



CITY OF SMITHVILLE
**PARKS AND RECREATION
MASTER PLAN 2030**

PREPARED JUNE 2021



City of Smithville, Missouri

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN 2030

This report is the final stage in the development of the City of Smithville's Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2030. This has been produced following extensive community consultation from November 2030 to May 2021.



June 2021

Report Prepared by:



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan was developed using a matrix of criteria including the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) classifications and recommendations for best practices, community input, future trends globally, nationally, and regionally, along with a set of guiding principles established through work with the Parks and Recreation Committee and city staff. Although the NRPA guidelines were established over 25 years ago, the guidelines are commonly accepted in the park planning industry. This plan recognizes the value in using the NRPA guidelines as a means for classifying parks and for determining the development of level of service (LOS) recommendations but pushes more forward-thinking and is responding to the recently approved Comprehensive Plan for the City of Smithville.

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Alderman Marvin Atkins	Alderman Steve Sarver
Alderman Jeff Bloemker (<i>former</i>)	Alderman Dan Ulledahl
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

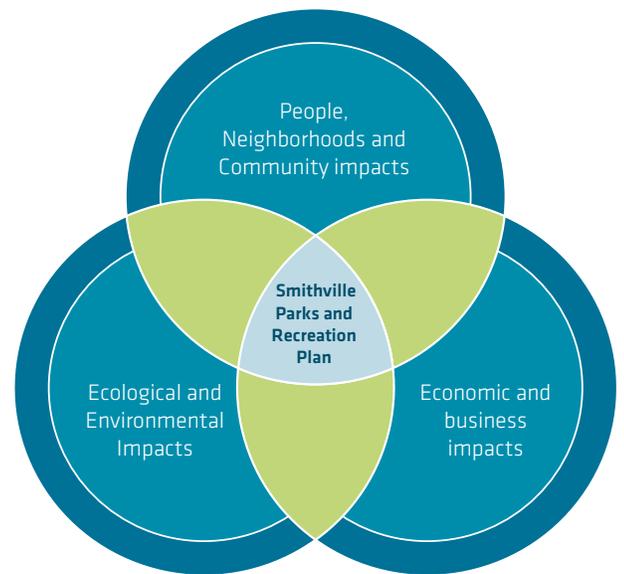
1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In late 2020, the City of Smithville initiated a process to create a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This followed the completion of a community visioning and strategic planning effort, and an update of the Comprehensive Plan during 2019 and 2020. Both these documents outline the community’s aspirations and desires. The comprehensive planning work also included task force sessions that explored parks and trails, downtown development, and neighborhoods.

The context that frames the scope of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2030 includes:

- **Smithville’s population is growing** – the forecasts in the Comprehensive Plan are for steady growth of between 2.2% and 3.3% per years, adding between 2,700 and 4,200 residents by 2030 (for a total of 13,500 to 15,000 by 2030). However, local task force sessions suggest there is a reasonable expectation the growth could be faster.
- **Smithville’s population is changing** – the current population is dominated by school-aged families. However, over the next 10 years this is expected to evolve with significant new cohorts emerging, including active retirees and younger generational cohorts bringing new demand for more recreational opportunities.
- **Value proposition** – the trail and recreation amenities (both current and potential) are seen as a key part of the community value proposition.
- **Funding** – the recently passed 0.5% Parks and Stormwater Sales Tax will help fund the Parks and Recreation Master Plan implementation.

City of Smithville
Parks and Recreation Master Plan
High level impact areas



In addition, the Smithville community, city staff and city leaders have expressed an appetite for innovative approaches and ‘out of the box’ thinking. There is a desire for a forward looking and ambitious plan, that takes account of emerging trends and anticipated community needs.



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHTS:

- The Smithville Parks and Recreation Plan focuses on delivering outcomes and impacts in three the main areas. The plan aims to improve the quality of life and deliver environmental and economic benefits.
- Parks and recreation are seen as key appeals and value propositions for the community. Building on the existing amenities, the plan aims to enhance the community’s appeal and quality of living.

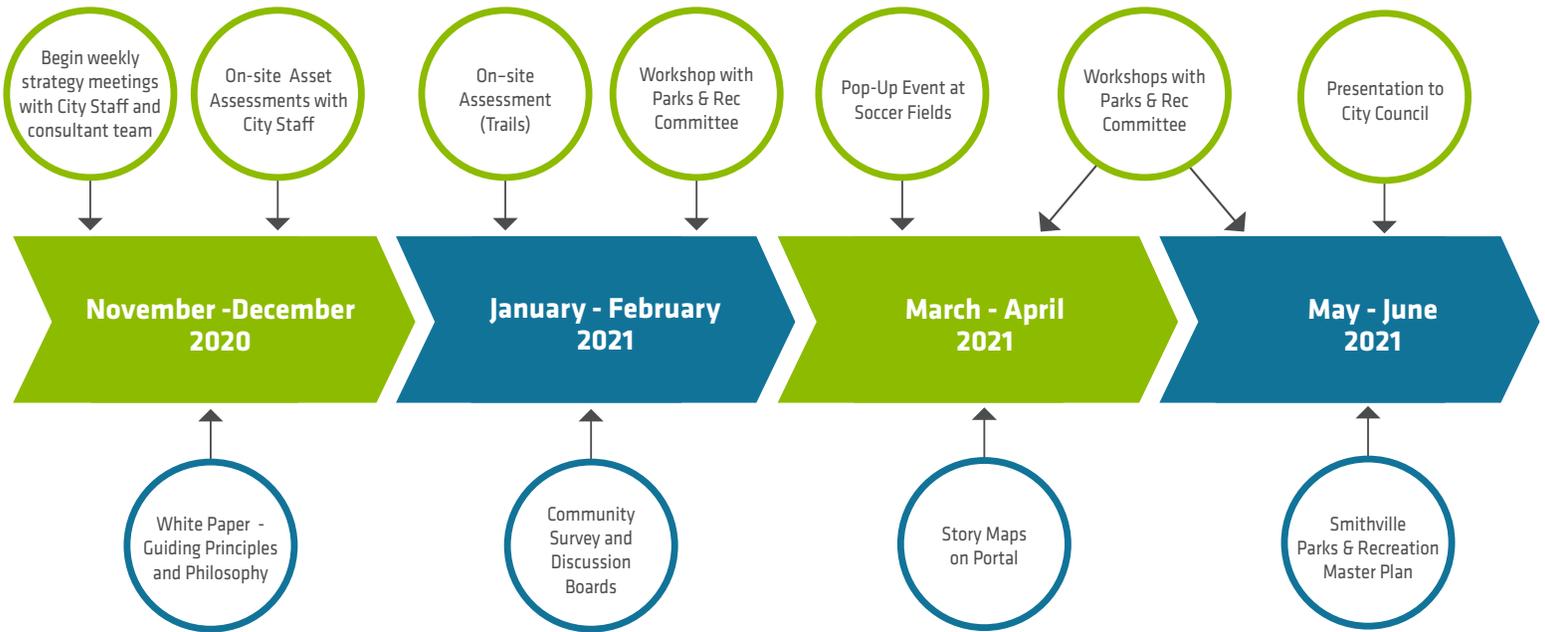


The level of public participation in the development of the Master Plan has been outstanding. Over 1,000 households had direct input into the community survey.

1.2 COMMUNITY INPUT AND PROJECT TIMELINE

A key aim in the planning process was to gather significant community input into identifying priorities and future needs. The Smithville Parks and Recreation Master Plan planning initiative began in November 2020, upon completion of Smithville’s new Comprehensive Plan.

The planning process took approximately eight months and included a community survey, discussion boards, story maps, on-site assessments, a pop-up event, and regular meetings with city staff and the Parks and Recreation Committee. The previous visioning and comprehensive planning work, along with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan align to reaffirm key high-level concepts and priorities supported by the city and community.



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHTS:

- Over 1,000 households participated in the community survey, which by any comparison is an outstanding level of community engagement. This was coupled with online discussion boards and community pop-up events. Results of the engagement can be viewed in full on the project portal. <https://lab2.future-iq.com/smithville-park-and-recreation-master-plan-project/>
- The community engagement gives a high level of confidence in the prioritization and objectives laid out in the Master Plan.



As cities grow denser and more vertical, maintaining widespread access to natural areas is vital for emotional, physical, and mental wellbeing.

2.0 FUTURE TRENDS SHAPING PARKS AND RECREATION IN SMITHVILLE

In crafting the Master Plan, emerging important trends were reviewed. A high-level summary of these trends is included below.

2.1 FUTURE TRENDS IN PUBLIC SPACES

Public Space is crucial for the economic, ecological, and social resilience of cities. Diverse open space types help to address combined needs for climate regulation, civic engagement and gathering, as well as economic issues. Smaller areas can provide space for shade, passive cooling, and air cleansing services, as well as increased degrees of solar access. Multi-functional river-side spaces can provide dynamic recreational areas that allow for public gathering and utility as well as floodable defense. For these reasons, treating all forms of public space, from open and green areas to denser street-side plazas, as social infrastructure is essential to making urban areas livable in the 21st century.¹ Treating Smithville public spaces as vital pieces of infrastructure will become increasingly important to maintaining quality of life in the community.

Smithville has several opportunities to treat public space as infrastructure. Examples of these unique land uses include:

- Multi-functional recreation space by the river’s edge. The Riverwalk concept has gained attention and support throughout the planning efforts. This is seen as deepening the downtown experience and creating a unique nature-based trail that links the downtown to the other trails.
- Tree planting schemes designed to accommodate climate change models within coming decades.
- Treating Smithville Lake as a vital regional ecosystem:
 - Socially (high levels of recreation), ecologically (stormwater retention and management, habitat value, carbon sink, air quality improvements), and economically (recreational-related revenue, fish permits, etc).
 - Extending the lake ecosystem throughout the city. This connection is underway and is a vital arterial connection which will deliver multi-dimensional benefits. There is the potential to also create similar connections on the north side of the river and could create a loop around the core of the downtown community oasis area.
- Building North-South trail connectivity (see *White Paper*) – Smithville has a unique geographic layout, that lends itself well to trail connectivity north to south on the east side of Hwy 169. This has the potential to create a ‘backbone’ for a trails system that connects Smithville and plugs into regional trail networks.

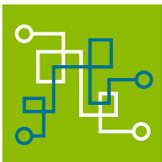
¹Mark Sarkisian, 22 April 2020.



As city demographics change, ensuring that public spaces remain inclusive and accessible becomes increasingly important to maintaining residents' quality of life.

2.1.1 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Defining public space as social infrastructure is a valuable way to cultivate greater civic identity, social cohesion, and sense of belonging in a community. With the explosive rise of people working from home during COVID-19, dependence on public space networks has increased. The pandemic has proven that parks and public spaces of all sizes are essential social infrastructure, with critical benefits for cities and their residents. Having walkable and safe recreation areas close to home is now more important than ever to many urban residents. Even after the pandemic ends, working from home is likely to continue, making these demands for accessible public space a fundamental aspect of long-term urban futures. Ensuring widespread accessibility of public space is an increasingly vital issue for Smithville. Public spaces are urban living rooms, acting as critical safety valves for citizens. They're where citizens can find breathing room, feel more connected to their cultural institutions, and each other. As such, their degrees of inclusivity are paramount to civic cohesion and connection.



FUTURE INSIGHTS FOR SMITHVILLE:

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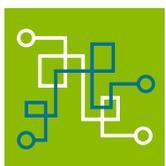
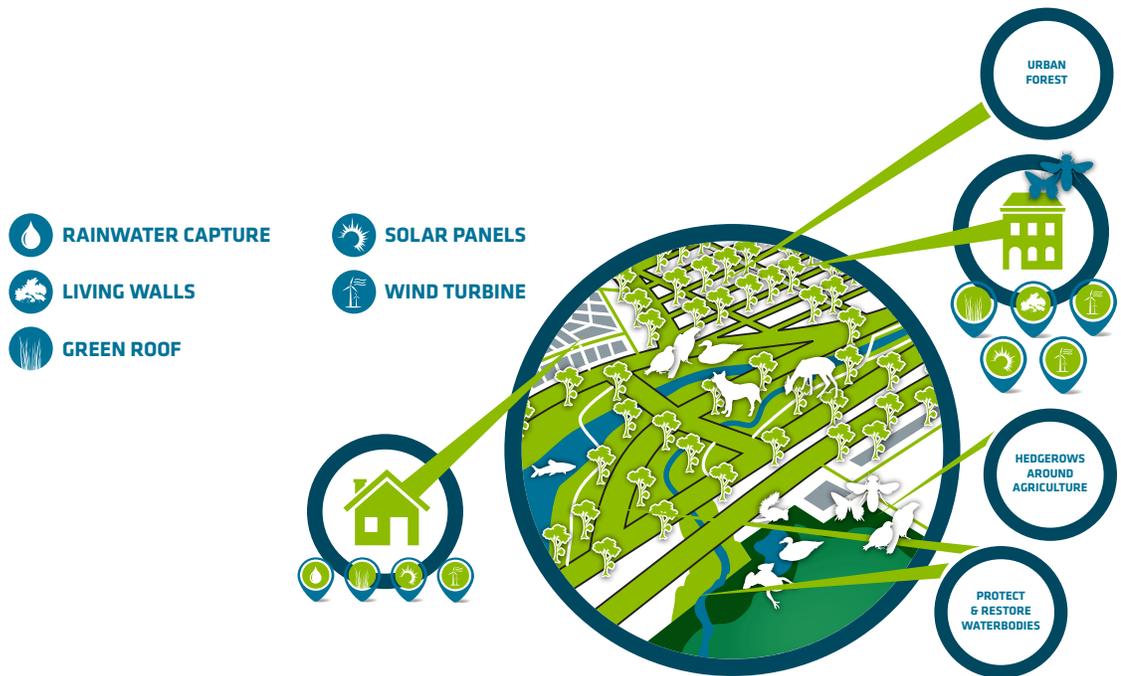
- Investing in smart technologies for public spaces can help the city of Smithville better understand how different types of residents use public space. These efforts can help inform improvements over time, creating public space networks that support the city's changing demographics.
- Distributed recreation could help to foster greater degrees of community connectivity in Smithville by encouraging people to visit multiple locations and use multi-use trails. Creating appropriate links across the city will ensure that Smithville becomes a more connected and vibrant place.
- Parks and recreational amenities support healthy lifestyles for community residents. Best practices demonstrate that access to parks and recreational facilities for people of all ages can help increase physical activity and provide health and wellbeing benefits.
- A national survey by the National Recreation and Park Association found that 93% of adults believe that local park and recreational programming benefit their mental health. Top benefits include the opportunity to socialize with family and friends, spending time outdoors in nature, and exercising as key benefits.



Resilient cities are integrated within their greater ecosystems, with green spaces providing opportunities for water management, habitat for birds and wildlife, and connections to nature for community members.

2.1.2 ECOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Approaching urban spaces as ecological systems is an attitudinal shift spreading in cities around the world. Assessing the ways different open spaces -- from wetlands to grasslands to forests and more -- are synthesized within cities is vital to strengthening their value as functioning habitats.¹ Municipalities are beginning to consider and incorporate ecological functions and habitat into master planning, resulting in new and redevelopment projects including more ecosystem features including wildlife protection and conservation, ecological restoration, greenway connections, as well as, living roofs and walls incorporated into buildings and other hard surfaces. Smithville has an important opportunity to approach its landscape as a functioning ecosystem. Its urban environment can become one where ecological infrastructure is seen as essential, and is emphasized and supported as much as energy, waste, and other infrastructural streams. Valuable approaches include no mowing, edible Agri-scaping; goats on the go; honeybee hives; wildflower and natural grass areas; and sunflower parks.



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FUTURE INSIGHTS FOR SMITHVILLE:

- Integrating urban gardens into different spaces and scales of Smithville's open space network can provide valuable food supplies, while creating more space for community gathering and social connection.
- Smart planting strategies can help Smithville's tree canopies and vegetated ecosystems provide greater air quality to inhabitants and adapt to shifting temperatures and weather patterns associated with climate change.

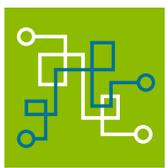
¹Kristina Hill, 16 January 2020



Connected and lively public spaces both improve quality of life and provide quantifiable economic benefits. Investments in infrastructure and amenities are critical in helping overlooked areas transition into centers of activity and development.

2.1.3 ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Public spaces have increasingly been used to attract new business ventures and citizens to cities and towns, becoming central aspects of marketing ventures and investment strategies. Residents are attracted to pleasing, engaging and dynamic spaces in accessible areas. Businesses are attracted to amenities and activities often situated in public spaces, because they realize professionals they might wish to employ or serve will likely want well-managed and maintained public spaces nearby.¹ Smithville can capitalize on the economic benefits parks and dynamic public spaces provide by enhancing the community oasis experience. This concept should be used in thinking about park and asset design, including elements such as shade, noise, views, and concentration of people. An important part of this approach is emphasizing the link between Smithville’s downtown areas and the Lake, as well as incorporating a welcoming river walk experience into the city’s urban fabric.



FUTURE INSIGHTS FOR SMITHVILLE:

- Smithville presents many valuable opportunities to link public spaces to generating more robust economic frameworks. Establishing the degree to which the city will control park and public space system designs over developer-led interests is a critical part of this process.
- Higher density residential areas have been proposed for different areas of Smithville, in particular its southern end. Combining denser residential areas with different types of public space can make for more dynamic living conditions.

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¹EPA, 2015; <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-05/documents/competitiveadvantage051215508final.pdf>



Quantifying and communicating Smithville's recreational assets' economic value helps inform future decisions and highlights the value qualitative experiences of recreation have on the city at-large.

2.2 ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NATURE-BASED ASSETS

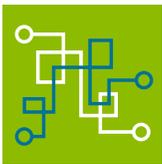
Nature-based placemaking is a growing movement in which communities have become more deliberate in using their outdoor recreational assets to improve the physical, social, cultural, and economic networks of their cities.¹ Communities across the country harness these placemaking efforts, recognizing the economic and fiscal benefits they can achieve for their municipalities while fostering quality cities and towns. The coming ten years provide the City of Smithville with a range of economic development opportunities related to parks and recreation to consider. Smithville's outdoor recreational amenities are recognized not only as community assets but also as assets for the city's economy. Between Smithville Lake, the city's numerous parks, popular recreational programming, and expanding trail network, the city is well-positioned to attract more residents, customers, and visitors.

Fundamental Principles of Nature-Based Placemaking as it Relates to Economic Development

Nature-based placemaking efforts offer a range of potential benefits. The following concepts are key to local economic development considerations and relate to the opportunities in Smithville.

- Turning nature visitors into local customers
- Lengthening visits to create more opportunities to capture dollars
- Developing brand identity and a unique local character

Smithville Lake and its visitor draw, Downtown Smithville, and the Smithville Gravel Grinder illustrate how these principles apply to existing opportunities related to nature-based placemaking and leveraging recreation to drive the local economy.



FUTURE INSIGHTS FOR SMITHVILLE:

- Event registration through digital portals such as Eventbrite can help the city quickly understand visitors' geographic locations via zip code. Intercept surveys can also inform the city of demographics and similar data.
- Documenting the private sector investment dollars attributable to public improvements allows the city to assess return on investment. Smithville's Main Street program will likely annually track public improvement and private investment dollars as part of the Reinvestment Statistics data reporting process.

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¹Pennsylvania Downtown Center; Nature-Based Placemaking (<https://padowntown.org/programs/nature-based-placemaking-program>)

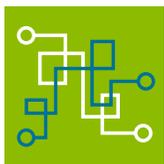


Smithville Lake is a distinguished natural asset in the community that draws regional visitors from across the metro area to recreate and explore.

2.2.1 SNAPSHOT: SMITHVILLE LAKE AND THE VALUE OF VISITORS

Smithville Lake has been identified as potential for being a key driver of the city's local economy. Exploring strategies that can connect Smithville Lake with enhanced sales revenue sources will better support existing businesses in Smithville. These strategies can also help attract new establishments and spur investment through private sector development, resulting in fiscal benefits for the city at-large. The first step in estimating Smithville Lake visitors' economic impact is to understand the estimated annual attendance to Smithville Lake and the proportionate split between Smithville residents and non-local visitors. It should be noted that approximately one out of three surveyed residents live in Smithville because of the proximity to Smithville Lake, indicating this outdoor recreation amenity is a strong contributor to the residential market of the city.¹ As Smithville's residential base grows so does the city's fiscal revenue and tax base – bringing more dollars to the city to fund desirable amenities like parks and programming for all.

Visitor Spending Impacts

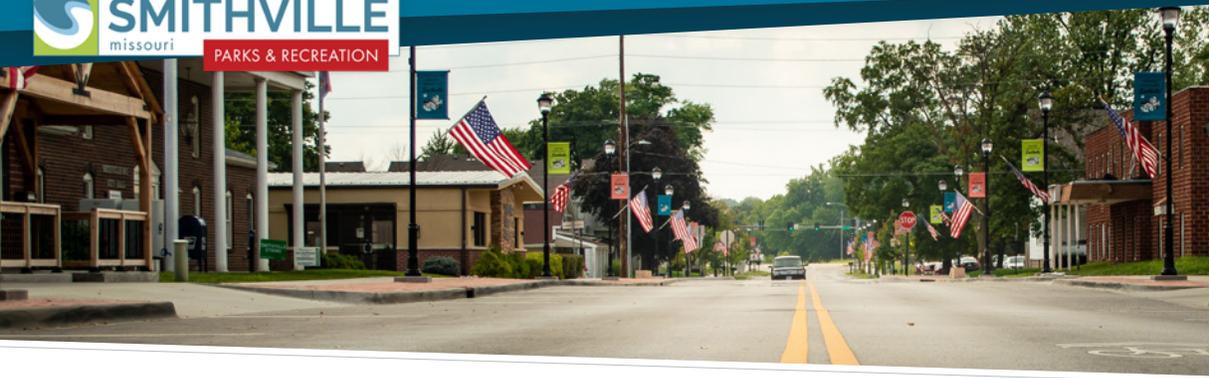


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FUTURE INSIGHTS FOR SMITHVILLE:

- Public-private partnerships have a track record of success in communities that leverage outdoor recreation and parks to drive their local economy. Potential new commercial development may occur in or near Smith Fork Park as the city expands its municipal boundaries towards Smithville Lake.
- Continuing to enhance physical placemaking and experiential programming will encourage more visitors and repeat visitors to stop in Smithville, enjoy Smithville Lake, and spend their dollars at local businesses.

¹Smithville Comprehensive Plan Community Survey, 2020



Knowing the impact of events and programming in Smithville strengthens partnerships, communicates value, and enhances operations.

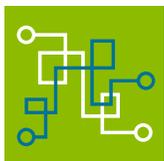
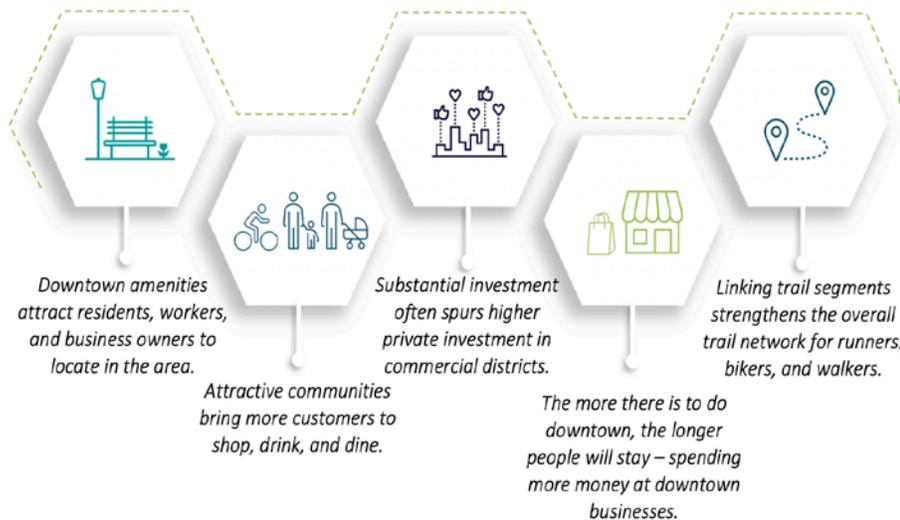
2.2.2 SNAPSHOT: DOWNTOWN SMITHVILLE

Enhancing the quality of place Downtown Smithville continues to impact customer experience and favorable perceptions of the area, conducive to attracting more visitors and customers to the commercial district. The proposed Riverwalk Park and Main Street Trail demonstrate public and private investment, a best practice in downtown revitalization strategies, to encourage more private investment in the downtown area. Incorporating a well-designed and well-visited Riverwalk Park in Smithville’s Downtown will encourage people to lengthen their visits in the downtown area. As customers extend their time downtown, the opportunities for businesses to capture dollars from these customers increase.

Downtown events and programming generate three different types of impacts:

- **Economic Impacts** include the impact on businesses, including sales and revenue, jobs and employment, and salaries and wages.
- **Fiscal Impacts** include the impact on property tax, sales tax, personal and corporate income taxes, and licenses and fees paid to the municipality and state.
- **Community Impacts** including many factors such as vibrancy, amenities, safety, aesthetics, entertainment, and preservation.

Economic Impacts of a Vibrant Downtown



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FUTURE INSIGHTS FOR SMITHVILLE:

- Events are held in Smithville’s Downtown and Courtyard Park throughout the year, including the popular Lighted Christmas Parade, Hot Summer Nights Concert Series, Farmers and Makers Market, and Yoga in the Park series.
- Connecting the regional trail network through Downtown to the Main Street Trail out to Smithville Lake will encourage more trail users to explore the downtown area and stop in local businesses.

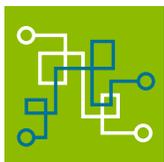
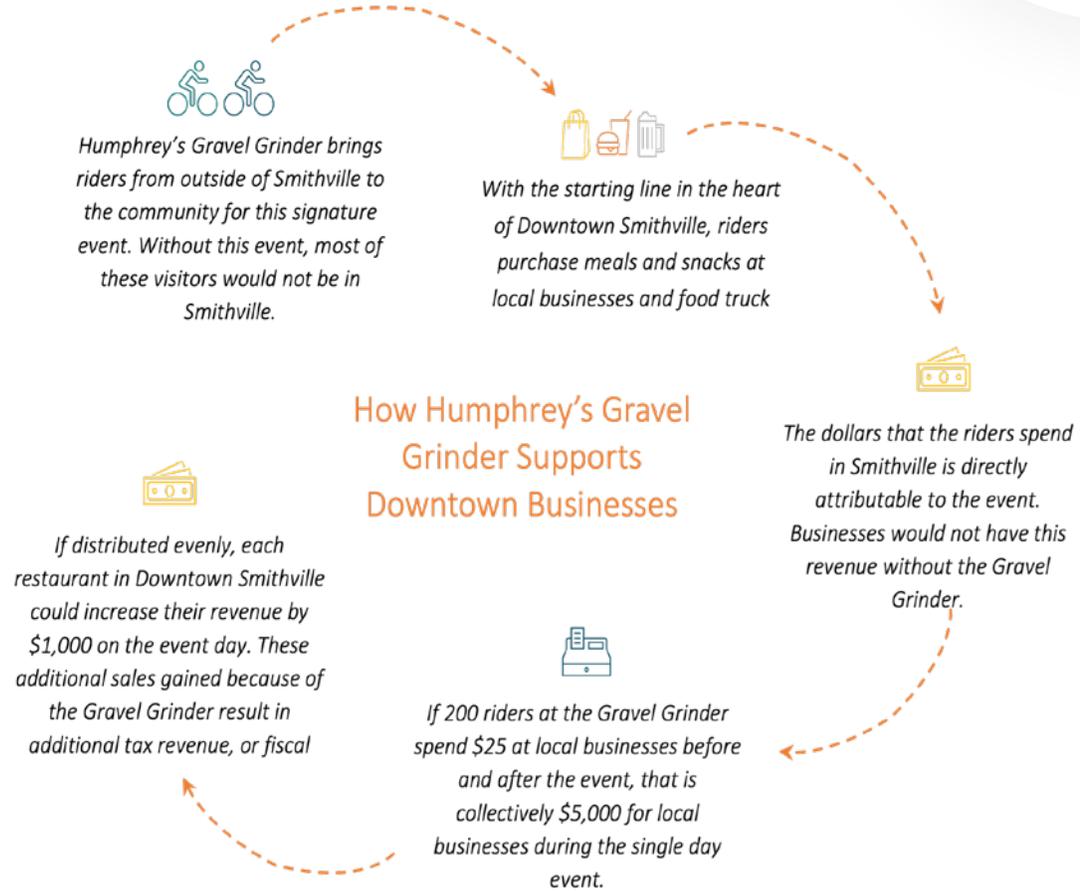


The Smithville Gravel Grinder Bike Race is a growing biking event that directly supports the Smithville Parks and Recreation Department.

2.2.3 SNAPSHOT: SMITHVILLE'S GRAVEL GRINDER

Since 2018, Smithville's Parks and Recreation Department hosts the annual and semi-annual Humphrey's Gravel Grinder, a bike race and ride spanning routes ranging from 50 miles to 200 miles. The event welcomes seasoned and casual riders and continues to grow in registration, attracting riders from throughout the Kansas City metro area and even nearby states.

Economic Impact of the Gravel Grinder



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FUTURE INSIGHTS FOR SMITHVILLE

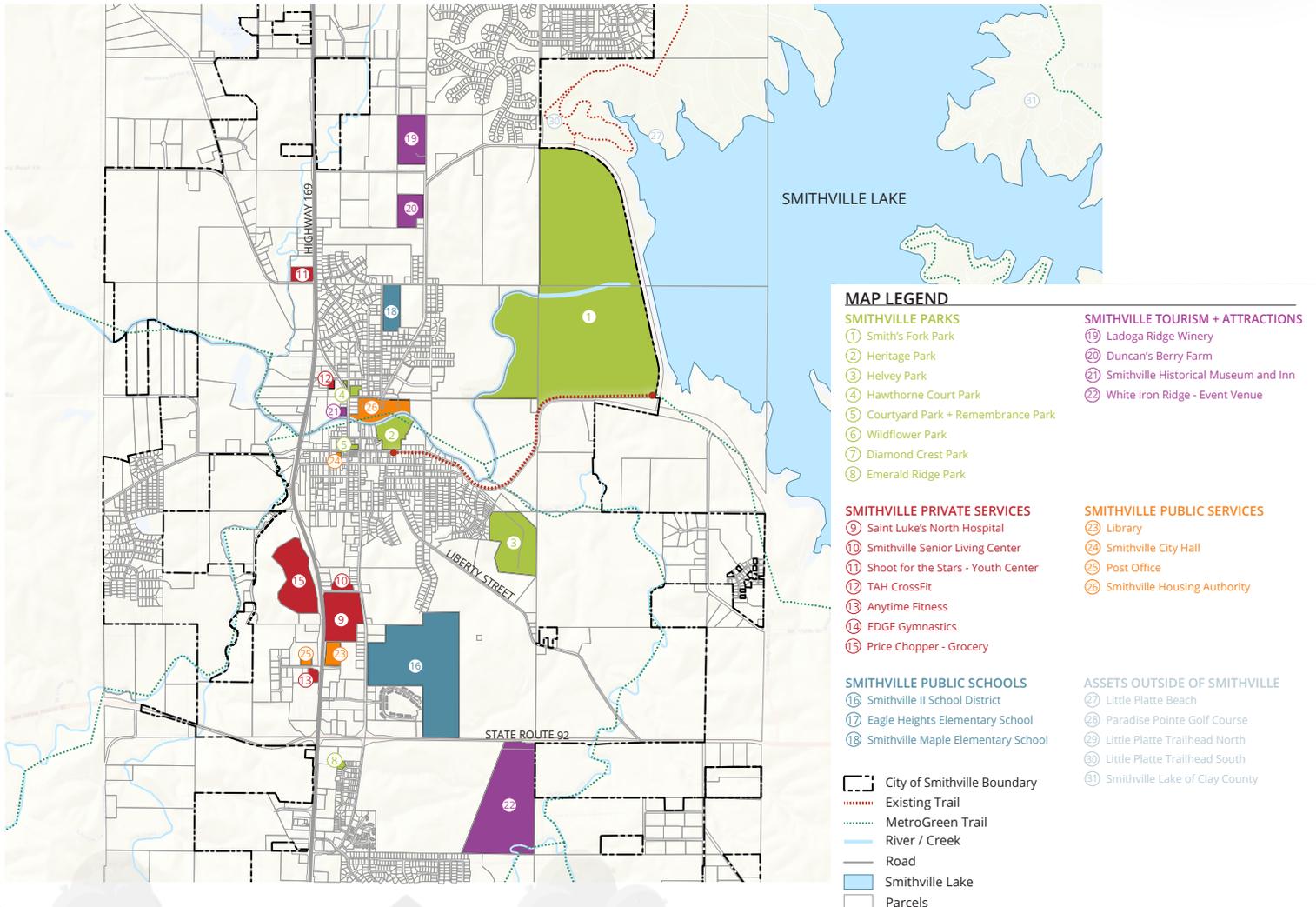
- Popular placemaking events that draw people to Smithville can significantly help support local businesses in the area. These events contribute to the sense that Smithville is a go-to place for activity and attract new residents and visitors.
- Best practices for communities to leverage nature-based assets to support local economies recommend physical linkages between the assets and areas of concentrated businesses. Smithville's newly constructed Main Street Trail exemplifies this strategy.



The asset map shows some of the public, private, and tourism-oriented services that Smithville currently offers. Most of these are centralized in the downtown core, with some growing trail connectivity between key recreation areas.

3.0 SMITHVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM - CURRENT STATUS

3.1 CURRENT PARKS AND RECREATIONAL ASSETS - OVERALL PICTURE





Smithville's Park system is now the focus for new planning and development. There is considerable untapped potential in this system, and the foundation of existing parks offers the opportunity to develop an exciting and vibrant system of public spaces.

3.2 PARKS AND PARK FACILITIES

To properly develop individual parks, trails and system-wide recommendations for the Smithville Parks and Recreation system, a thorough review of existing conditions and current park and recreation usage was completed and documented. Each park was assessed using the comparable criteria. The assessment includes the inventory of current park properties, their assets and current condition. Based on NRPA guidelines and classifications (Appendix A), the City of Smithville has four (4) pocket parks, three (3) neighborhood parks, one (1) community park, and one (1) regional park property for a total of 310 park acres.

Pocket Parks

- Courtyard Park
- Remembrance Park
- Emerald Ridge Park
- Hawthorne Court Park

Neighborhood Parks

- Diamond Crest Park
- Wildflower Park
- Helvey Park

Community Park

- Heritage Park

Regional Park

- Smith's Fork Park

Park Assessments: Scoring

Each park property was evaluated based on criteria that examines park properties and establishes numerical grades based on these evaluations. For a detailed look at the criteria for park and park facility evaluation, please see

Appendix B.

Scoring Category	Park Property	Current Park Classification	Assessment Score (Maximum score of 100)
Excellent (Score of 85-100)	Courtyard Park	Pocket Park	91
Good (Score of 70-84)	Remembrance Park	Pocket Park	79
Good (Score of 70-84)	Heritage Park	Community Park	76
Fair (Score of 50-69)	Smith's Fork Park	Regional Park	67
Poor (Score of 0-49)	Helvey Park	Neighborhood Park	44
Poor (Score of 0-49)	Diamond Crest Park	Neighborhood Park	43
Poor (Score of 0-49)	Wildflower Park	Neighborhood Park	43
Poor (Score of 0-49)	Emerald Ridge Park	Pocket Park	41
Average Scoring Category			Avg. Assessment Score (Maximum score of 100)
Fair (Score of 50-69)			60.5



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHTS:

- Overall, the Smithville parks scored as 'FAIRLY' on the assessment tool. Parks located in the heart of downtown (Courtyard, Remembrance, and Heritage) scored higher than other parks in the system.
- Generally, parks in the neighborhood park classification scored low compared to the parks of other classifications. It is worth noting many of these neighborhood park properties (Helvey, Diamond Crest, and Wildflower) are either recently acquired or largely undeveloped and awaiting recommendations from this planning process.



3.3 TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE

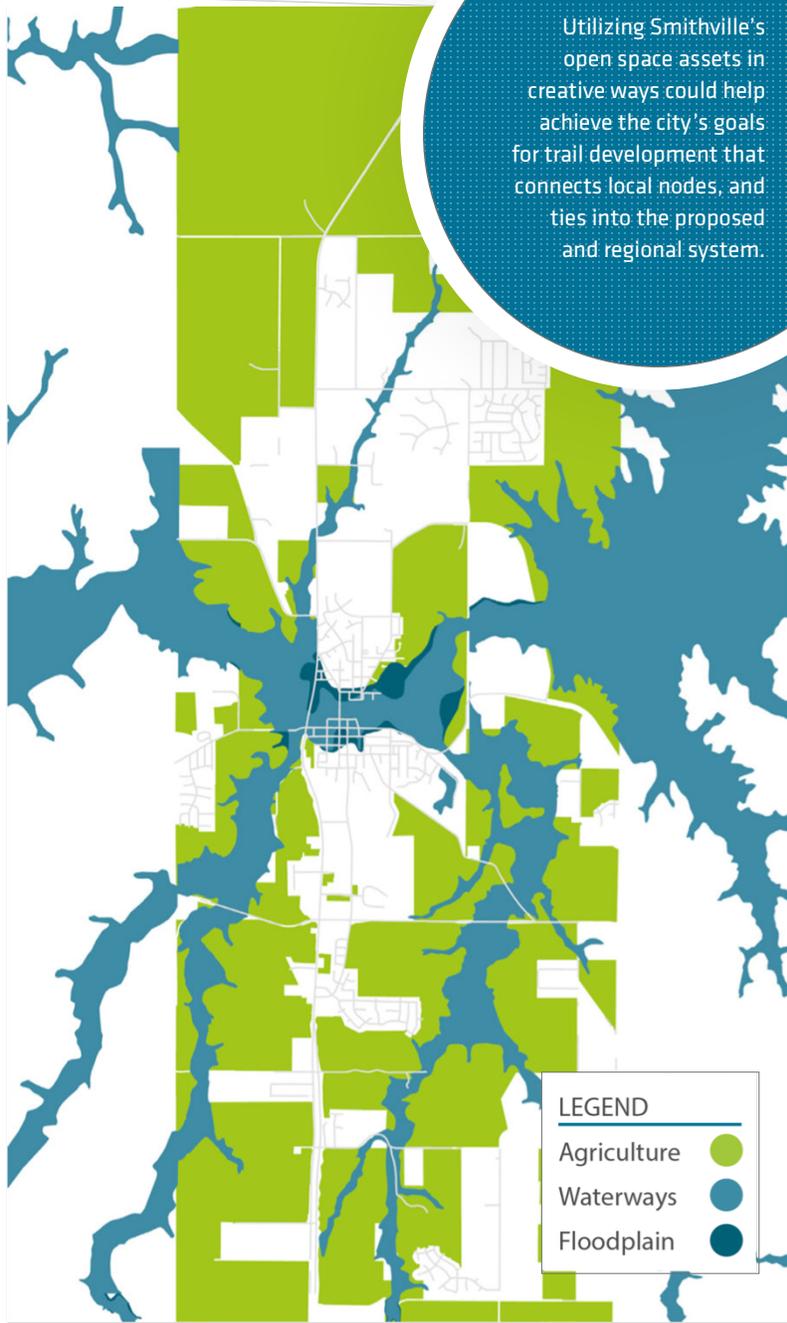
The term 'open space' refers to land that is undeveloped and not slated for any major development in the near future. Open space is important to evaluate in every city because it's often an area of opportunity for future growth, sustainable infrastructure, or future park space. The open space map indicates that Smithville has an abundance of not only agricultural land, but riparian corridors and streamways. There are many opportunities for trail development along waterways, wetland and prairie restoration, floodplain mitigation, and other sustainable infrastructure.

Utilizing Smithville's open space assets in creative ways could help achieve the City's goals of local/regional trail development and a more sustainable future. The existing open space is a key feature that helps create the rural feel of the city and offers the potential for future trail development. The riparian waterways and buffers can also offer important wildlife corridors and help in water runoff management.

In terms of trails development, Smithville is in the early stages of building a solid trail network.

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan identified the potential to create a north-south trail corridor and build connectivity between each of the main recreation areas.

Utilizing Smithville's open space assets in creative ways could help achieve the city's goals for trail development that connects local nodes, and ties into the proposed and regional system.



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHTS:

- Smithville has significant right-of-way along arterial streets. This could allow the development of multi-use paths to ensure that multiple modes of mobility and levels of experience can take advantage of the potential trail network.
- There is future potential for trails along the riparian buffers and waterways.



The current programming is dominated by summer community events, and sporting activities in spring, summer, and fall. Winter activities are limited, due to lack of all-season facilities.

3.4 RECREATION PROGRAMMING AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

The City of Smithville currently manages a variety of sports leagues. In addition to these programs and their associated entry fees, the City of Smithville allows the Youth Football Club the use of the football field and practice area in Smith Fork’s Park. The Club compensates the city for general maintenance and upkeep.

Current Sports Leagues:

- Spring youth soccer
- Spring soccer clinic
- Spring T-Ball
- Spring/Summer baseball
- Spring/Summer softball
- Fall T-Ball
- Fall Soccer
- Fall Soccer Clinic
- Fall Volleyball
- Winter Basketball
- Adult Softball
- Adult Kickball
- Adult Volleyball
- Adult Pickleball

In addition to providing sports leagues for residents, the City of Smithville Parks and Recreation Department provides a variety of community events and programs that appeal to a wide variety of the community. The programs offer opportunities for multi-generational activities, as well as more age-specific and focused interests.

Current Community Event Programming includes:

- Gravel Grinder Bike Race
- Smithville’s Haunted Campground (community Halloween event in the campground)
- Campground events: Easter egg hunt, Dinosaur dig, bike parades, Christmas in the campground, and craft activities
- Symphony in the Park (free music in the park)
- Candy Cane Quest
- Parks and Rec Month (Yoga in the park, Bootcamp in the park, Art at the Park, Outdoor Story me) (July)
- Movie Nights at Courtyard Park (May, June, and July)
- Running Club (meets twice a week)
- Scavenger Hunts
- Starting in 2021- Senior Fitness Classes in the Senior Center
- Adult pickleball clinics
- Keeping up with trends (more virtual programming, esports, etc.)
- STEM projects on YouTube and Facebook live
- Monthly virtual E-Sports tournaments
- Virtual fitness and meditation classes
- Outdoor Cycle Classes
- SUP Yoga classes at Helvey Park



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHTS:

- Community engagement opportunities and activities utilizing the park and park facilities are extensive in Smithville. From movies and concerts to scavenger hunts and E-Sports tournaments, there are many ways to interact with others and enrich the lives of residents.
- While the impacts of COVID limited the ability to gather in groups, virtual programming continued to deliver fitness and meditation classes, as well as E-Sports tournaments. This flexibility demonstrates the agility of the city to adapt and indicates a commendable resiliency.



The Smithville Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2030 closely aligns with the city's visioning, strategic planning, and comprehensive planning processes.

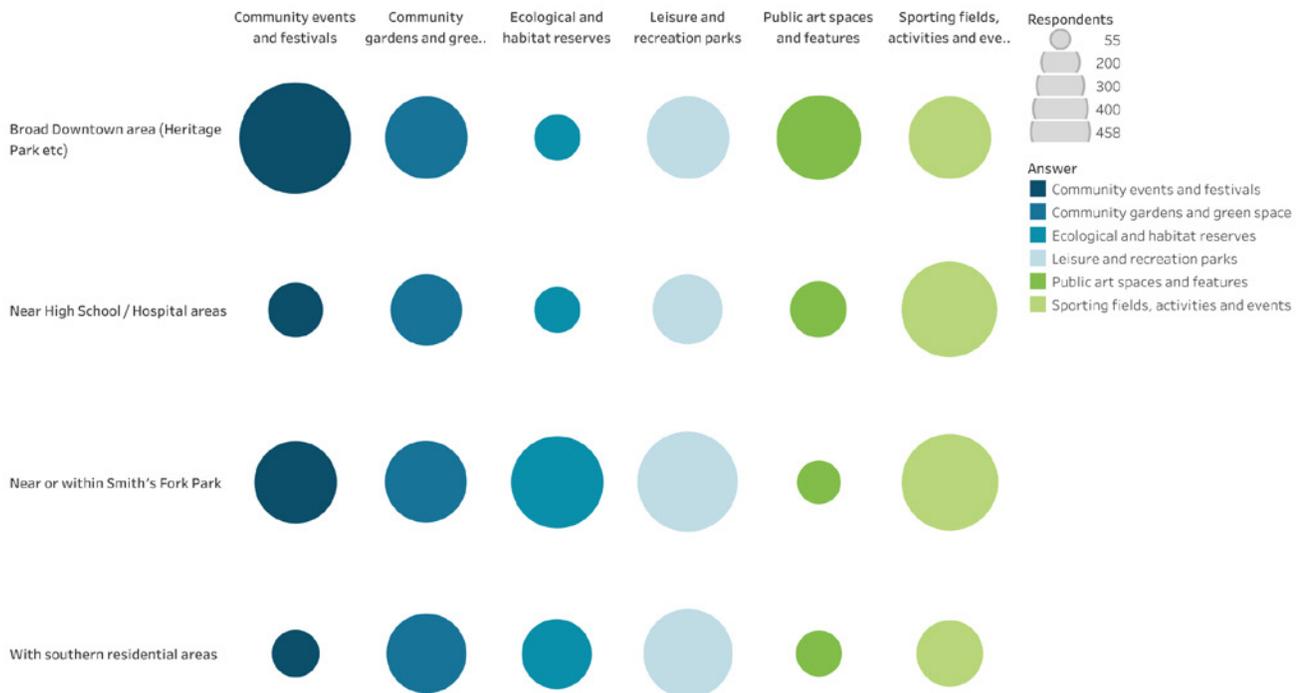
4.0 COMMUNITY FUTURE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The community survey and various discussion forums provided valuable insight into the community's desires. This input directly shaped the formulation of the various elements of the Master Plan. The community input can be viewed in full on the project portal. <https://lab2.future-iq.com/smithville-park-and-recreation-master-plan-project/>

4.1 DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS ACROSS THE COMMUNITY

'Distributed recreation' is a concept that was developed during Smithville's comprehensive planning process. Providing recreational opportunities to residents connected by trails and other multimodal connectivity is considered a priority for the community as its population grows large enough to support the maintenance and operations of a community center and recreation hub.

Distribution of Amenities



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHTS:

- The broad downtown area was considered by survey respondents as the most suitable location for community events and festivals, and public art spaces and features.
- Smith's Fork Park was identified as an area that was appealing to a range of amenities.



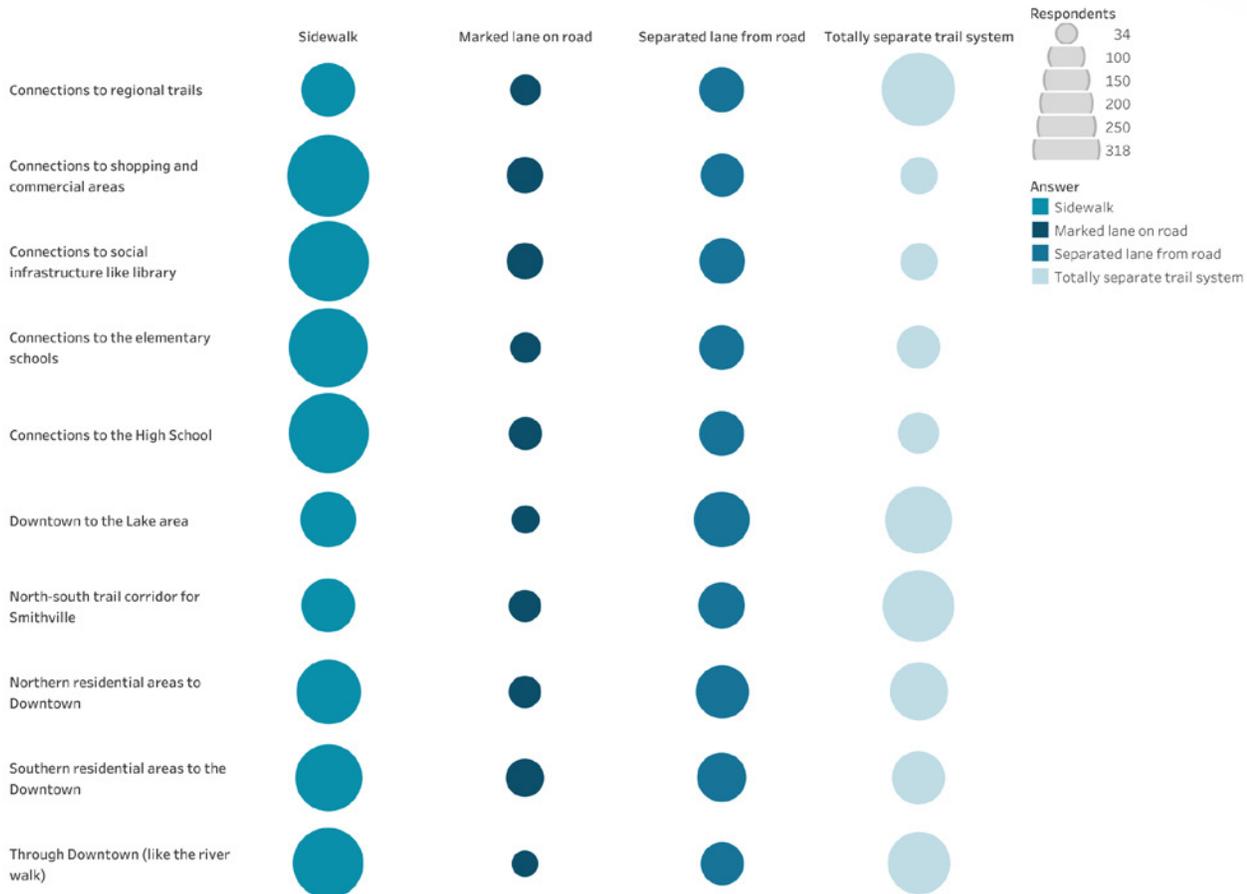
There is strong support for a main trail system, that forms the backbone of a multimodal system that links key recreation locations and amenities.

4.2 CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN RECREATION NODES

The concept 'Distributed Recreation' also requires the connectivity between the various location of recreation amenities. The survey explored the preferred types of connectivity, and it revealed a strong desire for primarily sidewalks and trails.

Minimum Standard of Connection

For each of the main connections, what do you think needs to be the minimum standard of connection / trail construction or design? (assuming within next 5-10 years)



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHTS:

- Sidewalks and a separated trail system were considered by survey respondents as critical minimum standards of connectivity for Smithville over the next 5-10 years, especially within the retail, downtown and commercial areas.
- Full trail systems were seen as important for the main connects to regional trails, the north-south corridor, and connecting the Downtown to the Lake.



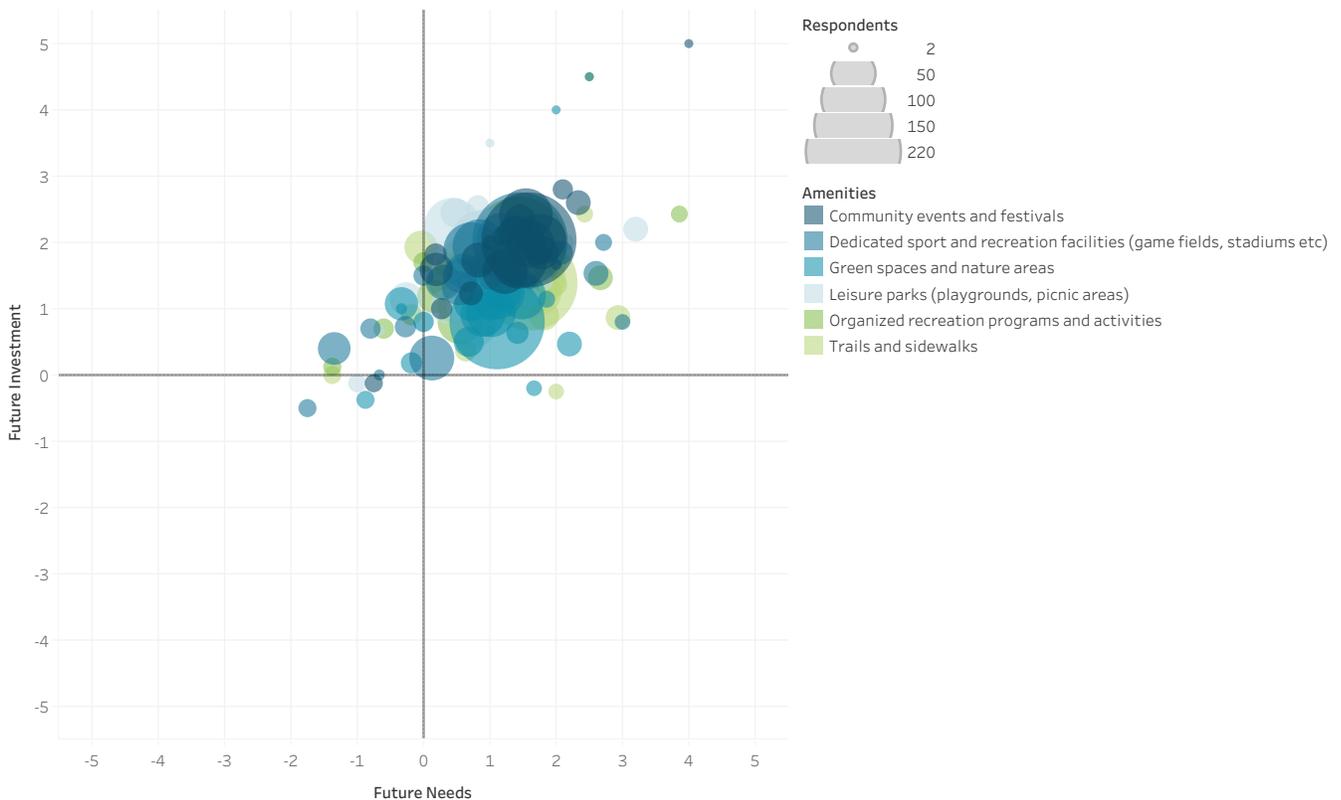
The survey results suggest a desire and need for more amenities, and a willingness to boost funding.

4.3 AMENITIES - FUTURE NEEDS AND INVESTMENT

The survey explored the correlation between the future needs and the appetite for additional investment. In most cases, there is an expectation that future needs will increase, across all the amenity types, and for most households.

Pivot Chart - Future Needs X Future Investment - Cohort by Type of Household and Character Area

X Axis = Future Needs: SCALE: -5 = Decrease significantly; 0 = Stay same; +5 Increase significantly
Y Axis = Future Investment: SCALE: -5 = Decrease substantially; 0 = Stay same; +5 Boost significantly



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHTS:

- There is strong support for increased funding and investment to Community events and festivals, Dedicated sports facilities, and Trails and Sidewalks.
- Green spaces and nature areas were not seen as areas requiring a significant boost in investment – which likely reflects the existing abundance of green spaces in Smithville.



There is strong support for a main trail system, that forms the backbone of a multimodal system that links key recreation locations and amenities.

4.4 PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT

Development of Smithville’s parks and recreational amenities will take time and investment. To gauge the community’s priorities for this investment, survey respondents were asked to rank their priorities in five broad categories over the next 5 years.

Priority For Investment

What priority for investment, over the next 5 years, would you assign to these five broad categories?
Rank 1 = most important; 6 = least important



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHTS:

- There was a clear focus on dedicated sports facilities and leisure parks.
- Aligning with the community’s desire for connectivity between recreational nodes in the form of sidewalks and a separated trail system, the category of trails and sidewalks was considered the most important for investment.
- These results helped to guide the development of the Park Concept plans.



5.0 CONCEPT PLAN ELEMENTS – 10-YEAR GROWTH PLAN

5.1 OVERALL CONCEPT PLAN

The proposed overall 10-year concept plan elements lay out an ambitious reinvention of Smithville’s approach and investment in Parks and Recreation. The plan reflects the community priorities established in the visioning and comprehensive planning work, conducted in 2019 and 2020. This Parks and Recreation Master Plan offers the opportunity to build the parks infrastructure and the city’s Parks and Recreation Department. It is also proposed that there is a strong community partnership, with a re-invigorated Parks and Recreation Committee, and mechanism for people to contribute to the future of the Parks and Recreation system and assets.

The broad elements of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan include:

- Focusing of bold redevelopment for Heritage Park and Smith’s Fork Park. These two locations serve critical functions as community hubs and provide future amenities for community events and recreation functions.
- Invest in neighborhood parks and convene surrounding residents as stakeholder groups to help refine specific priorities and develop ‘local’ park plans.
- Enhancing the community oasis experience, with a deliberate focus on broad multi-dimensional outcomes including community and societal benefits, environmental and ecological benefits, and economic benefits.
- Build a ‘Distributed recreation’ model – where recreation and park assets are spread at key locations across the city and connected by priority trails and access points.
- Introducing the Riverwalk Park concept and beginning work on a longer-term investment in a Community Center and Recreation Hub.

The concept plans reflect the needs of a community with changing demographics and a growing population. The community needs to plan for active retirees and invest now in the facilities for a growing school aged family population. There is a recognition of the importance of investing in public spaces and social infrastructure, and how these dimensions are becoming increasingly important to local communities.

The individual park concept plans laid out in this section reflect the ideas and priorities of the community, as articulated in the community survey and via the on-line discussion board. They propose upgrade of existing facilities and introduce new amenities and concepts. Taken as a whole package, they represent a 10 to 20-year investment plan, that will radically transform the community’s parks and recreation infrastructure; and, build new and innovative community spaces and facilities.



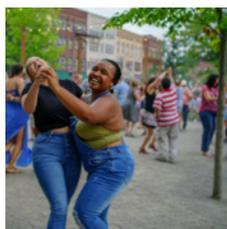


5.2 FUTURE PARK CONCEPT PLANS

The next ten years bring tremendous opportunities for Smithville parks development. Concept master plans were created for Heritage Park, The River Walk, Smith's Fork Park, a proposed Community Center and Recreation Hub, and a sample neighborhood park.

5.2.1 HERITAGE PARK

Heritage Park Concept Plan



LEGEND			
1	EXISTING PLAYGROUND	12	DESTINATION WATER FEATURE
2	EXISTING PARKING LOT	13	BASKETBALL COURT PLAZA
3	EXISTING T-BALL FIELD	14	PARKING LOT
4	VEHICULAR PARK ENTRANCE / EXIT	15	DROP-OFF
5	RIVERWALK	16	NATIVE PLANT MATERIAL / LOW MAINTENANCE SPECIES
6	MULTI-SEASON SKATE RIBBON	17	SCREENING BUFFER
7	SKATE & BIKE RENTAL / RESTROOM / CONCESSIONS	18	PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
8	GREAT LAWN	19	SHELTER
9	EVENT PAVILION		
10	ORNAMENTAL TREE ARBORETUM		
11	PARK LOOP TRAIL		

Heritage Park
Conceptual Master Plan | March 2021



Unique and one-of-kind offerings in centrally located Heritage Park will bring residents from all parts of the city to engage and participate in community events.

Concept Narrative - Heritage Park

Heritage Park’s location near the city’s center positions it perfectly to become a community gathering place. The community survey results indicated overwhelming support for the expansion of civic uses in Heritage Park. In addition, the proposed connectivity to downtown through the Riverwalk provides expanded green space for public use, as well as a potential natural wildlife corridor and a vegetated buffer for improved water quality and bank protection. An amphitheater, an orchard, a destination splashpad and public art spaces are proposed as additional attractions for residents and visitors to Smithville. In this concept, the existing playground and associated parking remains.

Benefits to the Community



Community and Social: Large community events, like car and art shows, and performances in Heritage Park can offer the community a place to gather to celebrate special events and share experiences.



Environmental: By removing some of the mown grass and adding native plantings, especially along the river, this could provide a wildlife corridor buffer and add diversity of plant, insect and animal life to the park. Removing grass from the park system means less mowing by staff.



Economic: Enhanced programming and “Pay to Play” activities such as ice skating, concessions and concerts adds Heritage Park as a destination attraction for residents and tourists while generating revenue to support Smithville’s parks and recreational opportunities.



PLANNING IMPLICATIONS AND NEEDS:

- Redesign of the park and its parking conditions, along with a reprogramming of uses could develop Heritage Park into the gem of Smithville’s Park system.
- The existing baseball fields currently in use will need to be relocated for the city to continue to provide the appropriate number of fields to meet demands.

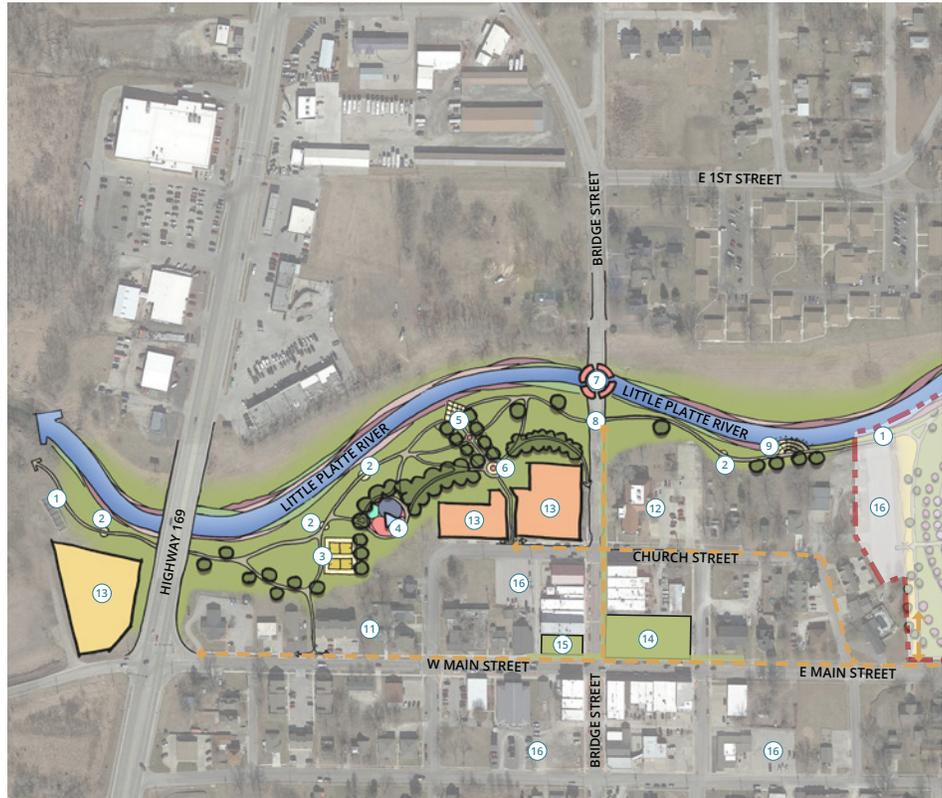
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5.2.2 RIVERWALK PARK

Riverwalk Park Concept Plan



Smithville Riverwalk
Conceptual Master Plan | March 2021





The Riverwalk would be an incredibly iconic park development, that would provide linkage from Hwy 169 through to Heritage Park, and onwards to the Lake.

Concept Narrative – Riverwalk Park

The Riverwalk concept gathered strong support throughout the planning process. This was seen as a potentially game-changing development, that would serve multiple outcomes. The concept plan includes features such as small sporting and group activity areas, walking trails and boardwalk concepts, and public art installations. The overall concept is to integrate this area into the downtown, providing a natural extension from the downtown commercial and retail areas to the green space and recreation areas. The Riverwalk includes a trail that follows the riverbank and provides walking access from Hwy 169 to Heritage Park.

Benefits to the Community



Community and Social: The Riverwalk would create an iconic destination area and add significant appeal to the Smithville Downtown area. This Riverwalk could serve as an important recreation area for the downtown area.



Environmental: This proposed park could anchor the Downtown Community Oasis and would offer a valuable greenspace to the downtown experience. In addition, it offers a significant opportunity to embrace the restoration of the river frontage and the floodplain area.



Economic: Linking Smithville’s downtown with the river frontage, the Riverwalk embodies nature-based placemaking. The Riverwalk expands Smithville’s downtown, especially to the west, demonstrates investment, and will likely catalytically spur more places for people in the downtown by encouraging enhanced outdoor dining options and sidewalk café type amenities.



PLANNING IMPLICATIONS AND NEEDS:

- This development is ideally suited to public / private partnerships, where development on the fringe to the Riverwalk or in the Downtown could be a catalyst for funding support and park creation.
- The Riverwalk area is ideally focused for floodplain and river restoration. This could be an important ecological feature of the whole Downtown Community Oasis concept.

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5.2.3 SMITH'S FORK PARK

Smith's Fork Park Concept Plan



Smith's Fork Park
Conceptual Master Plan | March 2021





Smith's Fork Park is a comprehensive recreational asset that has the potential to offer something for everyone.

Concept Narrative - Smith's Fork Park

Currently a destination for many, the conceptual plan for Smith's Fork Park expands the uses currently available and adds new amenities. The community survey respondents see this valuable property as a mosaic of activities for recreation and outdoor enthusiasts of all ages. Camping is a very popular amenity for the city and generates significant revenue. This plan expands the camping offerings to glamping and primitive options to complement the existing RV camping. The conceptual plan maximizes the organized recreational offerings with a more traditional baseball 4-plex, additional soccer fields, tennis/pickleball courts and an improved skatepark. Smith's Fork Park can continue to provide cross country trails, football, hiking and fishing. Some new program elements proposed for this park include a destination playground and a possible Environmental Education Center. This center could include community meeting spaces, indoor sport courts and track, or corporate event/retreat facilities.

Benefits to the Community



Community and Social: Smith's Fork Park provides the opportunities for small and large groups to gather for both organized and unorganized active recreation and encourages passive recreation activities such as Girl and Boy Scouts, camping, and an education center.



Environmental: Smith's Fork Park has environmental significance from the lake and spillway to the hills near Remote Lake and the native prairies protecting the history that lies beneath. Future development needs to continue to value these assets and carefully manage the landscape through proper selection of plant materials and prudent management of storm water.



Economic: This Park currently offers the most significant opportunities for revenue generation within the current park system. Camping and expanded camping are in high demand. The football clubs and trail groups participate in offsetting expenditures, and registration fees for soccer are on-going. Expanding offerings will only generate additional revenue and work to meet the needs of the community. Concentrating the recreational programming preserves the opportunity for additional future development in this area.



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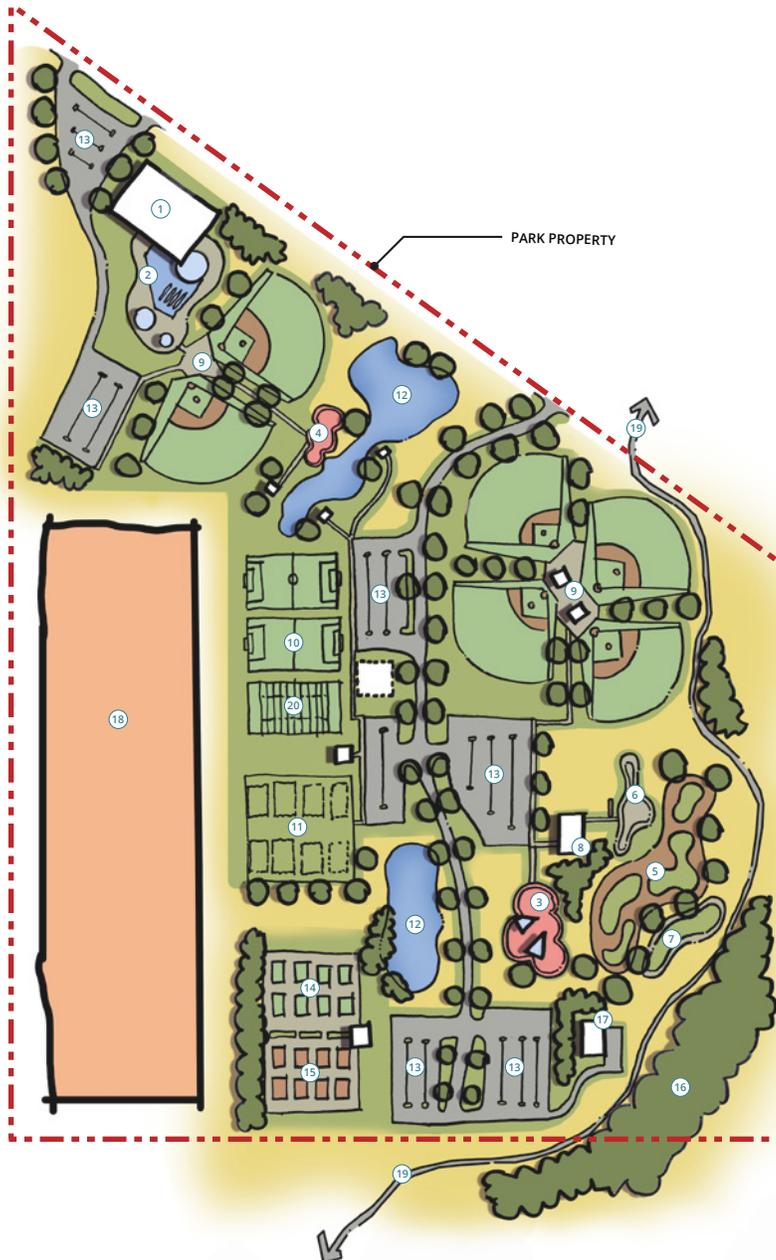
PLANNING IMPLICATIONS AND NEEDS:

- The area in Smith's Fork Park and the existing connectivity to the trail network, along with a variety of existing programmed amenities, makes this park the anchor asset to the distributed park system.
- Much of Smith's Fork Park is underdeveloped allowing for the creation of new programming activities to meet the community's needs and draw a larger audience from elsewhere.
- The trail connectivity from downtown will increase the amount of multi-modal traffic to and within this park. River connectivity might be possible to provide park goers another way to access this park.



5.2.4 COMMUNITY CENTER AND RECREATION HUB

Community Center and Recreation Hub Area



- LEGEND**
- 1 RECREATION COMMUNITY CENTER
 - 2 OUTDOOR AQUATICS
 - 3 DESTINATION PLAYGROUND
 - 4 SECONDARY PLAYGROUND
 - 5 BMX PUMP TRACK
 - 6 SKATE PARK
 - 7 BIKE PLAYGROUND
 - 8 RESTROOM / BIKE RENTAL
 - 9 BASEBALL FIELDS
 - 10 U-14 SOCCER FIELDS
 - 11 SPACE FOR U-6+ SOCCER FIELDS
 - 12 RETENTION POND
 - 13 PARKING LOT
 - 14 TENNIS/ PICKLEBALL COURTS
 - 15 VOLLEYBALL COURTS
 - 16 RIPARIAN CORRIDOR
 - 17 PARK MAINTENANCE FACILITY
 - 18 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY
 - 19 TRAIL TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
 - 20 FOOTBALL FIELD

Community Center and Recreation Hub
Conceptual Master Plan | March 2021





A future community center offers a high-profile destination for active recreational amenities and could be a significant draw to the community.

Concept Narrative – Community Center and Recreation Hub Area

Surveys and community input has highlighted the strong desire for a community center and recreation hub. An aquatics center has been highlighted as a highly desired recreation amenity. While it has been determined that such a development is not financially viable or feasible with Smithville’s current population, it is certainly time to start planning for such a complex. The rate of population growth, and the high level of community interest, suggest this may be a viable proposition by 2030 or 2035. At this stage, the community might then have enough population to viably fund the construction and maintenance of such a complex. These projects typically have a long lead time to purchase land, design the complex, fund the development and undertake the construction. While a specific location for the Community Center and Recreation Hub has not been identified, the southern portion of the city lacks a critical mass of parks and recreation amenities. It seems logical that such a future complex should be located near the high school in the Hospital Bluff Character Area, building upon the area’s existing social infrastructure.

Benefits to the Community



Community and Social: Competition in sports at all levels works to develop a social network for teammates and their parents, creating a community within the community. The proposed Community Center could offer a multitude of uses and create a year-round community and recreation amenity.



Environmental: Stormwater management and treatment is critical when highly fertilized fields are maximized in one location. Preservation of existing creeks and tree rows will be important to ensure the site offers a diversity of ecosystems.



Economic: Establishing a centralized, comprehensive community and recreation center in Smithville brings enhanced amenities to the city. This increases desirability for new residents to locate in Smithville and encourages those already residing in Smithville to stay. The center’s capacity to host regional tournaments will bring more visitors to Smithville, driving revenues to local restaurants and retailers.



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PLANNING IMPLICATIONS AND NEEDS:

- A premier community center has the potential to develop and find a niche that does not yet exist in the broader Kansas City market.
- Developing a facility and complex of this magnitude will be a decade long process. Initial steps should be taken to scope out the feasibility, explore funding options and consider site locations.
- By providing sports fields in one location, an economy of scale becomes evident. Facilities, equipment, and staff to service such a higher maintenance facility can be provided onsite.



5.2.5 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

As part of the implementation of the Master Plan, the neighborhood parks were reviewed. Wildflower Park was used as a potential model to develop a hypothetical concept plan. This shows how development can be done on a small scale to boost the amenities and usability of the neighborhood parks.

Wildflower Park Concept Plan – used as an EXAMPLE ONLY





The neighborhood park locations offer an opportunity to gather the local residents to undertake more detailed park planning and forge some collaborative funding and maintenance strategies.

Concept Narrative – Neighborhood Parks

Smithville has four neighborhood parks, which are in early stages of development. The Park concept plans should aim to turn these underutilized community spaces into local uses such as gardens, orchard, and leisure park activities. Any trails within parks should be low maintenance, and landscapes should focus on native planting where possible, and aim to maximize the ecological positive impact. These parks can also offer important open spaces and small community gathering areas. Educational signage throughout the parks would allow for unguided exploration. These parks can offer intimate local leisure and recreation assets that could be much loved and prized by local residents.

Benefits to the Community



Community and Social: Neighborhood parks have the potential to provide outdoor learning/education/ experiences for all ages. They can also allow locations for service community organizations, like Girl Scouts, Rotary, etc. in carrying out their activities.



Environmental: Through sustainable practices, preservation and enhancement of natural features, these parks can offer a respite for passive recreational users while improving the environment for plants, animals, birds and insects.



Economic: Neighborhood parks can be run on low-cost maintenance and even become self-sustaining through reservations of shelters/garden plots/bee hives and more. Furthermore, attractive and well-used neighborhood parks often help improve the desirability for future residents to move to the neighborhood, helping preserve Smithville’s strong housing market.



PLANNING IMPLICATIONS AND NEEDS:

- Neighborhood Parks are easily accessible/within walking distance of many residents. They can be established as an environmental asset and are large enough to be an attraction for wildlife and birds and best practices for the management of stormwater.

Planning Insight • By bringing a higher level of amenities to the neighborhood parks, they have the potential to be a key part of the distributed recreation system. By connecting these to the broader trail network, they can offer both on-ramp opportunities and even local destinations within the trail system.



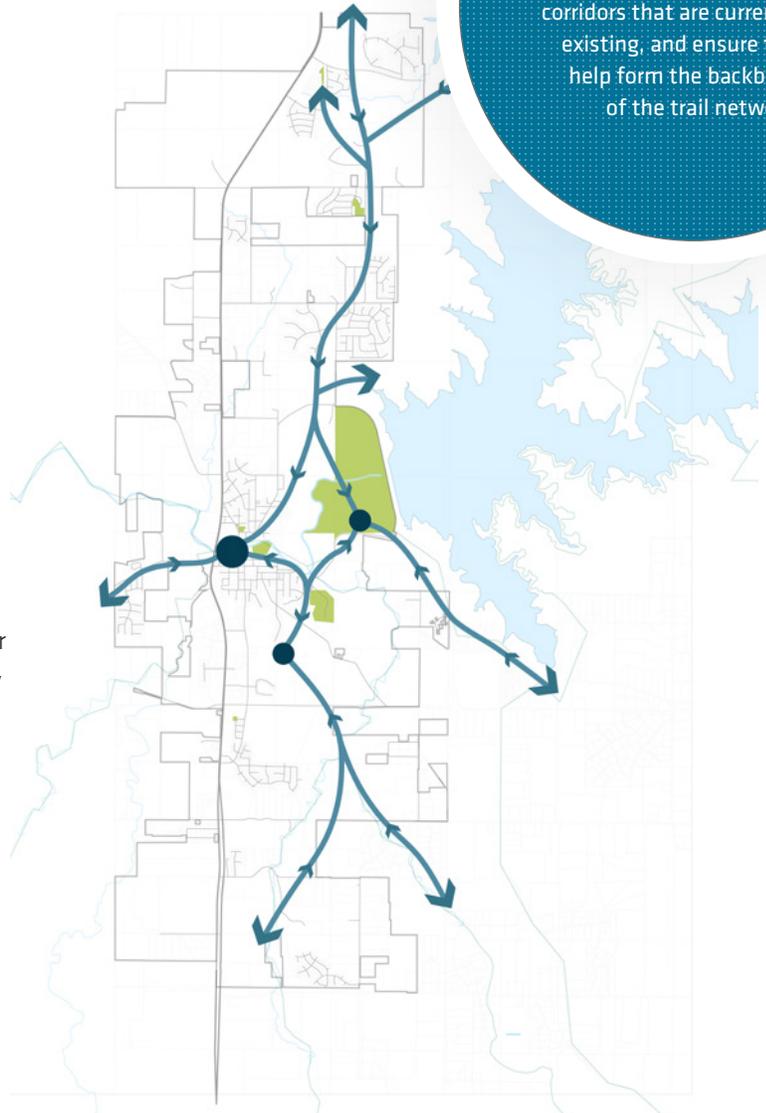


5.3 TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE

The overall Trails and Open Space concept plan aims to continue to build on the priorities that were set in the previous planning. This includes the following key points:

- Focus on building a unique North - South corridor connection on the east side of Highway 169. This has the potential to create a major trail connection the full length of Smithville
- Connect the major recreation nodes into the trail system, and progressively link the neighborhood parks into the system.
- Work to leverage the existing county trails and the number of miles of trails accessible to the community. The proposed MetroGreen Trails will assist the city in making key connections and creek crossings. As funding becomes available, applying for Planning Sustainable Places (PSP) dollars can greatly assist the local network in connecting to the greater Kansas City Metro.
- Leverage future projects with MoDOT for crossings and connectivity along State Route 92 which will be critical in connecting the southern portion of the city to the downtown oasis.

It is logical for trails to take advantage of the riparian and vegetated corridors that are currently existing, and ensure this help form the backbone of the trail network.



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PLANNING IMPLICATIONS AND NEEDS:

- The trail system has a strong overlap with the overall transportation plan. Further development of the future trails plan will be integrated in the current transportation planning work.
- Smithville residents continue to encourage prioritizing sidewalks and pedestrian opportunities. The city's Transportation Plan dives into sidewalk enhancement opportunities.



Smithville residents have indicated that existing recreation programming is not sufficient to meet current needs, and they are forecasting significant increase in future programming needs.

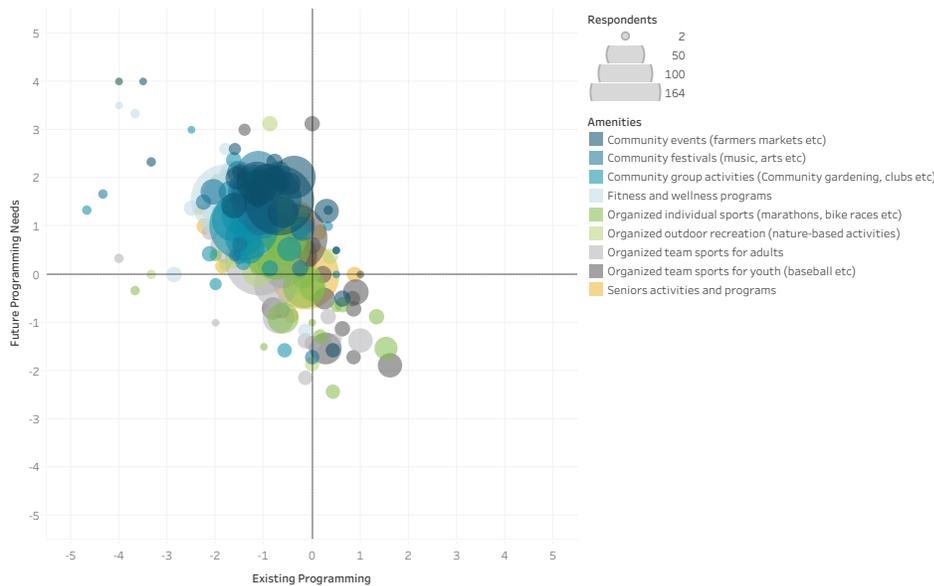
5.4 RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

The community of Smithville has identified a desire for more and different types of programming. The areas that appear to be growing in demand include:

- Community events and festivals – this is a current and future desire. Overall, people have expressed keen interest in expanded events such as farmers markets, music festivals and social gatherings. The downtown has been identified as the desired location, including Heritage Park.
- Organized outdoor recreation, and especially nature-based activities. There appears to be broad interest in community activities such as gardening clubs, cooking groups and nature groups.
- Seniors’ activities and fitness classes.

Pivot Chart - Existing Programming X Future Programming - Cohort by Amenities

X Axis = Existing Programming: SCALE: -5 = Well short of needs; 0 = About right; +5 = More than enough
 Y Axis = Future Programming Needs: SCALE: -5 = Decrease significantly; 0 = Stay same; +5 = Increase dramatically.



PLANNING IMPLICATIONS AND NEEDS:

- The changing demographic of the community will change the type of desired programming. The interest in group sport activities seems to be steady but there is growing demand in community based, active retiree, and fitness programming.

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- Creating flexible community spaces that can offer venues for new programming is essential. It is suggested that the existing senior center be repurposed and offered for expanded indoor programming. This will provide an interim short to medium term step until larger dedicated facilities can be funded within the community.



6.0 MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 BOOST INVESTMENT IN PARKS AND RECREATION

The Master Plan outlines a significant increase in investment. Key items to note include:

- The initiation of a 0.5% Parks and Storm Water Sales Tax has acted as a catalyst to fund investment in parks and recreation infrastructure. On current forecasts, this is likely to provide \$450,000 (+/-) per year for Park and Recreation investment. This amounts to approximately \$5 million over 10 years.
- It is assumed that this revenue can be leveraged with grants and other sources, to create a 2:1 match; potentially creating a \$15 million investment fund over 10 years.
- This investment will help cater for increasing demand and need for recreation and park amenities. There is some allocation for trails and linking sidewalks in this plan, but the bulk of that investment will be reflected in the Transportation Plan.
- Within this period, the plan allocates funding of Neighborhood Parks, Heritage Park and Smith’s Fork Park. The Riverwalk could additionally be activated in a ‘windfall situation’ or through public / private partnerships. It is assumed the Community Center and Recreation hub would be funded after 2030.
- The concept plans could be accelerated if additional revenue streams are identified. For example, an additional sales tax could be raised to specifically support the Community Center.

Investment recommendations – 2022-2031



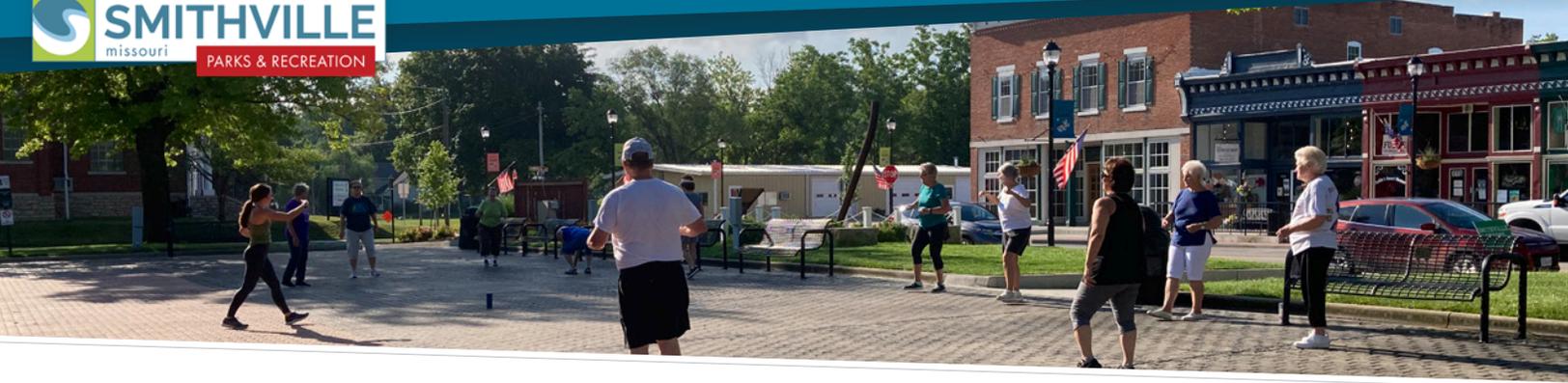


6.2 FOCUS ON DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY OASIS ASSETS AND DISTRIBUTED RECREATION

Creating the Downtown Community Oasis is a focus of planning efforts in Smithville. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan accelerates these efforts and brings added vibrancy and amenities to this important Character Area. In addition, the concept of Distributed Recreation allows the community to think about how to best spread amenities across the community and make recreation amenities within walking distance for all residents. Key considerations include:

- The initial focus and investment on Heritage Park and Smith's Fork Park are considered game changers that will redefine the Downtown Community Oasis as a vibrant community hub and amenity area. This will have long lasting impacts on the downtown area as the center of community events and activities.
- The Riverwalk would be a critical catalyst to boost the downtown redevelopment. This development, together with Heritage Park integrates the Downtown economy and the recreation sector, through culture, events, festivals, and community activities. This work should occur in close cooperation with the Main Street Program and Committee.
- The Concept plan includes an annual investment in Neighborhood Parks as 'small area' plans. This will help deliver value back to residents and create the important leisure parks and spaces in close proximity to residential areas.

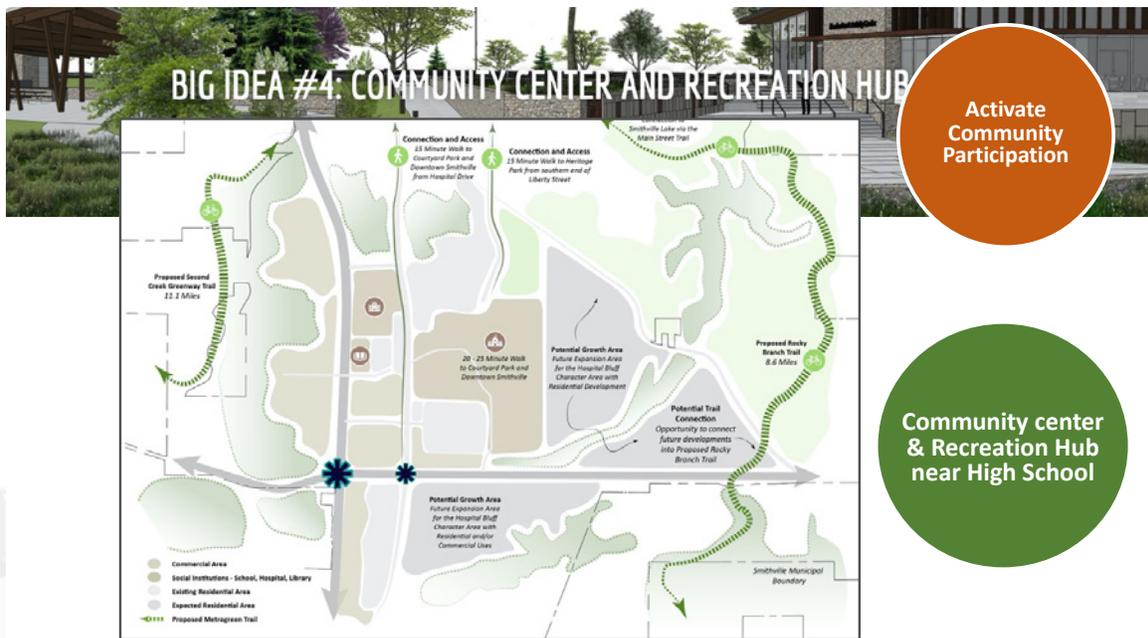




6.3 ACTIVATE COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Identifying alternate funding sources in addition to the City’s Parks and Storm Water Sales Tax is imperative to meet the forecast investment for ongoing capital improvements, programming, services, maintenance, and operations. There is enormous interest in the community in the Parks and Recreation facilities and programming, and this can be embraced to help find creative new opportunities. Recommendations include:

- Build a robust funding strategy that capitalizes on outside matching grants and funding sources. Ideally, the city would provide staff resources (outside of the Parks and Recreation Department) to focus on finding additional public and private funding, which could coordinate efforts between all City Departments.
- Revamp the Legacy Fund and create a direct mechanism for people to donate to Parks and Recreation infrastructure. This would allow interested people to donate directly to specific projects or parks. This process could also help create connections with existing local civic organizations.
- Establish a ‘Smithville Friends of the Parks and Trails’ volunteer group, who could assist with projects like trail maintenance, tree planting and fund raising.
- Convene residents who live around Smithville’s various neighborhood parks in ‘small area’ planning workshops to explore development options for these parks located throughout the city.
- Establish a Community Center and Recreation Hub working group or committee, to begin mapping out a timeline and feasibility for various options. This group should be tasked with developing a realistic timeline and exploring best practice funding models.
- For a detailed list of alternative funding resources, please see Appendix D: Alternative Funding Resources.





The Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes a focus on managing environmental impacts. There is abundant opportunity to link environmental management and restoration into future park developments.

6.4 CREATE STRONG ENVIRONMENTAL, EDUCATIONAL AND POLICY OVERLAY

Environmental and educational outcome have been highlighted as priorities in visioning and planning work in Smithville. This also applies to the Parks and Recreation planning work. The following recommendations will help guide the further work on this important theme.

- **Educational and wellness programming.** This is an identified need from the community surveys. There is increasing interest in fitness programming and community events associated with food and cooking. This could offer an interesting new area of programming. In addition, the strong focus on trails reflects the community interest in these recreational assets.
- **Parks and Recreation Branding Strategy.** There is clear need to develop some branding, consistent with future Smithville branding that distinguishes the City’s Park System and provides ready identification for users and visitors. This should especially connect with any Downtown or Main Street branding work, given the core role that the Downtown provides in anchoring many of the recreation assets.
- **Environmental Overlay.** Across all the activities associated with the Parks and Recreation Master Planning, there is an interest in environmental and ecological issues. The plan planning work has embraced this focus, and ecological aspects have been built into park designs. There is also potential to partner with other local entities and facilities, such as Litton Park, to further this environment focus. Smithville has an opportunity to apply leading edge thinking into park development and management that sets a course to net zero emissions and waste. This could offer an experimental framework to explore application of new ideas and approaches, in areas as practical as reducing mowing, encouraging native vegetation and implement closed loop bio-recycling systems.
- **Policy updates.** The high-level concepts and priorities in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will cascade down into new policy implications, as the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is implemented. Policy areas that need to be further addressed, to ensure they accommodate the priorities in the Master Plan include:
 - Riparian Buffers and Trail Easements
 - Landscape Ordinance and Overlay Districts
 - Public Art Program/Policy
 - Emissions and waste; and Light and visual impacts

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes a focus on managing environmental impacts. There is abundant opportunity to link environmental management and restoration into future park developments.





6.5 EXPAND PARKS AND RECREATION STAFFING SUPPORT

Following standard NRPA recommendations for staffing of parks systems, desired staffing levels relate to acreage of maintained active park space. These numbers are 1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for 15 acres of general park acres and 1.5 FTEs for athletic fields. While 310 acres would calculate to over 20 FTE's for the city, this is unnecessary for Smithville, as nearly 200 acres are a combination of surface water and natural prairie, woodlands or low-maintenance plantings. However, the 2021 NRPA report stated the staff investment was an average of 8.2 Full-Time Equivalent Employees per 10,000 residents. This would benchmark Smithville at about 8-10 staff in the Parks and Recreation Department.

- Currently, Smithville Parks and Recreation Department has 5 FTEs. This includes 1 Parks and Recreation Director and 1 Recreation and Marketing Manager who are responsible for most of the administrative work. The remaining 3 FTEs complete parks maintenance tasks as 1 Crew Leader and 2 Maintenance Personnel.
- As Smithville's Parks and Recreational Department adds additional or updated programs and amenities, it will be critical to the success to consider adding staff. This plan outlines short term (1-3 years) and long term (7-10 years) goals for staffing support growth in Appendix E: Staffing Organizational Chart.
- There is an immediate need to add an additional 2 or 3 FTEs. An additional Parks Maintenance #1 position allows the promotion of a Crew Leader who will become a supervisor for maintenance employees.
- This relieves some oversight responsibilities from the Parks and Recreation Director so there is capacity to add the duties of implementing these master plan improvements over the next 10 years.
- Similarly, the addition of a Community Events/Recreation Coordinator could add capacity for the City to offer programs and activities that were identified in the surveys as currently minimal or missing in the system.
- Additional capacity in Community Services can also provide the Recreation and Marketing Manager opportunity to pursue grant funding and work closely with the Legacy Fund.

Organizational Chart (Short Term)





7.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

The implementation strategies and timeline lay out the major steps in implementing the 10-year Master Plan. These steps have been crafted with input from the Parks and Recreation Committee and the City staff.

7.1 SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

The initial three-year period aims to:

- Lay the foundation for the staff capability and capacity to implement the infrastructure plan, raise the necessary funds, and launch new programming.
- Begin the process of upgrading the neighborhood parks, with an initial focus on Diamond Crest and Emerald Park
- Support the Main Street extension, and work to link this into future improvements at Riverwalk and Heritage Park
- Activate the community support, via a revamped and relaunched Legacy Fund, and Friends of the Parks and Trails initiative.
- Design and implement a Park and Trail signage, way-finding and branding program across the Smithville parks system.
- Repurpose and upgrade the Senior Center, to allow additional use as a community programming center.
- Begin strategic improvements at Heritage Park.
- Launch working group to explore the feasibility of the proposed Community Center and Recreation Hub.
- The Bold Step in this time-period is the development of a new cloverleaf ball field at Smith’s Fork Park, paving the way for a major upgrade at Heritage Park.

Costs are estimated based on historical cost data for the year 2021. A contingency of 8% has been added to the construction costs. Soft costs are an estimated +/- 10% of the construction costs.

	SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)	Construction Costs	Soft Costs	Total Costs
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	DIAMOND CREST			
	Playground, Shelter, and Fencing	\$250,000.00	\$25,000	\$275,000
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	EMERALD RIDGE			
	Playground	\$120,000.00	\$0	\$120,000
HERITAGE PARK	HERITAGE PARK			
	Two Shelters	\$130,000.00	\$0	\$130,000
PARK SYSTEM	ALL PARKS and TRAILS			
	Branding & Signage to uniquely identify Smithville assets	\$100,000.00	\$0	\$100,000
BOLD STEP	SMITH’S FORK PARK			
	4-Plex Baseball Fields, Parking, Restroom, and Site Development	\$2,934,000.00	\$290,000	\$3,224,000
	TOTAL SHORT TERM PROJECT COSTS			\$3,849,000



Acceleration of plans, within this timeframe could see the work on the Riverwalk commence, and link into the Heritage Park redevelopment.

7.2 MEDIUM TERM (4-6 YEARS)

The medium-term period (4-6 years) period aims to:

- Continue the neighborhood parks, with an initial focus on Hawthorne Court Park
- Add Sport Court at Smith’s Fork Park and begin the longer-term infrastructure planning in this area. The Sports Court could include tennis, basketball and pickle-ball options.
- Support the implementation of trail components of the Transportation Plan.
- Amplify the fund-raising with the focus on Heritage Park redevelopment.
- The Bold Step in this time-period is the major re-development of Heritage Park, including trail connectivity along river, landscaping, and new community amenities.
- Support and foster developer contributions to complete appropriate trail connections, add new neighborhood parks as developments occur, and encourage private investment in the Riverwalk Park.
- Assess progress with the Community Center and Recreation Hub feasibility work, and establish a solid timeline.

This period is primarily focused on consolidation of the Parks and Recreation staff team and building momentum on fund raising and matching funding strategies.

Costs are estimated based on historical cost data for the year 2021. A contingency of 8% has been added to the construction costs. Soft costs are an estimated +/- 10% of the construction costs. An escalation rate of 3% has been included in the total mid term project costs.

	MID TERM (4-6 YEARS)	Construction Costs	Soft Costs	Total Costs
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	HAWTHORNE COURT PARK			
	Public Art and Landscaping	\$100,000.00	\$8,000	\$108,000
SMITH'S FORK PARK	SMITH'S FORK PARK			
	Sport Courts	\$275,000.00	\$20,000	\$295,000
BOLD STEP	HERITAGE PARK			
	Field Demolition, Site Development, Central Water Feature, Parking, Roads, Sidewalks, Restroom/ Concessions. Shelters, Amphitheater and Great Lawn	\$4,087,000.00	\$470,000	\$4,557,000
	TOTAL MID TERM PROJECT COSTS			\$5,108,800





Acceleration of plans, within this timeframe could see the work commence on some aspects of the proposed Community Center and Recreation Hub.

7.3 LONG TERM (7-10 YEARS)

The long-term period (7-10 years) period aims to:

- Continue the neighborhood parks, with an initial focus on Helvey Park and Wildflower Park. The Helvey Park work will likely help connect the existing trail system to the proposed Community Center, located at a to be determined area to the south (near the High School).
- Support the implementation of trail components of the Transportation Plan.
- Launch major fund-raising program for the Community Center and Recreation Hub.
- The Bold Step in this time-period is the major re-development of Smith’s Fork Park, with infill park development and recreation facilities.
- Continue to support and foster developer contributions to complete appropriate trail connections, add new neighborhood parks as developments occur, and encourage private investment in the Riverwalk Park.

This period is primarily focused on next step expansion of the Parks and Recreation staff team and tackling the major park redevelopments at Smith’s Fork.

Costs are estimated based on historical cost data for the year 2021. A contingency of 8% has been added to the construction costs. Soft costs are an estimated +/- 10% of the construction costs. An escalation rate of 6% has been included in the total long term project costs.

	LONG TERM (7-10 YEARS)	Construction Costs	Soft Costs	Total Costs
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	HELVEY PARK			
	Loop Trail	\$200,000.00	\$20,000	\$220,000
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	WILDFLOWER PARK			
	Community Garden, Outdoor Classroom, Parking, and Nature Play	\$300,000.00	\$30,000	\$330,000
BOLD STEP	SMITH’S FORK PARK			
	Site Development, RV Camping, Primitive Camping, Destination Play, Parking, Roads, Sidewalks, Restroom/Shower, Shelters, Trails, Skatepark, and Updated Playground	\$4,735,500.00	\$500,000	\$5,235,500
	TOTAL LONG TERM PROJECT COSTS			\$6,132,630





8.0 APPENDICES

8.1 APPENDIX A: NRPA PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has national Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines that provide a template for classifying parks, the number of acres a system should have, and the recommended service levels based on population. Strictly intended as guidelines, these do not consider the unique character of each community. Local trends, available and estimated future capital funding, community and stakeholder input, along with predicted popularity in outdoor recreational trends often drive unique and specific recommendations. The guidelines, however, serve as a good baseline for determining a minimum standard of service. Written in 1995, they are still used today. For public park providers, the NRPA guidelines suggest, “A park system, at a minimum, should be composed of a ‘core’ system of park lands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population” (Mertes, 1995).

Critical to the service delivery system of any department is the provision of the four basic park categories: mini, neighborhood, community and regional. Beyond these four basic park types are special-use parks, natural areas/preserves, greenways, school playgrounds and private parks/recreation facilities. Each is classified differently based upon the types of amenities, size, service area and how access is gained to the facility.

- MINI or POCKET PARK** - The smallest type of park, a mini park, is typically a site less than five acres. Another term, “pocket park”, has been used in some instances to identify a mini park. It is designed primarily to attract residents who live within a quarter mile of the park. Generally, a walk-to type park, mini parks will not have parking facilities available for vehicles. Mini parks’ service levels are .25 to .5 acres per 1000 residents. Size normally prescribes these parks to be passive, limited-activity park facilities. Common elements include benches, playgrounds, and tables in an attractively landscaped setting. The parks are sometimes themed to blend in with the surrounding neighborhood. Designs sometimes match the existing homes, fencing, sidewalk pavers, etc.
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK** - Neighborhood parks are found in most city and county systems. These parks typically have 5 to 20 acres and serve a population living within a half mile of the park. Conceptually, neighborhood parks concentrate intense recreation activities and facilities into a limited amount of space. Facilities typical to this park include play fields, playgrounds, and shelters. Parking is not necessary for this type of facility due to its scope of activities and size because most visitors are residents. However, the standard for parking is a minimum of seven spaces for the first ten acres and one additional space for each additional acre. This may vary based upon the activities and appeal of the programs. If team sports facilities or special features such as swimming pools are included, parking spaces in the range of 40 per field, or greater, will be needed. Although the park is classified as a neighborhood park, the scope of people served can vary based upon densities and the number of other parks available. Typically, one neighborhood park should serve between 1,000 to 2,000 residents, or one to two acres per 1,000 people.



- **COMMUNITY PARK** - Community parks are needed within a system to ensure that all users' recreational needs and interests are addressed and included. This type of park expands beyond a local neighborhood and may sometimes include several neighborhoods. The concept behind community parks is to provide an all-inclusive facility for recreation users. It should include a mix of active and passive activities and attract users of all ages. From sports fields to a community center, the park should provide as many recreation and support services as possible. A park of this size and scope commonly consists of 20 to 75 acres; 60 acres is considered a good size for such expansive activities. Community parks have both day and night activities. Large facilities, such as a large indoor fitness/recreation center or a multi-field sports complex, can be placed in such a facility because of the amount of space available and the ability to buffer from the surrounding community. The service area for such a facility can vary based upon the size and scope of activities offered; however, a facility of this type may serve anywhere from 5,000 to 8,000 people, or 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 people. User analyses are often based upon a service radius, while others in more urban areas may be based upon drive times.
- **REGIONAL PARK** - The largest park typically found within a system is a regional park. These parks are normally found in large park systems. The size of a regional park varies from 50 to 250 acres depending on the type of activities and the amount of use. The service radius for this type of facility is based upon drive time and is typically within an hour's drive of most residents. Conceptually, the regional park is to provide large natural areas that can be accessed through a variety of means, from roadways to hiking and biking. Based upon the locale, it can have unique recreation areas, such as a water park or an equestrian facility coupled with natural areas. Note: Regional parks are unique to the general area. Prototypical or preferred amenities vary.
- **GREENWAYS AND TRAILS** - Greenways have become one of the most popular family recreation activities across the country. The value of greenways in terms of recreation, education and resource protection is invaluable. Greenways serve as linkages between cities, parks, schools, commercial areas, and neighborhoods. They provide a safe mode of transportation that preserves the environment. Greenways often include paved trails. Typically, trails can vary from 6 to 12 feet in width and can be paved or maintain a natural surface. When developing a greenway system, corridors should be identified where pedestrians will access the area easily and connect elements within the community and incorporate all the characteristics of the natural resource areas. Greenway corridors should be no less than 50 feet in width except in neighborhoods, where 25 feet may be acceptable.





8.2 APPENDIX B: PARK AND FACILITY EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each Park property is evaluated based on criteria that fairly examines all park properties and establishes numerical grades based on these evaluations (maximum score of 100).

The evaluation criteria is as follows:

1. **Accessibility (20 points)**
 - Ease in walking to the Park or Facility
 - Clarity of Signage
 - ADA compliance
 - Lighting
2. **Connectivity (20 points)**
 - Visibility from a distance
 - Multi-modal Capacity
 - Relationship to Adjacent Land Uses
 - Feeling of Safety
3. **Comfort & Character (20 points)**
 - Overall Attractiveness
 - Overall Maintenance
 - Pleasant Places to Sit
 - Protection from weather
4. **Usability (20 points)**
 - Mix of Things to Do
 - Level of Activity
 - Programming Flexibility
 - Sense of Ownership
5. **Amenities (20 points)**
 - Playground Equipment
 - Built Structures
 - Sidewalks, Streets, and Parking Lots
 - Energy and Sustainability





8.3 APPENDIX C: SMITHVILLE PARK INVENTORY SUMMARY

- Smith's Fork Park - (1601 DD Highway)** Acres 250. Estimated 76.73 developed / 173.27 undeveloped. Smith's Fork Park is a 250 plus acre park that the city leases from the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Amenities include a lighted baseball field, one unlighted baseball field, fenced in soccer field area, a lighted football field, one basketball court, two tennis courts, two shelters with electricity, two shelters without electricity, a playground, two restrooms, skateboard park, a self-supplied driving range, Smith's Fork Park Campground, Lake Remote Park & Nature Area, A Boy Scout and Girl Scout Special Use Area, and fishing from the Smithville Lake Dam Spillway.
- Smith's Fork Campground** - Smith's Fork Park Campground is a full-service campground. All 84 sites have electricity, water, and sewer connections. There is a restroom/shower house on site. The campground is open April 1 to October 31.
- Lake Remote Park & Nature Area** - Lake Remote Park & Nature Area provides 3.95 miles of improved trails in a 40-acre setting. The Park & Nature Area is part of Smith's Fork Park. Lake Remote Park & Nature Area includes a series of trails with three different surfaces; Ag-Lime, Maintained 10-Foot Cut and Single Track. Within the 3.95-mile radius is a beautiful natural lake, which offers public fishing at no charge, with a Missouri Fishing License. The lake has been stocked with catfish, bass, crappie and blue gill.
- Heritage Park - (320 East Main)** Acres 16.77. Amenities include two lighted baseball fields, one unlighted baseball field, one shelter, playground, picnic tables, a half-mile paved walking trail and restrooms.
- Courtyard Park - (118 N Commercial Ave)** Acres 0.58 - Located in the center of Smithville's Downtown Heritage District on Main Street (DD Highway). Amenities include the Ali Kemp Memorial Stage with electricity, perimeter electrical boxes, shade trees, picnic tables and park benches.
- Remembrance Park - (107 W. Main)** Acres 0.11 - Remembrance Park has a veteran's memorial and a Gazebo.
- Helvey Park - (1 Helvey Drive)** Acres: 31.57 - Helvey Park offers approximately 15 acres of parkland, including a 10-acre stocked lake, one shelter, picnic tables and large shade trees.
- Emerald Ridge - (15108 Kelly Drive)** Acres .86 - Amenities include a neighborhood playground and large green space.
- Wildflower Park - (Wildflower St.)** Acres 6.35 - Amenities include a neighborhood community garden, small pond, and large green space
- Diamond Crest Park (Diamond Ln)** Acres 3.79 - Amenities include a neighborhood old railroad trail and splash pad.
- Hawthorne Court Park (N. Bridge and Hilltop St.)** Acres 1.62 - Undeveloped neighborhood green space.





8.4 APPENDIX D: ALTERNATIVE FUNDING RESOURCES

The following information on potential funding mechanisms will assist the City's effort to implement, fund, and maintain the proposed recommendations in this master plan.

- Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)** - The **Planning Sustainable Places** (PSP) program continues the work of the Creating Sustainable Places initiative and the region's long-range plan, Connected KC 2050, promoting concepts consistent with sustainable communities and the advancement of site-specific and project-specific activities within the centers-and-corridors planning framework. This regional planning group offers matching funds that meet the criteria for communities in efforts to plan sustainable places.
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grants** - In Missouri, RTP grants are open to local and state governments, school districts, non-profit and for-profit organizations. Missouri receives between \$1 and \$1.5 million per fiscal year and the maximum amount awarded is \$250,000 for trail projects. Sponsors must have a minimum 20% match and projects must be open to the public. Eligible projects include restoration of existing recreational trails, development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages for recreational trails, construction of new recreational trails (with restrictions for new trails on Federal lands), acquisition of easements and property for recreational trails or recreational trail corridors, and assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and maintenance. The application period opens in the late fall for the 2022 RTP Open Project Selection Process. After applications are received, they are reviewed and scored by the Missouri Trail Advisory Board. Recommended projects are sent to the Federal Highway Administration for final approval.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants** - Federal funding that is available for LWCF grants is a maximum of \$500,000 per project, with a minimum 50% match. Grants are open to any local government, city and county, and public school. Eligible projects must be open to the public at reasonable times. Project examples include but are not limited to: Playgrounds, ball fields, pools and water parks, archery and shooting ranges, camping facilities, picnic areas, golf courses, boating and fishing facilities, trails, and passive areas. The application period opens in the late fall for the 2022 LWCF Open Project Selection Process.
- Playground Grants** - Throughout the year, national playground manufacturers' typically offer grant opportunities to help with funding playground projects. A qualifying playground system may need to meet a minimum budget in order to qualify for a 100% matching grant, but by utilizing a playground grant, the city can afford more play value to put towards their playgrounds.
- Private Grants** - Local governments throughout the country are seeking funding for outdoor recreation projects from private philanthropic organizations, foundations and corporations. One private grant example is the American Greenways Kodak Awards Program. This program, administered by The Conservation Fund, provides grants of \$500 to \$2,500 to local greenways projects. The purpose of the grants is to stimulate the planning, design and development of greenways. Information can be found at: www.conservationfund.org.



- **Find a Funding Partner** - According to a resource on playground manufacturer GameTime’s website, “there is an estimated \$360 billion available from funding sources for community play and recreation projects. Organizations across the country and around the world have money to contribute to playgrounds, fitness parks and other recreation initiatives.” Organizations with a focus on healthy living and native planting are just some of the establishments to consider partnering with.
- **Expand the Park Impact Fee** - The City to expand the leverage on potential developments (via park impact fees) to help fund the overall park system. A park impact fee is a one-time payment on a new development to support the construction of new parks, trails and amenities. This could included residential, commercial and industrial developments.
- **Leverage Community Support** - Volunteer labor through advocacy groups, school groups, neighborhood associations and businesses is a great way to supplement existing resources. Not all construction requires highly skilled and technical labor so various projects can utilize community volunteers.
- **Private Contributions** - Park systems can greatly benefit from private contributions. While all taxpayers contribute to parks, those who make additional financial contributions will have a special interest and source of pride in their attractiveness and functionality. It is natural for private donations be made to causes that are near and dear to them and the level of support has the potential to be very high, so it is important to be aware of inequities that could arise across the park system. Voluntary donations are unlikely to provide enough financial resources and should be strategically leveraged with park tax dollars.





8.5 APPENDIX E: STAFFING ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

As parks add additional or updated programs and amenities, it will be critical add staff to maintain these properties to the satisfaction of the citizens and visitors. The Parks and Recreation Department is divided into two divisions. Parks Operations is responsible for developing and maintaining park properties and facilities. Community Services includes promoting and administering all programming and community events.

Smithville Parks and Recreation - Organizational Chart (Short Term/1-3 Years)

- There is an immediate need to add an additional 2 or 3 FTEs. An additional Parks Maintenance #1 position allows the promotion of a Crew Leader who will become a supervisor for maintenance employees.
- This relieves some oversight responsibilities from the Parks and Recreation Director so there is capacity to add the duties of implementing these master plan improvements over the next 10 years.
- Similarly, the addition of a Community Events/ Recreation Coordinator could add capacity for the City to offer programs and activities that were identified in the surveys as currently minimal or missing in the system.
- Additional capacity in Community Services can also provide the Recreation and Marketing Manager opportunity to pursue grant funding and work closely with the Legacy Fund.

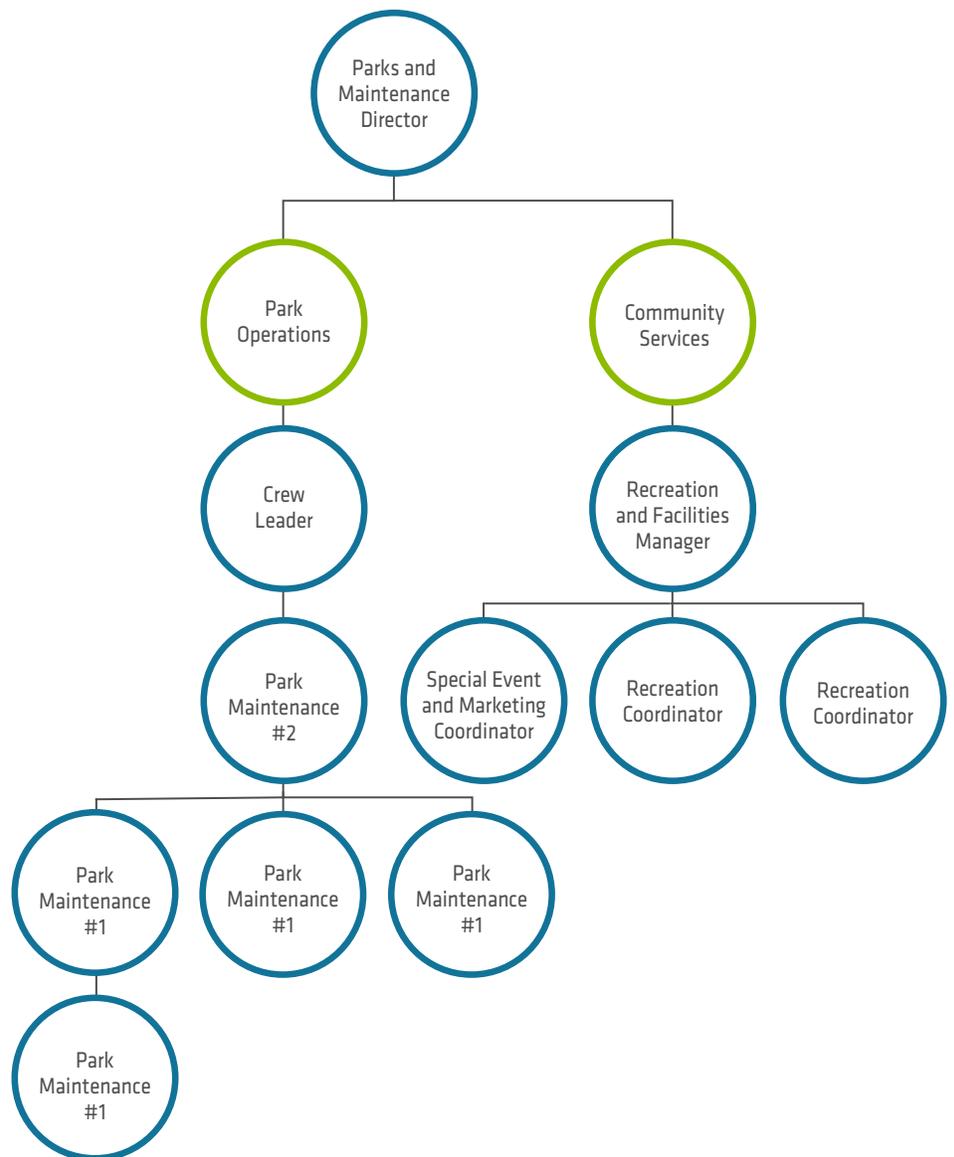
Seasonal Staff for both the Park Operations and Community Services Divisions will be brought on each year based on need.





Smithville Parks and Recreation - Organizational Chart (Long Term - 7 to 10 Years)

- The long-term organization chart adds additional Parks Maintenance Employees and Recreation Coordinators.
- As the maintenance support staff grows, consideration for specific skill set and experience is necessary. The desired skills will depend on needs relative to new developments within the parks. Some examples might include sports field/turf expertise, plumbing and electrical, forestry/horticulture, native land management, wood working, welding, and equipment maintenance.
- Community Services adds another staff person in the long-term to manage community events and allows two staff members to focus on recreation programming. These positions should consider cross-training as some overlapping skill sets would be beneficial as these positions may not be mutually exclusive during peak seasons.



This long-term view does not consider staffing needs relative to a Community Center and Recreation Hub or Aquatics Facility. Staffing will need to be added specific to these facilities for the management and maintenance of each.



9.0 ABOUT FUTURE IQ, LANDWORKS, AND JS&A

Future iQ, in partnership with the planning firms of Landworks Studio and Jon Stover & Associates (JS&A) were contracted to guide development of the new Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the City of Smithville.



David Beurle
Future iQ



Heather Branigin
Future iQ



Carisa McMullen
Landworks Studio



Jenna Fernandez
Landworks Studio



Leslie Deacon
JS&A



In November 2020, Future iQ (in partnership with the local planning firm Landworks, and with the economic development and planning firm Jon Stover & Associates) began work on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the City of Smithville. The Parks and Recreation Plan 2030, builds on the Comprehensive Plan 2030 and the Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan work in 2019 and 2020. The combined skill-sets of Future iQ, Landworks and JS&A have produced a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that represents the voices of the community. The process involved extensive community engagement, despite the event of a pandemic that presented unprecedented challenges for normal activity. The community of Smithville has participated in the creation of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that creates a future looking and aspirational road-map for this important dimension to the community.

To learn more about Future iQ and our recent projects, please visit www.future-iq.com or contact by email: info@future-iq.com.





10.0 FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the City of Smithville’s Parks and Recreation Master Planning process, please contact:

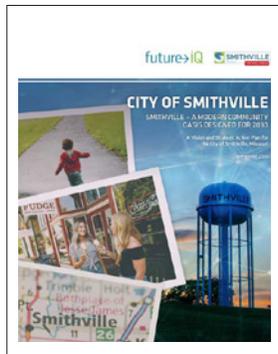
Parks and Recreation Director

City of Smithville
 107 W. Main Street
 Smithville, MO 64089
 Tel: 816.532.8130

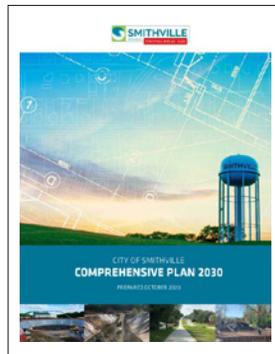
To access additional information on Smithville and the reports produced as part of the Parks and Recreation Master Planning project, the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Vision and Strategic Action Plan work:

City of Smithville Website <https://www.smithvillemo.org>

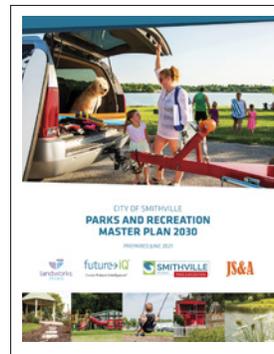
City of Smithville Parks and Recreation Plan Project [Portal](#)



Smithville Vision and Strategic Action Plan
 November 2019



Smithville Comprehensive Plan 2030
 October 2020



Smithville Parks and Recreation Master Plan
 June 2021



