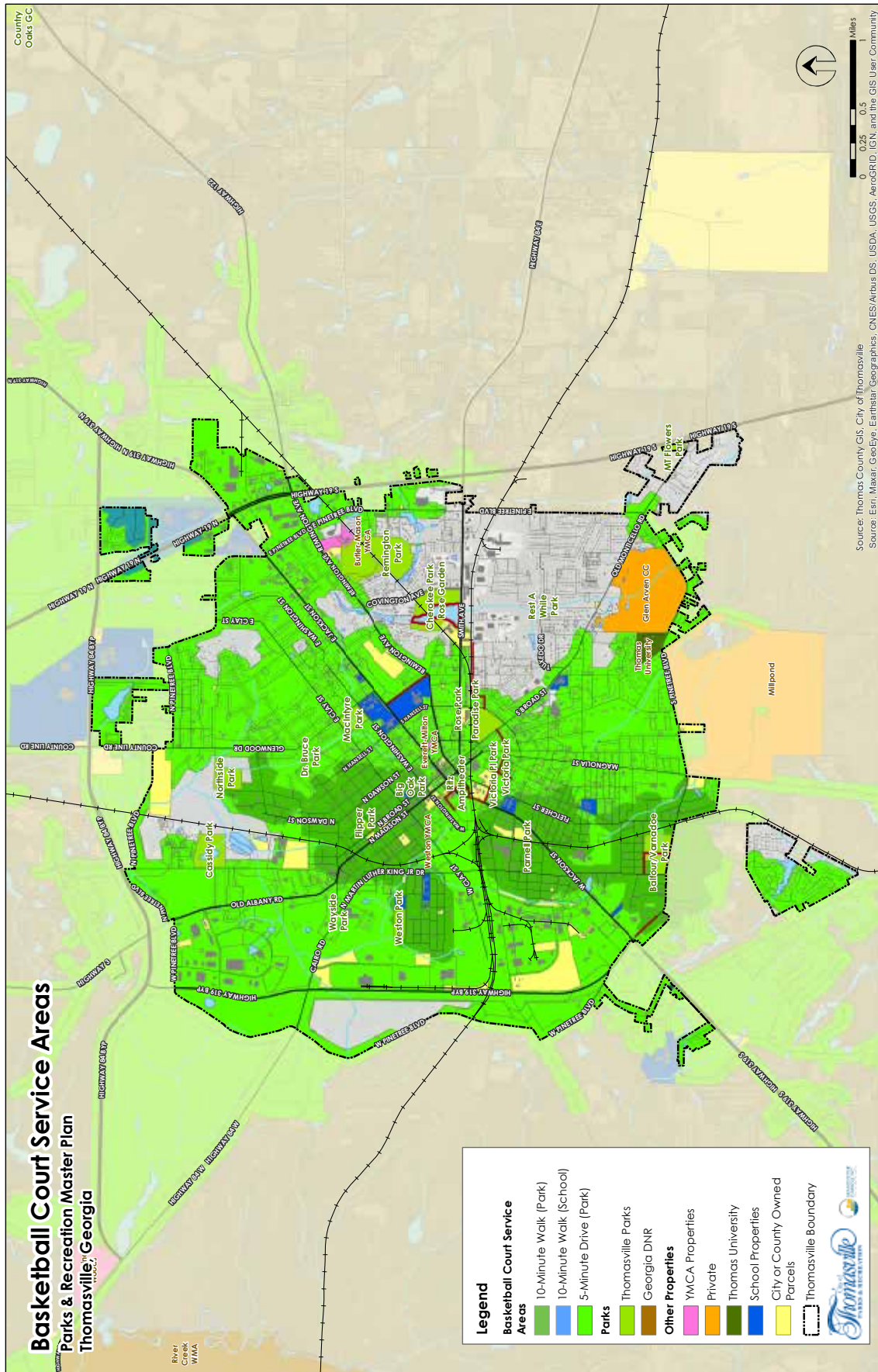


Figure 5.6: Multipurpose Field Service Areas

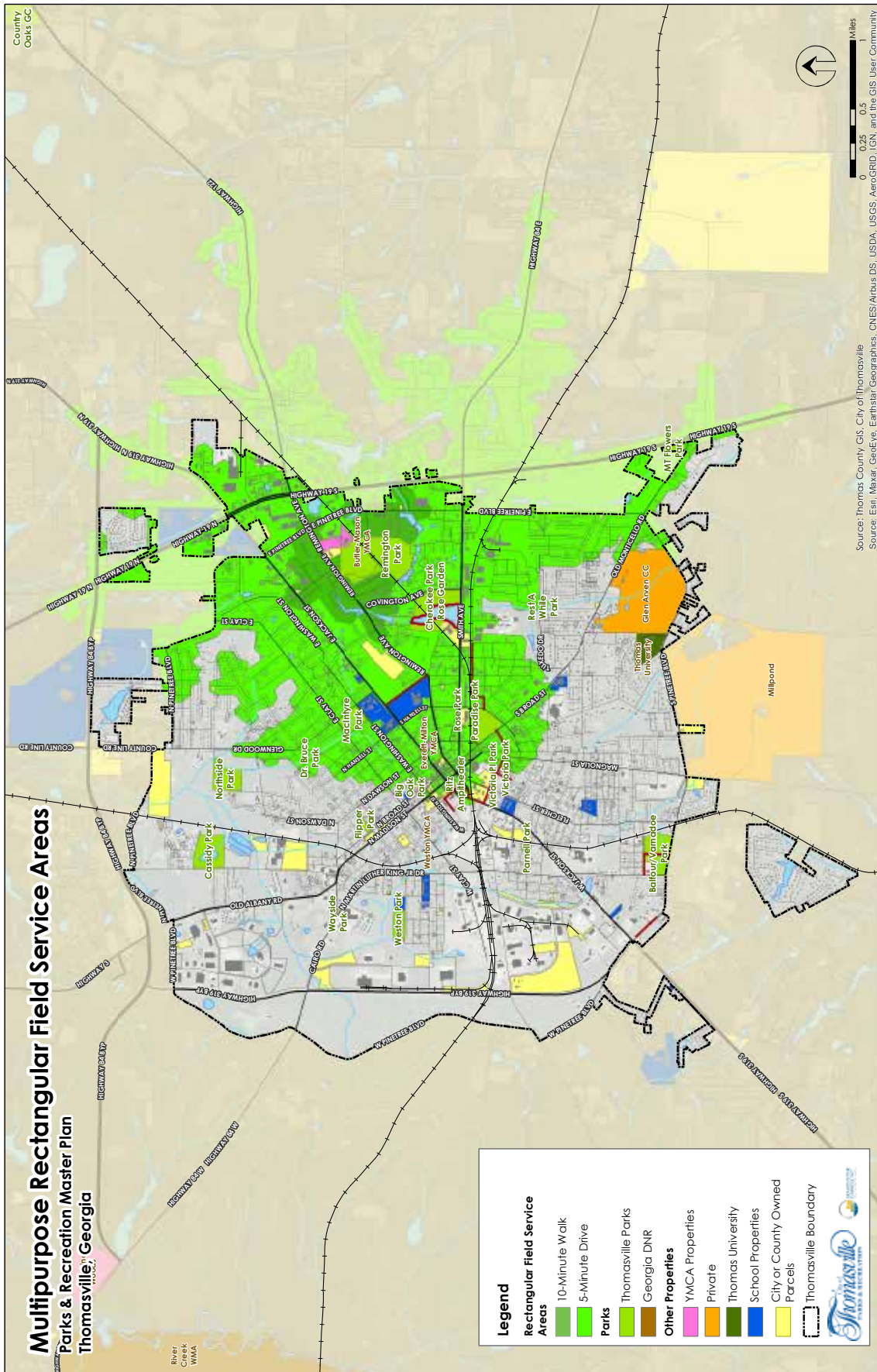


Figure 5.7: Golf Service Areas

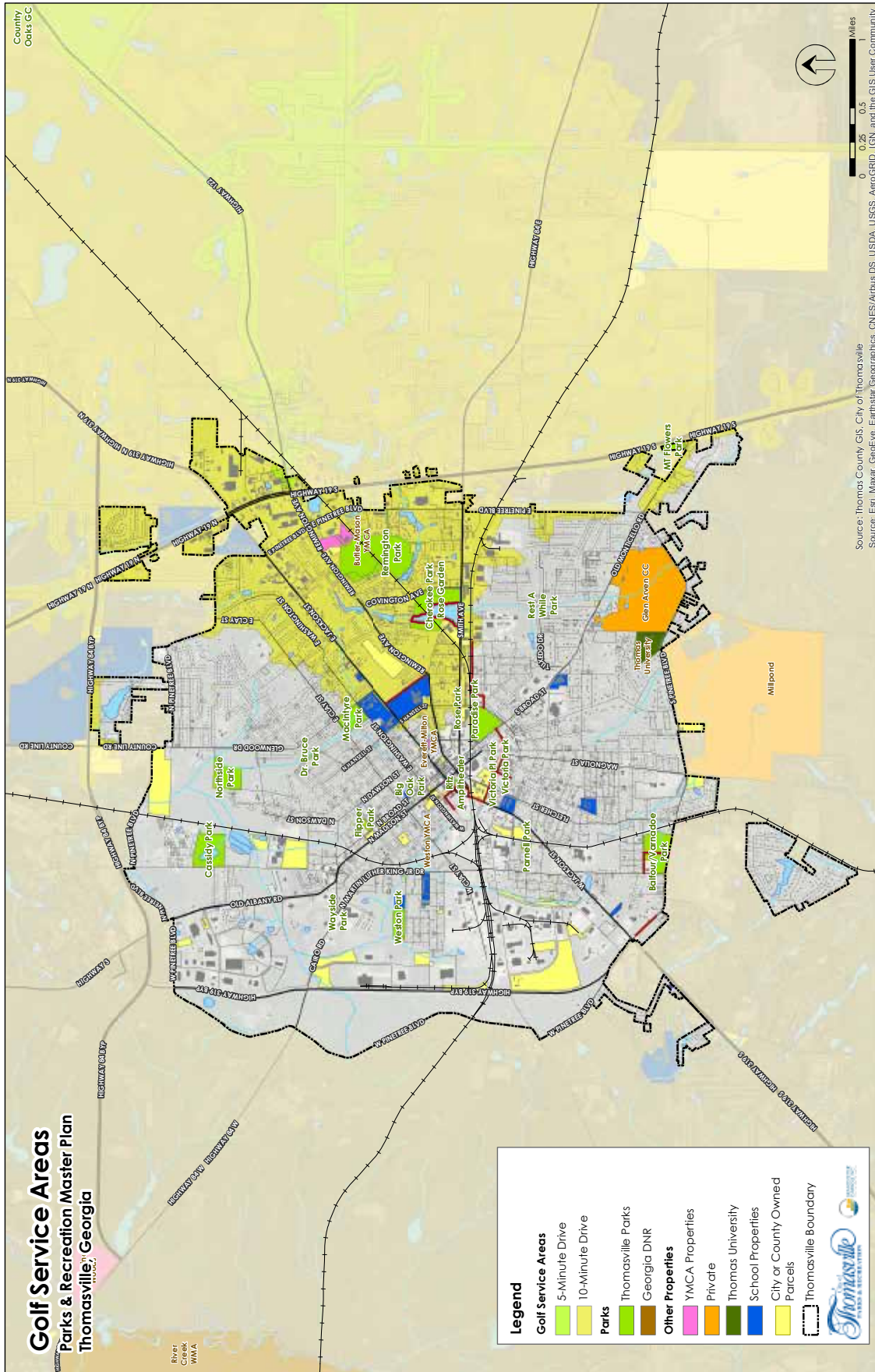


Figure 5.8: Tennis Service Areas

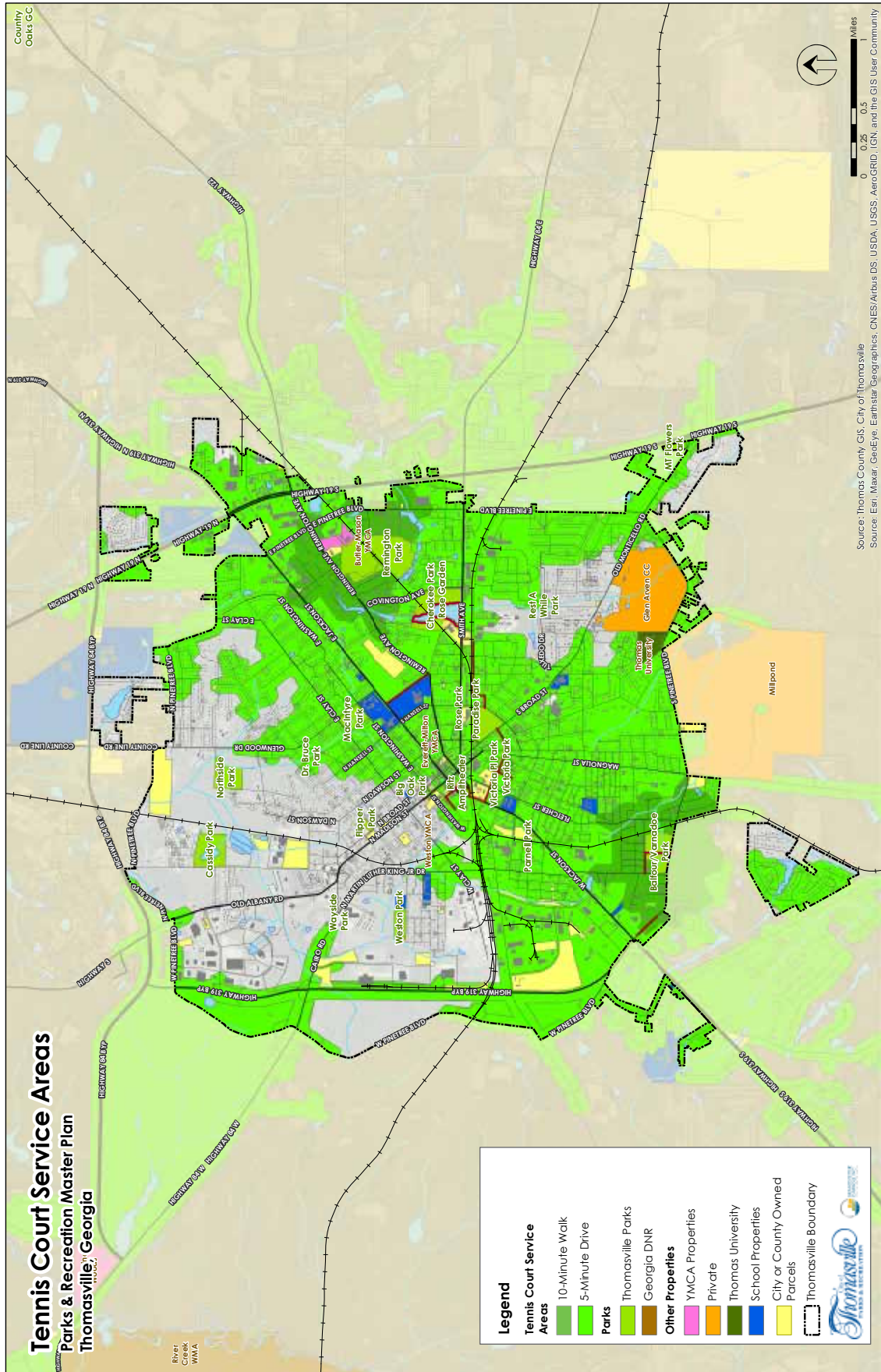


Figure 5.9: Disc Golf Service Areas

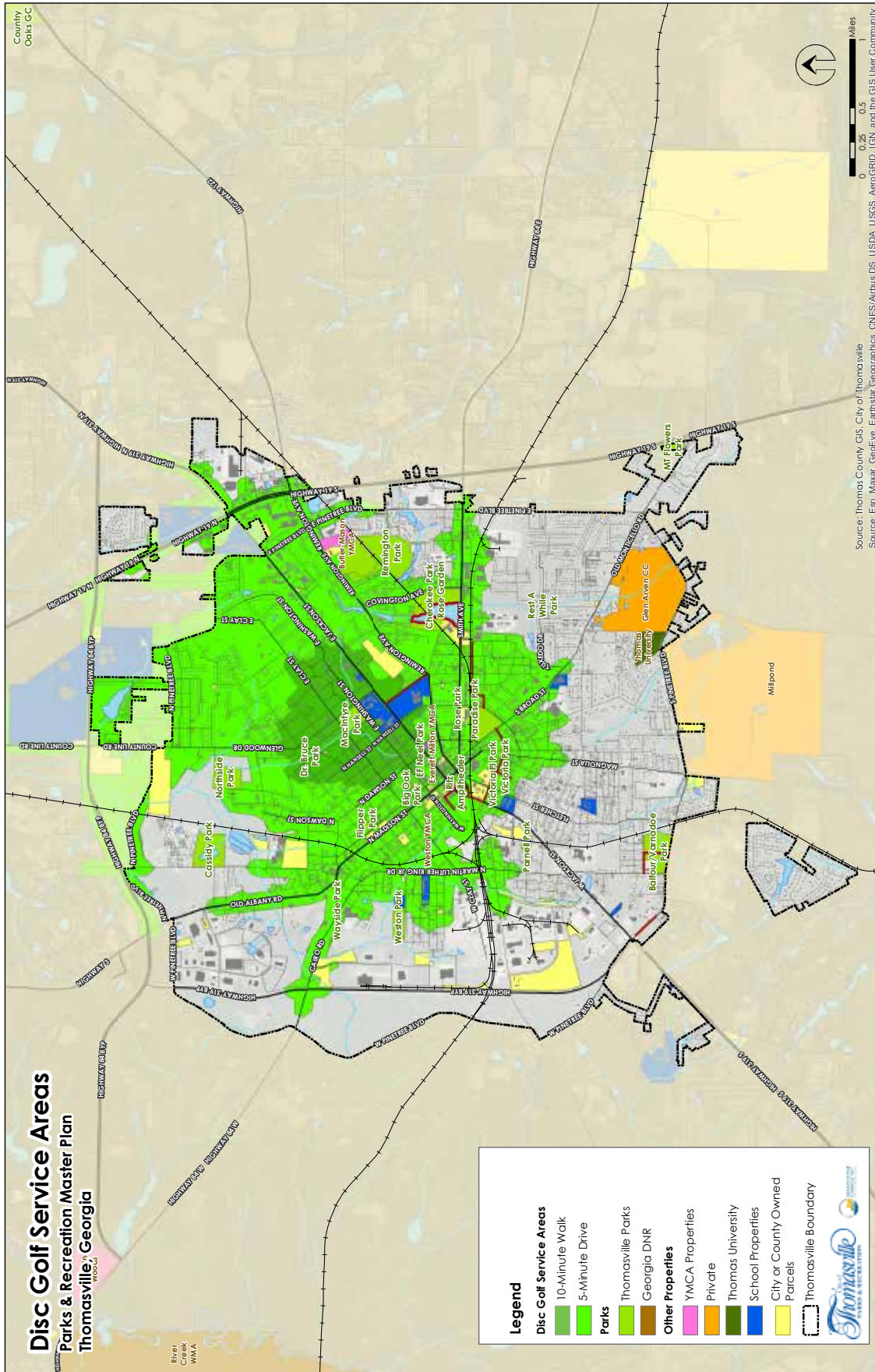


Figure 5.10: Trail Service Areas

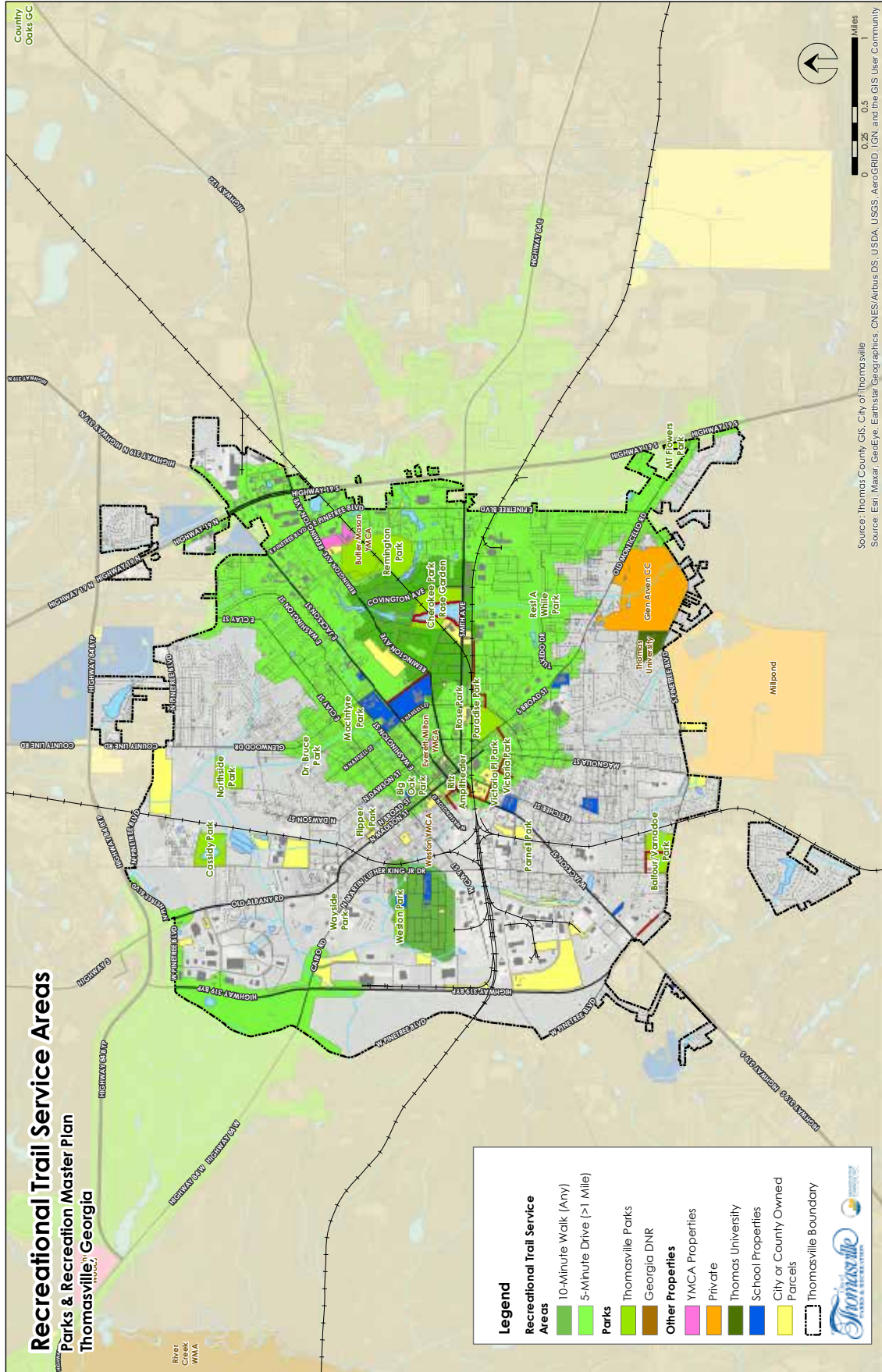


Figure 5.11: Dog Park Service Areas

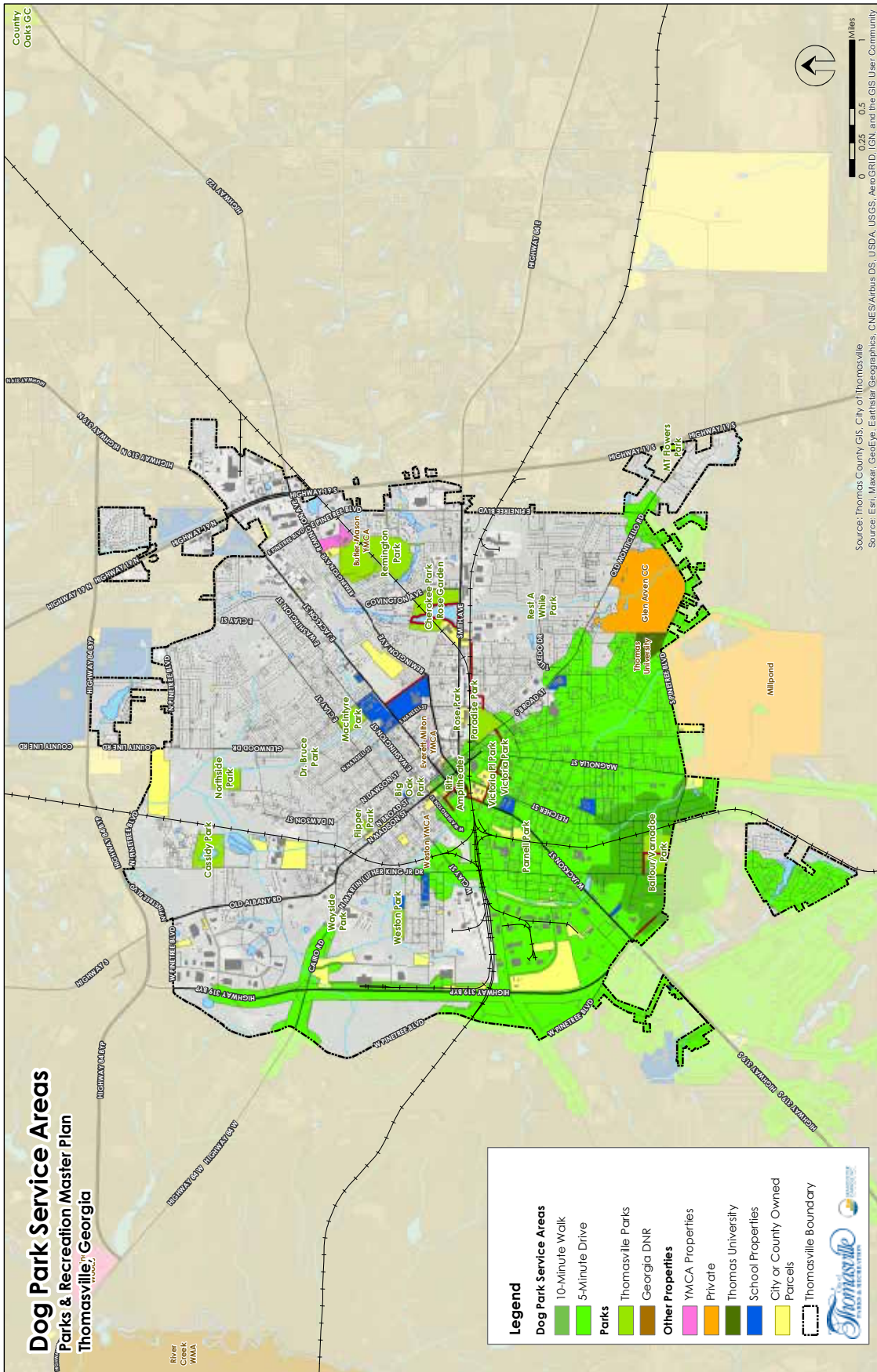


Figure 5.12: Amphitheater Service Areas

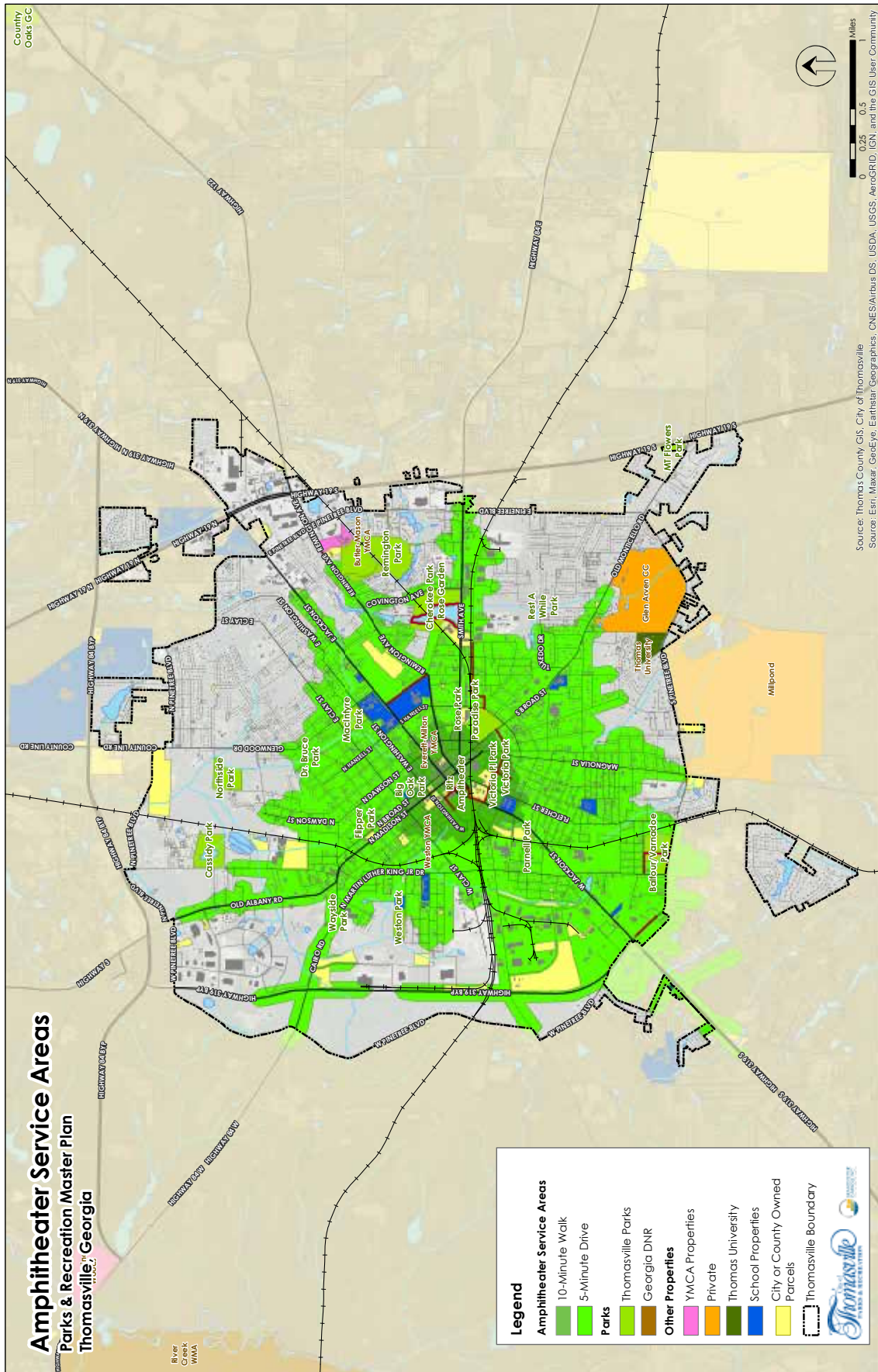
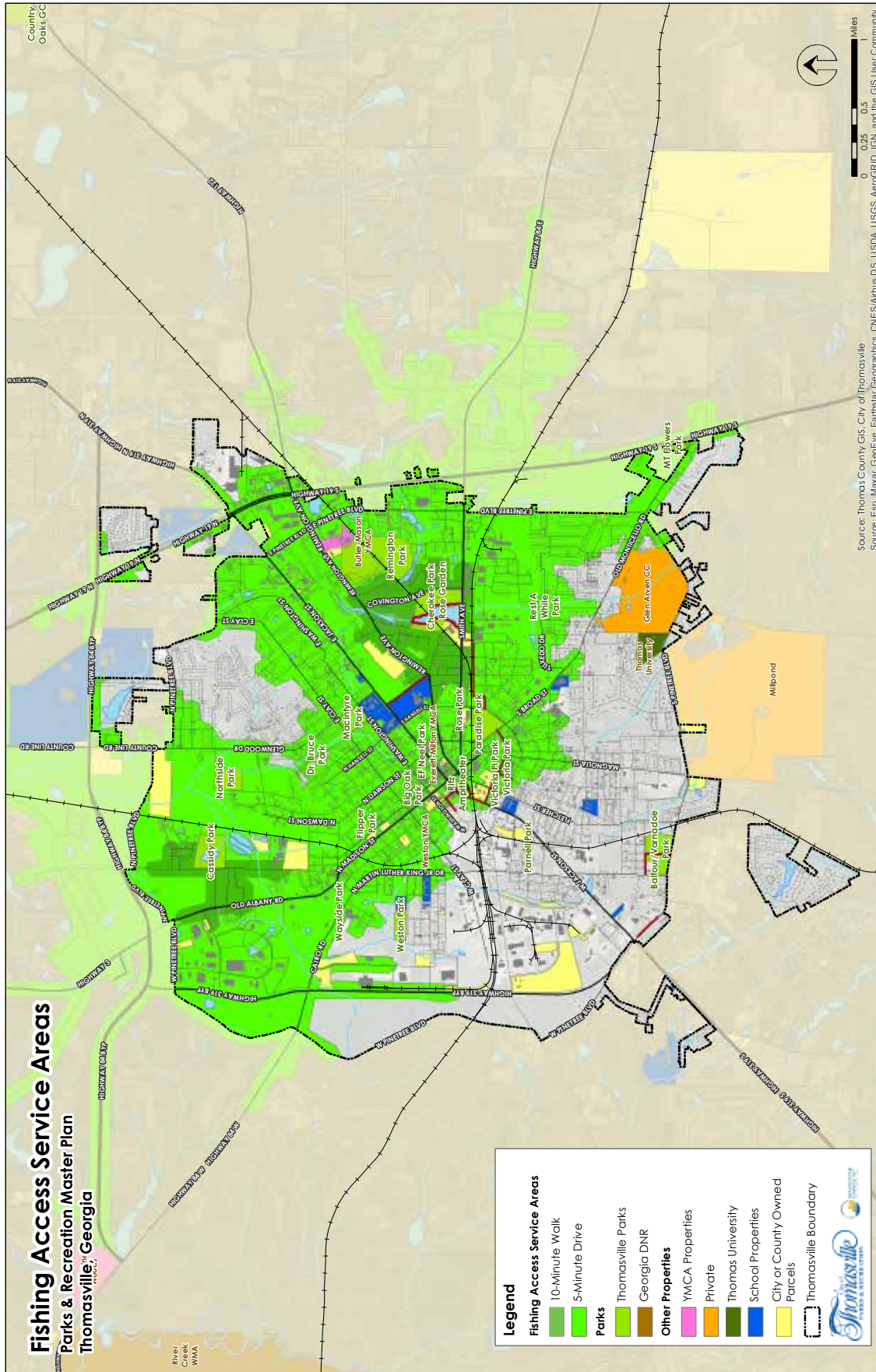


Figure 5.13: Fishing Service Areas



5.6 COMPOSITE GEOGRAPHIC PARK SERVICE AREAS

While the preceding text outlined the level of access to parks and facilities by geographic distribution and type, a composite analysis provides a more robust depiction of the level of service residents experience across the city. Service areas for 3 park classifications and 16 facilities (some not mapped in Section 5.5.) were assigned scores based on distance from the amenity (e.g., 5-minute drive vs. 10-minute walk), then GIS software (ArcGIS) was used to produce an overlay map with a combined score for all areas of Thomasville. Figure 5.14 shows the composite service areas for the city based on this multi-layered analysis. A more detailed description of the methodology can be found in Appendix A.

In the figure, blue indicates a higher level of service for parks and facilities per location (the deeper the shade, the better) while red areas have the lowest level of service (similarly, the deeper the red, the lower the service level). For example, a resident living within one of the dark blue areas would more likely be within a short walk to a park and/or many of the facilities previously described (e.g., ballfields and picnic shelters).

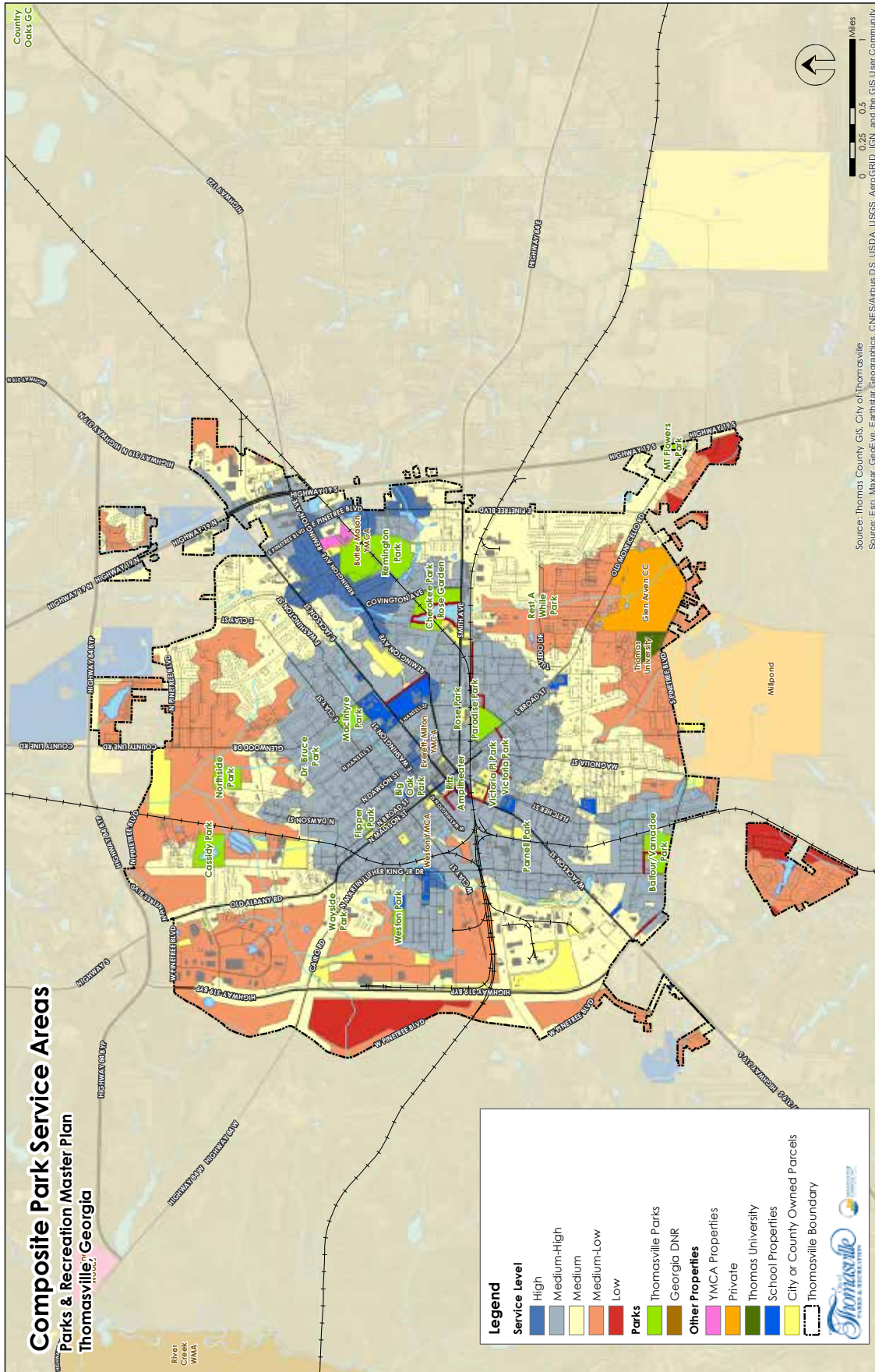
Areas with the highest composite level of service are anchored around Remington Park. Looking at population distribution, just 2% of the community enjoy a high level of service, but 44% have medium-high service levels. About a quarter live in each of the medium and medium-low areas (though there is less than 1% of the population living within the lowest service level). Looking at how the medium and medium-low service levels are dispersed in the city, there are sizeable areas of opportunity to improve service levels by adding amenities at existing parks.

Table 5.4 explores the service levels and population demographics in greater detail. About a quarter (28%) of the city's population lives at a medium level of service, with about three quarters at this level or above. **The areas with medium and medium-high levels of service have the lowest median household income (under \$40,000), indicating that these areas would benefit most from investment.** Diversity, median age, and the percent of children are similar between the various service levels.

Table 5.4: Population by Composite Service Area

Service Level (Rank)	Proportion at Composite Service Level			Median Household Income	Diversity Index	Median Age	Children
	Population	Cumulative Population	Cumulative Area				
High	2%	2%	4%	\$52,367	53.2	41.1	21%
Medium-High	44%	46%	35%	\$35,029	51.1	40.0	23%
Medium	28%	74%	69%	\$37,401	55.7	39.5	23%
Medium-Low	26%	100%	97%	\$51,150	55.8	40.0	25%
Low	0%	100%	100%	\$75,000	53.6	42.5	19%

Figure 5.14: Composite Park Service Areas



5.7 TRENDS IN PARKS AND RECREATION

The following text analyzes national trends in recreation, including types of activities and their associated facilities. First, a look at participation rates for various activities – using data from the Sport and Fitness Industry Association – then a deeper dive into the latest trends (relevant to Thomasville) occurring in programming and facilities across the nation.

There will be different emphasis and considerations particular to Thomasville, but also an exploration of overall patterns. Looking through a broader lens can provide insight into the origin and trajectory of more localized preferences. Understanding how trends in fitness, recreation, athletics, and cultural resources reflect in the parks and recreation industry illuminates present conditions and future possibilities in Thomasville. Equipped with industry context, the Thomasville Parks and Recreation Department can better sustain, expand, and realign its existing offerings.

5.7.1 Trends in Recreation Participation

The Sport and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) conducts an annual survey⁸ of individuals and households throughout the United States to determine participation in a variety of sports and fitness activities. By using a weighting technique, the survey produces results reflective of the total U.S. population age 6 and older; the 2020 sample consisted of 18,000 online interviews of households. The following text examines the findings of this SFIA report and connects relevant data to generate insights about Thomasville.

Figure 5.15 shows the difference in participation rates between generations for seven types of sports. The youngest generation (Gen Z) had the highest participation rates for Individual Sports (e.g., archery, skateboarding, golfing, etc.), Team Sports (e.g., baseball, ultimate frisbee, soccer, etc.), and Outdoor Sports (e.g., hiking, trail running, bicycling, etc.). With each generation, participation rates dropped as age increased with the exception of fitness space. The other three generational groups had high participation rates in Fitness Sports (e.g., barre, weight-training, kettlebells, etc.) The remaining three types of sports (Racquet, Winter, and Water Sports) have similar trends, Millennial's and Gen Z representing the highest levels of participation.

With growing percentages of Thomasville residents in the older two generations, demand for fitness sports programming is likely to increase into the future. Even though participation diminishes with age, outdoor sports remain popular with all age groups (39% of Boomers take advantage of outdoor sports). Team sports are far more popular with the youngest generation (56% Gen Z and only 4% Boomers).

Table 5.5 displays the 5-year participation rates for 55 different sports and fitness activities. This table also shows the 5-year annual growth rate and highlights which activities show either significant growth or decline in participation rates. The fastest growing sports are highlighted in blue; *pickleball*, *day hiking*, *trail running*, *BMX bicycling*, and *skateboarding* show the fastest rate of growth over the 5-year period.

Walking for fitness, *day hiking*, *free weights (hand weights)*, *running/jogging*, and *treadmill* have the largest number of participants. *Walking for fitness* has by far the greatest number of participants (over 100 million participants nationally). *Pickleball* and *hiking* are growing at the fastest rates (11% and 9%). Many of the top activities are oriented around trails (bicycling, ranked six). It is no surprise these facilities are in such high demand; Thomasville residents are not unusual in expressing their strong interest in trail-based activities.

⁸ The 2021 Topline Report for the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) is produced through the partnership of the Physical Activity Council (PAC), a collaboration of eight of the major trade associations in U.S. sports, fitness, and leisure industries.

Figure 5.15: Participation Rates by Generation

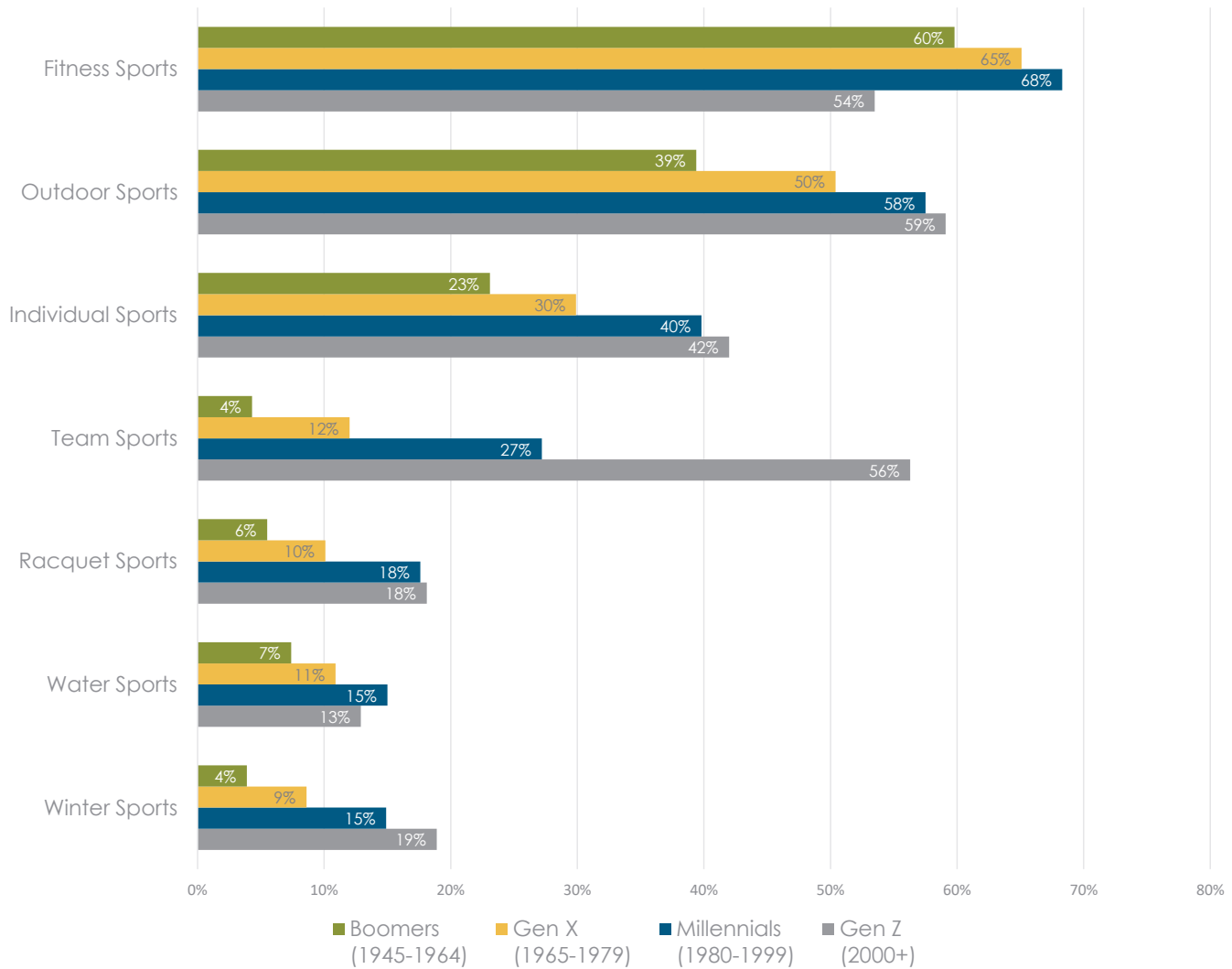


Table 5.5: Nationwide 5-Year History of Selected Sports Participation

Sport/Fitness Activity	Category	Participants (in Thousands)						5-Year Average Annual Growth
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Adventure Racing	Individual Sports	2,864	2,999	2,529	2,215	2,143	1,966	-7.0%
Aquatic Exercise	Aerobic Activities	8,226	10,575	10,459	10,518	11,189	10,954	3.7%
Archery	Individual Sports	8,378	7,903	7,769	7,654	7,449	7,249	-2.8%
Badminton	Racquet Sports	7,198	7,354	6,430	6,337	6,095	5,862	-3.9%
Baseball	Team Sports	13,711	14,760	15,642	15,877	15,804	15,731	2.8%
Basketball	Team Sports	23,410	22,343	23,401	24,225	24,917	27,753	3.6%
Bicycling (BMX)	Outdoor Activities	2,690	3,104	3,413	3,439	3,648	3,880	7.7%
Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)	Outdoor Activities	8,316	8,615	8,609	8,690	8,622	8,998	1.6%
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	Outdoor Activities	38,280	38,365	38,866	39,041	39,388	44,471	3.2%
Birdwatching (>¼ Mile from Home)	Outdoor Activities	13,093	11,589	12,296	12,344	12,817	15,228	3.5%
Cardio Tennis	Racquet Sports	1,821	2,125	2,223	2,499	2,501	2,503	6.8%
Cheerleading	Team Sports	3,608	4,029	3,816	3,841	3,752	3,308	-1.4%
Elliptical Motion Trainer	Aerobic Activities	32,321	32,218	32,283	33,238	33,056	27,920	-2.6%

Table 5.6: Nationwide 5-Year History of Selected Sports Participation (Continued)

Sport/Fitness Activity	Category	Participants (in Thousands)						5-Year Average Annual Growth
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Fishing (Fly)	Outdoor Activities	6,089	6,456	6,791	6,939	7,014	7,753	5.0%
Fishing (Freshwater)	Outdoor Activities	37,682	38,121	38,346	38,998	39,185	42,556	2.5%
Football (Flag)	Team Sports	5,829	6,173	6,551	6,572	6,783	7,001	3.8%
Football (Tackle)	Team Sports	6,222	5,481	5,224	5,157	5,107	5,054	-4.0%
Free Weights (Hand Weights)	Strength	54,716	51,513	5,217	51,291	51,450	53,256	-0.5%
Golf	Individual Sports	24,120	23,815	23,829	24,240	24,271	24,804	0.6%
Gymnastics	Team Sports	4,679	5,381	4,805	4,770	4,699	3,848	-3.2%
High Impact/Intensity & Training	Aerobic Activities	20,464	21,390	21,476	21,611	22,044	22,487	1.9%
Hiking (Day)	Outdoor Activities	37,232	42,128	44,900	47,860	49,697	57,808	9.3%
Ice Hockey	Team Sports	2,546	2,697	2,544	2,447	2,357	2,270	-2.2%
Ice Skating	Individual Sports	10,485	10,315	9,998	9,721	9,460	9,857	-1.2%
Kayaking (Recreational)	Water Sports	9,499	10,017	10,533	11,017	11,382	13,002	6.5%
Kayaking (White Water)	Water Sports	2,518	2,552	2,500	2,562	2,583	2,605	0.7%
Lacrosse	Team Sports	2,094	2,090	2,171	2,098	2,115	1,884	-2.0%
Martial Arts	Individual Sports	5,507	5,745	5,838	5,821	6,068	6,064	2.0%
Mixed Martial Arts for Fitness	Individual Sports	2,612	2,446	2,376	2,365	2,405	2,445	-1.3%
Pickleball	Racquet Sports	2,506	2,815	3,132	3,301	3,460	4,199	11.0%
Pilates Training	Conditioning	8,594	8,893	9,047	9,084	9,243	9,905	2.9%
Racquetball	Racquet Sports	3,883	3,579	3,526	3,480	3,453	3,426	-2.4%
Roller Hockey	Team Sports	1,907	1,929	1,834	1,734	1,616	1,500	-4.6%
Rugby	Team Sports	1,349	1,550	1,621	1,560	1,392	1,242	-1.2%
Running/Jogging	Aerobic Activities	48,496	47,384	50,770	49,459	50,052	50,652	0.9%
Scuba Diving	Water Sports	3,274	3,111	2,874	2,849	2,715	2,588	-4.6%
Skateboarding	Individual Sports	6,436	6,442	6,382	6,500	6,610	8,872	7.4%
Soccer (Outdoor)	Team Sports	12,646	11,932	11,924	11,405	11,913	12,444	-0.2%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	Team Sports	2,460	2,467	2,309	2,303	2,242	1,811	-5.6%
Softball (Slow-Pitch)	Team Sports	7,114	7,690	7,283	7,386	7,071	6,349	-2.1%
Stand Up Paddling	Water Sports	3,020	3,220	3,325	3,453	3,562	3,675	4.0%
Stationary Cycling	Aerobic Activities	35,553	36,118	36,035	36,668	9,930	6,054	-5.0%
Swimming for Fitness	Aerobic Activities	26,319	26,601	27,135	27,575	28,219	25,666	-0.4%
Swimming on a Team	Team Sports	2,892	3,369	3,007	3,045	2,822	2,615	-1.5%
Table Tennis	Racquet Sports	16,565	16,568	16,041	15,592	14,908	16,854	0.5%
Tai Chi	Conditioning	3,651	3,706	3,787	3,761	3,793	3,300	-1.8%
Tennis	Racquet Sports	17,963	18,079	17,683	17,841	17,684	21,642	4.2%
Trail Running	Individual Sports	8,139	8,582	9,149	10,010	10,997	11,854	7.8%
Treadmill	Aerobic Activities	50,398	51,872	52,966	53,737	56,823	49,832	0.0%
Track and Field	Team Sports	4,222	4,116	3,126	2,710	2,290	2,325	-1.0%
Triathlon (Traditional/Road)	Individual Sports	2,498	2,374	2,162	2,168	2,001	1,846	-5.8%
Ultimate Frisbee	Team Sports	4,409	3,673	3,126	2,710	2,290	2,325	-11.8%
Volleyball (Beach/Sand)	Team Sports	4,785	5,489	4,947	4,770	4,400	4,320	-1.7%
Bodyweight Exercise	Conditioning	22,146	25,110					N/A
Volleyball (Court)	Team Sports	6,423	6,216	6,317	6,317	6,487	5,410	-3.1%
Walking for Fitness	Aerobic Activities	109,829	107,895	110,805	111,001	111,439	114,044	0.8%
Weight/Resistance Machines	Strength	35,310	35,768	36,291	36,372	36,181	30,651	-2.6%
Yoga	Conditioning	25,289	26,268	27,354	28,745	30,456	32,808	5.4%

Legend

	>3% Increase
	1-3% Increase
	Minimal Change
	1-3% Decrease
	>3% Decrease

5.7.2 Aging Communities

Throughout the United States and in Thomasville, the median age of the population is increasing (currently 39.9 in Thomasville and 38.8 in the USA). The number of persons in the age group 65 and over is growing rapidly. Census data indicates that the percentage of the Thomasville population age 65 and older was 16% in 2000 but has reached 20% as of 2021 (see Chapter 2).

The relative health of these individuals is better than ever before, and they desire more active recreation than their predecessors. Senior centers are shifting from a focus on activities like card games to more active programming such as fitness activities and outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, and nature programs.

While the aging population should inspire parks and recreation agencies to invest more in activities, programs, and facilities for older users such as walking trails, fishing areas, community gardens, and cultural and nature education programs, many of these more involved and nature-oriented activities are appealing to all generations.

The big picture data is certainly mirrored at the local level in Thomasville. The survey and other forms of public engagement (see Chapter 4) show community support for expanding programs and facilities to accommodate residents age 50+ and older.

5.7.3 Universal Access

Many park systems are developing unique facilities that are designed to go well beyond the minimum requirement for the Americans with Disabilities Act. Park system administrators are uniquely positioned to set the best example for inclusivity – by creating an environment that is totally accessible to persons of all ages and abilities, parks and recreation agencies are changing the landscape not just physically but also culturally and in terms of mental health.

Some simple examples of physical treatments that go beyond the basic ADA requirements: textured edging on trails help to make the facilities more accessible for the visually impaired; fragrant plants and sensory gardens, as well as interactive displays provide a more hands-on approach to education and engagement; including therapeutic textures, ground-level features, and mobility-enhancing elements like ramps or bridges in playground equipment ensures all children – including those who are differently-abled – have space to play.

Universal access extends beyond the physical to include interpretive signage, buildings, and all programs. Providing barrier-free parks is an essential part of the process for any park improvement. Many equipment providers are available for exploring options; grant funding is potentially available.⁹ As some of the existing playgrounds in the city are in need of improvement and replacement, the city has a real opportunity to prioritize accessibility and universal access for the benefit of the community.

5.7.4 Fitness and Wellness

Both state and federal level agencies have placed strong emphasis on improving the health and fitness of individuals throughout the United States. Many local-level parks and recreation departments are building on this message.

Fitness facilities no longer have to be confined to indoor spaces; modern equipment exists that can be installed outdoors. Including outdoor fitness equipment in neighborhood and community parks can serve



Photo credit: The Conversation (2017)

"Why Communities Should Be Designing Parks for Older Adults"



Photo credit: Ann Arbor's Gallup Social Access Park (2017)

Ann Arbor's Universal Access Park

⁹ For example: <https://www.playandpark.com/funding/grant-opportunities> via PlayCore

as an alternative with added benefits of being outdoors. Thomasville has outdoor fitness equipment at Cherokee Park that more closely resemble what would be found at an indoor fitness center. This easy-to-use equipment could be installed at parks throughout the city at a modest cost. Potential locations include Remington and Balfour that have dated fitness course equipment that needs replacement.

Additionally, partnerships are key; many agencies collaborate with community health providers to offer fitness facilities and programs. The health benefits that can be provided by parks extend to mental health benefits as studies indicate that a connection to nature can relieve stress, improve interpersonal relationships, and improves mental health.¹⁰ **While the current partnership with the YMCA provides programming at Remington Park, new and expanded programming could be offered in partnership with other organizations and even businesses or departments within the city.**

5.7.5 Technology

The use of technology is becoming increasingly common in parks and recreation. Many park users want to remain connected while visiting parks and expect instant access to information about facilities and programs at those parks. They also want to be able to register for the events and programs they discover on their mobile device. While there may sometimes be concerns about distraction, especially in nature-oriented spaces, technology – when applied intentionally – can be a tool to enhance park experience. Considering the extent to which technology is part of many user experiences across sectors, it is likely going to be an element necessary to keep people – especially youth – engaged.

The use of technology in parks has many advantages. Wi-Fi access in parks enables users to stay connected via social media or other online activities, register for programming, and even interact more directly with staff (e.g., reporting maintenance issue or asking a question about scheduling). Installing device-charging benches gives people a place to keep those devices powered-up. Developing park-specific apps can inform visitors of opportunities at individual sites or systemwide. QR codes are yet another technological tool that visitors can use for quick access to information (e.g., tree and other plant identification, trail maps, park history and cultural context, park hours, etc.).

Employing technology in parks can supply helpful information for internal agency operations as well. For example, Wi-Fi hotspots record the number of connections or searches to create a picture of visitation trends.¹¹ Or, beacon counters can detect cellphone signals to help determine the number of users in an area.¹² Sensors along paths can distinguish between walkers, runners, and cyclists, as well as numbers for visitation frequency. Collectively, this type of data can describe information about popular visitation times, success of new features, and other descriptors.

Finally, social media is a means for interaction between parks users, parks staff, and the park itself. When visitors post to social web platforms, they assist with park promotion and help to encourage future use. Park agencies and staff have employed social media as a “crowd-sourced, data-gathering tool” for things like monitoring wildlife or vegetation, reporting invasive species, and identifying condition of trails.



Photo credit: Kennesaw, GA Parks and Recreation

Wellness Station



Photo credit: mycountyparks.org, Denison, IA

Smart Trail Signage, Denison, IA

¹⁰ National Recreation and Park Association, “Health and Wellness,” <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Health-and-Wellness/>, (April 8, 2019)

¹¹ National Recreation and Park Association, “Parks Using Technology to Engage and Inspire,” <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2017/may/parks-using-technology-to-engage-and-inspire/>. (May 1, 2017)

¹² Dolesh, R. J. (2019, January). Top Trends in Parks and Recreation for 2019. Parks & Recreation.

The department does not yet maintain an active social media presence, although the city page provides some promotion of parks and recreation through Facebook. Keeping social media platforms relevant with varied posts (e.g., video content, informational flyers, community polls, etc.) will be helpful for attracting followers and expanding impact. These posts would provide the department with additional means of gathering information on park condition, plant health, visitation levels, and more. Additionally, the city could extend its effort to provide public Wi-Fi into at least some of the parks.

5.7.6 Geocaching

Geocaching is a technology-based activity that has been growing in popularity since the early 2000s, when GPS technology improved significantly. Participants travel to local parks and open spaces to hunt for objects previously hidden by others using a set of coordinates and a digital GPS device (typically on a smart phone). Once found, participants generally exchange the now-discovered item for a new item, guaranteeing future use of the same geocache. The search can have varying levels of complexity – one cache leads to another or a puzzle must be completed.¹³



Photo credit: Thomasville History Geocaching Series

Geocache found at Piney Woods

Geocaches are already present at various locations in Thomasville, including in some of the city parks. Flipper Park, The Big Oak, and the Rose Garden are home to geocaches hosted by the Thomasville History Geocaching Series who also host 15 other caches in the area. So far, 2,825 geocaches have been found as of August 11, 2022 according to the group.¹⁴

The department has not yet provided guidelines for geocachers; Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites' "Leave No Trace" principles serve as a great locally relevant example for how best to participate in geocaching. Opportunities may also exist for the city to promote and encourage this activity by creating their own caches or organizing community geocaching events.

5.7.7 Environmental Education

There is a need for expanded environmental education and parks and recreation agencies have a considerable role to play. Environmental education centers throughout the country are having great success as communities are seeking out better access to engage with and learn from their natural environment. Potential subjects include natural processes, resource management, and wildlife habitats.



Photo Credit: Environmental Education Center of Lord Stirling Park, Basking Ridge, NJ

Environmental Education Center at Lord Stirling Park, Basking Ridge, NJ

Environmental education cultivates understanding of the benefits of natural habitats and open spaces (including those in Thomasville). Many park departments develop outreach strategies to bring environmental curriculum into schools. Not only does this outreach promote and encourage greater use and appreciation of local parks in the community, but it also creates opportunity for collaboration between organizations, institutions, and advocacy groups and it helps instill a lasting connection to the natural world.

Nature education engages all ages and abilities; nature-oriented programs can create space for intergenerational encounters. Creating environmental education opportunities that appeal to the community

¹³ National Recreation and Park Association, "How to Leverage Geocaching to Promote Park and Recreation Events," <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2017/october/how-to-leverage-geocaching-to-promote-park-and-recreation-events/>. (October 5, 2017)

¹⁴ Thomasville History Geocaching Series, "Thomasville history geocaching series: Small town family fun," <https://louiscarter01.wixsite.com/tvillehistoryseries/copy-of-about>. (August 26, 2022)

involves considering formats like guided hikes, camps, community events, field trips, or special-interest classes and topics such as habitat restoration, wildlife identification, or invasive species removal.

Currently, the closest facility offering nature education programming is about 20 minutes southwest of the city at Birdsong Nature Center who offer 565 acres of wildlife, 10 miles of trails, and programs for both youth and adults. Thomasville Parks and Recreation offers natural areas at Cassidy Road Park and Cherokee Park. These sites could potentially host remarkable nature education programs. River Creek Wildlife Management Area and Lost Creek Forest also represent potential locations through partnerships.

The lack of indoor program space makes offering educational classes more challenging, but programs can potentially be held at some of the picnic shelters.



Fall Botany walk

5.7.8 Birdwatching (or Birding)

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service nearly 50 million Americans participate in birdwatching (as of 2011) or about 20 percent of the population. The most common form of birding is watching birds near one's home; however, 38% of birders, or 18 million people, participate in birding away from the home. Participants in birdwatching tend to be older and more highly educated than the general population.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report also includes analysis of the economic impact of birdwatching activities. Birdwatchers direct substantial amounts of dollars into the economy because of trip-related (\$15 million) and equipment expenditures (\$26 million). The report finds that the birding industry, including indirect effects resulting from the multiplier effect, generates over \$100 billion annually throughout the United States and supports 666,000 jobs. These expenditures lead to an additional \$6 million in state tax revenues and \$7 million in federal tax revenues.¹⁵



In Thomasville, there are several spots to go birdwatching and a few organizations that host birding events such as the Pebble Hill Plantation's annual "Great Backyard Bird Count." The checklists created from this event are submitted to researchers at the National Audubon Society, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Birds Canada. In 2018, the city hosted a free tour at the Lost Creek Forest with Jim Cox, director of the Stoddard Bird Lab and Vertebrate Ecology at Tall Timbers Research Station. **Thomasville Parks and Recreation should consider more formal relationships with local Audubon Society members and others for collaborating to provide expanded birding opportunities.**

5.7.9 Environmental Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Many communities utilize parks as examples of best management practices (BMPs) to serve as models for minimizing environmental impacts and maximizing the sustainability of both park sites and operations. Parks and recreation departments are in great positions to lead in the implementation of these practices because they are typically among the largest landowners (if not the largest) in their jurisdictions. To assist in the implementation of these practices, some park departments establish manuals detailing the BMPs which are generally divided into categories. Some potential categories include (with examples):

- Site Selection (which properties to acquire and protect)
- Design (strategies for management of stormwater, water quality, riparian/wetland buffers; use of vegetation; choice of building materials)

¹⁵ Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis, Addendum to the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2013.

- Construction (controlling of pollutants, soil restoration, recycling of construction materials)
- Operation and Maintenance (practices for water conservation, use of organics, weed control, composting, energy use, etc.)
- Programs and Special Events (consider carrying capacity of facility, provide recycling receptacles)

Thomasville's Big Oak is one example of how the city's unique park system needs clearly established guidelines and standards for maintenance, preservation, and environmental protection. The Big Oak is a protected tree and became registered in 1936 as the 49th member of the National Live Oak Society. Applying these same principles to other natural areas and parks in the city will be essential for responsible development. Furthermore, the department can establish high-quality, sustainable long-term land management by proactively setting and adhering to its own best practices.



The Big Oak

The *Stormwater Master Plan*, prepared concurrently but separate from this plan, should provide guidance for BMPs for managing stormwater that could be utilized in city parks. Thomasville can use its parks as examples of potential practices. These improvements can also provide educational opportunities using interpretive signage.

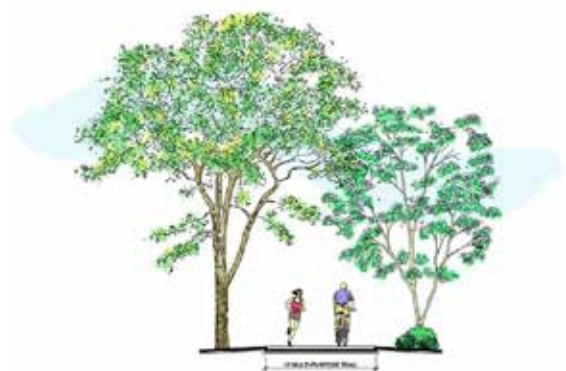
5.7.10 Trails and Connectivity

Demand for trails, trail linkages, and pathways that connect parks, open spaces, and other destination sites (like downtown districts) has been growing all over the U.S., including Thomasville. Where surveys have been conducted there is a high level of demand for connectivity. Communities with existing and extensive trail systems express pride and continued desire to build trails between neighborhoods and develop pathways to schools, shopping areas, other community attractions, and neighborhoods. Livable communities where residents report a high quality of life generally have robust trail systems and reliable connectivity that support active, engaged lifestyles.



Don Valley Bike Trails

The expressed need for trails – both for recreational use and for transportation – was conveyed clearly through the public input process. Thomasville already has a variety of paved and unpaved trails throughout the park system, as well as considerable community involvement and support for trail connectivity. The Thomasville Community Trail project will help to increase the level of connectivity throughout the city and to the parks system. The trail project is proposed to connect 17 parks via a 10-foot wide walking/biking trails. When constructing trails, sidewalks, parking areas, or bike facilities within the parks, the department should consider the location of the Community Trail and where it is planned to enter each park.



Cross-Section: Thomasville Community Trail Master Plan

5.7.11 Nature Play Areas

Many parks and recreation agencies are placing increased emphasis on the availability of nature play areas and programming for children. The Natural Learning Initiative (NLI) and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) recently released a document titled *Nature Play & Learning Places*, which provides a series of national guidelines for the creation of places for children to interact with nature. The guidelines are meant to support communities in providing opportunities for children to learn about their natural environment and to develop healthy active habits. The guidelines also encourage incorporating natural materials like plants, stones, water, fallen trees, etc. to augment sensory experience and facilitate tactile play. According to the guidelines, a nature play or learning place is:



Natural Play Structure (Silver Falls State Park – Oregon)

“A designated, managed area in an existing or modified outdoor environment where children of all ages and abilities play and learn by engaging with and manipulating diverse natural elements, materials, organisms, and habitats, through sensory, fine motor and gross motor experiences.”¹⁶

The following are examples of nature play features.

Natural Play Structures

Permanent play structures can be constructed from natural materials such as logs and rocks. The guidelines recommend engaging local children to generate ideas. It is best to use indigenous (native) materials in the design to ensure longevity.

Multipurpose Lawns

Multipurpose lawns, depending on size, can support a wide variety of activities and events. These lawns can be utilized for programmed and unprogrammed play for both large and small groups.

Meadows and Woodlands

Meadows or fields of native grasses, flowers, and non-woody plants provide ecosystems where children – and even their caretakers can explore and observe wildlife, especially insects and birds. These landscapes stimulate curiosity and offer dynamic learning moments in ways that a carefully managed lawn cannot.

Woodlands also offer diverse ecosystems similarly prime for creating quality educational and play experiences. Visitors can witness natural processes like seasonal change, photosynthesis, and animal behavior.

Vegetable Gardens

Hands-on garden beds give visitors opportunities to participate in the growth of vegetables, herbs, and other edible plants, not to mention the benefit of tasting fresh produce. Children can discover different kinds of fresh food, learn more about what it takes to grow from seed, and better understand the source of the food they eat.



Vegetable Gardens

¹⁶ Moore, R. (2014). *Nature Play & Learning Places*. Creating and managing places where children engage with nature. Raleigh, NC: Natural Learning Initiative and Reston, VA: National Wildlife Federation. Version 1.6. (pages vii, 5, 7-8, 51, 65, 71-83).

Aquatics

Existing natural streams, ponds, wetlands, and marshes give children and others a chance to witness the dynamic cycles of water, weather, and the geology of a place. If not present naturally, these elements can be constructed to replicate these phenomena. Children can have multi-sensory interactions and even encounter new types of living creatures.

Gathering and Performance Structures

It is a vital role of parks to give community space to gather. These structures – decks, patios, or gazebos – encourage social interaction and can be utilized for programming. To accommodate performances, these spaces can include things like stages, campfire circles, and amphitheater seating. These settings are also useful for team-building and group presentations.¹⁷

Opportunities in Thomasville

Thomasville has many opportunities to utilize the existing park system to implement the above nature play areas. Victoria Park for example, functions as a multipurpose lawn for the surrounding residents/neighborhood. Cassidy Park could provide access to both meadow and woodland with aquatic opportunities for learning and play through programming, educational signage, and future development. Partnership with the Thomasville Garden Club could prove to be beneficial when pursuing community gardens that are available to the public. When pursuing future development of the existing system, analysis should be conducted to incorporate nature play features that cater to each park's unique characteristics.

5.7.12 Mountain Bike and BMX Facilities

Off-road bicycling activities are growing in popularity, although they still represent a relatively small percentage of all bicycling activities. Modern mountain biking (MTB) originated in the 1970s in California with a group of enthusiasts who modified existing bikes for off-road use. These cyclists organized first downhill races which they called “Repack.” This name referred to the need to “repack” the brakes with fresh grease after each race due to the excessive heat from braking during the descent.¹⁸

During the early years of mountain biking, enthusiasts used single-track trails intended for hiking as bikes were not specifically forbidden from using these trails. However, as the sport gained in popularity, bikes have been banned from most hiking trails, and single-track trails designed specifically for mountain bikes have been established.¹⁹ More recently, a new style of trail called a “flow trail” has appeared which provides more predictable surfaces, banked turns, and a lack of obstacles. These trails require little peddling and minimal braking that appeal to a wider variety of users, including families. These trails can be designed to allow beginners to bypass any more technical trails.²⁰

Another trend in off-road bicycle facilities is the pump track. These tracks, which began to appear in the 2000s, are looping tracks that can be ridden continuously without the need to pedal. A user's speed is dependent on “pumping” the terrain transitions of the track. A pump track requires



Flow Trail



Pump Track

¹⁷ Moore, R. (2014). Nature Play & Learning Places. Creating and managing places where children engage with nature. Raleigh, NC: Natural Learning Initiative and Reston, VA: National Wildlife Federation. Version 1.6. (pages vii, 5, 7-8, 51, 65, 71-83).

¹⁸ Marin Museum of Bicycling, “Mountain Biking History,” <http://mmbhof.org/mtn-bike-hall-of-fame/history/>, (April 8, 2019).

¹⁹ Singletracks, “Visiting the Birthplace of Mountain Biking: Marin County, California,” <http://www.singletracks.com/blog/mtb-trails/visiting-the-birthplace-of-mountain-biking-marin-county-california/>, (April 8, 2019).

²⁰ IMBA, “Flow Trails,” <https://www.imba.com/model-trails/flow-trails/>, (April 15, 2016).

approximately 50' by 50' of space (minimum) and generally feature a series of rollers and steeply bermed corners.²¹ Unlike many of the other off-road facilities, pump tracks are usable by both mountain bike and BMX riders.

Thomasville does not currently offer any mountain biking facilities; however, opportunities to develop such facilities may be available through partnerships with other agencies that own large undeveloped properties. Mountain bike trails were among the top 10 facilities desired according to the online survey.

5.7.13 Splash Pads or Spraygrounds

Splash pads or spraygrounds are a growing trend in aquatics. Many agencies are replacing pools with these accessible water attractions. When compared to pools, spraygrounds have several benefits. First, lack of standing water means lifeguards are not needed, reducing operating costs significantly. In many instances, spraygrounds recirculate water, but flow-through systems are also used when availability of water is not limited. In both cases, maintenance is required, but the demand is greatly reduced compared to a swimming pool. When built conscientiously, spraygrounds and splash pads achieve significantly better universal accessibility.

Thomasville Parks and Recreation does not offer any aquatic facilities, including splash pads, although the YMCA offers three pools (2 outdoor, 1 indoor). Based on public input, residents desire more aquatic amenities. Splash pads ranked as one of the top three most desired facilities in the survey and were a top request at the open house workshop. The best locations for splash pads are larger, centrally located parks that are accessible by most of the community.



5.7.14 Dog Parks

Dog parks are in ever-increasing demand throughout the country. These spaces help to improve the interaction skills of dogs, while also providing social opportunities for dog owners. Quality dog parks require careful planning and an ongoing operating budget to ensure adequate maintenance and upkeep.

Optimally, a dog park is at least three acres in size and includes three separate areas: for large dogs, for small dogs, and a rotating unused area to allow for regeneration of turf. Some dog parks include an additional area for agility and training. Many dog parks are larger, reaching well over 10 acres in size. Typical quality amenities include shade, seating, water (for both human and animal), and restrooms.



Photo: Commercial recreation specialists

²¹ Adventure Sports Journal, "Pumpin': An Introduction to the World of Pump Tracks," <http://adventuresportsjournal.com/pumpin-an-introduction-to-the-world-of-pump-tracks/>, (April 8, 2019).

Thomasville currently offers one dog park at Balfour Park. While this dog park is a decent size, it consumes much of the park and needs consistent maintenance. According to the public input, there is a need for upgrades to the facility, and the location is not convenient to many residents.

5.7.15 Creative Placemaking

The Trust for Public Land – a nonprofit organization with a mission to bring high-quality parks within a 10-minute walk of every person in the U.S. – is a leading champion of creative placemaking as a strategy for affecting change. Creative placemaking is a collaborative, community-based process that captures the power of art, vibrancy of local heritage, and potential of place to build memorable spaces rooted in culture and local identity. Parks and recreation agencies around the nation offer community connection in physical and social forms; creative-placemaking is just another tool for ensuring successful parks that equitably reflect the people who use them.²² Many agencies partner with local entities (like other government departments, nonprofits, schools, places of worship, art institutions, and other groups) to put in place opportunities for resident-led installations, programs, and events.

Creative-placemaking can take countless forms. It may look like an outdoor sculpture walk at the center of the neighborhood park featuring resident and local artists' work. It might be an annual arts performance downtown that showcases immigrant and refugee cultures in the community. It can also be as low-profile as a pollinator garden including interpretive signage about the plants chosen and why. Whatever it may look like, it is essential that the community be inclusively integrated into every phase: ideation, selection (of artist(s), piece(s), feature(s), etc.), installation, activation, and long-term care.

When parks and recreation agencies prioritize local traditions, cultural identities, and native resources, making sure these are reflected in program and facility offerings, users will be more likely to participate and do their part to sustain the system. A reciprocal relationship forms, where community engages with parks and recreation to the extent that parks and recreation seeks to provide place-based resources.

Thomasville could include creative placemaking into any future park improvement by incorporating it into the planning process. It provides an opportunity to make every park unique and to build and connect community around these parks. The arts community in Thomasville and the surrounding area is vibrant and growing. Groups like Thomasville Center for The Arts could provide beneficial partnership. With clear expectations, fair compensation, and meaningful engagement, the arts community in Thomasville has the power to enliven the city's parks and community spaces.

5.7.16 Golf Courses

Since 2003, there has been a consistent annual decline in the number of golf players across the nation.²³ Additionally, according to research conducted by the National Golf Foundation, there has been a corresponding 11% contraction in course supply (i.e., more and more golf courses are closing). And even as participation and number of courses decline, youth and young adults represent one of the sport's largest consumer segments, and the percentages of golfers who are women or people of color (either junior participants, beginners, or off-course players) have increased.²⁴ The golf industry is experiencing changes

²² Trust for Public Land, Creative Placemaking, <https://www.tpl.org/our-work/creative-placemaking>

²³ Crompton, John L. NRPA. Implications of the Rise and Decline of Golf. June 25, 2020. <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/july/implications-of-the-rise-and-decline-of-golf/>

²⁴ National Golf Foundation. 2020 Golf Industry Facts. 2021. <https://www.ngf.org/golf-industry-research/>



Photo credit: Madisonville Creative Placemaking Billifer Studio



Photo credit: Madisonville Creative Placemaking Billifer Studio

Creative Placemaking in the Madisonville Neighborhood of Cincinnati (2015)

that have been in motion since the 1990s, and while the pandemic year of 2020 brought a renewed surge in participation, municipalities have significant reason to reimagine their golf courses.

In light of these shifts in the golf industry, of which there are myriad explanations and causes, many communities are flexing their creativity by finding ways to adapt. For example, some communities are bringing new types of recreation into their golf courses: installing FootGolf holes,²⁵ organizing 5k runs (like the PGA Golf Club in Port St. Lucie, FL and in Romeoville, IL),²⁶ and even programming the course with activities like group birdwatching (like in Seabrook Island, SC)²⁷ and community movie nights.²⁸ Any of these opportunities can be scheduled outside peak operation hours and during off-season months (e.g., fall and winter) to ensure there is no interference. Other ideas departments can pursue include hosting temporary disc golf tournaments or nature tours. By creating more reasons for people to be at the golf course, a parks and recreation department can better expand the consumer base served by the site, both increase and diversify its audience, and potentially explore additional pathways of revenue generation.

To continue providing service, the Country Oaks Golf Course needs some degree of intervention. The existing golf course, while providing all of the department's revenue, is experiencing some age related and design related problems. The course currently has drainage issues, and the position of the driving range allows balls to land in the roadway which can be dangerous. Implementing the previously prepared *Golf Course Renovation Master Plan* would be a great start to improving the course. The increase in attendance since the pandemic in 2020 only strengthens the need to keep the facility in operation.

5.7.17 Drones

Since the late 2000s, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) has increased tremendously. Used for both military and civilian purposes, these devices are having a considerable impact on parks and recreation agencies nationwide. A contentious activity, tensions exist around safety, privacy, and environmental impact, as well as applications (professional and recreational) like habitat and wildlife monitoring, photography, and map-making.

Popularity of drones is only growing, but regulations at the federal, state, and local levels have been slow to prevent, mitigate, or manage negative impacts. Many cities have enacted no-fly zones and other restrictions which means UAV-users – licensed or not – have limited available spaces. This then has led drone pilots to look to parks and public open space for flying opportunities.



Requiring permits (day or seasonal) and designating fly areas with set times for flying are tactics agencies are using. These measures help legitimize UAV use and maintain safe park spaces; permitting is also a potential revenue opportunity. Since drone use is only increasing, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) offers useful insight into the future of drone-use in parks:

"[P]ark agencies will face increasing public pressure to look at allowing hobbyist flights and commercial-use drones in parks... By creating stronger guidelines and policies about how to fly drones in parks instead of adopting blanket restrictions, parks can give people an outlet and place to fly recreationally. New programming and events can be planned around drones, bringing in visitors and related businesses that benefit the parks...[K]eep it focused on safety and respect for all parties. [A]cceptance will protect the public and park resources and enable an exciting new form of recreation to take place."²⁹

²⁵ <https://www.footgolfusa.org/courses> and <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/footgolf-at-picadome>

²⁶ <https://mistwoodgc.com/taco-trot> and <https://www.morningread.com/industry/release/2018-11-14/pga-golf-club-to-host-5k-run-walk>

²⁷ Audubon International. <https://www.golfandenvironment.org/birdwatchopenindex.htm>; Tidelines. Seabrook Island, SC. 2020. <https://tidelinesblog.com/2020/06/24/birding-is-back-on-the-golf-course/>

²⁸ Fairway Flicks at Lakeside in Lexington, KY. <https://www.facebook.com/lexkyparks/posts/2752061244823114/>

²⁹ Wootton, Courtney; Bradley, Michael J.; Ray Neal NRPA. Drones in Parks: It's All About Perspective. <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2018/december/drones-in-parks-its-all-about-perspective/>

Thomasville does not have a designated location for launching drones and lacks an official policy for flying them in the parks. As their popularity continues to increase, the city will likely need to designate such an area, as well as formulate and post a policy for (or against) use of drones within the park system.

5.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an assessment of needs for parks and recreation services in Thomasville. The analysis indicates a variety of parks and facilities are located throughout Thomasville; however, not all amenities are evenly distributed or easily accessible.

The level of service standards outlined at the start of this chapter – and developed using public input from residents of Thomasville – provide foundational guidelines for the quantity of parks, open space, and recreation facilities needed in Thomasville. Overall, there is demand for more trails (paved and natural), upgraded and maintained amenities, additional programming, and community events. In terms of programming, fitness classes, nature programs, farmers markets, outdoor movies, and concerts/art performances rose to the top of the list according to public input.

The geographic analysis of service areas identifies potential areas to target for investment in additional parks and recreation facilities. The mapping analysis shows higher levels of service in the central portion of the city, generally, with lower service levels in northern and southeastern Thomasville. **The findings described above, combined with public input requesting additional programming and improved spaces, underscore the need for improvements to existing parks and some additional programming opportunities; these pursuits should be the highest priorities for Parks and Recreation as the department determines its path forward.**

Responsive improvements, upgrades, and sustainable maintenance must be the focus, even as some proactive development is explored, to ensure comprehensive quality of life improvements for residents of and visitors to Thomasville. Thomasville is in a good position to confront many of the trends discussed in this chapter that have not yet been addressed. The aging population of Thomasville presents additional incentive for the city to address many of these trends, including fitness programming, community events, universal access, nature education, and expansion of trails.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The *2023 Thomasville Parks and Recreation Master Plan* represents a collective imagination of the future. While the action plan component (Chapter 8) is a detailed account of all the recommendations developed – both operational and capital – to guide investment priorities, the strategic plan component in this chapter is intended to provide the department with a clearly defined purpose and underlying motivation for tackling those action items.

Developed out of all the input gathered during the engage phase, and with full support of the steering committee, this strategic plan articulates a freshly inspired vision, mission, and set of defining values. These strategic elements will help pilot implementation of actions identified in this Master Plan, and thereby shape the future of parks and recreation in Thomasville. Also included at the end of this chapter are goals and objectives. These are incorporated later in the master plan to categorize and better define the wide range of recommendations in the action plan.

These strategic plan elements – vision, mission, goals, and subsequent objectives – will be instrumental for bringing the department's new vision and mission to life.

6.2 VISION

6.2.1 Purpose of a Vision

A vision describes a unique horizon, an intended outcome. It defines a clear standard of accomplishment and in so doing, helps unify effort. A vision should:

1. Provide clear direction
2. Focus effort
3. Guide long-term action
4. Illustrate the department's purpose
5. Inspire and motivate
6. Visualize an ideal

6.2.2 Proposed Vision for Thomasville Parks and Recreation

Fully informed by the values and visioning input generated by the steering committee, and with their support and approval, the following vision statement was crafted for Thomasville Parks and Recreation.

Exceptional parks and memorable experiences are accessible for everyone

6.3 MISSION

6.3.1 Purpose of a Mission

A mission defines the daily work and an enduring purpose. More specifically, a mission should answer questions like what the department does, how, and why it does this. The mission is an action-oriented statement that informs day-to-day action.

Like the vision statement, the mission should be easy to remember. It should be the foundation of all departmental decision-making.

6.3.2 Proposed Mission for Thomasville Parks and Recreation

Building from the foundational visioning exercise conducted with the Master Plan Steering Committee – and in consideration of the factors described above – the following is the proposed mission statement for Thomasville Parks and Recreation moving forward:

Enrich the entire community through engaging experiences and diverse amenities

6.4 VALUES FOR THOMASVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION

6.4.1 Purpose of Values

An organization's values serve as a "lighthouse" of guiding principles, informed by personal and organizational beliefs. Values are straightforward phrases or words that should:

1. Direct staff conduct
2. Express department ideals
3. Reflect department personality
4. Complement community's aspirations
5. Communicate what is important
6. Ensure quality staff experience
7. Instill positive focus systemwide

6.4.2 Core Values

Core values should be unique to the department and indicative of the attitudes, ambitions, and focus shared by the department and the community. Using insights from the steering committee discussions, and feedback generated through public engagement, the following are offered as foundational values for guiding the future work of the department:

Sustainability – Carefully monitor the natural, cultural, and financial resources of Thomasville

Accessibility – Ensuring equity of access to affordable recreation opportunities

Fun – Welcoming all to gather and play with family and friends

Excellence – Delivering the highest quality of service to our community

Spelling "**SAFE**," these values emphasize that Thomasville parks should be inviting and comfortable places for all.

6.5 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

6.5.1 Function of Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives identify areas of strategic priority and provide the broad, overarching organization for departmental actions. Together, goals and objectives:

1. Provide focus for actions and aspirations
2. Shape a designated timeframe for improvements
3. Create direction for investments of time, skills, and resources
4. Clarify what the department will and will not do

Generally, goals describe elements of the vision, defining what is achievable through the daily execution of the mission. Objectives – and therefore specific strategies or recommendations – fit within the scope of each goal.

Goals:

1. Overarching areas of strategic priority
2. Broad descriptions of intent
3. Rooted in outcome, rather than specific activity
4. Longest timeframe (i.e., as long as it takes to accomplish the vision)

Objectives:

1. Frame individual actions
2. More detailed description of what needs to be done
3. Measurable metrics (e.g., increase, reduce, consolidate, improve, distribute, etc.)
4. Variable timeframes (0-2, 3-5, 5-10 years)

6.5.2 Proposed Goals and Objectives for Thomasville Parks and Recreation

The following goals and objectives are intended to help guide improvements, operations, and services in parks and recreation in Thomasville over the next 10 years.

Goal 1: Beautiful Parks

Offer attractive parks and facilities that encourage fun and enjoyment for all

Objective 1.1 – **Places**: Provide innovative parks and facilities to serve and engage the community

Objective 1.2 – **Amenities**: Pursue responsive development and strategic replacement of structures and support features

Objective 1.3 – **Stewardship**: Employ sustainable practices to ensure continued community access to nature

Goal 2: Accessible Spaces

Build physical and social connections throughout the entire community

Objective 2.1 – **Gathering**: Offer accessible and inviting opportunities for community interaction

Objective 2.2 – **Connecting**: Improve connections to parks, schools, and popular destinations

Objective 2.3 – **Engaging**: Continuously gauge community needs and promote opportunities

Goal 3: Diverse Experiences

Provide a wide array of recreational opportunities that inspire community health and happiness

Objective 3.1 – **Events**: Collaborate to provide possibilities for interaction, fun, & learning

Objective 3.2 – **Wellness**: Encourage exploration & growth through diverse physical activities and educational opportunities

Objective 3.3 – **Partnerships**: Accommodate local organizations to optimize services and programs

Goal 4: Responsible Operations

Employ strong leadership to direct an engaged community using efficient management, exceptional customer service, sustainable operations, and productive partnerships

Objective 1 – **Structure**: Encourage an engaged workforce of valued staff with a culture of innovation

Objective 2 – **Operations**: Implement clear performance standards and training practices for quality and flexibility

Objective 3 – **Funding**: Explore creative operational practices and funding strategies to improve effectiveness of investment

6.6 STRATEGIES

As already mentioned, specific strategies are provided for each of the objectives listed above later in this report. These strategies will be discussed in Chapter 7 (organized by category, like “programming” and “facility improvements”) as well as listed in the Action Plan (Chapter 8), which also identifies a timeframe, responsible party, and potential funding source.



RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Thomasville's park system is aging and in need of investment. While current efforts to revitalize the existing park system are under way along with the formation of a parks and recreation department, this plan can help guide the future for the department as it approaches new development and revitalization of needed parks and facilities. For many of the community desires to be met, the continuation and growth of partnerships with other providers will be critical as Parks and Recreation and even the city overall, cannot meet all of these needs alone, especially the growing needs of all of Thomas County.

Families, seniors, youth, and everyone in between will always need ample opportunity to connect socially, to practice healthy habits, and to enjoy all the benefits of time in nature. Parks and recreation agencies across the nation have a critical role to play in a brighter, more equitable future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has permanently impacted how and whether users experience parks and recreation. In a time of public health inequity and economic disruption, people everywhere are feeling the effects of having (or not having) access to open space and parks.¹ For over three years, the coronavirus pandemic and its economic impacts have blazed through communities, and public parks and open space continue to provide respite, solace, and connection. Parks helped people cope, and they will continue to help communities recover.² These past few years have changed usage patterns and desires for parks, and some of the recommendations in this chapter are a direct result of those changes, while others represent existing trends that were accelerated by the pandemic.

This chapter presents observations and findings gained through the first three phases of this master planning process – Evaluate, Engage, and Envision. These recommendations are divided into the following categories:

- Upgrades to Existing Parks and Features
- Trails, Connectivity, and Nature Access
- New Park and Facility Development
- Programming

¹ McCormick, Kathleen. Room to Roam: The Pandemic Has Underscored the Need for More Urban Parks; So What Comes Next? Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolinst.edu/publications/articles/2020-10-room-roam-pandemic-urban-parks-what-comes-next>. Accessed November 2020.

² A Trust for Public Land Special Report: Parks and the Pandemic. <https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/Parks%20and%20Pandemic%20-%20TPL%20special%20report.pdf>

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- Operations and Budget
 - Capital Improvements and Cost Estimates

7.2 SYSTEMWIDE RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Systemwide recommendations represent high level, aspirational strategies and are, therefore, more general in nature. However, these actions refer to operational and capital improvements and are essential to the successful implementation of the goals of this Master Plan and represent ongoing efforts that require annual review and evaluation.

Top recommendation include:

1. Upgrade and improve existing parks and facilities
2. Continue to build and establish a brand for the Parks and Recreation Department
3. Add programming to meet unmet community needs through vendor contracts (initially), managed by a dedicated staff position (Enterprise Recreation Programmer)
4. Ensure the new department has the staff and resources needed to operate the department as offerings grow
5. Improve marketing of Parks and Recreation opportunities using multiple methods and utilizing new department branding
6. Improve and add support features throughout the park system (e.g., restrooms, seating, shade, drinking fountains, and landscaping)
7. Invest in overlooked/underinvested parks, addressing equity and access, using existing parkland
8. Continuously engage Thomasville residents throughout the implementation of this plan
9. Ensure all contracts and MOUs benefit Thomasville and its residents with requirements that contractors show how and where city funds were spent
10. Identify alternative funding streams to implement this plan and improve the park system (e.g., parks foundation, grants, tax revenue)
11. Add, upgrade, and replace playground equipment throughout the park system
12. Evaluate opportunities to add trails at parks and identify potential trail linkages throughout the community
13. Ensure ADA accessibility throughout the park system
14. Include technological updates with the renovation and addition of new facilities such as Wi-Fi, charging stations, and lighting
15. Strategically and consistently place signage (entrance, wayfinding, etc.) throughout the park system
16. Address issues identified in the *Golf Course Renovation Master Plan* at Country Oaks Golf Course

7.3 A PATH FORWARD FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The city recently re-formed the Parks and Recreation Department after many years of not having a city department dedicated to these facilities and programs. The formation of this department is essential for the city to begin responding to the desires of the public identified in this Master Plan, especially programs and events.

Continued coordination with other providers will be essential moving forward, but public input indicates potential unmet community needs for the following program categories:

- Concerts & art performances
- Festivals
- Fitness & wellness programs
- Age 50+ programs
- Nature education programs

-
- Farmers markets
 - Outdoor movies
 - Teen programs
 - Community-wide events

These programs should be the initial focus of new programming in Thomasville. Consistent with the desires of residents, these programs should be developed throughout the city and not located in any single park.

7.3.1 Where to Begin

A first step in the building of the department is the hiring of staff to manage programs. Currently, no staff exist to schedule, conduct, or promote programs. Initially, a single, dedicated staff member is needed to begin to offer programming in the city. This new position (Enterprise Recreation Programmer – see Sections 7 and 8 of this chapter) would begin by managing contracts with vendors to offer city-branded programs. These contracts would help fund the salary of this new employee.

It is also essential to understand the maintenance needs of parks and features prior to their development. The department does not currently have the staff to maintain the existing park system to the standard desired by users, so expansion of offerings will certainly require additional staff. Plans for operations and maintenance will be essential to protect the city's investment and ensure the quality of the park system.

With the creation of the Parks and Recreation Department and, as suggested in Goal 8.9, Policy 8.9.1 of the 2028 Blueprint, hiring an additional staff member to manage the department and its operations will be crucial to maintaining an excellent parks system. Opportunities to engage and draw the community to the existing parks offered by Thomasville will be something the newly re-formed Parks and Recreation Department and employee(s) should focus on as they begin defining the department's purpose and role in the city.

7.3.2 Important Considerations for the New Department

Staff to manage programs and understanding the operations and maintenance requirements for new development are the most urgent needs to address. However, several other steps are also needed to truly get the department working effectively for the people of Thomasville. Some of these tasks could be completed by the new position with assistance from existing staff. Ultimately, staffing of the department will need to grow to fully implement the vision of this Master Plan.

1. Dedicated staff

- Hire a dedicated staff member to begin to offer programming in the city and manage some of the duties below in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Manager and other city staff
- Add required staff as the department adds services

2. Operations & management plans

- Prepare an operations plan for the Parks and Recreation Department that outlines the pricing philosophy, defines maintenance standards, describes the marketing strategy, and identifies key partners
- Develop and implement measurable standards for park maintenance (e.g., Level 1,2,3,4 or 5 turf – see Subsection 7.8.5)
- Prepare management plans that identify expected life, maintenance and operational requirements (including BMPs), and replacement costs of improvements prior to development

3. Engagement/promotion

- Continue engagement throughout implementation
- Establish a brand and increase awareness of available opportunities, especially as they are added
- Use multiple methods including social media to improve marketing of Parks and Recreation opportunities

4. Coordination with partners

- Coordinate with partners to maximize opportunities and avoid duplication of services
- Work with a potential park foundation for marketing, fundraising, and volunteer opportunities

5. Measures of success

- Prepare a plan with an annual review process for business operations (programs, events rentals, etc.), identifying budgets with estimated costs and revenues (Subsection 7.6.3)
- Implement a process to evaluate the success of any program or event

7.4 UPGRADES TO EXISTING PARKS AND FEATURES

7.4.1 Observations and Analysis

Through the public input process, Thomasville residents voiced a strong desire for improvements to existing parks. This need was voiced through multiple channels and was a frequent topic at the stakeholder meetings and the open house workshop. When asked to allocate funds, survey respondents designated the largest amount toward existing facilities and deferred maintenance. Consistent with this desire for improvements, 25% of respondents rated facilities as fair or poor, although 75% indicated excellent or good. Additionally, 18% of respondents indicated that the poor condition of facilities prevented them from using parks. Respondents tend to rate the facilities they use most often. It is clear the Thomasville community desires better quality parks and improved opportunities for recreation.

The top requests for improvement to existing facilities in the survey were primarily support features with restrooms as the top requested improvement. Lack of restrooms was the top reason for not using parks in Thomasville. Most of the larger Thomasville parks have restroom buildings, but some are old and in need of renovation or replacement. Residents would like to see restrooms at some of the other heavily used parks, including MacIntyre and Paradise.

Over 40% of survey respondents requested drinking fountains, security improvements, and additional seating. More than a third requested sidewalks, shade, and Wi-Fi hotspots. Parking improvements were also requested and identified by the site assessments as many of the parking areas need improvement or are poorly defined, leading to vehicles parked outside of parking areas.

The COVID-19 pandemic put pressure to accelerate transitioning from standard drinking fountains to bottle filler stations, and they need ADA accessibility with paved walkways leading to them. Accessibility deficiencies were noted throughout the park system – by planning staff during park assessments and by the public during engagement efforts – with many issues stemming from lack of sidewalks leading to amenities.

Playgrounds rank high on the list, right after the support features, and were also high on the list for desired facility expansion. When constructing new playgrounds (or replacing existing), the city should make efforts to ensure variation (e.g., themes and features) to provide unique experiences and a reason for families to visit different parks. The city should also consider incorporating nature play elements into playgrounds.

Signage inconsistency throughout the park system was apparent early in the planning process. Some park entrances lack signage, and existing signage varies. This signage is important to ensure that visitors know they are enjoying a public park, provided by the City of Thomasville. Additionally, wayfinding signage within parks is limited, and wayfinding between parks across the city is also lacking.

The city has room to better utilize technology, such as park related apps and mobile device charging stations. Many of these technological improvements would require Wi-Fi hotspots in Thomasville parks, which would help the success of any future app and would also allow the city to collect data about park usage. If implemented, Wi-Fi access should include information indicating its availability.

7.4.2 Existing Fields and Courts

Compared to the benchmarks, Thomasville provides a high level of service for baseball/softball diamonds and multipurpose rectangular fields. Thomasville also has a higher level of service for basketball courts and slightly lower level for tennis courts.

Athletic Fields

Thomasville's fields are primarily located at Remington Park. Residents are generally satisfied with these facilities, although some minor improvements are needed. ADA accessibility at many fields needs to be improved as the fields, dugouts, and spectator seating all need to be accessible by wheelchair. Additionally, new standards require a fence along the upper portion of 5-row or higher bleachers. Many bleachers in Thomasville do not meet this requirement.

The fields at Varnadoe Park were damaged in a storm in April of 2022. These fields need repairs; however, future use by Thomas University should be determined prior to investment in these fields. The needs of Thomasville residents may vary from those of the university.

Game Courts

The seven existing basketball courts offer a higher level of service than the benchmarks, so investment in these facilities should primarily focus on existing courts, many of which are in poor condition. Some new courts may be needed to address underserved areas as well.

The demand for tennis courts is largely met between the courts at Remington Park and those by others, including Thomasville High School and private courts. The city offers three pickleball courts, also at Remington Park. Currently the fastest growing sport in the country, demand for pickleball courts will likely continue to grow. The city should monitor needs for additional courts and add when existing facilities are not meeting demands.

7.4.3 Golf Course

As noted earlier in this document, Country Oaks Golf Course has seen increased usage since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, but the course needs substantial improvement to maintain this level of use in the long-term. The previously prepared *Golf Course Renovation Master Plan* identifies a series of potentially costly improvements to upgrade and modernize the course. Ultimately, the city will need to determine what improvements to make to maintain the course as an attraction for residents and visitors.

7.4.4 Recommendations

1. Pursue and implement an ADA Accessibility Audit of all facilities, programs, and communications
2. Add support features throughout the park system such as seating/benches, shade structures, trash/recycling receptacles, drinking fountains/bottle fillers, and trees & landscaping
 - Include bottle fillers at all new drinking fountains and when existing features are replaced
 - Provide consistent amenities throughout the system
3. Add or improve restrooms throughout the parks; include family restrooms at larger parks
 - Add restrooms at MacIntyre and Paradise parks
4. Add and upgrade signage – entrance, wayfinding, interpretive, and informative – throughout the park system
 - Ensure consistent appearance and branding
5. Develop interpretive and informational signage throughout the park system (following signage plans) to help visitors understand the natural features and history of Thomasville parks while improving awareness of sensitive ecosystems and rare species
6. Add security cameras and lighting throughout parks in locations that have perceived security concerns
7. Continue to replace dated playgrounds and add where unavailable
 - Include separate age 2-5 equipment
 - Consider themed playground equipment, such as climbing rocks, sensory features, etc., potentially providing for marketing and photo opportunities
 - Incorporate nature play elements as part of playground development and replacement, especially in more passive park areas

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8. Add and upgrade picnic shelters at parks to increase overall access to these facilities, as well as make them more inviting, and to facilitate opportunities for outdoor community gatherings
 9. Incorporate shade features over existing amenities such as playgrounds to facilitate year-round usage
 10. Add Wi-Fi access to parks; promote park hotspots to ensure awareness
 11. Upgrade and utilize technology in parks for the benefit of both patrons and staff (see trends discussion in Chapter 5)
 12. Determine an approach to improving the Country Oaks Golf Course to address issues identified in the *Golf Course Renovation Master Plan*
 13. Explore development of a searchable mobile app to communicate site locations, services, and special events to the public
 14. Ensure accessible walkways to all facilities and seating areas
 15. Upgrade athletic fields throughout the system as needed
 - Provide accessible spectator areas with shade at all game fields
 - Improve ADA accessibility to fields and dugouts
 - Replace or upgrade bleachers to meet the requirement of a fence along the upper portion when 5-rows or more
 - Repair storm damage at Varnadoe Park fields, following examination of future community needs
 16. Monitor the demand for additional pickleball courts at Remington Park to meet the needs of this fast-growing sport

7.5 TRAILS, CONNECTIVITY, AND NATURE ACCESS

7.5.1 Observations and Analyses

According to the benchmarking in Chapter 2, Thomasville has 1.9 miles of trail per 10,000 population, just above the median of the benchmark communities (1.7 miles). The city is below the benchmark for trail miles per jurisdiction square mile, however. Additionally, trails consistently emerge at the top for desired improvements all over the country, even in jurisdictions with extensive networks of trails. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic only emphasized the demand for trails as park usage rates skyrocketed, and trails were a great provider of outdoor, physically-distanced activities. Thomasville is no different; residents clearly communicated their preference for more trail connectivity, through stakeholder discussions, the open house workshop, and survey responses.

According to the survey results, walking and hiking trails are by far the most desired facilities to be developed or expanded, with over half of respondents requesting more. Bike trails were second on the list. Several parks currently lack trail loops that could support them, including McIntyre, Paradise, Northside, Balfour/Varnadoe, and Cassidy. These trails, plus connections to adjoining neighborhoods, could improve access to parks within a 10-minute walk. A longer trail could be added at Remington Park greatly improving overall connectivity at the property.

The city has planned and begun implementation of the Community Trail. The proposed 15-mile system would connect many of the city's parks, while linking neighborhoods and downtown Thomasville. So far, nearly 2.5 miles of trails have been constructed. The plan for the Community Trail should be updated to confirm potential corridors and linkages between the city's existing and any new parks. The update should also include formalized standards for design, signage, and maintenance (including staffing requirements) to ensure trail experiences are consistent throughout Thomasville. The plan should also identify priorities and potential costs and incorporate other bike and pedestrian efforts.

The city also conducted a *Creative District Vision Report* which primarily focused on downtown but included opportunities for greenspace and trail linkages that support the current efforts to create more trails and increase connectivity. Some of these efforts have already begun with the completion of the trail head at the amphitheater. Continuation of this kind of revitalization of downtown will increase residents access to greenspace and create greater connectivity overall to the existing park system.

The effort to establish a trail system coincides with the “10-Minute Walk Campaign” led by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), Trust for Public Land (TPL), and Urban Land Institute – a national movement supported by hundreds of communities across the country to ensure everyone has walkable access to parks and trails.³ Trail and connectivity improvements in Thomasville will establish safe routes, create alternate means of transportation, increase access to parks and destinations throughout the city, as well as contribute to an overall sense of community cohesion. The city has a long way to go to reach this target, but it presents a potential long-term goal for Thomasville.

The desire for trails is directly connected to the high demand for access to natural areas. While some of the parks in Thomasville include some natural areas, none are large enough to accommodate the kind of hiking trails and nature access desired by the community. These properties tend to be located outside of the city and will require partnerships to meet community demands.

Two properties near Thomasville (within 10 minutes) have obvious potential for nature access, hiking, and programs. River Creek Wildlife Management Area, owned by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, is around 2,500 acres, currently with limited public access. The Lost Creek Forest, near the golf course, has previously partnered with the city for nature programs. Both properties and potentially others have great potential to help meet the needs of Thomasville residents.

7.5.2 Recommendations

1. Update the city's Community Trail plan to include standards for design, signage, and maintenance, prioritization, and costs
 - Incorporate the plans for individual parks and proposed bike and pedestrian efforts
 - Consider additional linkages between parks, schools, and other popular destinations
2. Add trail loops in existing and future parks
 - Add trails throughout the system at existing parks, including McIntyre, Paradise, Northside, Balfour/Varnadoe, and Cassidy
 - Consider a long trail at Remington Park to expand trail opportunities and improve connectivity at the property
 - Include trail connections between parks and adjacent neighborhoods wherever possible
3. Seek opportunities to add natural surface trails in existing and future parks
4. Partner with Georgia DNR and Lost Creek Forest to improve access to and awareness of natural areas
5. Consider signing on to the 10-Minute Walk Mission by the TPL and NRPA to show the city's commitment to connectivity and access to parks

7.6 NEW PARK AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

7.6.1 Observations and Analyses

Trends indicate stable population in Thomasville that is expected to grow only slightly from the current 19,000. Although the population is not growing rapidly, the make-up is evolving over time. The population age 65 and over has increased as a percentage since 2000 and is expected to exceed 21% by 2026. It is also important to note that the Thomasville parks and recreation system serves all of Thomas County, placing additional stress on existing resources.

At the same time, the percentage of children (under age 18) has declined slightly. While facilities for children will remain important, demand for senior activities will continue to increase. Demographic changes will likely continue and often lead to changing recreation needs. The needs of specific demographic groups should be addressed during the individual park master planning process.

7.6.2 New and Upgraded Parks

Nearly half (46%) of the population lives in areas with “high” or “medium-high” service levels, and just over a quarter (26%) live in areas with “low” or “medium-low” service levels (see Composite Park Service Areas map, Figure 5.14 in Chapter 5). These service levels emphasize the need to focus improvement efforts at existing

³ NRPA, TFPL, and ULI's 10-Minute Walk campaign: <https://10minutewalk.org/>

parks as the service levels show access, not quality. The data also shows the potential need for new parks and facility locations in some areas of the city.

Figure 7.1 shows the locations of potential new and upgraded parks in Thomasville. Most of the need for new parks is limited to smaller neighborhood parks strategically located in underserved areas. Two parks, Cassidy and Northside, are highlighted for their potential for substantial upgrades in services and facility availability using existing parkland.

Cassidy Park has the most potential for new park features. The 33-acre park currently offers only a small shelter and fishing dock, providing access to the pond. The concept in Figure 7.2 shows a potential arrangement of amenities at this park if it is upgraded to a community park. The features in the concept focus on passive use activities, including fishing, walking, and enjoying the outdoors. Utilizing some of the open space and with the closure of the dog park at Balfour, the park is a potential location for a new dog Park. It could also be a great location for a new disc golf course, and the local group, Red Hills Disc Golf, has indicated interest in adding a course at the park. If developed, the course should be carefully located to allow for the inclusion of the other features shown in the concept.

Three other locations are identified as potential locations for new parks. These potential locations for new parks were also identified in the city's most recent comprehensive plan, *Thomasville Blueprint 2028*. The city should pursue potential opportunities to add parks in these areas should they arise. When adding any new parks, the city should prioritize properties that also meet the goals of the Stormwater Master Plan.

Development of new parks – including upgrades to undeveloped or underdeveloped parks – will increase the proportion of residents that live within a walkable range of a park as will connectivity improvements as indicated in the previous section regarding trails. Currently, about half (50%) of the population lives within a 10-minute walk from a neighborhood park (or larger).

Any individual park (new or existing) undergoing significant development should have a master plan finalized prior to new development or redevelopment. This will help ensure facilities are accessible, complementary features are located appropriately, and, most importantly, desired features fit on the site. Planning is a critical tool for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of maintenance, making it easier to be proactive, instead of reactive, in the face of challenges and changing circumstances.

Another potential strategy to improve access to parks is to encourage developers to set aside usable land or even develop parks as part of residential subdivisions. Currently, the land provided by developers is often in floodplains or otherwise not able to support park amenities or even public access. In general, the city should consider incentives for providing parks or usable parkland, while not accepting donations that do not have potential for public use.

New Neighborhood Park Standards

As noted in Chapter 3, neighborhood parks should be minimum of 8 to 10 acres in size (at least 2 acres developed). With the recommendation to develop up to four new neighborhood parks over the next 10 years, Thomasville should have a standard list of elements to include in each park. These standards should function as a starting point for engagement with the community but should ensure that all new parks provide a variety of amenities for all users. Partners, including developers, that develop neighborhood parks should be encouraged to follow these standards.

Typical neighborhood park elements include:

1. Playground
2. ½ basketball court (may be swapped for another feature if desired by the community)
3. Gathering area/picnic shelter
4. Walking trail
5. Good circulation – walkways/ADA access
6. Restrooms (small)
7. Landscaping/trees for shade

Figure 7.2: Cassidy Park Concept



8. Open grass area/athletic field – practice or pick-up use (if adequate space exists)
9. Unique neighborhood determined feature(s) based on local interest – could be related to sports, environment, arts, etc., should consider placemaking opportunities
10. Parking (if space allows)

7.6.3 Outdoor Aquatics

The City of Thomasville does not currently offer any aquatic facilities. However, the YMCA offers three pools (2 outdoor, 1 indoor). Public input indicates that residents desire more aquatic opportunities. Splash pads ranked as one of the top three most desired facilities in the survey and were a top request at the open house workshop.



Although there were some requests for an outdoor swimming pool, the two existing pools by the YMCA are likely sufficient to meet the demand for a city the size of Thomasville. A new pool would come with a substantial capital cost (potentially most of the 10-year capital budget) and would ultimately compete with these YMCA facilities. A pool would also require considerable staffing and operating costs. For now, a better solution is to continue to partner with the YMCA to ensure that residents are able to use their existing pools. The potential demand for a city pool should be considered in the future if the situation changes.

Splash pads require a much lower capital and operations budget and make more sense for the City of Thomasville to consider currently. The best locations for splash pads are larger, centrally located parks that are accessible by most of the community. The final location for a splash pad (or splash pads) should be determined at the time of development and should be part of the master plan for the chosen site(s).

7.6.4 Other New Facilities

Outdoor Fitness/Obstacle Courses

Outdoor fitness equipment has become a popular addition to parks for users of all ages (in addition to active adults/seniors). These facilities ranked near the top of the list for new development of facilities as it is currently only located in Cherokee Park. The equipment could be added at relatively low cost at other parks in Thomasville to provide even distribution. Small amounts of this equipment can also be incorporated into playground development. Larger groups of equipment provide a potential gathering space and a venue for programs for seniors. Obstacle courses (or parkour) can be a desired feature for teenagers and young adults, who tend to use parks at a lower rate.



Photo: Kennesaw GA Parks and Recreation

Outdoor Fitness Course

Dog Parks

The city has one existing dog park at Balfour Park, but the facility takes up a large amount of land in the park and is not an optimal location in the city for potential users. The dog park should be relocated to another park, potentially Cassidy or Cherokee, for better access and to allow the land at Balfour Park to be used for amenities desired by the adjacent neighborhoods. The new dog park should be ADA accessible and should offer shade for both dogs and owners.

Community Gardens/Healthy Food Access

The survey results indicted a potential need for community gardens and healthy food access in Thomasville. The city does not currently offer an area where residents can grow their own food or learn about gardening.

According to the survey and the open house workshop, many respondents would like access to opportunities to grow or access fresh produce. In line with this request, the top desire for new programs in the survey was for a farmers market. Educational programs are also common at community gardens and farmers markets. Opportunities to partner with an interested group should be considered in one of Thomasville's parks.

Futsal/Multipurpose Courts

Outdoor futsal is a growing sport in parks and recreation due in part to limited field space in many communities. Futsal courts give users a chance to play soccer where space is otherwise limited and provide for a faster paced game. Although not a high priority according to the public input, these courts would provide opportunities for pick-up play without placing additional stress on existing or new field spaces. Multipurpose courts lined for futsal and other sports could also be added at future parks that lack the space for larger fields. They are an example of a potential "neighborhood determined/placemaking feature" which should be considered at the individual park planning level.



Futsal Court

Other Potential Features

Many specific features were requested throughout the public input that are consistent with trends and may or may not have support for development in Thomasville. The community-wide lens of this Master Plan focuses on the needs of the city as a whole but does not necessarily have the data needed to make all of the specific facility recommendations for every park, especially small neighborhood parks.

As a result, these specific needs should be addressed during the individual park master plan process, similar to those previously conducted for MacIntyre and Paradise parks. During this individual park planning process, it is important to include neighborhood determined features to ensure specific elements desired by neighbors and users are included in each park. Planning and budgeting for these elements helps to ensure that development aligns with needs and promotes a sense of local investment and ownership. It also can provide opportunities for placemaking in parks.

Potential neighborhood determined features include:

- Game courts (e.g., bocce, pickleball, futsal)
- Public art
- Nature area or garden
- Fitness equipment
- Skate parks
- Bike park elements (e.g., pump track, BMX course)

7.6.5 Recommendations

1. Utilize existing parkland to meet unmet facility needs and to improve access to park features
2. Prepare park master plans for existing parks and any future parks prior to development of facilities to ensure that added features are complementary, desired, and fully accessible
3. Develop Cassidy Park as a community park with a focus on passive uses to address many unmet needs in the community
4. Monitor community needs for futsal/multipurpose courts at existing and future parks
5. Continually evaluate opportunities to develop new parks in underserved areas, especially where stormwater can also be addressed
6. Include a neighborhood determined feature at each neighborhood park, ensuring development aligns with needs and encouraging a sense of local investment and opportunities for placemaking in parks

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7. Consider providing incentives to developers if they donate usable parkland or develop parks in new communities
 - Encourage these developers to follow city park design guidelines
 8. Seek opportunities for additional downtown plaza spaces for community gathering and outdoor dining, especially through partnerships
 9. Continue to partner with the YMCA to ensure public access to their pools
 10. Add outdoor fitness equipment at select parks to expand opportunities for improved community health
 11. Relocate the existing dog park and consider additional locations to meet the growing needs of Thomasville households
 12. Develop a splash pad (possibly more long-term) in Thomasville to expand access to aquatic facilities in the city
 13. Continue to partner with the disc golf group to provide new and expanded opportunities in the city
 14. Evaluate the demand for community gardens and other fresh food opportunities and seek partnerships to meet the demand
 15. Formulate and post a policy indicating where drone use is permitted or prohibited in Thomasville parks

7.7 PROGRAMMING

7.7.1 Observations and Analyses

The city has been partnering with the YMCA for all programming since 2001 through a recreation programming agreement. Programs currently offered at the YMCA include youth sports located at Remington Park, sports camps, fitness programs, and aquatics. As the department considers moving forward with the addition of programming, it will be necessary to avoid duplication of services and to review the current programming agreement to ensure the offerings are meeting public demand. The public input from this plan indicates that many program needs are unmet, especially outside of Remington Park. Continued coordination with the YMCA will be necessary to ensure that the city adds programs that focus on needs not met by the YMCA.

The following program needs were identified through the public input:

- Concerts & art performances
- Festivals
- Fitness & wellness programs
- Age 50+ programs
- Nature education programs
- Farmers markets
- Outdoor movies
- Teen programs
- Community-wide events

7.7.2 Opportunities to Add Programming

After coordination with other partners in Thomasville to avoid duplication of service, a first step would be to hire an Enterprise Recreation Programmer to issue Requests for Qualifications for event planners and program vendors to fill gaps in programming. Branded Thomasville-specific events, potentially hosted in partnership with existing groups (e.g., Thomasville Visitors Center), would create broad appeal and help build a diverse audience base. The Enterprise Recreation Programmer should negotiate with selected event and program vendors to determine what specific types of events, when, and how any revenue should be split between the city and vendors. Programs and events should be contractually owned by the city and incentivized. If the program or event is successful, the contract should continue.

Concerts, Performances, and Movies

Overall, Thomasville residents expressed a desire for the kind of programs that bring community together and can be enjoyed by all ages. The city currently hosts some of these programs at the Ritz Amphitheater, but residents would like to see more. This space is centrally located and could provide the perfect venue for additional programming, such as outdoor movies and even outdoor fitness programs on the lawn area.



Thomasville Amphitheater

Senior/Active Adult Programs

As noted in Chapter 2, Thomasville, like most of the country, has an aging population and a growing percentage of residents over age 65. Given this aging population, it is unsurprising that many residents would like to see more senior programs. Additionally, it is important to note that many citizens who qualify as “seniors” based on age (an arbitrary delineation) do not self-identify as seniors; they will sometimes elect not to participate in senior-targeted programs due to stigma or perception of aged people. This problem is common wherever communities advertise programs for “seniors” alone. It is important to consider branding and marketing more active programs geared towards this age group as “active adult programs.” As with other programming, the city should focus on opportunities that are not currently met by the offerings at the YMCA.



Photo: WASA Fitness

Senior Fitness

Nature Programs and Environmental Education

Residents indicated a desire for more access to natural areas and nature programs in Thomasville. Natural areas/nature parks were ranked as the fourth most desired amenity to be added or expanded in the survey, and many residents indicated they would like to see more of them at the open house workshop. A quarter of survey respondents also indicated a desire for nature programs, once again part of the top four choices.



Photo: Berea Community Middle School

Summer Activity

As noted in the trends section of Chapter 2, environmental education cultivates understanding of the benefits of natural habitats and open spaces. Nature education provides opportunities to engage all ages and abilities and provides great potential for intergenerational programming. The school districts and nonprofit groups are potential partners for environmental programs, including nature classes and activities. In addition to the schools, partnerships with Georgia DNR at the River Creek Wildlife Area, Lost Creek Forest, the Birdsong Nature Center, and possibly the YMCA at Camp Pineywoods could provide locations for many outdoor programs.

Potential programs include guided hikes, community events, field trips, or classes covering habitat restoration, wildlife identification (e.g., bird watching), invasive species removal, and more. Outdoor programs could potentially be hosted within Thomasville parks at one or more of the picnic shelters. Some, such as guided hikes, could be held through partnerships at nature trails in or near Thomasville.

The proposed stormwater mitigation projects at city parks and throughout the city also provide opportunities for learning about nature and environmental impacts. The Thomasville Pollinator Garden at Cherokee Park is a great example of access to nature in city parks. Similar partnerships at other parks such as Cassidy Park would provide additional access to nature without the need to leave the city.

Other Programming Needs

Public input also identified some unmet needs for farmers markets, teen programs, and fitness and wellness programs. Farmers markets were identified through public input as a top desired program (41% of survey respondents). In Thomasville, Lewis Produce/State Farmers Market is the second largest commercial, fresh produce market in the Southeast but residents would like to see a regularly scheduled and city organized market with booths and more accessible opportunities to participate. Unlike a traditional farmers market, Lewis Produce acts more like a storefront and requires more organization and upfront costs as well as revenue shares. While still a great asset to the community, smaller businesses and local residents/entrepreneurs may have easier access to selling goods via the traditional farmers market than in a store front because it requires less upfront costs and revenue sharing.

The YMCA currently offers some teen programming with no program fees. Current programming includes organized games, volunteer opportunities, teen huddles with an activity, and occasionally field trips for teens. The city should determine the additional types of programming teens desire and continue to partner with the YMCA whenever possible. Esports programs can attract the hard-to-reach teenage population and can be offered both at an indoor program space or from home.

While the YMCA currently offers fitness and wellness programs, there is more demand from the community for fitness and wellness classes and programs. Potential outdoor programs could be offered at the lawn at the amphitheater, Paradise Park, and/or at the open spaces at Cherokee Park. Specific features, such as outdoor fitness equipment or trails, could also be used to host programs.

7.7.3 Annual Implementation Plan for Business Operations

Creating an annual plan allows the department to establish goals for both internal operations and external performance (i.e., programming). Figure 7.3 illustrates the ongoing evolution of a typical parks and recreation agency's working operations. Each cycle begins with an annual plan and ends with evaluation. An annual operations plan is helpful for establishing pricing and costs, as well as for defining more specifically the ways which the agency will benefit the community; a yearly evaluation is critically important to ensure efficiency, appropriateness, and vitality.

Thomasville Parks and Recreation must consider overall operations in their entirety then determine what operations the department should "Stop, Start, or Continue" and program. Hosting a year-end retreat for the department staff is a helpful way to collectively evaluate performance and to identify goals and objectives for the coming year.

Most of the funding for the department's budget comes from the local option sales tax (LOST). Nearly all revenue comes from golf course fees with a small amount from facility rentals. Proposed new program offerings will require registration fees and a process to evaluate the success of each program. Programs offered by vendors should be cost neutral to the city with any revenue used to support future city programs or scholarships for those who cannot afford a program. Pricing philosophy is described in Section 7.7.

Figure 7.3: Ongoing Annual Operation Plan Diagram

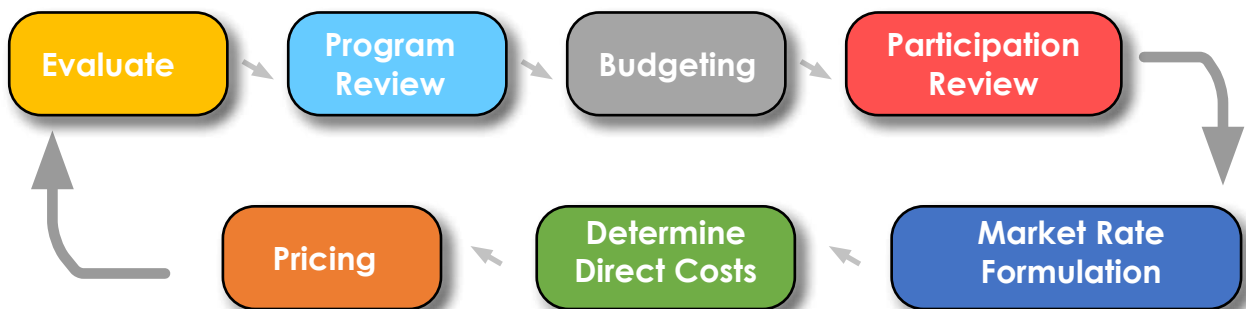
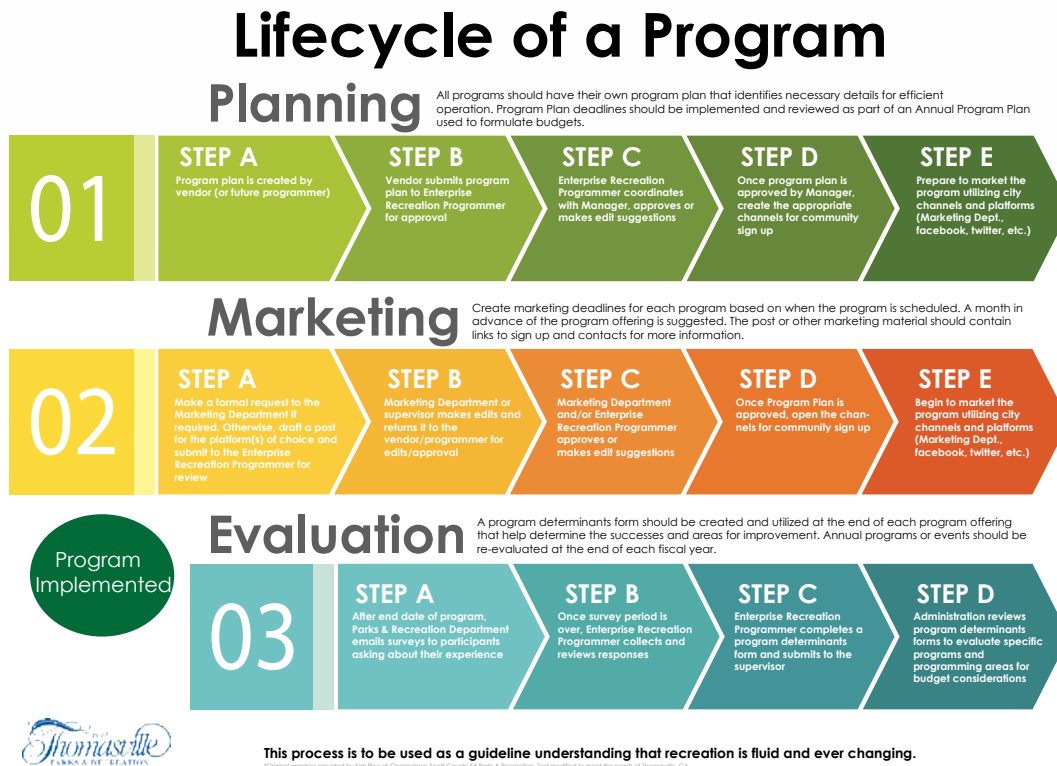


Figure 7.4: Program Life Cycle



While an annual plan is a broad overview, a more granular approach to programming would be to establish a “program life cycle” that details a formal process for establishing and continuing a specific program. Three main sections make up the lifecycle including the planning portion, the marketing portion, and the evaluation portion.

The planning portion focuses on establishing the details of the program itself, similar to the information requested in the ongoing annual operation plan. Once prepared, the program plan is submitted by a vendor to the proposed Enterprise Recreation Programmer and Manager with marketing following, once approved. Coordination with necessary groups such as the marketing department could be required prior to publishing the program for community consumption. After the program has been marketed and participants have signed up, the program is implemented. Finally, after implementation, the program should be evaluated based on established program determinants to determine the successes and areas for improvement and ultimately, whether the program should continue and is beneficial to both the city and the community.

7.7.4 Recommendations

1. Be a mission driven agency; pay very close attention to the new mission of Parks and Recreation (Chapter 6)
2. Ensure every action and decision connects back to the department's mission
3. Establish an annual assessment process and program life cycle to determine if Thomasville should stop offering a program, continue offering a program, or start a new program
4. Develop an online program calendar, including the ability to sync directly to personal calendars
5. Expand existing concert, movie, and live performance program offerings to address unmet community needs
6. Establish split revenue percentages for any program partnerships with funding channeled directly to Parks and Recreation
7. Continuously evaluate the demand for new or expanded programs as indicated by the survey results and other public input

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8. Consider partnership opportunities to add a regularly scheduled and city organized market with booths and more accessible opportunities to participate
 9. Seek opportunities to add Esports programs and other to attract the hard-to-reach teenage population
 10. Make full use of new facilities – amphitheaters, picnic shelters, Fitness equipment, etc. – by programming and offering activities anchored around these sites
 11. Seek partnerships with local entities to develop more age 50+ programming and to ensure offerings align with local needs
 12. Consider branding and marketing active senior programs together under a unique category, such as “active adults” to increase participation
 13. Strategically market these programs with support from partners and related service-providers
 14. Continue to respond to the growing demand for pickleball programs and leagues, both indoor and outdoor
 15. Monitor nationwide and regional recreation trends regularly, especially concerning growing population groups (50+ and BIPOC communities in Thomasville) to best serve the needs of the whole community
 16. Regularly identify needs of underserved populations
 17. Explore partnerships with nearby environmental and nature organizations (e.g., Georgia DNR, Lost Creek Forest, Birdsong Nature Center, the school districts, and YMCA) to create and promote additional nature-based group outings, participatory activities, and community events
 18. Partner with other agencies to organize events and community-engaged activities around trails and bike paths

7.8 OPERATIONS AND BUDGET

7.8.1 Observations and Analyses

On a per population basis, Thomasville employs far fewer full-time equivalent (FTE) staff per 10,000 population than the benchmark median. Most of the staff are dedicated to Country Oaks Golf Course, which generates all of the department’s revenue. As noted throughout this chapter, additional staff will be needed as the Parks and Recreation Department establishes its presence and brand.

The total operating budget for Parks and Recreation in Thomasville for FY 2020 was \$2.5 million with a per capita operating expenditure of \$133 and \$85 not including the golf course which most benchmarks do not offer. The benchmark median was \$107. Proposed facility development would obviously have a large impact on the overall budget of the department, and the city should be prepared for these additional budgetary demands when expanding or developing new facilities and programs.

7.8.2 Pricing Philosophy

Direct & Indirect Costs

As program needs increase, Thomasville should determine a clear funding philosophy and funding policies for Parks and Recreation. Some people in Thomasville can afford to pay market rate fees, while many cannot. In general, fees should be established for the 80% that can pay the fee instead of the 20% that cannot. The citizens of Thomasville want more parks and recreation opportunities and are very likely willing to pay for them. For those that cannot, scholarship programs can and should be established. As noted above, initial offerings through vendors will require fees with scholarships used for those who cannot pay. Ultimately, the department needs a formal process for determining how much cost should be recovered for any given offering.

This process requires a complete understanding of the direct and indirect costs for programs, events, rentals, and any partner agreement. First, the department should conduct an analysis of the expenditures in the annual budget. Once these costs are determined, they should be separated:

- Direct Costs: any expenditures related to the operation of a specific park, program, or facility rental (e.g., instructor fees, materials, staff time directly related to the specific service, etc.)

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- Indirect Costs: any expenditures that remain after removing direct costs; usually more general and systemwide (e.g., administrative tasks, facility maintenance, utilities, etc.)

Once the costs are understood and separated into direct and indirect costs, the city should decide how much of each program's cost should be recovered which will vary. Some programs or services could have 100% recovery where all associated costs are recuperated; other services may not have any recovered costs and the service would be free. This process of calculation can be kept reasonably simple by establishing set categories of recovery (i.e., 100%, 75%, 50%, and 0%).

Parks and Recreation needs a defined "pricing philosophy" to guide all these efforts. While it requires substantial effort at first to develop, proactive action will prevent long-term inefficiencies and shortfalls. Remaining flexible throughout the transition – currently there is no system of cost recovery in place – will be essential for the department's success. It will require small changes and incremental action for the department, and the public, to adjust.

The following are pricing strategies used in other communities. These are presented as possible avenues to pursue or inspiration for a Thomasville-specific system.

- Indirect costs are covered by the city, while direct costs are covered by the user at a specified cost recovery rate.
- Classifications are created based on whether the program or service benefits the community, the individual who is taking the program, or a combination of the two.
- Prices are based on the 80% of the public who can pay rather than the 20% of the community who cannot pay; alternate funding sources are used to supplement the costs for the 20%.
- Alternate funding sources are established and relied upon for providing opportunities to underserved members of the community.

7.8.3 Partnerships and Contracts

As noted throughout this chapter, collaborative partnerships will continue to play a critical role in the future of parks and recreation in Thomasville. Through strategic and transparent partnerships, the department can both reduce costs and generate additional revenue. In stakeholder conversations, the need for partnership and collaboration emerged over and over. Thomasville already has several formal partnerships – including with sports, schools, and business groups – as well as a widely held positive and responsive reputation in the community.

Looking forward along the 10-year timeline of this Master Plan, many actions will require expanded support from partner groups to be truly successful. In fact, some new facilities will likely only be possible through partnerships with other organizations to adequately cover both capital and operating costs. Any partnership the department pursues must be mutually beneficial, and terms clearly stated for all parties.

Similarly, existing contracts and MOUs should be reexamined to require clear records that show how city money is spent so that the City of Thomasville can be sure that residents are benefiting from the agreement. Any future contracts should have similar requirements.

The city should maintain consistent lines of communication with existing and future partners to ensure that each agency can convey its priorities and objectives, helping to clarify services provided, maximize opportunities, and avoid inefficient duplication of efforts.

7.8.4 Deferred Maintenance

Thomasville Parks and Recreation has a significant backlog of deferred maintenance throughout the park system. While the department has worked to address some of this maintenance, a detailed capital maintenance and replacement plan is needed. Public input clearly indicated that residents would like to see the parks maintained to a higher level, and this plan is essential to ensuring realization of this desire.

This process and addressing this deferred maintenance will require additional dedicated funding in the capital budget. Of utmost consideration is the high cost of reactive maintenance, rather than proactive action; when maintenance is deferred for too long, the cost increases exponentially each year of delay. It is

important that the city prioritize improvements to existing parks and facilities before investing heavily in new development.

As the department currently operates, there is typically not enough funding to replace facilities as they reach the end their useful life. All deferred maintenance should be identified and prioritized over a multi-year period and anticipated when features are initially added. Creating a comprehensive preventive maintenance plan for equipment safeguards against costly repairs that might otherwise have been avoided. Whenever items are purchased, plans for their eventual replacement must be put in place.

7.8.5 Park Operations

Moving forward over the next 10 years, the new Thomasville Parks and Recreation Department needs a strategy of sustainability – not simply environmental, but economic as well. Qualities like consistency, fairness, and flexibility will be crucial to the long-term durability of the department and the services it provides to the entire community. These qualities should be in place from the beginning of the departments operation. To efficiently operate an extensive and high-quality system like that desired by Thomasville residents, an appropriate amount of funds for staffing, equipment, and grounds management must be in place before the department can truly begin to offer these services.

Program Staff

Because there are no specified program staff, it will be difficult for the department to respond to programming demands without adding staff. The Enterprise Recreation Programmer described in Section 7.6 could potentially handle all these needs for new programs and events through outside contracts, which will generate revenue to offset a substantial portion – or potentially all – of this person’s salary.

At least in the short-term, nearly all programming opportunities should be conducted through contracts with outside vendors or community partners. Collaborating externally enables limited staff to oversee an array of programs within a smooth, streamlined process. The city needs the partnership of outside vendors and contractors to effectively expand programs and events. Finally, any contracts pursued must remain consistent and formally structured in writing with clear parameters ensuring benefits for the city and contractor both.

Operations & Management Plans

The primary purpose of successful operations and management plans is to identify the proper amount of funding each year to administer the park system while implementing this Master Plan. It is essential that the department understands the long-term costs and works closely with the city’s budget administrators to alleviate any concerns and prevent budget surprises.

An operations plan should be prepared for the whole Parks and Recreation Department. This document should incorporate the pricing philosophy (described in Subsection 7.8.2). It should also include standards that guide the overall maintenance of the parks in the system. It should also describe the department’s marketing strategy, consistent with the guidelines in Subsection 7.8.7. Finally, the plan should identify key partners as well as their roles in managing and operating any facilities and programs.

Management plans should be prepared for facilities and sites as the city invests in improvements to the system. These plans should identify the expected life of features or structures plus the required maintenance and operational needs. Replacement costs should be included and considered prior to development. These plans should also include any relevant best management practices (BMPs).

Park and recreation agencies are increasingly focusing on preservation and restoration of natural resources. Natural areas provide numerous benefits to the health and wellness of a community, including opportunities for all residents. Studies indicate that a connection to nature can relieve stress, improve interpersonal relationships, and improve mental health.⁴ Because they are typically one of the largest landowners in their jurisdictions, park and recreation departments have the opportunity to lead in the implementation of sustainability or best management practices (BMPs), efforts that can double as engagement and educational opportunities.

⁴ National Recreation and Park Association, “Health and Wellness,” <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Health-and-Wellness/>, (April 17, 2020)

The city's new *Stormwater Master Plan* provides a series of BMPs for the city to implement to improve sustainability and reduce stormwater issues in the city. The city's properties, and specifically the parks, offer opportunities to showcase these practices while potentially providing educational opportunities. Thomasville should make special efforts to both implement and promote BMPs throughout the park system.

Maintenance Requirements

First, maintenance requirements should be measurable. Each element of park maintenance needs a standard. For example:

- Level 1,2,3,4 or 5 turf – standards set by the department
- Restroom cleaning (e.g., daily, twice daily, etc.) – standards set by the department
- Capital replacement (e.g., roofs, HVAC systems, etc.) requires items to be placed on a list with an "expiration date" based on the general length of time an item lasts in good condition. Costs should be determined and provided to the city's budgetary administration years in advance to ensure the city is prepared for necessary appropriations.
- Painting schedule (e.g., number of years between re-painting, per item) – standards set by the department; painted items should be included on a multi-year list for funding
- Maintenance equipment replacement (e.g., lawn mowers, trucks, irrigation systems, etc.) – standards set by the department in collaboration with the city

Parks and Recreation should decide the level of maintenance service to provide at each park or portion of a park. This decision should be a proactive exercise where funding is put in place in accordance with what level of maintenance service is desired.

1 State of the Art Maintenance

- Park/Land Categories
 - High quality diverse landscapes
 - Urban plazas
 - High visitation parks
 - Athletic game fields
 - Manicured grounds
- Maintenance Standards
 - Mow every 5 days
 - Irrigate
 - Fertilize
 - Aerate
 - <1% weeds
 - Daily inspection

2 High Level Maintenance

- Park/Land Categories
 - Well-developed park areas
 - Reasonably high visitation
 - Athletic practice fields
- Maintenance Standards
 - Mow every week
 - Fertilize, aerate regularly
 - <5% weeds
 - Daily inspection

3 High Level Maintenance

- Park/Land Categories
 - Moderate to low level of development and visitation
 - Non-playing field areas in developed parks
- Maintenance Standards
 - Mow every 10 days
 - Fertilize if needed
 - No irrigation
 - Weekly inspection

4 Moderately Low-Level Maintenance

- Park/Land Categories
 - Low level of development
 - Low visitation
 - Undeveloped parks
 - Remote parks
- Maintenance Standards
 - Low frequency mowing
 - No fertilizer or irrigation
 - Monthly inspection

5 High Visitation Natural Areas

- Park/Land Categories
 - Natural areas of high visitation
 - Nature parks
- Maintenance Standards
 - No mowing / cleaning on complaint
 - Annual bush hogging, monthly inspection (prairie/meadow areas)

6 Minimum Maintenance Level

- Park/Land Categories
 - Undeveloped parks
- Maintenance Standards
 - No mowing
 - Occasional bush hogging, monthly inspection

Staffing Needs

The success of any future development hinges equally on funding and staffing capacity. The department currently employs 8 full-time equivalent staff members. The need for operations and programming staff was discussed earlier in this chapter, but maintenance staff also need to be addressed. Additional staff will be needed as more land is added to the system and features are developed even to maintain the current level of maintenance. If the city invests in improvements, it will be important and necessary to ensure that those investments are adequately maintained.

Small Plazas and Greenspaces

Thomasville has several small properties that provide limited to no recreational value but are still included in the overall parks system. The inclusion of these properties often leads to a perception that the city has a comparatively large number of parks. However, the benchmarking in Chapter 2 shows that based on the 10 true parks in the system, the city has a similar number of parks as found in other communities. The removal of these properties from the list (and count of parks) could lead to a clearer understanding of the park system and place added emphasis on the neighborhood and community parks that the community enjoys.

7.8.6 Training

Staff and the department itself will benefit from continued training for leadership and cultivated growth within their respective fields. For example, the existing and future staff should pursue appropriate certifications for overseeing parks and recreation operations, including Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP), Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI), and Aquatic Facility Operator Certification (AFO) – with Splash Pad Certificate. Programs for all these certifications are offered by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

As needs arise, staff may pursue other relevant certifications. To accommodate staff seeking these credentials, Thomasville must identify and allocate funding for professional development opportunities (e.g., conferences, training, memberships, etc.) with consideration to the licensure and requirements for certifications.

7.8.7 Marketing and Outreach

The community has indicated a desire for continuous, ongoing engagement with Parks and Recreation to make sure public needs are heard and addressed (Chapter 4). Some of the specific park improvements recommended in this plan will require local resident engagement to ascertain whether needs are effectively being met or if adjustments should be made. In the upcoming years of implementing this Master Plan, any major improvement project – whether capital or operational – should incorporate authentic outreach and engagement, as well as follow consistent standards of communication, to ensure transparency. According to the online survey, not knowing what is offered was the primary reason – expressed by almost a third (31%) of households – for not using parks or participating in programs.

While not knowing what is available will likely always be a top reason keeping people out of parks and programs, the department could make a significant shift in awareness by steps as simple as streamlining registration, as noted above. Regularly updating and sharing an event calendar and partnering with local organizations can also extend outreach. By first establishing guidelines for things like promotion, registration, and social media engagement pertaining to any events, programs, and camps, the department can build a stronger foundation of community awareness and involvement, a critical foundation for the success of any future programming the city develops.

Social media platforms are useful for staying connected but can be a challenge to sustain between staff changes and to update with engaging, interactive content. The city already uses Facebook regularly, posting images, updates, and more. As the Parks and Recreation Department grows, establishing department specific social media pages may help to create the identity of parks and recreation in Thomasville and reach a broad audience. Parks and Recreation should consider promoting opportunities on additional social media platforms, including Instagram and Twitter to widen the reach of their efforts. Additionally, promoted postings can reach residents who do not follow the department's accounts.

To ensure the longevity of a successful marketing strategy, the department should create simple, branded templates. Not only do templates give staff a better starting point for promoting programs easily and effectively, but they also make any outgoing messaging instantly recognizable by members of the community.

Figure 7.5 outlines three necessary elements that should be considered to conduct a successful marketing campaign. The top section, the first element, defines the department's identity. The middle section – the second element, containing the visual identity and messaging platform – describes what brochures, ads, flyers, and media will look like. The third element, at the bottom, lists a range of mediums for how the messaging can be shared.

Figure 7.5: Essential Marketing Communication Elements



Figure 7.5 is intended as a big-picture guide for crafting a marketing strategy. The strategic plan in Chapter 6 defines most of the top section for the Thomasville Parks and Recreation Department, but the middle section is left to the discretion of the agency in terms of visual identity and messaging platform. Any marketing materials Parks and Recreation creates should look to this branding for inspiration on color, style, and more.

The most important takeaway is that marketing can, and should be, easily implemented once it is standardized but still flexible for modifications. Figure 7.6 offers an example of a simple format that would be easily recognizable as messaging from the department. The title and images of a standard flyer or brochure can easily be changed to reflect what the agency wants to communicate or promote.

The standard event flyer format should include:

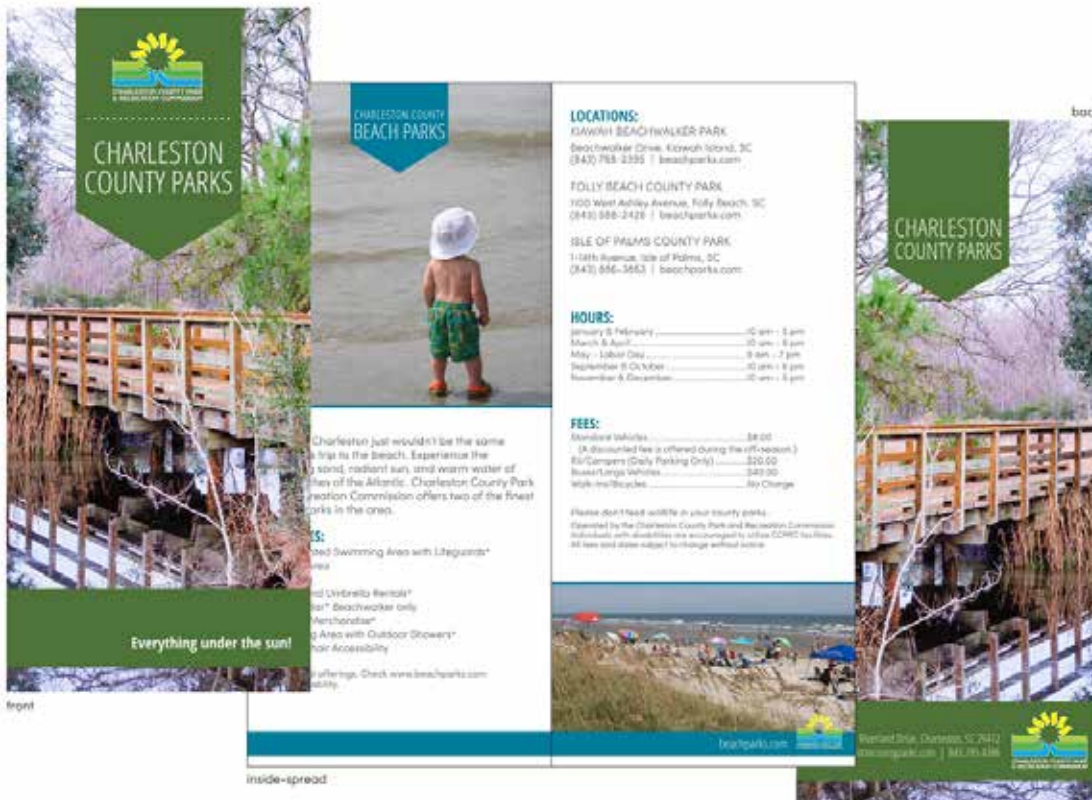
- Pictures (at the top and middle)
- Event name (in the front banner)
- Time and location (across the middle)
- Sponsors (at the bottom)
- Brand, logo, website and social media information

Any other materials, like the brochure in Figure 7.7, should incorporate similar visual identity and messaging structure. The same visual identity should also be used for online marketing, including social media and email notifications. Standardized, expanded marketing has the potential to attract additional users to the events, spaces, and programs offered by Thomasville.

Figure 7.6: Sample Event Flyer



Figure 7.7: Sample Brochure



7.8.8 Potential Funding Sources

Parks and recreation projects can be funded in many ways, including maintenance endowment funds, conservation districts, license tags, transient occupancy taxes, income taxes, lease backs, real-estate transfer fees, land dedication and/or park impact fees, and park authorities. Although all of these should be considered, the strategies below could have an immediate impact on the operations and capital improvements of Thomasville Parks and Recreation.

Forming a Parks Foundation

Establishing a Thomasville Parks Foundation, which would operate separately as a 501c3 organization, is an opportunity Thomasville should pursue. A foundation enables the city, its programs, and its facilities to receive philanthropic funds. There are philanthropists in Thomasville that want to donate to programs and services that add parks and recreation value to the city. A foundation must be promoted and actively utilized to fund park improvements. There must be a foundation board to guide efforts, and the members of this board should be intentionally recruited. Funds generated can create opportunities for capital projects, but also for programming. Funding can also be used to support volunteer recruitment and organization, enabling the city to introduce park ambassadors and other engaged members as part of the Thomasville's parks and recreation service.

As noted previously, Thomasville residents generally believe that program costs are fair. For those in the community who are unable to pay, the department is flexible in allowing them to participate in programs. Yet, there is currently no system for tracking these informal agreements and no set guidelines for determining who is qualified for assistance. However, the pricing for programs may still not be affordable for everyone in the community. A parks foundation can solicit donations for any participant that may not be able to pay for offerings, including covering program and user fees.

Volunteer Power

Park ambassadors provide directions, offer assistance, or remind visitors of park policies. They may also assist with maintenance activities, like litter pickup. The presence of ambassadors often helps visitors feel more comfortable in park spaces, and they can monitor sites to make sure people feel welcome and have good access to features of the park.

Adopt-a-trail or adopt-a-park programs are an additional, more formalized way for volunteers to assist with park maintenance in Thomasville. These programs encourage interested residents and groups to become involved in keeping parks clean for their community. These programs give new possibilities for involvement to those residents who have the interest but need a structured opportunity.

Keep Thomas County Beautiful manages a myriad of cleanup programs throughout the county. They manage a Youth Environmental Stewardship program (Y.E.S.), an adopt-a-spot program, Christmas Tree Recycling program, Great American Clean up events, and other litter removal programs that engage the community. This organization is an obvious partner to utilize for the city's parks and trails. Again, partnerships with local entities can be a great way to explore and initiate volunteer interest in the city. Target areas can be as small as a single facility or as large as an entire park. Keep Thomas County Beautiful could be a great volunteer base asset to the Parks and Recreation Department.

Creating a Scholarship Fund

Around the country, parks and recreation agencies are exploring ways to utilize the patronage of those already paying for recreation services. Thomasville Parks and Recreation should explore a couple of options for building a robust scholarship fund:

- Apply an additional \$2.00 charge to registration fees for paid programs; funnel the funds generated into a scholarship fund that can be accessed for those patrons unable to pay
- Add an option to the registration process where those signing up can opt to donate (e.g., \$2.00 or \$5.00) to help those in their community who are unable to pay to participate

Rentals

Many amenities in Thomasville are available for rent for relatively modest fees. The Big Oak Gazebo, Thomasville Rose Garden Gazebo, Cherokee Lake Park Pavilion #1, and Francis Weston Park Pavilion are available to reserve. Many of the improvements recommended in this plan have potential for rental usage and fees, including picnic shelters/pavilions and other spaces. There will also be substantial demand for rental areas adjacent to any new splash pads for gatherings such as kids' birthday parties. When any of these amenities are developed, they should be added to the rental inventory, and fees should be reevaluated to ensure they match what the public is able and willing to pay.

Grants and Application for Funding

The City of Thomasville should continue to be on the lookout for grants that will enhance the park system. Applying to established foundations is often easier and has a higher acceptance rate. There are sometimes local foundations that are more amenable to giving locally. In all, grants can come from the federal government, state sources, and sometimes local entities. Indianapolis, for example, has received over \$100 million in foundation grants from the Lilly Endowment over the past 20 years for park related improvements in the city.

Example grant sources:

- National Recreation Trails Program
- Recreational Trails Program (GDNR)
- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program
- Georgia Recreation and Park Association grants
- Resilient Communities Program (NFWF)
- Georgia's Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant (GAEPD)
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program
- America The Beautiful (U.S. Department of the Interior)
- Conservation Reserve Fund
- Community Forest and Open Space Program (Federal)
- Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Grant (FEMA)
- Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Grants (USDA)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (Federal)
- AARP Community Challenge

Below is a general list of ideas that communities have used to supplement costs of operations. Some of these may be more effective in Thomasville than others.

- Official drink for Parks and Recreation
- Tournament fees – if an outside vendor makes money, the city should as well
- Scoreboard sponsors
- Parking fees at events
- Field permits when outside groups are not using the fields
- Advertising sales
- Wi-Fi revenue through sponsorship, if a vendor provides the Wi-Fi
- Cell tower leases
- Privatization of various park and recreation programs and services

-
- Sports booster clubs
 - Corporate sponsorship in exchange for advertising

Hotel/Motel Tax

The City of Thomasville receives a Hotel-Motel Excise Tax of 8% which amounted to about \$660,000 in 2021 according to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. (Thomas County received a separate \$240,000.) A portion of these funds are unrestricted or "can be used for any legal general fund purpose in the city," while the rest are restricted to Tourism, Conventions, and Trade Shows (TCT). However, since the law defines TCT to include "parks, trails, and other recreational facilities," these funds can likely be used for capital development of many of the facilities recommended in this plan. The law does require cities to specify how funds will be spent prior to the fiscal year, so any changes need to be determined in advance.

Potential Sales Tax Funding

Currently, Thomas County implements a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), Local Option Sales Tax (LOST), and an Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST) which fund various infrastructure and educational systems in Thomasville. Related to parks and recreation, the SPLOST helps to fund facility improvements while the LOST aids in funding operation and the programming offered through the YMCA. While the funding provided through these mechanisms has been beneficial for Thomasville, aging facilities and community desires for additional programs indicates a potential need for additional funding.

The creation of a Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST) is one option for the city to raise additional funding. Funds from this source may be used for "transportation purposes" including capital projects and the retirement of general obligation debt for "roads, bridges, public transit, rails, airports, buses, seaports, including without limitation road, street, and bridge purposes. Thirty percent of revenues must be spent on projects on the Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan (SSTP)."⁵

If approved, some funding currently being used for the transportation related projects through the SPLOST could be re-allocated to the TSPLOST, potentially allowing for additional funding for Parks and Recreation capital projects. A TSPLOST could also be used to fund construction of trails throughout the city, a high priority for residents.

This program could enable the city to upgrade aging infrastructure and add new features throughout the system, beyond what can be funded through existing sources. Were the city to move forward with this initiative, the public will need to be provided with tangible specifics about future improvements. It is vital to departmental approval for taxpayers to understand where their dollars will be directed.

7.8.9 Recommendations

Operation and Maintenance

1. Adopt this Master Plan at the level of City Council; ensure commitment of legislative officials and city leaders
2. Prepare an operations plan for the Parks and Recreation Department that outlines the pricing philosophy, defines maintenance standards, describes the marketing strategy, and identifies key partners
3. Consider maintenance and staffing needs when adding parkland and features to the system
4. Consider adding a staff position, Enterprise Recreation Programmer, with dedicated hours for overseeing programming and managing outside contracts to begin responding to community requests for programming
5. Increase budget to improve maintenance levels to improve the overall condition of the park system
6. Consider removing some of the small properties with limited or no recreational value from the park system to increase emphasis on those that are most important to the community
7. Create and continuously update a comprehensive preventive maintenance plan for all equipment

⁵ Georgia Municipal Association. Handbook for Georgia's Mayors and Councilmembers. Georgia Municipal Association. (2018, February 27). Retrieved January 27, 2023, from <https://www.gacities.com/Resources/GMA-Handbooks-Publications/Handbook-for-Georgia-Mayors-and-Councilmembers/Part-Five-FINANCING-and-REVENUES/Municipal-Revenues.aspx>

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8. Implement conservation policies and sustainable practice guidelines for future development and management of park properties
 9. Elevate parks by implementing and promoting Best Management Practices (BMP) like stormwater detention, recycling, etc. throughout the system, especially those identified through the new *Stormwater Master Plan*
 10. Create and implement professional and career development strategies for management and supervisory staff
 11. Identify and allocate funding for critical staff development opportunities (including conferences, training, memberships, etc.) with consideration to licensure and certification requirements
 12. Encourage continued staff training for leadership and continued growth within respective fields
 13. Incentivize management level staff to attend professional development programs offered by state, regional, and national training organizations
 14. Incentivize and support staff members to pursue Certified Park & Recreation Professional (CPRP), Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI), and Aquatic Facility Operator (AFO) certifications

Partnerships and Sponsorships

1. Treat all vendors, contractors, and partners in a professional, consistent manner with legal, signed contracts containing the following:
 - Name, entity, and address
 - Obligations of each party
 - Terms of the contract
 - Price (if any, and who pays for what)
 - Representations and warranties – (insurance, who owns what)
 - Termination of the contract – when and by whom
 - Signed, witnessed, and reviewed periodically
2. Explore and solidify contracted partnerships with outside vendors and organizations, including private providers, to produce more programming
3. Develop working agreements with all partners (all outside groups using Thomasville facilities) including measurable outcomes; review every two years, at minimum
4. Ensure all future contracts and MOUs benefit Thomasville and its residents, in addition to the relevant partnering vendor or contractor
5. Require records from partners receiving city money that show how and where funds were spent
6. Understand all agency costs, both indirect and direct, before entering into agreements; understand how much investment a partner will commit to collaboration
7. Host quarterly or semiannual check-ins with all community partners; host roundtable discussion where all parties share program progress and emerging needs
8. Require a maintenance plan that identifies ongoing funding needs for partnership projects
9. Establish policies for accepting sponsorships and selling naming rights
10. Seek opportunities to install public art in additional parks and develop cultural programming in collaboration with creative, arts-advocacy entities in Thomasville
11. Continue open dialog with developers as neighborhoods are planned to ensure coordinated, strategic growth and the inclusion of needed park space and facilities

Engagement and Promotion

1. Develop a Master Plan Implementation Committee (e.g., can include members of plan steering committee) to facilitate, market, and guide implementation of the Action Plan (Chapter 8)
2. Maintain continuous public engagement throughout the implementation of this plan

-
- Engage neighborhood residents during park improvement processes using bulletin boards, monitored social media posts, and other methods
3. Establish a consistent messaging strategy for the department
 4. Determine standard formatting for all marketing and promotional materials (consider samples provided above) based on the medium (e.g., social media, newspaper, etc.)
 5. Create an eye-catching brand, including color, style, logo placement, and flyer layout
 6. Create department social media presence and consider the use of paid promotion
 7. Expand marketing of programs and facilities through existing and future collaborative relationships to increase community awareness and participation
 8. Utilize this Master Plan to guide decision making – regularly monitor progress
 9. Collaborate with partners and other service-providers in the city to cross-promote and share information about services

Management and Budget

1. Know the true costs to deliver services (direct and indirect costs – Subsection 7.8.2))
 - Inform users, partners, and citizens of these costs of services
2. Know the value of assets (excluding land values); know where those assets are in their life cycle
3. Establish and adjust fees for programs according to direct and indirect costs
4. Determine maintenance standards that include how many employees are required to maintain one acre of parkland; consider these standards when adding parkland to the system

Cost Recovery

1. Increase cost recovery as new features are developed, and new programs are added
2. Institute an easy-to-understand Cost Recovery and Pricing Plan for everything that is offered
3. Price services furthest away from the mission at full cost recovery levels
4. Analyze potential costs versus revenue before adding new features
5. Add new facilities to the rental inventory as they are developed
6. Reevaluate rental fees as amenities are updated, replaced, or added to the inventory
7. Identify potential revenue sources at community events, including sponsorships and entry fees
8. Develop a program for recruiting and scheduling volunteer park ambassadors to promote wellbeing and provide assistance at parks
9. Partner with Keep Thomasville Beautiful for park and trail clean-up

Funding Sources

1. Find dedicated funding sources for Parks and Recreation that can be depended upon annually
2. Seek philanthropists in the community to support the agency's causes
3. Create a Thomasville Parks Foundation to raise funds, recruit and organize volunteers, and promote the parks
4. Continue seeking grants and apply to foundations for project funding that enhances the park system; be sure this is consistent with the mission of Parks and Recreation while also considering associated costs to the city
5. Create a Scholarship Fund, potentially by requesting an optional additional \$2.00 charge during registration
6. Consider using some of the proceeds of the city's Hotel-Motel Excise Tax for development of parks and facilities identified in this Master Plan
7. Consider options to increase revenue from tax dollars to fund capital improvements

7.9 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND ESTIMATED COSTS

This section provides recommendations for individual park improvements including proposed new facilities and upgrades to existing parks. These recommendations are presented as a starting point for future discussions with users, neighbors, partners, and the community at large. Before pursuing development, each park site will need a deeper investigation into capacity and precise details like placement, materials used, and maintenance considerations.

The improvements by park are presented in Table 7.1. These improvements should be reevaluated prior to new development and after any follow-up planning studies. All costs in the table are estimated in 2022 dollars and will need to be evaluated for potential escalation at the time of development. The master planning process completed before large-scale improvements should include a detailed estimate of the costs for the improvements at each park.

Grant opportunities exist and should be explored for many of these improvements, particularly trail system development, helping to reduce the required contributions by the City of Thomasville. Additionally, partnerships, including for fundraising efforts, should be considered as part of any improvement, particularly those with substantial capital costs.

The top 10 improvements for existing and new facilities are listed below:

Existing Park/Facilities

1. ADA access
2. Restrooms
3. Playgrounds
4. Shade
5. Park trails
6. Underinvested parks
7. Picnic shelters
8. Roads/parking lots
9. Signage – entrance/wayfinding
10. Golf course improvements

New Development

1. Park trails
2. Citywide trails and connectivity
3. Nature access
4. Splash pad
5. Dog park (relocation/expansion)
6. Neighborhood determined features
7. Disc golf
8. Neighborhood parks (new)
9. Fitness area/obstacle courses
10. Pickleball courts

Table 7.1: Capital Improvements by Park

Park Name	Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
Systemwide					
1 ADA accessibility assessment	Short	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
2 Trees & landscaping throughout system	Ongoing	\$37,000	\$55,000	\$92,000	\$184,000
3 Wayfinding plan & signage for all parks	Short	\$123,000	\$0	\$0	\$123,000
4 Consistent signage at all park entrances	Short/Medium	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$0	\$110,000
5 Drinking fountains/bottle fillers throughout system	Short/Medium	\$37,000	\$37,000	\$0	\$74,000
6 Security cameras & lighting throughout system	Short/Medium	\$31,000	\$31,000	\$0	\$62,000
7 Site furnishing upgrades at all existing parks (trash & recycling receptacles/bike racks/pet waste stations)	Short/Medium	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$100,000
8 Community gardens (location TBD)	Medium	TBD	TBD	\$0	TBD
9 Wi-Fi hotspots	Medium	\$0	\$123,000	\$0	\$123,000
10 Splash pads (2)	Medium/Long	\$0	\$493,000	\$493,000	\$986,000
11 New neighborhood parks (2)	Long	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Systemwide Total		\$358,000	\$844,000	\$585,000	\$1,787,000
Neighborhood Parks					
Flipper Park					
1 Park master plan	Short	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$20,000
2 ADA walkways - 6' wide	Short	\$13,000	\$0	\$0	\$13,000

Table 7.1: Capital Improvements by Park (Continued)

Park Name		Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
3	Playground replacement	Short	\$62,000	\$0	\$0	\$62,000
4	Basketball court improvements	Short	\$62,000	\$0	\$0	\$62,000
5	Neighborhood determined feature	Medium	\$0	\$49,000	\$0	\$49,000
6	Parking lot w/ ADA spaces (10 spaces)	Medium	\$0	\$46,000	\$0	\$46,000
7	Trail - paved perimeter	Medium	\$0	\$60,000	\$0	\$60,000
8	Memorial improvements	Long	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Project Total			\$157,000	\$155,000	\$0	\$312,000
MacIntyre Park						
1	ADA walkways - 6' wide	Short	\$69,000	\$0	\$0	\$69,000
2	Erosion mitigation	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
3	Shelter repairs/upgrades (pads, paint, tables)	Short	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
4	Trail - paved, 8' wide w/ bridges	Medium	\$0	\$370,000	\$0	\$370,000
5	Shade at playground	Medium	\$0	\$49,000	\$0	\$49,000
6	Imagination garden	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
7	Porch swing plaza	Long	\$0	\$0	\$123,000	\$123,000
8	Restroom building	Long	\$0	\$0	\$277,000	\$277,000
Project Total			\$119,000	\$419,000	\$462,000	\$1,000,000
Northside Park						
1	Park master plan	Short	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
2	ADA walkways - 6' wide	Short	\$43,000	\$0	\$0	\$43,000
3	Basketball court replacement	Short	\$62,000	\$0	\$0	\$62,000
4	Parking lot w/ ADA spaces and paved road	Short	\$434,000	\$0	\$0	\$434,000
5	Picnic shelter	Short	\$62,000	\$0	\$0	\$62,000
6	Playground replacement	Short	\$185,000	\$0	\$0	\$185,000
7	Nature restoration (prairie/wildflower meadow)	Medium	\$0	\$9,000	\$0	\$9,000
8	Trail - paved perimeter - 8' wide (0.5-mile loop) w/ neighborhood connection	Medium	\$0	\$246,000	\$0	\$246,000
9	Neighborhood determined feature	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
Project Total			\$811,000	\$255,000	\$62,000	\$1,128,000
Parnell Park						
1	Consider relocation/upgrade of park	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
2	ADA walkways - 6' wide	Short	\$22,000	\$0	\$0	\$22,000
3	Basketball court replacement	Short	\$62,000	\$0	\$0	\$62,000
4	Picnic shelter	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
5	Neighborhood determined feature	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
Project Total			\$84,000	\$62,000	\$62,000	\$208,000
Weston Park						
1	ADA walkways - 6' wide	Short	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000
2	Concrete pads at small shelters	Short	\$11,000	\$0	\$0	\$11,000
3	Walking path extension	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
4	Ballfield improvements – bleachers, fencing, infield	Medium	\$0	\$92,000	\$0	\$92,000
5	Event pavilion	Long	\$0	\$0	\$185,000	\$185,000
6	Park expansion/trail connectivity	Long	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
7	Track renovation (partnership)	Long	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership
Project Total			\$15,000	\$92,000	\$185,000	\$292,000
Community Parks						
Balfour/Varnadoe Park						
1	Park master plan	Short	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$30,000
2	ADA walkways - 6' wide	Short	\$34,000	\$0	\$0	\$34,000
3	Basketball court upgrades - surfacing and fencing	Short	\$37,000	\$0	\$0	\$37,000
4	Field improvements (Varnadoe)	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
5	Picnic shelters (2)	Short	\$123,000	\$0	\$0	\$123,000
6	Playground replacement w/ shade	Short	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$300,000

Table 7.1: Capital Improvements by Park (Continued)

Park Name	Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
7 Relocate dog park to another park (demo)	Short	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
8 Tennis/pickleball court improvements or conversion	Short	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$100,000
9 Parking & road upgrades/reorganization	Short/Medium	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$0	\$250,000
10 Fitness area (replacement)	Medium	\$0	\$99,000	\$0	\$99,000
11 Restroom building improvements (Balfour)	Medium	\$0	\$277,000	\$0	\$277,000
12 Trail - paved perimeter - 8' wide (0.75-mile loop)	Medium	\$0	\$217,000	\$0	\$217,000
13 Neighborhood determined feature	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
Project Total		\$755,000	\$780,000	\$0	\$1,535,000
Cassidy Road Park/Fishing Pond (see concept)					
1 Upgrade to a community park	Short	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2 Park master plan	Short	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$30,000
3 ADA walkways - 6' wide	Short	\$17,000	\$0	\$0	\$17,000
4 Disc golf course (partnership)	Short	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership
5 Dog park relocation (alternate location)	Short	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
6 Parking lot expansion/reorganization	Short	\$231,000	\$0	\$0	\$231,000
7 Picnic shelters (add/improve existing)	Short	\$92,000	\$0	\$0	\$92,000
8 Restroom building	Short	\$277,000	\$0	\$0	\$277,000
9 Trail around pond - 8' wide (0.5-mile loop) w/ connections to neighborhoods (crushed	Short	\$154,000	\$0	\$0	\$154,000
10 Fitness area	Medium	\$0	\$99,000	\$0	\$99,000
11 Nature play area	Medium	\$0	\$185,000	\$0	\$185,000
12 Nature restoration (prairie/wildflower meadow)	Medium	\$0	\$9,000	\$0	\$9,000
13 Swinging benches	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
14 Neighborhood determined feature	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
Project Total		\$801,000	\$330,000	\$62,000	\$1,193,000
Cherokee Park/Rose Garden					
1 ADA walkways - 6' wide	Short	\$17,000	\$0	\$0	\$17,000
2 Dog park relocation (preferred location)	Short	\$123,000	\$0	\$0	\$123,000
3 Parking improvements	Medium/Long	\$0	\$139,000	\$139,000	\$278,000
Project Total		\$140,000	\$139,000	\$139,000	\$418,000
Paradise Park					
1 Carriageway enhancement	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
2 Gateway/entrance feature	Short	\$12,000	\$0	\$0	\$12,000
3 Gazebo/bandshell restoration & concert plaza	Short	\$123,000	\$0	\$0	\$123,000
4 Parking improvements	Short	\$69,000	\$0	\$0	\$69,000
5 Trail (crushed stone/granite)	Short	\$185,000	\$0	\$0	\$185,000
6 ADA walkways - 6' wide	Short/Medium	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$0	\$22,000
7 Lighting improvements	Medium	\$0	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000
8 Playground improvements	Medium	\$0	\$123,000	\$0	\$123,000
9 Restroom building	Medium	\$0	\$308,000	\$0	\$308,000
10 Shelter repairs/upgrades, pads under shelters	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
11 Signage - historic/interpretive/arboretum	Medium	\$0	\$31,000	\$0	\$31,000
Project Total		\$400,000	\$553,000	\$0	\$953,000
TOTAL NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY PARKS		\$3,640,000	\$3,629,000	\$1,557,000	\$8,826,000
Other Specialty and Regional Parks					
Dr. Bruce Park					
1 No improvements recommended	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Project Total		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Victoria Park					
1 Signage and site amenities only	Medium				
Big Oak/Elizabeth Ireland Poe Park					
1 Signage and site amenities only	Medium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 7.1: Capital Improvements by Park (Continued)

Park Name		Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
Country Oaks Municipal Golf Course						
1	Golf Course Renovation Master Plan implementation	Medium/Long	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000
Project Total			\$0	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000
Ethel Flowers Neel Park						
1	Signage and site amenities only	Medium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maury Tice Flowers Park						
1	Consider for stormwater mitigation	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Remington Park						
1	Park master plan	Short	\$60,000	\$0	\$0	\$60,000
2	ADA walkways - 6' wide	Short	\$52,000	\$0	\$0	\$52,000
3	Concrete pads at shelters	Short	\$49,000	\$0	\$0	\$49,000
4	Ballfield improvements – bleachers, dugouts, fencing, etc.	Medium/Long	\$0	\$288,000	\$673,000	\$961,000
5	Parking improvements	Medium/Long	\$0	\$254,000	\$254,000	\$508,000
6	Fitness area (replacement)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$99,000	\$99,000
7	Pickleball expansion	Long	\$0	\$0	\$148,000	\$148,000
8	Trail (crushed stone/granite) w/ improved connectivity	Long	\$0	\$0	\$154,000	\$154,000
Project Total			\$161,000	\$542,000	\$1,328,000	\$2,031,000
Rest A While Park						
1	Consider sale of property	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Smith Ave. Rose Park						
1	No improvements recommended	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
The Ritz Amphitheater						
1	No improvements recommended	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Victoria Place Pocket Park						
1	Signage and site amenities only	Medium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wayside Park						
1	Signage and site amenities only	Medium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Values include 10% contingency and 12% for design, engineering, bidding, construction administration, etc. (except non-construction items)

ACTION PLAN

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Action Plan table on the following pages (Table 8.1) provides a detailed list of recommendations for the *2023 Thomasville Parks and Recreation Master Plan*. These strategies represent specific actions for Parks and Recreation in the City of Thomasville to take to implement this plan.

8.2 ACTION PLAN STRATEGIES

These strategies are listed under the four goals and 12 objectives from the Strategic Plan (Chapter 6). The legend at the top of the table identifies the abbreviations used throughout the table. Checkmarks indicate the timeframe for the completion of each strategy within the time periods of 0-2 years, 3-5 years, or 6-10 years. Some strategies are indicated as “Ongoing” as they apply to all timeframes or represent more general actions that should always be considered. A total count of strategies by timeframe is located at the end of the table in the corresponding columns.

The other columns provide information regarding the implementation of each strategy. “Category” describes the type of action within the following four options: capital (capital improvements); policy (guidelines for the City Council and the Parks and Recreation Department, possibly including legislation); planning (long-term parks outlook, which includes conduction of studies); or operations. The column for “Agency” indicates who is expected to implement the strategy, usually Thomasville Parks and Recreation Department or another city department. “Funding Source” indicates how the strategy should be funded or the type of funds used (operating or capital funds).

8.3 IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY RATING

Following the visioning process, the steering committee was asked to review a series of potential improvements to Parks and Recreation in Thomasville. These operational and capital recommendations were intended to begin to address the needs of to help reach the new vision. Each of the proposed recommendations was based on the findings of the public engagement and the other analysis of the plan, all of which had been previously presented to the committee.

Committee members reviewed these potential solutions and participated in an exercise to help verify these priorities for the Action Plan. Committee members were asked to rate each of the potential improvement projects through the engagement software Mentimeter on a scale of 0-5 with the highest priority (5) and not needed (0).

These priority ratings were then used to help rank the importance of improvements but not necessarily the order in which they should be developed. Figure 8.1, located after the Action Plan, identifies the capital improvement rating based on the average of the ranking for each item. These ratings were used as part of the process for recommending priorities along with public input and analyses completed throughout this master planning process.

Table 8.1: Action Plan

ACTION PLAN - 2023 Thomasville Parks & Recreation Master Plan							
Legend of Abbreviations/Organizations							
Parks = Thomasville Parks and Recreation							
City = City Council, Other City Departments							
Partners = Other Organizations (county/state, private agencies, schools, state/federal grants, etc.)							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)		Category	Agency	Funding Source	Section References	
	0-2	3-5					6-10
Goal 1: Beautiful Parks							
Offer attractive parks and facilities that encourage fun and enjoyment for all							
Objective 1.1 – Places: Provide innovative parks and facilities to serve and engage the community							
Strategy 1.1.1:	Utilize existing parkland to meet unmet facility needs and to improve access to park features	✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP	7.6.4
Strategy 1.1.2:	Develop Cassidy Park as a community park with a focus on passive uses to address many unmet needs in the community		Ongoing	Capital/Planning	Parks/City	CIP	7.6.4
Strategy 1.1.3:	Determine an approach to improving the Country Oaks Golf Course to address issues identified in the Golf Course Renovation Master Plan	✓		Capital/Planning	Parks/City	CIP	7.4
Strategy 1.1.4:	Relocate the existing dog park and consider additional locations to meet the growing needs of Thomasville households	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	7.6.2 & 7.6.4
Strategy 1.1.5:	Continue to partner with the disc golf group to provide new and expanded opportunities in the city		Ongoing	Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	7.6
Strategy 1.1.6:	Consider themed playground equipment, such as climbing rocks, sensory features, etc., potentially providing for marketing and resident/visitor photo opportunities		Ongoing	Capital/Planning	Parks	CIP/OP	7.4
Strategy 1.1.7:	Incorporate nature play elements as part of playground development and replacement, especially in more passive park areas		Ongoing	Capital/Planning	Parks	CIP/OP	7.4
Strategy 1.1.8:	Continually evaluate opportunities to develop new parks in underserved areas, especially where stormwater can also be addressed		Ongoing	Capital/Planning	Parks/City	CIP	7.6
Strategy 1.1.9:	Develop a splash pad (possibly more long-term) in Thomasville to expand access to aquatic facilities in the city		✓	Capital	Parks	CIP	7.6
Strategy 1.1.10:	Include a neighborhood determined feature at each neighborhood park, ensuring development aligns with needs and encouraging a sense of local investment and opportunities for placemaking in parks		✓	Capital/Planning	Parks/City	CIP	7.6
Strategy 1.1.11:	Seek opportunities to install public art in additional parks and develop cultural programming in collaboration with creative, arts-advocacy entities in Thomasville		Ongoing	Capital/Operations	Parks/Partners	CIP/OP	7.8.9
Objective 1.2 – Amenities: Pursue responsive development and strategic replacement of structures and support features							
Strategy 1.2.1:	Pursue and implement an ADA Accessibility Audit of all facilities, programs, and communications	✓		Capital/Planning	Parks	CIP	7.4
Strategy 1.2.2:	Add support features throughout the park system such as seating/benches, shade structures, trash/recycling receptacles, drinking fountains/bottle fillers, and trees & landscaping		Ongoing	Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4
Strategy 1.2.3:	Replace or upgrade bleachers to meet the requirement of a fence along the upper portion when 5-rows or more	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4
Strategy 1.2.4:	Repair storm damage at Vamadoe Park fields, following examination of future community needs	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 1.2.5:	Provide accessible spectator areas with shade at all game fields		Ongoing	Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 1.2.6:	Improve ADA accessibility to fields and dugouts		Ongoing	Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 1.2.7:	Include bottle fillers at all new drinking fountains and when existing features are replaced		Ongoing	Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4

Table 8.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	Section References
	0-2	3-5	6-10				
Strategy 1.2.8: Provide consistent amenities throughout the system		Ongoing		Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 1.2.9: Add or improve restrooms throughout the parks; include family restrooms at larger parks		✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 1.2.10: Add restrooms at MacIntyre and Paradise parks		✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 1.2.11: Add and upgrade signage – entrance, wayfinding, interpretive, and informative – throughout the park system		Ongoing		Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 1.2.12: Add security cameras and lighting throughout parks in locations that have perceived security concerns		Ongoing		Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 1.2.13: Continue to replace dated playgrounds and add where unavailable; include separate age 2-5 equipment		Ongoing		Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 1.2.14: Incorporate shade features over existing amenities such as playgrounds to facilitate year-round usage		Ongoing		Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 1.2.15: Upgrade athletic fields throughout the system as needed		Ongoing		Capital	Parks/ Partners	CIP/ Partners	7.4.4
Objective 1.3 – Stewardship: Employ sustainable practices to ensure continued community access to nature							
Strategy 1.3.1: Elevate parks by implementing and promoting Best Management Practices (BMP) like stormwater detention, recycling, etc. throughout the system, especially those identified through the new Stormwater Master Plan		Ongoing		Capital	Parks/ Partners	OP/ Partners	7.8.9
Strategy 1.3.2: Implement conservation policies and sustainable practice guidelines for future development and management of park properties	✓			Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 1.3.3: Develop interpretive and informational signage throughout the park system (following signage plans) to help visitors understand the natural features and history of Thomasville parks while improving awareness of sensitive ecosystems and rare species		Ongoing		Capital/ Planning	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 1.3.4: Partner with Georgia DNR and Lost Creek Forest to improve access to and awareness of natural areas		Ongoing		Capital	Parks	CIP	7.5.2
Goal 2: Accessible Spaces							
Build physical and social connections throughout the entire community							
Objective 2.1 – Gathering: Offer accessible and inviting opportunities for community interaction							
Strategy 2.1.1: Ensure accessible walkways to all facilities and seating areas	✓			Capital/ Planning	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 2.1.2: Upgrade and utilize technology in parks for the benefit of both patrons and staff	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 2.1.3: Add and upgrade picnic shelters at parks to increase overall access to these facilities, as well as make them more inviting, and to facilitate opportunities for outdoor community gatherings		✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Objective 2.2 – Connecting: Improve connections to parks, schools, and popular destinations							
Strategy 2.2.1: Update the city's Community Trail plan to include standards for design, signage, and maintenance, prioritization, and costs	✓			Planning	City	OP/CIP	7.5.2
Strategy 2.2.2: Incorporate the plans for individual parks and proposed bike and pedestrian efforts into the Community Trail plan update	✓			Planning	City	OP/CIP	7.5.2
Strategy 2.2.3: Consider additional linkages between parks, schools, and other popular destinations		Ongoing		Planning	City	OP/CIP	7.5.2
Strategy 2.2.4: Add trail loops in existing and future parks		Ongoing		Capital	Parks	CIP	7.5.2
Strategy 2.2.5: Consider signing on to the 10-Minute Walk Mission by the IPL and NRPA to show the city's commitment to connectivity and access to parks	✓			Policy	City	N/A	7.5.2

Table 8.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	Section References
	0-2	3-5	6-10				
Strategy 2.2.6: Add trails throughout the system at existing parks, including McIntyre, Paradise, Northside, Balfour/Varnadoe, and Cassidy		✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP	7.5.2
Strategy 2.2.7: Consider a long trail at Remington Park to expand trail opportunities and improve connectivity at the property			✓	Capital	Parks	CIP/Partners	7.5.2
Strategy 2.2.8: Include trail connections between parks and adjacent neighborhoods wherever possible		Ongoing		Planning	Parks/City	OP/CIP	7.5.2
Strategy 2.2.9: Seek opportunities to add natural surface trails in existing and future parks		Ongoing		Planning/Capital	Parks/City	OP/CIP	7.5.2
Strategy 2.2.10: Explore development of a searchable mobile app to communicate site locations, services, and special events to the public		Ongoing		Planning	City	OP/CIP	7.4.4
Strategy 2.2.11: Add Wi-Fi access to parks; promote park hotspots to ensure awareness		✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP	7.4.4
Objective 2.3 – Engaging; Continuously gauge community needs and promote opportunities							
Strategy 2.3.1: Develop a Master Plan Implementation Committee (e.g., can include members of plan steering committee) to facilitate, market, and guide implementation of the Action Plan	✓			Policy	Parks/City	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 2.3.2: Prepare park master plans for existing parks and any future parks prior to development of facilities to ensure that added features are complementary, desired, and fully accessible		Ongoing		Capital/Planning	Parks	CIP/Partners	7.6.4
Strategy 2.3.3: Maintain continuous public engagement throughout the implementation of this plan		Ongoing		Policy	Parks/City	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 2.3.4: Establish a consistent messaging strategy for the department	✓			Operations/Policy	Parks/City	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 2.3.5: Determine standard formatting for all marketing and promotional materials (consider samples provided above) based on the medium (e.g., social media, newspaper, etc.)	✓			Operations/Policy	Parks/City	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 2.3.6: Create an eye-catching brand, including color, style, logo placement, and flyer layout	✓			Operations/Policy	Parks/City	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 2.3.7: Create a department social media presence and consider the use of paid promotion	✓			Operations/Policy	Parks/City	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 2.3.8: Engage neighborhood residents during park improvement processes using bulletin boards, monitored social media posts, and other methods		Ongoing		Policy	Parks/City	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 2.3.9: Expand marketing of programs and facilities through existing and future collaborative relationships to increase community awareness and participation		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 2.3.10: Consider branding and marketing active senior programs together under a unique category, such as "active adults" to increase participation		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	7.7.4
Strategy 2.3.11: Monitor community needs for multiuse/totals courts at existing and future parks		✓	✓	Planning/Capital	Parks	OP/CIP	7.6.4
Strategy 2.3.12: Develop an online program calendar, including the ability to sync directly to personal calendars		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	7.7.4
Strategy 2.3.13: Monitor nationwide and regional recreation trends regularly, especially concerning growing population groups (50+ and BIPOC communities in Thomasville) to best serve the needs of the whole community		Ongoing		Operations/Planning	Parks/City	OP	7.7.4
Strategy 2.3.14: Monitor the demand for additional pickleball courts at Remington Park to meet the needs of this fast-growing sport			✓	Capital	Parks	OP	7.4.4
Goal 3: Diverse Experiences							
Provide a wide array of recreational opportunities that inspire community health and happiness							
Objective 3.1 – Events: Collaborate to provide possibilities for interaction, fun, & learning							
Strategy 3.1.1: Expand existing concert, movie, and live performance program offerings to address unmet community needs		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP/Partners	7.4.4

Table 8.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	Section References
	0-2	3-5	6-10				
	<p>Strategy 3.1.2: Consider partnership opportunities to add a regularly scheduled and city organized farmers market with booths and more accessible opportunities to participate</p> <p>Strategy 3.1.3: Partner with other agencies to organize events and community-engaged activities around trails and bike paths</p>	Ongoing					
<p>Objective 3.2 – Wellness: Encourage exploration & growth through diverse physical activities and educational opportunities</p> <p>Strategy 3.2.1: Continuously evaluate the demand for new or expanded programs as indicated by the survey results and other public input</p> <p>Strategy 3.2.2: Make full use of new facilities – amphitheaters, picnic shelters, pickleball courts, etc. – by programming and offering activities anchored around these sites</p> <p>Strategy 3.2.3: Add outdoor fitness equipment at select parks to expand opportunities for improved community health</p> <p>Strategy 3.2.4: Seek opportunities to add Esports and other programs to attract the hard-to-reach teenage population</p> <p>Strategy 3.2.5: Continue to respond to the growing demand for pickleball programs and leagues, both indoor and outdoor</p>	Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP/ Partners	7.4.4
<p>Objective 3.3 – Partnerships: Accommodate local organizations to optimize services and programs</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.1: Ensure all future contracts and MOUs benefit Thomasville and its residents, in addition to the relevant partnering vendor or contractor</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.2: Explore and solidify contracted partnerships with outside vendors and organizations, including private providers, to produce more programming</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.3: Treat all vendors, contractors, and partners in a professional, consistent manner with legal, signed contracts containing obligations of each party, terms, and conditions</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.4: Require records from partners receiving city money that show how and where funds were spent</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.5: Develop working agreements with all partners (all outside groups using Thomasville facilities) including measurable outcomes; review every two years, at minimum</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.6: Host quarterly or semiannual check-ins with all community partners; host roundtable discussion where all parties share program progress and emerging needs</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.7: Understand all agency costs; both indirect and direct; before entering into agreements; understand how much investment a partner will commit to collaboration</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.8: Establish split revenue percentages for any program partnerships with funding channeled directly to Parks and Recreation</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.9: Continue to partner with the YMCA to ensure public access to their pools</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.10: Seek partnerships with local entities to develop more age 50+ programming and to ensure offerings align with local needs</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.11: Explore partnerships with nearby environmental and nature organizations (e.g., Georgia DNR, Lost Creek Forest, Birdsong Nature Center, the school districts, and YMCA) to create and promote additional nature-based group</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.12: Consider providing incentives to developers if they donate usable parkland or develop parks in new communities</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.13: Encourage these developers to follow city park design guidelines</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.14: Seek opportunities for additional downtown plaza spaces for community gathering and outdoor dining, especially through partnerships</p> <p>Strategy 3.3.15: Develop a program for recruiting and scheduling volunteer park ambassadors to promote wellbeing and provide assistance at parks</p>	Ongoing	✓		Policy	Parks/City	OP	7.8.9
		✓		Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
	Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
	Ongoing			Policy	Parks/City	OP	7.8.9
	Ongoing			Policy	Parks	OP	7.8.9
	Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP/ Partners	7.8.9
	Ongoing			Policy	Parks/City	OP/ Partners	7.8.9
	✓			Operations	Parks	Revenue	7.7.4
	Ongoing			Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/ Partners	7.6.4
	Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP/ Partners	7.7.4
	Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP/ Partners	7.7.4
	Ongoing			Policy	City/ Partners	OP/ Partners	7.6.4
	Ongoing			Policy	City/Parks/ Partners	OP/ Partners	7.6.4
	Ongoing			Planning/ Capital	City/Parks/ Partners	CIP/ Partners	7.6.4
	✓			Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/ Partners	7.8.9

Table 8.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	Section References
	0-2	3-5	6-10				
Strategy 3.3.16: Partner with Keep Thomasville Beautiful for park and trail clean-up		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP/Partners	7.8.9
Strategy 3.3.17: Evaluate the demand for community gardens and other fresh food opportunities and seek partnerships to meet the demand	✓	✓		Capital/Policy	Parks	OP/Partners	7.6.4
Strategy 3.3.18: Collaborate with partners and other service-providers in the city to cross-promote and share information about services		Ongoing		Policy	Parks/Partners	OP/Partners	7.8.9
Goal 4: Responsible Operations							
Employ strong leadership to direct an engaged community using efficient management, exceptional customer service, sustainable operations, and productive partnerships							
Objective 4.1 – Structure: Encourage an engaged workforce of valued staff with a culture of innovation							
Strategy 4.1.1: Be a mission driven agency; pay very close attention to the new mission of Parks and Recreation		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	7.7.4
Strategy 4.1.2: Ensure every action and decision connects back to the department's mission		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	7.7.4
Strategy 4.1.3: Consider adding a staff position, Enterprise Recreation Programmer, with dedicated hours for overseeing programming and managing outside contracts	✓			Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 4.1.4: Consider maintenance and staffing needs when adding parkland and features to the system		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 4.1.5: Consider removing some of the smaller properties with limited recreational value from the park system to increase emphasis on those that are most important to the community	✓			Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.5
Strategy 4.1.6: Prepare an operations plan for the Parks and Recreation Department that outlines the pricing philosophy, defines maintenance standards, describes the marketing strategy, and identifies key partners	✓			Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 4.1.7: Prepare management plans that identify expected life, maintenance and operational requirements (including BMPs), and replacement costs of improvements prior to development		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	7.3.2
Strategy 4.1.8: Create and implement professional and career development strategies for management and supervisory staff	✓			Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 4.1.9: Identify and allocate funding for critical staff development opportunities (including conferences, training, memberships, etc.) with consideration to licensure and certification requirements		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 4.1.10: Encourage continued staff training for leadership and continued growth within respective fields		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 4.1.11: Incentivize management level staff to attend professional development programs offered by state, regional, and national training organizations		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 4.1.12: Incentivize and support staff members to pursue Certified Park & Recreation Professional (CPRP), Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI), and Aquatic Facility Operator (AFO) certifications		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
Objective 4.2 – Operations: Implement clear performance standards and training practices for quality and flexibility							
Strategy 4.2.1: Utilize this Master Plan to guide decision making – regularly monitor progress		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 4.2.2: Formulate and post a policy indicating where drone use is permitted or prohibited in Thomasville parks	✓			Operations	Parks	OP	7.6.4
Strategy 4.2.3: Establish an annual assessment process and program life cycle to determine if Thomasville should stop offering a program, continue offering a program, or start a new program		Ongoing		Operations/Policy	Parks/City	OP	7.7.4
Strategy 4.2.4: Increase cost recovery as new features are developed, and new programs are added		Ongoing		Policy	Parks/City	N/A	7.8.9
Strategy 4.2.5: Institute an easy-to-understand cost recovery and pricing plan for everything that is offered; integrate into the operations plan	✓			Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9
Strategy 4.2.6: Increase budget to improve maintenance levels to improve the overall condition of the park system		Ongoing		Operations/Policy	City	OP	7.8.9

Table 8.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	Section References	
	0-2	3-5	6-10					
Strategy 4.2.7: Create and continuously update a comprehensive preventive maintenance plan for all equipment	Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.2.8: Require a maintenance plan that identifies ongoing funding needs for partnership projects	Ongoing			Policy	Parks	OP	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.2.9: Know the true costs to deliver services (direct and indirect costs) and inform users, partners, and citizens of these costs of services	Ongoing			Operations/ Policy	Parks	OP	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.2.10: Know the value of assets (excluding land values); know where those assets are in their life cycle	Ongoing			Operations/ Policy	Parks	OP	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.2.11: Determine maintenance standards that include how many employees are required to maintain one acre of parkland; consider these standards when adding parkland to the system	Ongoing			Operations/ Policy	Parks	OP	7.8.9	
Objective 4.3 – Funding: Explore creative operational practices and funding strategies to improve effectiveness of investment								
Strategy 4.3.1: Find dedicated funding sources for Parks and Recreation that can be depended upon annually	Ongoing			Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/ Revenue	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.2: Seek philanthropists in the community to support the agency's causes	✓			Operations	Parks/ Partners	Revenue	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.3: Create a Thomasville Parks Foundation to raise funds, recruit and organize volunteers, and promote the parks	✓			Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/ Revenue	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.4: Consider using some of the proceeds of the city's Hotel-Motel Excise Tax for development of parks and facilities identified in this Master Plan	✓			Policy	City	N/A	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.5: Consider options to increase revenue from tax dollars to fund capital improvements	✓	✓		Policy	City	Revenue	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.6: Establish policies for accepting sponsorships and selling naming rights	✓	✓		Policy	Parks/City	OP/ Revenue	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.7: Continue seeking grants and apply to foundations for project funding that enhances the park system; be sure this is consistent with the mission of Parks and Recreation while also considering associated costs to the city	Ongoing			Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/ Revenue	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.8: Create a Scholarship Fund, potentially by requesting an optional additional \$2.00 charge during registration		✓		Operations/ Policy	Parks	Revenue	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.9: Establish and adjust fees for programs according to direct and indirect costs	Ongoing			Operations	Parks/ Partners	Revenue	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.10: Price services furthest away from the mission at full cost recovery levels	Ongoing			Policy	Parks	OP/ Revenue	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.11: Analyze potential costs versus revenue before adding new features	Ongoing			Policy	Parks	OP	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.12: Add new facilities to the rental inventory as they are developed	Ongoing			Policy	Parks	Revenue	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.13: Reevaluate rental fees as amenities are updated, replaced, or added to the inventory	Ongoing			Policy	Parks	OP/ Revenue	7.8.9	
Strategy 4.3.14: Identify potential revenue sources at community events, including sponsorships and entry fees	✓	✓		Operations	Parks/ Partners	Revenue	7.8.9	
Totals by Timeframe	34	16	11			Ongoing = 75		
Total Number of Strategies = 121								

Figure 8.1: Improvement Priority Rating





APPENDIX A - METHODOLOGY

A.1 SERVICE AREA ANALYSIS

The spatial distribution of parks throughout Thomasville is important because residents are more able and willing to access facilities that are close to their homes. For this analysis, travel times (walking or driving) based on the street network were used to determine service areas for parks by park type and for specific facilities within parks. The size of service areas varies depending on the amenity in question. This analysis used the ArcGIS Online and ArcMap by ESRI for the development of both the spatial data and the maps used in the report.

This process to develop the service area consisted of five steps for each service area distances.

1. Create shapefile with park entrances in ArcMap
2. Upload shapefile with park entrance points to ArcGIS online
3. Select "Perform Analysis" → "Use Proximity" → "Create Drive-Time Areas"
4. Select Walking Time or Driving Time (depending on measurement)
5. Select "Run Analysis"
6. "Export to Shapefile" and download

This process was repeated to generate service areas representing the following travel times:

- 10-minute walk
- 5-minute drive
- 10-minute drive

The shapefile for park entrances was created using the "RoadCenterlines" and "Parks" shapefiles provided by the City of Thomasville, combined with aerial imagery (Google Maps). Additionally, the process above was repeated to determine service areas for schools and parks by others in and near Thomasville.

Once the service areas were generated, the results were reduced to a single polygon for each site using the "Dissolve" function in ArcGIS. The service area shapefiles were then linked to the inventory table presented in Chapter 3 (Table 3.2) to allow for the selection of the service area of each site by facilities offered.

Once the service area ranges were calculated, the next step in the process was to assign service areas to parks by park type and various recreational facilities. The travel times associated with each park or facility are based on common travel time measurements. For example, a 10-minute walk is a commonly used measurement for the distance a person will travel for a frequently used service. The travel times assigned are based on the use level of the amenity, which corresponds with the length of time a user is likely to spend at the destination. For example, users are likely to be willing to travel a greater distance to use a large community park than a small neighborhood park, because the larger park will likely keep visitors and their families occupied for longer.

The travel time shapefiles for the previous step were used to create a series of service area maps. For each map, the locations of each amenity in question were selected using "Definition Query" from the travel time layers. For example, the Neighborhood Park Service Areas map (Figure 5.1) shows a 10-minute walk to any park (green for Thomasville parks; blue for schools; pink for parks by others) including Mini and Community Parks. In contrast, a 5-minute drive is indicated only for a community parks in Figure 5.2 (bright green). These areas were turned-on (or the other areas were turned-off) in the corresponding travel time layers within ArcGIS (using "Definition Query") because they were contained the specific park feature represented in the map.

Most maps show more than one travel time to a feature to show varying levels of service, because even if the target service area is a 5-minute drive, those within a 10-minute walk have better access to the facility. As noted previously, the information presented in Table 3.1 (Chapter 3) was used to assign park type classification

and to select the service areas corresponding to the sites where each of the mapped park features were located.

The composite service areas map consists of a weighted overlay of each of the park and facility service areas. A single shapefile was created for each of the sixteen facilities and three park classifications listed in Table A.1 below with the levels of service (travel times) indicated in the table. Scores were assigned to the travel time from each facility as indicated with a higher score for a shorter travel time. The “Union” function in ArcGIS was used to combine these 19 layers into one composite layer.

Once the scoring for all layers was combined into a single layer, a Field was added to the Attribute Table to indicate the composite score. The scores for the 19 facilities and park classifications were tallied to represent this composite score for all areas in Thomasville. Each of the five ranges represents approximately 13 points since the highest scoring location in Thomasville scored a 63 (out of 76 possible points). Therefore, each category represents the score of the area as a percentage of the highest score (63). These areas were then presented in the Composite Park Service Levels map. The five areas were then exported to a new shapefile and uploaded to ESRI Business Analyst to estimate the population and demographics for those living within each level of service.

Table A.1: Composite Map Scoring

Facility/Score	10 Minute Walk	5 Minute Drive	10 Minute Drive	Total Points	Notes
Park Classification					
Neighborhood Park	6	N/A	N/A	6	Inc. community
School Park	4	N/A	N/A		
Community Park	N/A	3	1	3	
Other Park	1	N/A	N/A	1	
Park Points				10	
Recreation Amenities					
Playground	6	3	N/A	6	Inc. schools
Basketball Court	4	2	N/A	4	Inc. schools
Trails	4	2	1	4	Park trails < ½ mile only for 5d and 10d
Diamond Ballfield	4	2	1	4	
Multipurpose Rectangular Field	4	2	1	4	
Tennis Court	4	2	1	4	
Picnic Shelter	4	2	1	4	Med & large only for 5d and 10d
Fishing Access	4	2	1	4	
Dog Park	4	2	1	4	
Amphitheater	4	2	1	4	
Disc Golf Course	4	2	1	4	
Golf Course	4	2	1	4	
Pickleball Court*	4	2	1	4	
Skate Park*	4	2	1	4	
YMCA*	4	2	1	4	
Swimming Pool (Outdoor)*	4	2	1	4	
Facility Points				66	
Total Points				76	

*Not Mapped in Chapter 5

APPENDIX B - PARK AERIALS







MacIntyre Park
Parks & Recreation Master Plan
Thomasville, Georgia

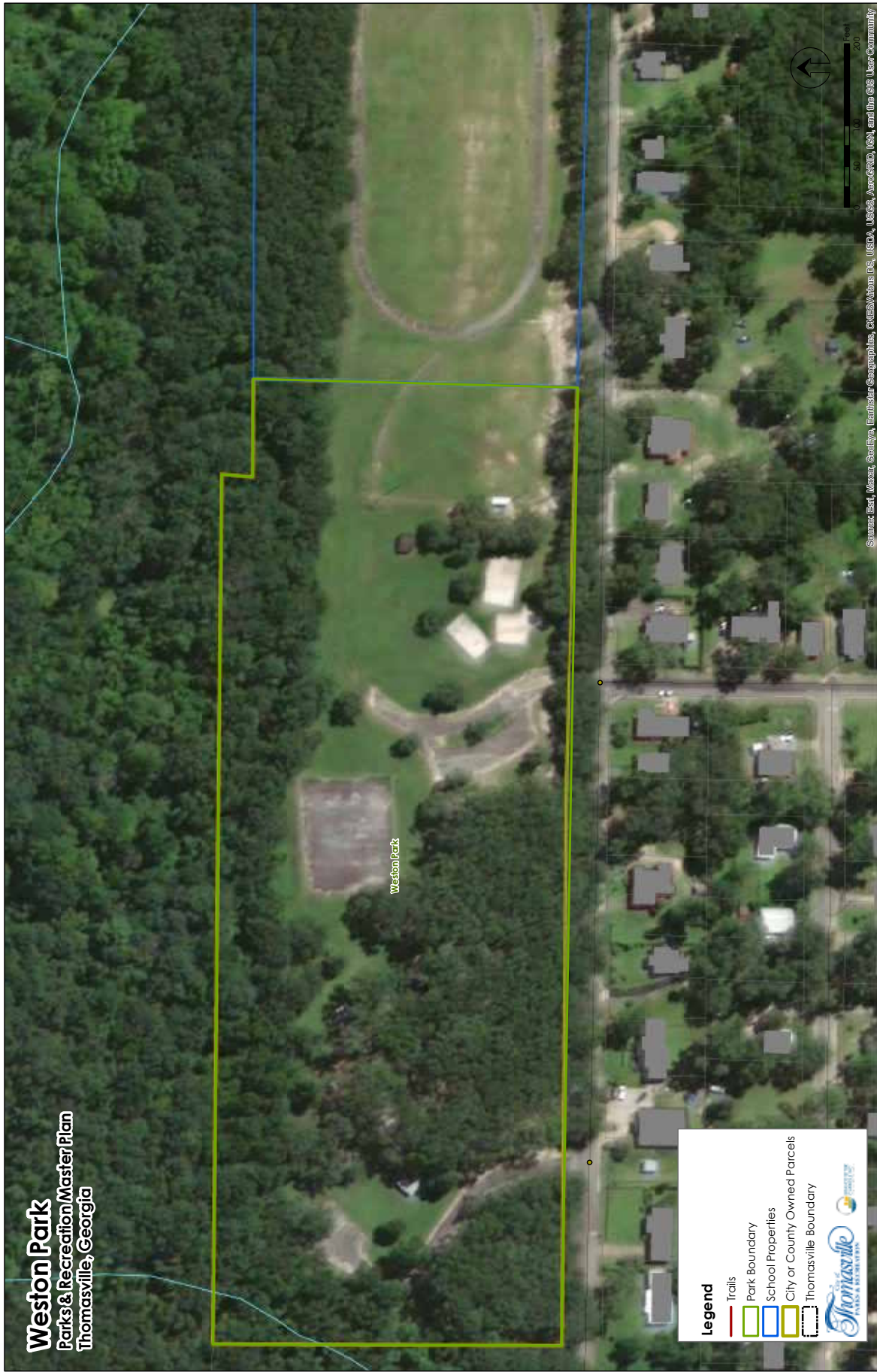








Weston Park
Parks & Recreation Master Plan
Thomasville, Georgia



APPENDIX C - PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARIES

CONFERENCE MEMORANDUM
THOMASVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN
PROJECT NO. 21082

Present: Keith Rodenhauser, Brandstetter Carroll Inc.
Patrick D. Hoagland, ASLA, Brandstetter Carroll Inc.



May 11th, 2022

The first public workshop open house was held by Brandstetter Carroll on March 21st from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Thomas County Public Library, Flipper Room. Approximately 40 residents attended this meeting. Thomasville city staff held three additional public open houses where approximately 40 more residents attended. In total, approximately 80 residents attended the four public open house meetings. As people entered, they were given a dot to place on a map to illustrate where they lived. They were shown to three stations where they could provide input and then given dots to vote on their most important park features and programs (3 each). Participants were also given \$1,000 in play money to vote for improvements that should be made to parks. The following are the responses to the write in comments at each of the three stations. A ✓ indicates where a person agreed with a comment.

Parks and Facilities

1. What makes them great now?
 - Maintenance of existing parks is below par ✓
 - Butterfly Garden at Cherokee Lake ✓✓✓
 - Excellent ball parks/fields at Remington ✓✓✓
 - Maintained well, attractive ✓
 - Playgrounds maintenance throughout town
 - Event spaces ✓
 - Variety of park sizes and spaces
 - Trees, flowering bushes ✓
 - Centrally located
 - Well kept ✓
 - Great picnic areas
 - Most are well maintained
 - Clean and quiet
2. What would make them better?
 - Would love to see a community garden ✓✓✓✓
 - Pool for children – Balfour Park ✓✓
 - Lost Creek Forest – Great opportunity for ecological trails, boardwalks, education center ✓✓
 - Cherokee Park – Create better fishing habitat while improving water quality ✓✓
 - Paradis Park – MUP around park. Define entrances. Connect to downtown. Antique carousel, Splash park ✓
 - Macintyre Park – Get creative with ditches to create features
 - More shade everywhere ✓✓
 - Expand community forests/gardens
 - Need community garden spaces ✓✓✓

-
- Remington – Additional entrance/exit to facility ✓✓
 - Pool for children – Balfour Park
 - Cherokee Park expansion for disabled citizens equipment
 - Lighting the walkway at amphitheater (during concert it is very dark as people mill around ✓✓
 - Ped/bike connectivity ✓✓
 - Connect schools/parks/downtown ✓✓✓
 - Stream restoration and riparian
 - Covered shelters✓✓
 - Pool/park = family space✓✓✓
 - Handicapped accessible paths at Macintyre Park and Paradise Park for wheelchairs, scooters, walkers✓✓
 - Calisthenics Park
 - Community food forest✓
 - Bathroom at Paradise Park✓✓
 - Connect trails “belt line” ✓✓
 - Rental equipment/balls, bikes ✓✓
 - Weston Park – Community garden
 - Need more outdoor spaces for children and seniors on the southside ✓
 - Bike and walking trails ✓
 - Canopy over playground equipment at Cherokee Lake – There's no shade and it gets too hot in the heat to play on
 - Bathroom at every park ✓
 - Established trees for vegetation on banks of stream through Macintyre Park to help with bank erosion

Trails and Natural Areas

1. What makes them great now?
 - We have good locations ✓
 - Well maintained (generally) ✓✓
 - Centrally located
 - Trees, creeks ✓
2. What would make them better?
 - Shade, natural trails ✓✓
 - Native plants ✓✓
 - Integrate with water management ✓✓
 - City loop access for everyone
 - Connectivity ✓✓✓✓
 - Lost Creek Forest – Great opportunity for ecological trails, boardwalks, educational center ✓✓✓
 - Access through golf course ✓✓
 - Bathrooms ✓✓✓

- Parking (off street)
- Handicapped accessible paths at Macintyre Park and Paradise Park
- Adjacent streetscapes
- Recycling education – reuse, recycle, etc. ✓
- Wi-Fi ✓✓
- Country Oaks – Audubon sanctuary center
- Connect existing trails ✓
- Sidewalks on Old Monticello for younger kids ✓✓✓
- Community gardens ✓✓
- More public fishing opportunities ✓
- Restrooms ✓
- Handicap accessibility ✓✓
- Need more trails ✓✓✓
- Classes for homeschool students at the locations

Programs and Events

1. What makes them great now?
 - Need an over 50 softball league and any other senior adult recreation programs ✓✓✓✓
 - Special events are excellent ✓
 - Good variety, just need more YMCA control ✓
 - Special events ✓
 - Nature programs ✓✓
 - Golf for kids, low income ✓✓✓
 - Amphitheatre – love it ✓✓
 - More activities tailored to seniors ✓
 - Free activities or sponsored events ✓
2. What would make them better?
 - Indoors – heat, cold, rain drive people inside
 - Regular nature events, so people can know when/what ✓✓
 - Community gatherings, concerts, etc. ✓✓
 - Community garden space ✓✓✓
 - Recycling (plastics and glass) ✓✓✓✓✓
 - More community events – Balfour area ✓
 - Aquatics area – Balfour area
 - Increase nature learning programs ✓
 - More senior programs
 - YMCA – Outdoor calisthenics park
 - Community meeting spaces ✓✓
 - More community events ✓

- Please bring back paper/plastic/glass recycling
- Recycling pick-up in community
- More adult sports
- Homeschool cultural art classes

Top Comments on Subjects – write in responses

Top Subjects	# of mentions	%
Trails, walking, biking, hiking	81	29%
Existing Park Upgrades/Improvements	30	11%
Nature center/education Programs	28	10%
Community Garden	19	7%
Outdoor Pool/Water Park	18	6%
Improved Maitenance	16	6%
Community Events	16	6%
Picnic Areas/Shelters	13	5%
Restrooms	11	4%
Senior 50+ recreation leagues	11	4%
Natural Areas	10	4%
Fishing	8	3%
Playground upgrades	7	2%
More programming	5	2%
Improved Amphitheater	3	1%
Game courts	2	1%
Increased and improved Parking	1	0%
Improved and athletic fields	1	0%
Indoor facilities	1	0%
TOTAL	281	100%

Write in comments at all open houses were recorded, combined, and categorized into the above subjects.

Dollar Voting

Participants were given \$1,000 in play money to place in boxes with the following categories:

Action (Box Title)	Event					Total
	Stakeholder Groups	Open House 3/21/22	Open House (Cherokee)	Open House (Ritz)	Open House (DOJM)	
Existing Facilities/Maintenance	\$2,500	\$6,600	\$200	\$3,100	\$2,500	\$14,900
	15%	18%	1%	48%	50%	16%
New Recreation Facilities	\$1,200	\$2,400	\$400	\$200	\$800	\$5,000
	7%	7%	3%	3%	16%	5%
Trails	\$3,300	\$7,500	\$1,400	\$2,600	\$700	\$15,500
	20%	21%	9%	41%	14%	17%
New Parks	\$200	\$2,700	\$1,500	\$1,900	\$1,000	\$7,300
	1%	8%	10%	30%	20%	8%
Athletic Fields	\$400	\$2,900	\$1,900	\$300	\$100	\$5,600
	2%	8%	13%	5%	2%	6%
Community Gathering Space	\$2,500	\$2,900	\$1,100	\$700	\$1,100	\$8,300
	15%	8%	7%	11%	22%	9%
Splash Pad/Pool	\$3,500	\$5,200	\$5,000	\$1,900	\$2,100	\$17,700
	21%	14%	33%	30%	42%	19%
Programs/Events	\$3,200	\$3,400	\$3,500	\$1,200	\$2,200	\$13,500
	19%	9%	23%			15%
Other	\$100	\$2,300	\$0	\$600	\$600	\$3,600
	1%	6%	0%	19%	44%	4%
Total	\$16,900	\$35,900	\$15,000	\$6,400	\$5,000	\$91,400

Other:

- Fishing
- New park at 1107 Smith Ave--beautiful property
- Stock ponds
- Public art
- Fencing for the amphitheater
- Fix the zip line (MacIntyre)
- fix up the gazebo (Paradise or Big Oak?)

Features Board

Participants were given three red dots to place on 16 park amenities (represented by pictures). The results are presented in the table below.

Park Features	Event			Total	%
	Open House 3/21/22	Open House (Cherokee)	Open House (Ritz/DOJM)		
Splash Pads	20	11	10	41	17%
Trails	17	6	12	35	15%
Community Gardens	12	4	6	22	9%
Natural Areas	11	0	5	16	7%
Restrooms	11	1	7	19	8%
Event Spaces	8	2	7	17	7%
Game Courts	8	2	0	10	4%
Indoor Recreation Facilities	7	1	2	10	4%
Public Art	6	2	2	10	4%
Athletic Fields	5	3	0	8	3%
Playgrounds	4	7	6	17	7%
Golf Course	4	1	2	7	3%
Picnic Shelters	3	0	6	9	4%
Dog Parks	3	6	1	10	4%
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	2	1	3	6	3%
Disc Golf	0	1	0	1	0%
Total	121	48	69	238	
Participants	40	16	23	79	



Programs Board

Participants were given three green dots to place on 16 park programs (represented by pictures). The results are presented in the table below.

Programs	Event			Total	%
	Open House 3/21/22	Open House (Cherokee)	Open House (Ritz)		
Farmers Market	18	4	10	32	14%
Nature Programs	17	5	8	30	13%
Festivals	19	2	5	26	11%
Movies/Music Concerts	11	3	12	26	11%
Cultural & Performing Arts	7	3	10	20	9%
Before/After School Programs	9	1	8	18	8%
Summer Camps	7	5	4	16	7%
Youth Sports	7	4	2	13	6%
Active Adult (50+) Programs	9	0	1	10	4%
Fitness Classes	4	2	2	8	3%
Adult Sports	4	2	1	7	3%
Annual Special Events	3	4	0	7	3%
E-Sports	-	4	2	6	3%
Adaptive Recreation	3	0	2	5	2%
Runs & Races	1	3	1	5	2%
Athletic Tournaments	1	1	1	3	1%
Total	120	43	69	232	
Participants	40	14	23	77	



If you should disagree with any information contained herein, please kindly notify our office in writing within 10 days of receipt of this memorandum.

Keith E. Rodenhauser, AICP, GISP, SITES AP
KER/ker

5/11/2022

C:

Pat Hoagland
File

Open House Summary

6 of 6

PRMP | Focus Groups | March 21st

Group 1 | Youth Programming

ATTENDEES: Mary Oglesby, Janet Cable, Nate Tyler, Katie Chastain, Terry Scott, Lucinda Brown

What do you like:

- Paradise – good for wee ones; playground equipment
- MacIntyre—outdoor relief for MPMS/Scholars students
- Balfour—used to be very actively used; but dwindled
- Amphitheater
- Cherokee Park—great for walking; very active with diverse users

History of Parks & Rec (Nate)

- Overview of the programming joining up with YMCA
- Non-YMCA parks were not getting investment/attention
- Would like to see an equitable minimum level of service
 - Rest rooms, potable water, other reasonable amenities distributed fairly
- Need more clarity on budget/investment in parks
 - differentiate privately sponsored improvements
- Parks & Rec was usually the first to get cut when city budget got tight
 - Seems like this was resolved; but still seeing disinvestment outside the “star” parks
- MOU with YMCA really changed dynamics—there is no programming beyond Remington
 - Riptide Swim Team used to be at Balfour

Unmet Needs:

- Not all the parks are treated the same – if it must be self-sustaining, apply to all facilities
 - Golf Course was cited as an example
 - Public should have input in process for allocation of P&R funding
 - Seems like too many funds are going Downtown (“uncovering bricks”)
 - Prioritize disinvested parks to demonstrate equity as a priority
- NOTE: the YMCA agreement specifies focus on Remington and not ALL parks
- Concerns about accessibility; residents’ proximity to parks/facilities
- Flipper is still used regularly by families that used to live in the neighborhood
- Should we explore dispersing facilities for equity?
- Other Parks in our region that we could emulate
 - Camilla—made big investment in a splash pad facility
 - Pelham—bike/BMX course?
 - Utilizing trails as means for safe connectivity between parks
- MAJOR SAFETY ISSUE: no sidewalks to Cassidy Park/Old Albany area
 - Consideration of 1-car households—safe routes for residents
- General discussion about SPLOST/LOST allocations and renegotiate
- General discussion about impact fees for developers

What do you want to see?

- Equity – BLIGHT is real and needs to be addressed (everyone supports equity)
- South Side – splash pad, Olympic size pool, greenspace, play area, venue
- Connectivity between parks
 - The trail plan used to be more ambitious (beyond parks)
- Internet; wi-fi; buried utilities
- Nate: “Parks are personal” – make sure that neighborhoods are heard (but they have to participate)
- More art and culture in parks – public art installations
- Native plantings
- Youth spaces to hang in public → where they feel welcome and learning spaces (outdoor classroom)
- Shade to have comfortable spaces
- Passive space is just as important as active uses – Cassidy has a very organic vibe (lunch spots)
- Outdoor classrooms
- Restrooms and drinking water at Cassidy
- More activities and programs in the parks
- Skatepark, mountain bike trails, pump track
- Impact fees for park development

Councilmembers want to advocate for what people actually want

Group 2: Tourism/Economic Development

ATTENDEES: Michelle Arwood, Nancy Tinker, Scott Chastain, Andrea Collins, Haile McCollum

What do you like:

- MacIntyre Park – played in creek as a kid; disc golf; great NH park
- Paradise—Has a lot of potential and most notoriety; want it to be safer & welcoming; great natural space; canopy
- Amphitheater –for passive use
- Cherokee – enjoy the water feature
- For Kids: Paradise & MacIntyre get the most use

Remington was state of the art when built; interestingly, many active rec folks think we need MORE facilities because local rec leagues and travel leagues are competing for same space → lots of wear & tear as well but in better shape than most facilities in this area

How will we integrate “existing” park plans with new MP? There wasn’t funding to support the plans at the time charrettes were underway → we are using MP for a system lens and vision which will consider the plans created during park charrettes

Opportunity to program Paradise Park → family focused events at the Band Stand (in discussion at City and TEF)

NPOs are the highest users (100 active orgs) – community calendar helps spread word; NPOs try to make sure they aren't competing with each other

Unmet Needs:

- **Restrooms –**
 - Chamber of Commerce catches a lot of traffic for public restrooms from Paradise
 - Having the resources/public works available to take care of the facilities is recent priority
 - Remington restrooms: recent reno, but maintenance is constant
- Acknowledging that restrooms are high use/traffic will require expensive facilities
- Shade – beyond tree canopy and need built structure (Amphitheater)
- Walking Trail at Cherokee was wildly popular → could that be expanded to other parks?
- Accessibility/Mobility
- Obvious spaces – entry, parking, etc. – signage, boundaries; wayfinding in general
- We need water activities to offset summer heat; playgrounds get really hot (again, shade)
- Educational spaces/outdoor classrooms
- *note that there is a conservation ethos in our community; teachable opportunities/moments
- Do we have too many parks? Are there areas that could retire to support new parks?
- Travel teams – how is that affecting local economy? Currently hosting 15-20 tournaments a year (mostly baseball/softball) → expand to other sports (track, basketball, etc.)?
*****Can we use a portion of the hotel/motel tax to support park improvements*****
- Lots of land around parks that are privately owned would be ideal for expanding trails (but expensive)
- Some parks—like Northside—where local users maintain → partnership/sponsors have helped with a lot of things → informal arrangements/agreements → can/should this be expanded? Balance sense of ownership and exclusivity
- Lost Creek & Golf Course opportunity → need to get to the table and revisit relationship
- What is our community's response to transition from local rec leagues to travel leagues?

10-year Vision

- Safe, functional, beautiful, connected
- CONNECTION IS CLUTCH; safer routes in general
- Healthier community because we're using our trails
- Trails to help with economic development tool
- Parks are integrated with stormwater management plan & tied in with ecology
- Waiting list for programming in most parks / events, etc.
- Having more naturalist programming; education; ecology
- Improved wayfinding in and to the parks
- Lost Creek used for environmental education

Tourism/Economic Development Specific

- How are we accommodating → marketing does not advocate for parks, just downtown
- Could parks be "jewel" of the city → having interpretation of significance/history of parks
 - Requires fixed focus
- Design for your COMMUNITY not for the outsiders → lean into our brand/identity

Group 3: Discussion with Tom Everett (YMCA)

Group 4: Community Health & Wellness

ATTENDEES: Kathy Megahee (Family Connection), Lisa Billups (TCRC), Todd (AMC), Alexis (TCRC intern/FAMU)

How Organizations Work with P&R

- Family Connection – community navigator; mental health issues per latest community needs survey (shared with BCI)
- TCRC—provide significant childcare (Balfour Park not great for tots; take older kids at other parks, courts at Varnedoe);
 - MacIntyre Park is their favorite park—good for families and kids
 - Covey Film festival is a big fundraiser for TCRC – Amphitheater, Muni Auditorium, Covey Nest (Ferguson), could use other parks
 - COVID---40 kids; usually about 100 kids →can't continue to bus around to parks
- Alexis: young adult POV; her work at Garrison she noted kids rather play outside than on ipads
 - She's from Tampa; she notes recreation is integrated into downtown fabric
- Todd: AMC Live Better program→support for trails, active living
 - →outreach via kids; using some parks to “base” health events

What you like

- Disc golf→ big group into this and interest in Cassidy
- Pickleball growing in popularity
- Pavilions, shade spaces, places to eat/grill/sit—MORE passive space

What you don't like/see a void

- P&R used to have parks in outlying communities
- Remington is too far away from the kids that are in TCRC program
- Nix the dog park at Balfour to expand kid/family friendly amenities
- Need ACTIVITIES for kids—not just a space
- Need more adult activities
- Need more youth activities

What you want to see

- Having more diverse recreational facilities for adults (climbing, zip lining)
- More options closer to TCRC – pools, amenities like MP—currently busing the kids around town
- If we continue to contract with YMCA, it needs to service/program ALL parks or City gets staff to do so (preferred as a City function)
- WIFI available at all parks
- SUCCESS is where there is FACILITY for each NH with amenities and programming and community based – more than one at Remington → VA-Beach model (small fee)
- Connections between parks
- Programming in other parks besides Remington

Group 5: Active Users

ATTENDEES: Melvin Hugans ; John Cable; Roger Hawkes

CRA investment → TNB putting in a lot of weight into parks

There are about 200 kids near Northside park; requested TNB replace basketball goals

BIKE ADVOCATES!!!!

Note: run existing park plans against recommendations to see if we need revisions

Things you like

- Paradise Park is accessible to downtown living; options for lots of folks
- Cherokee Park for walking and picnics; Westin is adjacent to low-income families and used a lot
- See a lot of folks using the amphitheater passively on a daily basis
- Pickleball courts are increasing in popularity → need more courts
- Lots of folks are lunching at the parks in their cars

What you don't like/see that we need

- Roger doesn't use the parks; meet at the amphitheater and created own "trail" → concerns about safety; feels it easy-ish to walk around town, but difficult to bike safely
- City has interesting MOU with the City Schools (access to facilities after hours; share expenses)
- Generally, riding a bike is not safe in town → but there is also a cultural component to improve

What do you want to see?

- City/county planning (especially for connectivity) → integrated planning efforts are common in other areas
- There are opportunities to have more facilities that are "outdoor" — bike trails/off-road cycling, hiking, etc.
- Non-pool aquatics (splash pads)
- Connecting the parks in a safe walkable/bikeable route
- More Neighborhood and pocket parks
- Quality of life is a good selling point to developers/investment
- Paradise Park - Walking trails, restrooms



1








On the Agenda:

- Why are we here?
- Who is BCI?
- Where are we going?
- Early discoveries

2

The Project Team

-  Patrick D. Hoagland, ASLA, Principal In-Charge
-  Tom O'Rourke, CPRP, Funding, Programming, Organization
-  Keith E. Rodenhauer, AICP, GISP, SITES AP, Data Analysis/GIS/Senior Planner
-  Darrell Douglas, Landscape Architect
-  Phillip Schillfarth, AIA, CID, LEED AP, AFO

3

Our Experience

- Over 80 Park and Recreation System Plans
- Significant Park System Master Plans
 - Charleston, SC
 - Lexington, KY
 - Fairfax, VA
 - Austin, TX (Aquatics)
 - Grand Prairie, TX
 - Garland, TX
- Somerset County Park Commission, NJ
- Morris County Park Commission, NJ
- Princeton, NJ
- Newnan, GA

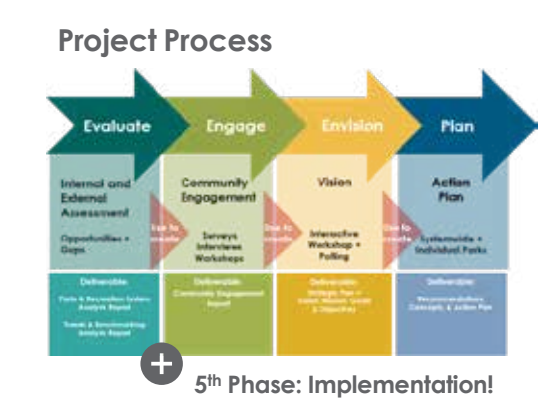
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Current Trends We're Seeing:

- Trails & Connectivity
- Walkability (10 minutes to a park)
- Dog Parks
- Disc Golf
- Pickleball
- Splash Pads
- Active Adult Programs
- Fitness / Wellness
- Nature Parks (Passive Fun)
- Artificial Turf
- Lifelong Activities
- Community Events



5



6

Evaluate Phase

What We Do:

- Analysis & Context
 - Demographics
 - Benchmarking
 - Previous Plans
 - Policies & Management
 - Funding
 - Industry Trends
- Assessment
 - Parks & Amenities
 - Trails
 - Facilities Inventory
- Mapping
 - Facilities
 - Geographic Distribution (i.e., Service Areas)



Why?...

...To Identify Gaps & Opportunities!




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Service Area Map | Examples

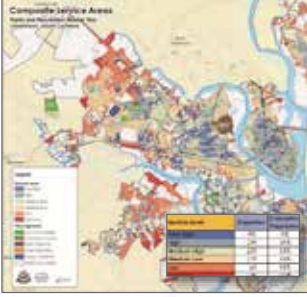
Facilities Mapped:

- Playgrounds
- Athletic Fields
- Basketball Courts
- Tennis Courts
- Trails
- Picnic Shelters
- ...and more!

Types of Maps



- Park/Facility Service Areas
- Composite Service



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Engagement Phase

What We Do:

- Stakeholder discussions
- Public workshops
- Community events
- Online engagement
- Surveys
 - Web-based
 - Handout



Why?...

...Engagement informs the planning process, raises awareness, builds community trust, & identifies needs.

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What our engagement looks like:



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Stakeholder Engagement

Examples of groups to engage:

- City administration & council
- YMCA & Existing partners
- Athletic organizations
- Cultural arts & creative organizations
- Senior citizens
- Georgia State Parks
- Schools
- Neighborhood associations
- Other city departments
- Department staff




This can illuminate opportunities, build coalition, and drive partnerships

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Web and Handout Survey

- One page front and back
- Can be completed online or via handout
- Not statistically valid but cross tabs available
- Often filled out by existing user groups

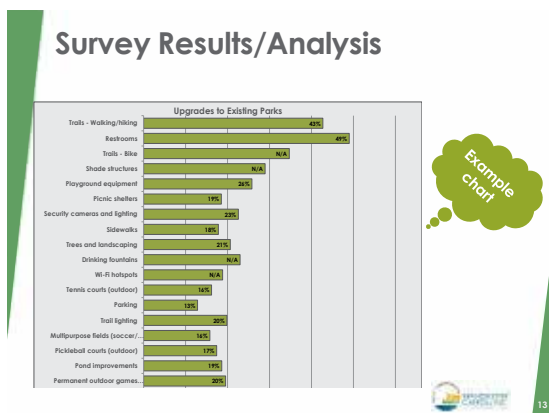
Will be on PublicInput.com



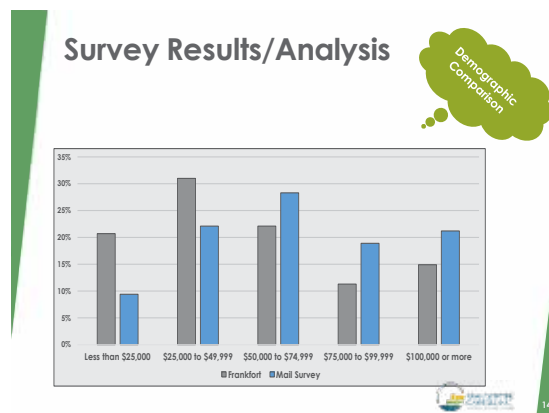
★ Will be live ASAP. Please fill it out & Share with family & friends!



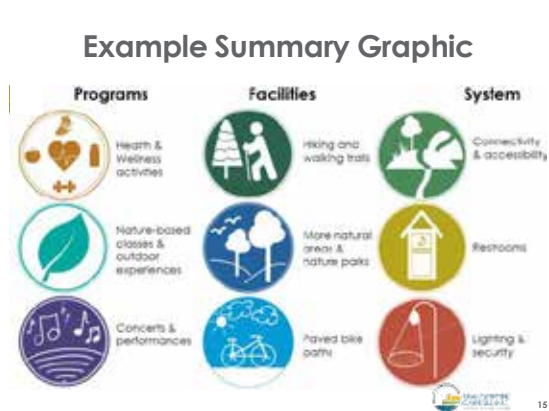
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Envision Phase

What We Do:

- 2-part strategic planning session
 - Group polling & discussion
 - Review results & draft strategic plan
- Use Mentimeter platform (in-person tool!)

Why?... ...Strategic Plans solidify purpose and create a big-picture definition of success. You do great work – visioning helps it be even better!

★ *Envision Phase informs and organizes the Plan Phase*

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Plan Phase

What We Do:

- Synthesize all phases:
 - Evaluate
 - Engage
 - Envision
- Produce a **realistic, practical** plan that serves as an essential foundation for the road ahead

Why?... ...Having a Master Plan for your parks & recreation will empower you to be proactive, fiscally responsible, & truly effective!

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Plan Components

- Detailed Action Plan (table format)
 - Timeframe for each recommendation
 - Agency responsible
 - Funding Source
- Systemwide & By Park Recommendations
 - Land/New Parks
 - Facility Improvements
 - Trails & Greenways
 - Active and passive parks
 - Athletic fields
 - Funding Analysis & Revenue Strategies
 - Marketing
 - Operations & Staffing
 - Programs & Services
- Concept Plans
- Public Review
- City Council Adoption



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Example of Action Plan

ACTION PLAN - 2019 PADUCAH PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN						
Legend of Abbreviations/Organizations						
Parks = Paducah Parks and Recreation	CP = Parks Operating Budget					
City = City Commission, Other City Departments	CIP = Capital Improvement Budget					
Partners = Other Organizations (Foundations, businesses, schools, civic associations, state/federal grants, etc.)	Revenue = Items that Generate Additional Revenue					
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)	Category	Agency	Funding Source		
	0-2	3-5	6-10			
Goal 1: Great Parks and Enhanced Facilities						
Targeted Outcome: Enhance and expand existing parks and develop high quality facilities that serve as destinations for community recreation						
Objective 1.1 - Gathering Spaces: Offer attractive and welcoming amenities that promote a sense of community and attract visitors						
Strategy 1.1.1:	Develop recreation center with an indoor aquatic center, gym, fitness center, meeting rooms, classrooms, kitchen, an outdoor lounge, bike room, and office of Habitat Park	✓		Capital	Paducah City	CP
Strategy 1.1.2:	Continue to develop Brentford Plaza/Schultz Park as a destination park	✓		Planning	Parks	CP
Strategy 1.1.3:	Determine the potential reuse of the Robert Cheery Civic Center once the new recreation center is developed	✓		Capital	Parks	CP
Strategy 1.1.4:	Enable reuse for the existing Paducah Recreation Center following the development of the new recreation center	✓		Capital	Parks	CP
Strategy 1.1.5:	Renovate the Arno Baurer Building and the Arts and Crafts Building of Habitat Park to keep these facilities available for community members to rent for events	✓		Capital	Parks	CP
Strategy 1.1.6:	Develop the plaza space of Beckenbomough Embury Health Park for events	✓		Capital	Parks	CP
Strategy 1.1.7:	Add picnic shelter of existing and future parks to expand access to these facilities and to promote opportunities for community gatherings (see Chapter 8 for locations)	✓		Capital	Parks	CP
Strategy 1.1.8:	Develop a dog park in Arno Baurer area to replace the dog park of Stuart Nelson (existing facility)	✓		Capital	Parks	CP



The Action Plan is organized by the Strategic Plan elements defined during the Envision Phase

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Example of Plan Summary



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Expectations of Steering Committee

Steering Committee Members

- Act as a critical liaison between the planning team and individuals/organizations throughout Berea
- Share relevant planning process information with your social and professional networks
 - Promote surveys and input opportunities
- Co-create a new strategic plan for Parks and Recreation
- Offer regular feedback as plan components are developed

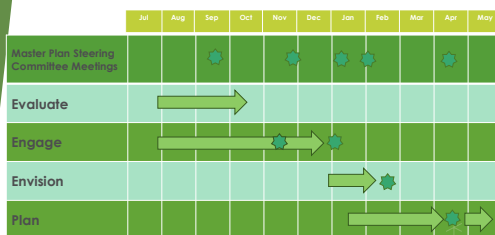
Approximately 5 Meetings

- Meeting #1 – Introduction & overview of the process
- Meeting #2 – Review of findings from system analysis and public input
- Meeting #3 – Visioning: An interactive participatory process to co-create new mission, vision, and goals for Parks and Recreation Department
- Meeting #4 – Preliminary Recommendations: Consultant shares broad recommendations which the committee will rank by priority
- Meeting #5 – Draft Master Plan: Committee reviews and shares suggestions prior to final presentation of plan to Berea City Council

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Planning Timeline



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Early Discoveries

- Inventory/Site Assessments – In progress
- Demographic – Preliminary findings
- Benchmarking – Preliminary findings



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Inventory

- Over 465 Acres
- 12 Parks + Several Plazas/Green Spaces
- 3.6 miles of trails
- 10 playgrounds
- 7 basketball courts
- 3 tennis courts
- 6 multipurpose rectangular fields
- 17 baseball/softball diamond fields
- 1 dog park
- 1 amphitheater
- >10 picnic shelters
- 18-hole golf course
 - 9 FootGolf holes



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Demographics

A few early takeaways...more to come!

- Growth
 - Since 1980, your population has remained stable at ~18,500
 - Projected to grow slightly by 2026
- Age
 - 23% under age 18
 - 20% age 65+
 - Both higher than comparisons (Georgia, USA)
- Diversity
 - 53% black (55% in 2000)
 - Multiracial and Hispanic or Latino populations growing



- Poverty
 - 25%, 35% children
 - Well above benchmarks



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Benchmarking

A few early takeaways...more to come!

- Compared to 36 agencies across: AL, FL, GA, KY, MD, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA
- Park Acres Per 1,000 population
 - Benchmark: 8.2
 - You have: 24.8
- Percentage of Parkland Developed
 - Benchmark: 88%
 - You have: 64%
- Operating Expenditures Per Capita
 - Benchmark: \$133
 - You have: \$107



- Acres Per FTE
 - Benchmark: 9.1
 - You have: 58.2



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Questions? Let's Talk!

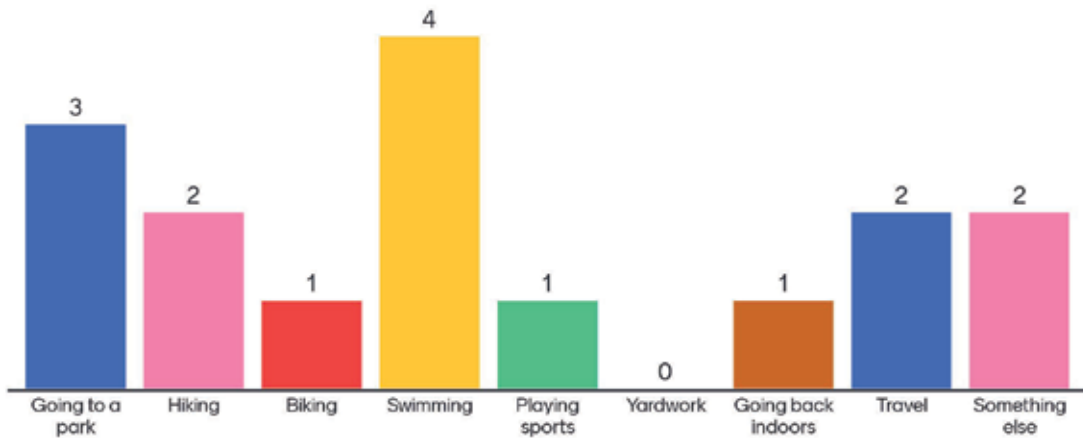
What's next:

- Promote survey
- Determine stakeholder groups & schedule discussions
- Open house meetings

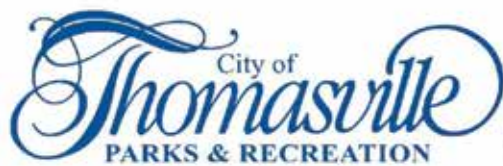
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What are your favorite outdoor Summer activities?

Mentimeter



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Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Steering Committee Meeting #2
Strategic Planning Session
Thomasville, Georgia
July 29, 2022



Mentimeter



Mentimeter

On the Agenda:

Service Area Mapping

Public Input Review

Visioning Session



Project Process

Mentimeter

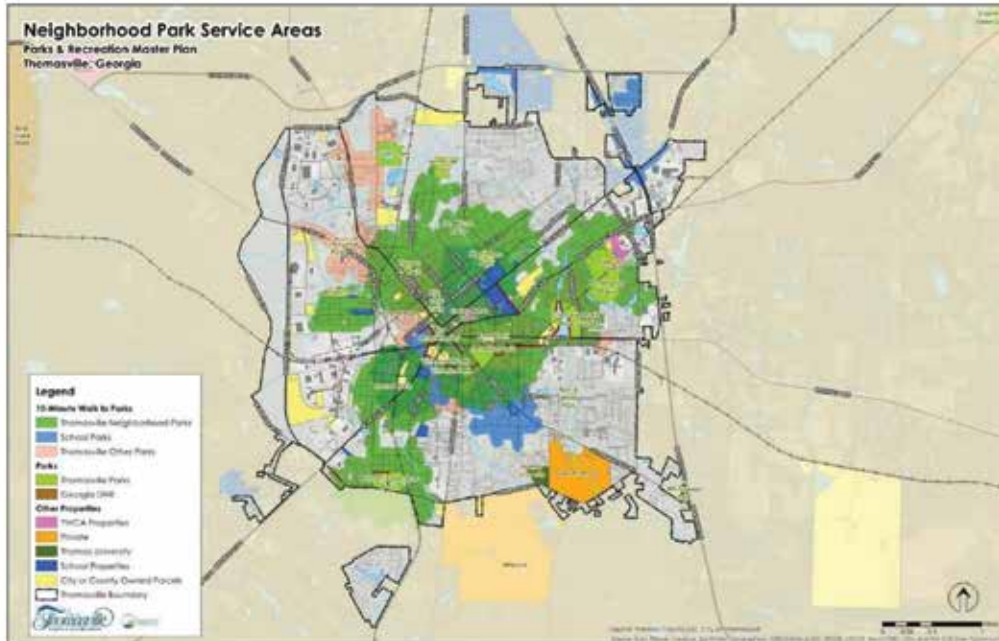


5th Phase: Implementation!

3

Service Area Mapping – Neighborhood Parks

Mentimeter

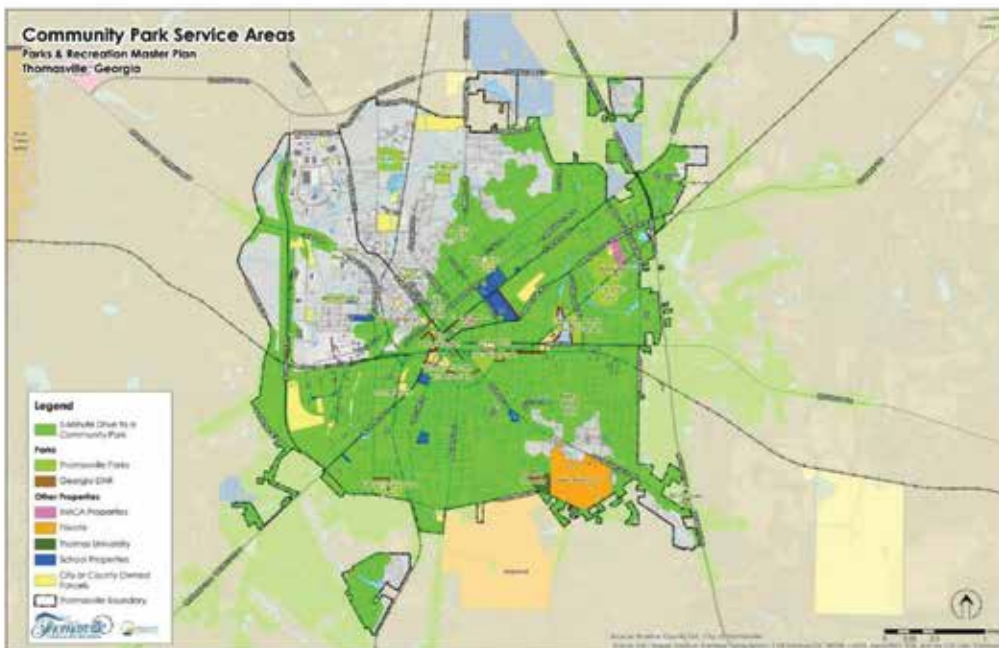


44% live within a 10-minute walk to a neighborhood park

2

Service Area Mapping – Community Parks

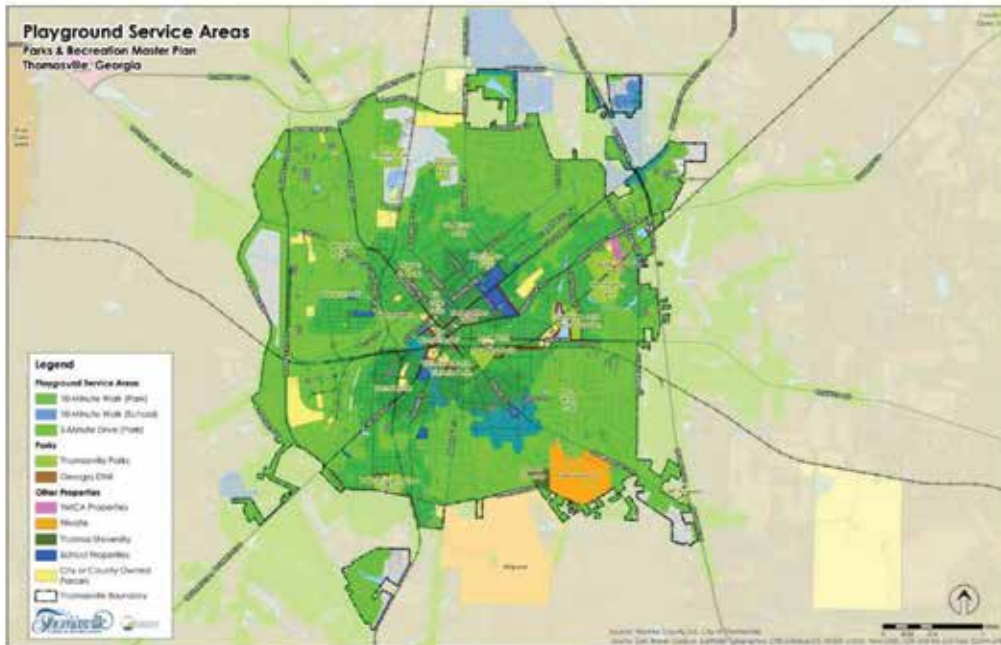
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Service Area Mapping - Playgrounds

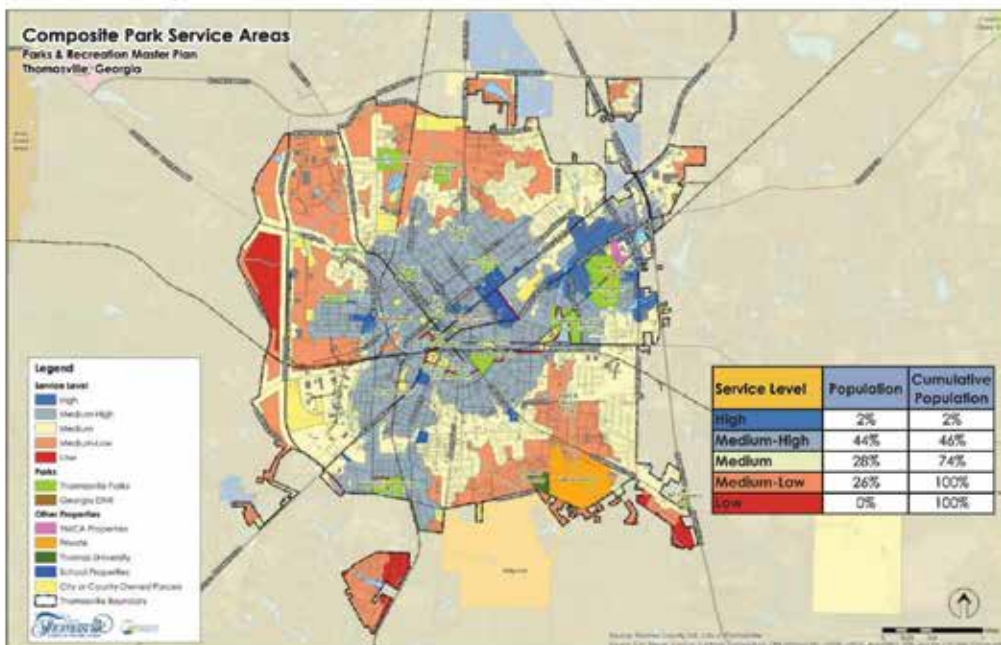
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Composite Service Area

Mentimeter



*19 Park and Facility categories included

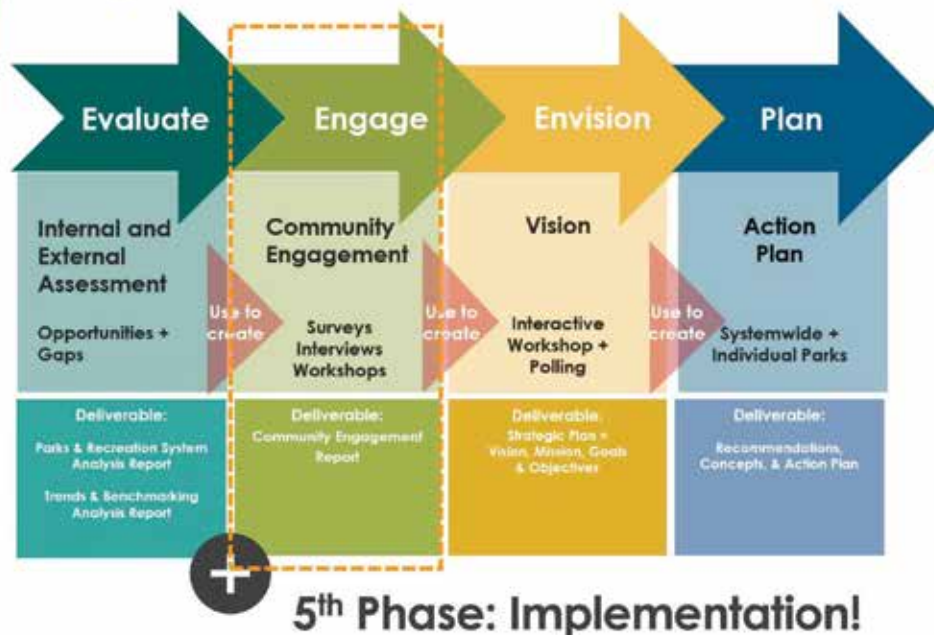
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Benchmarking

Category	Thomasville	Benchmark	Comparison
Acres per 1,000 population	24.8	8.0	Higher
Parkland as a percentage of city	4.8%	2.7%	Higher
Trail miles per 10,000 population	1.9	1.7	Lower
Trail miles per Jurisdiction Sq. Mi.	0.24	0.35	Higher
Percent of parkland developed	0.6	0.9	Lower
Operating expenditures per capita	\$133	\$107	Lower
Revenue generated per capita	\$20	\$13	Lower
Cost Recovery	15%	16%	Similar
Capital costs per capita	\$30	\$8	Higher

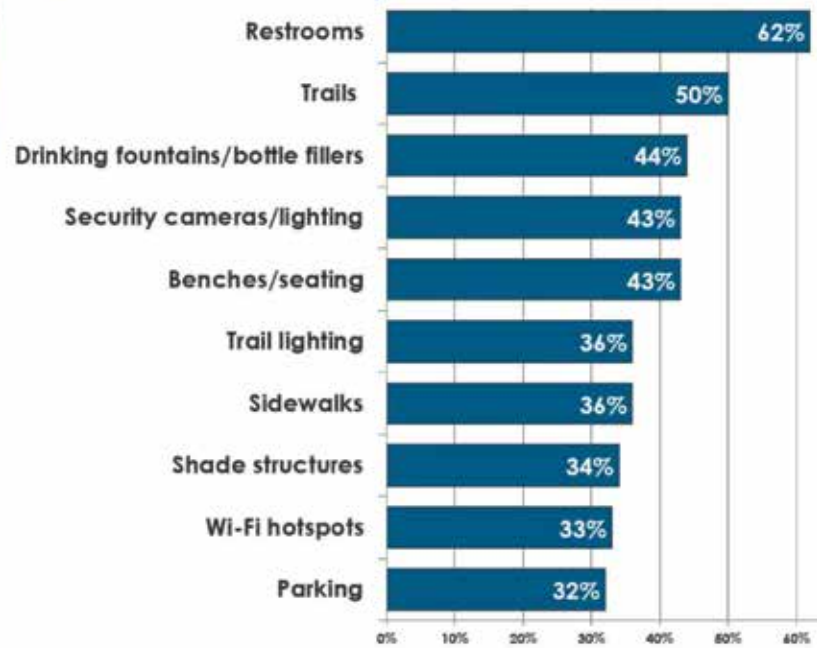
*Comparing 36 agencies with populations between 10,000 & 30,000 in AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, MD, MS, NC, SC, TN, & VA

Project Process



Upgrades/additions to Existing Parks – Top Responses

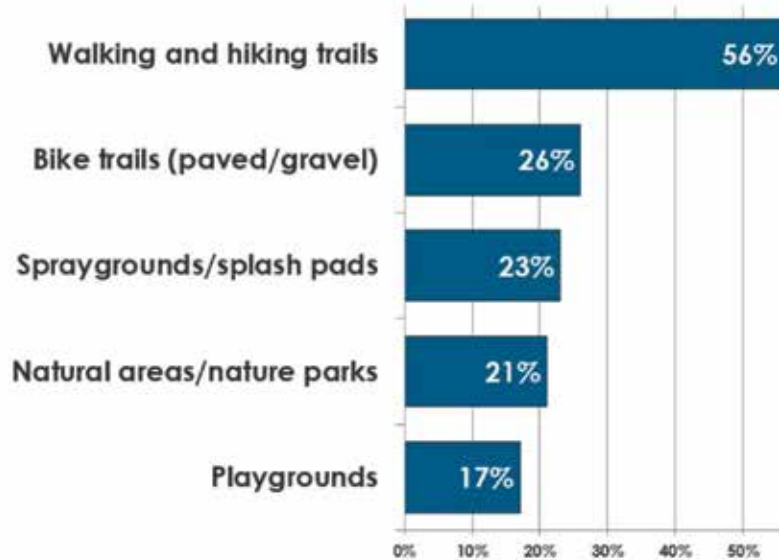
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Top Facility Priorities for Investment (Up to 4 choices)

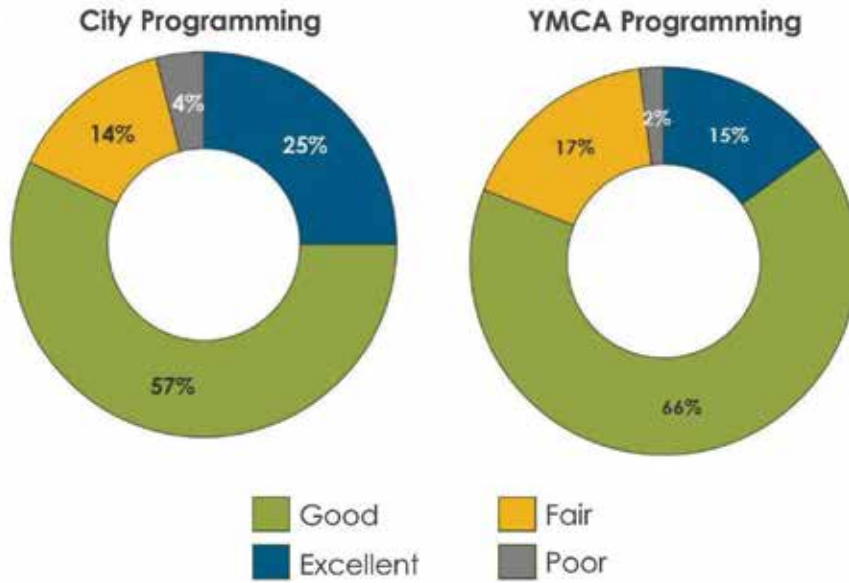
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Quality of Programming

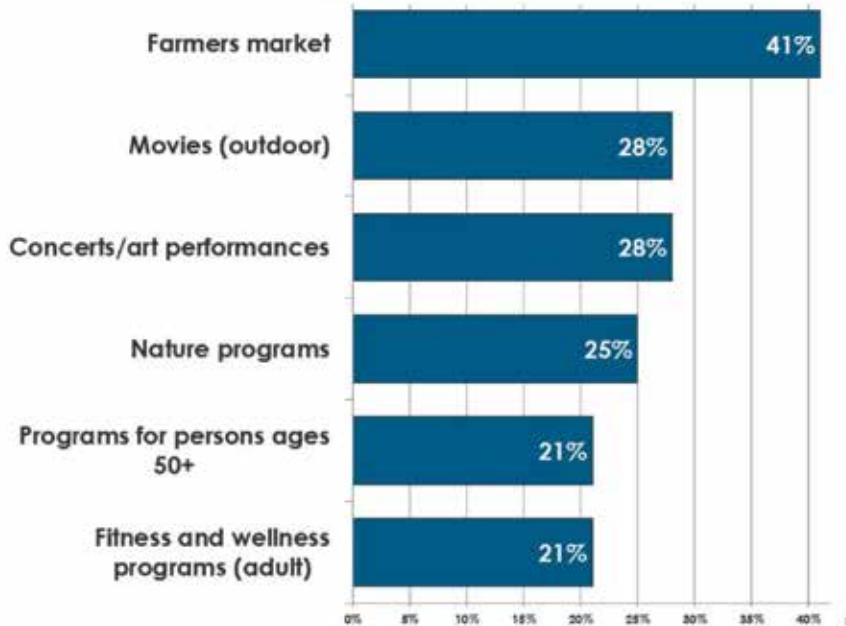
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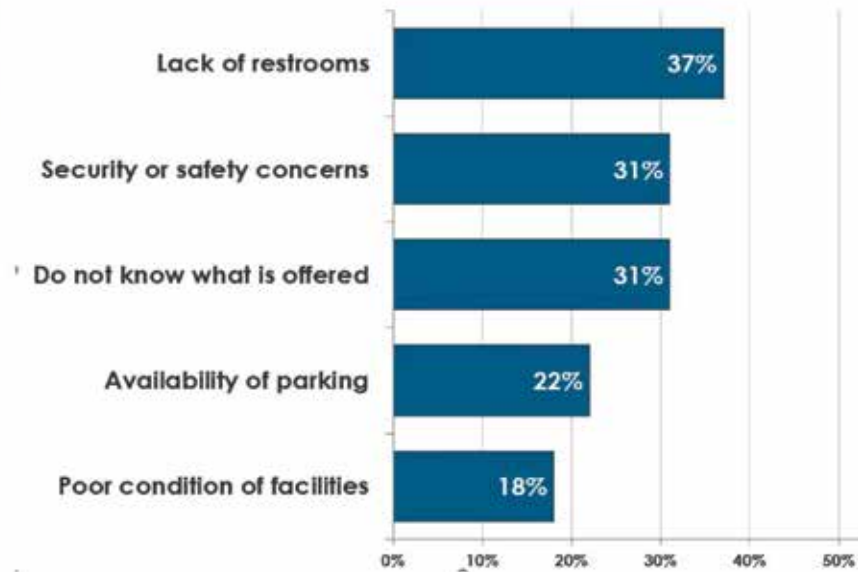
Top Program Priorities for Investment (Up to 4 choices)

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Reasons for NOT Using Parks, Facilities, or Programs

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Public Workshop/Open House

Mentimeter



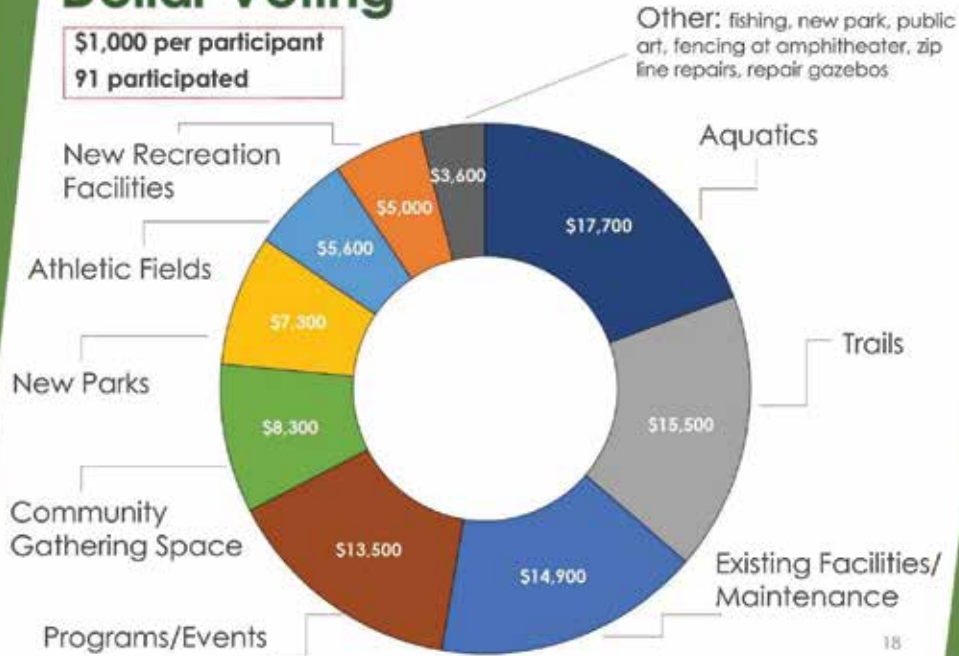
- ▶ Approximately 80 participants attended
- ▶ 4 Open Houses



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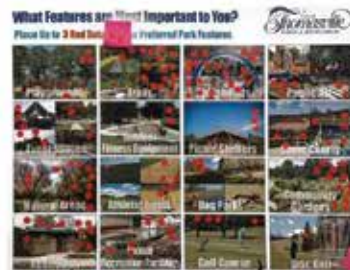
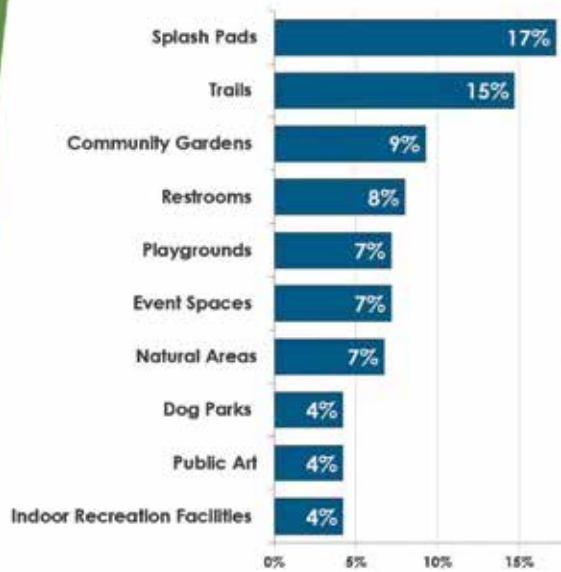
Dollar Voting

\$1,000 per participant
91 participated



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Most Important Features



79 participated

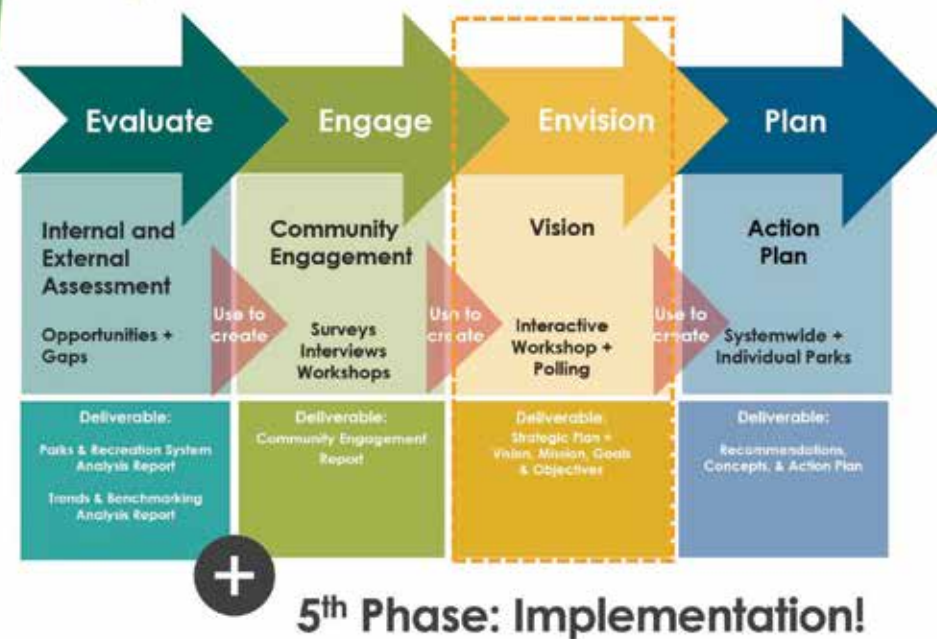
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To Summarize – Residents want:

- ▶ Connectivity and trails – walking, hiking, biking (paved & gravel)
- ▶ Athletic field improvements – more, lights, turf, improvements to existing (better use, support elements)
- ▶ Additional programming and events (concerts, festivals, special events, outdoor movies, farmers markets, nature programs, adult fitness & wellness classes)
- ▶ New park features (e.g., splash pad, swimming pool, nature areas/parks)
- ▶ Preservation of and access to natural areas
- ▶ Upgraded playgrounds w/ accessible, adaptive equipment
- ▶ Support amenities – restrooms, wayfinding, security, shade, seating

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Project Process



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➔ Envision Phase = Evaluate + Engage

Mentimeter

★ Process we'll go through together:

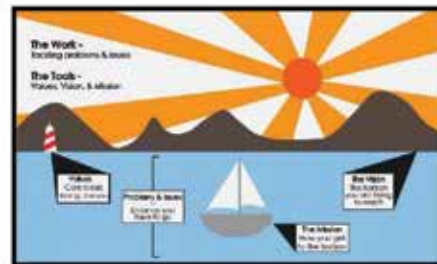


What does (and should) make parks and rec special in Thomasville?

Mentimeter



What are Core Values?



Mentimeter

It's your lighthouse!

- **Guidelines** for Action & Belief
 - Direct staff conduct
 - Express city ideals
 - Reflect community's personality
- **Signpost** for the Future
 - Shaped by culture, experience, context
- Straightforward **Phrases or Words**

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Example Core Values:

Mentimeter

Demonstrate Fiscal Responsibility – So that citizens know their tax dollars are being spent in a cost effective and fiscally responsible manner in our efforts to build and preserve a park system that meets our community's needs.

Developing Partnerships – So that you benefit from our commitment to actively combine resources with government agencies, other service providers, and individuals.

Fostering Diversity – So that every resident has the opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of park experiences and recreational opportunities.

Provide Quality and Value of Service – So that you take pride in quality facilities and services while receiving superior value and prompt, efficient customer service.

Valuing Our Workforce – So that our staff and volunteers realize their worth and importance to our success and receive development and recognition.

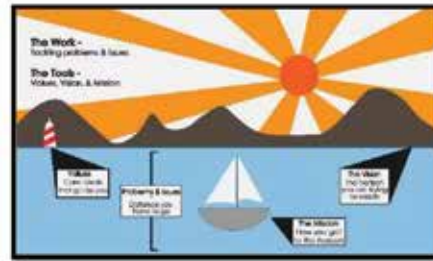
Enhancing Stewardship – So that this community, rich in natural and cultural resources, understands and reaps the rewards of our leadership in protecting its heritage

Communicating Effectively – So that residents participate fully in creating quality parks and services.



21

What is a Vision?



It's your horizon! Should be aspirational, compelling, easy to understand.

- **Describes:**
 - **Where** you want to go
 - **What** you hope to accomplish
- **Directs** your impact & what you become
- **Stays with you for the long haul...**

Example Vision Statements:

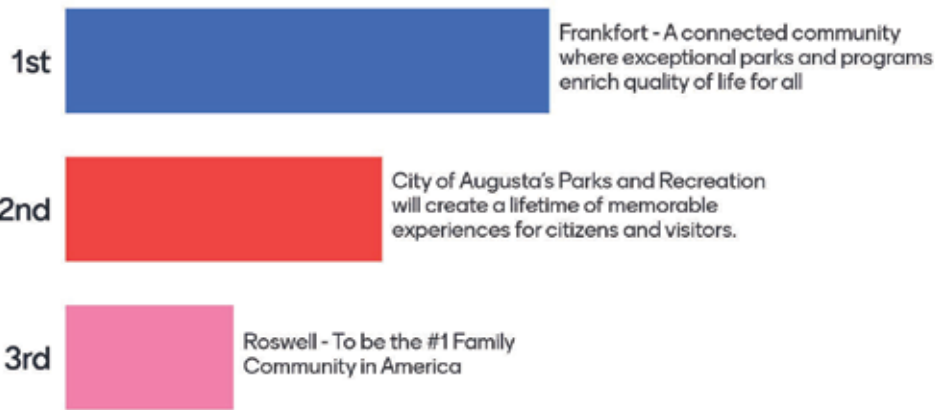
A connected community where exceptional parks and programs enrich quality of life for all

To be the #1 Family Community in America

City of Augusta's Parks and Recreation will create a lifetime of memorable experiences for citizens and visitors.

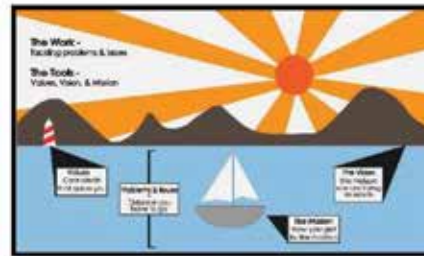


How would you rank these visions?



What is a Mission?

- Answers 4 questions
 - **What** do you do?
 - **Who** you do it for?
 - **How** you do it?
 - **Why** do you do it?
- One sentence, **simple and concise**
- Should be **easy to remember** and share with others
- Includes **action** words



It's your boat!

Example Mission Statements

Together we connect and enrich our community through exceptional experiences



To provide quality recreational facilities, parks and programs, which are safe, diverse, affordable and enriching to the community through our commitment to public service.



Build community and enrich life through parks, programs and play

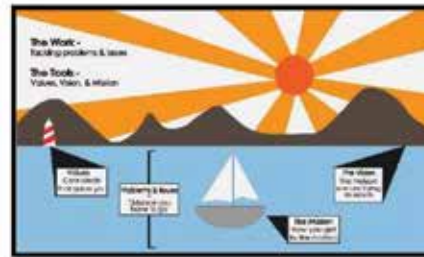


26

How would you rank these mission statements?



What are Goals & Objectives?



Think of these as your stops along the way.

- **More Specific** description of actions and aspirations
- **Focused** direction for investments of:
 - Time, Talent, & Resources
- Clarifies what you **will & will not** do
- Supported by Strategies or **Actions**

27

Goals

Think of goals as **categories** for your intended actions. They should be oriented around the following:



28

Example – Goals and Objectives

GOALS	 Create Great Parks	 Engage The Community	 Be a Model of Fiscal Responsibility & Integrity	 Achieve Operational Excellence	 Empower & Prepare Our Team
	OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Essential Park Amenities & Services Ensure Healthy Biodiversity Establish the Plan for the Next Levy Period Create Destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate Across Boundaries Create a Community Conservation Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Financial Stability Develop Alternative Funding Resources Commit to Financial Transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work Together Provide Exceptional Customer Service Improve Business Practices
	CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVE		FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE	INTERNAL BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE	GROWTH/ DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE



29

29

Example – Goals and Objectives

				
Inspire Public Space	Inspire Play	Inspire Investment	Inspire Stewardship	Inspire Our Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep today's parks safe, clean, and fun; promote our parks history and cultural heritage; and build the great parks of tomorrow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote active living, well-being, and connectivity for San Francisco's diverse and growing population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage community, government, industry, and partnerships; attract new funding resources; and keep San Francisco's parks and programs accessible to all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance San Francisco's precious natural resources through conservation, education, and sustainable land/facility management practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage innovation and enhance a connected, engaged, and skilled workforce that drives outstanding service.



- OBJECTIVE 1.1** Develop more open space to address population growth in high-needs areas and emerging neighborhoods.
- OBJECTIVE 1.2** Strengthen the quality of existing parks and facilities.
- OBJECTIVE 1.3** Steward and promote good park behavior.
- OBJECTIVE 1.4** Preserve and celebrate historic and cultural resources.

30

Example – Goals and Objectives



Great Spaces

Connect people in a variety of environments through parks and spaces



Great Experiences

Promote health, wellness and experiences for our growing population through programs and events



Great Stewardship

Value Lexington's resources through preservation, education and sustainable management practices



Great Engagement

Engage members of the community in planning and promoting quality parks and programs



Great Leadership

Assure that people, process and finances are managed efficiently and effectively



LEXINGTON
Parks & Recreation

Imagine it's the year 2030: how have parks & recreation improved in Thomasville?

they're physically connected	Investment has been made in public parks	Safe accessible trails connect all parks which are accessible and welcoming to everyone.
They are family oriented	Beautiful parks in every neighborhood	Diversity in programs that reach the entire community
Improved Accessibility	Parks are so great people from the county (and maybe beyond) are using them and they are often cited as a reason for people moving or staying here	History, culture, and nature preserved



Imagine it's the year 2030: how have parks & recreation improved in Thomasville?

Mentimeter

Better park maintenance plans	Parks are clean	Equipment is up to date and in good repair in all parks
Provide multiple options (Splash Pad, Ball Field)	we adhere to a base level of service systemwide	Balfour Park will have a swimming pool, green space, children play equipment seating areas, restrooms and be welcoming for all of Thomasville but especially the surrounding community.
City is working with community partners to program parks as partners beyond YMCA	All parks and services are free	Better connectivity between parks



Imagine it's the year 2030: how have parks & recreation improved in Thomasville?

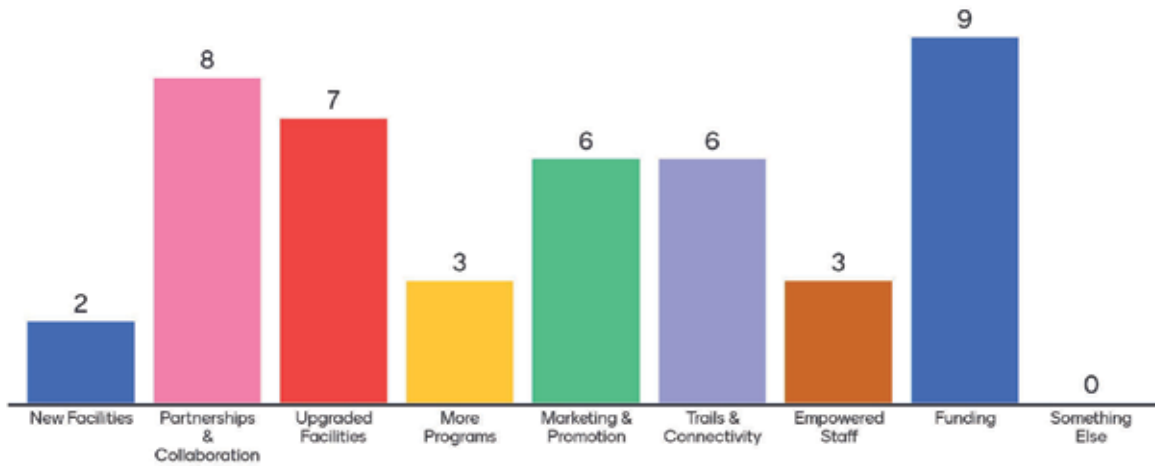
Mentimeter

Multiple things in each park for a variety of people, offering hours of passive entertainment	I smell George and Louis 😊	ADA accessible
Each park has its own "personality" reflective of the neighborhood	18 hole disc golf course	Splash pools in of heavy traffic parks



What do you need to get to that future?

Mentimeter



Let's get focused: Are there specific actions to take or improvements to address?

Mentimeter

Council to allocate adequate funding	Funding and staffing	Partnerships with local organizations need to be established and fostered
18 hole disc golf course	Golf course improvements	expand trail plan to improve connectivity
Need to engage ppl in nearby neighborhoods to hone in on what makes each park special	Include community members in Park Planning	Thomasville "park standard" that is consistent throughout the parks.



Let's get focused: Are there specific actions to take or improvements to address?

Mentimeter

Better funding for parks and rec	Connect parks with trails/sidewalks	Funding not just for improvements but for ongoing maintenance and enhancements
Allow partners to move forward with plans	Incorporate Green infrastructure into park design	Make sure the community knows what is available to do.
More and improved restroom facilities	Add Splash Pads in underserved communities.	Consider shade trees or coverings



Let's get focused: Are there specific actions to take or improvements to address?

Mentimeter

addresses stormwater management issues	Building/Upgrading facilities can be the start, but dollars have to be increased to maintain the upgraded parks	plant more shade trees
Start with the easy stuff	Partnerships to consider additional programs at passive parks	create public art spaces
A swimming pool in Balfour Park for the South Side of Thomasville. Close down the Dog park that is there. Make it a beautiful family and children, quality, assessable parks for the underserved communities. Summers should be fun in the community.	Public art plan	



Example of Plan Summary



Expectations of Steering Committee

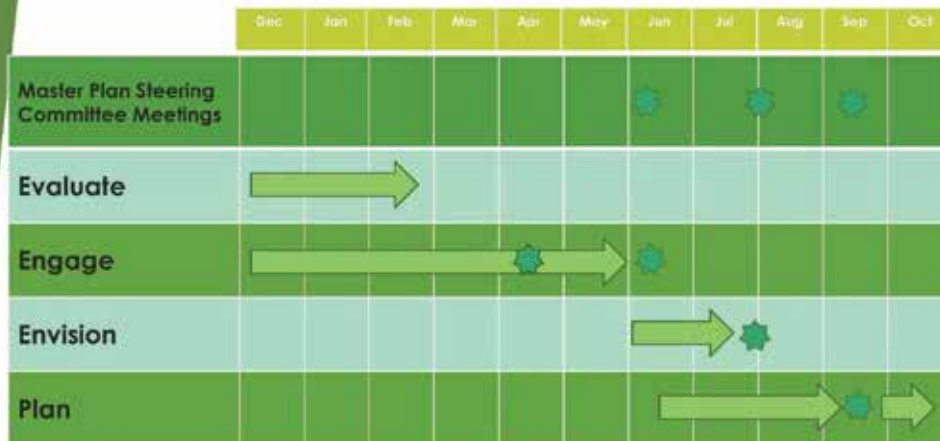
Steering Committee Members

- Act as a critical liaison between the planning team and individuals/organizations throughout Thomasville
- Share relevant planning process information with your social and professional networks
 - Promote surveys and input opportunities
- **Co-create a new strategic plan for Parks and Recreation**
- Offer regular feedback as plan components are developed

Approximately 5 Meetings

- Meeting #1 – Introduction & overview of the process
- **Meeting #2 – Review of findings from system analysis and public input**
- **Meeting #3 – Visioning: An interactive participatory process to co-create new mission, vision, and goals for Parks and Recreation**
- Meeting #4 – Preliminary Recommendations: Consultant shares broad recommendations which the committee will rank by priority
- Meeting #5 – Draft Master Plan: Committee reviews and shares suggestions prior to final presentation of plan to Thomasville City Council

Planning Timeline

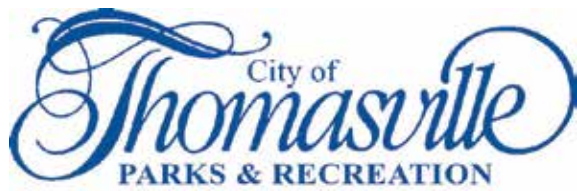


Questions? Let's Talk!

What's next:

- Draft Strategic Plan & Visioning Meeting #2
- Preliminary Recommendations
- Draft Master Plan
- Final presentation to City Council





Parks & Recreation Master Plan

*Steering Committee Meeting #3
Strategic Planning Session #2
Thomasville, Georgia
October 6th 2022*



On the Agenda:

- Review Visioning Results
- Review DRAFT Strategic Plan
- Choose Mission Statement
- Choose Vision Statement
 - Goals & Objectives
- Preliminary Recommendations
 - Next Steps



Project Process



5th Phase: Implementation!

Values

What values should guide Parks and Rec in Thomasville?

Mentimeter



DRAFT Values

Sustainability – Carefully monitor the natural, cultural, and financial resources of Thomasville

Accessibility – Ensuring equity of access to and affordable recreation opportunities

Fun – Welcoming all to gather and play with family and friends

Excellence – Delivering the highest quality of service to our community

5

DRAFT Mission Options

- 1. Enrich the community through engaging experiences at accessible parks and diverse amenities***
- 2. Ensure that welcoming, diverse, and affordable parks and programs are accessible to all***
- 3. Provide safe, accessible, and memorable experiences for the entire community***

6

DRAFT Vision Options

1. **Exceptional parks and memorable experiences are accessible for everyone**
2. **A welcoming and accessible park system that connects everyone to memorable experiences**
3. **Become southwest Georgia's leader in parks and recreation by ensuring dynamic experiences for all**

7

Goals for Future

Imagine it's the year 2030: how have parks & recreation improved in Thomasville?



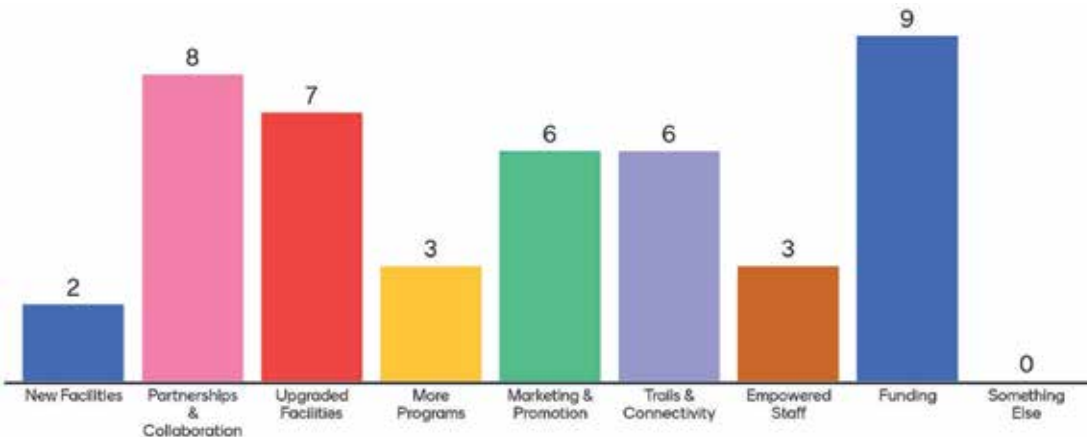
They're physically connected	Investment has been made in public parks	Safe accessible links connect all parks which are accessible and welcoming to everyone
They are family oriented	Beautiful parks in every neighborhood	Diversity in programs that reach the entire community
Improved Accessibility	Parks are so great people from the county (and maybe beyond) are using them and they are often cited as a reason for people moving or staying here	History, culture, and nature preserved
Better park maintenance plans	Parks are clean	Equipment is up to date and in good repair in all parks
Provide multiple options (Splash Pools, Ball Fields)	We adhere to a base level of service systemwide	Buffout Park will have a swimming pool, green spaces, children play equipment, seating areas, restrooms and be welcoming for all of Thomasville but especially the surrounding community
City is working with community partners to program parks as partners beyond YMCA	All parks and services are free	Better connectivity between parks
Multiple things in each park for a variety of people, offering fears of passive entertainment	18 hole disc golf course	Splash pools in all heavy traffic parks
Each park has its own "personality" reflective of the neighborhood	ADA accessible	

8

Goals for Future

What do you need to get to that future?

Mentimeter



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DRAFT Goals & Objectives

Goal 1: Accessible Spaces

Build physical and social connections throughout the entire community

- ▶ Objective 1.1 – **Connecting**: Improve connections to parks, schools, and popular destinations
- ▶ Objective 1.2 – **Gathering**: Offer accessible and inviting opportunities for community interaction
- ▶ Objective 1.3 – **Engaging**: Continuously gauge community needs and promote opportunities

10

DRAFT Goals & Objectives

Goal 2: Beautiful Parks

Offer attractive parks and facilities that encourage fun and enjoyment for all

- ▶ Objective 2.1 – **Places:** Provide innovative parks and facilities to serve and engage the community
- ▶ Objective 2.2 – **Amenities:** Pursue responsive development and strategic replacement of structures and support features
- ▶ Objective 2.3 – **Stewardship:** Employ sustainable practices to ensure continued community access to nature

11

DRAFT Goals & Objectives

Goal 3: Diverse Experiences

Provide a wide array of recreational opportunities that inspire community health and happiness

- ▶ Objective 3.1 – **Events:** Collaborate to provide possibilities for interaction, fun, & learning
- ▶ Objective 3.2 – **Wellness:** Encourage exploration & growth through diverse physical activities and educational opportunities
- ▶ Objective 3.3 – **Partnerships:** Collaborate with local organizations to maximize services and programs

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DRAFT Goals & Objectives

Goal 4: Responsible Operations

Employ strong leadership to direct an engaged community using efficient management, exceptional customer service, sustainable operations, and productive partnerships

- ▶ Objective 4.1 – **Structure:** Encourage an engaged workforce of valued staff with a culture of innovation
- ▶ Objective 4.2 – **Operations:** Implement clear performance standards and training practices for quality and flexibility
- ▶ Objective 4.3 – **Funding:** Explore creative operational practices and funding strategies to improve effectiveness of investment

13

Preliminary Recommendations



Operational Priorities

- ▶ Build department and branding
- ▶ Expand staff to meet additional program and facility needs – additional offerings will require more staff
- ▶ Reexamine existing and future MOUs – cost to city/how money is spent
- ▶ Collaborate for improved marketing and promotion
- ▶ Provide more community events (concerts/movies/special events/farmer's market) – city and partnerships
- ▶ Add program offerings (fitness & wellness /50+/nature) – needs not currently being met, outside of Remington Park

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Systemwide Priorities

- ▶ Address deferred maintenance/improve existing facilities
- ▶ Invest in overlooked/underinvested parks, addressing equity and access
- ▶ Add new neighborhood parks – in underserved areas/potentially in conjunction with stormwater improvements
- ▶ Continue to develop and connect trails – inside and outside of parks, safe routes
- ▶ Improve ADA access throughout system
- ▶ Find alternative funding streams – grants, donations, partnerships, possible tax for capital improvements
- ▶ Implement golf course plan to maintain/increase usage – up since 2020

16

Facility Improvements

- ▶ Restrooms (improve/add) – MacIntyre, Paradise, etc.
- ▶ Splash pad(s)
- ▶ Playground replacement/upgrades – unique, engaging features
- ▶ Outdoor fitness equipment – replace existing and add new
- ▶ Picnic shelters/areas
- ▶ Pickleball – fast growing
- ▶ Disc golf – potentially at Cassidy Pond
- ▶ Dog park – relocate and improve – possibly at Cherokee Park or Cassidy Pond
- ▶ Wayfinding/signage – throughout system
- ▶ Support features – shade, security, seating, bottle fillers
- ▶ Other

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Next Steps...



Final Steps

- ▶ Finalize Strategic Plan
- ▶ Finalize **Operations & Program Recommendations**
- ▶ Determine **Individual Park Recommendations**
 - ▶ Identify **Capital Costs**
- ▶ Action Plan & Draft Report
- ▶ **Final Meeting to Review Draft Report**
- ▶ Present to City Council

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Expectations of Steering Committee

Steering Committee Members

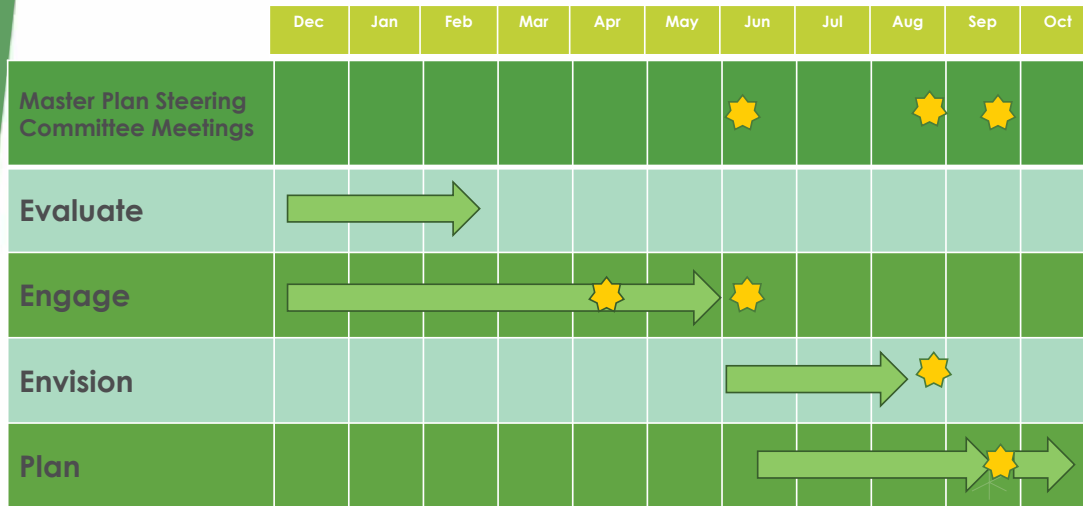
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Project Timeline



Questions? Let's Talk!

APPENDIX D - PREVIOUS PLANS

Summary of Previous Plans and Studies

Thomas County/Thomasville 2005-2025 Comprehensive Plan

This plan document includes future plans for the county and the city of Thomasville containing a community assessment, public input, and guidance from staff, stakeholder groups, community workshops, and survey materials.

Items Relevant to Park and Recreation in Thomasville:

Future Development areas in Thomas County – Areas 1-4 include development of parks and recreation facilities

Future Development Areas in Thomasville – All areas except the highway, office/institutional, medical, employment/industrial included parks/recreation/greenspace as recommended future uses.

Natural & Cultural Resources – joint county/city goal 4 – encourage and promote public support for natural and cultural resource conservation work and resource management plans as well as parks and trails networks

2028 Comprehensive Master Plan Blueprints

The comprehensive master plan for the City of Thomasville is broken up into three books focusing on building place, building community, and implementation. The building community book holds the most information pertaining to parks, recreation, and natural & cultural resources.

Items relevant to Park and Recreation in Thomasville:

Goal 7.5: Protect, restore, and expand native habitats to increase biodiversity throughout the city

Policy 7.5.3: Encourage the conservation, creation, or restoration of native habitat in urban areas such as public parks and publicly or privately owned lots.

Goal 7.6: Protect and enhance ecologically sensitive areas, plants, and wildlife resources

Policy 7.6.2.1 Use these tools to encourage the retention of land that is in a natural, undisturbed condition. Plan new parks and open spaces to preserve ecologically sensitive areas.

Goal 7.8: Develop a system of greenways along the City's streams that serve to communities recreational and mobility goals, in addition to protecting water quality and property from degradation or damage due to flooding.

Policy 7.8.3: Create linear public open space that links parks, recreation facilities, schools and natural areas

Goal 7.9: Encourage and promote public support for natural and cultural resource conservation and work toward coordinating resource management plans as well as a parks and trails network that extends into the unincorporated county.

Goal 7.14: Continue to encourage and promote the preservation of Thomasville's historic resources, historic districts and historic landmarks

Policy 7.14.4: Explore and capitalize on any parallel benefits (economic, marketing, administrative, etc.) of similar resources and markets, e.g., natural resource protection, active and passive recreation,

retail, greenspace, parks, trails, pedestrian routes, rails, biking, equestrian, and scenic corridors, arts and antiques.

Community Concerns

This section covers the public input provided and has particular parks and recreation elements relevant to this plan. Overall, residents would like to see improvements to existing parks including new amenities and developing identities for each park in the system. Some of those amenities include additions such as splash pads, community gardens and mini golf. Residents would also like to see the park system expanded with the addition of smaller neighborhood parks in areas that are currently underserved and opening school yards to the public during after school hours. Establishing a parks coordination system was also a topic of concern given the several different agencies that are in charge of maintenance for multiple facilities.

Recreation Goal 8.9 through 8.14 – concerned with improving the existing parks and connections to them as well as environmental preservation and ecological footprints.

Desire was also expressed concerning activities and gathering spaces for the youth/teenage generation.

Country Oaks Golf Master Plan

This master plan specific for the Country Oaks Golf facility focuses on increasing safety for golfers on site and for motorists on the adjacent highway, improving agronomic conditions to help provide a higher quality product for the community, create a new strategy and aesthetic for the course, and provide new amenities.

MacIntyre Park Vision Plan 2016

This vision plan captures what the public would like to see at McIntyre Park. In Partnership with the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design through a grant, Thomasville hosted a workshop for public input focused on improvements to MacIntyre Park. This park while it has a deep history and roots in the city, also sits at the headwaters that feed into the Ochlockonee River. Emphasis on watershed quality, education, and accessibility was evident in the Vision Plan. Residents comments concerned park character, water quality, play areas and recreation, education, amenities, and connectivity.

Paradise Park 2019 Planning Document

This planning document was created in collaboration with the City of Thomasville and K2 Urban Design to produce a 20-Year Vision for Paradise Park. Key priorities identified through the planning process include making simple but multi-purpose improvements, slow traffic around the park, activate vacant lots surrounding the park, and improve walkability between downtown and the park. Three designs were included in the document each focusing on different methods of improvement. Option A adds a large event space near the Chamber of Commerce building and new public facilities. All three include similar design elements such as improving edges and street design, adding walkways utilizing historic carriageways, a lawn and events area, connecting to downtown, and revitalizing the surrounding neighborhood through new zoning strategies.

Weston Park 2019 Master Plan

This Master Plan was produced through a design charrette hosted by the City of Thomasville in collaboration with the Douglass Alumni Association in February of 2017. Criteria informed by residents of Thomasville include protecting character & history, providing safety, increasing park usefulness, increasing community collaboration, and allowing the park to become a neighborhood catalyst to promote investment. Key items residents would like to see in Weston Park are improved restrooms, new playgrounds, improved facilities (benches, bike racks, garbage cans, water fountains), event space,

walking paths, renovated picnic area, improved lighting, improved score boards, competition athletic facilities, and more land.

Community Landmarks Trail 2011 Master Plan & Recreation Analysis

The Community Landmarks Trail Master Plan and Recreation Analysis was developed to implement a trail system that will connect the city's historic districts, downtown, and neighborhoods to existing parks. The trail project would create more than 14 miles of multi-use trails around the city. The plan includes proposed trail linkages, maps, and cross sections detailing the different facets of the trail as it travels throughout the city. Wayfinding signage, historical/educational signage, buffers between the street and trail, connections to destinations, and phases of construction are within the plan.

South Pinetree Boulevard Street improvements

Planned improvements to South Pinetree Boulevard include a sidewalk which borders Balfour Park and connects to an existing sidewalk system. This sidewalk would provide a safe path for those living on Heisman Way, Halcyon Way, the Woodlakes Road residents, and the Acacia Blvd residents as well as those living on the East side of the railroad tracks to Balfour Park.

Creative District Vision Report

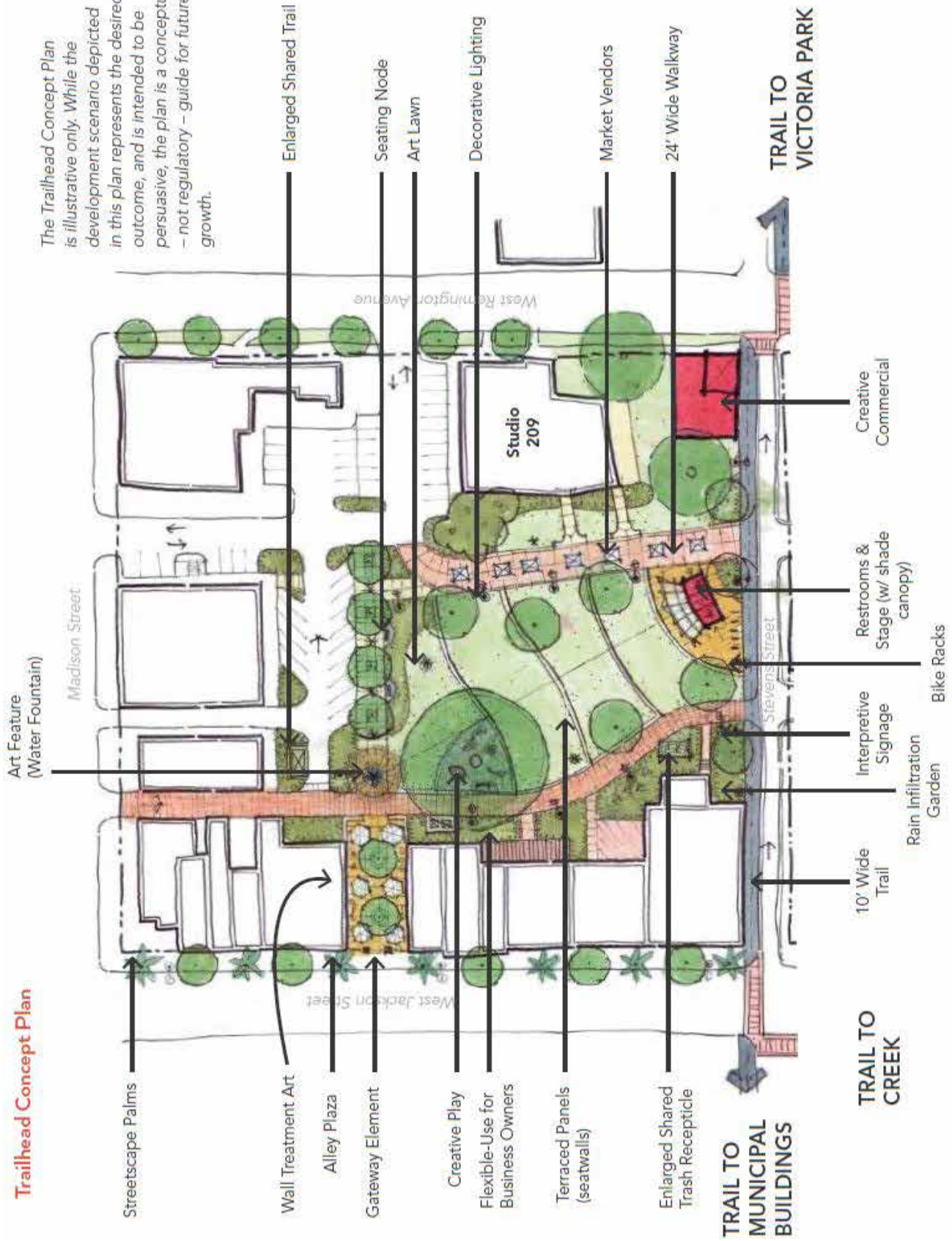
The Creative District Vision Report is a planning document designed to develop a new creative district in the downtown historic area known as "The Bottom". Although this plan is intended to bring economic development to the area, many aspects of the plan include parks and recreation elements. The existing parks in Thomasville were not directly addressed in the plan however, the plan did suggest creating additional greenspace and parkland on vacant sites.

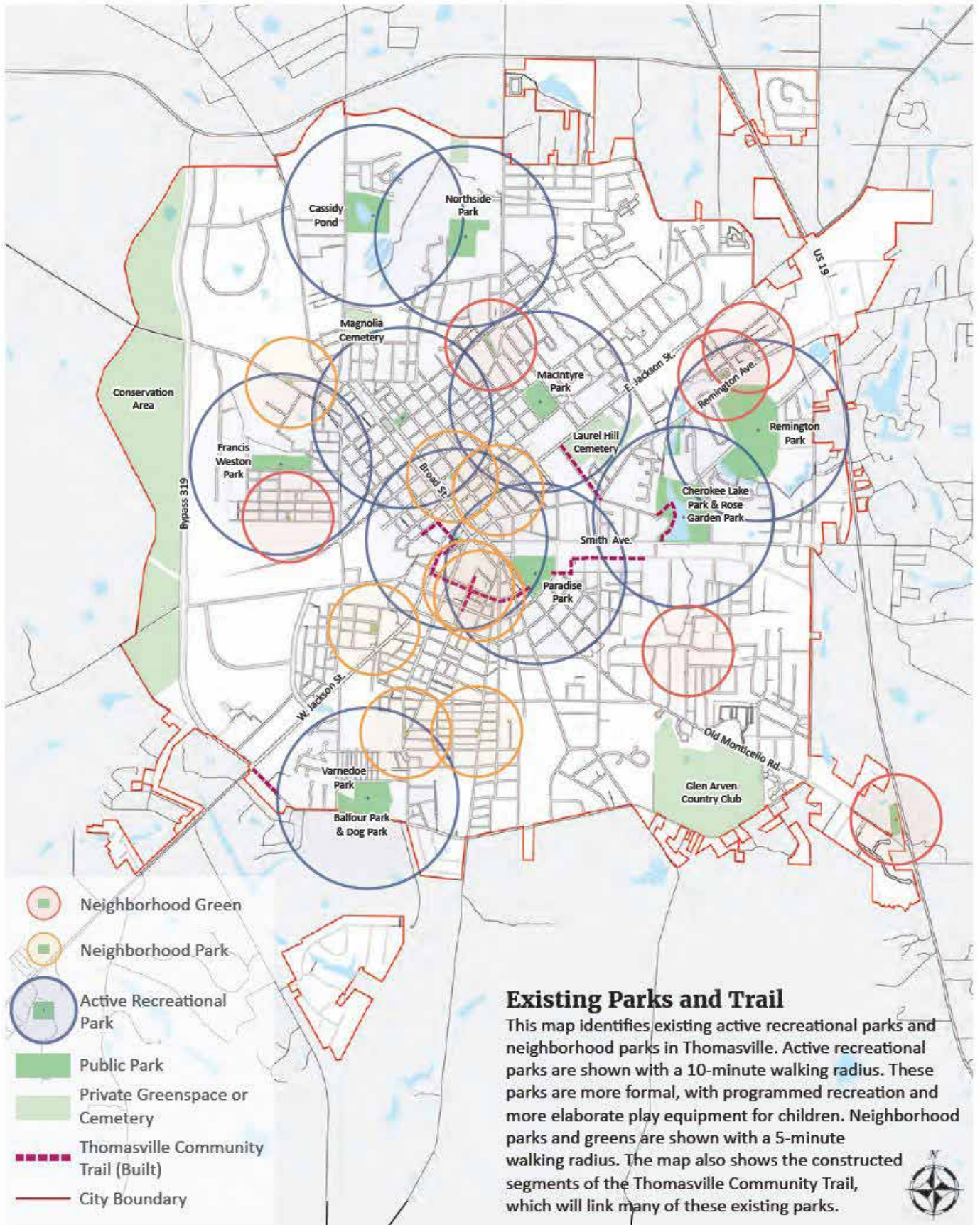
Victoria Park Overlay District

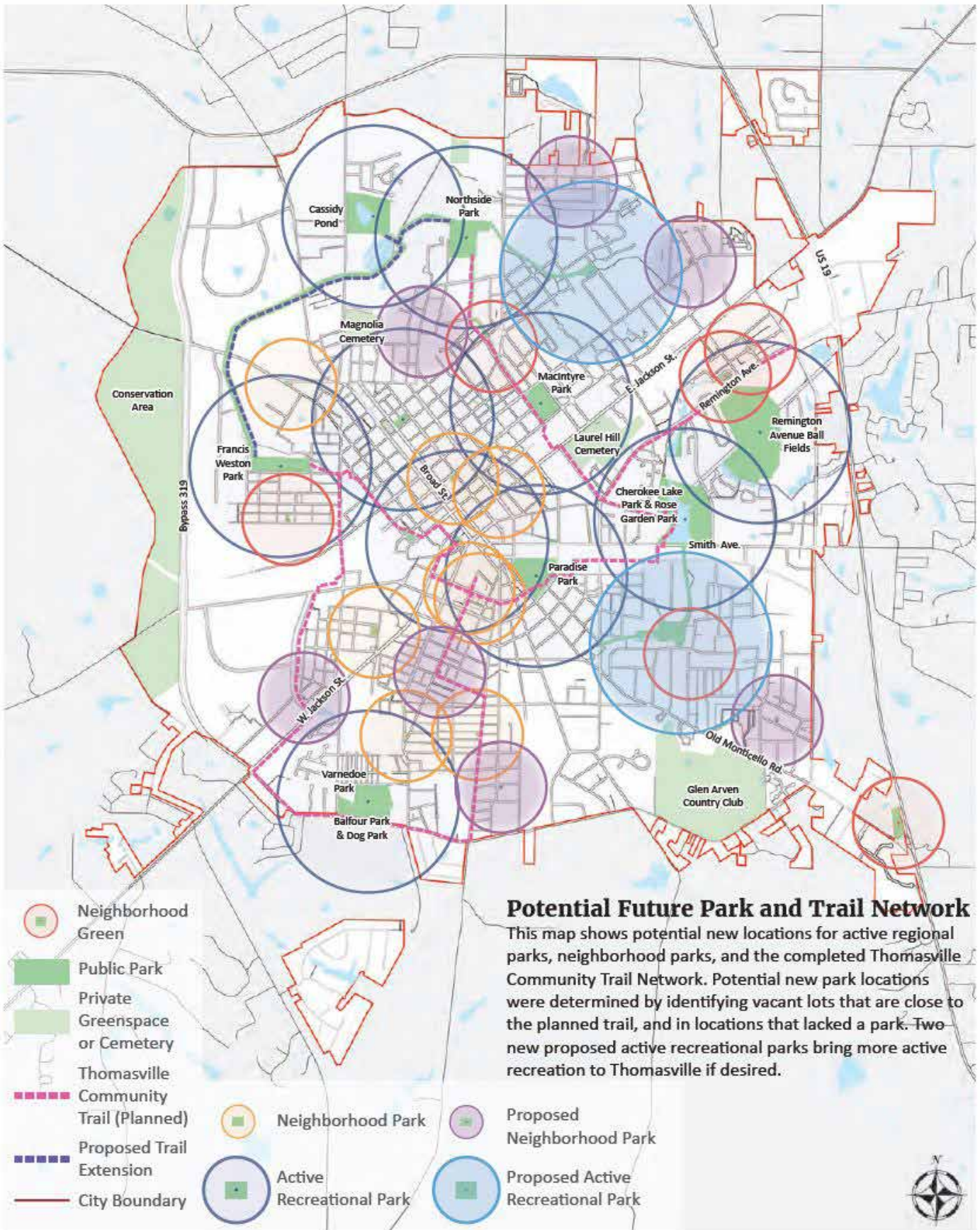
The Victoria Park Overlay District is intended to promote preservation, infill development and revitalization in the city. In relation to parks, design includes park or greenspace frontage which may or may not be maintained by the Parks department and/or the neighborhood.

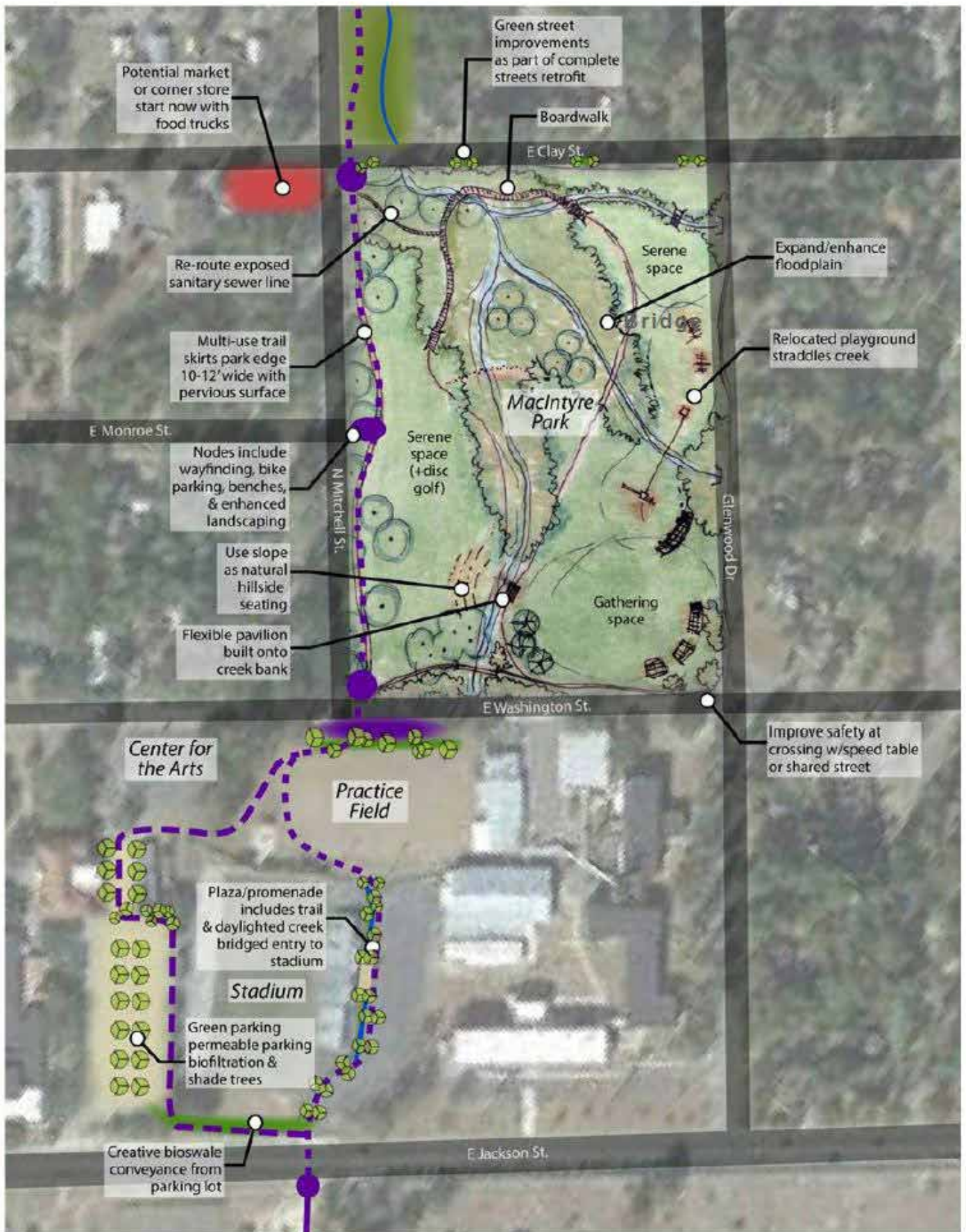
Trailhead Concept Plan

The Trailhead Concept Plan is illustrative only. While the development scenario depicted in this plan represents the desired outcome, and is intended to be persuasive, the plan is a conceptual – not regulatory – guide for future growth.





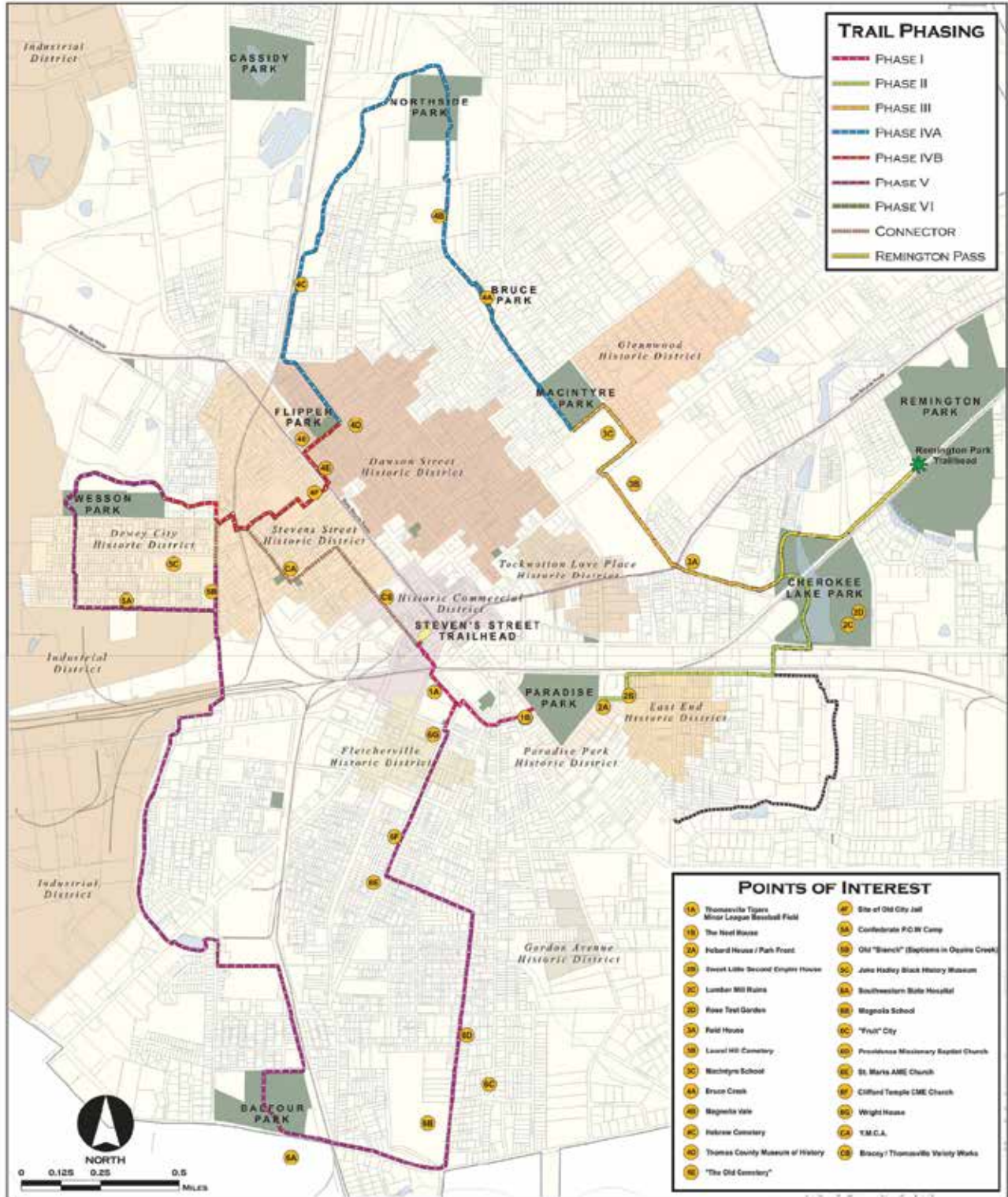




Conceptual master plan for MacIntyre Park

SITE PLAN
PARADISE PARK
THOMASVILLE, GEORGIA
4-20-21
SCALE: 1" = 100'







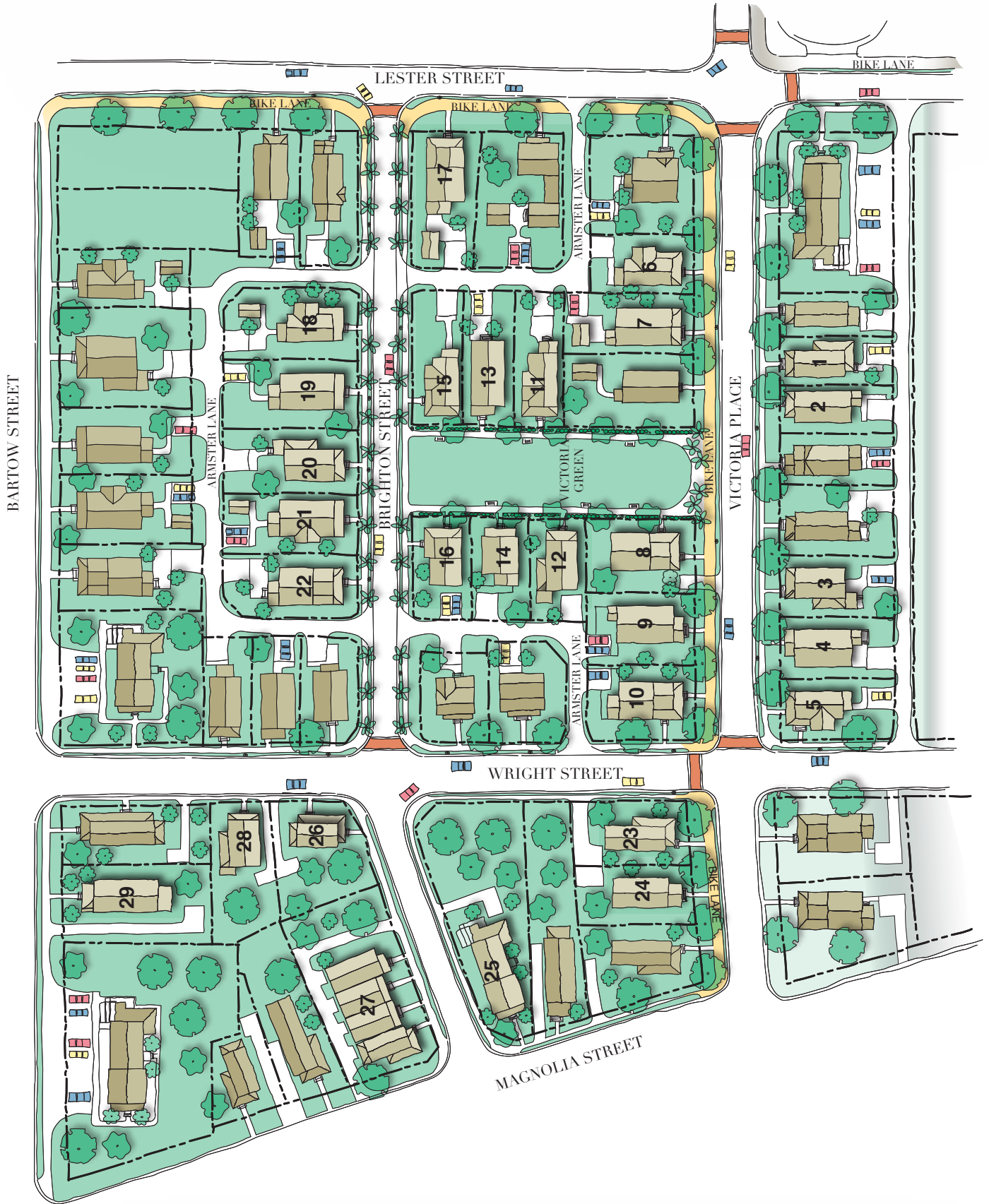
Map Created June 11, 2020



South Pinetree Boulevard Street Improvements

The following board presents an illustrative image of the final design for the South Pinetree Blvd. Improvement Project. The improvements will complete a sidewalk on South Pinetree from W. Jackson St. to Magnolia St., add left turn lanes at W. Jackson St., M.L.K. Dr., and the former State Hospital entrance, and include a roundabout at Magnolia St. In addition, the project includes resurfacing the existing road between W. Jackson St. and Old Monticello Rd.

-  Existing Sidewalk
-  Proposed Sidewalk
-  Left Hand Turn
-  Roundabout





Weston Park : Passive Recreation Improvements

APPENDIX E - CORE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

CORE PROGRAM CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

E.1 ATHLETICS

Definition: Leisure activities which focus on skill development and athletic enjoyment.

1. Audience:

- Team
- Individuals
- All ages

2. Formats:

- Seasonal
- Rec League
- Competitive
- Participant & Spectator
- Progressive levels of skill development

3. Athletic activities provide the opportunity to:

- Enjoy physical activity and have fun
- Develop and maintain an effective level of physical fitness
- Utilize a positive outlet for aggressive behavior
- Provide an opportunity to feel connected to and participate with a group (socialization).
- Participate in healthy competition
- Develop sportsmanship and character

4. Types of Activities Include (not limited to):

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| ▪ Badminton | ▪ Fencing | ▪ Ice Hockey |
| ▪ Baseball | ▪ Flag Football | ▪ Skating |
| ▪ Basketball | ▪ Golf | ▪ Soccer |
| ▪ Bocce | ▪ Lacrosse | ▪ Softball |
| ▪ Bowling | ▪ Martial Arts | ▪ Swim team |
| ▪ Cricket | ▪ Pickleball | ▪ Tennis |
| ▪ Cycling | ▪ Racquet Ball | ▪ Ultimate Frisbee |
| ▪ Equestrian Programs | ▪ Roller Hockey | ▪ Volleyball |
| | | ▪ Evolving and new sports |

E.2 HEALTH, FITNESS, AND WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

Definition: Leisure activities which focus on body movement oriented in direction of fitness, skill development, and physical enjoyment.

1. Audience:

- Individuals
- Groups
- Seniors (e.g., Silver Sneakers)
- Youth
- All ages

2. Formats:

- Seasonal
- Participant & Spectator
- Progressive levels of skill development

3. Activities provide the opportunity to:

- Have fun
- Develop and maintain an effective level of physical fitness
- Utilize a positive outlet for aggressive behavior
- Provide an opportunity to feel connected to and participate with a group (socialization)
- Compete
- Develop sportsmanship and character

4. Topics Include (not limited to):

- Aerobics
- Cycling
- Fitness Activities
- Boot Camp
- Barre
- Cross Country Skiing
- Walking Clubs
- Therapeutic Horseback Riding
- Movement Fitness
- Yoga
- Paddling
- Walking
- Cardio Hikes
- 5/10K Runs
- Water aerobics and exercise
- Swimming
- Weight lifting

E.3 HEALTH AND WELLNESS EDUCATION

Definition: These programs go beyond the traditional view of recreation and promote the individual's optimal well being physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually.

1. Format:

- Testing/Screening
- Instructional Workshops and Classes
- Speakers
- Community Forums
- Partnerships/Programs with Other Agencies

2. Health, Wellness and Educational Programs provide opportunities to:

- Extend and continue the learning process
- Create public awareness and understanding
- Allow the individual to feel connected to his/her community
- Enhance self-esteem

3. Types of Activities Include (not limited to):

- Stress Management
- Cessation Programs (e.g., quitting smoking & substance abuse support)
- Nutrition & Weight Control
- Vision Screening
- Healthcare Assistance (e.g. signing up for Medicare)
- Personal Training
- Diabetes Support
- Arthritis Therapy
- Heart Health Activities

E.4 CREATIVE ARTS

Definition: Activities that result in the creation of something tangible. The process usually involves artistic expression or effort of the imagination:

1. Format:

- Progressive Skill Development
- Individual and/or Group Projects
- Exhibits, Shows, Displays
- Classes and Workshops

2. Creative Arts provide the opportunity to:

- Express creativity
- Work with hands
- Develop fine motor skills
- Enhance the appreciation for the arts
- Give personal satisfaction and pride in accomplishment

3. Types of Activities Include (not limited to):

- Ceramics/Glass
 - Glazing & Staining
 - Greenware
 - Hand Building
- Crafts
 - Copper Foil Art
 - Paper Making
 - Decoupage
 - Papier Mache
 - Enameling
 - Plaster Crafts
 - Jewelry Making
- Drawing/Painting-Calligraphy
 - Pastels
 - Cartooning
 - Pen & Ink
 - Charcoal
- Fabric
 - Batik
 - Needle Point
 - Crochet
- Photography
 - Composition
 - Pinhole Cameras
- Raku
- Stained Glass
- Wheel (Throwing)
- Plastic Crafts
- Mobiles
- Print Making
- Book-binding
- Mosaics
- Silk Screening
- Paper Crafts
- Wood Working
- Sketching
- Mixed Media
- Water Colors
- Oil
- Preschool Drawing
- Quilting
- Knitting
- Sewing
- Using 35mm Cameras
- Digital Workshops

-
- Sculpture
 - Casting
 - Plaster
 - Clay
 - Weaving
 - Basketry
 - Dyeing
- Soft (Fabric)
 - Mobiles
 - Wire
 - Paper
 - On or Off the Loom
 - Spinning

E.5 PERFORMING AND CREATIVE ARTS

Definition: Activities that allow the participant to use their own self as the medium of expression. The process of “doing” is important whether or not an audience is involved.

1. Formats:

- Progressive skill level development
- Classes and workshops
- Knowledge-Sharing
- Special Events
- Neighborhood Projects

2. Performing and Creative Arts provide the opportunity to:

- Discover themselves as a person, by being creatively involved in learning new skills, exploring and expressing talents
- Create their own entertainment
- Enjoy artistic expression at all ages
- Develop and enrich cultural appreciation

3. Types of Activities:

- Dance
 - Ballet
 - Ballroom Dance
 - Clogging
 - Creative Movement
 - Folk Dance
 - Jazz Dance
 - Modern Dance
 - Square Dance
 - Tap Dance
 - Line Dancing
- Drama
 - Acting
 - Backstage Crafts & Set-making
 - Games, Charades, Stunts, and Skits
 - Pantomime and Improvisation
 - Poetry Readings
 - Puppetry
 - Storytelling
 - Theater Groups
- Music
 - Choral Groups
 - Guitar
 - Piano
 - Rhythm Instruments (Bells, triangles, blocks, Drums)
 - Recorder
 - Singing
 - Talent/Variety Shows
 - Special Needs Music Program
 - Music Fundamentals

E.6 CULTURAL PERFORMANCES

Definition: Activities in which the person is a spectator of a cultural performance.

1. **Formats:**

- Progressive skill level development
- Special Events
- Concerts, Live Shows, Screenings, etc.

2. **Cultural Performances provide the opportunity to:**

- Provide the participant with the opportunity to discover and appreciate various forms of performing arts
- Serves to develop and enrich cultural appreciation

3. **Types of Activities:**

- Ballet
- Musical performances
- Concerts, recitals
- Theater - Plays
- Musicals
- Talent shows

E.7 EDUCATION, LIFE SKILLS, AND FUN

Definition: Programs that offer fun and educational activities which can be enjoyed for a lifetime.

1. **Audience:**

- Individuals
- Families
- Group
- All ages or specific age range

2. **Format:**

- Instructional Workshop or Class
- Speaker/Presenters
- Travel Program Itinerary

3. **Education and Life Skills Programs provide opportunities to:**

- Enhance a skill
- Improve safety and awareness
- Learn
- Explore
- Socialize

4. **Types of Activities Include (not limited to):**

- Informational Referrals
- Parenting Skills
- CPR & First Aid
- G.E.D. Programs
- Tax Assistance
- Social Meetings
- Financial Literacy Training and Assistance
- Introductory Classes or Activities

-
- Tutoring
 - Summer Camp
 - Personal Safety
 - Baby Sitting Classes
 - Computer Skills
 - How-To Classes
 - Group Outings/Travel
 - Scout Programs
 - Aquatics
 - Swim Lessons
 - Red Cross Courses
 - Scuba

E.8 COMMUNITY AND ANNUAL EVENTS

Definition: Activities that bring the community together to celebrate holidays, seasons, traditions, local makers, etc. May overlap with Cultural Performances.

1. Formats:

- Large gatherings in parks or along parade routes
- Admission fee – may or may not charge

2. Events provide opportunities to:

- Gather with community to celebrate holidays, events and traditions
- Meet neighbors
- Build a sense of unity and shared experience

3. Types of Activities:

- Festivals
- Parades
- Fairs
- Concerts
- Cultural celebrations
- July 4th Fireworks
- Holiday events
- Seasonal events
- Social activities
- Movies
- Markets (art, crafts, etc.)

E.9 GAMES

Definition: Activities oriented around play and governed by specific rules; intended to provide challenges, diversion and enjoyment.

1. Audience:

- Groups
- Individuals
- Youth
- Seniors
- Families
- All ages

2. Formats:

- Active or Semi-active Group Games
- Social Games, Mixers, Ice Breakers
- Mental Games, Quizzes, Puzzles, Paper & Pencil Games
- Table and Equipment Games
- Quiet Games

3. Games provide the opportunity to:

- Develop ability to cooperate effectively with others
- Learn to accept and abide by the rules of the game
- Accept victory and/or defeat in good spirit
- Learn perseverance
- Develop good sportsmanship and consideration for the rights of others
- Learn to take turns and to accept boundary limits (either in a physical sense, or in terms of personal behavior)

4. Types of Activities Include (not limited to):

- Air Hockey
- Billiards
- Board & Table Games
- Cards
- Checkers
- Chess
- Dominoes
- Cornhole
- Horse Shoes
- Low Organized Games (Lead-Up, Relays, Tag, Dodge ball)
- Magic Stunts & Tricks
- Table Tennis
- Skittles
- Word Games
- World Wide Games
- Foosball

E.10 NATURE/OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

Definition: Activities that are best conducted outdoors and that have, in some way, a direct relationship with nature or place the participant in direct contact with the elements.

1. Audience

- Individuals
- Groups
- All ages

2. Format:

- Classes/Workshops
- Teambuilding
- Program partnerships with other agencies
- Role Playing
- Field Trips
- Sensory Awareness Activities
- School Activities
- Summer Camp

3. Outdoor education activities provide the opportunity to:

- Develop an awareness and appreciation of our natural resources
- Develop skills for adaptation to vocational or leisure pursuits

4. Types of Activities Include (not limited to):

- Bird Feeding & Watching
- Archery
- Sledding
- Orienteering

-
- Canoeing
 - Kayaking
 - Cross Country Skiing
 - Nature Play
 - Camping
 - Glamping (Glamour Camping)
 - Paddling (Canoe and Kayak)
 - Hiking
 - Fishing / Fishing Derby
 - Geocaching
 - Pet Shows
 - Repelling/Climbing
 - Survival Skills

E.11 GREEN LIVING/ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Definition: Programs and activities that inform and help individuals or groups minimize their impact on the environment in order to provide for a sustainable future.

1. Audience:

- Family
- Individuals
- School Groups
- All ages

2. Formats:

- Seasonal Events
- Summer Camps
- Hands-on Activities
- Group Hikes
- Field Trips

3. Activities provide the opportunity to:

- Learn methods to minimize our footprint on the environment
- Participate with others toward a goal of a more sustainable future
- Learn methods which can be practiced at home and in parks at a larger scale

4. Types of Activities Include (not limited to):

- Land/Wildlife Conservation
- Recycling
- Gardening
- Rain Barrel Making
- Small Footprint Spring Cleaning
- Landscaping with Native Plants
- Earth Day Celebrations
- Butterfly Gardens
- Backyard Conservation Workshops
- Composting How-To and Support
- Invasive Species Removal
- Weather, Climate Observation

E.12 HERITAGE AND HISTORY

Definition: Programs that offer educational opportunities to interpret the heritage and history of a community, location, environment, or culture.

1. Audience:

- Families
- School Groups
- Individuals

-
- Tourists

2. Format:

- Instructional Workshops and Classes
- Reenactments
- Speaker Presentations
- Interpretive Events

3. Heritage and History Programs provide opportunities to:

- Understand and celebrate local natural and cultural history
- Enjoy nature, heritage, and culture as a family or group
- Feel connected to the environment and local history

4. Types of Activities Include (not limited to):

- Heritage Walks
- Storytelling
- Maple Sugaring
- Military Reenactments
- Heritage Farming Methods
- Live-Action Museums
- Native American Studies

E.13 VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Definition: Because parks and recreation department staff cannot possibly perform all of the tasks needed to accomplish their mission, volunteers are necessary. Through programs that coordinate, educate, and supervise volunteers the work of the department can be carried out in an efficient, effective, and communal manner.

1. Audience:

- Individuals
- Families
- Group
- Partners

2. Volunteer Training Programs provide opportunities to:

- Participate toward the overall goals of the department
- Assist in tasks that are beyond the staff limitations of the agency (help to accomplish tasks in a timely and efficient manner)
- Be an integral part of an organization protecting the environment and supporting facilities and programs offered
- Gain experience using a wide array of skills
- Share interests with people of all ages
- Improve overall quality of life through community connectedness
- Receive professional training on a variety of topics
- Learn about the natural world
- Foster friendships
- Interact with park visitors
- Exercise in the great outdoors
- Be creative

3. Types of Activities Include (not limited to):

- Orientations
- Park Cleanups
- Educational Session Leader Training
- Nature Center Hosts
- Naturalist Training
- Invasive Species Removal
- Adopt a Park/Trail
- Trail Patrol and Maintenance
- Sustainable Trail Building
- Conservation Orientation

APPENDIX F - SURVEY REPORT

8/24/22, 8:58 AM

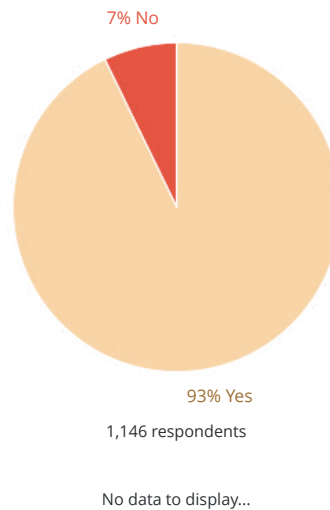
City of Thomasville, GA - Report Creation

Thomasville Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Project Engagement

VIEWS	2,680	PARTICIPANTS	1,155
RESPONSES	27,588	COMMENTS	608
SUBSCRIBERS	107	IMPRESSIONS	28,816

* Have you (or those who live with you) visited any parks or recreation facilities offered by the City of Thomasville in the past year?

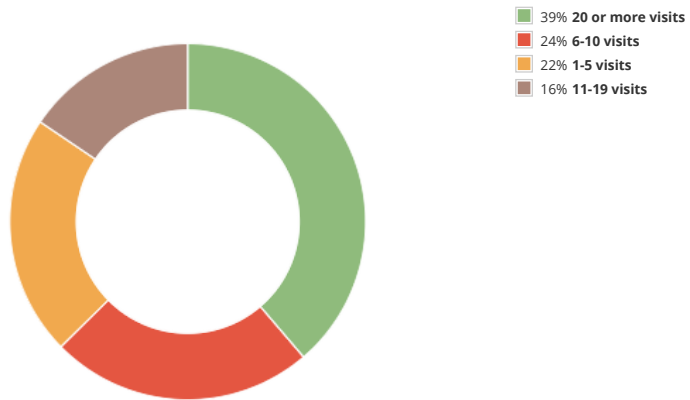


Please check ALL parks and recreation facilities you (or those who live with you) visited in the past year.

81%	Cherokee Park & Thomasville Rose Garden	812 ✓
62%	The Ritz Amphitheater and Park	617 ✓
62%	Remington Park	616 ✓
58%	MacIntyre Park	584 ✓
55%	Paradise Park	547 ✓
38%	The Big Oak & Gazebo	376 ✓
28%	Schools	277 ✓
20%	Country Oaks Municipal Golf Course	197 ✓
16%	Balfour Park and Dog Park	161 ✓
15%	Cassidy Road Park/Pond	151 ✓
11%	Weston Park	114 ✓
7%	Northside Park	65 ✓
6%	Flipper Park	59 ✓
6%	Varnedoe Park	57 ✓
1%	Parnell Park	14 ✓

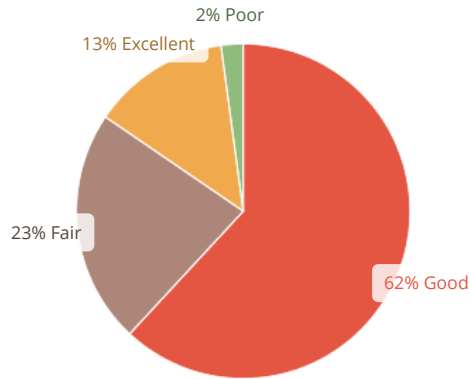
1,000 Respondents

Please indicate how often you or people that live with you have visited parks within the past year.



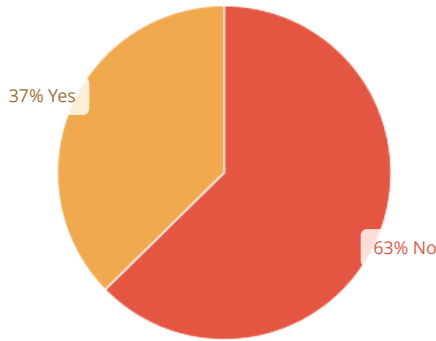
971 respondents

How would you rate the physical condition of the parks & facilities you visited in Thomasville?



982 respondents

Have you or those who live with you participated in any programs/events offered by the city in the past 2 years?



82 respondents

Your parks needed to be more handicapped accessible. I am disabled and have to go to Tallahassee to enjoy a park

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

First Friday. Sports events at Remington park.

5 months ago

Would go if I knew about them.

6 months ago

Parks old and Out dated

7 months ago

Would love more public fishing area

7 months ago

Your paying a outside consulting firm how much taxpayer money to tell you what to do and you say you want opinions yea right here's one take cameras down in school zones and does that money stay in community or does it go to atlanta

7 months ago

I am over 65 and the programs do not apply to my age group.

7 months ago

No

7 months ago

First fridays

9 months ago

No

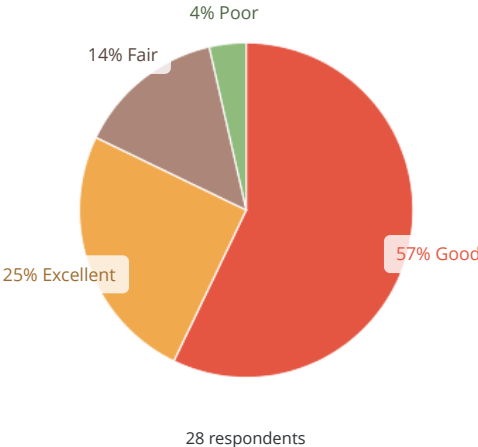
9 months ago

Victoria Christmas, rose show..etc

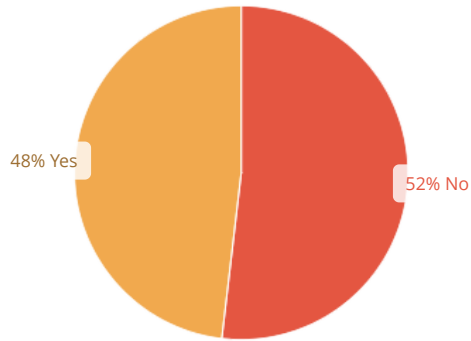
9 months ago

No data to display...

How would you rate the quality of programs?



Have you or those who live with you participated in any programs/events offered by the YMCA in the past 2 years?



1,020 respondents

This would definitely be nice to have a clearly defined walking trail at another park other than Cherokee Lake.

9 months ago

55 Agree

Would love to see the parks connected by a walking/cycling trail as has been discussed in the past.

9 months ago

43 Agree

This kind of strong opinion which is not shared by most is why you got slaughtered in the election. You need to keep up with what the rest of world is building for their citizens.

5 months ago

The "idea" is good but the costs are exorbitant! Those funds would be way better spent on the parks themselves. The trails in existence to date are rarely if ever used! And I believe projected costs to complete "the trail" is in the millions.

6 months ago

McIntyre park could use some additional parking and restrooms nice restrooms that are kept like amphitheater and so could Cherokee lake and Remington park.

9 months ago

38 Agree

It would be great if we had parking in McIntyre Park that's closer to the playground equipment for those in wheelchairs and with walking problems. There's really no convenient access for the elderly, either. Just a thought.

9 months ago

35 Agree

It would be wonderful if both Macintyre park & Paradise park had restroom facilities available!

9 months ago

12 Agree

Please, please, please add equipment for our children with special needs and in wheelchairs. It is so needed. We want our children to be included with the other children. Maybe have a wheelchair merry go round and more adaptive swings such as a wheelchair swing to name a couple. I'd be more than happy to help!

9 months ago

11 Agree

I agree a biking trail is needed here.

9 months ago

11 Agree

Work to have trails which lead from one park to another.

Increase water features at parks.

Integrate more public art into parks.

Acquire small vacant lots close to down town and have mini- parks/public art exhibits.

9 months ago

[10 Agree](#)

Kids need somewhere safe to ride their bikes that none of the parks offer. Bicycles aren't allowed on the sidewalk at Cherokee Park which is unheard of to me. McIntyre park could use restrooms. A map of the disc golf course would also be nice.

9 months ago

[8 Agree](#)

Restrooms need to be added to Paradise and McIntyre parks; I feel this would increase the usage by young families.

7 months ago

[7 Agree](#)

Wonderful parks, but restrooms should be updated and need more handicap equipment for children to be able to enjoy parks also.

9 months ago

[7 Agree](#)

Please lower swings at all parks for 3-5 year olds. McIntyre needs slides for smaller kids since slides were removed.

Benches in the shade at all parks.

An asphalt path at Paradise likes parks in larger cities for little kids to ride their bikes in a safe place. Paths would need some creativity- think like a kid.

Splash pad for all to use 7 days a week.

9 months ago

[7 Agree](#)

Thomasville is lacking a really good playground for young children. The updates at McIntyre are great- let's do the same for younger children

8 months ago

[6 Agree](#)

I would love to see Thomasville include all children so please think about the special needs children in our community.

9 months ago

[6 Agree](#)

Remington parks bathrooms need to be updated with paint, new privacy doors, & replace rusty fixtures.

9 months ago

[6 Agree](#)

Need more options similar to Cherokee Park

9 months ago

[6 Agree](#)

The historic bandstand at Paradise Park is a key focal point and piece of our community's history, yet it's been yellow taped for a number of years. It should be brought back to safe usable condition so concerts and events can return. Paradise Park could also use restroom facilities to encourage use by families with younger children (and others) and to make public events possible without porta potties.

7 months ago

[5 Agree](#)

Paradise Park could be great with some updates! It would feel more inviting if some trees were taken down to make an open space with nice green grass. Bathrooms would be nice but could potentially feel unsafe there. A trail system connecting it to downtown and the amphitheater could draw more people to the park. I'm sure this is beyond the budget, but it would be awesome to see a new playground, maybe with a rubber ground. I see other towns with great parks that are popular gathering places for families with kids; it's a shame to see Paradise Park always stand empty.

9 months ago [5 Agree](#)

More walking trails or trails through the woods like in Tallahassee. Thomasville has beautiful outdoors and woods, but it is difficult for the general public to enjoy it unless you are driving down a clay road or hunting on plantation land.

8 months ago [4 Agree](#)

We would like to see a sidewalk through MacIntyre Park where a walker or wheelchair or mobility scooter can be used.

9 months ago [4 Agree](#)

Bathrooms are needed at Macintyre and Paradise park.

9 months ago [4 Agree](#)

We need a bike trail.

9 months ago [4 Agree](#)

Bathrooms at Remington Park definitely need to be upgraded....

9 months ago [4 Agree](#)

ALL parks need fully functional restrooms, handicap access, adequate lighting, and safe, sufficient parking. Not everyone has a daytime, 9-5 job or is a stay home parent. For the most part, facilities are not user friendly for those outside this demographic. YMCA classes also target the stay home parent and 9-5ers.

9 months ago [4 Agree](#)

We need a walking trail at other parks as well

9 months ago [4 Agree](#)

There is a ton of foot traffic and bike traffic on Remington Ave. We really need sidewalks there. Also, please connect existing sidewalks. Hiking trails and cycling trails would be great too.

7 months ago [3 Agree](#)

Every park should have clean, accessible, well-maintained restrooms.

7 months ago [3 Agree](#)

A restroom at MacIntyre Park and Paradise Park would be wonderful! My kids love both parks, but we would be able to enjoy them even more if they had restrooms.

8 months ago [3 Agree](#)

Paradise park, Cherokee park, and Remington park totally need a updates! The playgrounds are old, boring and dull. Some of the stuff even broken and the city no bother to fix it. I have been to the parks and recreation area in suburban Atlanta. There playgrounds are colorful, different shapes and length of slides. It has musical area, digging area, and climbing area. The recreation also has the sparkling water for summer.

8 months ago [3 Agree](#)

Such an opportunity to upgrade paradise park

8 months ago [3 Agree](#)

I am anxious for the Remington street scape to get started. And I would appreciate more bike friendly areas to get around town

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

Cherokee lake is the only park that has had any real renovations and updates. Flipper park and other parks that are in predominantly African American communities are neglected

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

Public splash pad. More basketball courts. Running/walking trail through thomasville with a map available. I see the mile markers on the pavement around town, but can't find the actual route so having it better identified. A fitness park similar to what Bainbridge just opened.

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

Would love to have a public splash pad for the kiddos!

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

All the parks give the impression of being "stale". All need to be reenergized with additional features and designs to draw more people. Many have reputations of where drug deals are happening due to the poor lighting near the parking lots. Bathrooms are a must for all.

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

Wish we had true bicycle and walking paths across town, this traffic is not good for either with the poor roads we have

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

Thomasville needs more areas with walking trails. If pls rations could open their gates to the public for that, that would be great.

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

Bathrooms need to be updated. Need painted, new privacy doors, and rusty parts need to be replaced.

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

It is critically important that our parks are accessible for citizens of all mobility. Also I find it very odd that the City of Thomasville invests \$500k annually into a private organization for recreation. Thomasville, Thomas County and the other cities should partner to create a unified Recreational Department.

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

Should have wheelchair access at the park especially by Paradise Park and by the Football Stadium. Gymnastics Beam would be great

I know that parks are beautiful some do need change

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

Parks are pretty good for a small town and saved our sanity during the pandemic shutdown. Good start!

I'd like to see doggy water fountains, linear/connected parks, and more sidewalks/bike paths generally.

7 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Thomasville would love to have a weekly farmers/makers market. One of these parks would be a perfect place to hold it.

7 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Picnic tables are always dirty and covered with a thick scum
Trash cans are full attracting flies
It would be nice if these are kept up better than they are

7 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

I would love to see some more *connected* bike/walking paths between the parks. McIntyre really needs a water fountain and sidewalks on the north & south side of the park. The city also should consider installing shade sails over playground equipment at Cherokee & McIntyre. Both parks could also use more benches positioned under shade.

7 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

It would be great to have some playground equipment near downtown to entertain small children when adventuring downtown for lunch/shopping. Ideally near green space like Ritz. Managing safety at night during special events could present challenge but with adequate lighting this could be mitigated.

7 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Something like Village Play in Cashiers NC (<https://www.villagegreencashiersnc.com/village-play/>) would be an AMAZING addition. Attractive and would enhance the downtown vibe; give young families a reason to spend time downtown on the weekend which would in turn support our local businesses.

7 months ago

Cherokee Park needs work. The walking trail floods in rainy weather and the geese and dog poop everywhere. I stopped using the park. Sometimes I feel unsafe there.

7 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

I would love to see some bike trails in addition to forest hiking trails.

8 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Definitely need more (longer) walking /safe cycling trails. Also, a free bicycle safety course for children and parents. we see way too many people without helmets. Public programs like in the park CrossFit for all ages would be wonderful

8 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

A splash pad would be great! A special needs public playground would really be great to have so it is inclusive for children!

8 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Bathrooms are needed at McIntyre and Paradise. Walking trails around the playground equipment for moms to exercise while monitoring their kids. Public splash pad.

8 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

As many have said, the widened sidewalks, often immediately adjacent to the street, are not truly providing what was hoped for as a multi-use trail. And some of the off-street proposed routes were scrapped in favor of street-side routes. Some of these are unavoidable, but we need to seek every option for true, off-street options (at least some amount of grass or landscaping between street and trail. I think Remington is going to provide that option. Portions of Pinetree and Old Monticello are possibilities but require piping ditches. Biggest parks drawback is perception of security and safety due to people hanging around doing things they shouldn't. Need police biking through.

8 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Would love to see a walk/bike trail connecting all the parks

8 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

We love the parks here. It's important to me to feel safe wherever we are. There are parks that I won't visit alone with my kids because of lurkers and questionable trash items found on the playground.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

We need more handicapped accessible equipment and sidewalks to the equipment for out handicapped children.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

I have seen all parks transform into great areas for the public over the years. I commend City of Thomasville for their efforts to improve our parks by listening to the citizens.

I have noticed that "Safety" is one of cities' goals. I think extra lighting at "all" parks would offer that goal to the users of the parks for early morning workouts and at dusk. Also, I like the way some of the colleges have stationery emergency phones scattered throughout the campuses. This could be another feature the parks could add or cameras for safety/sense of security.

Thank you so much City of Thomasville for giving the public an opportunity to share our ideas.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

The Y is great! More than just a Gym!!

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

MacIntyre Park needs some lights at night.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

McIntyre park is difficult to walk through with the current water situation
A good bike trail would be nice.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Need long bike trails/cycling trails.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Would love to see Paradise Park get refreshed so there would be more activity for different age groups. Also an attempt to connect it better to downtown I think would be nice. In general all parks appear "stale" and need life brought back with updated designs. More pocket parks around town would be nice. Inter connectivity around town is non existent. This town needs water features. The parking lot for Paradise Park has a reputation for drug and unsafe activities. The updated design for the fishing pond at Cherokee missed many opportunities, very disappointing results due to lack of design techniques.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Would love to see Remington Park upgraded. The ballfields, softball, soccer & football complex. Bathrooms need to be replaced. They don't work properly.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Flipper Park could use an upgrade/makeover. It's as if the equipment was improperly placed & disregarded. It's disheartening.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

The pandemic messed up everything! I used to participate but have become disabled. Please ensure all facilities are handicapped accessible.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

It would be great for the city to host more softball tournaments. They bring a lot of people and money to our community. If the ymca has control of weather tournaments are hosted consider restructure to allow the city to make the decision.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

It would be wonderful if there were more fenced areas for off-leash play for dogs at Paradise and Cherokee Parks. It seems like no one goes to the Dog Park on South Pinetree. Improvements to Balfour Park would be nice for the kids in that area with nothing to do.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

We need a park on the south side of Thomasville for the children and families with a pool. Balfour park was turned into a Dog Park. The Black community does not have a park on this side of the city. This is a pitiful shame and this city management should be shamed. Thomasville is much more than downtown and the north and east side. Things need to change and it will.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Basketball

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Events could be publicized more for community involvement.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Disc golf is a great family activity! Y'all deserve an 18 hole course!

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

I would love to have more baseball tournaments. We have nicer facilities than most of the cities we play. Please consider making it more lucrative for tournaments organizers.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

My most enjoyable activity was playing disc golf at McIntyre Park. With only 12 holes though, there is definitely the demand & desire for building the City's first-ever full 18-hole course. There are a few beautiful properties in Thomasville (and I like Cassidy, for one). There are many players in disc golf-rich Tallahassee (and other places) and we all travel to play courses within reasonable distance, plus we also end up patronizing a business or two while in town. I know a new course would be well received in Thomasville and often played. Please consider this in your current plan. Thank you!

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Glen and his crew do an excellent job considering what they have to work with, however the golf course is way beyond needing a complete redoing. It was built on the cheap and the citizens of this area deserve better. Country Oaks could be a real money maker and a draw for industry looking at this area.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Another disc golf would be a great win for Thomasville. I know I always plan my trips up from Tallahassee so I can shop and eat downtown after I play disc golf.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

Need another, but larger disc golf course.

9 months ago

[2 Agree](#)

There are more and more people using the trails every day. Part of the reason more people don't use them is because they are incomplete, poorly located or "value engineered" to be no wider than a sidewalk. Investments like this are expensive and take a while to catch on but are well worth it in the long run. Not finishing the trail plan is short sighted.

5 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

McEntyre park has new sidewalk and a drainage system (Glenwood drive side) but children have been seeing climbing down the rocks and there's no guard to keep someone from falling in from the sidewalk. There needs to be rails there or some kind of guard.

5 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I agree with the comments that would like to add more cycling trails. It would be nice to be able to bike with the kids in more areas that are safe from cars.

5 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

It would be so nice to have a joint water management/park system. Has anyone done a cost/benefits analysis considering the benefits to Thomasville from attracting more visitors and businesses to spending less on remediation, etc., versus the costs? Have we looked at how other Cities are improving their economic prospects by offering features that are in demand today?

5 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I propose, as have others, opening up Lost Creek Forest for public access via sign-in at Country Oaks GC. We need to maintain its original intent, while allowing access for schools, research and those interested in its beauty and natural resources. It's a gem but needs city/county staff to manage as a wilderness or conservation area.

5 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Overall our parks feel dated with very little investment in recent years. Paradise Park and Macintyre Park have lots of potential. They are underutilized because they lack the basics: restrooms and parking/accessibility. Remington Park is by far the most active park but needs upgrades. Restrooms are in poor condition and not nearly enough stalls to accommodate crowds. it's common for people to wait in bathroom lines for 10-20 minutes at tournaments and YMCA program nights. Parking lot by soccer fields is full of potholes and not safe. No accessible bathrooms for tennis/pickleball. Kudos to the city for recent investment @ ritz amphitheatre and weston park! Both are nice facilities for our community to enjoy. Our parks in general need a good plan, not only for needed upgrades, but also long-term plan to maintain them and keep them safe and usable for the community.

5 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I appreciate any walking, running, biking paths that are secure.

5 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Wheelchair and walker accessible path needed at MacIntyre Park and Paradise Park.

5 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Please update or add children's' play equipment at Cherokee. Most of it is geared toward older kids and is not safe for toddlers.

5 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Paradise Park needs bathrooms! We always have to leave before we want to because of this issue.

5 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Wish McIntyre park and paradise had Publix restrooms!! Would visit much more often, if so. It's hard to take children to a park with no where to use the restroom.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

My vote for money spent on the next upgrade is Paradise park - bathrooms and improve the shaded picnic area.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I think more sidewalks are needed to connect parks.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

While the facilities at Cherokee Park are good, the walking trail around the lake has moderate to severe groundwater issues toward the northwest portion of the lake. These groundwater issues result in the trail/path being covered in water or mud most months out of the year. The solution to this problem would be the addition of an underdrain system west of the trail, that would discharge into the lake at two or three locations. This would be a relatively inexpensive project and would make the trail useable year round. The other issue involves those portions of the trail around the lake that were not replaced or upgraded with the last project completed at the lake. In many areas the trail width is still only 5', which is inadequate to support two-way foot traffic or bicycle traffic around the lake.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

It would be great if Cherokee Park was people only. To many people don't clean up after their dog. Children play at that park. There is a dog park and thar is were people should take there dog.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Would love to see a multi use trail system

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I walk daily at Cherokee Lake with my dog. There are a lot of drainage issues around the lake and the sidewalk and adjacent grass is covered with mud and water. It would be nice to have those fixed.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

More walking and bike trails

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I would like to see more walking trails.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Sidewalk along Covington leading to Cherokee. Walking in the ditches is not comfortable or safe. More signs reminding people to leash their dogs and pick up after them. I pick up after mine bur many do not. Put 3 or 4 of those posts with doggie poop bag dispensers and reminders all around. And I echo what many have said about more trails in general.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Cassidy Park needs restrooms and also Cassidy road needs serious repair and so does Grove pointe

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

More resources should be committed to Country Oaks, especially greens and sand bunkers which will result in the course drawing more players from around the region and be an attraction for retirees and out of state visitors.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Cassidy Rd park needs to be stocked! Cherokee lake should have been dug out with a bulldozer when it was dry. Someone needs to be responsible for enforcing the rules at the parks. People should be held accountable for littering and breaking the rules!

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Would love to see swimming pool at Balfour Park and would love for the city to offer FREE swimming lessons for all ages

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

New equipment needed at Macintire park! Do something so the schools right there could us the park better too

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Since there is a designated dog park, Dogs should not be allowed at Cherokee park unless the owner picks up the dog's poop of the walking trail/sidewalk.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Overall our parks are good, but they could be made much better with a little work. It would be nice to have a paved walking trail at another park in addition to Cherokee Lake. Also, the trail at Cherokee Lake really should be made wide enough for at least 3 people, if at all possible. Most people walk in pairs, which leaves no room for anyone to pass if going faster. If you do go off the trail to pass someone, you end up in the mud. More/better parking at all the parks. McIntyre Park has no parking other than the sides of the road. More seating and shaded areas would be great. Make the parks accessible to those of all abilities with more paved areas so those with walkers and wheelchairs are able to use them. Have playground equipment for children in wheelchairs or with special needs.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Why is there only a side walk on one side of McIntyre Park? Please consider adding more side walk for this park.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

More walking trails

6 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Finishing the multi-purpose trail once and for all would be amazing. Also making the atmosphere around city parks better with food trucks, shops, etc...

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Would love to see additional walking trails
Besides Cherokee park

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Need sidewalks

6 months ago [1 Agree](#)

definitely feel like they need to make progress to the dog park. i come everyday for my dog and it could be a lot better. the fencing needs to be redone and the obstacle course for the dogs. it would be nice to have a walking trail or biking trail instead of people riding bikes on the road.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

The regular tennis players who use the Remington courts, both on their own & through the YMCA, would really appreciate it a covering could be constructed, like the basketball courts have. This will enable children, teens, and adults to play all year round. Tennis is an excellent physical activity, and it's a shame that we get rained out often in winter. A covering/open-air fixed structure would also help all players in summer, when temperatures are in the 90s. Thank you!

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Would love to see parks connects by trails. Creek repair at Mac park, covered tennis at Remington, more nature trail offerings

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Glad there is a TPR Master Plan underway for improving the quality of our parks; some of which have no restroom facilities or water fountain. More sidewalks or walking trails would be welcome. Of course, litter is always a problem; maybe security cameras can help with that. I'm grateful for all of our City parks that are available to everyone in the community as well as our visitors.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

We need a safe bike trail and/or bike lanes throughout Thomasville.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

We need a nice safe bike trail and or bike lane throughout Thomasville.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I would love to see security at the parks. I know the TPD officers drive through, but it would be great to have dedicated security at the busier parks like Cherokee Lake and Remington.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Better parking and newly paved driveways would make a world of a difference

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Would recommend connecting the city parks with bike paths so they can be accessed without driving between parks. Also recommend making downtown a walking pedestrian mall by blocking off several blocks to cars. A lot of cities do this. Knoxville TN is a great example

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Replace burned out security lights around Cherokee Lake, especially near apartments and Lake Eagle Drive. Increase flowering shrubs along the walking trail.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Parks would benefit from having restrooms available. Sensory playgrounds with shade covers would also be a nice addition. Also a rubberized running trail; there is nowhere in Thomasville to run safely!

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Cherokee Park needs to have some of the sidewalks leveled, fence next to playground/road and more wood chips for the playground. The playground can be unsafe with children running across the driveway. A fence would slow them down and they would only be able to cross in one spot. Shade is also needed at the playground. The slide gets very hot. More shade stations on the walking path around the pond is needed. Many people walk and need more shady spots to take a break. More picnic areas are needed. Most days these areas are taken up with parties and other events. I sometimes would like to take my children to the park for a picnic.

Paradise park needs better parking. More places for people to sit and watch the children play, birds and rest.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

The parks are pretty boring and basic

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

The parks are good but nothing to make you want keep coming back except for Cherokee part most parks don't have anything for small kids.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

It would be great to have more benches around all of the playground areas.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Cherokee Park parking and drives need repair badly!!! Speed bumps and polite police presence would be nice. Cassidy road needs grill repair and more active cleanup of trash

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

They need to be kept a little more cleaner than they are and I think Cherokee lake should get vending machines for the walkers and runners and those who also visit the park for leisure time

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I'd like to see more programming and events in Paradise Park. Every great downtown has a water feature. The creek behind the Biscuit Company and the one in MacIntyre Park are great opportunities to create vibrant connections to water in Thomasville. The trail system needs to connect our parks.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

In general, most of the parks along with other Thomasville Infrastructure appear to be lagging in needed updates due to either funding, management and/or vision. Safety is an utmost concern for all public space. Lighting, security, convenient parking, ADA Access and restrooms should be consistently provided. At the end of this process, there will be nice some graphics but shouldn't we know just how much money will be allocated for the Parks so we can all think and plan accordingly. Will an overall budget be presented at the end of this process with an outline for how and when it will be paid? If not, my concern is that this Study will just be placed on the shelves like so many others. Hopefully any improvements decided on will not "have" to be designed and constructed by City forces. If the conditions of the streets City-wide are an example of our Public Works competence, you wouldn't want them in charge of park improvements.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

McIntyre park needs parking. Also the city could really use a walking path and a bike path. Cherokee Park is great but the city could use an additional walking area. Bicycle friendly options are needed.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Fix the Gazebo at Paradise , need less pine trees. Need security watch at all parks.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Weston Park needs an upgrade to the track, too much grass, trip hazard; also lighting and SAFER bleachers, those near the track have sharp metal, rusty ends and there are not enough of them. There is a hill and could be designed similar to the amphitheater front seating.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I love our wonderful and beautiful parks. Wouldn't it be great if they were connected as was proposed in the past? They all need more handicap accessibility.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I love our wonderful parks. It would be really good if they could be connected as was planned in the past. More walking and bicycling parks are needed.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

The roads in Cherokee park have huge pot holes, especially the road to the right. Can't believe they have not been repaired.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Thomasville parks and rec are doing a great job. Wish all the parks had bathrooms.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

More walking and running trails would be fabulous!

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I definitely would like another walking trail on the west side of town.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Agreed with others it would be nice to have more wooded hiking/ biking paths

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

We would like to see more bicycling trails! A rail to trail would be awesome. Also, more restrooms at the other parks like Cherokee Lakes Facilities.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

More dog parks or dog friendly parks are needed.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Cherokee is immaculate. McIntyre disc golf needs some gentle love, but is still a beautiful course and park.

I would love to see a course put in at Cassidy Park

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Not every event at the Remington fields are the YMCA. We attend softball tournaments, and the facilities are embarrassing. I think that we would have had local input that is as valuable as a consultant.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

If we could have a 'chain of parks' and bike trails. Cherokee Lake bath room refreshed needed.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Cherokee Lake playground needs some major TLC. Some of it has no fall zone and it should be 9 inches of mulch.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

i play softball tournaments at remington park and the fields are in tragic condition. they badly need to be redone. the dirt is so bad that the pitchers mound had to be refilled after every single game because of the depth of the grand canyon inside the pitchers circle. the dirt is so bad that it is either sopping mud or straight dust. the outfield grass has tons of holes, which is very dangerous for outfielders. the dugouts are also very small. the bathrooms are DISGUSTING. (D complex)

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Thomasville needs trails where you can run, walk, or bike. It would be nice if we had an arrangement like Tom Brown park in Tallahassee and how it connects to other parks.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Please upgrade the infields at Remington Park. It is an embarrassment to our city. We have travelled to numerous complexes in the southeast and the Remington infields are like sandpits rather than infields. The batting cages are also unsafe, but an important part of skill development for our young athletes.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Pickleball, kickball,softball,volleyball

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Remington park needs to update the facilities. Go take a look at the new parks and recreation department in Adel/Cook County. Remington parks facilities are embarrassing.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Workouts, swimming and bingo at ymca. I would like to see more activities for youth, seniors and other groups. I do not feel safe at park by the jail. I have had mental patient come up to me on bridge. I feel that I should carry a gun just to walk there. That day my husband was with me and I will not go back. My in-laws left Thomasville and moved to Valdosta because they had more to offer. Classes to learn, senior center there is in a good area with many activities eg bridge, dancing and more.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

A wide walking and bike path would make this town better for residents, potential residents and tourists.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Updates would be great but definitely do not want to see a lot of trees ripped out. The trees are important and make them feel like parks, especially the large older trees.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

We need a water park and splash pad. There is no place to cool off in Thomas County or Thomasville unless you own your own pool or you are a member of the YMCA. There needs to be restrooms at all the parks. I agree there needs to be somewhere safe for people to ride bikes but the walking trail at Cherokee Park is not that place. Foot traffic and bikes don't mix well. There should be a separate place designated for bikes.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

City needs to invest in nets to cover the open area surrounding the concession buildings for B & C fields, restrooms need extreme upgrades and air circulation and ball fields need better drainage. It REALLY sucks to go watch you child play baseball and can't walk on the grass because you will sink 2 foot.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Would love to see restrooms at McIntyre park and also Paradise. They are great for birthday parties but have no restroom options especially for small children.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

We love the Y programs!

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Remington park is a nice park, the fields up keep is terrible. The YMCA/City should allow more tournaments, the money it brings into town everybody could benefit.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

The Baseball fields are in poor condition compared to facilities in our surrounding areas. The pitching mounds need to be corrected so young men don't get hurt by trying to pitch. Some communities even have Miracle fields so that special needs students can compete. Having excellent, well maintained facilities is a plus for tournaments to come to our area which also help with revenue earned while out of town folks are here.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Have lived in Thomasville for 43 years and frequented many of the parks, including but not limited to MacIntyre, Remington, Paradise, Cherokee, and Cassidy. There have been improvements at several parks but many times they have fallen short or otherwise I'll planned.. Cherokee lake for example shows many signs that drainage into the lake during rain events was not looked at thoroughly. The roadway was not widened or paved, playground equipment is dated. The walking trail should be widened around the entire lake based on the amount of traffic it sees. Cassidy Road needs restroom facility. Paradise park still feels very unsafe. Programs offered at the YMCA are so expensive most people can't afford to participate. Design Charentes were held for both Paradise Park and MacIntyre Park yet nothing has been done to either one. Also all parks should have animal proof trash cans installed to keep squirrels, ravens, raccoons and other animals from pulling trash out of the receptacles and littering the parks.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

A miracle field would be awesome!! Valdosta has one but it is just not close enough for us to participate in activities. All inclusive playgrounds.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Adaptive equipment for special needs.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

There should be a dog park on the east side of town. More dog owners frequent Cherokee park due to its central location but there's not a fenced in area for dogs to enjoy. The current dog park is also run down and could use upgraded equipment and grass. Upgraded bathrooms at all parks similar to the ones at the Amphitheater would be nice too.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Would love to have a bicycle trail that is safe to ride.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

It would be nice to be able to play golf at Country Oaks without having to drive to Cairo or Quitman to play a decent maintained course.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

The YMCA would not let us join because we are not married and have a child. They need to get with the times and change this policy.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I would like to see more attention put into park that's been under serve.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

You cannot use play equipment at Cherokee in summer. It needs trees or a cover.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Walking trails at parks

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Add a walking trail or clearly defined walking path around Balfour Park and the Dog Park. Consider doing the same at Cassidy Pond and include bathrooms.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

McIntyre Park is such a wonderful place but needs parking. And I agree, Thomasville needs more options for disabled people.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Need exercise trail with same quality as Moultrie has along south Main Street. Thomasville's widened sidewalk network right next to the roads is not used as much as trails in other cities because it's too close to the road traffic for people of all ages to be comfortable exercising. Citizens of all ages are healthier from walking, running, and Biking the Moultrie trail. Many use it daily because it's not right next to the road (think mothers pushing a stroller with another child on a bicycle). The parts of the Moultrie trail that get used most are sections in the safer low crime neighborhoods.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

We need somewhere safe for children to ride bikes

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Cassidy Road Park needs to have a walking path all the way around the pond. And a safe path to get there from Grove Pointe Subdivision.

9 months ago

We need safe biking trails for children downtown.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

More walking running and bike trails around the city.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Flipper Park Need to be upgraded bridge across the creek also name the creek after Henry o flipper bathrooms lighting walking trails that connects to Western park also needs a walk/ bike trail Northside park and road is rough

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

More bike and walking trails to connect all the parks to one another bathrooms at all of the parks proper lights improve roads and parking issues around the parks more equipment in all of the park renovation is needed at Flipper park and make it historical Statues plaques ECT.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Walking/biking trails around the community are highly needed. We walk or ride bikes on the streets with way too many people do not understand right of way. How many people have to be injured before this becomes a priority?

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I think the parks available in Thomasville are great spaces that could be tweaked some to make them outstanding. I agree with several comments that the parks could be made more accessible for everyone with better parking and accommodations for those with disabilities. I think it's important to make the parks as multigenerational as possible as well so people of all ages could enjoy them, more community spaces, more seating for grandparents taking grandchildren to play. Activities for those who love nature, include geocaching spots, trails. Also areas for those who love fitness. I also think maybe we have these around town already but not everyone is aware so I think better promotion to the town of areas available to people would be great.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Overall I think our parks are ok. There are some more popular than others due to activities/events that are held in them.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Definitely support more biking/walking trails.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Would love more paths walking paths or bike paths!

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

It would be nice to have the Remington tennis and pickle ball courts covered like the basketball court and skate park. It would not only help with the preservation of the courts, but kids people an opportunity to still be active in their sport when it's raining.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I love the Y. Wish the participation number was higher.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

The road leading to Northside park on Woodland Drive needs to be paved. More lighting needs to be installed. Basketball courts, softball and baseball fields, and tennis courts need to be repaired and restored. Park also needs new playground equipment and outdoor workout equipment. A bike and/or walk trail would be nice. Last but certainly not least the sign needs to be replaced with a new sign like all other parks have. Taxpayers pay for these improvements to be done.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

It would be nice to have Northside park redone. It's the only park in the city that has not had any improvements including the sign.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Grew up loving Paradise Park and continue to love having a little bit of woodsy nature so close to town. Can't wait to see the bandshell fixed up!

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Not interested in any YMCA programs

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Went to the Weston Park and oak hill golf course.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I would like to see 18 baskets/holes if disc golf.

9 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I have visited the wonderful community of Thomasville a dozen times a year for the last five, usually to play disc golf and sometimes with my family to enjoy a festival or play in soccer tournaments. We live in Tallahassee and enjoy getting out of town occasionally. I have heard discussion of a new disc golf course in Thomasville and highly recommend it for your community. It would be another reason to visit, enjoy your town, and spend my money at the fabulous restaurants downtown. Do it!

9 months ago

👍 1 Agree

membership at the YMCA; use facilities and classes

10 months ago

👍 1 Agree

Youth Track

10 months ago 👍 1 Agree

Trail between parks!!!! Walking access to Cherokee WITH pedestrian access- currently have to risk your life to cross Remington on foot 🙄

one month ago

McIntyre Park needs a sidewalk all the way around. The amphitheater downtown is wonderful.

2 months ago

Some parks are dated, others are wonderful. I'd really like to see Balfour Park cleaned and updated, because selfishly it is the closest to our home.

3 months ago

I think different & more play tools for the kids , bring in something new more updated, better well kept bathrooms

3 months ago

A sidewalk on Mitchell Street side of MacIntyre Park would be a nice improvement.

3 months ago

We visited Cherokee Park in a Sunday about 3:30 and the lady's bathroom was out of toilet paper and messy

4 months ago

Park was awesome. Went to play disc golf, people park in the fairways though so it makes it hard to play in some areas

4 months ago

An alternate walking area that is safe, well lit and with clean RR facilities other than Cherokee. It te day to get a little crowded.

Also more group pavilions in each park might spark more visitation and use, especially if n the warm months. Do we market our parks for family /class reunion use?

4 months ago

Thomasville definitely needs a walking/bicycle path; maybe connect Cherokee, Paradise Park and Amphitheater areas

4 months ago

Balfour park needs to be upgraded and a pool installed. Stop the trail and put that money to good use for our children and families. We need this outreach to help make Thomasville a city for all citizens. Balfour Park needs new creative playground equipment, green space seating areas and a kiddie pool. If the city care about our community, it should listen to us.

5 months ago

All the park need an upgrade

5 months ago

We love the parks in Thomasville! One thing I would suggest is to add public restrooms at all parks that do not have them, one's like the Amphitheater. We have many students that visit Paradise Park that have to use the Chamber to use the restroom. We always welcome them, but sometimes we have members using the facility so it is difficult for those children to use the restroom.

5 months ago

Please post notice and charge fines for pet owners who curb their dogs irresponsibly, and do not clean up after their pets 🐕 and/or dedicate special parks or areas for walking pets .

5 months ago

We would like to see Cassidy road Park with bathrooms

5 months ago

Balfour Park and Varnedoe was once filled with the young and old. The area was like an outdoor sports complex for neighborhood. The park featured a tennis court and could have supported more than one court. There was a pool and a softball field where leagues played regularly, picnic tables and a play area for younger children. Varnedoe Stadium was a place where people went to watch games. The entire neighborhood used these facilities in some capacity. My guess is people stopped going because these areas were not maintained and upgraded as well the other parks. Then the addition of the dog park made this area unsuitable for children due to the possibility of dog attacks and fleas. Even normally well-behaved dogs can act out around strangers. A lighted walk park around these areas would be wonderful.

5 months ago

It would be great to have lights at Northside Park

5 months ago

Walking trails, please!

5 months ago

Would love to see restrooms and parking at McIntyre park. I would love to see the dog park turned into a family park.

5 months ago

It would be nice to have a pool and playground equipment at the Balfour Park. A tennis court would also be a nice feature.

5 months ago

Paradise Park needs bathrooms! we keep having to leave before we're ready due to this issue

5 months ago

Paradise Park needs bathrooms. We always have to leave before we want to because of this issue

5 months ago

Best mile walk with bird watching

6 months ago

cherokee and mcintyre are alot better than paradise which is used for out of town functions, rose garden etc. i live 2 blocks from that park and walking down the sidewalk i see dead trees to tall pine trees that are unsafe while the wind blows. my most wanted function is to cut these dead dogwood trees down that are around our town. i live on s broad, they are not dormant they are dead, out of towners who know anything about flowering trees may wonder why they are still there, I do. it is an eyesore to any garden activists, i know the parks department is small maybe volunteers could chain saw them down after they are marked by the head of the department. i had a discussion with one employee of that department and she insisted they were dormant, the ones where i live are dead from the moss that has covered them. they are an eyesore.

6 months ago

Probably need to consider closing some parks so the city can concentrate or spend money on the most used parks.

6 months ago

I really like walking at Cherokee park. Keeping it in good shape is my wish.

6 months ago

The walking trail at Cherokee Lake is wonderful. We use it all the time. The soccer park is well used and very nice for walking, as well.

6 months ago

We are so thankful for the amazing parks and awesome YMCA. More bark at the Cherokee Lake playground would be nice. Maybe a little more information about the birds and animals you might see at the parks, especially Cherokee Lake, would be cool.

6 months ago

As the mature trees fall due to age or storms, new trees need to be planted in their place to keep the parks beautiful.

6 months ago

Team Lean 2022

6 months ago

It would be nice for my kids to come to a park that more updated

6 months ago

Hi, would love to see a pool built in the Balfour Park.

6 months ago

A pool at Balfour Park would be awesome!!!

6 months ago

I don't recall them having anything lately. It would be nice if they did, I miss having our Park and Recreation Dept in Thomasville they were very active in the community for our children and adults as well.

6 months ago

Yes

6 months ago

Yes

6 months ago

Ymca swim

6 months ago

Cherokee Park playground is too close to the driveway/parking so relocating it or putting something up to make it safer for little ones would be great. One of the bolts of the swings at Remington Park was loose when we went a couple of weeks ago and it was sliding back and forth, moving across the pole, and making an awful sound. I had to change the swing my daughter was on because I didn't feel it was safe. And the benches at Paradise Park beside the playground are warped from the heat and need to be replaced. Just small things that could easily be fixed. Otherwise, we really enjoy and appreciate the parks in Thomasville!

7 months ago

Have amateur musicians, street performers, face paintings and animal zookeeper exhibits and demonstrations. Could do this on Saturday and Sunday afternoon. Friday afternoon concerts in the summer.

7 months ago

A splash pad and bike trails would be a great addition!

7 months ago

Would love the parks with ponds or lakes to have paddle boats to ride on

7 months ago

Ymca

7 months ago

Yes go to the Down town one

7 months ago

Would love to see public ponds stocked

7 months ago

Have musical guest singing in the parks. Have educational and entertaining exhibits and demonstrations. On Weekends say for instances face painting And Animal demonstrations. Saturday's fun in the parks.

7 months ago

None

7 months ago

The times do not match our available times to visit

7 months ago

Nugget Biscuit Nugget in a Biscuit

7 months ago

Badly need bathroom facilities at McIntyre park

7 months ago

Restrooms at the amphitheater are so nice and would be welcome at other parks as well. Also maps that depict sidewalks or ways to connect parks would be nice for runners, walkers or bikers

7 months ago

Paradise Park has broken swings and McIntyre Park has a great zip line but it is broken more than not. I love to take my grandchildren there. I like to walk at Cherokee Park but do not feel safe there. The back side of it is just creepy.

7 months ago

I would like to see Paradise Park be updated and programmed more. It seems to me that Parks and Rec focuses primarily on youth programming. Thi Chi in paradise park would be fabulous. Also, why couldn't the Dawson ST YMCA do some classes in the park- it is so close! Being outside is good for your health!

7 months ago

Would love to have bocce courts and a senior softball league

7 months ago

I was walking through out the Paradise park area and a guy starting following me and making me feel nervous so I called someone and headed straight towards the sidewalk. I like to be out in nature but I did not feel safe so I did not walk throughout the park. I kept to the outside perimeter.

7 months ago

Football

7 months ago

Need benches at Parnell park

7 months ago

No comment

7 months ago

I already filled out this questionnaire and just want to read the comments. Why do you make it so hard?

7 months ago

Looking forward to what is being presented on the 18th!

7 months ago

Exercise related activities

7 months ago

We need better parks, picnic areas, trails for walking and cycling and a better dog park as well.

7 months ago

I would like to see the roadways at Cherokee Lake improved. We also need to add water fountains along the 1 mile walk. I want to see adult play equipment added, such as swings.

There needs to be a bathroom at Paradise Park and it was suggested to add a poets' corner at the gazebo, which was in need of repair the last time I was there awhile back. Everything about the amphitheater is perfect. There needs to be a bathroom at McIntyre Park.

7 months ago

Yoga

7 months ago

Pickleball and team lean

7 months ago

Remaining optimistic that the Remington Ave project will get off the ground soon!

7 months ago

X

7 months ago

.

7 months ago

Weston Park needs upgrade to track area including SAFER bleachers and lighting. Bleachers at the track are old with rusty metal ends.

All parks need equipment for children or adults with disabilities.

7 months ago

We need more defined walking areas that can be accessed throughout the town.

7 months ago

Can't afford to participate in any YMCA programs. It would be nice to walk around a park, while the children play.

7 months ago

I go to the Y several times each week and to the other parks regularly. I am interested in finding out where Parnell Park is so I can see it. All of our parks are wonderful and an asset to Thomasville and Thomas County.

7 months ago

Our family has benefitted from countless YMCA programs over the years. Youth sports (baseball, t-ball, basketball, football and flag-football) and summer camps have been a favorite of ours for nearly two decades. While all the kids have outgrown these activities, we still are big believers and hope to see continued and increased investment in out youth through YMCA programs.

7 months ago

From where we live on Magnolia the multiuse trail around town, a lot of time we find Cars parked on the trail so you have to go in the road to get around them. A lot of times the trails are completely blocked. The Parks are great around town, but parking at Remington park is crazy with the pot holes in the parking lot and very small spaces

7 months ago

Country Oaks is a nice, well designed golf course that is well managed and could be a draw to Thomasville for both out of town visitors and players from surrounding towns. HOWEVER, the city has not provide a sufficient budget to improve the greens and sand traps. some of the greens are 15 years old and need to be replaced. The maintenance department does an amazing job with the limited budget. With some additional resources Country Oaks can be a real draw for Thomasville.

7 months ago

Please clean up after your pets or leave them at home.

7 months ago

The YMCA requires a membership and the cost is too high for the benefit.

7 months ago

7 months ago

Part of equipment at MacIntyre Park was broken. Bathrooms at MacIntyre Park.

7 months ago

Pools, gym

7 months ago

Special Olympics Events

7 months ago

Ball

7 months ago

I would love to see a nice dog park in Thomasville. I feel that one put into an area that is more central would be great! Similar to the dog park in Bradfordville.

7 months ago

We love the parks, would be neat to see a walking path to connect rose garden to the butterfly garden. Also the drive path to connect parking from the Cherokee park entrance to the first right when turning in had significant erosion in need or repair.

7 months ago

The community trail needs to be prioritized. The property at Mitchell and Clay should be a trailhead parking area for MacIntyre Park.

7 months ago

We need a trail to accommodate bikes/skaters.

7 months ago

Na

7 months ago

Country oaks have so much potential being the only public golf course in town. The golf course seems almost neglected. I prefer to drive 40 minutes either direction to Quitman or Cairo.

7 months ago

Would really love the disc golf.park to be a full 18 holes and if not there build a full18 holes elsewhere

7 months ago

I really enjoy the parks and appreciate the effort put in to keep them them clean maintained.

7 months ago

I would like to see a paved bike trail.

8 months ago

Many events & programs!

8 months ago

Yes!

8 months ago

A splash pad would be nice as well as more walking trails and better care at the golf course

8 months ago

Would love to see improved restrooms at Balfour/dog park & restrooms added to paradise park

8 months ago

My spouse and I have served as volunteer coaches for multiple sports. We would love to give input regarding the Y

8 months ago

Would love sidewalks on Remington that connect to downtown

8 months ago

.

8 months ago

A fairly simple but effective improvement to Country Oaks would be to plow, re-level and replant the drying range and #2 tee area. More work on the greens would be great as well.

8 months ago

Would love a bike trail and a walking path wide enough for people to pass without having to step off the walkway.

8 months ago

Would appreciate an upgrade to some of the parks to be more inclusive and to also have a place to change my son. Currently at 4 feet tall we go to the van.

8 months ago

The parks here are absolutely gorgeous and very clean! Thank you!

8 months ago

Parade

8 months ago

Walk and run

8 months ago

None

9 months ago

No.

9 months ago

Team Lean and Kickball

9 months ago

Have not been to ang

9 months ago

No reason.

9 months ago

No response

9 months ago

N/a

9 months ago

Soccer

9 months ago

We need a coffee shop at Cherokee lake

9 months ago

No comment

9 months ago

SilverSneakers

9 months ago

No

9 months ago

Ok

9 months ago

Restroom facilities needed at MacIntyre and at Paradise. Restrooms/concession area at Remington needs upgrade: they are Super hot in summer months and gross year round.

9 months ago

N/a

9 months ago

No

9 months ago

Please focus on infrastructure improvements, cleaning, playground maintenance and upgrades, and parking

9 months ago

Soccer

9 months ago

None

9 months ago

The playground at Cherokee lake needs to be updated or just pressure washed. But I loveee that park!!

9 months ago

I would love McIntyre Park to more playground equipment for younger children.

9 months ago

Swimming lessons

9 months ago

9 months ago

N/a

9 months ago

Restrooms would be nice

9 months ago

We

9 months ago

No comment

9 months ago

No

9 months ago

No comment

9 months ago

No comment

9 months ago

Best soccer fields around

9 months ago

Another disc golf course would be a great addition.

9 months ago

I am member of YMCA

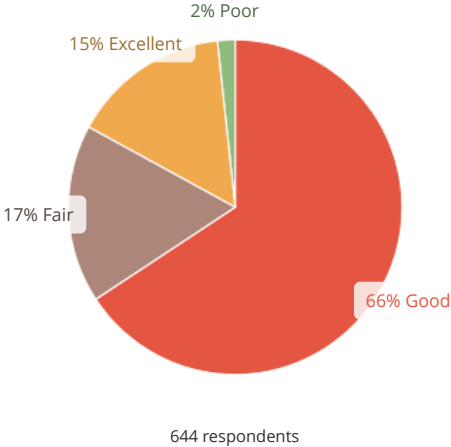
9 months ago

Soccer for my 4 year old

9 months ago

No data to display...

City of Thomasville, GA - Report Creation
How would you rate the quality of programs?



Please check ALL organizations you (or those who live with you) use for parks & rec activities.

65%	City of Thomasville Parks	388 ✓
47%	YMCA	281 ✓
33%	Churches	195 ✓
27%	Georgia State Parks/DNR	161 ✓
26%	Thomasville City Schools	153 ✓
25%	Thomas County Schools	152 ✓
18%	Country clubs/golf courses	110 ✓
17%	Neighboring cities	99 ✓
15%	Birdsong Nature Center	91 ✓
10%	Private youth sports leagues	60 ✓
9%	Red Hills Disc Golf	56 ✓
9%	None (Do not use any organizations)	51 ✓
7%	Private clubs (tennis, health/fitness)	44 ✓
7%	Private schools	43 ✓
6%	Adult leagues/associations	33 ✓
5%	Homeowners associations (HOA)	32 ✓
5%	Lost Creek Forest	28 ✓
4%	Other	22 ✓

598 Respondents

Which amenities would you like to see UPGRADED or ADDED at EXISTING Thomasville parks?

63%	Restrooms	386 ✓
50%	Trails	308 ✓
44%	Drinking fountains/bottle fillers	274 ✓
43%	Security cameras/lighting	266 ✓
43%	Benches/seating	264 ✓
36%	Sidewalks	220 ✓
36%	Trail lighting	220 ✓
34%	Shade structures	209 ✓
33%	Wi-Fi hotspots	203 ✓
32%	Parking	198 ✓
32%	Playground equipment	195 ✓
29%	Picnic shelters	181 ✓
26%	Handicap accessibility	160 ✓
24%	Trees and landscaping	151 ✓
23%	Public art	142 ✓
22%	Community gardens/healthy food access	137 ✓
19%	Fitness equipment (outdoor)	115 ✓
18%	Bike racks	108 ✓
16%	Country Oaks Golf Course upgrades	96 ✓
13%	Disc golf	79 ✓
13%	Basketball courts	78 ✓

13%	Pickleball courts (outdoor)	78 ✓
13%	Signage	78 ✓
11%	Baseball/softball diamonds	70 ✓
11%	Multipurpose fields (soccer, lacrosse, football, etc.)	69 ✓
9%	Sports field lighting	57 ✓
7%	Electric car charging stations	43 ✓
6%	Bike repair stations	40 ✓
6%	Tennis courts	35 ✓
4%	Drone launch area	26 ✓
4%	Other	24 ✓

617 Respondents

Please check ALL reasons that keep you (or those who live with you) from using parks, recreation facilities, trails, programs, and events of Thomasville Parks and Recreation more often.

37%	Lack of restrooms	175 ✓
31%	Do not know what is offered	148 ✓
30%	Security or safety concerns	145 ✓
22%	Availability of parking	103 ✓
18%	Poor condition of facilities	88 ✓
17%	Do not have time	82 ✓
11%	Not comfortable/not meeting needs	52 ✓
10%	Fees are too high	49 ✓
9%	Facility or program not offered	43 ✓
8%	Too far from our home	40 ✓
7%	Other	33 ✓
6%	Program times not convenient	31 ✓
4%	Personal disability	21 ✓
4%	Use other agencies' facilities	17 ✓
3%	Poor customer service by staff	14 ✓
2%	Class full	11 ✓
2%	No transportation	9 ✓

479 Respondents

Which FACILITIES would you or those who live with you most like to see developed/expanded? (Select up to FOUR options).

56%	Walking and hiking trails	316 ✓
26%	Paved bike trails	146 ✓
23%	Spraygrounds/splash pads	131 ✓
21%	Natural areas/nature parks	119 ✓
17%	Playgrounds	95 ✓
14%	Swimming pools/aquatic centers (outdoor)	81 ✓
13%	Picnic shelters/picnic areas	74 ✓
13%	Mountain bike trails	72 ✓
13%	Small neighborhood parks	72 ✓
11%	Community gardens	64 ✓
11%	Swimming pools (indoor)	61 ✓
10%	Senior center	55 ✓
9%	Dog parks (off-leash)	49 ✓
8%	Boat launch (canoe/kayak)	46 ✓
8%	Pickleball courts	46 ✓
8%	Disc golf courses	44 ✓
7%	Large community parks	42 ✓
7%	Permanent outdoor games (ping-pong, cornhole)	39 ✓
7%	Baseball and softball diamonds	37 ✓
7%	Community/recreation centers	37 ✓
7%	Fitness equipment/obstacle course (outdoor)	37 ✓

6%	Skateboarding area	35 ✓
6%	Volleyball courts	34 ✓
6%	Stage or amphitheater (outdoor)	33 ✓
5%	Tennis courts	27 ✓
4%	Pump track/BMX course	25 ✓
4%	Artificial turf fields	21 ✓
4%	Multipurpose fields (soccer, lacrosse, etc.)	21 ✓
3%	Other	17 ✓
3%	Basketball courts (outdoor)	15 ✓
2%	Gymnasium space/game courts (indoor)	13 ✓

566 Respondents

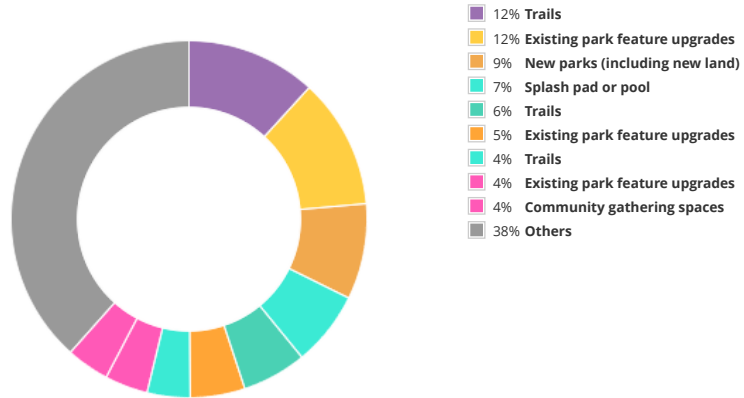
Which PROGRAMS would you or those who live with you most like to see developed/expanded? (Select up to FOUR options).

42%	Farmer market	220 ✓
28%	Movies (outdoor)	149 ✓
28%	Concerts/art performances	147 ✓
25%	Nature programs	131 ✓
22%	Fitness and wellness programs (adult)	114 ✓
21%	Programs for persons ages 50+	109 ✓
14%	Special events	75 ✓
14%	Teen programs	75 ✓
14%	Before and after school programs	72 ✓
13%	Summer camp programs (youth)	70 ✓
11%	Sports programs (adult)	56 ✓
10%	Special needs/therapeutic recreation	54 ✓
10%	Swim lessons	54 ✓
10%	Water fitness programs	52 ✓
9%	Sports programs (youth)	47 ✓
8%	Bicycle/pedestrian safety programs	45 ✓
8%	Art, dance, performing arts (adult)	44 ✓
8%	Preschool programs	44 ✓
8%	Pet exercise programs	41 ✓
7%	Art, dance, performing arts (youth)	35 ✓
6%	Fitness and wellness programs (youth)	32 ✓

3%	Martial arts programs	18 ✓
2%	Other	11 ✓

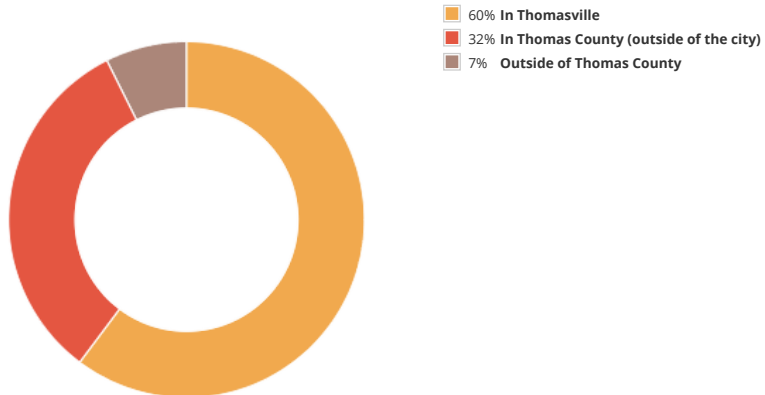
530 Respondents

How would you spend \$100 on Parks and Recreation improvements in the City of Thomasville?



485 respondents

Where do you live?



596 respondents

No data to display...

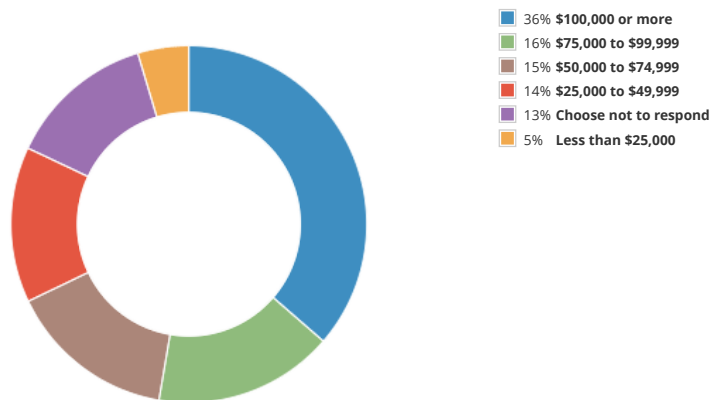
City of Thomasville, GA - Report Creation

Counting yourself, how many people in your household are of the following ages?

	0	1	2	3	4	5+
Under 5	64% 0	24% 1	8% 2	2% 3	2% 4	1% 5+
5 - 9	59% 0	31% 1	8% 2	1% 3	- 4	- 5+
10 - 14	59% 0	27% 1	13% 2	1% 3	- 4	1% 5+
15 - 19	60% 0	29% 1	10% 2	2% 3	- 4	- 5+
20 - 24	76% 0	16% 1	6% 2	2% 3	- 4	- 5+
25 - 34	52% 0	22% 1	24% 2	1% 3	- 4	- 5+
35 - 44	40% 0	24% 1	35% 2	- 3	- 4	- 5+
45 - 54	46% 0	31% 1	23% 2	- 3	- 4	- 5+
55 - 64	49% 0	35% 1	16% 2	- 3	- 4	- 5+
65 - 74	58% 0	25% 1	17% 2	- 3	- 4	- 5+
75+	80% 0	13% 1	6% 2	- 3	- 4	1% 5+

365 respondents

What is your annual household income?



539 respondents

8/24/22, 8:58 AM

City of Thomasville, GA - Report Creation

If interested in receiving future updates and notifications, please provide your contact information.

No data to display...

What recommendations would you like the City of Thomasville to consider?

18 hole disc golf course could bring events and tourists
9 months ago [13 Agree](#)

18 Disc Golf course. Could be a premiere spot In South Georgia/north Florida.
9 months ago [11 Agree](#)

Love our parks. Would really like a splash pad for kids and also we play a lot of disc golf and would support improvements there
9 months ago [10 Agree](#)

I would really love to see the city add a professional-grade disc golf course.
9 months ago [8 Agree](#)

Hire more Parks and Rec staff to help keep the parks in tip top shape
10 months ago [7 Agree](#)

Disc golf courses brings new people to Thomasville
9 months ago [6 Agree](#)

New disc golf courses
9 months ago [6 Agree](#)

Would love to see bike trails that are not sidewalks, immediately adjacent to streets, but are further from the street and seem like a pleasant route to ride (perhaps where ditches are on Pinetree, old Monticello, Remington as planned, etc). Some segments of the current project just don't seem like recreational bike trails that you might send a visitor on.
9 months ago [5 Agree](#)

Would love to see more sidewalks throughout town. More walking/hiking/nature trails. Biking trails away from traffic, like rail-trails
9 months ago [5 Agree](#)

Bike trails, upgrade existing parks, nature trails
9 months ago [5 Agree](#)

Bathroom paradise park
9 months ago [5 Agree](#)

A new disc golf course. Good opportunity to increase tourism.
9 months ago [5 Agree](#)

Building one brand, well-designed new full sized 18-hole disc golf course. The sport has catapulted tremendously, has been growing exponentially for the last 15 years, and exploded in popularity during Covid because it is a safe outside sport enjoyed by people of all ages. Plus, it is a healthy alternative due to the walking involved.
9 months ago [5 Agree](#)

I have traveled from Tallahassee with friends to play disc golf and enjoy lunch. Disc golf is an exploding sport both locally and on a national scale. People travel from across the area to Tallahassee to play at Tom Brown Park and could easily make a trip to Thomasville.
9 months ago [5 Agree](#)

Disc golf course at cassidy pond, adult soccer league.

9 months ago

[5 Agree](#)

I would like to see improved facilities and features at existing parks, a focus on accessible trails (walking, wheeling, biking), and creation of smaller neighborhood parks with basic equipment (benches, playgrounds, etc.). A paved trail connecting multiple parks would also be beneficial. Tallahassee's Cascades Park and related trails is a great example of connecting an urban park to sub-urban trails farther afield. These types of projects would benefit the broader community, including underserved areas.

9 months ago

[4 Agree](#)

Splash pad

Creative bike path for little kids at Paradise and McIntyre (think like a kid).

Lower swings at parks for 3-5 year olds

Slides and more equipment for 3-6 year olds at McIntyre Park.

9 months ago

[4 Agree](#)

Please remember the original stipulations for Paradise Park set in the 1880s - it's supposed to be a nature park, not a baseball diamond or a wild animal exhibit - just beautiful trees and nature in the middle of a growing town.

9 months ago

[4 Agree](#)

Waste Receptacles at the parks that are designed to keep animals out. The current receptacles just add to the litter issue in Thomasville. Additional Picnic facilities and possible playground equipment for Cassidy Road Park. Actually following thru on the design Charrettes that have already taken place for Macintyre Park and Paradise Park. Finishing the Multipurpose trail

9 months ago

[4 Agree](#)

First and foremost, continue fixing and repaving the terrible roads around town as feasible! Also would be nice to have more walking trails/paths near the parks and around town in general, where there are not currently sidewalks. Also more security cameras at parks, downtown, etc. would be nice to have.

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

Walking/bike path the entire length of Old Monticello Road out to Hwy 19, along the length of Remington Road and all the way around Pinetree Blvd

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

Please focus on infrastructure improvements, playground enhancements and cleaning, parking, and new trails

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

Please use the funds and tax money to make improvements to all the parks so children and adults can have recreation and park activities on all sides of town. It helps for productivity in both youth and adults. We want to keep Thomasville as beautiful as possible.

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

Add a small parking lot inside McIntyre park to give better access to playground equipment for handicapped and elderly.

9 months ago

[3 Agree](#)

A new disc golf course

9 months ago [3 Agree](#)

An 18 hole disc golf course!

9 months ago [3 Agree](#)

Trails and walking in nature opportunities.

7 months ago [2 Agree](#)

More emphasis on native plants and native plant gardens.
More bat houses in more parks.

7 months ago [2 Agree](#)

Bike trails

8 months ago [2 Agree](#)

More trails and connected parks

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

I Would like the city to consider all populations I'm thinking of improvements.

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

Park at Old Monticello Road entrance at 19 needs to be refreshed. Weeds and dead bushes around marker, etc

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

Nature Trails

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

Nature Trails!

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

Hire outside professional consultants for future projects.

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

Update Country Oaks Golf Course

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

Update bathrooms at the Parks!

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

Please make improvements to Northside Park. It is a park close to historic district and also a popular walking area for pedestrians. A walk trail, renewed sports fields and courts would be proper. Also the sign change would make the Park an equal to all other parks in the city.

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

Building a USA BMX certified track. It's a great sport for all ages that can bring lots of \$\$\$ into the community if done right.

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

Disc golf course with 18 holes. Brings people from all over.

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

18hole disc golf fourse

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

18 hole disc golf course

9 months ago [2 Agree](#)

Consider closing some parks so you can make the others better. No need for out door pools, the Y has the pools covered....waste of money and personnel.

6 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Create more walkable communities and parks.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Promote native plants and trails and education about natural South Georgia habitats right here in Thomasville parks.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Need a usable park for all ages on the South side of town between S. Pinetree and Bartow

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

There is a ton of foot traffic and bike traffic on Remington Ave. We really need sidewalks there. Also, please connect existing sidewalks. Hiking trails and cycling trails would be great too.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

PLEASE connect all the existing sidewalks and add more!

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Elevated observation deck for sunset viewing.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

I would like to see Clay Street YMCA upgraded and Butler-Mason have a removable cover (such as at McClay School in Tallahassee) so it could be used year round. It seems a waste to let it sit idle all winter while Milton Y is sometimes crowded.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

More biking trails and running/walking trails.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Hiking / walking trails

7 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Walking trails on the westside of town

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Hiking trails would be nice. Trails with nature not roads and parking lots. A greenway like the one in Tallahassee would be a great start.

7 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Long bike and walking trails. Would be nice to have trails to Boston, Moultrie, Cairo, along the lines of the St. Marks trail in Tallahassee.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Bike/walking trails.

8 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Actually have a Parks and Rec. Not the YMCA run the Remington parks field.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

60% of the Thomasville parks are very outdated, boring and dull. No bathroom in some parks and younger kids can't hold when they need to go. The playgrounds are so dull and not exciting.

8 months ago

[1 Agree](#)

Improve clay street YMCA

8 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Bathrooms at paradise park and also closer picnic tables to the equipment. Also lighting for all parks. Would love to have a splash pad for kids

8 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Bike friendly areas, and improve the skate park, these are my main suggestions.

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Please make somewhere safe for children to ride bikes, a paved walking trail in a safe area away from cars that allows bikes would be great.

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Pool /splash pad for the kids more side walks no more ditches and around parks more toys Lighting and bathrooms sidewalks all around town especially around bus stop apartment complex and to and around stores

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

bathrooms and a splash pad

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Pickleball is growing by hyperbolic numbers. Ignoring the need for safe and adequate capacity is not fair to many citizens.

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

What is pickleball? What is hyperbolic?

7 months ago

Please use design professionals (civil engineers, landscape architects, planners, etc) in private practice. There were many missed design opportunities at the recent Cherokee Park lake renovations which could have greatly enhanced that facility for the citizens. It makes the City appear to be building things "on the cheap" when in fact it could be that the City Staff are not aware of what is going on in the design community. This is not a knock on the City staff because they have to more focused on Public Works and responding to the population. Also it seems to take the City to finish anything construction wise. Again use private construction companies in a public bid process to handle projects, not City crews. There are many locations where a pocket park could be designed. In one area a Garden Club planted a tree but the City came and cut it down. Due to our location we desperately need shade and I believe the City could greatly enjoy some kind of water feature(s). The golf course greens along with other areas need to be refurbished. Interconnectivity should be reinforced. I think it would be great if Paradise Park had a stronger connection to downtown. Visitors to downtown from out of town probably don't even know it is there.

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Events and activities that encourage use of existing parks and and new park that can be used for hiking/ camping

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Cherokee Lake is marred by the jail so close (consider additional dividing options). And the presence of people who expose themselves is a concern. Need Park Police assigned.

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Art/farmers market

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Better park

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Add mini golf course to our parks.

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

18 hole disc golf.

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Please make country oaks into something that this city can be proud of. It's turning into an embarrassment!

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Improvements to small green spaces in neighborhoods on south and west sides of town. Many children in these areas do not have adequate afterschool activities and lack transportation/guardians to take them elsewhere.

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Splash pad and pool for public - not at YMCA

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Encourage masking.

9 months ago [1 Agree](#)

Finish the trail!

Enough with drunk fest concerts - do something beneficial to our community health and fitness!

one month ago

Just park improvements nad a splash pad.

3 months ago

Indoor walking track

4 months ago

All concerns related to upgrades and safety.

4 months ago

Bike Lanes or bike trails

5 months ago

Relocate the Balfour Park dog park and create an outdoor family recreation center in that area to include picnic tables, lighting, walking trail, tennis tables, playgrounds, etc.

5 months ago

Sidewalks on Old Monticello Road

5 months ago

Improve the water management and trails system. There are many examples of how other sicities have done this. I believe the City would benefit from this in a number of ways. I applaud you for soliciting citizen input. Thank you!

5 months ago

Finish MacIntyre Park water features

5 months ago

Expand access to Greenways and Parks

Outdoor calisthenics park at YMCA

5 months ago

BMX track/park, walking/bike trails, more activities for teens (even if privately operated) like putt putt golf, go karts, etc.

5 months ago

Make Balfour Park a neighborhood for the children & adults on the south side of town like it was. Bring back the pool.

5 months ago

To be fair and equitable when selecting projects to fund.

5 months ago

Nice new restrooms at Macintyre and Paradise. Renovate restrooms at Remington Park Fields. Our restrooms are not nice at all compared to other towns that we travel to for tournaments. Also, ours are never stocked appropriately for game days (toilet paper, soap). Thomasville is a nice town and our Remington park field amenities should reflect that too.

Also, what is going on with the gazebo structure at Paradise Park? We've been here for almost 10 years and it has always had yellow caution tape around it. Can we get rid of it if it is a hazard? Or spend the money to repair/renovate it? I imagine it has some historical value to it so maybe the latter is more appropriate. It's crazy to keep it tied up with caution tape all the time.

5 months ago

Handicapped accessible paths at MacIntyre Park and Paradise Park.

5 months ago

I'd like to see more activities for teens.

More LGBTQ inclusive activities for teens and adults.

5 months ago

All of the above.

6 months ago

More bark at the Cherokee Lake Park Playground & Signs that talk about the local wildlife please

6 months ago

Please consider adding more paved walking trails in McIntire Park, since it is always very wet and mushy in the middle ground area and hard to walk in the park on/after rainy day. Also additional security cameras and lighting would be appreciated at all parks!

6 months ago

I would like for the City of Thomasville to consider placing a high fence around the basketball courts of Weston Park. The two goals near the back side rest at the top of a steep slope. The installation of fence would be greatly beneficial.

6 months ago

At the risk of being repetitive I'm not sure my comment posted so I'll repeat it. I think country Oaks is in dire need of improvement if it's going to continue its existence which I firmly believe it's a huge asset to the overall recreational program operated by the city and YMCA in partnership. I understand it, the hefty cost but I will suggest that the millions that have been allocated for the completion of the bike/walking trail, be Redirected to the improvement of country Oaks. Quite frankly the existing bike/walking trails or not used at all. There are several designated crossings on Streets that I use on a regular basis and the last 10 years I don't think I've seen one person using those crossings. And I don't buy the argument that until you complete it people won't use it.

6 months ago

Bring Country Oaks back to much more playable conditions. I knew you do the best You can with what you have. But if that thing is to survive and thrive it's going to take a pretty significant investment. I would suggest the millions that have been allocated for the completion of the so-called walking biking trail which in my opinion is virtually a waste of money could be redirected towards the golf course.

6 months ago

No pets in park were kids are.

6 months ago

Repairs at Cherokee Lake. More trash cans. Bike trails, walking trails. Nature trails.

6 months ago

Paved and non paved bike trails, more nature walking trails, attempt to join parks with multi purpose bike and walking trails. A good number of water stations and shaded resting areas between parks.

6 months ago

Clean the walking path in Cherokee Park more often.

6 months ago

The city needs to focus on keeping the parks beautiful. As trees are removed due to storms or otherwise, new trees should be replanted to maintain the beauty & shade of the parks

6 months ago

Restock Cassidy road park. Police presence in parks!

6 months ago

Free swimming lessons and other places to swim other than the YMCA. They YMCA is too expensive! Many kids need lessons. Why can't they be free? Many organizations are contributing to the YMCA and I'm not aware of anything they offer free to any age group. I don't see any benefits for my family with the YMCA. The times they are open are not convenient to working single parents. We need other options in the city of Thomasville that does not include the YMCA.

6 months ago

Parking garages (2) downtown

6 months ago

First, thanks to the city for taking on this initiative to make our city even better. It would be great if there was some way to create walking and biking trails. We live in a naturally beautiful area, yet there are few if any trails within or outside the city to enjoy it. Nature and ecology tours could bring in some new tourism. Community gardens also may find a niche here. City offers plots, water from spigots, and residents pay a nominal annual fee to rent a plot to garden. Plots also could be available free for schools and other groups to use to as an educational tool for children and to provide free fresh food in some neighborhoods. In other places I've lived, these plots have been part of larger rec parks so there is visibility and some security. While it was not offered as an option in the questionnaire, what about incorporating a well-maintained recycling center into a part of a large rec park? Finally, a park center that offered interesting programs and educational classes for adults and seniors would be a nice addition.

6 months ago

Side walks around McIntyre Park

Trails/walking paths

6 months ago

another disc golf course

6 months ago

To bring back the Park and Recreation Dept, to Thomasville,Ga,

6 months ago

Bring back The Park and Recreation Dept.

6 months ago

It would be helpful to describe what the city parks department has control over. People may answer or make suggestions for things outside of this department's funding/control.

6 months ago

Getting New Directors at the Thomasville Resource Center, management is awful, uninvolved, and not concerned with Thomasvilles community standards,, single certain children out. Sells clothes during business hours doesnt represent Thomasville in a positive light!.

6 months ago

I suggest that we cover the tennis courts at Remington Park, so that children, teens, and adults are not rained out for recreational play or lessons. This has occurred a number of time with the YMCA adult cardio clinic. I think some type of public/private partnership might be possible, because we tennis players are very interested in making this happen. The basketball court is covered; the skating area is covered. It makes sense to cover the tennis courts, and I think private initiatives could supplement a city plan to upgrade the courts by covering them.

I would also like the city to offer FREE tennis clinics for youth in the summer. Tennis is one of the best exercise options; you can play it from childhood to your senior years. It should be a sport available to all, not just the affluent. Also, if kids are introduced to tennis, they can later play on the THS tennis team, and even have another option for possible college scholarships. Thank you for your consideration.

7 months ago

Covered tennis courts, nature amenities,

7 months ago

continue work on the trail connecting the parks.. and connecting the existing sections to sidewalks. hard to walk over wet muddy grass at times to access the paths.

7 months ago

Please add security. The uptick in crime in Thomasville has me afraid to use the parks. An actual security guard would be better than lighting and cameras, but those would be welcome too.

7 months ago

Park safety, activities for small kids and teens, SPLASH PAD PLEASE!!!

7 months ago

Water park

7 months ago

Water activity

7 months ago

Sidewalk are needed in this town, all over this town. Not just visitors area of this town. Once that is taken seriously and done maybe this town can called a city & and a town 🙄.

7 months ago

Splash pads in a park that are connnextrd to bike trails much like cascades park would be very entertaining for our family

7 months ago

Make Paradise Park into the Thomasville version of Savannah's Forsyth Park. It's a large downtown park that has something for everyone.

7 months ago

I think that adding a bathroom facility at Remington front fields by parking lot would help. I think that consolidation the parks in different areas of town to less but offer more saves the city money maintaining all the fields even those that are hardly used, and it elevates the use of the fields being used.

7 months ago

n

7 months ago

Add restrooms to the larger parks. Add lighting and thin some trees in PAradise and McIntyre Parks. More walking trails. Connect parks.

7 months ago

More parks, do not have to be large - pocket parks - in the City. Green is better. Also, a bocce ball court in Paradise Park would be very fun.

7 months ago

Maintain what we have first. Repair, replace, or add basic services (drinking water everywhere, parking as needed, restrooms at our largest, most frequented facilities) to our existing parks. Connect our facilities to our schools and neighborhoods with sidewalks and trails. When we've achieved that, then we can look at adding to our parks and facilities.

7 months ago

More access for children of all abilities. More outdoor basketball areas. Bike and walking trails. A splash pad would be great!

7 months ago

more teen programs and better dog park unleashed

7 months ago

Size of lanes and road maintenance are big concerns for me. I scrub my bumper a lot. My car isn't lowered.

7 months ago

Keeping present Parks restrooms clean.

7 months ago

Please consider adding a free or *very* inexpensive splash pad!

7 months ago

A splash pad with shaded areas for parents to sit is greatly needed! The closest ones are in Moultrie and Tallahassee and that's just too far in the heat of the summer. Please consider a splash pad!

7 months ago

i would rather money was spent on things more important, such as road upgrades parking power water etc than parks and recreation

7 months ago

more things for teens and young adults

7 months ago

I would like to keep some of our parks as natural as possible, i.e., McIntyre Park. And I would love to see more nature parks.

7 months ago

I think it is important to consider which improvements will bring significant value to our community and which improvements just have vocal support. Will more pickleball really benefit our community? (Please stop eliminating tennis courts for the benefit of pickleball). Will more disc golf really benefit our children? Some of the most beneficial improvements would likely be restrooms at our most popular parks, allowing families to enjoy them for longer periods of time. Children would also benefit from a splash pad. If strategically positioned, it would allow many children with no access to pools or ability to swim to cool off and have fun in the summertime. I also believe our community would benefit from a more robust trail system, specifically natural surface. These trails can provide recreation and connectivity at a relatively low cost. Thank You!

7 months ago

Please complete the hike and bike trail.

7 months ago

Finish water features at McIntyre

7 months ago

Finish water features at McIntyre

7 months ago

Putt putt golf could be fun

7 months ago

Safety safety safety and make it obvious so that people feel comfortable

7 months ago

Like our parks. Do have some issues with condition of parking, park access, signage and appropriate lighting for some park areas.

7 months ago

Upgrade public parks - add restrooms - add "permanent" but permeable walkways in parks for mobility limited

7 months ago

Maintenance cost and upkeep after installation

7 months ago

Maintenance cost and upkeep

7 months ago

An 18 hole disc golf course could bring tournaments which could generate revenue for the county.

7 months ago

An addition to the skatepark, more nature trails.

7 months ago

Beautification...Repaving and sidewalks on south side of town. Orange St, Pear St. ect...

7 months ago

After school childcare programs are desperately needed. The Y is full and one parent has to stay home due to inability to find suitable transport and care.. county schools. Also splash pad and farmers market would be amazing!

7 months ago

Need restrooms for McIntyre And Paradise Park.

7 months ago

More inclusive areas for people with special needs.

8 months ago

N/A

8 months ago

Water park, swimming pool, splash pad, walking trails, bike trails, public restrooms.

8 months ago

More hiking, walking, bicycle trails & programs.

8 months ago

More benches splash pad more events. Farmers market

8 months ago

Utilize what we have better. The creek at McIntire Park could be used for boat racing. The upgrades have been awesome and we go there more often. More benches

8 months ago

Instead of creating new parks, put money into the existing parks by improving the restrooms, adding bike or walking trails & games or equipment for elderly & disabled. Just look what all of the improvements added to Cherokee lake!!! :)

8 months ago

Multi use trail, upgrade to center building at Remington Park, putting pressure on the Y to develop stronger more competitive youth sports.

8 months ago

More paved walking trails, with good lighting

8 months ago

Country Oaks golf course needs to turn the driving range so it faces away from Pavo Road. Yesterday I counted 12 golf balls on the golf course side of the road and 8 on the Jones side of the road. Will it take someone wrecking from getting hit by a golf ball for the city to realize that this is a huge problem.

8 months ago

Restrooms at MacIntyre and Paradise Park would be awesome!

8 months ago

Baseball, soccer, multi purpose fields need up grades and to be better maintained. The pitching mounds for boys is bad. Some one is going to get hurt. Look at surrounding facilities around us who host sporting events weekly to biweekly at there facilities. The revenue that the city and county make is huge because many people who come have to have a hotel and places to eat. Also some towns have Miracle fields for children with special needs to compete. Valdosta has one of these out at there complex.

8 months ago

Trails with bathrooms and water fountains!

8 months ago

Please consider more sensory and handicap accessible play areas. Better bathrooms would be helpful also. We would love more walking trails too.

8 months ago

A splash pad for kids would be awesome. It gets so hot during the summer that it's hard to actually enjoy the outside unless there is water involved.

8 months ago

Housing for low income people on disability

9 months ago

Please have a traffic light installed at the intersection of Smith Ave. and Covington Ave. It's very dangerous,

9 months ago

More lighted walking areas with restrooms.

9 months ago

Speed humps installed on Clay St and the surrounding areas

9 months ago

Disc golf course

9 months ago

Security features to ensure safety

9 months ago

Security

9 months ago

More room an upgrades

9 months ago

More events that encourage existing park usage and a new park that could be used for hiking/camping.

9 months ago

Mountain bike trails would be nice! I always have to travel to Tallahassee to ride trails. Riding millpond all the time Is very beautiful but can feel redundant.

9 months ago

Sidewalks and low lamp posts. — major need throughout the city

9 months ago

Outside basketball court (aka cage) needs resurfaced. Fishing Ponds could use restocking

9 months ago

We'd love a playground and sidewalk at the Cassidy Road park

9 months ago

Continue to upgrade and maintain the parks in and around the city, as is possible. Doing a good job with what is available. People need to help keep the parks clean.

9 months ago

A recreational park with a pool is needed at Balfour Park.

9 months ago

Doing a better job weeding the Rose garden

9 months ago

Building a walk over in the middle of Cherokee lake so you don't have to walk to the back where it's creepy. Make it a half mile track.

9 months ago

A dedicated park for disc golf with 18 holes would be a huge draw to the area. Disc golf has grown exponentially in the past few years and this region is teeming with players.

9 months ago

A bathroom facility for MacIntyre is needed, especially for people driving to the area for disk golf. A new, 18 hole disk golf course, possibly at Cassidy Pond, seems to be desired by the growing community of players. It would be great to have a more challenging course, with longer holes.

A natural surface walking trail would be a nice addition to the paved walking trail at Cherokee park. I see a lot of morning walkers and it would be nice to have the option to get off of the paved trail. This would most likely not work at Cherokee park and would need to be in a different location. Perhaps a "twisty" loop trail that weaves through Paradise park?

Of course, a splash pad and new playground equipment are always going to be popular with parents. We are constantly looking for new things to do with the kiddo.

9 months ago

Indoor pool with retractable roof for summer activities and winter activities.

9 months ago

Bike trails would be nice.

9 months ago

None

9 months ago

Disc golf courses. 18 hole course and new baskets/pads for mac

9 months ago

New 18 hole disc golf park at Cassidy pond, and equipment for temporary course at live oaks for disc golf tournaments.

9 months ago

establish a base level of service for ALL parks by type; ensure O&M expenditures are equitable; increase budget to invest in improvements and O&M and dedicated staffing; invest in golf course upgrades/renovation; invest in trail system to improve and expand connectivity

10 months ago

Thank you very much for your time and interest in parks and recreation here in Thomasville. Your responses will help us to focus on and improve services that are most important to our residents. Please watch for updates and return to this website to continue sharing your ideas for parks and recreation in Thomasville.

No data to display...

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Counting yourself, how many people in your household are of the following ages?

Average



Under 5 years

5 - 9 years

10 - 14 years: _____

15 - 19 years: _____

20 - 24 years: _____

25 - 34 years: _____

35 - 44 years: _____

45 - 54 years: _____

55 - 64 years: _____

65 - 74 years: _____

75+ years: _____

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