

Facility Recommendations and Criteria

VI. Facility Recommendations and Criteria

The Facility Recommendations and Criteria Section describes the facilities with design criteria intended to define the recommended facilities and provide general guidelines to consider in follow-up planning and design. Photographs of other facilities are included to illustrate the concepts discussed.

E. Trails

Hiking trails, bike trails, paved and unpaved trails were among the top activities that residents would use more if facilities were provided. The “unmet demand” percentage illustrated in the community survey shows a very strong desire for more trails and a series of integrated trail systems. The ultimate goal is to have a series of interconnected trails that link neighborhoods, schools, parks, and community facilities.

1. In addition to the desire to connect to a county-wide system, the residents also desire the development of trail loops within the parks. These should be both paved and unpaved trails. Paved trails should be developed around the main activity areas of general use parks to link the facilities and to provide a smooth walking surface. Paved trails can help provide ADA accessibility. Natural trails with earth, stone, or bark chip surfaces are appropriate to provide opportunities for nature education, wildlife viewing, and hiking.

The parks with potential additional trails include:

- a. Wilhelmina Park.
- b. Cherokee Park.
- c. Summerlin Park.
- d. Sunrise Stables Park.



2. Trail Design Criteria

- a. The trails that would be developed would receive a great deal of use according to survey results. These trails would be used for bicycling, walking and jogging. Therefore, the trails in these heavily used areas should be at least 10 feet wide and paved to provide ample room for this wide variety of potential users. Where land is available, a path for wheels (bikes and rollerblades) separated from the other walking paths will avoid conflicts among users. In areas where the slopes are steep or land is not available, the trails can be combined. The initial phases could include natural or wood chip type trails to allow pedestrian access only, but these trails would be damaged during flooding and would not allow for the maximum use of the proposed facility.

Facility Recommendations and Criteria

- b. It is also recommended that greenways be developed segment by segment, completing each segment entirely before moving on to the next. This will allow the completed segment to become a “utilized example”, therefore building public enthusiasm and support for the project.
- c. Trails for bicycles should be developed to the standards published in the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 1999.
- d. The hike and bikeways routes recommended suggest a three tiered system.
 - (1) Hikeways
 - Class One: Hiking Only
 - Class Two: Hike and Bikeway combined
 - Class Three: Hikeway on the berm of a vehicle right-of-way
 - (2) Bikeways
 - Class One: Bikeway Only
 - Class Two: Hike and Bikeway Combined
 - Class Three: Bikeway shared with vehicles, without a barrier but with marked off lanes or signs indicating bike lane.
 - (3) In this plan, the primary corridors should be Class One or Class Two Trails. Where necessary to connect destinations in developed areas, Class Three Trails are acceptable.

F. Playgrounds

- 1. Playgrounds are typically developed at nearly every mini-park, neighborhood, community or county park. Playgrounds should be designed for the age specific group for which they are intended. At larger community parks, areas should be designated for pre-school and school-aged children.
- 2. It is recommended that a variety of experiences be provided at each playground. It is also recommended to use safe and durable materials such as plastic components, plastic coated steel decks, steel posts, and similar materials. The overall design of the playground in each facility

Facility Recommendations and Criteria

should meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission Guidelines. Proper safety surfacing should be provided under all equipment. Handicap accessibility is a major issue, which must be considered in the design of each playground.

3. At the larger community parks, it is recommended that larger and very creative destination playgrounds be developed since these parks typically have the infrastructure to handle larger groups of people. Larger community parks have the capacity to attract regional populations.
4. All playgrounds must meet minimum ADA requirements, but a higher level of universal access is desired at county and community parks. The main general use parks should have large destination playgrounds where appropriate.
5. Park land with potential for playgrounds include:
 - a. Large all-access playground at Wilhelmina Park.
 - b. Upgrade Dudley Memorial Park and Reserves of Liberty Park playgrounds.
 - c. Sunrise Stables Park
 - d. Summerlin Park
 - e. Allen Park
 - f. New neighborhood, community and county parks.



Facility Recommendations and Criteria

G. Athletic Fields

1. The demand for athletic fields is ever increasing as population and participation grows. It would be ideal for these facilities to be developed in complexes rather than in single fields scattered throughout the township. A complex is more efficient for the following reason:
 - a. It is more efficient for maintenance and for equipment purchase and installation.
 - b. It increases the potential for concession sales.
 - c. It provides better oversight and convenience to league officials.
 - d. It provides equipment storage in one location.
 - e. The location of many games in one site increases the chance of positioning qualified medical staff at the site when an injury or accidents occur.
2. The following are some recommendations and observations for specific types of fields.
 - a. Synthetic Turf Fields – The township or a sports organization may consider the development of synthetic turf fields. It has been proven that these fields can be used earlier in the year, later in the year, and more often during the playing seasons than natural grass fields, and are safer to play upon. The long term costs will be more for the development, replacement, and long term maintenance, but there will also be more events that can take place on the fields. This is taken advantage of the land without spreading clay over several fields. The proposed West Central Community Park with several ballfields proposed would be an ideal location for this type of development.
 - b. Natural Grass Fields – Fields for soccer, baseball, and lacrosse should be irrigated if possible to provide better rejuvenation of the lawn. Also, rectangular fields, such as soccer fields can be rotated in different directions for various seasons or keep some fields out of use each year to allow them to rejuvenate the grass in the wear areas. The seasons for soccer are typically in the spring and fall, which are the prime growing seasons for grass, which makes it difficult on fields for a lot of use to maintain a good lawn.
 - c. Baseball Infields – A variety of add mixtures are available for improving infields of ballfields. Fields should contain primarily dirt with add mixtures to improve the playing surface if they are used for multiple age groups or girls of softball. In cases where organizations desire grass infields, which require more maintenance, then the organization should be responsible for the maintenance and up keep of those fields.

Facility Recommendations and Criteria

- d. Support facilities that should be included with these fields include the following where practical:
- (1) Bleacher/stadium seating.
 - (2) Parking for at least 60 cars per field.
 - (3) Restroom and concession facilities.
 - (4) The fields should be lighted to extend their use where consistent with the Zoning Resolution.

H. Picnic Areas

The development of picnic areas and picnic shelters were very high on the list of items identified in the survey and in the public workshops. Picnic areas are best if developed in a natural setting. Shelters could be developed in each of the neighborhood, community and county parks. Community parks provide better opportunities for the development of large shelters (group reservable picnic shelters). These could be used for company picnics, family reunions, church outings, etc. These group rental facilities are best if developed in conjunction with a playground, sand volleyball court, walking trails and open fields for games. Shelters should be located in close proximity to parking and restrooms. Shelters that are the most frequented in other communities are those that are located in wooded areas or that overlook water bodies. The natural settings that are most inviting for picnic areas would include wooded areas, open fields, lakes for fishing, riverfronts and natural stream corridors.

It would also be appropriate to develop picnic shelters and facilities in the vicinity of athletic complexes. Families often spend many hours at the ball fields on game days and this provides a place to get out of the sun and a facility for the teams to meet.

For the above reasons, new picnic areas should be developed as part of all new neighborhood and community parks. Also, the plans for picnic shelters and tables could be implemented at the following parks:

1. Wilhelmina Park
2. Sunrise Stables Park
3. Maud Hughes Incline Park



Example Picnic Shelters

Facility Recommendations and Criteria

I. Restrooms

One of the items which the respondents of the survey identified as most needed to improve the parks are restrooms. This is common in many of the surveys recently completed by this Consulting Team. Ideally, these would include restrooms with running water, flush toilets and sinks for hand washing. Typically, they would be developed of masonry materials, be easy to clean, and would be designed to withstand heavy use and frequent cleaning.

Potential sites where restrooms could be added to improve the use of the park are Dudley Memorial Park, Reserves of Liberty Park, Wetlands Park, and Wilhelmina Park.

J. Pavilion/Amphitheater Covered Stage

The development of a pavilion, or bandstand with a covered stage at a park in Liberty Township would provide the opportunity for a wider variety of cultural arts programs, concerts, and other presentations that are of value to the community. These structures should be designed to accommodate the types of performances for which the programs would be planned. The photographs indicate some typical types of successful amphitheaters and bandstands that have been used in other communities.



These facilities should be supported by the presence of restrooms, drinking fountains, parking areas and paved walkways for access.

K. Dog Parks

Dog parks have become a very common element in many park systems throughout Ohio and the United States. They provide an opportunity for people living in areas with small yards to have a place to let their dogs run free.

Support facilities at dog parks would include:

1. Three fence enclosed areas of approximately one half to one acre each. One would be for large dogs, one for small dogs, and one would be rotated so that there would be a chance for the grass to grow.

Facility Recommendations and Criteria

2. A drinking fountain with a bowl accessible to dogs.
3. Shade areas and sitting areas.
4. A parking area.
5. Dog waste bags with an appropriate disposal system.

L. Wilhelmina Park Preliminary Concept Plan

A public workshop with the neighborhoods surrounding the proposed park took place on December 5, 2008. The approximately 30 people in attendance identified the type of development they desire. The main items included:

1. Pet friendly
2. All-access playground
3. Skate park
4. Restrooms
5. Security lighting
6. Preserve the wooded area
7. Trails
8. An amphitheater
9. Prairie and wetland area
10. Buffer to the adjacent homes

Based upon this discussion, Figure 33, Wilhelmina Park Preliminary Concept Plan was prepared. This figure illustrates a concept plan that provides for neighborhood and community oriented facilities, walking trails, parking, restrooms, an amphitheater, game courts, picnic areas, playgrounds, and other facilities. This concept is only intended to be an illustration of one potential solution. Other alternatives should be explored, in conjunction with the surrounding neighborhoods, to provide for the needs of the neighborhood and the overall community.

The Preliminary Concept Plan illustrates a park that will appeal to all residents of Liberty Township with opportunities for all ages and abilities. There are no athletic fields shown on the plan. The neighborhood had strong feelings of concern for the safety of children in the neighborhood if programmed athletic fields that would generate significant traffic were included in the plan. Access to the park is through residential streets and the option of access to Princeton Road is excessively expensive. Therefore, this park is planned as a more passive, family-oriented park with generous open space.

The residents of the Township and the neighborhood have expressed desire for water in the parks. Therefore, the potential of using the existing detention pond as a retention pond should be investigated in the planning of the park.

Facility Recommendations and Criteria

M. Prototypical 150 Acre Park Concept for Western Liberty Township

Figure 34 illustrates a prototypical configuration for the proposed 150 acre park to serve western Liberty Township. The final site that is chosen will dictate many of the design parameters, but this figure is intended to illustrate the types of facilities and relationships that are desired. The front 100 acres are the active portion of the park with complexes of baseball/softball fields and rectangular fields.

Each cluster of fields should have support facilities of restrooms, concessions, playgrounds, parking, and other amenities. Each of the four field baseball/softball complexes will have a restroom/concession building in the center.

In the soccer complex, one field is reserved as a championship field. This is the field that would be best to use a synthetic surface if desired. The other fields would ideally be developed on a continuously plain to allow for alternating sizes and directions of the fields for various age groups and to rest the turf in some areas.

Two of the fields are a combination of football and soccer or other rectangular fields to illustrate that there area needs other than soccer that requires rectangular fields.

The active athletic portion of the park should have a minimum of 60 parking spaces per field.

A maintenance complex is also located in the front portion of the park because the field areas require the higher level of maintenance than the passive areas in the rear of the park.

The back 50 acres provide a much more passive experience. This area should be partially wooded to provide more serene areas for picnicking and nature enjoyment. This area has two parking lots with two picnic shelters using each parking lot. A restroom and a playground services the group of two shelters.

A pond could also be developed if the site conditions warrant as an area for more nature study and as an aesthetic feature. Picnic areas along water bodies are typically rented more than others.

Another feature in the rear of the park is a dog park. The only other dog park in the area is at the VOA Park, therefore, this one is proposed to serve the western half of Liberty Township.

The trails in the rear portion would be natural surfaces. The trails in the front portion should be 10' wide paved trails to provide for multiple users and heavier traffic and should meet AASHTO standards.

Figure 33: Wilhelmina Park Concept



LEGEND KEY

- (A) Restrooms
- (B) Small Playground
- (C) Large All-Access Playground
- (D) Small Picnic Shelter
- (E) Large Picnic Shelter
- (F) Amphitheater
- (G) Sprayground
- (H) Basketball Courts
- (I) Open Lawn Space
- (J) Parking
- (K) Detention Pond
- (L) Non-Paved Trail - - - -
- (M) Paved Trail - - - -
- (N) Buffer Planting/Reforestation
- (O) Wetland
- (P) Skate Park
- - - - Utility Easements



Preliminary Wilhelmina Park Concept Plan
 Liberty Township Parks Master Plan
 Butler County, Ohio

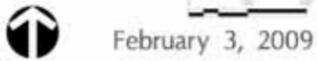


Figure 34: Prototypical 150 Acre Park Concept for Western Liberty Township



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**Prototypical 150 Acre Park Concept
for Western Liberty Township**
Liberty Township Parks Master Plan
Butler County, Ohio

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