

INTERSECTING PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SPACE: AN ANALYSIS OF TWO FITNESS PARKS IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

by

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Abstract

Complex issues and exciting opportunities lie at the intersection of public health and park design. One component of the recently emerging field of design for active living explores the relationship between design and physical activity as part of a transdisciplinary area of study. This study provides the opportunity to view the design strategies that landscape architects have used to design parks through a lens of promoting physical activity.

The purpose of this study is to understand design strategies incorporated in two fitness parks in Louisville, Kentucky assist in meeting public health goals for the citizens of Louisville. Two topical areas were explored: the physical design strategies used in the parks; and the collaborative efforts among stakeholders to further the public health agenda for promoting physical activity in the parks. A case study of two community scale fitness parks profiled the characteristics and design philosophies engaged in park development. The methodology, based on qualitative procedures incorporated three types of investigation: 1) collection of background data and documentation of Louisville's parks and Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement; 2) interviews with key stakeholders from public agencies, private non-profit foundations, and selected consultants who have completed parks design work in Louisville; and 3) a case study analysis of two of the fitness parks in the city, based on the background data and input from subject interviews, and an identification of physical design strategies in each park. Identification of design strategies was based on a conceptual framework developed from the disciplines of public health promotion and landscape architecture, and input from local agency stakeholders. A physical activity design strategy inventory form was developed to aid in analysis.

Anticipated results were two-fold:

1. Presentation of information to assist landscape architects in designing parks that intentionally provide engaging opportunities for physical activity; and
2. Contribution to the dialogue between landscape architects and public health professionals, informing collaboration on design projects and community programs.

Findings revealed that the two parks studied incorporated several physical design strategies that promote physical activity, reflecting the mature park culture in Louisville, Kentucky, home to one of five designed Olmsted Parks and Parkways systems in the United States. The physical activity design strategy inventory form developed in this study as an audit tool warrants additional study as a potential audit and design tool to engage landscape architects designing for physical activity and informing others of ways that park design can play a role in physical activity.

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Dedication

To people who enjoy parks.

CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

Thesis Statement -The Intersection of Public Health and Public Parks

Design strategies are one of many factors contributing to the continued success of a healthy community promoting active living for its citizens. This study provides the opportunity to view the design strategies that landscape architects use to design parks through a lens of promoting physical activity through creative design. Synthesizing the concerns and interests shared across public health and design disciplines for promoting physical activity strengthens the potential for achieving the public health goal of active and healthy communities. Through case study analysis, this study seeks to inform the transdisciplinary public health interests on the role of design in the active living agenda. In addition, collaboration among city agencies and special interest groups plays a role in encouraging physical activity is explored.

This study involves landscape architecture case studies and identification of physical design strategies of two parks in Louisville, Kentucky. Louisville was selected because of the great strides made on multiple levels through a number of community wide initiatives to promote physical activity. Through its City of Parks Initiative, Louisville has focused on parks for people to meet individual health and personal fitness goals through its promotion of ten “fitness parks” located throughout the city.

The Context

Complex issues and exciting opportunities lie at the intersection of public health and park design. In the recently emerging field of design for active living, the relationship between design and physical activity has not been fully explored. Public health

historically addressed environmental health issues such as disease and environmental hazards detrimental to physical health (Frumkin, 2003). The Surgeon General's report of 1996 changed the way in which public health looks at physical activity, recognizing the importance of moderate activity in achieving improved health instead of concentrating on vigorous activity for the active adult. Obesity trends are on the rise in the United States, resulting in an increase in chronic illness and health care costs. Americans need to get moving and parks offer a venue for that to happen. As expressed by one interview participant in this study, parks are the city's largest free fitness centers.

The active living movement focuses on the development of a new transdisciplinary field where collaboration is required for a diverse group of disciplines with a broad range of backgrounds (Sallis et al 2006, 301). Originally composed of researchers in behavioral science, kinesiology and health, the field now encompasses several disciplines such as planners, public health professionals, epidemiologists, parks and recreation managers, landscape architects, and architects. Research has evolved in establishing the role of parks in promoting physical activity, but there are issues that merit further study (Mowen, 2010). The body of literature pertaining to parks and public health is expanding rapidly.

One identified area of study needed (Bedimo-Rung et.al, 2005) involves the relationship of design to park characteristics such as aesthetics, safety, and park conditions. From the perspective of landscape architecture, these individual considerations should be viewed as an integrated way to shape design strategies for physical activity in parks to forward the agenda for active living. Research to date has revealed patterns and trends in activities across user groups, but little has been studied to establish the important link between physical activity and the cognitive mapping of design.

Louisville's advocacy for healthy living encompasses a number of community wide initiatives to promote physical activity on multiple levels makes it an appropriate area to study. Through its City of Parks Initiative, Louisville has focused on parks for people to meet individual health and personal fitness goals through its promotion of ten "fitness parks" located throughout the city. The design legacy for parks, originated from the system designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, who with his partner Calvert Vaux named and defined the profession of landscape architecture in America (Beveridge 1995, 6). Celebrated for his design of parks throughout the United States, including Central Park in New York City, Olmsted designed park and parkway systems in five cities, including Louisville. The projects he completed over one hundred years ago exemplify active living within a mature park system. The physical system of parks in Louisville is complemented by an array of programs and activities. Park programs and activities are supported in part by Louisville's Healthy Hometown Movement, which promotes healthy eating and physical activity for members of the community.

Scope of Study

Identification and evaluation of design strategies and collaborative efforts are critical to promoting physical activity in parks. This study of two parks explores two topical areas: the physical design strategies used in the fitness parks, and the collaborative efforts among stakeholders to further the public health agenda for promoting physical activity in the parks.

This study's methodology utilizes three types of qualitative investigation: collection of background information through published data and documentation; interviews with key staff of agencies, non-profit organizations and selected consultants who performed design services for parks in Louisville; and a case study analysis of two community parks in Louisville, Kentucky. A form

to identify physical design strategies was developed and criteria applied in the analysis of the two parks profiled in the case study. Interviews conducted in the spring of 2010 established the role of parks in promoting physical activity as well as the collaborative working relationships involved in creating opportunities for active living in the parks. Inventory of the design characteristics of Louisville's fitness parks identified key influences of physical design to promote activity in the parks. Collaborative efforts were discussed to determine their role in the Healthy Hometown Movement.

This study is framed within the park environment, and more specifically within the park boundary. Access to the park, connectivity to other parks, nature contact within the park and the context of the park setting and its surroundings all contribute to the active use of a park. For the purposes of this study, however, the context of the park in its surroundings was addressed as ancillary to what was happening within the park. Social, economic, and ecological considerations were largely outside the scope of the study.

Anticipated Results

The anticipated results of this study are two-fold:

1. Presentation of information to assist landscape architects in designing parks that intentionally provide engaging opportunities for physical activity; and
2. Contribution to the dialogue between landscape architects and public health professionals, informing collaboration on design projects and community programs that benefit health and wellness for persons in the community.

CHAPTER 2 - Background

The Complexity of Parks and Park Design

Many books about parks identify guidelines for park design and management without defining what a park is. Definitions found in the literature range from basic, a place between reconciliation and nature (Baljon, 1992), to more descriptive, a public outdoor space at various scales and functions for the enjoyment of public for rest and recreation, often owned and managed by a public agency (Vroom, 2006; Garvin, 2000). Parks mean different things to different people and within different professions.

Parks become even more complex when viewing them from the various perspectives of the experts, who are involved with promoting and evaluating physical activity in parks. Health professionals quantify proximity to parks and individual activities within the parks to measure physical activity of various age and user groups, and relate individual park features to physical activity. Planners look at how parks fit into the context of urban life-socially, economically, geographically, and equitably. Community health professionals look for ways to reduce adult and childhood obesity and find venues to engage people in physical activity and healthy eating on multiple levels. Another important, but not widely researched area, is that of design of parks and physical activity. Landscape architects design parks, determining the range of physical activity that might take place.

This study of park design strategies is shaped by the intersecting fields of public health and landscape architecture. Louisville, Kentucky's success in employing several initiatives to forward the agenda for physical activity and public health provides the setting

to examine this intersection. This chapter introduces Louisville and key concepts from public health, parks, design and transdisciplinary work as well as the methodologies applied in this study.

The Study Area – Louisville, Kentucky

Louisville, a city with a population of approximately 700,000, is Kentucky's largest city. The city's origins date back to the late eighteenth century, when it was settled in north-central Kentucky on the Ohio River, on the Kentucky-Indiana border. Although horseracing may be what Louisville is best known for, recent strides in city programs make it a viable study area for the intersection of parks and public health. Some of the city's recent initiatives are significant, especially its Healthy Hometown Movement, an initiative to reduce obesity and promote positive lifestyles through healthy eating and increased physical activity levels. A key component of this initiative is the presence of several Olmsted Parks in Louisville. According to Liz DeHart of the Louisville Olmsted Conservancy, the city is home to one of five Olmsted designed park and parkways systems in the nation. Building upon the historic parks' legacy, Olmsted's plan for Louisville resulted in eighteen parks, most of which have served the city's residents for well over one hundred years. The Floyds Fork Greenway, a new 4,000+-Acre Park in the eastern part of the city, will contain 16 miles of the Louisville Loop, a 100-mile bicycle network around the city. The Loop project has mandated extensive collaboration among citizens, public agencies and private foundations. The uniqueness of the Olmsted parks and maturity of the park culture in the city presents a rich and complex set of circumstances for study of design strategies that promote physical activity.

Figures 2.2 and 2.3 illustrate the location of Louisville in context to the United States and Kentucky. Physiographically, Louisville is at the outer western edge of the Bluegrass, one of five regions in the state. The Bluegrass area is one whose surface is predominantly a rolling plateau transitioning to more rugged topography at the edges (Kentucky Atlas and Gazetteer, 2010) directing its patterns of development and placement of parks.

Louisville is the county seat of Jefferson County, and the two jurisdictions merged in January 2003 to form the metro Louisville government. The cultural context of Louisville has been described as being somewhere between north and south, and between east and west (Mohoney 2004, 31). It has experienced a transition from a riverfront industrial city of the 1800s and 1900s to one that has become more service industry oriented.



Figure 2.1 Kentucky in the U.S.



Figure 2.2 Map of Kentucky (Kentucky Atlas and Gazetteer)

Louisville – City of Parks

A large part of Louisville’s civic and cultural heritage includes parks and parkways. Although parks were suggested by city notables such as George Rogers Clark as early as 1799 (Rademacher 2004, 45), the first park was not constructed until 1880 (Fitzpatrick 1985, 54). In 1887, the all-male social and literary club “Salmagundi” recommended the development of three large parks

to encourage economic and population growth. When Frederick Law Olmsted began work on the city's first three large parks and associated parkways shortly thereafter, his concept formed the foundation for the current system of 123 parks comprising more than 14,000 acres.

In February 2005, Louisville Mayor Jerry Abramson announced a new initiative for Louisville's park system, a multi-million dollar program to be completed over several years. The "City of Parks" plan intended to "build upon the groundwork laid by famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted over a century ago, and to transform the city into a City of Parks," and is the most comprehensive effort to expand the system since the 1890s (Frost, 2005). The recent acquisition and development of new park land is the most significant effort since the system was established. Projects include over 4,000 additional acres in park lands, including: Floyds' Fork Greenway project to create a new system of parks and trails within the Floyds Fork watershed in eastern Jefferson County; expansion of the existing Jefferson Memorial Forest in southwest Louisville Metro; a paved trail of approximately 100 miles around the city; and new outdoor recreation and nature education programs. A map of the City of Parks delineates public parks within system and proposed projects in Figure 2.3.

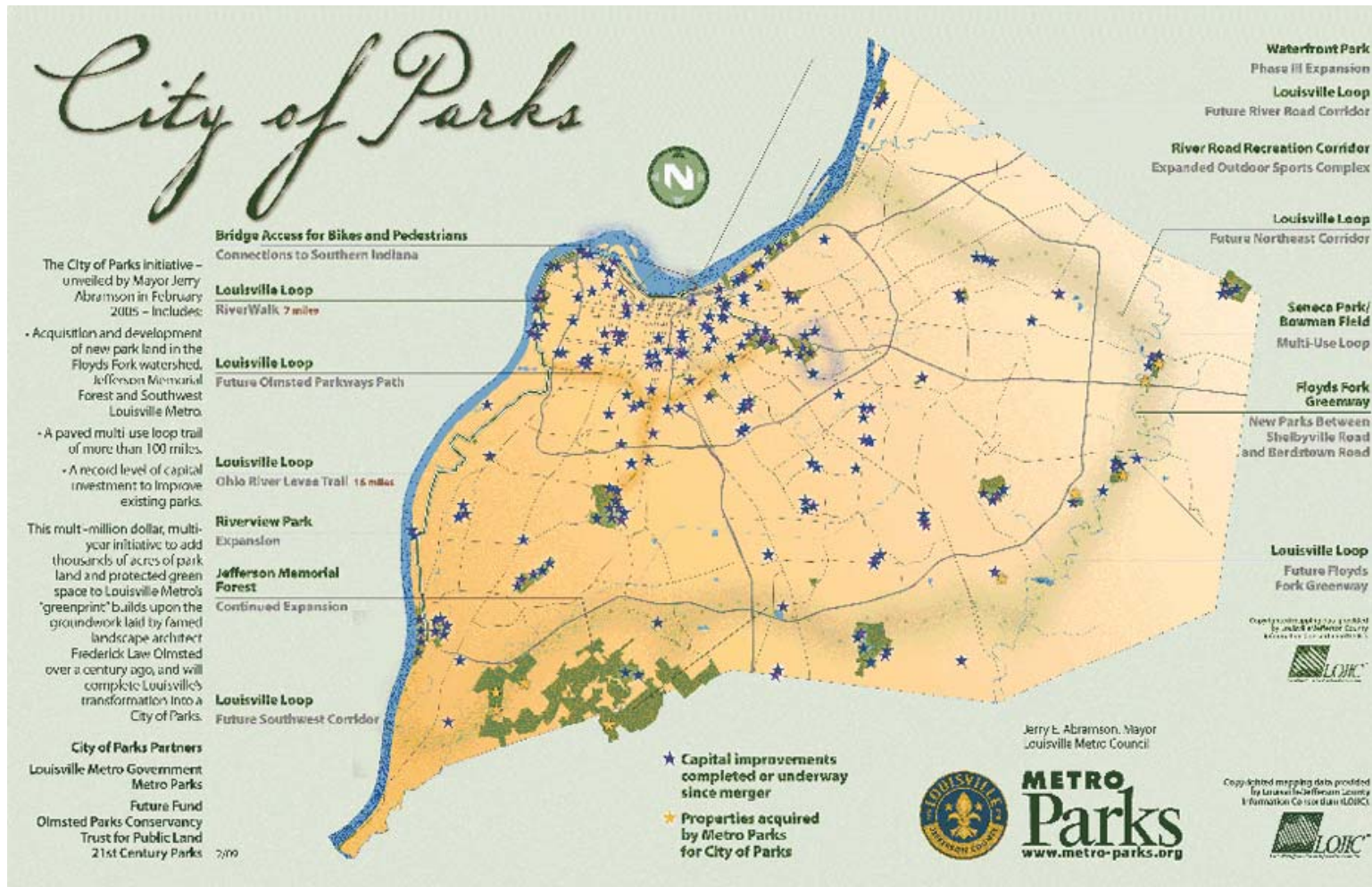


Figure 2.3 Louisville City of Parks Map (Source: Louisville Metro Parks)

Health Concerns and Healthy Hometowns

Many studies have been published in recent years showing the relationship between lifestyle and health and obesity and health. In 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) figures identified only one state (Colorado) that had an obesity rate of less than 20 percent. Six states with the highest prevalence for obesity—Mississippi, Alabama, Oklahoma, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Tennessee—were equal to or greater than 30 percent (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010)). Kentucky rose from the 10-14% category in 1990 to 29.8% in 2008. Figure 2.4 from the CDC website illustrates the increases in obesity over an eighteen-year period.

Research links lifestyle and health, identifying physical inactivity as a significant health problem in the United States that has led to chronic diseases, poor mental health, and even premature death (Frank, Engelke, and Schmid 2003, 1). Behavior modification and diet play a major part in addressing this problem. The physical

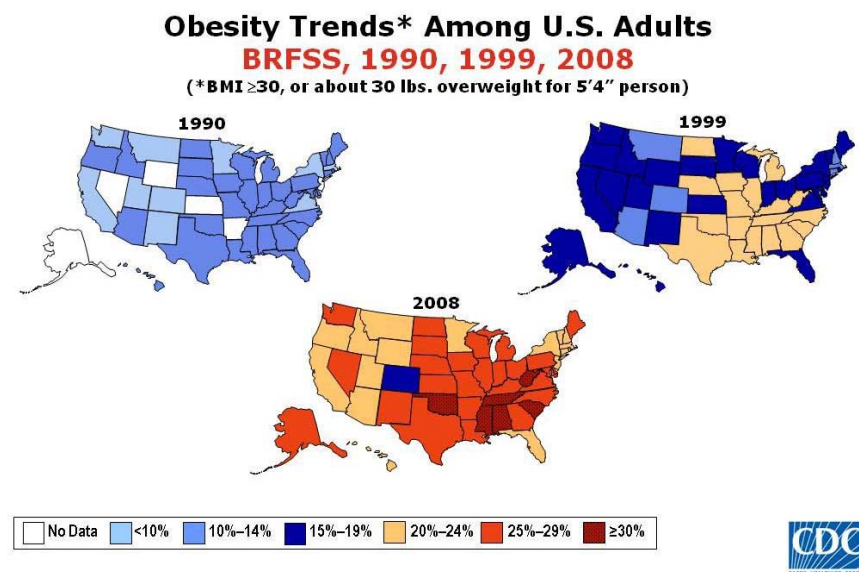


Figure 2.4 Obesity Trends* Among U.S. Adults

environment plays a pivotal role when evaluating strategies for intervention. Availability of and proximity to resources and opportunities have a significant influence in the ways neighborhoods affect health (Morris October 2006, 106).

Although these issues present problems in striving for healthy communities, it is never too late to reap the benefits of participating in physical activity. The main goal is to engage people in activities that get them moving and increase physical activity levels. There are several options for the activity over the course of the day, including household, utilitarian, recreational and occupational activities (Morris 2006, 14). Thirty minutes of moderately vigorous activity, at least five days a week is the recommended duration of exercise for an adult to meet personal fitness goals.

Like Louisville, other cities in the past decade have addressed concerns for wellness through increased physical activity and healthy eating. In 2005, the City of Wichita, Kansas, commissioned a report to compare key features and success factors for ambitious initiatives for physical activity and healthy nutrition in seven cities: Omaha, Nebraska; Louisville, Kentucky; East Hartford, Connecticut; Columbia, Missouri; Choctaw County, Oklahoma; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Madison, Wisconsin. The cities were chosen for their innovative strategies for influencing good nutrition and physical activity with communitywide interventions (Bothner et al, 2005). Louisville gained recognition for its communitywide focus on multiple programs with multiple initiatives, with a focus on the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement. Table 2.1 depicts the comparison of health initiatives among cities.

Table 2.1 Healthy Community Program Comparison (after Bothner, Bradley and Whiting, 2005)

Community Comparison: What Other Communities are Doing to Improve Physical Activity and Healthy Eating for Their Citizens
for Health and Wellness Coalition of Wichita, KS March 2, 2005

Key Features

Community	Program	Directed By	Structure	Focus Areas	Collaborative Efforts	Comments
Omaha, NE	<i>Our Healthy Community Partnership and Activate Omaha</i>	Full time executive director	not for profit 501(c)3	Data-driven; community health	Senior level executive support from healthcare organizations.	
Louisville, KY	<i>The Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement</i>	Initiated and led by mayor	Core team provides support; coordinator in Public Health and Wellness Dept.	Community wide, with multiple programs; initial emphasis on schools and worksites	Multiple initiatives with sponsoring partners from several types of organizations; senior executives from partners participate in Advisory Board	Additional in-kind support from partners;
Madison, WI	<i>Fit City Madison</i>	Initiated by Mayor, has goal to make Madison "healthiest city in the nation"	Historically, funded by Health Department; now requesting donations from partners	Schools were first focus area.	University of Wisconsin provides support position and expertise	
East Hartford, CT	<i>H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. East Hartford</i>	from city Health and Social Services department	Developing a clear focus for policy and sustainable changes instead of quick fixes	Stresses importance of community involvement, multi-cultural components included.		Comprehensive community assessment guide for creating a strategic plan
Tulsa, OK	<i>Community Health Foundation</i>	created by City Health Department	not for profit 501(c)3; Board of Directors composed of community members	First focus was overall community health; now moving toward physical activity, nutrition, and childhood obesity	Provides opportunities to promote programs and sponsor school based programs	
Choctaw County, OK	<i>Choctaw County Coalition and "Walk This Weigh"</i>	community based initiative	no formal organization, but has formal structure	overall community health	Effective use of volunteer members and sub-committees; emphasizes 'buy-in' from community residents	Field consultants are provided by State Health Department
Columbia, MO	<i>Bike, Walk & Wheel</i>	originated from grass-roots community advocacy organization	partnership with city Health Department	not specifically listed	Broad partnership with various organizations; committed leadership from the Mayor	Major grant provided money for initial funding

Since 2005, the trend for healthy communities continues to grow, focusing on healthy eating and physical activity to reduce obesity.

Healthy Hometown Movement

As illustrated in Figure 2.4, a significant link between inactivity and health nationwide exists. Metro Louisville has some startling statistics as well. The Louisville Metro Health Department Health Status (2004) report found:

- 59.6% of city's residents are overweight
- 35% engage in no leisure time activity
- 289 out of every 100,000 Louisvillians will die of heart disease, compared to 247 nationwide
- 61 out of 100,000 Louisvillians will die of stroke, compared to 58 nationwide.

In response to the health status of the community, Mayor Jerry Abramson stated a vision to improve the quality of life for the newly merged Metro Louisville in 2004 "A Community All People Are Proud to Call Home." He established the "Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement" (MHHM), now called "Healthy Hometown Movement" (HHM). The movement is a long-term effort to combine community resources, programs, and projects to improve the health status of its citizens and promote healthier lifestyles. Objectives include increased physical activity, healthy eating, public policy and access to resources and facilities that support active lifestyles. A wide range of activities is included in the movement with many participating agencies and community groups. Recent

programs have encompassed a variety of topics, such as stop-smoking classes, farmers' markets, walking clubs, and yoga classes. Sponsored and provided by the public health department, these programs represent the city's long-term commitment for community health and wellness.

The concern for healthy communities is not a recent phenomenon, and has been prevalent in the United States for quite some time. The emphasis in the early days, however, focused on the environmental impacts to health caused by industrial development and unsanitary waste disposal.

Public Health

Public health is a system that addresses preventive aspects of health and issues at a population level rather than individual health issues, and contains many fields within its domain. These include, but are not limited to epidemiology, biostatistics and community health services. The focus of public health has changed over time in response to urban conditions (Turnock, 2009). Promoting public health for active communities concentrates efforts for healthy eating and physical activity.

A Brief History

Since the late eighteenth century, and through the 1860s, American cities grew more rapidly than they could successfully manage sanitation issues. Sanitation problems occurred in several environmental categories: air; water; garbage; sewage; commercial activity, and housing (Frumkin, Frank and Jackson 2004, 46). Immigration of people to American cities was a major factor in this rapid rate of growth, and combined with a number of other factors, led to unsafe and unsanitary living conditions for many. This

unpleasantness influenced the way urban centers grew and developed. By the mid-nineteenth century, physicians related certain diseases with specific geographic areas of the city, most often in poor, industrial areas (Frank, et al, 13). As a result, efforts to clean up unsanitary conditions began with an emphasis in poor areas of the cities. Reforms led to the establishment of public health entities in the United States, including State Boards of Health, and health associations for medical professionals (Frank et al, 15).

Sanitation reform was not limited to health professions in the late 1800s. Among design professionals, Frederick Law Olmsted was involved in the movement. He received an appointment as secretary to the U.S. Sanitation Commission in 1861. In addition to reporting on physical conditions, Olmsted's documentation included a "Report on Demoralization of the Volunteers," describing the conditions prior to battle that led to declining health of the Union soldier (Rybczynski 1999, 198). He confronted urban design characteristics that caused overcrowding and inadequate sanitation after the Civil War, recognizing trees and plants as having a "sanitizing effect on their immediate environment" (Fein, 1967). Olmsted's background in public health proved to be a strong influence in his design approach to variety of projects and project types, including parks throughout the United States, in a career that spanned over forty years in the late 1800s.

Public health continued to influence the shaping of cities into the twentieth century, with the establishment of zoning laws in the early 1920s. The purpose of such zoning was to separate incompatible land uses for health, safety and welfare of citizens. One result of zoning legislation was the protection of the wealthy and middle class citizens and exclusion of undesirable uses, not just those that were not compatible (Frank, Engelke and Schmid 2003, 23). The effect of zoning on land use patterns and park locations often dictated types of land uses as well as the location and types of parks within a community.

Public health continued to be concerned with disease control and environmental hazards through much of the 1900s. In the 1960s, urban decay was evident in many cities, with a political awareness and call for action. Federal programs developed to deal with the urban crisis included the Model Cities program and Fair Housing Act (Frumkin, Frank and Jackson 2004, 62). Public health in urban areas became concerned with climbing infant mortality rates, chronic diseases such as diabetes, hunger and starvation among the poor and other diseases of epidemic proportion (Frumkin, Frank and Jackson 2004, 63). Those concerned with urban health was concerned about not just physical health, but recognized the importance of the interconnectedness of social and environmental health. Since 1999, public health in the United States has been “preparing for and responding to community health threats” (Turnock 2009, 8).

Public Health and the Link to Physical Activity

Public health did not make a substantial connection to health as exercise until the 1950s, when the first national effort for fitness encouraged young people to exercise in the form of participating in team sports, and tested American youth by the then newly formed President’s Council on Physical Fitness (Pate, 1989). Successive efforts expanded the program, but it was not until 1996, when the landmark *Physical Activity and Health: a Report by the Surgeon General* was published, that physical activity was considered a goal for all Americans. What exactly is physical activity and how does it differ from exercise? The following provides a set of definitions as synthesized by Marcus (2009, 6) for clarification:

Physical fitness is an outcome that can be attained through exercising at the frequency, intensity, and length of time prescribed by the American College of Sports Medicine (2000).

Physical activity, as referenced in the operational definitions at the end of this chapter, refers to any bodily movement that results in the burning of calories (Casperson 1989).

Exercise is actually a subcategory of physical activity; it is physical activity that is planned, structured, and repetitive (Marcus 2009).

Various studies applied public health data to develop physical activity guidelines to achieve and maintain health benefits. Additionally, several studies directed exercise scientists to assess the intensity level of physical activity, as well as the duration of each interval of activity, and provide guidelines for different types of activity. According to the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008), adults need at least two hours and thirty minutes a week of aerobic activities at a moderate level, or vigorous activities for at least one hour and fifteen minutes a week. Additionally, adults should perform muscle-strengthening activities at least two day a week for all the major muscle groups. Table 2.2 provides a summary of the guidelines.

Table 2.2 Exercise Recommendations for Improved Overall Health

Key Guidelines for Adults

- All adults should avoid inactivity. Some physical activity is better than none, and adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits.
- For substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, and preferably, it should be spread throughout the week.
- For additional and more extensive health benefits, adults should increase their aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity, or 150 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity. Additional health benefits are gained by engaging in physical activity beyond this amount.
- Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities that are moderate or high intensity and involve all major muscle groups on two or more days a week, as these activities provide additional health benefits. (from Healthy People 2010)

Guidelines have also been developed for adults 65 years of age and older and children 6 to 17 years of age, as listed on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website.

Declared a “watershed report” by Donna Shalala, former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, *Physical Activity and Health: a Report by the Surgeon General* was significant in several ways. Unlike previous efforts limited to addressing only the benefits of sustained vigorous activity for cardio respiratory fitness, the report expanded the role of fitness to include moderate levels of activity for health benefits ((U.S. Surgeon General, 1996, 12). It focuses on reporting the physiological aspects of physical activity for American adults and calls for further study of potential benefits of physical activity for mental health benefits. The report was a collaborative effort led by the CDC and its partner, the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCPFS), representing the Surgeon General’s office. It included assistance of the National Institute of Health in the form of several of its agencies, as well as non-federal organizations (U.S. Surgeon General 1996, 10). Other groups provided consultation in preparation of the report, such as the American Heart Association, the American College of Sports Medicine, and the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. Primarily, the document addressed activity using large muscle groups for a designated time period, such as in walking or bicycling. The most important information from the report was the recommendation that adults participate in 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five days a week (Bussel, Leviton and Orleans 2009, S309). This report challenged communities to respond to help citizens improve physical activity and healthy living habits, and challenged citizens to rethink personal fitness goals and objectives.

Active Living and Active Living Research

The release of the Surgeon General's Report in 1996 resulted in efforts by the CDC and others to study benefits of physical activity for improved health. The CDC established its Active Community Environments Initiative in response to data obtained from the disciplines of public health, transportation planning and urban design. Early CDC efforts included promoting walking and bicycling to school and promoting physical activity using trails.

Being relatively new, the active living approach to physical activity continues to evolve. Active living is a broad term, generally described as “a way of life that integrates physical activity into everyday life” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). Four domains identify environments in which physical activity occurs: recreation, transportation; occupation; and household (Sallis et al 2006, 122). These environmental influences include transportation systems, parks and recreation areas, neighborhoods and building structures. Social ecology is the basis on which models have been developed to study physical activity. Social ecology is described as:

“a framework or set of theoretical principles for understanding the dynamic interrelations among various personal and environmental factors in health. Social ecology pays explicit attention to the social, institutional, and cultural contexts of people-environmental relations and draws on both large-scale preventative strategies of public health and individual level strategies of behavioral sciences and medicine” (McLaren and Hawe 2005).

Social ecological models developed by numerous disciplines attempt to identify aspects in the built and physical environments that improve or minimize opportunities for physical activity (Kaczynski and Henderson 2008, 619). Scientists have used a number of audit tools to measure physical activity in the built environment, including direct observation and extensive collection of quantitative data related to proximity and use of specific facilities. Few address design considerations such as configuration and layout; adjacencies of use areas and activities; aesthetics; establishing a sense of place; or motivational decision point analysis.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), a health foundation created to “improve health and health care for all Americans,” has sponsored much of the research conducted in the active living arena. One of its program areas is Active Living Research, launched in 2000 to focus on a multi-strategy approach to promote physical activity. Research, practice and policy change are results sought through a transdisciplinary agenda to build the capacity within multiple disciplines to affect policy change and advocate physical activity (Sallis et al 2006, 300). One of the challenges of the agenda, and the active living movement as a whole, is in development of a new transdisciplinary field where collaboration is necessary for disciplines that are diverse and do not share the same knowledge base and experience (Sallis et al 2006, 301). Initially, researchers were in the fields of kinesiology, behavioral science and health. The field is continually evolving and expanding. Numerous disciplines are engaged including public health professionals, urban planners, epidemiologists, parks and recreation managers, transportation planners, landscape architects, and architects. The list continues to grow.

Physical Activity and Active Living

Important developments followed the 1996 report, including a multi-disciplinary conference of health professionals sponsored by the CDC in 1997, in what is thought of as the beginning of the Active Living Movement (Kaczynski and Henderson 2007, 319). Active living refers to multi-level strategies designed for policy and environmental change at the community level to promote physical activity as a part of an everyday lifestyle for Americans (Bussel, et al 2009, S309). Several different types of research have been conducted in recent years. Literature from urban planning and transportation has documented “the influence of the built environment on physical activity” (Bussel et al 2009, S309); and parks and recreation areas have been the subject of many studies from proximity of neighborhoods to parks, to quantifying numbers of users at specific park facility types (Bedimo-Rung, et.al 2005). Social interventions have also been studied as a successful strategy to complement environmental change, and promote use of park facilities for physical activity over a sustained period. Healthy People 2010 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000) further evidenced the government’s growing interest in physical activity. The report stated 467 objectives in twenty-eight focus areas designed as a framework for improving health of all U.S. citizens in the first decade of the twenty-first century (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). From the multitude of objectives, leading health indicators were identified. One of those leading indicators is physical activity.

Physical activity plans have been developed on a national and state basis. The U.S. Physical Activity Plan, prepared in 2010 was led by the CDC and the Prevention Research Center at the University of South Carolina is comprised of eight sectors: public health; education; volunteer and non-profit organizations; transportation, urban design and community planning; mass media; health care; business and industry; and parks, recreation, fitness, and sports. Statewide plans address physical activity in twelve states:

Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, South Dakota, and South Carolina. A literature search in April 2010 did not locate a statewide plan for Kentucky.

What Has Been Studied

Within the four domains identified by Sallis et al, recreation, transportation, occupation, and household, much research has been completed. Activities such as walking and bicycling cross two domains: transportation and recreation. Active transportation addresses the utility aspects of walking and cycling, such as walking or cycling to go to work, to the store. Transportation planners, such as landscape architect Lawrence Frank, have published numerous articles relative to active transportation. In the area of parks and recreation, current research suggests that parks encourage people to engage in physical activity (Mowen, 2010). A recent research synthesis by Active Living Research (Mowen, 2010) examined twenty-eight studies relative to parks and physical activity and identified areas that warrant future research. Additional research in the area of park characteristics, such as aesthetics, conditions, safety, disparities and features is needed to correspond directly to physical activity levels (Sallis, et al, 8). Early research found indicators that linked park aesthetics, safety, and conditions with health status within neighborhoods, but more research is needed (Kaczynski and Henderson, 2008). Review of this research synthesis from a landscape architecture perspective indicates that park characteristics and features have not been linked to design strategies to engage people in physical, as no literature linking design features or design strategies in terms of layout, configuration and adjacencies to increased physical activity was found in the review.

Parks

As a venue for physical activity, there are many types and sizes of parks. The following paragraphs describe park typologies over time, by activity, and relative to national standards and guidelines to provide a frame of reference for the park system in Louisville. The park has been a venue for activities and programs such as social gathering of friends and family, playing games and sports, and the restful relaxation associated with viewing nature. As multiple-use entities, parks are volatile and complex (Jacobs, 1993; Harnik, 2010). The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) developed national guidelines for communities in the 1970s and 1980s for park types and acres required for parklands (Eysenbach 2007, 27). Applying such guidelines revealed that what worked for one city did not necessarily work for another (Eysenbach 2007, 27). Politics and people establish park cultures specific to the locations in which they reside. As a result, NRPA replaced the standards in 1996 with a more locally based set of guidelines (Eysenbach 2007, 27). Unfortunately, some studies still apply the outdated standards, particularly with regard to acres of parkland per population in a community.

Park Typologies

The types of parks developed in the United States are largely a temporal reflection of popular American culture. In the 1800s, urban park designs were generally consistent with Olmsted's vision to connect people to nature (Rogers 2001, 428), providing views, vistas, wooded areas and meadow like open spaces to offer urban dwellers a respite from life in the city. Following the pleasure ground movement of Olmsted, the reform movement of the early twentieth century influenced park design with the development of small, symmetrical parks with recreational "field houses" and recreational facilities. Americans fell in love with the automobile, and

the design of parks and parkways brought a regional scale to urban residents. Regional and state parks responded to people's desires to get on the road in the 1920s and 1930s. President Franklin Roosevelt's numerous federal programs played a significant part in the stimulation of a depression era economy and put people back to work (Rogers 2001, 424). This resulted in significant growth in the numbers and types of recreation resources available throughout America.

In the 1930s through the mid-1960s, the reform era led to establishment of municipal parks departments, whose sole interest was the parks as natural retreats (Dahl and Mohlnar, 2003, 4). As resource managers, Parks Departments were responsible largely for the physical environment. Conversely, Recreation Departments addressed programming issues for activities within the parks. Recreation areas became popular, identified by active sports facilities, such as ball fields, hard- surface courts for basketball and tennis, and playgrounds. These active recreation areas received less design expertise than existing parks had previously received. This resulted in the reduction of the scenic park into a more utilitarian form, lacking imagination and intrigue (Baljon 1992, 17). Division of parks and recreation departments in many cities over resource and facility issues, and sometimes lacked the interdisciplinary collaboration for the park in its entirety (Dahl and Mohlnar, 2003, 5).

The open space movement of the 1960s reflected the urban unrest of the times, and envisioned the goal to stop riots that had plagued many cities, such as Chicago and Detroit (Cranz and Boland, 2004, 103). New York's mayor John Lindsay sought to reclaim parks for social control and reform, removing the sterility and standardization that the Recreation Facility era had brought. The Open Space era of the 1970s and beyond brought a closer connection to park programming and popular culture. Recreation activities extended traditional boundaries outside the parks (Cranz and Boland, 104).

Historically, parks in the context of the urban landscape have been viewed in two ways: as a medical discourse and as a social reform agenda (Meyer 2007, 61). Over time, the ideological conception of a park was bifurcated. It was either a green pastoral space that provided a flexible framework for multiple activities or a large sports complex with programmed activities (Meyer, 61). Defining the contemporary park has been challenging—to the point the typology has been examined and re-examined—and thought by some to be overworked and in need of a new paradigm (Geuse 1998, 39). Despite such criticism, typologies provide general guidance for types and sizes of parks, allowing the community to customize the typology based on individual needs.

Longitudinal Park Typologies

To select candidate parks for case study in Louisville, various park typologies were evaluated. The first, by Cranz and Boland (2004) describes longitudinal typology—park types through U.S. history. They contend that a park typology lasts approximately 30–50 years. Cranz provides an analysis of how user needs have changed over time, most significantly in the twentieth century (Francis 2003, 71). This typology considers four types published by Cranz in 1982, and the 2004 addition of a fifth park type, the “Sustainable Park,” shown in Table 2.3.

In the set of classifications identified in Table 2.3, several characteristics exist in Olmsted Louisville parks in both the Pleasure Ground and Sustainable Park types. Additionally, in the Sustainable Park type, promoters of the parks in Louisville include the Louisville Department of Public Health and Wellness and two not-for-profit entities critical to the preservation and expansion of the MetroParks system: the Olmsted Parks Conservancy and 21st Century Parks.

Table 2.3 Park Typologies Over Time

The Addition of the Sustainable Park as a Potential Model for Park Typology of the 21st Century

	Pleasure Ground 1850-1900	Reform Park 1900-1930	Recreation Facility 1930-1965	Open Space System 1965-?	Sustainable Park 1990-present
Social Goal	Public Health & Social Reform	Social reform; children's play; assimilation	Recreation Service	Participation; revitalize city; stop riots	Human health; ecological health
Activities	Strolling, carriage racing, bike riding, picnics, rowing, classical music, non-didactic education	Supervised play, gymnastics, crafts, Americanization classes, dancing, plays & pageants	Active recreation: basketball, tennis, team sports, spectator sports, swimming	Psychic relief, free-form play, pop music, participatory arts	Strolling, hiking, biking, passive & active recreation, bird watching, education, stewardship
Size	Very large, 1000+ acres	Small, city blocks	Small to medium, follow formulae	Varied, often small, irregular sites	Varied, emphasis on corridors
Relation to City	Set in contrast	Accepts urban patterns	Suburban	City is a work of art; network	Art-nature continuum; part of larger urban system; model for others
Order	Curvilinear	Rectilinear	Rectilinear	Both	Evolutionary aesthetic
Elements	Woodland & meadow, curving paths, placid water bodies, rustic structures, limited floral displays	Sandlots, playgrounds, rectilinear paths, swimming pools, field houses	Asphalt or grass play area, pools, rectilinear paths, standard play equipment	Trees, grass, shrubs, curving & rectilinear paths, water features for view, free-form play equipment	Native plants, permeable surfaces, ecological restoration green infrastructure, resource self-sufficiency
Promoters	Health reformers, transcendentalists, real estate interests	Social reformers, social workers, recreation workers	Politicians, bureaucrats, planners	Politicians, environmentalists, artists, designers	Environmentalists, local communities, volunteer groups, landscape architects Louisville: public health and wellness department, Olmsted Conservancy; 21st Century Parks
Beneficiaries	All city dwellers (intended), upper middle class (reality)	Children, immigrants, working class	Suburban families	Residents, workers, poor urban youth, middle class	Residents, wildlife, cities, planets

Cranz, Galen and Michael Boland. 2004. "Defining the Sustainable Park: A Fifth Model for Urban Parks".

(After Cran, Galen and Michael Boland, 2004. "Defining the Sustainable Park: A Fifth Model for Urban Parks")

Comments by author: shaded area represents characteristics of Olmsted Parks and correlations with existing Louisville Parks.

Typology by Park Classification

Another classification of parks is by size of park and the distance its visitors travel to the park. To establish the actual space needed for various types of park facilities, the National Recreation and Parks Association published a set of guidelines and standards in 1996 in its *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*. The publication provides guidance to local governments in developing park master plan and system plans (Eysenbach 2007, 27). A model set of park and greenways standards follows in Table 2.4. The column added on the far right provides assessment by the author of each classification in Louisville's park system.

Table 2.4 Park and Greenway Classifications

After Planning and Urban Design Standards (2007)					Louisville Parks
Classification	General Description	Focus	Size	Service Area Criteria	Park Type in Louisville ? Description of like facilities
★ Neighborhood Park	Basic unit of park system, serves both recreational and social purpose	Informal recreation	3 acres minimum, 5 acres typical, 8-10 acres preferred	1/4 to 1/2 mile uninterrupted by major roads or other physical barriers	YES, Listed as major park type
★ Community Park	serves broader purpose than neighborhood parks	meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscape and open spaces	minimum of 20 acres preferred, with 40 acres or more optimal	community wide or several neighborhoods in a given area of the community	YES, Listed as major park type
★ Large Urban Park	generally associated with larger urban centers with large populations	meeting wide-ranging community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique and sometimes extensive landscape and open spaces	varies. Typical minimum size is 50 acres, with hundreds of acres not uncommon (such as Central Park in NY)	varies	YES, Listed as major park type
Youth Athletic Complex/Facility	Consolidates programmed youth athletic fields and associated facilities to fewer strategically located sites throughout the community. Also can provide some neighborhood use functions	Programmed youth athletic facilities	varies, with 20 or more acres desirable. Optimal size is 40-80 acres	varies	not included in data collection
Community Athletic Complex/Facility	Consolidates programmed youth athletic and adult fields and associated facilities to limited number of sites. Tournament-level facilities are appropriate	Programmed youth and adult athletic facilities	varies, with 20 or more acres desirable. Optimal size is 40-80 acres		not included in data collection
Greenway	Lands set aside for preserving natural resources, remnant landscapes, and providing visual aesthetics/buffering. Also provides passive-use opportunities. Ecological resource stewardship and wildlife protection are high priorities. Suitable for ecologically sensitive trail corridors.		varies, depending on opportunity and general character of natural systems within the community.	varies, depending on opportunity and general character of natural systems within the community.	Louisville has areas within specific parks, but not listed as a park type.
Parkway	Linear parklike transportation corridors between public parks, monuments, institutions, and sometimes business centers. Can be maintained green space or natural in character.		varies	varies	Not listed as a park type. Olmsted Parkways are consistent with this classification.
Special Use	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single purpose uses, such as a nature center, historic sites, plazas, urban squares, aquatic centers, campgrounds, and golf courses.		varies based on need	varies based on need	Not listed in park typology. Locust Grove and Riverside, the Farnsley-Moreman Landing historic sites are in Louisville. Golf courses are listed in other major park types.
Park-School	School sites that are used in concert with, or in lieu of, other types of parks to meet community park and recreation needs. School sites often provide the majority of indoor recreational facilities within a community.		varies, depending on specific site opportunities.	varies, depending on specific site opportunities.	not included in data collection.
Private Park/Recreation Facility	Parks and recreation facilities that are privately owned, yet contribute to the public park and recreation system.		varies	varies	Waterfront Park is an example of this park type. Not owned or operated by City, but free access to the public.
Regional Parks and Park Reserves	Larger-scale, regional based parks and open spaces that focus on natural resource preservation and stewardship.			Typically a minimum of 500 acres and up to several thousand acres. Service area is regional, which generally encompasses several cities.	Yes. Jefferson Memorial Forest is Louisville's only regional scale MetroPark.

Note: ★ represents park types as listed in Parks and Open Space Master Plan (1995) and Louisville Metro Parks Park Guide (2009). Highlighted area indicates parks in Louisville not listed as major park type by five classifications in Table 2.5.

Park typologies should be structured to meet the needs in a particular community. To understand Louisville's park typology and its park system, a profile of the park culture in Louisville, its history, and current system follows.

Louisville's Park System and Public Health Initiatives

The city and county parks systems merged in 1968, thirty-five years before the merger of the entire city-county government into its current structure. The facilities in the MetroParks system are composed of those parks and properties that the City operates and/or maintains. Within its featured destinations are more than 40 miles of paved exercise paths in two dozen parks; 22 stocked lakes for fishing covering 114 acres; river access from several parks; riding stables at McNeely Park; and nine public golf courses.

Louisville Park Typology

The park classification system in Louisville is based on one developed by the Louisville/Jefferson County Parks Department (now Louisville MetroParks) in its 1995 Parks Master Plan. It generally follows the intentions of the guidelines for community standards as provided in the 2009 *Louisville Metro Parks Park Guide*. Table 2.5 provides the descriptions of park classifications.

Table 2.5 Park Typologies in Louisville

Park Typologies - Louisville, KY

Classification	General Description	Size	Service Area Criteria	Number of Parks	Author Comments
Neighborhood	none given	< 20 acres	serving residents within a one mile radius	82	
Community	none given	20 - 100 acres	serving residents within a three mile radius	26	1 is Olmsted Park
Major Urban Parks	none given	100 - 1,000 acres	serving residents within a six mile radius	13	4 are Olmsted Parks
Regional Park	none given	City only has one regional park, Jefferson Forest, 5,000 acres+	county wide	1	
total number of parks in System*				122	depending on what source, total # varies between 120 - 124.

source: www.metro-parks.org "Louisville Metro Parks: Park Guide", August 2009.

* does not include other facilities that are opened to the public but not managed or maintained by Metro Parks, such as Louisville Nature Center or Waterfront Park.

Criteria for the Louisville typologies are limited to type, size and service criteria. This enables the city more flexibility to address its local needs for different types of parks specific to user needs in specific locations. The purpose of the right hand column in Table 2.5 indicates Louisville's park system offers many opportunities beyond those indicated by typology. The MetroParks website lists all facilities in a range that is generally consistent with the national park and greenway classification guidelines. The park typologies in Louisville offer flexibility in the types and numbers of facilities provided, as is recommended in the park planning standards. General guidelines suggest the completions of a needs assessment and level of service study to meet the demands specific to community needs and desires (Eysenbach 2007, 27). The *Parks and Open Space Master Plan* (1995) contains substantial information about the park planning process and a needs assessment. The plan does not reflect the multitude of health and physical activity initiatives undertaken since 1995. Additionally, the plan needs to establish levels of service for the city's future recreation facilities and minimum acres required. Although in need of an update, the plan contains some content relevant today as a basis in the planning, design and master planning process for individual new parks, park expansion and renovation (Smiley, 2010).

Louisville's Fitness Parks – Best Parks for Exercise

Most recently published in 2009, *Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise* provides a guide to ten city parks that offer a variety of recreation opportunities to assist Louisville residents in finding ways to meet their personal health goals (Abramson 2009). The brochure references the Mayor's Miles program, which is a series of paved trails with markings at 1/10

mile intervals so that users can track their distance and progress on the trail. The parks profiled in the brochure are located throughout the city. A description of facilities for each park is shown in Chapter 3, Methodology (see Table 3.1).

Many parks featured in the 2009 MetroParks Guide have facilities similar to those featured as “Fitness Parks.” The concept of fitness parks, however, is intriguing to consider as a park type, especially as venue specifically designed to help people meet personal fitness goals. A literature search found no references to fitness parks as a specific park typology in park planning.

Large Parks vs. Small Parks

Louisville contains a broad range of park facilities with variations in environmental context. Extensive study addressing multiple scales would be required to understand two components of the park system: types of facilities at different scales and range of design issues at each scale, and its connection to public health agenda and supportive advocacy of physical activity for a healthy lifestyle. The community scale was selected to address the issue succinctly in evaluating parks for case study. There are several reasons for this. One, the community scale cuts across other types of binary classifications, such as built vs. unbuilt or large parks vs. small parks. It allows the review of landscape elements through a lens not normally considered collectively (Czerniak 2007, 19). It provides opportunities to look specifically at design strategies shared by both past and future parks: legibility and resilience (Czerniak, 32). Additionally, there is often a grassroots movement at the community level to get things done; the community level is where things happen. Leaders and citizens can work together to affect change.

Park Planning and Design in Louisville

Major park projects included in the comprehensive *Parks and Open Space Master Plan (1995)* go through a master plan process. Generally, the plan includes documentation of existing conditions, proposed improvements, a physical master plan, and outline for resource management and maintenance of the park. The process embraces public input on the proposed park or proposed improvements to an existing park, and meetings are held throughout the project to solicit input and inform design. Public meetings are integral to the process. It is important to note that the plan has not been formally updated since 1995, and much has happened in City of Parks movement and other initiatives that may supersede the comprehensive plan.

Louisville MetroParks and the Olmsted Legacy

Of the 123 MetroParks, Frederick Law Olmsted and his successor firms designed eighteen. The Louisville Park and Parkway System was the last system-wide project Olmsted designed, nearly thirty-four years after he and Calvert Vaux began work on their successful competition for design of New York's Central Park (www.olmstedparks.org). His stepson, John C. Olmsted, worked with him on the Louisville system, and continued after Olmsted retired, doing work in Louisville into the 1930s. The culture of the Olmsted park system is deeply rooted in Louisville in three large multi-use parks: Cherokee, Iroquois, and Shawnee. The parks are connected by almost fifteen miles of tree-lined parkways with multi-use paths (Rademacher, 47). The parkways extend into the parks, and conversely extend the parks into the parkways –and into the city. Connectivity was part of the original plan. The design of each park reflects the physiographic character of the region, and features a distinctive natural terrain and character as a theme of its own. Figure 2.5 provides a map of the Olmsted Parks and Parkways.

Olmsted Parks System Map



Figure 2.5 Map of Louisville Olmsted Park System (source: Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy, 2009)

(Three flagship parks: Iroquois, Shawnee and Cherokee are circle by dashed line. By author)

The three flagship parks met, according to former Olmsted Parks Conservancy director Susan Rademacher, “the hallmark of Olmsted’s social vision” by providing a source of mental, physical and social recreation as a relief from the stress of city life (Rademacher, 46). The parks portray classic elements of an Olmsted Park: balance of uses; graceful alignments respectful of topography; curvilinear roads and paths; use of native character and materials; separation of traffic modes; ease and accessibility; and the domination of nature over built elements (Rademacher, 47). Olmsted’s designs offered a flexible framework in that different activities could occupy the same space at different times with different types of users. The curvilinear walking paths with “y” intersections offered choices in travel direction while encouraging movement of people through the park spaces. In response to the city’s need for additional parks, specifically smaller inner city parks and playgrounds, the Olmsted firm continued work on the park system into the 1920s, developing fifteen more parks for the city.

In 1989, the Olmsted Parks Conservancy was formed to protect and restore the parks, which had fallen into great disrepair (Rademacher, 49). A team of consultants led by Andropogon Associates of Philadelphia produced the *Master Plan for Renewing Louisville’s Olmsted Parks and Parkways (1994)*. The plan was significant in its interdisciplinary approach to restore both the ecological and cultural landscape based on an evaluation of historic research, public input, and examination of both maintenance and management practices (Rademacher, 49).

Initiatives that Influence Park Culture

Shaped by the strong foundation of the Olmsted Parks, Louisville's park culture has been influenced by several initiatives in recent years. Between the time of the city-county merger in 2003 and announcement of the "City of Parks" movement in 2005, MetroParks completed 67 enhancement and construction projects for existing parks (Frost, 2005). The Greenprinting of Louisville, Abramson's multi-year vision for parks (Northern 2006, 3), reflects the influence by the Olmsted Parks Conservancy in its goal to restore the parks and preserve Olmsted's vision for those parks.

Other Mayor's Initiatives relate to parks as well. Bike Louisville is a program with a goal of making the city more bicycle friendly, and in 2005, Mayor Abramson declared a goal of attaining a gold level designation as a bicycle-friendly community by the League of American Bicyclists. One of Abramson's new programs having perhaps the most significant impact and growing partnership with several city agencies is the Healthy Hometown Movement, established in 2004.

The Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness (LMDPHW) operates the Healthy Hometown Movement (formerly known as the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement). Its coordination efforts, as described on the City's website (www.louisvilleky.gov) bring together partners from neighborhoods, the business community, local schools, government agencies, academia, non-profit organizations that share a common goal of improving the health of Louisville Metro residents by encouraging healthy eating and increasing levels of physical activity. The city envisions this as a long term, multi-phased program to combine community resources, programs, and projects to promote healthy lifestyles. As stated by Director Dr. Adewale Troutman, MD, MPH, "[it is] a marathon, not a sprint" (French, 2005). Community partners will initiate cultural changes in neighborhoods, schools, health

organizations, and work sites. The early days of the movement addressed worksite wellness and schools. More recently, the effort encompassed the collaborating of several disciplines.

Partnering Efforts

One of the most beneficial aspects of the Healthy Hometown Movement (HHM) involves collaboration between with other agencies and groups for various programs in the area of health and wellness. For example, ACTIVE Louisville was a partnership led by the Louisville Metro Housing Authority that required interdisciplinary coordination to introduce healthy living principles in the planning and design process for low-income neighborhoods. With grant funding from a federal program intended to revitalize public housing and reduce poverty, the project expanded awareness of and opportunities for physical activity (Walfort 2009, S368). The continued support of Louisville departments such as planning, public health, and public works was critical to the program's success. The MetroParks Department participated as a partner by providing a facility for a walking club and fitness classes (Walfort S370).

Another critical element in the success of HHM is the access and availability of public parks. Although HHM conducted some fitness and yoga classes in the recent past, it faced challenges in providing trained recreation staff and adequate facilities in-house. Currently, HHM participates in funding for a variety of programs at multiple levels in other departments and agencies, ranging from fitness classes offered by MetroParks (French, 2010) to participation in the Louisville Loop project. Establishing a continued culture of collaboration has been instrumental in the development of the Louisville Loop. HHM has participated in the funding of signage for the Loop, and the project has brought agencies together that would have not necessarily worked together on a regular basis (French 2010). In addition to HHM and MetroParks, several city departments and non-profit groups have been involved

in the project: Transit Agency of the River City (TARC), Public Works, Municipal Sewer District, Planning and Development Division, 21st Century Parks, Inc., the Louisville Olmsted Conservancy, and numerous citizen and special interest groups in the area.

Design

Understanding active living research recognizes the study area of parks as one that “suggests that parks and playgrounds encourage physical activity.” Studies identifying that the availability of parks encourages physical activity (Kaczynski and Henderson, 2007; Sallis et al.2006; Mowen et al. 2008). However, the design strategies employed within the park to encourage people to be physically active have not been adequately addressed. Architects provide motivational decision prompts such as putting an attractive set of stairs near a building entrance to encourage people to use the stairs instead of taking the elevator (Zimring et al 2005, 186). As designers of the outdoor environment, landscape architects can use such design strategies to encourage physical activity in parks and recreation areas. Planners have been criticized for their lack of quantitative data when addressing public health and planning issues. Conversely, the study of one form of physical activity, bicycling, has been shaped by the five e’s-engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation and planning. No mention of design is made. Studying physical design strategies in parks can assist landscape architects to establish their role in the transdisciplinary agenda, and educate other disciplines in the importance of design in promoting physical activity.

In the transdisciplinary agenda created for promoting active living, public health literature calls for a discovery of a sense of place, and identifies goals for park-based physical activity (Frumkin, 2003; Bedimo-Rung, et.al, 2005). Physical facilities, activity areas

and park characteristics all play a role in meeting such goals. What design offers in the transdisciplinary agenda is making the park work functionally, spatially and visually—and responding to user needs as a whole entity. Design of parks involves a problem solving process to provide order, form and functionality in these outdoor spaces. It addresses the user experience of movement through space and time, providing a cognitive map. It gives context to a place and an experience, connecting form and meaning, and creating spaces that are both functional and beautiful. In essence, design qualities in a park make the park come alive: embracing the user, encouraging enjoyment of the park, and engaging the user in active exploration, discovery, and fun.

Design qualities deserve consideration in promoting physical activity in parks. In the flagship parks of the nineteenth century designed by Olmsted, the landscape was one that offered the psychological and therapeutic values of scenic beauty (Meyer 2007, 61). Parks were a “visual and spatial register of natural beauty, abundant resources, productivity, regional pride, and national exceptionalism” (Meyer, 61). In direct opposition, sports complex parks of the 1960s contained desirable physical features, yet lacked design qualities to the point where one park looked very much like another. The objective park features lacked the subjective qualities to make them spatially unique and attractive. Physical features alone do not reveal much about the user experience or the design qualities that influence that experience (Ewing and Handy 2009, 66). Studies promoting physical activity focus on the inclusion of programmatic elements and numbers of features in the park environment as attractions to potential park users (Cohen et. al, 2009, Kaczynski et. al 2008; Li et al. 2005), but do not address design qualities. Intangible design qualities organizationally and spatially enhance the objective features in the park, working in tandem to produce real design strategies.

Design Qualities

There are many perceptual qualities in urban design that promote active street life (Ewing et al., 2006, S224). These qualities identified by Ewing et al., are applicable to the design of parks. Perceptual qualities shape both the physical features of the park and the behavior that encourages physical activity in the parks.

One such design quality is **legibility**, the capability of design components to be read and understood by the people who use them (Czerniak, 2007). Legibility provides a figural void in its spatial structure to assist the park user in easily navigating the site, and it links physical elements to reference points that connect the space (Ewing et al. S226).

The **complexity** of a park provides its visual richness. It is dependent upon the physical variety of elements within a given space (City of New York, 2010, 23). The design of Central Park illustrates this quality in that it is an artificial place created by a multitude of construction processes, yet appears as an image of nature through its artful screening of city functions and facts (Czerniak 2007, 218). A complex park is one that the functional demands of the program mesh with the aesthetic requirements of the landscape.

Context provides the interrelated conditions that define the park in its given location (Ewing et al. S226). This study centers on the context within the park boundary. The quality of context within this framework refers to strong and easily remembered figural forms characteristic of the large urban parks built in the nineteenth century (Czerniak 2007, 220).

Coherence defines visual order. Spatial relationships are consistent and the degree on coherence is complementary in presenting a visual sequence for the arrangement of physical site elements, such as benches, trees, etc. (Ewing et.al 2006, S226).

Connectivity refers to linkages from space to space or one side of the street to the other (Ewing et.al 2006, S226). Tree lines, building projections, marked crossings, and trail intersections are examples of connectivity.

Diversity lies within the range of activities the park provides. As in a park's resilience, the strategic form and organization of systems within the park must be able to facilitate change while maintaining design sensibility (Czerniak, 216).

Tidiness is demonstrated by a park that is well maintained, and shows little evidence of trash, debris, or wear and tear (Ewing et. al 2006, S226). This is one area where the frequent use of a park by users is healthy for the park (French 2010), minimizing negative activity that produces untidy conditions.

The above-referenced design qualities span a broad range on in the realm of being objective or subjective, presenting metric challenges in evaluation, but nonetheless are a requirement in producing designs that will effectively engage park users in physical activity. Table 2.6 provides a summary of the design qualities applied in this study with descriptions of characteristics specific to park design.

Table 2.6 Design Qualities (after Ewing and Handy, 2006; Czerniak, 2007)

Term	Description
legibility	Capability of design components to be read-textual, biological, organizational, and methodological. Parks must be legible to people who use them (Czerniak, 2007).
coherence	Sign of visual order. Degree of coherence is influenced by consistency. It is complementary in scale, character and arrangement of physical site elements such as landscaping, street furniture, paving materials, etc.
complexity	The visual richness of a park, providing variety in form, line, color and texture.
connectivity	Linking paths, trails, compatible uses with one another to form a network or system.
context	Interrelated conditions that identify a place; a sense of place within its given location.
diversity	Richness in the variety of programs, use areas and facilities provided in the park.
tidiness	Includes the physical condition of facilities and the order of the park facilities, and lack of trash, debris.

Working Together

Bringing together a diverse group of professionals, academic and non-academic constitutes a major component of a transdisciplinary agenda to accomplish physical activity goals for parks. The collective resources are powerful and complex, and present challenges in communicating individual participant roles in the process, and understanding the contribution that each brings to the table. A diagram representing the nature of a transdisciplinary effort is shown as Figure 2.6.

transdisciplinary

- crosses disciplinary and scientific/academic boundaries
- Common goal setting
- Integration of disciplines and non-academic participants
- Development of integrated knowledge and theory among science and society

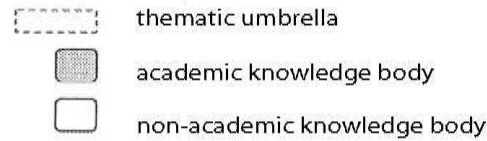
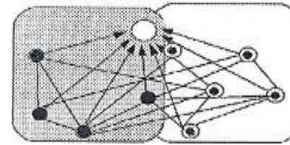


Figure 2.6 Transdisciplinary Concept (Tress, 2005)

Perhaps the most important issue in the transdisciplinary agenda comprehends the perspectives and diverse areas of expertise of each discipline involved. Stakeholder involvement is critical to the success in an integrative approach to transdisciplinary study. In an integrative approach, new knowledge and theory emerges from integrating interdisciplinary knowledge (Tress et. al 2006, 17).

Figure 2.7 depicts the range of stakeholder involvement in integrative and non-integrative approaches.

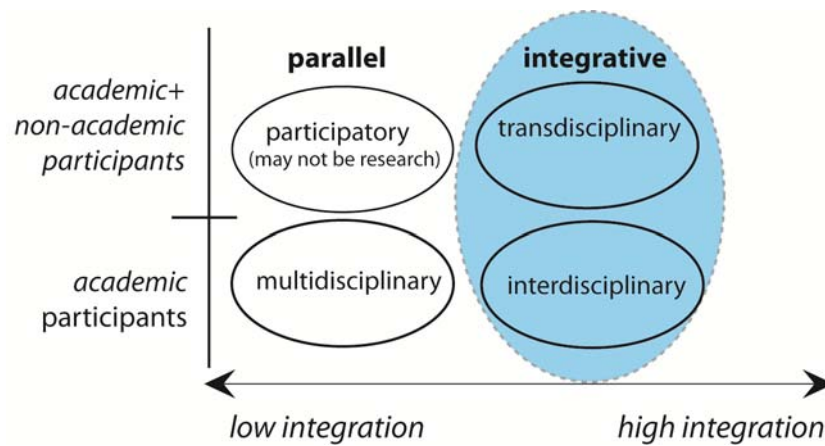


Figure 2.7 Degrees of Integration and Stakeholder Involvement in Integrative and Non-Integrative Approaches to Projects (Tress 2005)

Benefitting from an integrative approach, landscape architects can use the data produced by quantitative studies on physical activity in the programming and design of parks, while public health professionals can benefit from understanding the significant role of design qualities for engaging people in physical activity.

This study utilizes traditional landscape architecture case study evaluation structure methodology and local interviews to build a conceptual framework to identify design strategies. The methodology is fully described in Chapter 3.

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following list provides operational definitions for key words used in this study:

Case Study Analysis-in the profession of landscape architecture, “ a well-documented and systematic examination of the process, decision-making and outcomes of a project, which is undertaken for the purpose of informing future practice, policy, theory, and/or education” (Francis, 1999).

Community -generally refers to local political jurisdictions, including city, town or village; in certain circumstances may consist of a sub-area of a city consisting of residential, institutional and commercial uses that share a common identity (Davidson and Dolnick, 2004).

Design—a problem solving process in which there is a response to a set of existing conditions (a problem) to which a new set of conditions (a solution) would be more desirable. Aspects of the environment that should be included in design involve form; order; functionality in the spaces that facilitate various uses; movement through space and time; context, in that form and meaning must be connected; and aesthetics, creating spaces of beauty (Ching, D.K., 1996; Vroom, M., 2006). In landscape architecture, it typically “links a site, a location and a patron” (Vroom, 2006, 93).

Design strategy—an action for design, which drives design components by purpose and intent, offering clarity, guidance and direction to reach a solution.

Green infrastructure—interconnected system of green space that conserves natural values and functions of ecosystems, and provides benefits to the human population associated with such ecological framework for community sustainability. (Benedict and McMahon, 2002)

Fitness Parks—City of Louisville, Kentucky features ten parks that offer a combination of activities to help individuals meet personal health goals (Louisville MetroParks, 2009).

Infrastructure-the underlying foundation of basic installations and facilities on which a city depends for continuance and growth (paraphrased from Webster collegiate dictionary, eleventh edition).

Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement (MHHM), also known as **Healthy Hometown Movement (HHM)**-a long term, multi-phased program designed to change the culture in the city of Louisville, Kentucky one where healthy eating and adequate physical activity are the norm (Walfoort et al., 2009).

Nature-in the context of Louisville, a great variety of outdoor settings that contain substantial amounts of vegetation (Kaplan and Kaplan 1998, 1).

Nature contact-personal human experience of viewing natural scenes, being in natural environments of public space and / or urban park settings.

Park-public outdoor space at various scales and functions for the enjoyment of public for rest and recreation, often owned, and managed by a public agency. (Vroom, 2006; Garvin, 2000); a place of reconciliation between nature and man (Baljon, 1992).

Physical activity-bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that uses energy positively correlated with physical fitness as movement increases through intensity, duration and / or frequency. (Caspersen, Powell and Christenson, 1985).

Public health-comprehensive plans made and measures taken to ensure conditions in which people can be healthy. Focus is on preventive aspects of health at a population level as opposed to an individual level, and the promotion of health at a community scale (Turnock, 2009).

Public open space- outdoor areas that are owned by government entities and accessible to citizens and visitors alike. Includes, but is not limited to: streets, sidewalks, rights of way, parks, stormwater management areas, and infrastructure (Davidson and Dolnick, 2004).

Transdisciplinary agenda—common goal setting based on an area of research that crosses disciplinary and scientific boundaries, and includes the integration of academic and non-academic disciplines to develop integrated knowledge and theory between science and society (Tress, 2006).

CHAPTER 3 - Methodology

The intent of the study is to identify and evaluate physical design strategies in two fitness parks in Louisville, Kentucky, to identify design strategies for employment in future parks, and to understand the collaborative efforts involved in forwarding this as a part of Louisville's public health agenda. Two topical questions were explored:

- 1) What are the design strategies used in these parks?
- 2) What collaborative efforts are in place among the agency stakeholders, not-for-profit organizations, and interested parties to further the public health agenda?

The methodology is based upon qualitative procedures and incorporates three types of investigation: 1) collection of background data and documentation of Louisville's parks and Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement; 2) interviews with key stakeholders from public agencies, private non-profit foundations, and selected consultants who have completed parks design work in Louisville; and 3) a case study analysis of two of the fitness parks in the city, based on the background data and input from subject interviews, and an identification of physical design strategies in each park.

The methodology incorporates information unique to this project in the construction of a conceptual framework for design strategies to be identified in the analysis. As such, information obtained in the interviews informed the analysis, which includes the development of the design strategy framework. A diagram presenting the methodology process is shown in Figure 3.1.

What role does Louisville's Fitness Parks play in meeting the public health agenda for the citizens of Louisville?

Phase One
Background and Methods
(Chapters 2 and 3)

Gather background information from published data and collect information from MetroParks, Olmsted Conservancy, Public Health and Wellness Department, Planning and Development Division, and Recreation Division, Mayor's Office, 21st Century Parks, and Design Consultants

Intent of study is to identify the design strategies and collaborative efforts which are effective in promoting physical activity in parks.

Phase Two
Interview and Case Studies
(Chapter 4)

Conduct interviews with key staff in applicable agencies and non-profit foundations. Areas of inquiry: identification of roles and responsibilities of respondent; familiarity with issues relative to physical activity and park design; impact of park design on conducive environment for physical activity; effectiveness of transdisciplinary collaboration relative to promoting physical activity in parks

Olmsted Parks Conservancy
MetroParks and Recreation
Public Health and Wellness
Planning and Development
Mayor's Office
Transit Authority of River City (TARC)
21st Century Parks, Inc.
Public Works
Consultants

Conduct case studies of two fitness parks; Chickasaw Park and Thurman-Hutchins Park based on background information and interviews

Analyze results of interview to inform case study analysis methods

Phase Three
Findings and Analysis
(Chapter 5)

Develop design strategy inventory form

Construct framework for establishing design strategies from interview data, public health and design publications

Use form to identify presence of design strategies in each park

Compare and contrast results for each park to identify patterns or disparities

Analyze issues revealed in interviews and case studies relative to effective transdisciplinary collaboration

Conclusions
(Chapter 6)

Conclusions
Future Study, Lessons Learned

Figure 3.1 Process Diagram for Methodology and Analysis (JF Winslow)

Phases of Work

The methodology is organized in three phases of work described in the following paragraphs.

Phase One-Background

Phase one of the study was a literature review and archival search. Background information and data relative to the study area was obtained from archival documents, published data, field observations, anecdotal interviews on site, and audio-visual records. Local data sources inform the structure of the study particular to metropolitan Louisville. Such sources include, but are not limited to Louisville MetroParks and Recreation Department, the Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy, the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement, the Mayor's office, Louisville Public Works Department; the Metro Planning and Development Division, and consultants who performed park design services for the city and worked on the two parks profiled in the case study. A matrix describing the activities provided and physical characteristics of the ten fitness parks was constructed to select two parks for case study, and is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Development Summary for Louisville's Fitness Parks

Name of Park	Classification	Olmsted Park?	Year Established	District	Size in Acres	Paved Path	Mayors Miles	Hiking	Bike/Walk Path	Vehicular Access	Parking Area	Bus Route/Stop	Walking	Sprayground	Unpaved Trail	Playground	Ballfield	Basketball	Amphitheatre	Picnic Area	Boat Ramp	Dog Run	Fishing Area	Golf Course	Scenic Overlook	Treeline (forested)	Riverfront	Horseshoe	Tennis	Restrooms	Volleyball	soccer		
Charlie Vettiner	MU	no	1957	20th	284.38				x			x				x		x		x		x	x							x		x		
Thurman Hutchins	C	no	1999	7th	65.11	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x			x					x	x					s		x	
Carrie Gaulbert Cox	C	no	1952	7th	51.2																													
Chickasaw	C	yes	1921	1st	61.21	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x						x	x	x	s		x			
Shawnee	MU	yes	1892	5th	486.7		x					x												x										
Long Run	MU	no	1960	19th	416.35					x						x		x			x		x						x	x	x			
Jefferson Memorial Forest	R	no	1948	13th	6,191																		x											
Cherokee	MU	yes	1891	9th	389.13		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x		x		x	x				x	x				
Seneca	MU	yes	1928	9th	333		x					x												x										
Iroquois	MU	yes	1888	15th	725.56		x					x		x					x	x				x										

Note: MU = major urban; C = community; R = regional

Data sources: "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Fitness and Exercise" (2009); List of Parks, www.Louisvilleky.gov/MetroParks/parks.

Phase Two-Interviews

The second phase of work began with interviews of individuals engaged in Louisville’s active living agenda. Louisville, Kentucky has been successful in employing several initiatives to forward the agenda for physical activity and public health. Collaborations emerging from specific project involvement and the grants obtained offer great promise for continued success. Critical to this study is the application of the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach, founded on the premise of positive inquiry to seek information (Flora and Flora, 2008). The AI approach uses existing community capitals to build on what there is and what is

working. It “seeks to discover assets on what is working best, dreams about how what is working could work even better, and [then] designs how to build on current asset works to get to desired future conditions” (Flora and Flora, 361). The selection of Louisville as a study area is one of a city that is using its current capital, and optimizing what is working in terms of public health and parks, in a collaborative effort to build a healthy community. It supports the structure for advocating the role of public health to promote physical activity in parks. Through this process, the parks and collaboration efforts in the city are identified-challenges and successes, future initiatives, and potential value as a model for other communities.

Interviews were conducted with key staff members of city departments working with parks and public health issues as they relate to physical activity, particularly with regard to Louisville’s fitness parks. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain each participant’s perception of study issues. Five areas of inquiry informed the interview content. These include:

- Parks and physical activity
- Fitness parks
- Mayor’s Healthy Hometown Movement
- Parks Design and programming
- And working with others.

A literature search explored each area of inquiry, and formed the basis for the interview categories. Interview categories targeted the following areas:

- the role of parks in promoting physical activity and shared characteristics of fitness parks;
- recognition of the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement and its role in promoting physical activity;
- key influences in the physical design and layout of the parks;
- role that Olmsted Parks play in the Fitness Parks;
- accommodation of the parks for programmed activities and events;
- and, effective ways to collaborate among agencies within and outside the regulatory structure and with landscape architects to forward a transdisciplinary agenda to advocate healthy communities.

Questions within each category were listed on the interview form, with fourteen questions. Interview composition followed a semi-structured interview guide to allow tangential discussions on critical background and noteworthy information (Pitney and Parker, 2009, 48). The completed interview forms are included in Appendix A.

Preliminary meetings during the data collection stage of the study informed selection of participants. After initial participants agreed to participate, nominated sampling (Pitney and Parker, 2009, 49) guided the selection of the 11 interview participants.

The interview process followed an established sequence. Interview forms were submitted to the interviewees via email approximately one week prior to the interview, accompanied by the approved IRB consent form, which was signed and returned by the interviewee prior to the interview. Interviews were conducted by phone or in person. Upon completion of the interview, the responses were documented in writing and sent to the participant for review and concurrence. A debriefing occurred in a follow up phone call to each participant to answer any outstanding questions or make clarifications. Interview forms were then complete. Completed interview forms will be retained until May 2013, by author in compliance with Kansas State University requirements. Responses to the interviews were reviewed and synthesized as one component of data analysis by themes and/or strategies. Responses, with background information and relevant published data, provided critical information to inform the case study phase of the thesis. Counting of codes as indicators of participant interest was not conducted, as it conveys a quantitative orientation contrary to the qualitative nature of the study (Creswell 2007, 152). Figure 3.2, Interview Composition, illustrates the basis of literature found for construction of the interview questions.

Area of Inquiry	Literature Cited	Interview Category	Question
Parks and Physical Activity	Frumkin, H. "Healthy Places: Exploring the Evidence" ●●● Solomon, et. al. "Creating Physical Activity, Promoting Community Environments: Time for a Breakthrough" ● Bedimo-Rung, et. al. "The Significance of Parks to Physical Activity: A Conceptual Model" ●●●● Sallis, J., et. al. "An Ecological Approach to Creating Active Living Communities" ●●●	● A - Establish the role of parks in promoting physical activity	How does the term "physical activity" (p.a.) relate public health and parks? What benefits do physical activity and parks share? Are benefits complementary? If so, how?
Fitness parks	City of Louisville, KY. "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise" ● Cranz, G., et. al. "Defining the Sustainable Park: A Fifth Model for Urban Parks" ● Steiner, F., et. al. <i>Planning and Design Standards</i> ● Jackson, L. "The Relationship of Urban Design to Human Health and Condition" ●●	● B - Identification and shared characteristics of fitness parks	City brochure identifies fitness parks to help citizens with fitness goals. Familiar with publication? What facilities should be included in a fitness park to engage people in physical activity?
Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement (MHMM)	City of Louisville, KY. <i>Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement Resource Guide</i> ● Bothner, V. et. al. <i>Community Comparisons and Common Language: A Study to Compare What Other Communities Are Doing to Improve Physical Activity and Healthy Eating</i> ● Walfoort, N., et. al. "ACTIVE Louisville: Importing Active Living Principles into Planning and Design" ●●	● C - Recognition of MHMM and its role in promoting physical activity	How does MHMM promote physical activity in parks? What commitments has the program made in parks initiatives for promoting physical activity? Has the program served as a catalyst for any parks initiatives?
Parks Design and Programming	Cohen, D. et. al. "Parks and Physical Activity: Why Are Some Parks Used More Than Others?" ● Frumkin, H. "The Measure of Place" ● Marcus, C. et. al. <i>People Places: Design Guidelines for Urban Open Space</i> ● Saelens, B. "Built Environment Correlates of Walking: A Review" ●	● D - Key influences in the physical design and layout of parks	What characteristics do Olmsted parks have that promote physical activity? Who impacts design in parks? How do programmed events promote p.a. and use of parks? Who are key participants in City?
Working with Others	Dahl, B. et. al. <i>Anatomy of a Park</i> ●● Lyndon, D. "Caring About Places" ● Frank, L. et. al. <i>Health and Community Design: The Impact of the Environment on Physical Activity</i> ●	● E - Collaborative Efforts	What are best ways to collaborate? Recommendations for transdisciplinary agenda? Next steps?

Figure 3.2 Interview Composition: Mapping the Questions (JF Winslow, 2010)

Five areas of inquiry were developed in preparation of the interview questions: 1) Parks and Physical Activity--establishment of the role of parks in promoting physical activity; 2) Fitness Parks--identification of fitness parks as a type of park, and of shared characteristics; 3) the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement (MHHM)--recognition of its role in promoting physical activity; 4) Parks Design and Programming--exploration of the key influences in the physical layout and design of parks; and 5) Working with Others--the collaborative efforts needed to keep the momentum going.

Case Study

To date, little research has been completed to examine the specific aspects of parks that may contribute to physical activity (Kaczynski, Henderson, 2008). To gain a better understanding of the principles of park design and the context of the park with regard to physical design strategies, the second phase of work included a case study of two of the fitness parks. Subject study was informed by three sources. One is the "Case Study Method," a well-established research method in landscape architecture, a profession whose research has primarily been led by project examples. Mark Francis developed this method for the Landscape Architecture Foundation. Others include John Creswell's *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design* (2007), and *Qualitative Research in Physical Activity and the Health Professions* (Pitney and Parker, 2009). The park sites selected for case study are Thurman Hutchins Park in eastern Louisville and Chickasaw Park, an Olmsted Park in the western end of the city approximately one mile south of Shawnee Park. Criteria for selection of fitness parks included park location; parks of similar physical size and layout; inclusion of one Olmsted Park; inclusion of one park completed in recent years. The ten fitness parks described in the Louisville publication *Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Table*

Table 3.2 Selecting the Parks for Case Study

Name of Park	Classification	Olmsted Park?	Year Established	District	Size in Acres
Charlie Vettiner	MU	no	1957	20th	284.38
Thurman-Hutchins	C	no	1999	7th	65.11
Carrie Gaulbert Cox	C	no	1952	7th	51.2
Chickasaw	C	yes	1921	1st	61.21
Shawnee	MU	yes	1892	5th	486.7
Long Run	MU	no	1960	19th	416.35
Jefferson Forest	R	no	1948	13th	6,191
Cherokee	MU	yes	1891	9th	389.13
Seneca	MU	yes	1928	9th	333
Iroquois	MU	yes	1888	15th	725.56

Note: MU = major urban; C = community; R = regional
 Data sources: "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Fitness and Exercise" (2009); List of Parks, www.Louisvilleky.gov/MetroParks/parks.

Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise (2009) are geographically distributed throughout the city, and the intent was to profile two from separate political and geographic districts. The community scale offers the opportunity to compare parks of a similar size and character. Inclusion of an Olmsted Park provided an opportunity to address historic parks and the Olmsted legacy and design philosophy. A contemporary park, one less than ten years old, was selected to analyze the similarities and distinctions of parks from two different eras to evaluate design strategies from a temporal vantage point. A matrix of the fitness parks with site summary and listing of facilities is illustrated in Table 3.1. Table 3.2 is excerpted from Table 3.1 to portray the ion of selection criteria of the parks: community park, one Olmsted Park, one park included in recent years, parks located in different geographic and political districts of the city.

Additional criteria considered for evaluation of parks was based on a combination of qualities identified as design features playing a role in promoting physical activity such as: access (Bedimo-Rung, et.al 2005); amount and type of vegetation; presence of interesting and meandering pathways (Frumkin 2003); and information obtained during the interviews referenced.

The second part of the analysis involved the development of a park evaluation criteria form based on three areas of expertise. These included interview results from Louisville stakeholders; research data on physical characteristics, attributes, goals and strategies in parks from the discipline of public health; and, from landscape architecture and architecture, Olmstedian design principles and the

guidelines for parks and playgrounds from the City of New York's *Active Living Guidelines* (2010). The information is presented in more detail in Chapter 4- Interviews and Case Study.

Literature Review

The following references represent a partial list of literature reviewed during the first phase of work to direct research and provide guidance to the overall framework of the thesis. The categories directly reflect the intent and direction of the study path to obtain local input for the discovery, and assessment of physical design strategies and the relationship of physical activity in parks with Louisville's public health goal of reducing obesity. Complete citations are included in the bibliography. The sources listed here also form the basis for mapping the interview questions as shown in Figure 3.2. During the second phase of work, five areas of inquiry were established to guide the interview portion of this study:

- A) Establishing the role of parks in promoting physical activity;*
- B) Identification and shared characteristics of fitness parks;*
- C) Recognition of the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement (MHHM) and its role in promoting physical activity;*
- D) Key influences in the physical design and layout of parks; and*
- E) Collaboration efforts needed to support a transdisciplinary agenda of promoting physical activity in parks.*

Following each citation is the abbreviation (A, B, C, D or E) for category or categories most relevant to the interview question.

1. **Frumkin, Howard. 2003. "Healthy Places: Exploring the Evidence." (A, D, E).** Frumkin introduces the term "sense of place" as a public health concept. He acknowledges that there are many recommendations for good places, but cites "a lack of evidence to support the premise..., making the idea inconsistent with public health practice" (1451). The need is stated for documenting healthy place making, with the identification of four aspects of the built environment for public health research: nature contact, buildings, public spaces, and urban form. Potential research agendas are offered for each category. Guidelines for good places are ex cathedra (from one's office or position-architects), deductive inference, qualitative observational research, and empirical studies. The author begs the question of what people other than designers would like to see in healthy places, such as parks. A number of design features are listed as playing a part in parks, emphasizing that these may vary in terms of user demographics and interests. Frumkin calls for the rediscovery by public health of a sense of place; meeting research needs and opportunities for the design and construction of healthy places; professionals in planning, design and public health to learn about the vocabulary and view point of each other's disciplines; and to pursue active collaboration in order to make positive changes to the built environment.
2. **Solomon, Loel; Standish, Marion; and Orleans, C. T. 2009. (A). "Creating Physical Activity, Promoting Community Environments: Time for a Breakthrough."** Presenting a review of steps that the United States must take to close the nation's physical activity gap, "Three Healths" are identified as connected to build a vibrant and viable community--people, economy and environment. The authors point out that interventions at the community level are most effective to improve the physical activity environment and cite the significant role that parks, neighborhoods, schools, workplaces and transportation play in making physical activity an integral part of one's daily life.

3. **Bedimo-Rung, Ariane; Mowen, Andrew; and Cohen, Deborah. 2005. “The Significance of Parks to Physical Activity: A Conceptual Model.” (A, B, D, E).** The authors contend that park-based physical activity holds promise for meeting physical activity goals. Indicating that there is little research addressing what park environmental and policy characteristics may enhance physical activity levels, relationship potential between park benefits, use and physical activity are discussed, including activity areas in the context of the entire park and surrounding neighborhoods. Bedimo-Rung, et. al. discuss the physical park facilities to be assessed in six conceptual areas: features; conditions; access; perceived safety and park design policies. Future research is called for to measure association between individual physical activity levels and specific park characteristics. The authors also call for future research in addressing associations between physical activity levels and park characteristics, and state the need for collaboration among several disciplines to create physically active environments, such as parks.
4. **Sallis, James et. al. 2006. “An Ecological Approach to Creating Active Living Communities.”(A, B, E).** This article addresses current research conclusions regarding multiple levels of influence on physical activity, and that these active living components are associated with different environmental variables. Sallis calls for continued research to provide information that informs active living design of communities, recreation areas and transportation facilities. This continued research involves creating active communities through building a transdisciplinary field of experts.
5. **City of Louisville, KY. 2009. “Louisville’s Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville’s Best Parks for Exercise.” (B).** Most recently published in October 2009, this brochure highlights ten parks located throughout the city as “Fitness Parks,” sites that offer a combination of recreational opportunities to assist Louisville residents to meet personal health goals. Maps of selected parks indicate a variety of available facilities, including exercise paths with mileage markers to indicate

walking/running progress, an initiative led by the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement. The two case studies were selected from this list of parks.

6. **Cranz, Galen; and Boland, Michael. 2004. "Defining the Sustainable Park: A Fifth Model for Urban Parks." (B)** In a "Landscapes" periodical in 1978, Cranz created a typology for parks, identifying four classifications: Pleasure Ground; Reform Park; Recreation Facility; and Open Space System. In this article, Cranz and Boland provide an update, identifying a new type of park—the Sustainable Park. Unlike the other four types that primarily address social issues, the Sustainable Park involves ecological concerns—primarily sustainability. The authors present the fifth type using the same criteria used for the other four, stating that the Sustainable Park emerged in the 1990s. While that appears to be valid, they append a list of Sustainable Parks that include several developed as much as a hundred years before. They claim a new aesthetic is needed not only for Sustainable Parks, but also for all urban landscapes. This relates to the examination of fitness parks to assess as to where it fits into existing typologies.
7. **Steiner, Frederick and Butler, Kent. 2006. Planning and Design Standards. 2007. (B).** As a part of this resource for land planning and site design, there is a general list of park typologies in the United States, used to portray types and sizes of facilities and characteristics of several types of parks including regional, community, and neighborhood parks. Specialized parks and types of facilities are also defined.
8. **Jackson, Laura E. 2003."The Relationship of Urban Design to Human Health and Condition." (B, E).** Ms. Jackson links the effects of urban design to negative public health impacts, and analyzes the state of the science. The impact is evaluated on three spatial scales regarding physical and mental health. The three scales are building and grounds (referred to as parcel scale) neighborhoods, and towns /regions, with significant social interventions occurring at the community

scale. While issues are categorized by scale, Jackson calls for more research to strengthen the association between design and health. She asserts that landscape ecology and landscape architects have provided a body of literature to document the environmental consequences on the urban landscape, yet research is very limited when considering human effects. Article concludes that we need to shape the urban fabric by principles of ecology and ethics.

9. **City of Louisville, KY. 2006. *Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement Resource Guide*. (C).** the online resource guide demonstrates the City's outreach efforts to educate its citizens regarding health and wellness. Topics include physical activity; nutrition; Louisville's health challenges; prevention; and exercise tools.
10. **Lyndon, Donlyn. 2001. "Caring About Places." (D)** In his introduction to an issue about Public Spaces in *Places*, Donlyn calls for designers to re-examine our perspective on public space and spaces that are formed. He questions whether new forms of open spaces that might better be formed by the way people uses such spaces. Of particular interest is the call for designers to present qualities in an outdoor space to be enjoyed by many different kinds of people and be accessible to all.
11. **Bothner, Vera; Bradley, Tami; and Ronald C. Whiting. 2005. *Community Comparisons and Common Language: A Study to Compare What Other Communities Are Doing to Improve Physical Activity and Healthy Eating*. (C).** This 2005 study describes seven cities in the Midwest and Southeastern United States that have established public health practices by conducting programs and activities that encourage physical activity and healthy eating among their residents. Louisville, Kentucky is one of the cities profiled in their report, which compares and contrasts the each program.
12. **Walfort, Nina; et. al. 2009. "ACTIVE Louisville: Incorporating Active Living Principles into Planning and Design." (C, E).** Ms. Walfort and her colleagues conducted an intervention in three low-income neighborhoods in the

process of being redeveloped. Physical activity awareness was increased through creative collaborations with other city departments. This report lists lessons learned in partnering with different groups and establishes a network of interdepartmental collaboration.

13. **Cohen, Deborah, et. al. 2009. “Parks and Physical Activity: Why Are Some Parks Used More Than Others?” (D).** A diverse sample of parks studied in Southern California explored 30 parks in an effort to determine why some parks are used more than others are. At the community level, the study showed the strongest correlation between physical activity and use levels was having events at the park. Parks with most use had lakes or water features, multiples trails and aesthetically pleasing landscape features.
14. **Frumkin, Howard. 2009. “The Measure of Place.” (D).** Frumkin discussed how the relative qualities of a place should be measured. He explains how the Hippocratic observations on health and environment are relevant today, and as we advance our understanding on place and health, it will help us design places that are beautiful, sustainable and inspiring.
15. **Marcus, Clare C. and Carolyn Francis. 1998. *People Places: Design Guidelines for Urban Open Space.* (D).** This book presents design guidelines and criteria on seven types of urban spaces, including urban plazas and neighborhood parks, presenting several case studies on each type of space. Pertinent information to this study includes a section on post-occupancy evaluation, calling it “an exercise in design criticism based on human needs.”(346)
16. **Saelens, Brian and Susan Hardy. 2008. “Built Environment Correlates of Walking: A Review.” (D).** Subject of this article focuses on evaluating the increased amount of empirical investigation into the association of walking and environmental factors in the built environment in the past few years, particularly 2005 to 2006. While the article cites more information related to walking for transportation than for recreation, it does state the preference of recreational

walkers for visually pleasing aesthetics and calls for more connectivity in pedestrian systems.

17. **Dahl, Bernie and Donald J. Molnar. 2003. *Anatomy of a Park*. (D, E).** This volume is an updated version of a book by Albert Rutledge in 1971. Predominantly a primer on park planning and design, it provides a good base of information on functional and aesthetic consideration for parks, and a discussion among park experts from their experiences interpreting the park user's point of view describing physical qualities that made for great parks –the consensus being sites with open space, water, places that were shady, places for walking, and “fun people places.”
18. **Frank, Lawrence; Engelke, Peter and Thomas Schmid. 2003. *Health and Community Design: The Impact of the Built Environment on Physical Activity*. (E).** This book chronicles the historical relationship between health and urban form in the United States. It offers a profile of the different needs of various groups of people, and describes types of settings that bicycling and walking fit into and those that do not. Three areas are evaluated for their interdependent relationships: land use; transportation; and physical activity. Several arguments are identified to challenge past practices that have been inefficient and ineffective. While the primary subject matter in the book is not limited specifically to parks and park design, it has a good discussion of the community scale context of bicycling and walking. The authors outline an agenda for policy recommendations, and call for an interdisciplinary approach to planning and problem solving.
19. **Francis, Mark. 2003. *Urban Open Space: Case Study in Land and Community Design*. (D).** Francis presents his case study method for landscape architecture and describes a structured approach for both issue based and place based case studies. In a study commissioned by the Landscape Architecture Foundation, Francis developed a methodology to improve the level of scholarship in landscape architecture with a comprehensive review of case study approaches in both ecological and social sciences, as well as other design professions. The case study method is an effective tool for planning

and design disciplines, where its strength lies in connecting “seemingly unrelated systems and resources.” Francis profiles three types of case study analyses: those specific to particular location or project, issue based studies, and hypothetical study. The application of design strategies for physical activity may provide “timely information on emerging issues,” and forms the basis of the case study evaluation presented herein.

Analysis of Interviews and Case Studies

At the conclusion of the second phase of work, information collected in the interviews and case studies was synthesized into a Design Strategy Inventory Form. That synthesis and the results of assessing the two parks using the form are the basis of Chapter 4. The synthesis utilizes information specific to the Louisville context. Description of the analysis methods employed in creating the Physical Activity Design Strategy Inventory Form is included in Chapter 4.

Analysis of Physical Activity Strategies

The final phase of work involved analysis of the case study parks using the Physical Activity Design Strategy Form. Design strategies supporting physical activity in the two parks were identified and compared. Common and diverging strategies and patterns are summarized in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4 - Interviews and Case Study

“It is hard to design a space that will not attract people.

What is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished.” (William Whyte, 1979)

Introduction

While a collective body of evidence supports the role of parks in promoting physical activity, few studies have linked the physical environment with design strategies that may enhance physical activity. Two fitness parks in Louisville were selected to identify design strategies employed by each. Selection criteria included size of park; types of facilities; community scale and context. Because of the significance of the Olmsted Parks in Louisville’s park culture and Olmsted’s contribution to design of healthy and healing environments, one of the parks selected is an Olmsted Park. Several studies and research articles referenced in Chapter 3, Methodology, address the need for studying design features in park for the role they play in physical activity. Bedimo-Rung, et.al (2005) identified areas for further study in her analysis of building a conceptual model for parks: park features, access, existing conditions, perceived safety, and park design policies. Frumkin (2003) addressed design features important in parks including presence of: meandering and well-maintained paths; recreational amenities; attractive scenery; perceived level of safety; and the amount and types of vegetation. While public health professionals and planners have written much, most of the research has been

quantitative in nature. There exists a significant gap in study of design, perhaps due to its subjective nature and challenge of developing metrics for successful design strategies. By evaluating the parks with these characteristics in mind, much can be learned to employ design strategies to engage more people in enjoyable physical activity.

This chapter is organized in two sections. The first part of the chapter addresses the interview results and analysis from Louisville stakeholders. Secondly, using the landscape architecture case study model of baseline criteria, key issues and selected critical dimensions were applied to each park.

Figure 4.1 provides a look at this part of the study process.

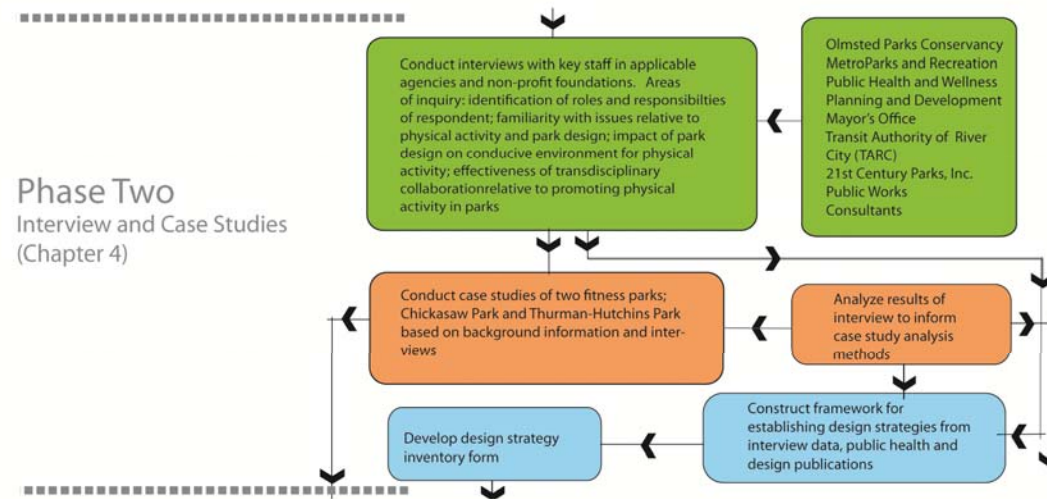


Figure 4.1 Mapping Chapter 4 (JF Winslow)

The two parks selected are Chickasaw Park and Thurman-Hutchins Park, as referenced in Table 3.2. The parks are both at the community scale parks of similar size. Chickasaw Park is an Olmsted Park, dedicated in 1922, while Thurman-Hutchins was dedicated and given to the city of Louisville in 2000. Table 4.1 provides a snapshot of the physical data of each park.

Table 4.1 Overview of Two Fitness Parks for Case Study

	Chickasaw Park	Thurman-Hutchins Park
Park Type	community	community
Project Area	61 acres	65.1 acres
Year of Park Dedication	1922	2000
Project Team	Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects	Bravura Architects Environs, Inc. Landscape Architects

In addition to the physical characteristics of the parks as listed above, several issues cross the intersection of public parks and public health. Interventions and programs to encourage physical activity produce mixed results. Social factors and social interactions involve the demographics of the park location and types of users at a particular facility, and social factors change over time and vary from place to place (Frumkin 2003, 1453). Proximity of parks to neighborhoods is another contributing factor to levels of park usage (Kaczynski et.al 2008), as well as safe and attractive routes to access such parks. These all contribute to the level of use and value a park contributes to its community environment.

This evaluation focuses primarily on physical design strategies within the park(s). The study provides the opportunity to view the design and strategies that landscape architects have used to design parks through a lens of promoting physical activity through creative design. By synthesizing the concerns and interests shared for promoting physical activity, it strengthens the public health goal for active and healthy community. This evaluation seeks to inform the transdisciplinary interests on the importance of design in the active living agenda. Collaboration among city agencies and special interest groups all play a role in encouraging physical activity. Collaboration among agencies constitutes the second part of this analysis, as revealed in the interviews conducted with agency representatives in Louisville in February-April of 2010.

Informing the Analysis – the Interviews

Interviews were conducted in person or by phone with key staff members from city departments, not-for-profit agencies affiliated with parks, and with consultants who had completed park design projects for Louisville MetroParks. The areas of inquiry consist of five topics areas, with intentions of: A) establishing the role of parks in promoting physical activity; B) identifying awareness of fitness parks as a type of park and the key characteristics shared; C) recognizing the Healthy Hometown Movement and evaluating its role in promoting physical activity; D) establishing the key influences in the physical design and layout of parks; and E) identifying effective strategies for transdisciplinary collaboration to promote active and healthy environments in the Louisville parks. Interviewing key local stakeholders informed the process and characteristics specific to Louisville.

How the Interviews Informed the Analysis

Interview Participants

The selection of stakeholders began during the first phase of work in July 2009. Background information provided linkages among activities and extent of previous collaborations between parks and public health professionals in Louisville. Early discussions with MetroParks and Louisville Public Health and Wellness staff members led to recommendations of potential participants from other city departments, consultants leading design projects for MetroParks, and not-for-profit organizations focused on park preservation and development such as the Louisville Olmsted Conservancy and 21st Century Parks, Inc. Working relationships among the agencies have been primarily on a project basis, with no formalized process to date. Figure 4.2 identifies key stakeholder agencies, their connections to parks, and selection of participating agencies for interviews. The chart illustrates the participating agencies in the interviews, and the top-down structure from the Mayor's office. Coordination among departments is project based, as agencies report to different key staff members in the Mayor's office, thus the irregular and relatively non-linear composition of the chart. Selection of the participants was by nomination by other participants, and participating entities are indicated with a circle around each.

Connecting Public Health and Parks in
Louisville - Key Stakeholders for Collaboration

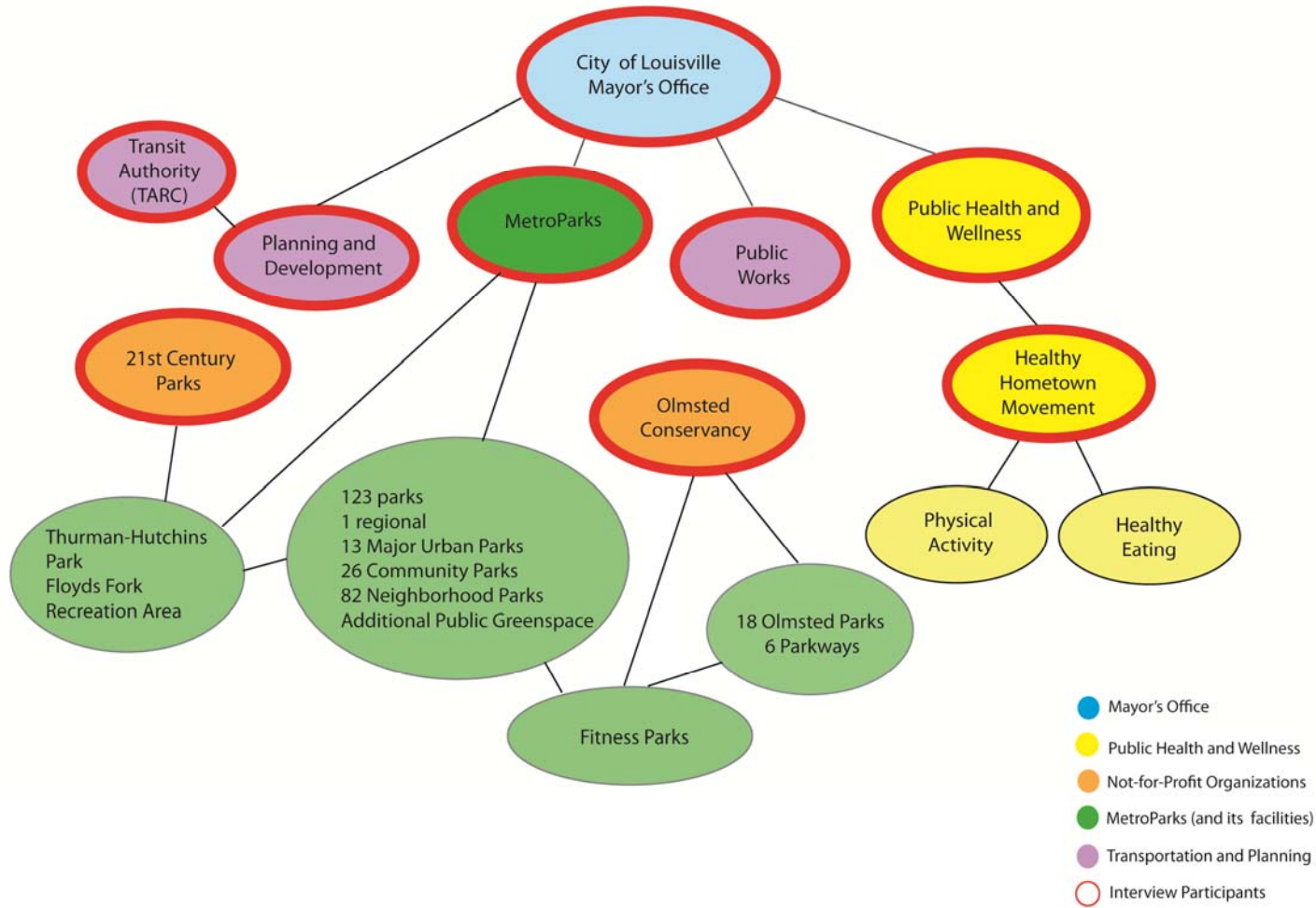


Figure 4.2 Agency Relationships Relative to Louisville Parks and the Interview Process (JF Winslow)

Eleven persons participated in the interviews between February 26 and April 9, 2010. Representatives from five public agencies, two not for profit groups, and one consulting firm, Environs, Inc. responded positively to the request for interviews. No response was received from requests for interviews from the recreation division of Metro Parks. The interview participants included:

1. Kevin Beck, Project Manager, 21st Century Parks-a not-for-profit agency which has been a benefactor for several park initiatives, and is currently developing the Floyds Fork Greenway
2. Marigny Bostock, Community Health Specialist-Healthy Hometown Movement, Louisville Department of Public Health and Wellness
3. Liz DeHart, Marketing Director-Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy
4. Rolf Eisenger, Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner-Louisville Public Works Department
5. Leann French, Administrator-Louisville Department of Public Health and Wellness
6. Lisa Hite, Senior Planner-Louisville MetroParks
7. Mary Lou Northern, Senior Advisor for Arts, Parks and Faith-Based Organizations-Office of Mayor Jerry Abramson
8. Steve Sizemore, Senior Long Range and Neighborhood Planner-Department of Codes and Regulations, Planning and Design Services
9. Jon Swintosky, Landscape Architect-Project Manager- Louisville MetroParks
10. Mike Smiley, Principal and Vice-President-Environs, Inc. Landscape Architects

11. Nina Walfoort, Director of Marketing (formerly government outreach)-Transit Authority of River City

Interview Summary

Generally, the interview responses facilitated the discovery and further investigation of the data provided in the five areas of inquiry. The following paragraphs outline responses to the interviews by area of inquiry. Each area of inquiry contains a brief description, and summary of responses generally listed in order of the frequency of responses, where applicable. Documentation of individual interviews is included in the Appendix.

Describing Physical Activities and Parks

The purpose for this area of inquiry was to establish the role of parks in promoting physical activity. There was an agreement among participants for parks as a destination and a general awareness of the role of parks in promoting physical activity. Additionally, participants noted that the health of the park benefits from people using it, as frequent intended use discourages negative behavior. Responses to questions about the role of parks in promoting physical activity and shared characteristics of the fitness parks included:

- Parks are a destination that create the place for physical activity
- Physical activity is needed to reach optimum health according to CDC guidelines
- People are active and health related statistics show psychological benefits of wellness in parks
- Parks provide a mind, body, spirit connection; both have potential to improve a person's health
- Parks benefit from the people using it, it improves the health of the park itself
- Anything the landscape architect designs has to be interesting

Louisville's Fitness Parks

Louisville MetroParks most recently published a brochure identifying ten city parks as “Fitness Parks” in the fall of 2009. This area of inquiry sought to determine the awareness of the fitness parks as a park activity and destination in Louisville. Of the respondents, seven out of eleven were familiar with the Fitness Park concept. Additionally, respondents listed the physical facilities and activities that should be included in a Fitness Park. Most frequent response was for walking trails.

- Seven of the eleven respondents were aware of or had seen the Fitness Parks Brochure
- Fitness Parks Should Include:
 - Walking trails
 - Tennis courts
 - Playing courts (hard surface like basketball)
 - Safe place to ride a bicycle
 - Playground for all ages so that parents can get exercise, too
 - Wayfinding and signage (currently is very inadequate)
 - Connectivity to trails
 - Safety features (like lighting on trails)
 - Comfort features (restrooms, drinking fountains)
 - Community Gardens
 - Places to explore that provide opportunities for independent activities
 - Facilities are a programming issue dictated by topography

Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement

Located in the Louisville Public Health and Wellness Department, the Healthy Hometown Movement has been actively promoting physical activity and healthy eating in multiple programs throughout the City since 2004. The intent of this section was to obtain an understanding of the level of awareness across disciplines of HMM program efforts and collaboration. Most frequent response was recognition of the Mayor's Miles program, located in several parks. Another significant response addressed the importance of HMM networking with other agencies, and providing funding for fitness classes and trail signage in a number of Louisville parks.

Promoting Physical Activity in Parks and Parks Initiatives

- Mayor's Miles Program
- Enhancement of Olmsted Parkways
- Networking with other agencies and providing funding for fitness classes and trail signage
- Mayor's Hike n Bike annual events
- Louisville Loop
- Neighborhood Walkability Assessments – how to get to the parks
- MHHM has fostered a lot of interagency coordination

Park Design and Programming

The physical design and layout of a park influences the success of promoting physical activity in parks (Bedimo-Rung, et.al 2005). The question in this fourth area of inquiry addressed the Olmsted Parks and the characteristics they have that promote physical activity. Participants cited the presence of walking trails and the ease of movement through the park with minimal conflicts. The amount of flexible open space and generous dimensions for pedestrian and bicycle access were also noted. There was a consensus

that the public, more specifically the park users, is the most important group making an impact to physical park improvements to support physical activity. Some felt that key agencies included MetroParks, the Louisville Olmsted Conservancy and the Mayor's Office. Pertaining to the role of programmed activities in the park, responses supported the introduction of specific parks that people may not normally have visited, and that the planned events orient people to parks, making parks a "feel good place to be" (Walfort, 2010).

Characteristics Olmsted Parks Have to Promote Physical Activities

- No fences, use of natural barriers
- Boundless playgrounds
- Spraygrounds
- Lots of landscaped open space
- Walking trails
- Water to play in
- Nice wide pedestrian and bicycle access makes it safe and attractive to users
- Open space for team and active sports
- Design and build to be beautiful
- Connectivity to parks with multiple modes of transportation
- Walk through the parks with minimal conflict
- Parkways that lead to the parks
- Active living – great potential for walking and biking; winding roads and their one way circulation
- The outdoor rooms
- Interesting and fun places to explore

Who can make an impact to physical park improvements to support physical activity?

- General public is the most important
- Get public input and apply it to design
- Park Users
- MetroParks; Olmsted Conservancy and the Mayor's Office

Role of Programmed Events and Facilities to encourage physical activity

- Introduce people to parks and places they haven't been to before
- Brings people to the parks
- Make parks a 'feel good' place to be
- Events orient people to the parks

Collaborative Efforts

The recent participation by multiple agencies in the planning, design and construction of the 100-mile Louisville Loop for multi-use trail access around the city necessitated collaboration among agencies on a continuing basis. The positive experience described by participants in that effort called for an advocacy by all to be involved in initiatives to support the City's goal of promoting healthy lifestyles for its citizens. Key participants in the program included the Healthy Hometown Movement, Public Health and Wellness Department, and the Active Living Committee in bringing the Mayors Miles program to fruition. The grants obtained by Public Health and shared with others act as a catalyst for providing funds for physical activity initiatives in and outside the parks. Effective ways to encourage collaboration called for enabling policy to have quarterly meetings to exchange ideas and forward each other's project agendas, as has been done to date on a project basis. Suggestions made to engage people in physical activity garnered more diverse participant responses. Marketing the parks as a place for physical activity and incorporating Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, and the inclusion of community gardens as planned for the Floyds Fork project were responses recorded. In terms of the City's next steps, funding emerged as a main priority, to ensure that the existing parks can be maintained and properly supported. Participants expressed interest in putting prevention to work in more ways, and recognizing the perspectives of all agencies and disciplines in the process of engaging people in physical activity.

Key Participants and Role in the Program

- Advocacy by all
- Public health; MHHM; Active Living Committee; Mayor's Miles
- Transit Authority of River City (TARC)
- Mayor's office provides higher leadership in the program; Public Health serves as a catalyst
- CDC Grants – public health; parks; public works; TARC

Effective Ways to Encourage Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- By providing funding to others to support others' programs
- Have quarterly meeting as they have done for Louisville Loop
- Work together to get grants and funding
- Open up the process with charrettes and workshops

To Engage People in Physical Activity, What Needs to Be on the Transdisciplinary Agenda?

- Community Gardens
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles
- Marketing the Parks as a Place for Physical Activity
- Public health, parks and a strategic planner
- Positive indicators for positive outcomes- look at ways for creative funding

What Are City's Next Steps?

- Raise money so that parks can be properly supported
- Recognize the value of everyone's perspective and what it brings to the table
- Put prevention to work- Healthy Kids/Healthy Communities, Louisville Loop
- Continue summits like Walkability, Bikability

The Appreciative Inquiry approach worked as a tool to discover the positive core (Flora and Flora 2008, 361) of the City stakeholders and recognizing the steps to build assets around that core.

Role of Interviews in Park Evaluation

The interview process provided background information relative to the agencies involved in the current public health and physical activity projects, and their respective agendas. The number and types of public health initiatives in Louisville continues to grow at an accelerated rate. Obtaining information on what the stakeholders place the most importance on and what common issues they share is valuable in forwarding the agenda for physical activity. Understanding issues that can be addressed through design are concerns of the stakeholders used to inform landscape architects what they can bring to the transdisciplinary agenda. For example, types of facilities respondents would like to see in a fitness park have a significant influence in design and contribute to strategies that strengthen a park culture for active living.

Identifying Design Strategies

The second phase of the work was concluded with identification of design strategies that encourage physical activity in park users. For the purposes of this study, a design strategy refers to a purposeful action for design. The strategy intentionally drives the design components, offering clarity, guidance, and direction to reach a solution. Here the solution is one of physical activity encouraged by a design strategy. The design components are the physical design features in the strategy. To build a transdisciplinary agenda, each team member needs to understand common attributes shared by scientists and designers, as well as the unique role design can take to achieve the desired behaviors to promote physical health. For the purposes of this study a combination of goals, strategies, physical features/facilities and design policies cited as items likely to promote physical activity in parks were compiled from three areas of expertise: 1) public health professionals performing research in physical activity in parks, 2) design in the form of Olmsted design philosophy employed in the three Olmsted flagship parks and the City of New York's Active Living Design

Guidelines; and 3) local stakeholders as represented by the interview participants. The intent of the analysis was to combine resources from differing perspectives to identify physical design strategies. References used to inform the design strategies consist of:

- Dr. Howard Frumkin from the CDC;
- Ariane Bedimo-Rung, et.al, Professor at Louisiana State University School of Public Health;
- Mark Francis, author of the *Case Study Method for Landscape Architecture* (2003);
- Frederick Law Olmsted, as referenced in criteria in the *Louisville Olmsted Parks and Parkways Master Plan*;
- *Active Living Design Guidelines: Promoting Physical Activity and Health in Design*, by the city of New York City (2010);
- and information collected during the interviews.

The most important component of a park is its users. The users should be involved in the program elements and design of the park. The inclusion of detailed user data specific to parks in Louisville is beyond the scope of this study but represented through a filter of selected common user need categories as identified in over thirty public open space case studies, as discussed by Francis (2003). The following common universal needs described by Francis generally promote physical activity: *access; comfort and safety; active engagement; and discovery/fun.*

A series of four analytical diagrams was created to construct a conceptual framework for physical design strategies. In the process illustrated in first diagram (See Figure 4.3) the list of goals, objectives and strategies from three distinct areas-Public Health promotion research, Design, and Stakeholders-are shown in the column at left. Each item was associated by its relevance to the Common User Needs identified by Francis, delineated in black text to the right in the diagram. The categories in gray text delineate physical features to be associated in development of the design strategies (See Figure 4.4) and design policies identified by Bedimo-

Rung, et.al (2005) to be used in the evaluation of collaboration efforts needed on a transdisciplinary agenda. The overlapping and cross connections illustrate both common and unique perspectives among disciplines. The physical facilities and design policies interconnect to the goals and objectives, forming the basis for evaluating the collaborative efforts.

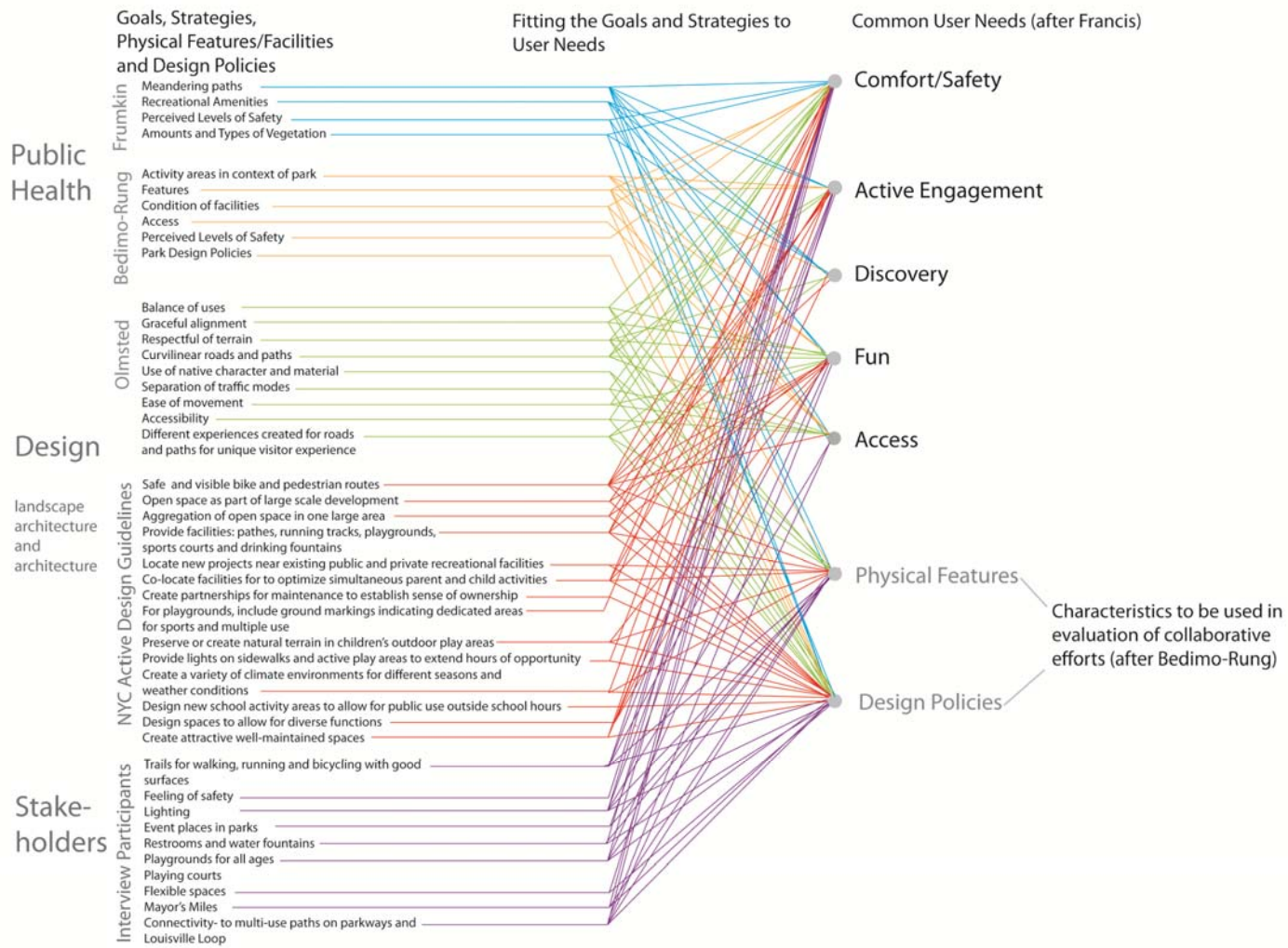


Figure 4.3 Identifying Goals and Strategies with User Needs (JFWinslow)

To further develop physical design strategies, perceptual design qualities such as those used for urban design and walkability (Ewing and Handy, 2009) were identified for applicability to physical activity goals and strategies. These qualities include legibility, complexity, diversity, tidiness, context, clarity, and connectivity as referenced in Table 2.6.

Design studies published in urban design literature have historically addressed the presence and importance of urban design qualities, but have not attempted to delineate or measure such qualities (Ewing and Handy 66). It is important to note some of the challenges presented in assessing qualitative design encompass a broad range of objectivity and subjectivity. This is applicable to park design as well. The following diagram (See Figure 4.4), the second in the series to delineate the process for identifying design strategies, portrays the range of objectivity-subjectivity in developing physical design strategies. Tangible physical features of parks comprise objective components, which are characterized as predictable, quantifiable, and measurable. The body of literature in physical activity and parks to date largely focuses on these types of studies. On the subjective end of the scale are qualities which are unpredictable, open to interpretation and have little research documentation to date.

Park Physical Features

- paths
- vegetation
- weather
- recreational amenities
- facilities
- activity areas

Perceptual Design Qualities

(after Ewing and Handy Table 2.6)

- legibility
- complexity
- diversity
- tidiness
- context
- coherence
- connectivity

Comfort and Safety

Common User Needs

(after Francis, Figure 4.3)

Access

Active Engagement

Discovery / Fun



More Objective

- predictable
- established
- measurable
- quantifiable
- common vocabulary
- much research completed

More Subjective

- difficult to measure
- open to interpretation
- unpredictable
- unique perspectives by each discipline
- little or no documented research to support claim

Framework for Developing Physical Design Strategies

Figure 4.4 Objectivity-Subjectivity Realm of Physical Design Strategies (JF Winslow, 2010) After urban design qualities by Ewing and Handy, 2009)

In a pattern similar to that in the Ewing and Handy study, potential strategies were categorized by user needs and those strategies were defined in terms of their design qualities. Figure 4.5, the third of four diagrams in the series of building the framework for identifying design strategies represents the process for developing the qualitative physical design strategy identification form.

Identifying Physical Design Strategies

from figure 4.3

from Francis

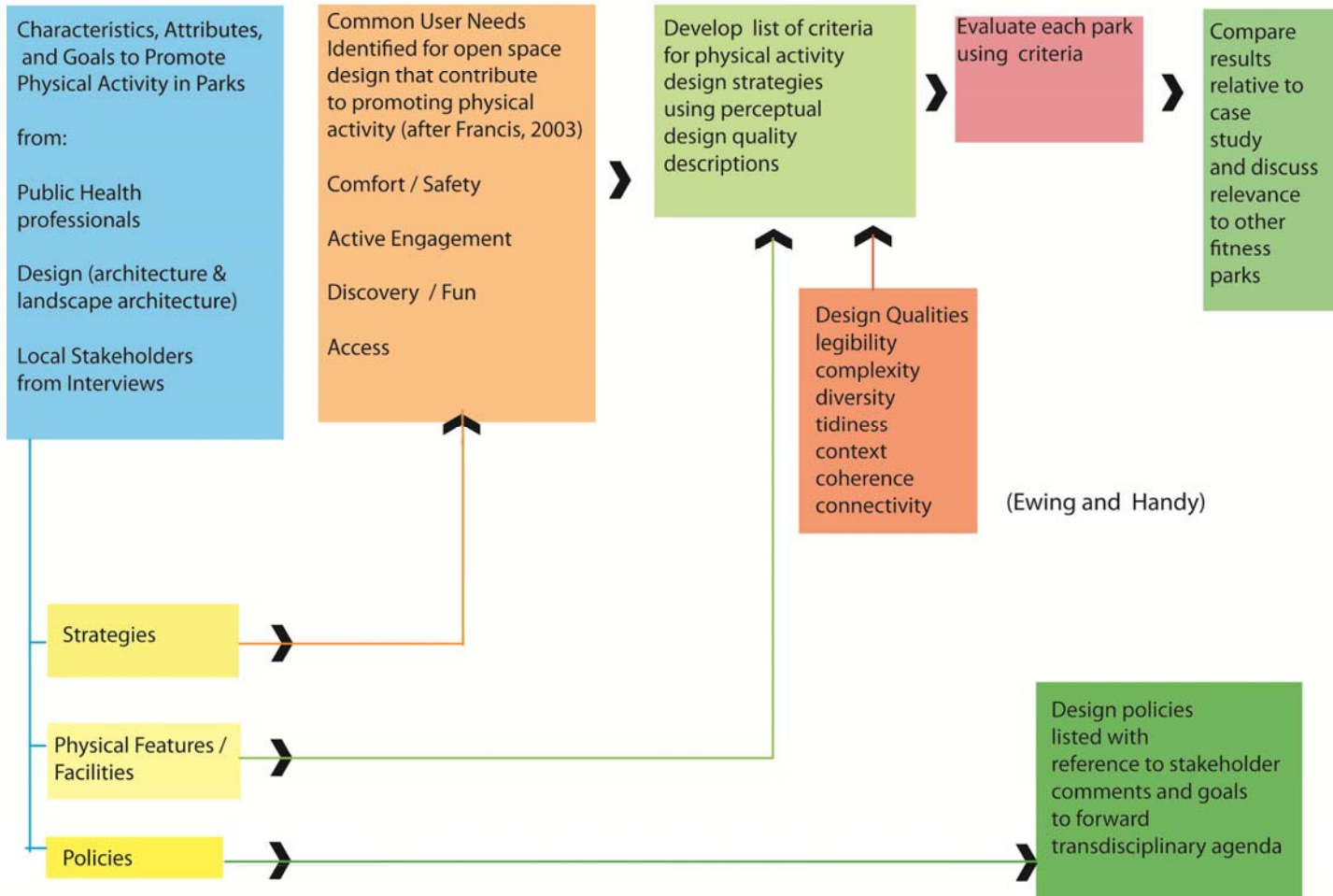


Figure 4.5 Process for Developing Physical Activity Design Strategy Identification Form (JFWinslow, 2010)

The form, the fourth and last diagram in the design strategy framework construction series, combines the information as contained in the construction process as shown in Figure 4.5. The form is provided as Figure 4.6.

Physical Activity Design Strategy Inventory Form

		Present in Park
Access		
Legibility	Ease of movement throughout activity areas in the park	
	Clearly visible and multiple access modes to the park	
Coherence	Respectful of terrain	
	Separation of Traffic Modes - car, bicycle, pedestrians, transit	
Tidiness	Aggregation of open space in large central area	
	Trails with good surfaces	
Connectivity	Provision for areas made for sun in winter, shade in summer	
	Trail connections to offsite trails and parks	
Context	Neighborhood access encourages park use	
Comfort and Safety		
Legibility	Safe and visible pedestrian and bicycle routes within the park	
	Benches	
	Restrooms - location and proximity to use areas	
	Drinking Fountains - location and proximity to use areas	
Coherence	Lighting on Trails and Activity Areas for Extended Use	
Complexity	Effective Use of Native Materials, establishment of identity	
Tidiness	Condition of Facilities and Equipment	
	Little or no evidence of debris, litter	
Active Engagement		
Legibility	Centrally visible activity spaces	
	context	
Context	i.e, sports courts proper solar orientation, etc.	
	Location of park relative to other existing public/ or private facilities (co-location for shared resources)	
Diversity	Multiple facility types and uses provided	
	Flexible Open Space Provided	
Complexity	Facilities co-located to optimize simultaneous p/c activities	
	Motivational decision prompts placed to encourage mobility	
Connectivity	Curvilinear roads and paths	
	Connection to multi-use path on parkways and L. Loop	
	Mayors Miles path	
Discovery/Fun		
	Different Experiences created for road and path users	
	Create or preserve natural terrain in children's play areas	

Figure 4.6 Identifying Strategies-Physical Activity Design Strategy Inventory Form (JFWinslow)

The form differs from other existing measures of park environments, which have advanced rapidly over a short time period. To date, five observational audit tools assess physical features in parks (Kaczynski, 2010). These models address the presence of park facilities and physical condition, or quality, of facilities. A literature search in June 2010 found no studies or audit tools relating to perceptual design qualities in parks. The most relevant study found was on the application of urban design qualities related to walkability (Ewing et al, 2006; Ewing and Handy, 2009). Use of the audit tools has been limited to date, due to shortcomings in audit intent and validity (Kaczynski, 2010). Moreover, the presence of a trail or feature does not constitute design or design quality without consideration of the context, complexity, legibility and coherence of the site, and the cognitive map created by the user to navigate and experience the park. The physical activity design strategy identification form, addresses the perceptual design qualities in the parks, and design strategies that may be employed to engage people in physical activity. The other audit tools have a different structure and purpose. Findings from those quantitative studies could inform perceptual qualities and design strategies to be used by landscape architects in the design of parks.

The Physical Activity Design Strategy Form informed identification of strategies in each of the parks. Chapter 5 presents the findings revealed from application of the forms.

Parks for Case Studies

Park Descriptions

Thurman-Hutchins Park, a 65- acre park, is located on the south side of River Road, and just north of Interstate 71 in eastern Louisville.

Chickasaw Park, an Olmsted Park, is one of three city parks located on the Ohio River. The historic 61-acre park is in the West End of Louisville, on a bluff less than a mile downstream from Shawnee Park. See Figure 4.7.



Figure 4.7 Case Study Park Locations (base map from Louisville MetroParks, 2009)

Thurman-Hutchins Park

Site Context and History

Thurman-Hutchins Park was developed by David A. Jones, former CEO and co-founder of Humana Health Care, and donated to Louisville–Jefferson County Parks (now Louisville MetroParks) in June 2000 (Rogers 2010, 18). Mr. Jones and his

company, Main Street Realty, have donated several parcels of land for park improvements, and formed 21st Century Parks, Inc., a non-profit 501(3) c entity which concentrates its efforts on the development of the Floyds Fork Greenway in the eastern portion of Louisville.

The land for Thurman-Hutchins was predominantly undeveloped farmland, the site of a golf driving range, with wetlands and floodplain covering portions of the site. The park was named for Elsie Thurman Jones, Mr. Jones' late mother, and for Lillias Hutchins Ashbury, the mother of his wife, Betty Ashbury Jones (Main Street Realty, 2007). River Road forms the park boundary to the north, and Different Strokes Driving Range and Patriots Peace Memorial lie directly east of the park. To the south is Interstate 71, a 4-lane divided limited access highway. Single-family residential lies south and southeast of the park site. West of the park is Twin Park, undeveloped forested bottomland targeted for ecological restoration. A map showing the park context within the River Road Recreation Corridor is Figure 4.8.

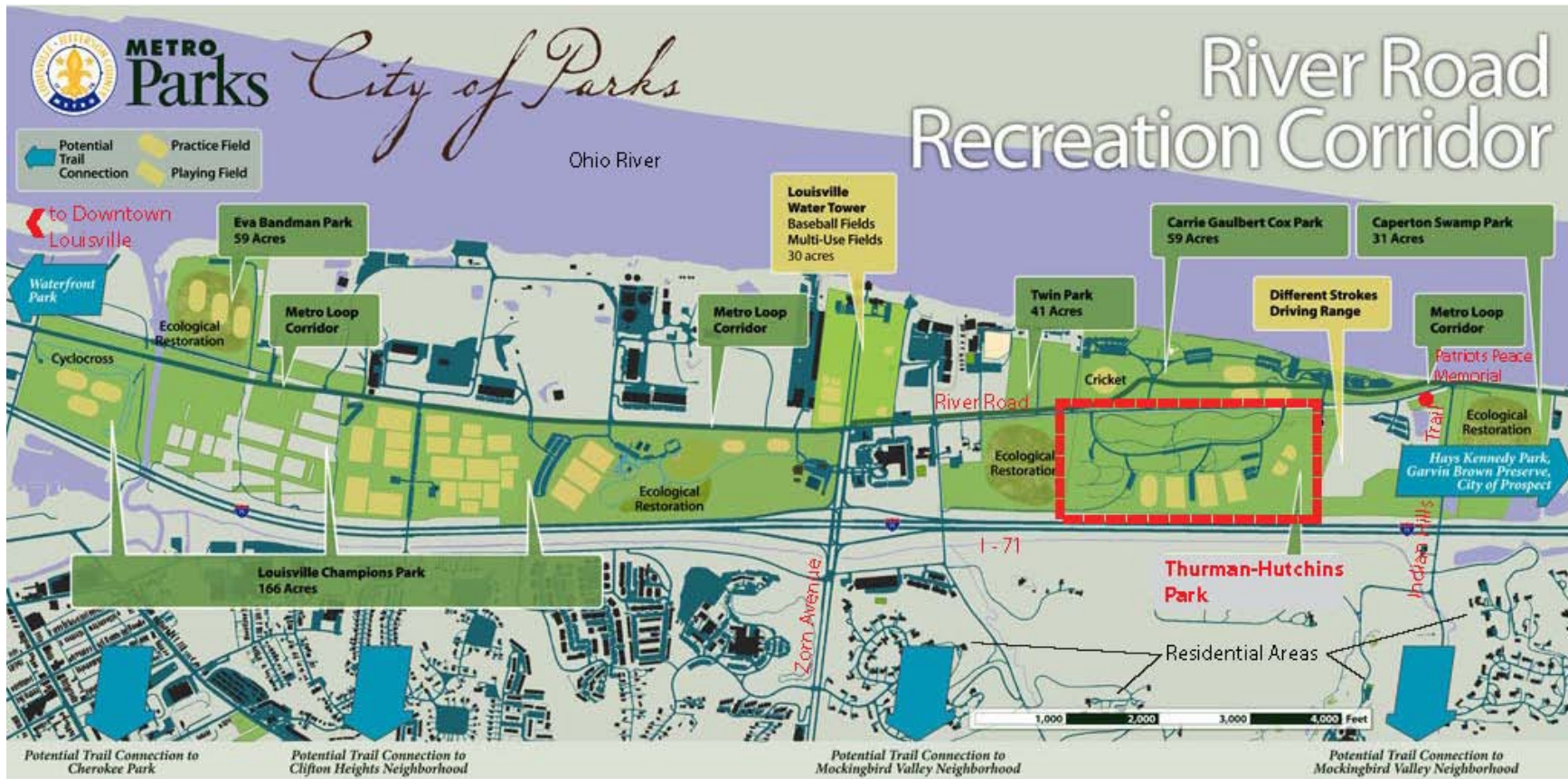


Figure 4.8 Thurman-Hutchins Park in context of River Road Recreation Corridor (Source: www.metro-parks.org)

Table 4.2 provides a summary of Thurman-Hutchins park development.

Table 4.2 Development Summary for Thurman-Hutchins Park

Project	Thurman-Hutchins Park
Location	3734 River Road, Louisville, KY 40207 Nearest Intersection: River Road and Indian Hills Trail
Park Type	Community
Project Area	65.1 acres
Client	Originally – David A. Jones, Humana, Inc. Developed park and donated to Jefferson County in 2000.
Project Team	
Architect	Bravura Architects, Louisville, Kentucky Jim Walters, AIA – Principal Dan Church, AIA
Landscape Architect	Master Plan - Jones & Jones, Seattle, WA Construction Plans – Environs, Inc., Louisville, KY
Contractor	Main Street Realty, Louisville, KY
Owned and Operated	MetroParks, Louisville, KY
Significant Features	Wooded areas; wetlands; active sports fields for soccer and baseball; fishing lake; 3 measured walking trails.

Project Genesis and Design Concepts

Work on the project began when David Jones, and his son, Dan, held a design competition for development of a park master plan. They commissioned the landscape architecture firm of Jones and Jones of Seattle, Washington to develop preliminary concepts for the park, according to Mike Smiley, project landscape architect. Initially, the park program envisioned active recreation with regulation play for soccer, baseball and other activity areas.

Bravura Architects, also retained by David Jones to work on the park, held an in-house design charrette, resulting in a change in the direction of the design philosophy (Church, 2010). Jim Walters, then principal architect for Bravura, saw the opportunity to integrate the existing wetlands and natural features into the design, reducing the number of playing fields and active facilities to the south end of the park, near the interstate highway. Parking was divided into small ‘finger’ areas, rather than large parking lots, similar to the approach taken at Waterfront Park in downtown Louisville by Hargreaves Associates (Church, 2010). Passive areas for walking, picnicking, and fishing were focused in the northern portion of the site to optimize preservation of existing trees, pastoral spaces and wetlands (Church, 2010). The pond was designed to provide an area for storm water management, flood control and a place for fishing. An illustrative master plan for the park is shown in Figure 4.9.

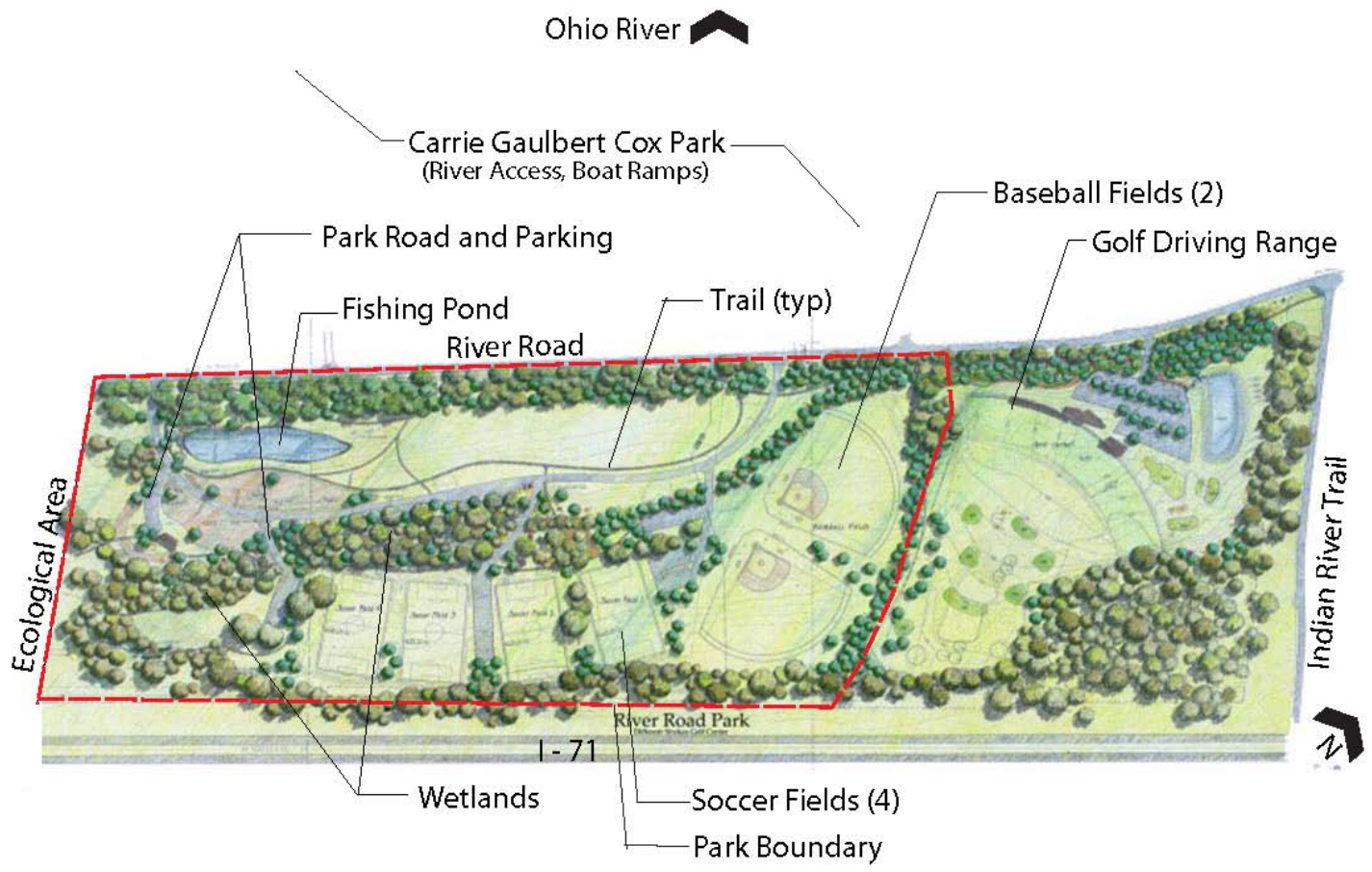


Figure 4.9 Master Plan for Thurman-Hutchins Park (base plan source: Environs, Inc.)
 (Comments by JF Winslow)

Definitions and Responses to Problems

Confronted with low-lying areas and interstate traffic noise, the design team suspected forested areas might be wetlands near the middle of the site. An environmental scientist confirmed the wetlands through evaluation of hydric soils and vegetative indicators, which led to a design layout that separated active and passive facilities. A passive drive through experience was accomplished with the layout of the winding road. After discovering the significance of the wetlands and the obstacles presented to an active sports field program, the number of sports fields was reduced, and the wetlands and natural character of the site became one of its most significant features. Although a walking path was added to the northern part of the park, the term “fitness” or designing for physical activity was not a part of the park program (Church, 2010). The existing Different Strokes driving range, which was located in what became the center of the new park, was moved to the east end of the park. Figure 4.10 illustrates pre-development conditions using a 1998 site aerial photograph.

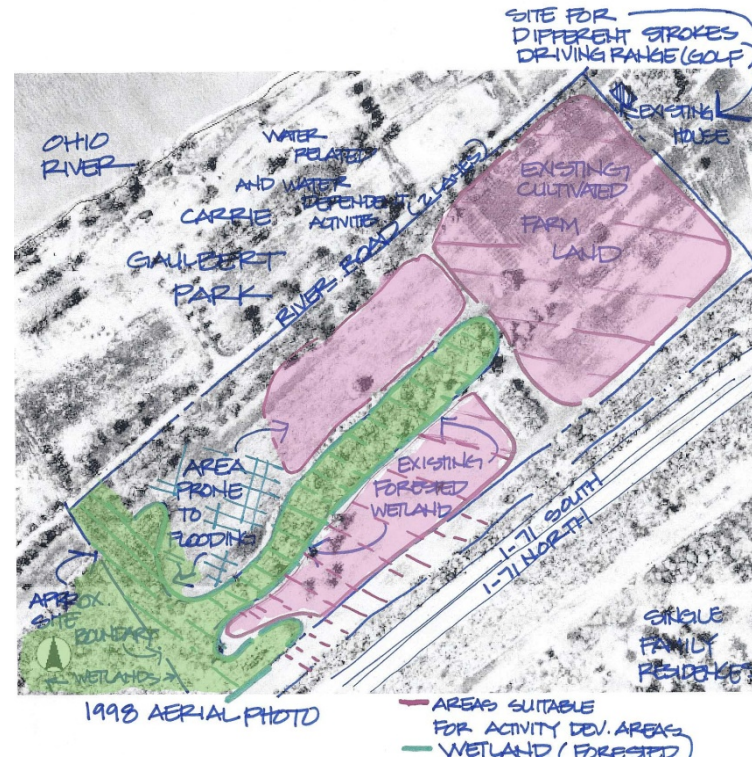


Figure 4.10 Thurman-Hutchins Park -Sketch Diagram of Pre-Development Conditions

(JFWinslow w/ input from interviews. Base photo dated 1998. Source: Louisville/Jefferson County Information Consortium-LOJIC, 2010)

Goals for Park Design

The primary goal for the park design evolved into one where both active and passive facilities co-exist. Preserving the existing wetlands and providing both active and passive recreation facilities reflected an innovative solution to accommodating the intent of

the program, and effectively demonstrated a sense of land stewardship on the part of the park developer and designer. The park was dedicated to the local parks department in June 2000.

Site Visit Impressions

This researcher visited the site in August and November of 2009, and March 2010. The tree covered areas, winding walking path and open feeling of the park was much like the City's Olmsted Parks in the separation of vehicles and automobiles in the passive areas of the park. The walking path, which has become a location for the Mayors' Miles program, was clean and in excellent condition. The sports fields were not in active use at the times of the visit, but facilities appeared well maintained. Photos in Figures 4.11 through 4.13 provide visual context of site visit impressions.



Figure 4.11 View across fishing lake, Thurman-Hutchins Park (photo source: Main Street Realty, 2010)



Figure 4.12 Playground Area, Thurman-Hutchins Park



Figure 4.13 Meadow Area, Thurman-Hutchins Park (photos by JF Winslow)

How and When the Site is Used

Site access for automobiles and bicycles is from River Road. A multi-use path is located on the north side of River Road near the park, but no transit service is provided by Transit Authority of River City (TARC). The site's four soccer fields and two baseball fields are used for league play and tournaments. The Trinity High School team uses the baseball facility for its regular season games. Fishing, walking and picnicking are frequent uses in the park, and the walking path is lighted for extended use. There is a playground on-site, and shelters for group activities. Searching local neighborhood newsletters and local event blogs revealed group use by many different interests. A post-construction site diagram depicting overall park impressions is shown in Figure 4.14.

ARCHITECTURE OF BUILDINGS IN PARK AND GOLF AREA IS SIMILAR TO RIVERSIDE CAMP.
 LAKE FUNCTIONS AS HOLDING AREA FOR IRRIGATION, OVERFLOW PASSES BENEATH ROAD AND RECHARGES NATURAL WETLAND AREA.

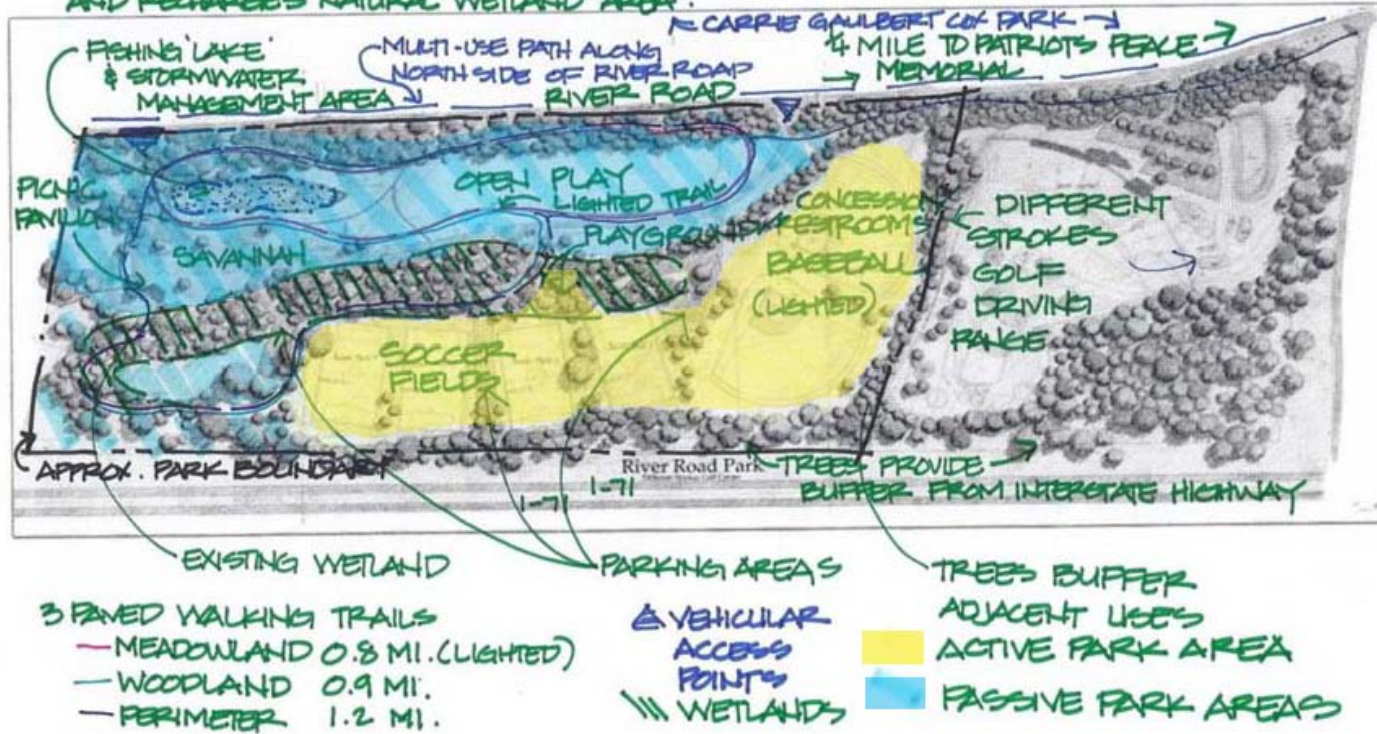


Figure 4.14 Field Notes: Thurman-Hutchins Park Site Diagram-Overall Park Context (JFWinslow, base plan provided by MetroParks, 2010)

Activity areas and use zones in the park are organized as active and passive and located to minimize user conflicts. Five use zones exist within the park: the pond / fishing area; open play area centrally located in the center of the park near River Road; a passive recreation area in the southwest portion of the park; preserved wetlands in the center of the park; and active recreation areas on the eastern portion of the site. The variety of active and passive uses provides multiple opportunities for physical activity, providing visual and functional variety and interest. Figure 4.15 illustrates the activity areas of the park.

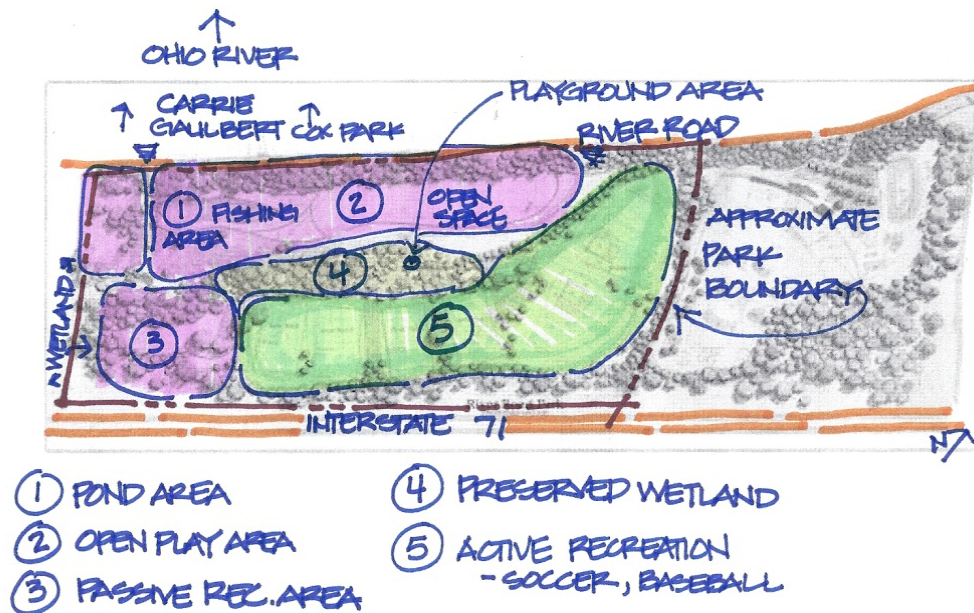


Figure 4.15 Field Notes: Thurman-Hutchins Park Site Diagram-Activity Areas 2010 (JFWinslow, base plan provided by MetroParks, 2010)

Park circulation, specifically roads and walkways, plays a key role in promoting physical activity with respect to layout and configuration (Bedimo-Rung et.al, 2005). The layout of the roads and trails reflect Olmsted's design strategy for curvilinear configuration that provides for ease of movement and minimal conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. While the crossings are few, the need for legible markings and signage for pedestrian safety was noted in these areas. Connectivity to the Carrie Gaulbert Cox Park directly across from the park north of River Road was found to be inadequate, and improvements should be made for safe crossing.

The three loop trails in the park provide options for walking, in both length and location. The 0.8-mile trail marked as Mayors' Miles provides the opportunity to measure progress for individual fitness goals. Figure 4.16 delineates circulation in and around the park.

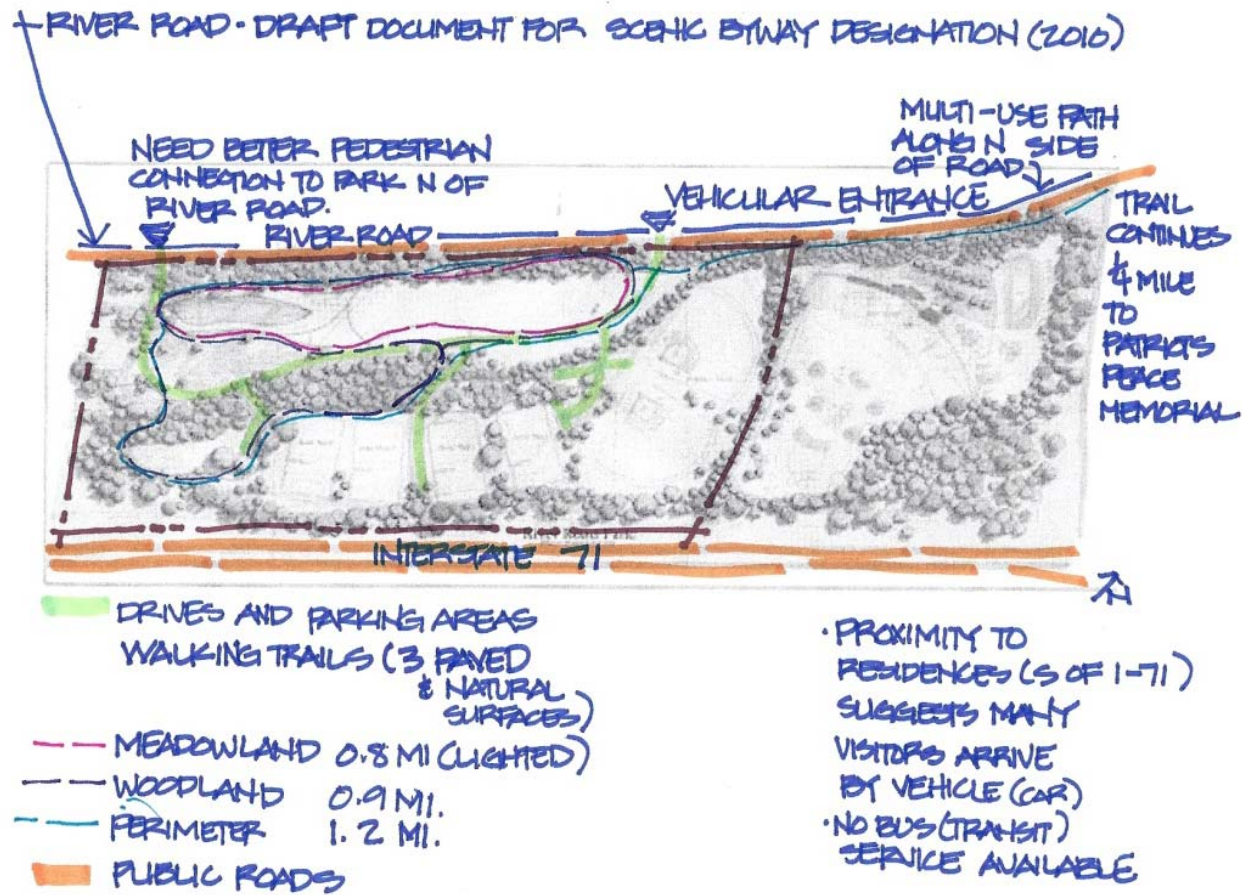


Figure 4.16 Field Notes: Thurman-Hutchins Park Site Diagram-Circulation 2010 (JFWinslow, base plan provided by MetroParks, 2010)

Management and Maintenance Issues

No significant management issues were found in research of published data or discussions with MetroParks staff. Proceeds from the neighboring Different Strokes Golf Driving Range, operated by the developer of the park, support the maintenance for the park. Additionally, Trinity High School is responsible for the maintenance of the baseball fields in return for the home team advantage of using the facilities.

Scale

The scale of the park reflects similar community parks in the city in relation to its size, layout and general configuration. The site is pervious, with the exception of building and parking areas. Facilities and park design address human scale, and tree canopy and wetlands provide both areas of enclosure and openness. The context of the park and its relative location within the Park Gateway Section of the River Road Scenic Corridor is shown in Figure 4.17.



Figure 4.17 Park Gateway Plan (source: River Road Scenic Corridor Management Plan, 2010)

Time

The facility appears to have fared very well over the ten years it has been in operation. Within the context of the River Road Corridor, and its Corridor Management Plan funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under study in 2010, the park and its connectivity to other resources offer a variety of opportunities for physical activity. Completion of the Louisville Loop will also offer connectivity to resources in other parts of the city.

Chickasaw Park

Site Context and History

The site for Chickasaw Park was formerly an estate belonging to political boss John Whalen (Kleber 2001, 178). The park was designated specifically for African-Americans in response to racial segregation in the early part of the twentieth century. Formal dedication as a park for African-Americans took place in June 1922. It was not until 1923, however, that the Louisville Parks Board commissioned the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects to prepare a preliminary plan for the park. An aerial photograph depicts the park in its community context in Figure 4.18. The original master plan as developed by the Olmsted Brothers is illustrated in Figure 4.19. A development summary for the park is provided in Table 4.3.



Figure 4.18 Chickasaw Park Vicinity Map (photo source: google earth.2005 photo)

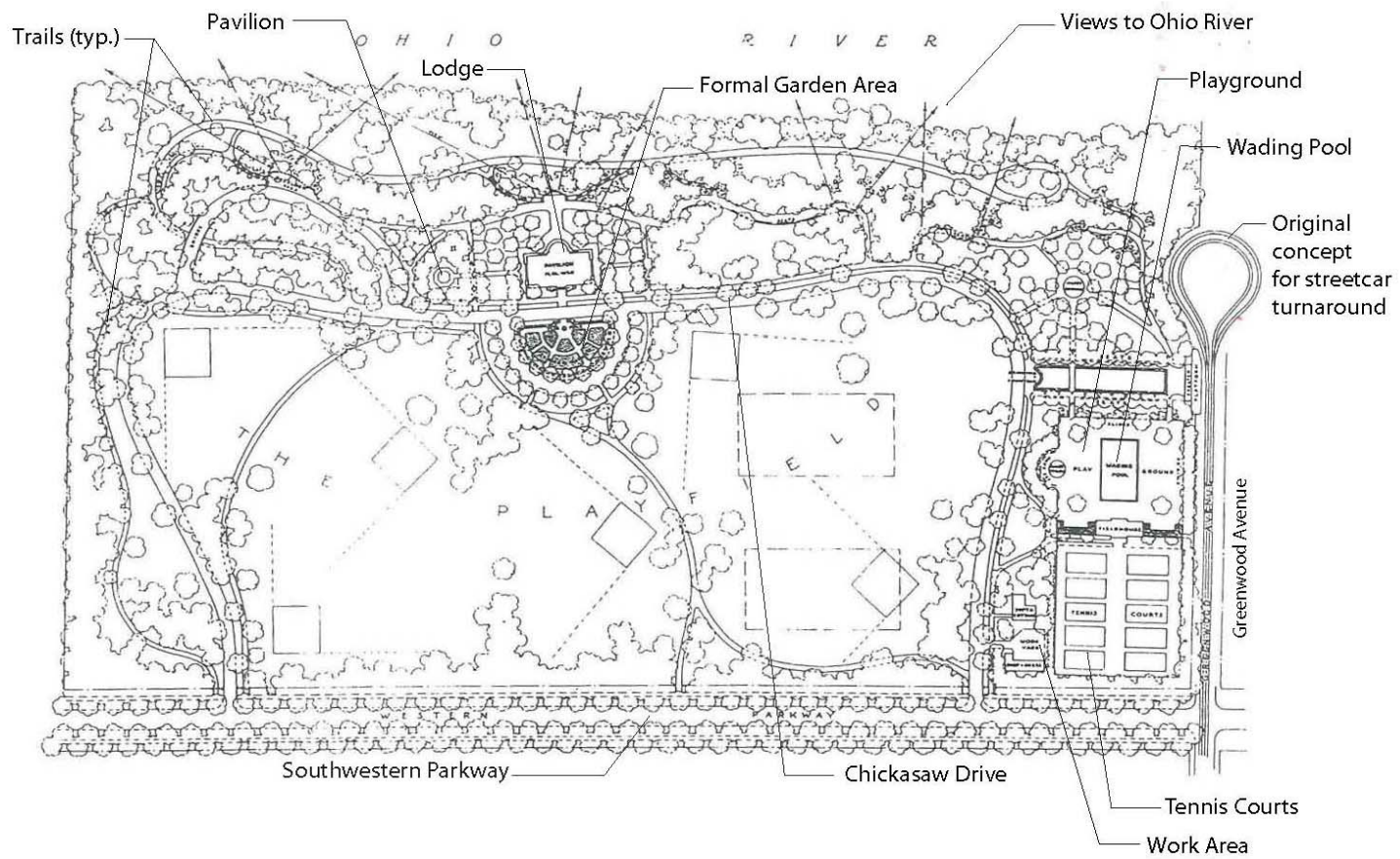


Figure 4.19 Preliminary Plan for Chickasaw Park by Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects, 1923

(Source: Louisville MetroParks; comments by JF Winslow)

Table 4.3 Project Development Summary for Chickasaw Park

Project	Chickasaw Park
Location	1200 Southwestern Parkway, Louisville, KY 40211 Nearest Intersection Southwestern Parkway and Greenwood Avenue
Park Type	Community
Project Area	61.21 acres
Year of Property Acquisition	1921
Client	Louisville Board of Park Commissioners City of Louisville, KY
Original Master Plan Completed	1923
Park Construction Completed	1930
Construction Budget	Approximately \$26,000.00 (in 1929 dollars)
Project Team	
Landscape Architect	Olmsted Brothers
Engineer	W.C. Horrigan
Significant Features	Riverfront park; multiple points of access;

The plan developed by the Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects reflects the philosophy of their predecessor Frederick Law Olmsted to be responsive to the land's terrain and natural features by design. According to Olmsted historian Arleyn Levee (2001), the 1923 Preliminary Plan for Chickasaw Park provided:

- A design for a variety of uses, as well as facilities to support such uses for a broad range of ages and interests;
- An area of relatively level, well drained upland area that was adaptable for a variety of recreational uses;
- A system of well placed paths and drives to access all areas of the park, both upland and to the river;
- A large interior green area inside the curvilinear paths;
- Views over the Ohio River oriented to expand the park by including the river in its viewshed;
- A separation of spaces in a logical and visually pleasing sequence, including transition zones between those spaces; and
- Deliberate separation of activities to minimize user conflicts and enhance the positive park experience for the visitors.

When constructed, the park that was developed had several variations from the original master plan. The concepts were relevant to the park constructed (Levee, 2001). A series of historical aerial photography, documented changes to the park through time in the *Master Plan for the Renewal and Management of Chickasaw Park* (Environs, Inc. et al 2001). A major flood significantly affected the park in 1937 and led to the subsequent construction of an earthen floodwall. The floodwall interrupted the gradual slope of the land to the river, and divided the riverbank portion of the park from the upland portion.

Ms. Levee evaluated the landscape character chronologically through a series of plans and aerial photographs with reference to the design intent of the Olmsted Plan. While the park was not constructed exactly to plan, it did achieve the intent of the plan in many respects. It is important to note that when the park was dedicated in 1922, no facilities had been constructed. Construction was done in segments over a long period. The earthen floodwall constructed in the 1940s bisected the riverfront and parkway areas.

Definitions and Responses to Problems: the 2000 Master Plan

Over time Chickasaw Park's resources experienced physical deterioration, as did other Olmsted Parks in Louisville. After the plan for the Olmsted 'Big Three' Parks and Parkways was completed in 1994, the city addressed the need for improvements in Chickasaw Park with an extensive master planning process. The result was the completion of a final design plan in 2000 and a *Master Plan for the Renewal and Management of Chickasaw Park* (Environs, Inc. et al 2001). The goal of the plan was to integrate the cultural, historic and ecological components for restoration of the park to improve the user experience and provide for future management and maintenance of the park. In the planning process, a community committee identified several items for park improvements. These proposed improvements included: expansion of the lodge area; clean up of the pond area, which had suffered bank erosion and water quality issues; improvements to restrooms to upgrade them for year round climate conditions; replace lights on the existing walking path; provide safe access to the river; alleviate drainage problems in the pond area; increase the number of drinking fountains in the park, distributing them throughout the park. Upgrades were also requested for tennis courts, walking path asphalt replacement and an increase in the area for gatherings and reunions. Playground equipment was identified for replacement to meet current safety

standards. The Master Plan attempted to address the concerns of community residents. The proposed improvements, however, were never constructed. The plan is presented as Figure 4. 20.



Figure 4.20 Chickasaw Park Proposed Master Plan, 2000

(Source: Louisville MetroParks; plan prepared by Environs, Inc.; comments by JF Winslow)

This researcher visited the site in August and November of 2009 and March 2010. The resilience of the park was evident. Although physical facilities of the park appeared worn and in need of improvement, the tree covered areas, winding walking path and open feeling of the park were intact and represented a comfortable human scale. Figures 4.21 through 4.23 portray images of the park.



Figure 4.21 Walking Path in Chickasaw Park



Figure 4.22 Playground and Shelter Area, Chickasaw Park



Figure 4.23 Open Play Area, Chickasaw Park (photos by JFWinslow, 2009)

How and When the Site is Used

Site access for automobiles and bicycles is from Southwestern Parkway. A sidewalk is located on adjacent to Southwestern Parkway, and transit service is provided by Transit Authority of River City (TARC). The site's six clay and six asphalt tennis courts are the home of the West Louisville Tennis Club. A basketball court, volleyball court and half court basketball facility are located on site, as well as a sprayground for water play. Fishing, walking and picnicking are frequent uses in the park, and the walking path is lighted for extended use. There is a playground on-site, and shelters for group activities. A site diagram describing the park vicinity is shown as Figure 4.24.

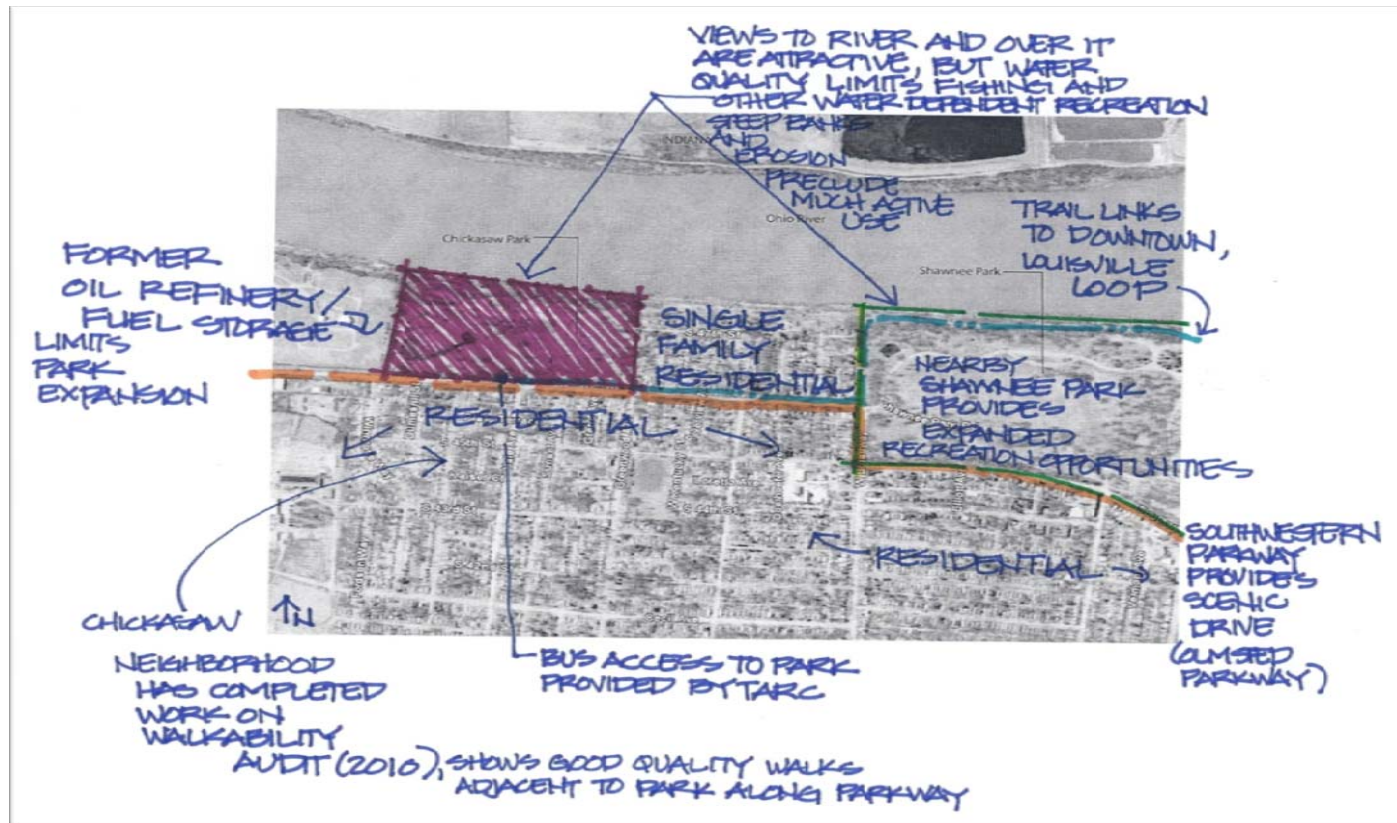


Figure 4.24 Field Notes: Chickasaw Park Site Diagram-Park Vicinity 2010

(Base photo from Louisville/Jefferson County Information Consortium (LOIJC), 2010; comments by JF Winslow)

Park zones and activity areas generally follow the original Olmsted plan. Five zones are included in the park. The riverfront area is the most underutilized and contains steep slopes and thick vegetation, making it difficult to access from the park or from the Ohio River. The lodge area is centrally located on site, and frequently used for gatherings and family reunions. As a result, it becomes

a congested area, and the facility is undersized for events held there. The active recreation area is heavily used for tennis, basketball, playground and sprayground. The pond area has been used for fishing, but has experienced water quality problems in recent years. The parkway/shelter area has excellent park visibility both in and out of the park. The playground equipment in this area needs updating, and no drinking fountains are in the immediate area. Figure 4.25 illustrates the park zones and activity areas.

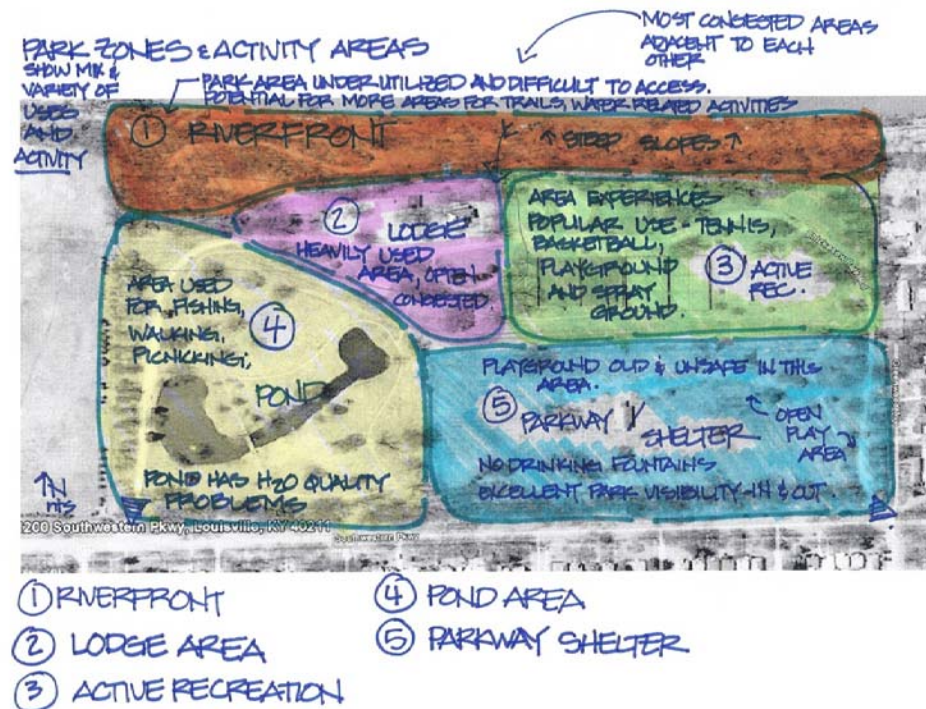


Figure 4.25 Field Notes: Chickasaw Park Site Diagram-Activity Areas (after Environs, Inc., 2001)

Vehicular circulation within the park is on Chickasaw Drive, the road configured in a half loop through the park. The paved paths through the park are well used and in need of re-surfacing. A par course is located along the trail, and needs to be updated. The trail is beneath a mature tree canopy for part of its length, providing shade in summer and sun in winter. There is no fence along the park boundary, providing for multiple access points for pedestrians. Minimal conflicts were found between vehicular and pedestrian movement, and a safe crossing would improve access to the park. The circulation plan is provided as Figure 4.26.

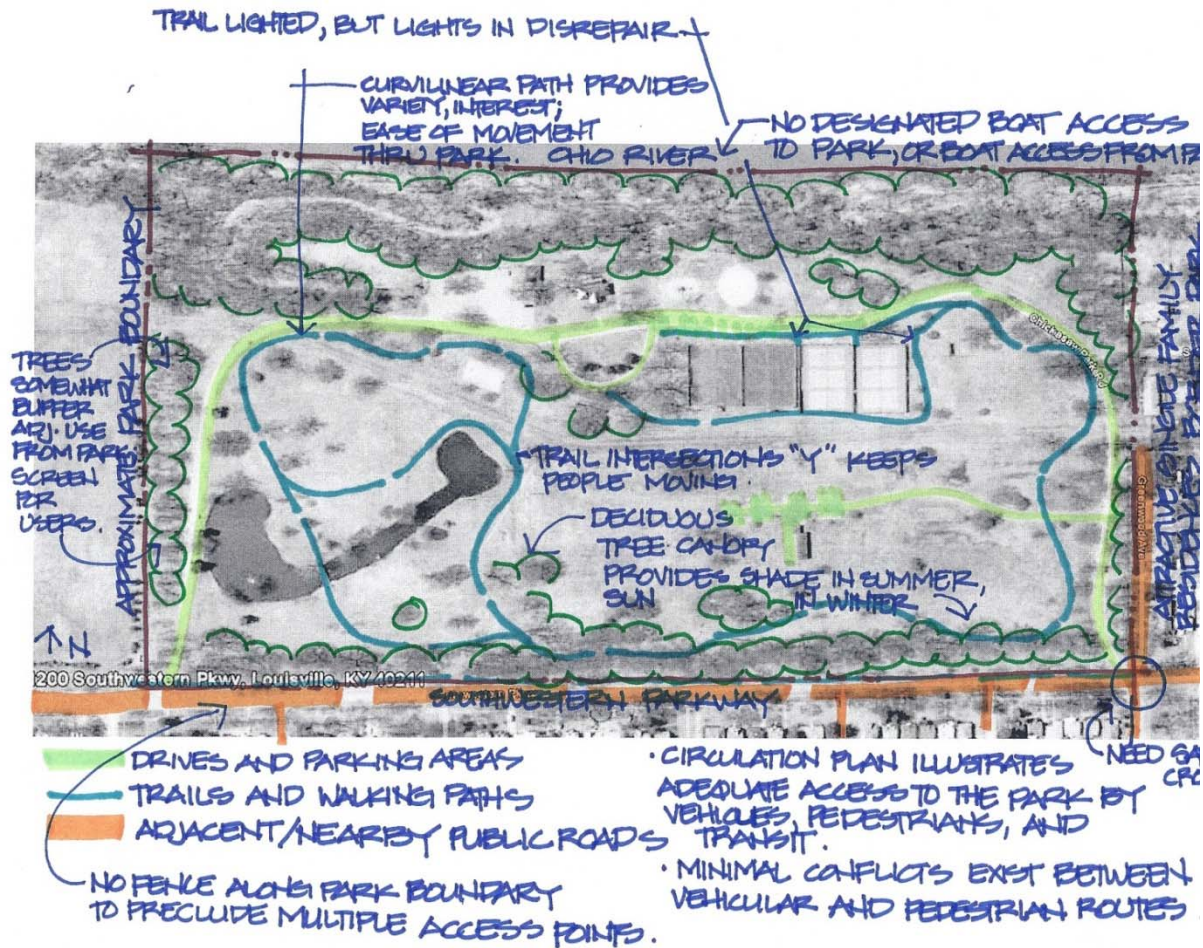
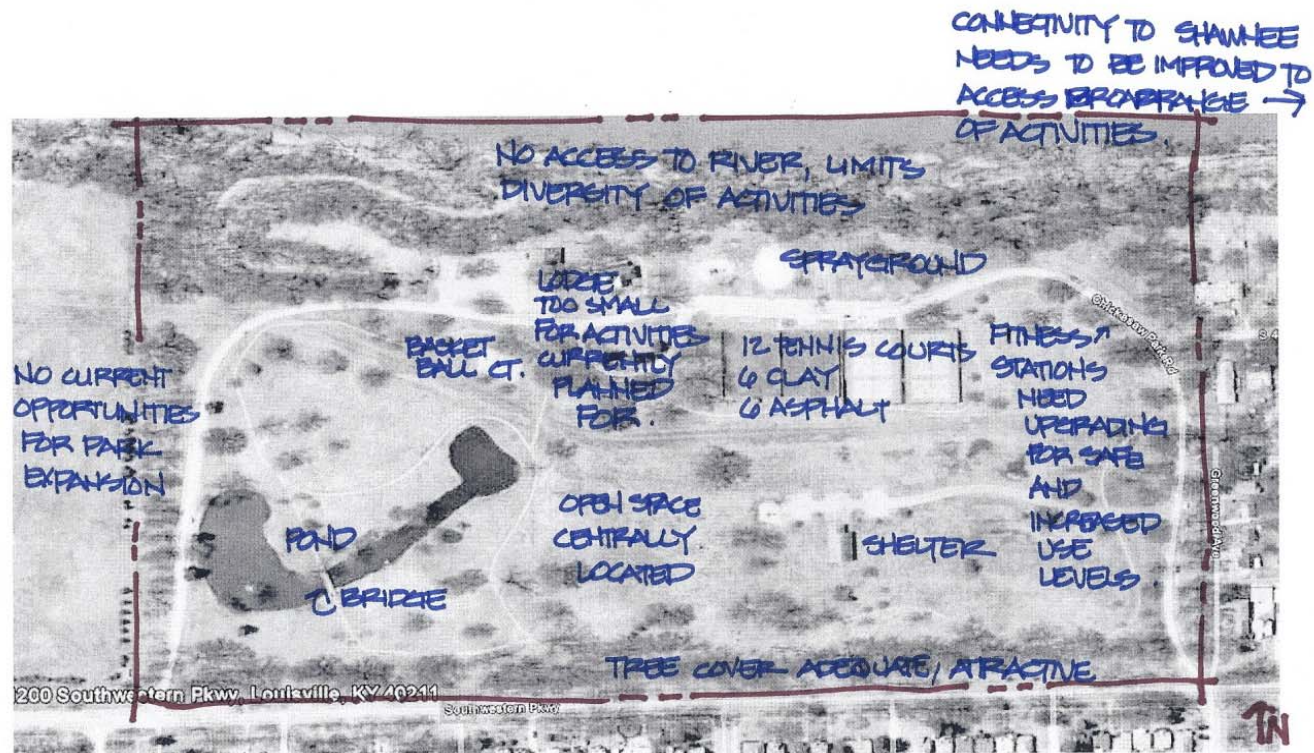


Figure 4.26 Field Notes: Chickasaw Park-Site Diagram Circulation, 2010 (JF Winslow)

In the context of the overall park, Figure 4.27 provides a summary of comments on park analysis.



ACCESS: AVAILABLE TO PARK VIA TRANSIT, CAR, BICYCLE, PEDESTRIANS
 • ADA ACCESSIBLE WITHIN PARK, NEED CURB RAMP AND SIDEWALK CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS TO PROVIDE SAFER ACCESS.

CIRCULATION: GOOD FOR BOTH AUTOS AND PEDESTRIANS WITHIN PARK - MINIMAL CONFLICTS AND TWO AREAS EXPERIENCING CONGESTION.

Figure 4.27 Field Notes: Chickasaw Park Site Diagram-Overall Park Context, 2010 (JFWinslow 2010)

Management and Maintenance Issues

No significant management issues were found in research of published data or discussions with MetroParks staff. MetroParks provides maintenance for the park. As in the case of the other Olmsted Parks, maintenance demands appeared to exceed maintenance budgets. Proposed improvements from the 2000 master plan were not completed due to insufficient funds. The resilience of the park is challenged by its physical condition and need for improvements. As one of the interview participants observed about the Olmsted Parks, “they are loved to death” (Smiley, 2010).

Scale

The scale of the park reflects similar community parks in the city in relation to its size, layout and general configuration. Placement and configuration of walking paths address human scale, as do the facilities in the pond area. The canopy of mature trees provides a context of scale and a sense of filtered enclosure.

Time

Since its inception in the early 1920s, the park has accommodated many types of uses and users. Due to its rich cultural history, it is as if there is a special relationship between the park and its users. The flexible open spaces have stood the test of time for the park, but its facilities, while well loved, are in definite need of improvements to enhance the user experience.

CHAPTER 5 - Findings and Analysis

“Look at positive indicators for positive outcomes.”

(Steve Sizemore, Planning and Development, 2010)

Chapter 5 delineates the presence of design strategies identified in each park and provides a comparison of design strategies in both parks to identify common strategies, emerging patterns and disparities relevant to parks built at different times in different parts of the city. Evaluation of collaborative efforts to further active living initiatives for parks in Louisville is also provided, based on information obtained from the interviews and background data. Figure 5.1 maps the contents in this chapter of the study.

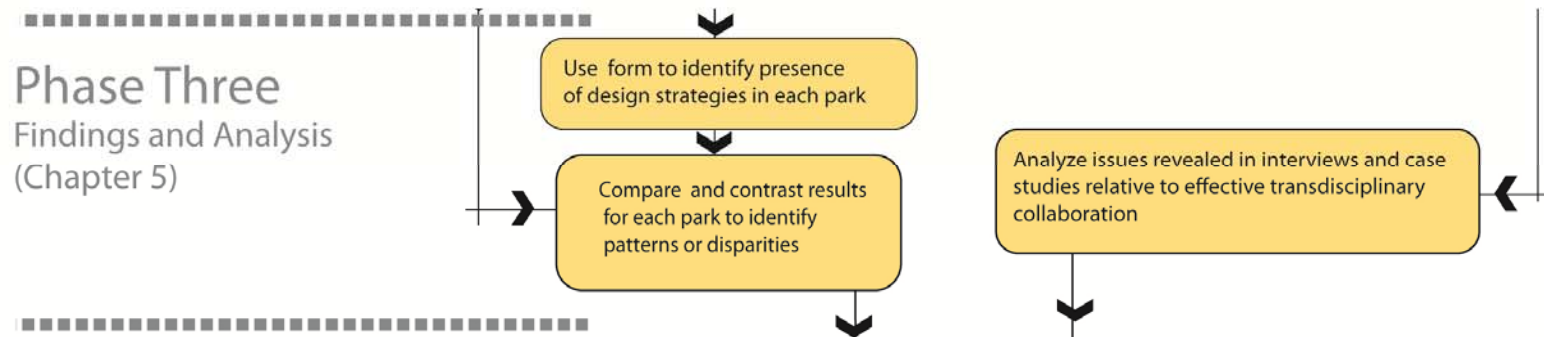


Figure 5.1 Mapping Chapter 5 (JF Winslow)

Evaluating Physical Design Strategies

The case study documentation was used to identify physical activity design strategies utilized in each park. In addition, the relative importance or prominence of each strategy within the park was considered. The following discussion addresses the design qualities associated with the universal needs that promote physical activity. Assessment of the design qualities is complemented with supporting observations by interviewees, where applicable.

Design Strategies in Thurman-Hutchins Park

As stated by project architect Dan Church, physical design strategies to engage people in physical activity was not a specific program element in the original design concept for this park. Based upon this researcher's evaluation, however, Thurman-Hutchins Park contained several design strategies to encourage physical activity.

Access

Layout and configuration are conducive to ease of movement throughout the site. Located along the River Road Scenic Corridor, the park was visually accessible and the setting invites visitors to experience the park. Access points to the site were clearly visible, but since much of the access is by automobile, pedestrian routes appeared to be of

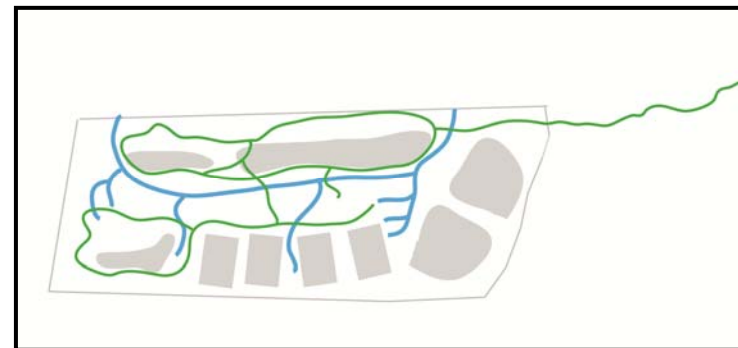


Figure 5.2 Access in Thurman-Hutchins Park (JF Winslow)

secondary importance. Open spaces were legible and clearly identifiable, aggregated in large central areas. Trails were paved and well marked. Separation of traffic modes was fair, but pedestrian crossings appeared to be inadequately marked, and no obvious trail connection was provided to Carrie Gaulbert Cox Park, on the north side of River Road. Trail connections to Patriots Peace Memorial provide offsite connections to other parks and recreation facilities, but within the context of the River Road Recreation Corridor, there is limited connectivity to other sites along the corridor. Addressing a neighborhood context here was not directly applicable, as there were no residential areas within close proximity to the park to encourage park use.

Comfort and Safety

Safe and visible pedestrian routes offer a safe and comfortable experience to the park users. Benches located throughout the park appeared attractive and accessible, but were singly placed and not encouraging social interaction. Restrooms were provided in the park, but advertised in city brochures as open seasonally, placing potential limitations to park conveniences and limiting use. Drinking fountains were placed along trails and in activity areas. For extended use and clarity, the 0.8-mile loop trail was lighted, as were the baseball facilities. The soccer fields and open play areas were limited to day use. Complexity was demonstrated in the effective use of native materials on site and adherence of site structures to a consistent architectural theme. The general condition of the facilities was excellent, and there was no evidence of litter or debris on site visits conducted by this researcher.

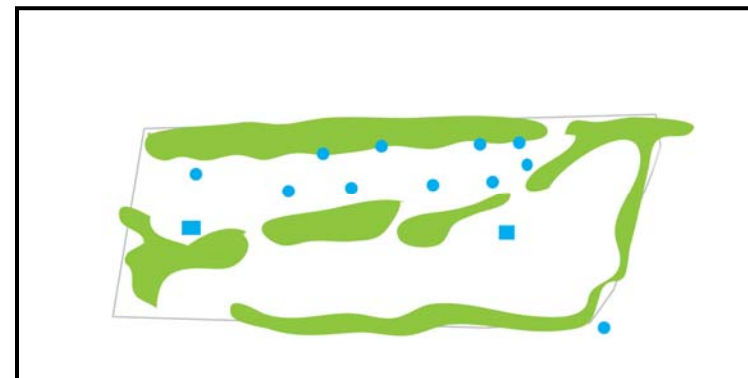


Figure 5.3 Comfort and Safety in Thurman-Hutchins Park

(JF Winslow)

Active Engagement

Centrally visible activity spaces are evident throughout the site. Baseball and soccer fields' site and solar orientation appeared appropriate for functional play. The location of Thurman-Hutchins Park within the River Road Recreation Corridor offers multiple opportunities for active engagement. The multiple facility types and uses provided-walking, active sports, and fishing offers choices to the park users for individual experiences. The centrally located open spaces provided flexibility in uses for different groups and demographic profiles. In terms of complexity, the y-intersections and trail route choices presented motivational decision prompts to encourage movement and discovery. Curvilinear configurations of the trails promote physical activity and movement through the space. The Mayors' Miles path engages people in physical activity by providing distance markers to chart individual distance accomplished, contributing to user satisfaction.

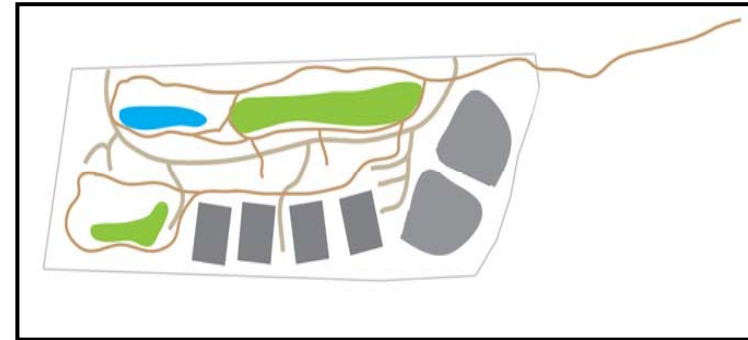


Figure 5.4 Active Engagement in Thurman-Hutchins Park
(JF Winslow)

Discovery/Fun

The winding trails appear to enhance user experience and promote discovery of the park-offering views of open areas. Although the playground area was respectful of terrain and encouraged activity by children, there was no evidence of co-located facilities to encourage concurrent adult-child physical activity and fun. The layout of facilities enhances opportunities for group activities and gatherings, and many events are scheduled at the park throughout the year to engage people in physical activity.

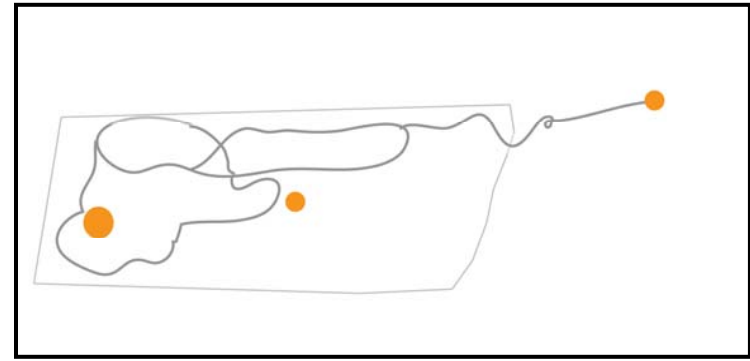


Figure 5.5 Discovery/Fun in Thurman-Hutchins Park
(JF Winslow)

Design Strategies in Chickasaw Park

Chickasaw Park followed the Olmsted philosophy in providing a respite from urban living conditions in response to popular culture at the time of its original construction. While physical design strategies to engage people in physical activity were not a specific program elements in the original design concept, the park contained several design strategies to encourage physical activity. These are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Access

Access within the park provided legible and clear indicators for ease of movement through the park. Investigation found layout and configuration promoted ease of movement through the site with its curvilinear alignment of trails, and juxtaposition of aggregated open space clearly visible from vantage points throughout the park. No access was discovered to this waterfront park by the Ohio River, and the river's water quality limited water-dependent and water-related recreation activities.

Modes of traffic were clearly separated for cars and pedestrians, but crossings were not clearly marked. The park is accessible from locations along Southwestern Parkway and Greenwood Avenue. Site is clearly and legibly accessible by private automobile, transit, bicyclists and pedestrians. Access is generally respectful of terrain, with the exception of the earthen dam floodwall that was constructed in the park in the 1940s. Large open plan areas were aggregated for a variety of uses, providing a mixture of sun and shade areas. Connectivity to other trails and park facilities was evident through the pedestrian access to Shawnee Park and the River Walk linking the park to downtown. The routing, however, revealed differing trail widths and surfaces. Neighborhood access was excellent from the Chickasaw neighborhood, and a recent walkability study rated adjacent streets for providing access to the park. Trail surfaces were cleared of vegetation and potential hazards, but surface had experienced excessive wear and degradation of material over time.

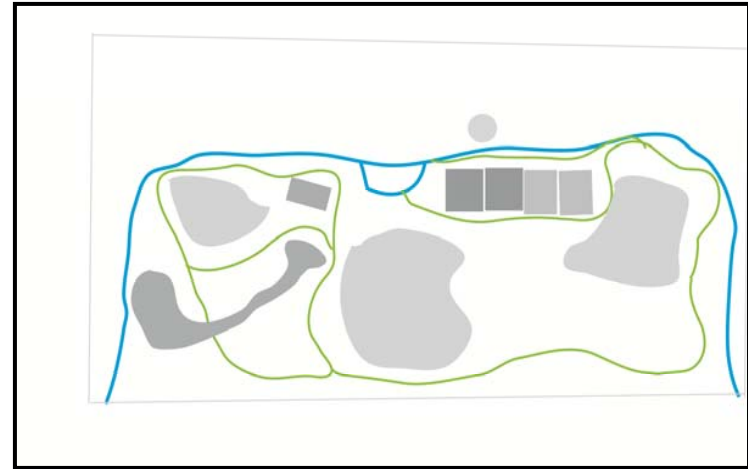


Figure 5.6 Access in Chickasaw Park (JF Winslow)

Comfort and Safety

The legibility of the site's pedestrian routes within the park is good, but during site visits, park users complained of congestion as a potential safety hazard for pedestrians in the lodge and tennis court areas. Placement of benches throughout the park offered limited opportunities for social interaction, and few water fountains were visible on this researcher's site visits. Restrooms were found onsite, but advertised in park brochure as being opened seasonally, which may limit levels of physical activity on a year-round basis. Lighting was observed along the loop trail for extended use. The 2001 park master plan identified that lights were all rarely in working order. Effective use of native materials is evident in shade tree species on site, and the architectural character of original site structures is consistent. The most apparent problem in the park was the condition of the facilities. More specifically, the facilities appear to be well maintained and respected by users, but time and use mandates improvements to facilities for optimum user experience in promoting physical activity. There were small amounts of litter and debris in isolated locations within the park.

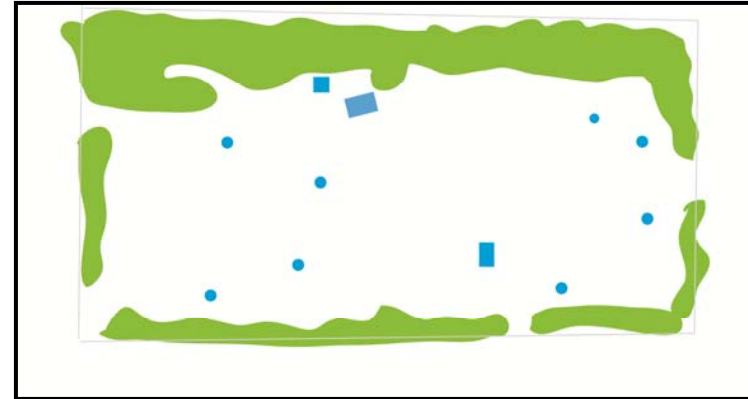


Figure 5.7 Comfort and Safety in Chickasaw Park (JF Winslow)

Active Engagement

The park contains centrally located and highly visible activity spaces. A variety of activities such as walking paths, open play areas, tennis and basketball courts provide for a diversity of user choices that promote physical activity. Sports courts are oriented for functional use, and the location of the park within its proximity to the regional Shawnee Park provides for a rich contextual experience for physical activities. The co-location of activities for adults and children occurred in the playground equipment near picnic and shelter areas, but not proximate to more active pursuits. No evidence was found to indicate employment of a strategy to co-locate such facilities. The motivational decisions prompts were evident in Chickasaw Park trails, with fewer route choices than in Thurman-Hutchins Park. A Mayor's Miles trail allows people to measure attainment of fitness goals and accomplishments in its visual distance indicators.

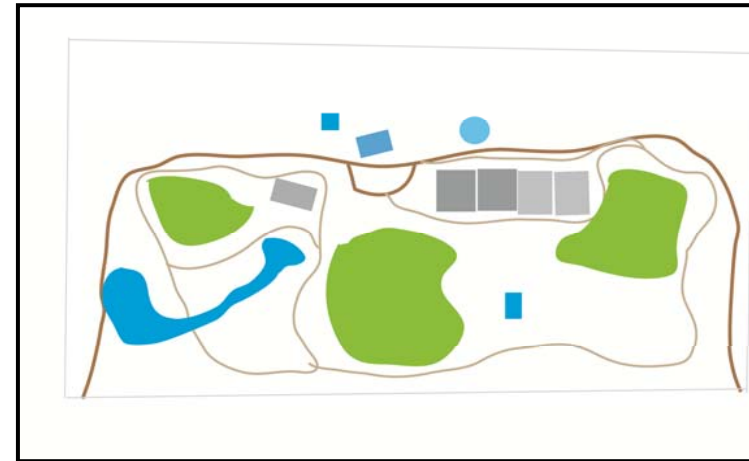


Figure 5.8 Active Engagement in Chickasaw Park (JF Winslow)

Discovery/Fun

There is not a great variety of different experiences for road and path uses within the park. Improving trails to the waterfront would enhance the options for physical activity, and provide attractive views of the river. No evidence of natural terrain or creative manipulation of topography in children's play areas was found in Chickasaw Park.

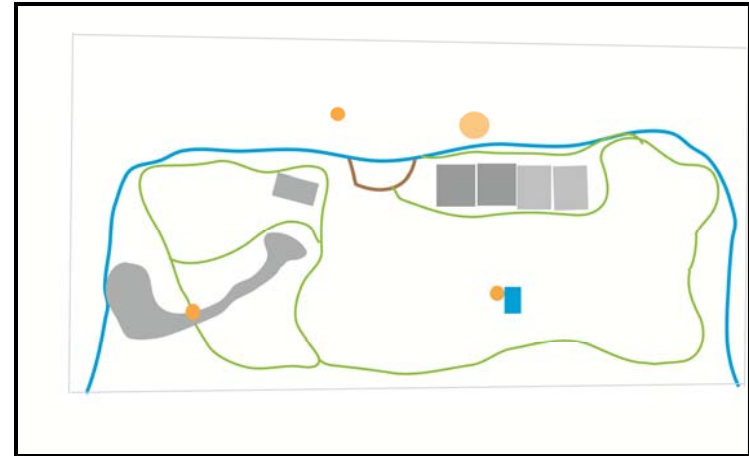


Figure 5.9 Discovery/Fun in Chickasaw Park (JFWinslow 2010)

Park Inventory Form

The physical design strategies discussed in the previous section are summarized on the following park inventory form, which was the basis for evaluating the strategies. See Figure 5.10.

**Physical Activity Design Strategy Inventory Form
Thurman-Hutchins Park**

Access		Present in Park
Legibility	Ease of movement throughout activity areas in the park	x
	Clearly visible and multiple access modes to the park	
Coherence	Respectful of terrain	x
	Separation of Traffic Modes - car, bicycle, pedestrians, transit	x
	Aggregation of open space in large central area	x
Tidiness	Trails with good surfaces	x
	Provision for areas made for sun in winter, shade in summer	
Connectivity	Trail connections to offsite trails and parks	x
Context	Neighborhood access encourages park use	
Comfort and Safety		
Legibility	Safe and visible pedestrian and bicycle routes within the park	x
	Benches	x
	Restrooms - location and proximity to use areas	x
	Drinking Fountains - location and proximity to use areas	x
Coherence	Lighting on Trails and Activity Areas for Extended Use	x
Complexity	Effective Use of Native Materials, establishment of identity	.
Tidiness	Condition of Facilities and Equipment	x
	Little or no evidence of debris, litter	x
Active Engagement		
Legibility	Centrally visible activity spaces	x
	i.e, sports courts proper solar orientation, etc.	
Context	Location of park relative to other existing public/ or private facilities (co-location for shared resources)	x
	Multiple facility types and uses provided	x
Complexity	Flexible Open Space Provided	x
	Facilities co-located to optimize simultaneous p/c activities	
	Motivational decision prompts placed to encourage mobility	x
Connectivity	Curvilinear roads and paths	x
	Connection to multi-use path on parkways and L. Loop	
	Mayors Miles path	x
Discovery/Fun		
	Different Experiences created for road and path users	x
	Create or preserve natural terrain in children's play areas	x

**Physical Activity Design Strategy Inventory Form
Chickasaw Park**

Access		Present in Park
Legibility	Ease of movement throughout activity areas in the park	x
	Clearly visible and multiple access modes to the park	x
Coherence	Respectful of terrain	x
	Separation of Traffic Modes - car, bicycle, pedestrians, transit	x
	Aggregation of open space in large central area	x
Tidiness	Trails with good surfaces	
	Provision for areas made for sun in winter, shade in summer	x
Connectivity	Trail connections to offsite trails and parks	x
Context	Neighborhood access encourages park use	x
Comfort and Safety		
Legibility	Safe and visible pedestrian and bicycle routes within the park	x
	Benches	x
	Restrooms - location and proximity to use areas	x
	Drinking Fountains - location and proximity to use areas	x
Coherence	Lighting on Trails and Activity Areas for Extended Use	x
Complexity	Effective Use of Native Materials, establishment of identity	x
Tidiness	Condition of Facilities and Equipment	
	Little or no evidence of debris, litter	
Active Engagement		
Legibility	Centrally visible activity spaces	x
	i.e, sports courts proper solar orientation, etc.	
Context	Location of park relative to other existing public/ or private facilities (co-location for shared resources)	x
	Multiple facility types and uses provided	x
Complexity	Flexible Open Space Provided	x
	Facilities co-located to optimize simultaneous p/c activities	
	Motivational decision prompts placed to encourage mobility	x
Connectivity	Curvilinear roads and paths	x
	Connection to multi-use path on parkways and L. Loop	x
	Mayors Miles path	x
Discovery/Fun		
	Different Experiences created for road and path users	
	Create or preserve natural terrain in children's play areas	

Figure 5.10 Physical Activity Design Strategy Inventory Forms for Thurman-Hutchins and Chickasaw Parks (JF Winslow)

Comparing the Results

There are several similarities between the design strategies present in the two parks. Patterning Thurman-Hutchins Park after the Olmsted Park design philosophy may have influenced the outcome in the likeness of physical design strategies involved. There were, however, some gaps identified in design strategies.

Access

Both parks contain loop roads that appear to add legibility and coherence in organization and spatial structure. Cohesive trails within both parks clearly delineate routes and provide curvilinear alignments for user interest and variety. The neighborhood context of Chickasaw Park, surrounded by residential areas on two sides is an asset for users, one where park use by people makes a healthy impact on the park resource (Swintosky, 2010). Users access Chickasaw Park conveniently by car, bicycle, walking or transit. Thurman-Hutchins is a commuter park, in that no residential neighborhoods lie adjacent to the park. Access by car appears to be the primary mode of transportation. Trails have not yet been developed to the levels proposed in the River Road Recreation Corridor to provide connectivity among multiple park resources. Although both parks are in close proximity to the Ohio River, neither takes advantage of visual or physical access to the waterfront or water related activities. Visual access is provided along the boundaries of the park, and as in the manner of the Olmsted parks, there are no fences.

Comfort and Safety

Tree lined park boundaries provide a sense of comfort and human scale for promoting activity in the park. Both parks have safe and orderly routes for circulation. Trails are lighted for extended use, although there have been reports of lights not in working order by users of the park when this researcher visited the park in August and November of 2009. Plant materials indigenous to the Bluegrass Region thrive in the parks, giving the parks a sense of local familiarity. Buildings in Thurman-Hutchins Park reflect the architectural style within the context of the area (Church, 2010). Tidiness was evident in Thurman-Hutchins Park, and conditions of facilities were excellent. Due to the age and wear in Chickasaw Park, appearance was more of a well-loved, well-worn condition. As funds become available, MetroParks and the Olmsted Conservancy will proceed with the list of improvements proposed in the 2001 master plan (DeHart, 2010).

Active Engagement

The use of large areas of flexible open space supports the legibility of both parks by providing centrally located grounds for a range of activities dictated by individual park users and user groups. The large open areas facilitate many programmed activities that function as social interventions to get people out to the parks (Northern, 2010). Both parks are co-located with other facilities: Thurman-Hutchins in the context of the River Road Recreation Corridor and Louisville Loop; and Chickasaw in its adjacency to one of the Olmsted Parkways, its proximity to Shawnee Park, and connection to the Louisville Loop. Both parks have a variety of uses, and are located near other facilities, offering many opportunities for physical activity. One area lacking is one of complexity in the co-location of activities for parent-child shared and independent activities. Therein lays excellent opportunities and benefits of having

playgrounds for all ages and for the location of facilities for safe and comfortable concurrent and independent activities for adults and children within a close proximity. Leanne French, one of the interview participants, recommended a strategy of having playgrounds for all ages. Interview participants listed connectivity to other parks and features as a preference. Completion of the Louisville Loop and connecting trails from the parks to the Loop will address this desire.

Discovery/Fun

This category lies in the subjective area of the objectivity-subjectivity realm, making it important to provide and difficult to measure, as each user has different interpretations of what constitutes discovery and fun. Thurman-Hutchins Park creates different experiences for road and path users by its attention to detail at the pedestrian scale. Additionally, the intent to preserve natural terrain is evident in the playground and trail areas. Chickasaw Park does not portray the qualities for different experiences for road and path users, although configuration was legible and safe. This design quality needs further documentation of fun in its various dimensions—mystery, adventure and challenge (Francis 2003, 25) to support the user need and design strategies for discovery and fun.

Transdisciplinary Collaboration

A series of questions in the interview process addressed the transdisciplinary agenda to promote active living. Three major themes emerged from participant responses and background data collected. The first is the organizational structure in Louisville including the need to develop formal policies to enable the positive work that has evolved from the various initiatives by the mayor. The second component involves meetings and other means of connecting resources, such as grant funding. The third area is that of

physical improvements. In all three areas, interview participants and background data were representative of “looking at positive indicators for positive outcomes” (Sizemore, 2010). The findings are described in the following paragraphs.

Organizational Structure

The current city organizational structure is top down, with leadership from the Mayor. According to Mary Lou Northern, senior advisor to the Mayor on Parks, the mayor is “making the message to encourage departments to work together, but a more formal structure needs to be implemented.” The Louisville Loop has set a precedent in successful collaboration, but no policy is in place to mandate quarterly meetings on a regular basis for personnel at the project level. Formalizing a policy for quarterly meetings among disciplines would give the stakeholders opportunities to work together on a regular basis to obtain grants and funding. According to one participant, the city departments are stratified in two layers: the directors and the people actually doing the work. Promulgating policy would transform the current informal, project-based communication to a structured program on multiple levels.

The active living agenda in Louisville was described by planner Steve Sizemore as “a quasi-grass roots movement.” The recommendation by study participants for the formation of an Active Living Department within city government would formalize the efforts currently in place. All participants expressed an interest in the institution of long-range programs, recognizing that future mayoral administrations may see the need to re-brand current initiatives.

Connecting Resources

Most participants expressed a concern for connecting resources through regularly scheduled meetings among departments. Networking opportunities would be more fully realized with regular communication among departments and across disciplines. The

expansion of the park master plan process through the use of design charrettes and workshops has been effective, but could be expanded to include projects at multiple scales, not only the major projects. Summits such as the one conducted for walkability by Mark Fenton (Smiley, 2010) have brought awareness of active living principles and initiatives to the participants in the transdisciplinary agenda, and programming of summits in other areas of active living offer continued education and networking of resources. Opening up the process further with charrettes and workshops would foster continued collaboration, and a better understanding of each department's perspective and needs.

A second item suggested was marketing the parks as “places for physical activity and to have fun” (Eisenger, 2010). The fitness park brochure has been an effective tool, but not widely distributed. Programmed events such as the Mayor's Hike and Bike and social interventions have brought people into parks. Studies have indicated that such social interventions need to continue to keep the momentum going (Cohen et al, 2009; Brennan-Ramirez et al, 2006).

Grant funding has been an effective catalyst for advancing the transdisciplinary agenda in Louisville. The CDC grant obtained by the city in March 2010 is being used in an initiative “Putting Prevention to Work” (Walfoort, 2010) to fund several projects related to parks and active living. The execution of the grant programs has forwarded the agenda, but more importantly, established communications networks and sharing of both funds and strategies for multiple projects. Conversely, without formalized programs, the grant funding becomes the engine for improvements on a project-by-project basis, and misses opportunities for long range planning.

Physical Improvements

Several items related to physical improvement to the parks were expressed by interview participants that could further a transdisciplinary agenda to promote physical activity in parks. At the top of the agenda was responsibility for the park resource as a venue for promoting physical activity, and an “advocacy by all” for protecting park resources (DeHart, 2010). In that respect, a positive park environment discourages negative activity so that available funds may be used for positive improvements (Swintosky, 2010).

Another item for physical improvement is community gardens (Beck, 2010). While it may necessitate specific site and program requirements typically not employed in city parks, it has been a trend that is growing across the country. The City of Seattle’s green community garden initiative could serve as a model for such an effort (Hou et al, 2009). Programs such as the Mayor’s Miles, initiatives such as the Mayor’s Miles trails were recommended for expansion to go outside the parks and connect the neighborhoods. This program was recommended for such program development to lend permanence to the initiatives put into action by Mayor Jerry Abramson (French 2010).

In Louisville, interview participants recognized the importance of design in promoting physical activity. Challenges were presented by the organizational structure and apparent lack of permanence resulting from the multiple initiatives not yet formalized as policy or long-standing programs. Successes in obtaining and innovative use of funds across disciplines have been experienced on multiple projects and programs.

CHAPTER 6 - Conclusions and Recommendations

“Parks are the largest free fitness centers in the city.”

(Marigny Bostock, HHM, 2010)

This study identifies physical design strategies that respond to practicing landscape architecture in a way that embraces the principles of active living. Landscape architects, well known and celebrated as a profession that designs parks, can expand their influence by designing parks to promote physical activity to reduce obesity. Parks are more than a solid foundation for community green infrastructure—they are key components of active living communities.

Relationship between Physical Activity in Parks and Public Health

There is an important relationship between physical design strategies in parks and the public health agenda to reduce both childhood and adult obesity. If strategies to promote physical activity are employed in the design of parks, the park provides the venue for persons to meet their personal fitness goals, and supports the social programs and interventions that must accompany the physical strategies to realize the goal of establishing and maintaining healthy communities. Combining the goals, objectives and

strategies from public health professionals and landscape architecture with observations from Louisville agency stakeholders interviewed, provides specific recommendations for park design strategies that promote active engagement, access, discovery and fun, and comfort and safety. Some of the strategies identified appeared to be common to the interests of all disciplines and seemed to be just good design common sense. Through the lens of active living, specific qualities common to park design take on new meaning. For example, a path that splits can be designed with motivational decision prompts to keep pedestrians moving. Other design qualities identified in this study are what landscape architects take for granted as “that’s just what we do.” To that end, landscape architects need to do a better job of educating other disciplines exactly what it is that they do, and what value it brings to the transdisciplinary agenda. During the interview process of this study most of the participants demonstrated a knowledgeable understanding of the role of landscape architects in the Louisville parks. This understanding appeared to be an outgrowth of the collaboration and cross-disciplinary work on several projects, most notably the Louisville Loop.

Lessons from Interview Results

In addition to informing the study with background information on Louisville and its park system, the interviews provided insights into understanding the collaboration necessary to advance the city’s goal for a healthy hometown. This may be attributed in part to the selection of interviewees by nomination. Use of appreciative inquiry methods sought to utilize a strategy of involving the participants as co-learners to construct expert “know-what” with locally specific “know-how” knowledge (Flora and Flora 2009). Another potential reason for the interviewees understanding the mature park culture in Louisville is that it is inextricably linked to its Olmsted heritage in 100 years of appreciation for park design.

One of the greatest concerns expressed by the participants was continuing the momentum that has been established by several of the mayor's initiatives in physical activity and public health in various areas of the community: social interventions, events to get people out to the parks, and programs to get people moving. A formal policy to reinforce the positive experience of collaboration in the Louisville Loop project should be carried forward for interdisciplinary collaboration on a regular basis. There was a contention that such collaboration would be beneficial to all in: being familiar with what other groups were doing and identifying opportunities to work together; establishing a working network for projects of a variety of type and scale, not limited to key mayoral initiatives; and, providing a venue to collaborate on funding grants and opportunities.

Fitness Parks as a Potential Typology

Unique to Louisville, but worthy of further exploration is the concept of a fitness park. The promotion by Mayor Abramson to provide ten parks geographically distributed throughout the city to help people meet personal fitness goal was an ambitious initiative and thought by some to be a marketing campaign for parks. Whatever the origin, the brochure published in 2009 provided information for citizens for a variety of activities in several locations. The branding of fitness parks has benefitted from programmed events and social interventions to get people to the parks and is building that awareness of parks as fitness centers. A majority of the interview participants was aware of the fitness parks brochure; all were knowledgeable of the programs and activities that support the initiative.

Thurman-Hutchins Park and Chickasaw Park had several features in common as fitness parks: curvilinear and lighted walking paths; presence of mature trees for shade; wet areas; adjacency to a major scenic road and visited by many. Although built in different eras in different parts of the city, the major difference was not in the types of facilities or apparent popularity of both facilities by users, but in the condition of the facilities. For example, the lights on walkways in Chickasaw Park were reported not to be in working order. In contrast, Thurman-Hutchins Park had three separate trails delineated, with one fully lighted for extended use. Failure to fund the 2000 Master Plan completely has had unfortunate consequences for Chickasaw, yet the park demonstrates its resilience by its popularity and positive qualities. Improvements outlined in the master plan will be undertaken as funds become available, as has been the procedure followed in the other Olmsted Parks. Studying of design strategies in Louisville's other fitness parks may discern patterns and trends to confirm strategies that could be applied to other parks within the system.

Importance to Landscape Architecture

Design is not an audit; it is a process. There is a response to a set of existing conditions-identified as the problem. The solution provides conditions that are more desirable than existing ones (Ching, 1996). It is important for landscape architects to be a part of the transdisciplinary agenda, to educate others on the importance of the design vocabulary and tools that are trademarks of the profession.

As designers of parks, landscape architects have the opportunity to become more fully aware of how they can influence active living design in the parks they design. Approaching the study with a traditional landscape architecture case study methodology through the lens of multiple disciplines involved in active living provided a full set of tools to examine the issue. This is only the

beginning of an emerging field of practice for landscape architects. The essence of landscape architectural practice is one of creative thinking, problem solving and collaboration in the outdoor environment. Designing parks to promote physical activity and participation in the active living transdisciplinary agenda will strengthen the disciplinary identity of landscape architects and expand the knowledge within and of the profession.

Future Research

An inventory form for physical activity design strategies was developed as a part of this study. In addition to providing a synthesis of design qualities in each park, the form summarizes the perceptual qualities for encouraging physical activity in the parks. Looking at more diverse park types, locations and a broad range of activities would serve to develop the form into an evaluation tool for qualitative study of design for active living in parks and other areas of landscape architectural practice. Applying the form to only two parks had its shortcomings, particularly when comparing and contrasting the parks. Documenting only the presence or absence of physical activity design strategies begs a more in-depth analysis relative to the importance and hierarchy of the strategies as they apply to the overall park design. Advanced research may be directed to identify design strategies using data derived from quantitative studies of physical park characteristics system-wide, or applied to one of many parks for testing its validity and evaluating strategies in the context of the entire park. As used in this study, the form is an inventory tool, recording whether specific strategies are present. The list of park design qualities could be further developed to identify design elements that facilitate the specific recommended physical activity levels outlines in the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. Developed further, the inventory might include a scoring system, weighted to reflect the relative importance of each strategy. Such a system could be developed with more extensive study of multiple parks.

This study, while limited by its time and resources, shows potential for future research in several areas. What lies at the intersection of public health and public parks is rich and complex on multiple levels. Findings revealed that the two parks studied incorporated several physical design strategies that promote physical activity, influenced by the mature park culture in Louisville. The use of the Physical Design Strategy Identification Form was a useful on the two parks, and warrants additional study to test it as a potential audit and design tool to engage park users in physical activity.

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Appendix A

Introduction

The City of Louisville established the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement (MHMM) to improve health status of its citizens and promote healthier lifestyles. Objectives in this goal include increased physical activity, healthy public policy, and facilities that promote active lifestyles.

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A critical component in MHMM is the access to and availability of public parks. Louisville Metro Parks is composed of 123 parks, encompassing a total area of over 14,000 acres. Of these parks, 18 parks were designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and his successors, and provide the foundation for the current park system.

By researching and comparing the goals and objectives, as well as its facilities and agendas, it is anticipated that there can be much gained in working toward effective collaboration to design parks to engage people in physical activity - healthy people in a healthy environment. Two fitness parks will be studied in effort to assess physical environmental factors which contribute to engage community residents in physical activity.

Interview Questions

Agency/Organization associated with 21st Century Parks

Your role in agency/organization: Project Manager (negotiating land transactions, program administration; keep designers on budget and on track. Staff has grown from one to three, park manager and development coordinator(fund raising) hired; marketing done by external consultant

Years in current position: 5

Status of Development – Environmental document approvals are anticipated by March 31, 2010. Final design will begin after approvals are received. 21st Century Parks received a \$38 million dollar federal grant, and has raised \$68 million dollars from private sources.

Part A – Describing Physical Activity in Parks

- 1) How does the term "physical activity" relate to health and parks?

It's integral to the demographics we live in. The city has typical neighborhood patterns. It is important to get outside. Bike culture has not yet evolved to where everyone feels safe riding; Kevin runs in Cherokee Park for exercise. We have to have open space, to spread out and move around in.

- 2) What benefits do physical activity and parks share?

Not sure I understand the question....Parks need to be designed to be well used and well loved. They need to be clean, safe, and well maintained. It is an amenity for the general population to enjoy. People will help maintain the parks.

3) Are these benefits complementary? If so, how?

Yes, see response to #2.

Part B - Louisville's Fitness Parks

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- 1) The City has a brochure "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise". It features maps of parks located throughout the city that offer a combination of recreational opportunities to help citizens reach personal health goals. Are you familiar with the publication?

No, I have never seen it.

- 2) What facilities should be included in a 'fitness park' or other recreation area to engage people in physical activities?

For 21st Century Parks, Inc., it is a programming issue, dictated by topography. Of our 4,000 acres, only two parks are out of the flood plain and flat enough to develop space for active playing fields. These fields are envisioned to be open fields for informal activity (as opposed to organized league facilities for soccer, baseball, etc.) In some places, Floyd's Fork Linear Park is 400 acres wide; in other places it is 50' wide. It is mainly seen as a trail connector, with as many types of trails programmed that is compatible with the land, such as hiking on rough terrain. Other facilities are paddle, canoe and kayak trails (blueways).

Part C - The Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement

- 1) How does the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement promote physical activity in parks?

It gets people out; it has been a good campaign to get people outside. The Mayor has a bike ride on Memorial Day and Labor Day to get people out and see some parks; it gets them to different parks than they might typically go to, and such events get people to see different parts of the city. The activities in Floyd's Fork will be an opportunity for local residents to learn and enhance skills in mountain biking, paddling, outdoor skills, and offer a venue for events, such as adventure racing, etc.

- 2) What commitments has the program made in parks initiatives for promoting physical activity?

It is early in the process for 21st Century Parks, Inc. We've just started on the Louisville Loop (a 100 mile loop currently in planning and design stages around the city for bicycles and pedestrians; approximately 25% is complete on the downtown and western parts of the city). Sixteen miles will go through Floyd's Fork, and it is planned to be ADA accessible all the way, which will be a challenge. That challenge has driven choices of land purchased. (The configuration of)Floyd's Fork would look like a snake that swallowed the eggs.

- 3) Has the program served as a catalyst for any parks initiatives?
See answer to #2 on previous page.

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Part D – Parks Design and Programming

- 1) The Olmsted Parks are part of Louisville's history and civic culture. What characteristics do they have that promote physical activity?
The 21st Century Concept for Parks was championed by the Olmsted ideas. He was an expert – all the Olmsted Parks have a wonderful circulation plan throughout the park; vistas (like the architect says, 'hiding the peanut'); a lot of circulation patterns originally meant for transportation have changed to recreation. An example is Central Park, where park roads are closed on weekends – like being in a big grassy open field.
- 2) Who is able to make impacts to physical park design, and design of facilities that would promote physical activity?
In our case, it would be the general public; they are the most important. We have had nearly 100 special interest groups participate in concept preferences and ideas. It needs to be a balance of people and nature. **How do programmed activities and events in the parks encourage physical activities?**
The more people enjoying activities, making the park look like a fun place to be, a place that is safe and clean. Now the park is at the edge of development, we need to be good stakeholders – part of everyday life should provide the opportunity to hop out of bed in your house and walk to a trail, and part of it should be the destination.

Part E – Collaborative Efforts

- 1) Who are the key participants and what are their roles in the program?
There are a lot of key partners, mainly because of the Louisville Loop – MetroParks; Future Fund; MSD; KTC; FHWA; and the public, since you are building from the ground up.
- 2) What ways would be most effective to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration for parks and public health to promote physical activity?
If the partnerships stay viable, one big seat at the table is TARC – they spawned the Gateway Concepts; they want to provide bus service to the four major gateways at Floyd's Fork, it is a visionary plan to provide access for people who cannot drive to the parks to get there.

Introduction

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Interview Questions

Agency/Organization associated with: [Public Health and Wellness Department, Healthy Hometown Movement](#)

Your role in agency/organization: [Community Health Specialist; Project Director for Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities Program-focus of RWJF grant is environmental change and system change.](#)

Years in current position: [A little over a year; have been with MHHM since 2007;](#)

Part A – Describing Physical Activity in Parks

- 1) How does the term "physical activity" relate to health and parks?

I guess I would describe it as parks are the largest free fitness centers in the city. People do everything from running and walking; ultimate Frisbee-it's just a matter of helping parks market those opportunities.

- 2) What benefits do physical activity and parks share?

Benefits are healthier lifestyle, being in fresh air and nature; camaraderie for a walk or a run; eye catching, most well maintained and beautiful.

- 3) Are these benefits complementary? If so, how?

Yes, being active in a park is good for your body; being in such a beautiful place is good for your mind.

Part B - Louisville's Fitness Parks

- 1) The City has a brochure "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise". It features maps of parks located throughout the city that offer a combination of recreational opportunities to help citizens reach personal health goals. Are you familiar with the publication?

Yes, I have looked at it. We do not have any copies at the Public Health office. It would be good to have some in the office.

- 2) What facilities should be included in a 'fitness park' or other recreation area to engage people in physical activities?

I was just in New Orleans. They have stations where people can visit and do fitness activities, like pull up bars or a stretching station.

A wayfinding and signage program would be good. Mayor's Miles needs new signs and ground markers. The mayor likes people to meet and walk. Benefits to walk and socialize.

Part C - The Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement

- 1) How does the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement promote physical activity in parks?

- Mayor's Miles
- Getting ready to launch weight loss program
- Health Department sponsors classes at some of the recreation centers in yoga, tai chi. The health department provides funding, parks provide the facilities.
- Tommie Smith Youth Program in the spring and summer; with YMCA in the summer and parks for summer track meet.

- 2) What commitments has the program made in parks initiatives for promoting physical activity?

See #1-funding for free classes

Tommie Smith track program

Brightside, the city beautification organization, sponsors outdoor volleyball tournament every year

Part B - Louisville's Fitness Parks

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See #1-funding for free classes

Tommie Smith track program

Brightside, the city beautification organization, sponsors outdoor volleyball tournament every year

- 3) What items would you advocate on a transdisciplinary agenda to engage people in physical activity in the park?

In certain areas, keep lights on later in neighborhoods, in West Louisville
Talking to residents in the area
Advocacy training in CPTED.
Parks should be used for positive activities.

- 4) What are the city's next steps toward ongoing collaboration?

We're definitely in a good spot in our (MHHM) partnership with parks.
Weight loss challenge will kick off soon
Not be in competition, work together.

Introduction

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Interview Questions

Agency/Organization associated with: [Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy](#)

Your role in agency/organization: [Marketing Director](#)

Years in current position: [3.5](#)

Part A – Describing Physical Activity in Parks

- 1) How does the term "physical activity" relate to health and parks?
 - They are synonymous.
 - Health related statistics show psychological benefits of wellness in parks.

- 2) What benefits do physical activity and parks share?
 - Parks bring people out
 - There are social ties related to people getting out to the parks and doing things.
 - Social ties are one of the biggest shared benefits.
 - Olmsted had the idea that everyone is equal and can share activities and space.

- 3) Are these benefits complementary? If so, how?
 - See responses to 1 and 2.

Part B - Louisville's Fitness Parks

- 1) The City has a brochure "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise". It features maps of parks located throughout the city that offer a combination of recreational opportunities to help citizens reach personal health goals. Are you familiar with the publication?
 - Not familiar with the publication.

- 2) What facilities should be included in a 'fitness park' or other recreation area to engage people in physical activities?
 - Designated areas for activity
 - Playgrounds
 - Tennis courts
 - Ballfields, running track
 - Walking paths and multi-use paved paths
 - Hiking trails into the woods, off-road multi-use paths
 - Good example is Joe Creason Park. People used to walk in the park for exercise. About a year ago, MetroParks built a paved walking path that is very popular and heavily used – "build it and they will come".

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Part C - The Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement

- 1) How does the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement promote physical activity in parks?
 - They have maps, brochures, signs posted throughout the park with measured distance goals, the markers help, as in "how far did I go?"
 - Mayor's Miles help people feel a personal accomplishment.

- 2) What commitments has the program made in parks initiatives for promoting physical activity?
 - More bike trails and walking paths
 - Conservancy and Parks have done it with multi-use paths – more availability
 - It really helps, it is amazing. It is coming from the Mayor.

- 3) Has the program served as a catalyst for any parks initiatives?
 - Mayor's Hike and Bike Event – held on Memorial Day and Labor Day
 - The Mayor has amazing resources – wherever he goes, everyone wants a piece of the action. His whole family participates in the bike rides, so he also leads by example.

- The event is simple and user friendly.
 - You don't have to register
 - It is a fun event
 - There is no cost to participate
 - There is free stuff given out by vendors that show up at the park.
 - We all want events like the Mayor's Hike and Bike – and to share his level of coverage he gets from the media.

Part D – Parks Design and Programming

- 1) The Olmsted Parks are part of Louisville's history and civic culture. What characteristics do they have that promote physical activity?
 - Olmsted separated things with natural barriers, so the Olmsted Parks don't have fencing.
 - There is a place by Hogan's Fountain in Cherokee Park that you can see a lot of opportunities for different activities that let you move around freely, without being restricted to a certain area.
 - Boundless Playgrounds (also called Play all) have been put in Dupree, Shawnee and Iroquois Parks.
 - There is some controversy regarding swimming pools in Louisville. Community pools are old and have declined over time, and they are only open ten weeks out of the year.
 - The trend is going toward Spraygrounds, which are open 25 weeks a year, the attendance is higher, and costs are minimal.
 - We really need more pools in the Louisville area.

- 2) Who is able to make impacts to physical park design, and design of facilities that would promote physical activity?
 - Olmsted: getting public input and applying it to what you are able to do.
 - Master Plan process works pretty well.
 -
- 3) How do programmed activities and events in the parks encourage physical activities?
 - Everybody wants to host a walk, and the park is a free facility – everybody loves that.
 - Tour de Olmsted is going into its second year.
 - Programmed events introduce people to new places and new opportunities.

End of interview for Wednesday, March 3.

March 30, 2010

Part E – Collaborative Efforts

1) Who are the key participants and what are their roles in the program?

Events and activities we get active in is when there is an impact on the park that needs attention. Cherokee Park is a prime example- at Bonnycastle Hogan's Fountain's area. How do you make improvements without sacrificing park land and protecting the resource? Physical carrying capacity is extended and challenged. Advocacy is in what is necessary to protect the park. In some ways, it is not about getting more people in the park. Too many cut ins to park to drive through. NO surprises in Cherokee Survey for trails in 2009.

Survey being done about Olmsted branding by Olmsted Parks Conservancy. Conservancy is confused with.

2) What ways would be most effective to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration for parks and public health to promote physical activity?

With what city is doing, whether MetroParks is doing something – partner with businesses. It's about everybody working together, and not overdoing it. Well planned and scheduled. The cause or disease of the week the cancer walk, the diabetes walk. Hard to be involved. Allows awareness of the parks- awareness of parks. Takes pressure off of the other three, to have events in other parks. Tyler Park, brings people to the parks.

3) What items would you advocate on a transdisciplinary agenda to engage people in physical activity in the park?

Advocate proper usage and land stewardship. Look out and slow down! Take care of the park and be responsible. Don't park under the trees.

4) What are the city's next steps toward ongoing collaboration?

Raise more money so that they can be properly supported. City is not doing it because of current state of the economy. City – strictly maintenance. Save America's Treasure Grant- EPA Grants.

Finished interview on March 30, 2010.

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Interview Questions

Agency/Organization associated with Public Works Department

Your role in agency/organization: Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner

Years in current position: Since July 2009

Part A – Describing Physical Activity in Parks

- 1) How does the term "physical activity" relate to health and parks?
Needed to reach optimal health CDC guidelines.
Parks provide the venue.

- 2) What benefits do physical activity and parks share?
Parks provide the venue for physical activity.

- 3) Are these benefits complementary? If so, how?
Yes, parks have the capacity of people to reach physical activity recommended requirements, also mentally complementary.

Part B - Louisville's Fitness Parks

- 1) The City has a brochure "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise". It features maps of parks located throughout the city that offer a combination of recreational opportunities to help citizens reach personal health goals. Are you familiar with the publication?

Yes, I have seen the PDF online.

- 2) What facilities should be included in a 'fitness park' or other recreation area to engage people in physical activities?

One of the big things parks is missing is wayfinding. We don't have comprehensive maps to connect to trails. We need a website in sync with conditions so people will know what is opened or closed.

Part C - The Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement

- 1) How does the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement promote physical activity in parks?

Don't know.

Through Mayors Miles, building a network.

- 2) What commitments has the program made in parks initiatives for promoting physical activity?

Mayor's Miles; different events in parks

Mayor's Hike and Bike-Memorial Day and Labor Day. 5,000 people show up.

Vendors come out, and the route changes every year. Hike is mostly downtown.

- 3) Has the program served as a catalyst for any parks initiatives?

Provided umbrella for a number of events and activities to occur; Branding for physical activity.

Part D - Parks Design and Programming

- 1) The Olmsted Parks are part of Louisville's history and civic culture. What characteristics do they have that promote physical activity?

Put life into them, make them a fun place to be. Olmsted Conservancy helps with trail maintenance.

- 2) Who is able to make impacts to physical park design, and design of facilities that would promote physical activity?
Ultimately the user-shapes where the parks go.
- 3) How do programmed activities and events in the parks encourage physical activities?
Planned physical activity marketing

Part E – Collaborative Efforts

- 1) Who are the key participants and what are their roles in the program?
City departments, in two layers:
 1. The directors
 2. The people who are really doing the work
 3. Mary Lou Northern has done amazing things with the Louisville Loop
- 2) What ways would be most effective to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration for parks and public health to promote physical activity?
Quarterly meetings with key players;
Would not miss opportunities for communications
- 3) What items would you advocate on a transdisciplinary agenda to engage people in physical activity in the park?
Awareness.
Parks need to market themselves as a place for physical activity and a place to have fun.
- 4) What are the city's next steps toward ongoing collaboration?
Complete Master Plan, have each department sign off, forming a project team.

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Interview Questions

Agency/Organization associated with Louisville Department of Public Health and Wellness

Your role in agency/organization: Administrator

Years in current position: Five Years

Part A – Describing Physical Activity in Parks

- 1) How does the term "physical activity" relate to health and parks?

Physical Activity is what happens in parks. Parks are made to be active -- whether it is vigorous, moderate, semi-sedentary.

- 2) What benefits do physical activity and parks share?

As a friend of mine says, "Parks take people to their happy place". There is a benefit to be outside and moving. It is a way to connect mind, body and spirit. People get the benefit of the beauty of a place. You can equate parks with physical activity. Take Seneca Park, for example. There is a 25 M.P.H. speed limit along the roads (that border the park), that is really enforced. You can drive by and see people being active, walking, running, etc. it's inviting.

- 3) Are these benefits complementary? If so, how?

Absolutely -- mind, body and spirit; surrounded by beauty and being physically active.

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By researching and comparing the goals and objectives, as well as its facilities and agendas, it is anticipated that there can be much gained in working toward effective collaboration to design parks to engage people in physical activity - healthy people in a healthy environment. Two fitness parks will be studied in effort to assess physical environmental factors which contribute to engage community residents in physical activity.

Interview Questions

Agency/Organization associated with Louisville Department of Public Health and Wellness

Your role in agency/organization: Administrator

Years in current position: Five Years

Part A – Describing Physical Activity in Parks

1) How does the term "physical activity" relate to health and parks?

Physical Activity is what happens in parks. Parks are made to be active – whether it is vigorous, moderate, semi-sedentary.

2) What benefits do physical activity and parks share?

As a friend of mine says, "Parks take people to their happy place". There is a benefit to be outside and moving. It is a way to connect mind, body and spirit. People get the benefit of the beauty of a place. You can equate parks with physical activity. Take Seneca Park, for example. There is a 25 M.P.H. speed limit along the roads (that border the park), that is really enforced. You can drive by and see people being active, walking, running, etc. it's inviting.

3) Are these benefits complementary? If so, how?

Absolutely – mind, body and spirit; surrounded by beauty and being physically active.

Part B - Louisville's Fitness Parks

- 1) The City has a brochure "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise". It features maps of parks located throughout the city that offer a combination of recreational opportunities to help citizens reach personal health goals. Are you familiar with the publication?

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Yes.

- 2) What facilities should be included in a 'fitness park' or other recreation area to engage people in physical activities?

A safe place to walk and ride a bike, with pleasant surroundings.

A playground, not so active – parents sometimes get some exercise while kids are on playground.

Income generating activities such as ballfields and tennis courts.

Part C - The Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement

- 1) How does the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement promote physical activity in parks?

Web banners; physical banners;

Funding – Recreation programs, classes in parks and recreation centers. Classes are now in parks and taught by CPR certified instructors, health and wellness department used to have some classes, but was not really set up in facility or staffing, parks is a better venue. There are classes in 8 community centers. MHHM co- advertises and co-markets with MetroParks. They also funded the Tommy Smith track meet last summer as part of summer camp activities.

- 2) What commitments has the program made in parks initiatives for promoting physical activity?

CDC grant was just awarded to city for \$7.9 million (for two years), and part of it will go to parks for more signage for Mayor's Miles, signage for Mayor's Miles walkways from neighborhoods to Louisville Loop. Funding has from Robert Wood Johnson has also funded some MHHM initiatives and partnering opportunities.

- 3) Has the program served as a catalyst for any parks initiatives?

Summer health initiative for summer day camp in MetroParks;

The Mayor's Miles Program started in the Parks in 2005.

Part D – Parks Design and Programming

- 1) The Olmsted Parks are part of Louisville's history and civic culture. What characteristics do they have that promote physical activity?

Lots of landscaped open spaces

Whether built or made by users, the hiking trails at Cherokee Park Cherokee and Iroquois – there are wide places for people to walk and bike; drive to park and walk outside; creek to play in.

- 2) Who is able to make impacts to physical park design, and design of facilities that would promote physical activity?

Parks staff - I really see that the landscape architects that work for parks, John Hamilton (parks director's right hand man), Mayor Abramson, Lisa Hite and her staff can make the changes. In my job I can call them(Parks Staff) to get answers.

- 3) How do programmed activities and events in the parks encourage physical activities?

Brings people to parks; will have outdoor fitness classes in Chickasaw Park and four other parks in the summer of 2010. Other people that go to the park to play, walk, fish, play tennis – will be able to see the classes going on and may want to participate. Parks with t-ball and baseball often have parents that get active by walking while child is in organized activity.

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Part E – Collaborative Efforts

- 1) Who are the key participants and what are their roles in the program?

Great question. Public Health and Wellness; Planning and Design; Recreation and Parks (they need to get along better); Parks; Transit TARC – to get to summer programs; Public Works.

- 2) What ways would be most effective to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration for parks and public health to promote physical activity?

I think we need to know each other to get things done (I just met the recreation leaders within the last year). There is not a lot of built in collaboration. We need to work as partners with other city departments, not as competitors.

3) What items would you advocate on a transdisciplinary agenda to engage people in physical activity in the park?

Parkscape using CPTED principals in small neighborhood parks for safety – like pocket parks that are attractive and functional.

Connecting Parks via schools

Environmental Health – life in the parks

Health classes may lead to physical activity programs – there are now two diabetes support groups at two different parks, one for adults, one for young people.

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4) What are the city's next steps toward ongoing collaboration?

We have an active living committee (who is on the committee?).

Tommy Smith Track meet.

Huge part of collaboration for \$7.9 million CDC grant for two years.

Expand the Mayors Miles program - from neighborhoods to the parks.

Mayor and Public Health and Wellness Department Director have a challenge to lose weight. Mayor has city challenge for 100,000 pounds.

We get access to free and beautiful fitness areas.

Introduction

The City of Louisville established the Mayor’s Healthy Hometown Movement (MHHM) to improve health status of its citizens and promote healthier lifestyles. Objectives in this goal include increased physical activity, healthy public policy, and facilities that promote active lifestyles.

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By researching and comparing the goals and objectives, as well as its facilities and agendas, it is anticipated that there can be much gained in working toward effective collaboration to design parks to engage people in physical activity - healthy people in a healthy environment. Two fitness parks will be studied in effort to assess physical environmental factors which contribute to engage community residents in physical activity.

Interview Questions

Agency/Organization associated with: Louisville MetroParks

Your role in agency/organization: Senior Planner, Planning and Design

Has four person staff for planning and design

Years in current position: 8; prior to coming to MetroParks, Ms. Hite was with Louisville Planning and Design, and Louisville Development.

Part A – Describing Physical Activity in Parks

1) How does the term “physical activity” relate to health and parks?

Parks are all about getting people moving and enjoying the outdoors. This includes many miles of trails of all kinds – walking, bridal paths, bicycling.

- Sports facilities that accommodate both organized and informal activities such as basketball, soccer, baseball, etc.
- Recreation programs that contain physical activity are contained in recreation centers. Some are located in parks, some centers not in parks. The Recreation planning and administration is a separate division within Metro Parks.
- Environmental education programs for Louisville youth are located at the Jefferson Memorial Forest. The outreach programs offer inner city children positive contact with nature. Children from community centers and associated recreation staff are introduced to the outdoors in an environment close to home.

2) What benefits do physical activity and parks share?

- Getting people moving; improving both mental and physical fitness;
- To make even the most passive experience in a park to feel like one of the most beautiful places to be;
- The recreation experience is much more than just active recreation and fitness activities. The park is a place for a variety of passive activities as well.

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3) Are these benefits complementary? If so, how?

- Yes, with both organized and unorganized activities.
- The public participation process is integral to the Master Plan development of the parks and park uses. An example is Tyler Park, a 12 acre park very close to Eastern Parkway and Bardstown Road. It had six existing tennis courts, which was thought to be a lot for the size of the park. People were concerned about the location of the existing playground, in a low lying area that was not highly visible, and there were safety concerns expressed by people at the public meeting. There was a request to move the playground closer to active areas of the park, closer to the street for better visibility and access. This would require removal of two tennis courts. The neighborhood was somewhat divided on the tennis court issue. After hearing the reasons for moving the playground, some proponents of the tennis courts changed their position after hearing the concerns for playground safety and visibility. The public participation process enabled this community consensus to happen.
- People claim 'temporary ownership' of particular places in the park – where groups meet for events, or even for informal gatherings –when MetroParks assists groups in finding suitable places within a park for their activity, it often results in an outcry of a group who had been using the space as 'theirs'. People love these parks to death.

Part B - Louisville's Fitness Parks

1) The City has a brochure "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise". It features maps of parks located throughout the city that offer a combination of recreational opportunities to help citizens reach personal health goals. Are you familiar with the publication?

- Yes, I have heard of it. It was developed by (MetroParks) Public Information Office. (Jason Cissell)
- What is hugely popular is the paved walking path; In Joe Creason Park, it was an example of "build it and they will come". Although it was not a big (financial) investment, most people can access it.

- Fitness activities occur in many more of the parks than the ten listed in the brochure.

2) What facilities should be included in a 'fitness park' or other recreation area to engage people in physical activities?

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- Number One would be the paved walking path – it is easy for people to take up walking as an activity.
- Number Two, Playgrounds: for strength, agility and social interaction; a place where families can be there (in the park) at the same time, doing different activities.

Part C - The Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement

1) How does the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement promote physical activity in parks?

- I have been to a few meetings, know what they do.
- Mayor's Miles program
- Grant from CDC to put signage on the Louisville Loop along the Riverwalk and Levee segments of the Loop.

2) What commitments has the program made in parks initiatives for promoting physical activity?

- Mayor's Miles; Grants; Others in Parks Department, such as John Hamilton, have been more involved in meetings with MHHM and other departments.

3) Has the program served as a catalyst for any parks initiatives?

- Parks Department may have been a catalyst for some of their (MHHM) initiatives. The Departments support each other.

Part D – Parks Design and Programming

- 1) **The Olmsted Parks are part of Louisville's history and civic culture. What characteristics do they have that promote physical activity?**
 - It is the same idea of design of all parks – making them beautiful, special places; it set the stage for our park system. It (Louisville's Olmsted Parks) was Olmsted's last and finest parks project. Page | 4
 - Olmsted scholars come to Louisville to study. Some design principles have been recommitted. Look at the Olmsted Master Plan, (they are) great places to spend time incorporating Olmsted's framework.
 - The Olmsted Conservancy helps raise awareness. (Design) principles are taken to a higher level. (We) use many Olmsted principles in designing new parks.

- 2) **Who is able to make impacts to physical park design, and design of facilities that would promote physical activity?**
 - Master planning process. Louisville's system wide Master Plan was done in 1994. (it may be dated, but) It is still used as a reference.
 - Users, neighbors, special interest groups, potential users, elected officials – (City) council members try to get improvements made in their districts; parks are one of their priorities.
 - Process is in three stages: 1) Program information and site data meeting where residents can discuss their likes and dislikes; 2) Present inventory and analysis of park – historian, landscape architect present to public participants; and 3) Present concepts.
 - Resource agencies – Army Corps of Engineers; Kentucky Division of Water Resources; Historic Preservation.

- 3) **How do programmed activities and events in the parks encourage physical activities?**
 - Lots of activities are run by City staff or by others.
 - Mayor's Hike and Bike – on Memorial Day and Labor Day, huge events.
 - Jefferson Forest

Part E – Collaborative Efforts

- 1) **Who are the key participants and what are their roles in the program?**
 - Police Department – safety and emergency access for Louisville Loop
 - Parks Department
 - Mayor’s Healthy Hometown Movement
 - Planning and Design Services – Planning Commission – in some instances, they have convinced developers to ‘buy in’ by putting trail head parking in, close to parks; some developers have requested to be involved in putting in trails, etc.
 - Public Works – Transportation
 - MSD – bioswales for stormwater management; rain gardens and rain barrels for water collection;
 - Louisville Water Company – Drinking water
 - TARC – transit, taking bikes on the bus

- 2) **What ways would be most effective to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration for parks and public health to promote physical activity?**
 - Grants with Public Health, like the CDC one for fighting obesity (trail signage).
 - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – grants.
 - Work together for grants and funding.
 - Continue with other programs we’re already doing to advocate more communication.
 - A lot collaboration happens anyway; Louisville is small enough to let that happen.

- 3) **What items would you advocate on a transdisciplinary agenda to engage people in physical activity in the park?**
 - Louisville Loop example of getting all the agencies working together. A former school system administrator wants every school to have access to the Loop.
 - (Collaboration) symbolizes merger (2003) between Louisville and Jefferson Count.
 - So many roles in the community.

- 4) **What are the city’s next steps toward ongoing collaboration?**
 - You can never anticipate (what will change in the next administration).

Introduction

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Interview Questions

Agency/Organization associated with: [Mayor's Office](#)

Your role in agency/organization: [Senior Advisor for Arts and Parks; and Faith Based Organizations. Oversees the Louisville Loop Project.](#)

Years in current position: [since January 2003 \(was Cabinet Secretary for Arts, Parks, and Neighborhoods, then Metro government was reorganized by the Mayor\).](#)

Part A – Describing Physical Activity in Parks

- 1) How does the term "physical activity" relate to health and parks?

The beauty of the system is the connectivity of the system; See so many active people; year round, Southern Parkway is used. One of my favorite sights was a lady pushing someone in a wheelchair pushing a stroller.

- 2) What benefits do physical activity and parks share?

We always talk about people benefits, but even more important is how the park benefits from people using it. It improves the health of the park itself.

- 3) Are these benefits complementary? If so, how?

Iroquois Park was not safe 20 years ago; improvements were made and it made the parks safer, people safer.

Part B - Louisville's Fitness Parks

- 1) The City has a brochure "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise". It features maps of parks located throughout the city that offer a combination of recreational opportunities to help citizens reach personal health goals. Are you familiar with the publication?
Yes.

- 2) What facilities should be included in a 'fitness park' or other recreation area to engage people in physical activities?
 - It has to be a good walking surface
 - Needs safety features like lighting.
 - Restrooms
 - Drinking fountains
 - Playgrounds for children and adults; there are too many adult sedentary activities

Part C - The Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement

- 1) How does the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement promote physical activity in parks?
Parks started the Mayor's Miles; MHHM took it over. MHHM, ACTIVE Louisville and Parks pulled together for the Louisville Loop
The neat thing about MHHM is that it has been done under an umbrella approach. MHHM and other departments have been working to pull parks-communication outreach efforts to inform the public.

- 2) What commitments has the program made in parks initiatives for promoting physical activity?
I think having things like the Mayor's Hike and Bike (twice a year) about 5,000 people attend
 - Hike in the Forest, about 500 attended
 - Those kinds of activities get people out into the community
 - Get the Scoop on the Loop progress meeting-in April 2009 public meeting, there were people waiting at the door to get in.

3) **Has the program served as a catalyst for any parks initiatives?**

- Not sure about that one;
- So much of MHHM has been about communication
- MHHM developed a good working relationship with the Parks Department
- There is now better communication to the public about what is going on in the community.

Part D – Parks Design and Programming

1) **The Olmsted Parks are part of Louisville's history and civic culture. What characteristics do they have that promote physical activity?**

- First of all the parkways that lead to them-My house to the park is 3 mile walk
- Each were designed with land in mind; same features but with a different terrain;
- A good response to the land
- Car and person compatible
- Iroquois Park has Mayor's Miles, no auto traffic; it is really safe and fun.

2) **Who is able to make impacts to physical park design, and design of facilities that would promote physical activity?**

- The public is the most important
- For MetroParks, it is to know how people engage with the parks-the parks are so loved in this city
- All departments need to work to build consensus; that needs to be weighed against professional judgment and criteria;

3) **How do programmed activities and events in the parks encourage physical activities?**

- Some, like summer camps in Chickasaw Park have an environmental education component to them
- School trips to Jefferson Forest also have environmental education
- They get people comfortable with being in parks
- Hike and bike gets people into parks that they would not normally visit

Part E – Collaborative Efforts

- 1) Who are the key participants and what are their roles in the program?
 - Communications staff influence program ideas
 - MHHM staff and Parks senior staff
 - Program planners work together
 - Directors need to work together more closely
 - Parks has the facilities and the health department has the need

- 2) What ways would be most effective to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration for parks and public health to promote physical activity?
 - Mayor making messages-The most important person is the mayor. It has to be from the top down to work. Elected officials are also important in the process.
 - Part of it is the Health Department. We need a more formal process.
 - We have to plan it all together.

- 3) What items would you advocate on a transdisciplinary agenda to engage people in physical activity in the park?
 - Public Health
 - Need a Park Strategic Planner
 - It needs to evolve over time
 - Communications and program staff

- 4) What are the city's next steps toward ongoing collaboration?
 - Engage with next mayor and civic leadership of the participating departments
 - MHHM is very important for the next mayor
 - The efforts are melding together nicely, the new mayor may want to re-brand it.
 - Just continue to work and build together
 - Mayor met with Obama staff recently because of MHHM – need to think of it as a movement, not just a program
 - The City of Parks and the Louisville Loop have gotten people to think in a different way.

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Interview Questions

Agency/Organization associated with: [Planning and Design Division, Department of Codes and Regulations](#)

Your role in agency/organization: [Senior Long Range and Neighborhood Planner](#)

Years in current position: [Six](#)

Part A – Describing Physical Activity in Parks

- 1) How does the term "physical activity" relate to health and parks?

Parks are a destination place; they create a place for physical activity.

Good air quality and environmental quality are critical in the visitor experience.

- 2) What benefits do physical activity and parks share?

From a land use perspective, parks provide a framework for physical activity; they also share amenities.

There is interaction between park space and land use with regard to physical activity (park context; getting to and from the park; what physical activity visitor participates while in the park.

There needs to be a (visual) incentive to walk, greenways are providing that in some places we would not have thought of (like rails to trails, reclaimed industrial areas).

3) Are these benefits complementary? If so, how?

There needs to be a (visual) incentive to walk, greenways are providing that in some places we would not have thought of (like rails to trails, reclaimed industrial areas).

They offer physical activity in a cleaner, safer environment.

Part B - Louisville's Fitness Parks

- 1) The City has a brochure "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise". It features maps of parks located throughout the city that offer a combination of recreational opportunities to help citizens reach personal health goals. Are you familiar with the publication?

Not really.

- 2) What facilities should be included in a 'fitness park' or other recreation area to engage people in physical activities?

Trails, both soft and hard (surfaced).

Hard surfaced playing courts – basketball, tennis.

Playgrounds

Building for indoor classes

Flexible spaces, both interior and exterior for group classes, such as tai chi, yoga, etc.

Part C - The Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement

- 1) How does the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement promote physical activity in parks?

Mayor's Miles Program – designated length of trail with mile markers along route.

Programs to use pedometers – Kentuckiana on the Move

Mayor's Hike and Bike – held on Memorial Day and Labor Day (annual event) – it either begins, ends or goes through park

Typically, events held in parks

- 2) What commitments has the program made in parks initiatives for promoting physical activity?

(It has enabled the) formation of collaborating together through projects, as some of the same people are in the movement.

The MHHM has served as leverage in the framework for healthy community getting things done that may not have been done or funded by others (such as CMAC funds for trails and parks).

The Strategic Plan for Louisville Loop is being developed, as a component that will complement the MHHM – there are strategic imperatives to be met.

Partnerships and grants ???

- 3) Has the program served as a catalyst for any parks initiatives?

Absolutely. Louisville Loop; City of Parks – the Mayor's Initiative for improvement of existing parks, new parks, private/public partnerships.

MHHM has been a part of this in initiatives such as signage for Louisville Loop and Parks.

WHO and Healthy Cities Movements have been doing this for years.

Another factor – economic development

Part D – Parks Design and Programming

- 1) The Olmsted Parks are part of Louisville's history and civic culture. What characteristics do they have that promote physical activity?

Historically - Original Olmsted parks were designed as an alternative for folks to re-create (an environmental respite from the city).

Now – Terrain; variety; aerobic exercise.

Parks have spaces like outdoor rooms – flat places for activity.

Parks have flexible space, the other great things about parks and parkways is that they set a framework for the built environment that leads people to the parks – the tree-lined parkways. A lot of the older city neighborhoods were built around those parks.

- 2) Who is able to make impacts to physical park design, and design of facilities that would promote physical activity?

Traffic engineering has made both negative and positive impacts in terms of access to parks – such as traffic volumes too high for safe pedestrian access; circulation change for safety.

Neighborhood organizations – tried to promote in neighborhood park; a lot of people are active in (the organizations and the parks?)

- 3) How do programmed activities and events in the parks encourage physical activities?
Basically by providing an organized event, it introduces people to parks, such as in the Hike and Bike Events.
There is a lot of social marketing.

Part E – Collaborative Efforts

- 1) Who are the key participants and what are their roles in the program?
In my experience higher leadership from Mayor's office; a lot of changes have happened in the last year or so. Public Health has served as a catalyst – Leanne (French) and Marigny (Bostock) have done a great job.
There have been some outside organizations - corporate groups who have partnered with the City, and special interest organizations such as bicycle and fitness groups.
- 2) What ways would be most effective to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration for parks and public health to promote physical activity?
Taken from the big picture making connections, how does it all relate? We need a comprehensive look to leverage other resources – transportation, public health.
Look for creative ways for funding.
With the CDC Grant (there is a lot of opportunity – grant of \$7.9 million awarded to Louisville for Public Health and wellness initiatives.
It's facilitative – there have been some barriers, as well opportunities. Public Works considers use first.
- 3) What items would you advocate on a transdisciplinary agenda to engage people in physical activity in the park?
Look at: possible outcomes; indicators such as park usage; health impacts related to physical activity; how is real estate related to parks and choices where people live.
To be effective, need to look at getting leaders to learn about what you are doing.
Provide strategy for serving underserved areas;
Bike path – encourage business re-vitalization along the Loop.
Trails have been a major incentive.

4) What are the city's next steps toward ongoing collaboration?

I don't know...

Institutionalize effort we currently have. We have been pulling from a quasi-grass roots movement, with stakeholders donating some extra time to get things done because it is the right thing to do.

We need an Active Living Department.

Notes about interviewee:

A Kentuckian from Hazard area; has a Master's Degree in Planning from University of Cincinnati.

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Interview Questions

Agency/Organization associated with: [Environs, Inc. – a Landscape Architecture firm in Louisville, KY](#)

Your role in agency/organization: [Principal and Vice President](#)

Years in current position: [11 \(formerly worked for Louisville MetroParks\)](#)

Part A – Describing Physical Activity in Parks

- 1) How does the term "physical activity" relate to health and parks?
 - I think getting people out and exercising at any level relates to health. It's a mutual thing – get people out in parks and they get attached to it (the place).
 - Park becomes an endearing place. Often, people get involved as volunteers.

- 2) What benefits do physical activity and parks share?
 - Anything we do as landscape architects has to be interesting, looking for what's around the bend, the "a-ha" point.
 - That is why Cherokee Park is interesting. It keeps people moving. People are a big part of it (the park).
 - The park is a place to see and be seen as a fitness thing, a social thing.

- 3) Are these benefits complementary? If so, how?
- Refer to question 2.
 - There are all kinds of complements: people, social, coming from a physical place and supporting one's mental health

Part B - Louisville's Fitness Parks

- 1) The City has a brochure "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise". It features maps of parks located throughout the city that offer a combination of recreational opportunities to help citizens reach personal health goals. Are you familiar with the publication?
- Yes. It's a pretty good brochure for people who aren't very familiar with parks and the park system.
 - See it as a marketing tool for Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement.
- 2) What facilities should be included in a 'fitness park' or other recreation area to engage people in physical activities?
- NOT do a fitness track (parcourse)
 - Have independent things – walking paths – build it and they will come.
 - Many are simple things, such as people's wish to explore;
 - Organized events and sports and places in the park to do that.

Part C - The Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement

- 1) How does the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement promote physical activity in parks?
- It has been mostly focused on getting outside, a lot of bicycling is what I see.
 - Haven't been that involved in MHHM, but have heard a lot about it.
 - Our firm has been a consultant to MetroParks, has not done work directly for Public Health Department.
 - Part of it is unspoken – parks are about activity.
- 2) What commitments has the program made in parks initiatives for promoting physical activity?
- City of Parks initiative is huge. Some of it has to do with 21st Century Parks; but other things are going on as well.
 - Bicycling – offers a lot of connectivity;
 - Spraygrounds are popular – a big thing.
 - Mental fitness needs to be a part of this, too.

- 3) Has the program served as a catalyst for any parks initiatives?
- Yes. See response to question 2.
 - City of Parks initiative, bicycling.

Part D – Parks Design and Programming

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- 1) The Olmsted Parks are part of Louisville’s history and civic culture. What characteristics do they have that promote physical activity?
- As I mentioned, they are interesting, fun places to explore.
 - Walking paths, gathering spaces, history and events.
 - Integral to Louisville’s culture.
 - Nowadays people have outcry that they want to change. An example of this is in Cherokee Park near Hogan’s Fountain, the “tepee” pavilion is controversial in that its architectural style is out of character with the original park design.
 - People love these parks to death.
- 2) Who is able to make impacts to physical park design, and design of facilities that would promote physical activity?
- A lot of people can make impacts through the public meetings on projects
 - There is some citizen input, there could be more.
 - Designers
 - Politicians
 - Mostly parks staff and designers.
- 3) How do programmed activities and events in the parks encourage physical activities?
- A lot of programmed activities are centered around physical activity venues
 - Walks, a lot of organized runs; bike rides
 - Organized activities in Waterfront Park
 - Fundraising events in Cherokee and Seneca Parks

Part E – Collaborative Efforts

- 1) Who are the key participants and what are their roles in the program?
- Parks Department – they are very involved in every aspect of the parks.
 - Sports Organizations and Special Interest groups – such as soccer, horse riding groups – but they really have a limited purview

- Have to be willing to collaborate.

2) What ways would be most effective to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration for parks and public health to promote physical activity?

- Open up the process with charrettes and workshops – it has been done for some larger projects;
- A lot of activities for fitness
- Workshops and the charrette process could be used more often.

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3) What items would you advocate on a transdisciplinary agenda to engage people in physical activity in the park?

- See response to question 2.

4) What are the city's next steps toward ongoing collaboration?

- I think the city needs to encourage collaboration on every project;
- Keep the summits going!
 - Walkability Summit
 - Bicycle Summit
 - Healthy Hometown Summit
 - Hike and Bike – very popular, thousands participate.

Introduction

The City of Louisville established the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement (MHMM) to improve health status of its citizens and promote healthier lifestyles. Objectives in this goal include increased physical activity, healthy public policy, and facilities that promote active lifestyles.

A critical component in MHMM is the access to and availability of public parks. Louisville Metro Parks is composed of 123 parks, encompassing a total area of over 14,000 acres. Of these parks, 18 parks are Olmsted parks, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and his firm, and provide the foundation for the current park system.

By researching and comparing the goals and objectives, as well as its facilities and agendas, it is anticipated that there can be much gained in working toward effective collaboration to design parks to engage people in physical activity - healthy people in a healthy environment. Two fitness parks will be studied in effort to assess physical environmental factors which contribute to engage community residents in physical activity.

Interview Questions

Agency/Organization associated with: **Louisville MetroParks**

Your role in agency/organization: Landscape Architect, Project Manager

Years in current position: 13 (an additional four summers as student intern)

Part A – Describing Physical Activity in Parks

- 1) How does the term "physical activity" relate to health and parks?
 - It's a natural, unconscious relationship
 - Parks are a place to recreate- sports, outdoors.
 - People like green areas, nature is a mental respite. It has positive benefits to health.
 - A great opportunity to walk , run, enjoy programmed activities

- 2) What benefits do physical activity and parks share?
 - They both promote positive physical and mental health
 - Community aspect is that parks provide a stage for community interaction
 - Positive human interaction results in less negative activity (such as trash, vandalism, etc.)
 - More people go when it is a fun, active place

- When there is negative activity, less people go to a park, or they react strongly, which builds a sense of community.

3) Are these benefits complementary? If so, how?

- Some great places are not used greatly; A good example of this is Cherokee Park; changing the park road loop to one way circulation was a great thing, it made a big difference;
- In the last 16 years, the park has been cleaned up and more accessible.
- It fits the park like a puzzle piece, some things had slid in quality in the past (this helped remedy the situation – the one way circulation).
- Active sports did not appear in parks until the early 20th century; Playgrounds preceded the Spanish Plague (year?)' active sports activities were consolidated to same area of park.

Part B - Louisville's Fitness Parks

- 1) The City has a brochure "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise". It features maps of parks located throughout the city that offer a combination of recreational opportunities to help citizens reach personal health goals. Are you familiar with the publication?

- Yes, interviewer brought it to his attention in November, 2009.

- 2) What facilities should be included in a 'fitness park' or other recreation area to engage people in physical activities?

- Concur with what is in the brochure; McNeely park may have been added to brochure
- Infusion of use has not happened at Shawnee Park (no stain of past experience).
- Chickasaw and Seneca parks both have heavily used, lighted walkways, and are the most used
- Thurman Hutchins also very well used.

Part C - The Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement

- 1) How does the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement promote physical activity in parks?

- Mayor's Miles walking paths – the paths were already there, encouraging to people because they could visibly measure their progress on the (distance-marked) path.
- Mayor's Hike and Bike events are very popular, originated by MHHM; the 1897 route had 10,000 participants ride from downtown to Iroquois Park via Southern Parkway.

2) What commitments has the program made in parks initiatives for promoting physical activity?

- MHHM sponsored Mayor's Miles;
- MHHM sponsored Mayor's Hike and Bike – twice annually, Memorial Day and Labor Day. Mayor had to shut down the roadways for the hike and bike and it gave people the idea that something like that was a positive thing, and non-motorized mobility there was feasible.

3) Has the program served as a catalyst for any parks initiatives?

- Two major initiatives here;
 - In 2003 – 2004, MetroParks invested in the Olmsted Parkways – Southern, Eastern and Algonquin for the Parkways multi-use path to provide connectivity for pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.
 - 2007 Master Plan – took on the 'Complete Streets' mentality, and off-street opportunities for circulation.
 - Louisville Loop – established goal of the Loop in Cornerstone 2020
 - MHHM got it kicked into gear.
 - It is now approximately 25% complete (March 2010)
 - Riverwalk in 1990's from downtown was its starting point.

Part D – Parks Design and Programming

1) The Olmsted Parks are part of Louisville's history and civic culture. What characteristics do they have that promote physical activity?

- Walking – in the three original Olmsted parks there was connectivity to and within the parks for multiple modes of transportation.
- Within the park, one could traverse park with minimal conflicts.
- Off road trails and paths reflective of the original Olmsted Plan.
 - Bridle Path at Iroquois Park.
 - Shawnee Park had a lot trails that were displaced by levee construction; they could be re-done with minimal investment.
 - Later Parks had more active activities.
 - Characteristic of park planning in Louisville, all through the community people are not very far from Olmsted Park.

- 2) Who is able to make impacts to physical park design, and design of facilities that would promote physical activity?
 - The entire community through public meetings during the master planning process.
 - MetroParks – primary impact
 - Operations
 - Planning and Design
 - Recreation Staff, who deals primarily with programmed activities in parks and in community centers (not all community centers are in parks).
 - Olmsted Conservancy – often a key partner.

- 3) How do programmed activities and events in the parks encourage physical activities?
 - Hike and Bike, mini-marathons and running races all bring people to parks in locations where they would not typically visit, in different parts of town.
 - Physical activity exposes people to parks in a variety of tournaments, seniors bike races
 - It reintroduces former park users to return to the parks on their own.

Part E – Collaborative Efforts

- 1) Who are the key participants and what are their roles in the program?
 - MHHM
 - MetroParks Staff
 - Public Works – relatively new involvement with bike planning
 - TARC – mostly with Louisville Loop and Parkways; providing for people taking their bikes on the bus.
 - Utilities
 - Emergency Services – safety in mile markers, can access people by location in emergencies

2) What ways would be most effective to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration for parks and public health to promote physical activity?

- From the top down – Mayor and directors of agencies
- To coordinators and communicators across departments
- Personal concerns involve: difference in focus for each department
 - Need to support each other and stay on the same page, with location and placement of facilities and advocate positive uses.

3) What items would you advocate on a transdisciplinary agenda to engage people in physical activity in the park?

- Communication and common goals from the top down.
- Health component
- Social interaction – benefits knowing your neighbors and making friends
- Turn around negative aspects by simply being in the park.
 - Eliminates graffiti, tax dollars go farther because you can walk in the park and feel safe.

4) What are the city's next steps toward ongoing collaboration?

- Communication
- Recognizing value of everyone's perspective and the value of being at the table together
- Knit things together to prevent missed opportunities
- Come from the TOP
- Don't close your eyes about your projects – let others know what you are doing!

Introduction

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Interview Questions

Agency/Organization associated with [TARC-Transit Authority of River City](#)

Your role in agency/organization: [Director of Marketing](#)

Years in current position: [4 years in current role; 11 years total. Former positions included management of government relations and government outreach programs](#)

Part A – Describing Physical Activity in Parks

- 1) How does the term "physical activity" relate to health and parks?
[Getting to parks, feeling safe in parks;](#)
[Need to be in a place to participate in physical activity](#)
[Have to be able to get there.](#)
[A no-brainer.](#)

- 2) What benefits do physical activity and parks share?
[Both have the potential to enhance a person's health.](#)

- 3) Are these benefits complementary? If so, how?
[Yes; Designed in most cases to have physical activity.](#)

Part B - Louisville's Fitness Parks

- 1) The City has a brochure "Louisville's Fitness Parks: Your Guide to Louisville's Best Parks for Exercise". It features maps of parks located throughout the city that offer a combination of recreational opportunities to help citizens reach personal health goals. Are you familiar with the publication?

No.

- 2) What facilities should be included in a 'fitness park' or other recreation area to engage people in physical activities?

- Place to walk and run
- A track lengthy enough to be repetitive, not ugly or boring
- Active playing fields
- Young kids' play areas, open space to enjoy the outdoors

Part C - The Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement

- 1) How does the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement promote physical activity in parks?

- Have representatives on advisory committee on parks
- Enhance Olmsted Parkways
- Louisville Loop
- Active Living Committee
 - Schools first
 - Long range goal is safe routes to parks
 - Pedestrian summit in 2008

- 2) What commitments has the program made in parks initiatives for promoting physical activity?

Done some walkability assessments; Hancock Corridor in Shelby Park; had a grant for Hancock Corridor, but stymied by safety. Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities Grant.

- 3) Has the program served as a catalyst for any parks initiatives?

It definitely has- Health Kids Healthy Communities Grant. CDC grant of \$7.9 million in 2010.

Part D – Parks Design and Programming

- 1) The Olmsted Parks are part of Louisville's history and civic culture. What characteristics do they have that promote physical activity?
From active living; great potential for walkability and bikability; winding roads; Cherokee Park one-way circulation.

- 2) Who is able to make impacts to physical park design, and design of facilities that would promote physical activity?
 - MetroParks
 - Olmsted Parks Conservancy
 - Mayor's Office

- 3) How do programmed activities and events in the parks encourage physical activities?
I think they bring people to the parks and make them familiar with what is there; a feel good place to be; Events orient people to parks.

Part E – Collaborative Efforts

- 1) Who are the key participants and what are their roles in the program?
Everybody!
CDC grant- physical activity schools, Public works, TARC to shuttle bikes. Endless potential to get involved.

- 2) What ways would be most effective to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration for parks and public health to promote physical activity?
I think MHHM is a good example. A good model would be to get together quarterly; it is hard to get people involved without that carrot. Good to get people together; Louisville Loop – parks department could do it more broadly.

- 3) What items would you advocate on a transdisciplinary agenda to engage people in physical activity in the park?

Certainly. Getting schools to use parks.

Public health is involved. Public Works for bike and ped access.

Historical educational things about Cherokee and Iroquois. A shuttle along the loop to the parks.

- 4) What are the city's next steps toward ongoing collaboration?

Three or four things:

Healthy Kids Healthy Communities

Louisville Loop-huge collaboration

CDC Grant for \$7.9 million

Louisville Working on Health, Putting Prevention to Work