



# West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative

CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN REPORT  
AUGUST 2016



With appreciation to these individuals and organizations for their thoughtful contributions and enthusiastic participation in the planning effort for the West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative.

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- Cheri Bryant Hamilton, Councilwoman, Louisville Metro Council, District 5
- Diane Porter, Vice-Chairperson, District 1, Jefferson County Board of Education

**Invited Stakeholders**

- 2 not 1
- Bicycling for Louisville
- Boy Scouts of America
- Boys and Girls Club of Kentuckiana
- Central High School
- Chickasaw Federation
- Family Scholar House

- Get Outdoors Kentucky
- Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana
- JCPS Newcomer Academy
- Kentuckiana Paddlers Association
- Kentucky Archaeology Survey
- KY Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
- Louisville Bicycle Club
- Louisville Defender
- Louisville Grows
- Louisville Metropolitan Sewer District
- Louisville Nature Center
- Maupin Elementary
- Louisville Metro Government
- Newbreed Church
- Portland Library
- Portland Museum
- Quest Outdoors
- Shawnee Arts and Cultural Center
- Shawnee Free Public Library
- St. George’s Scholar Institute
- U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Louisville Urban League
- Waterfront Development Corporation
- West End School

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- Tetra Tech, Technical and Regulator Addendum

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# INTRODUCTION



## 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

### WHAT: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Louisville is recognized for a fantastic system of parks and open space. The city has significant and improving opportunities for paddling, hiking, cycling, mountain biking, and fishing which are important as the city seeks to improve community health and quality of life. However, access to these and similar types of outdoor recreation activities is not equitable across the city. Generally speaking, formal and safe facilities for these activities are lacking in west Louisville. This is particularly important given that west Louisville has some of the highest rates of chronic disease in the city, relatively higher rates of violent crime, and is home to families with an average median household income of just \$21,733. Given that west Louisville is located adjacent to the Ohio River in the vicinity of hundreds of acres of parkland and that the area is rich in cultural history (e.g., Ohio River archeology, National Register listed parks, history of segregation in the parks, and the underground railroad connection with Portland Wharf, to name a few), we have the potential to improve these conditions by creating great access to quality-of-life-enhancing recreational opportunities.

The West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative envisions that all children and their families have hope for a better future through connection to nature and the outdoors. This initiative seeks to benefit residents of West Louisville and Portland by creating expanded opportunities for children and families to experience nature within their own neighborhoods. The initiative supports Mayor Fischer's community goals and complements existing park master plans by making recommendations for new park infrastructure that reflects current thinking about positive impacts resulting from greater connection to nature and nature-related outdoor activities.

This master plan has its roots in Metro Parks' recent efforts to respond to inequities related to access to nature in Louisville by extending nature-based programming to residents in West Louisville. This began with the establishment of Louisville ECHO (Louisville is Engaging Children Outdoors) environmental education program in 2008 with seed funding from the U.S. Forest Service to provide a number of Louisville public schools outdoor field trips. It was expanded in 2012 when Metro Parks began offering nature-based recreational programming as part of public events such as the annual Canoemobile and out-of-school time activities in partnership with local youth service providers and community centers. Metro Parks plans to construct a stewardship center in Shawnee Park, the Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center, so that Metro Parks' natural Division can provide more children and families in west Louisville with outdoor experiences through expansion of the Louisville ECHO program. Funding for the hiring of a formal consultant, MKSK, was provided by Louisville Metro Government. Further funding from Louisville Metro Government, matched with funding from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, funded development of the plan's Technical and Regulatory Addendum.

### WHY: PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN

Shawnee, Chickasaw, and Portland Parks are viewed as both historically significant as well as a vital open spaces within the community of Louisville. Located along the banks of the Ohio River in west Louisville, the parks embrace the unique neighborhood setting and the landscape of the river corridor. There is a strong desire for the parks to continue to foster health and wellness for the community, serve as an ecological resource, and provide a location for civic interaction.

The Master Plan serves as a vision for the community of Louisville to continue to provide a forward thinking urban park system, fostering community interaction and the development of a sustainable Louisville: Socially, Environmentally, and Culturally.

The ideas within this report establish a comprehensive series of physical recommendations in support of ecology, history, programs/events, activities, and behaviors. The well-planned design and management of these urban parks can further the goal of providing a neighborhood parks system in which spending an hour or a day at the park is an experience of opportunities for both individuals and groups engaging in expression, self-discovery, and recreation, one in which natural spaces provide opportunities for both individuals and groups to engage in expression, self-discovery, and recreation. Today's renewed consciousness about the impact of urban parks on our health and wellness has promoted more nature based play opportunities, convenient access to nature, and inclusive design for all that benefit urban populations.

### HOW: THE MASTER PLANNING STUDY PROCESS

#### Grounding:

An intensive period of interviews, observation, and research to gain a comprehensive understanding of the park site and its surroundings.

#### Exploration:

Developing in words and concepts, broad planning principles and goals in response to community and waterfront issues and needs.

#### Recommendations:

The formulation of physical planning and design concepts, tested against planning principles and goals, in meeting identified program and enhancement needs.

#### Finalization:

The refinement and adoption of a comprehensive, unified set of ideas that comprise the master plan.

These steps were taken in concert with the Planning and Design Team, which provided input and evaluation of each step throughout the planning and design process. The role and focus of the Planning and Design Team was to:

- a. grow in knowledge and understanding of the parks and the surrounding context, how it looks and how it works
- b. review and help determine planning and design principles and goals for the development of outdoor recreation opportunities
- c. discover and explore new ideas and new ways of thinking about outdoor recreation
- d. share results of the planning and design process with key stakeholders and the community
- e. promote and be an advocate for the orderly planning, development, and re-development of the parks

### THE BIG PICTURE

The West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative envisions that all children and their families have hope for a better future through connection to nature and the outdoors. This initiative seeks to benefit residents of West Louisville and Portland by creating expanded opportunities for children and families to experience nature within their own neighborhoods. The initiative supports Mayor Fischer's community goals related to advancing education attainment from cradle to career, improving health and wellness, expanding green-facing job opportunities, and reducing crime.

With your support, together we will:

1) Create equitable outdoor recreational infrastructure that reconnects West Louisville residents to the Ohio River and the underappreciated, underutilized natural spaces within Chickasaw Park, Shawnee Park, and Portland Wharf Park. Infrastructure envisioned includes river access for boating, canoeing, and fishing; pond restoration in Chickasaw pond; creation of hiking trails, bike-oriented amenities, and special places for nature play and contemplation.

2) Construct a satellite stewardship center in Shawnee Park, the Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center, so that Metro Parks' Natural Areas Division can fully utilize this new and improved infrastructure in order to expand its "Louisville is Engaging Children Outdoors" to serve more children and families in West Louisville. Louisville ECHO programming includes curriculum-supporting field experiences for local school children, out-of-school time outdoor recreation programming such as fishing, canoeing, climbing, and archery, and special events such as the annual Canoemobile.

3) Leverage existing partnerships, including those with Wilderness Inquiry, Inc., the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, Outdoor Afro, and the Children and Nature Network. With support from these national organizations we strive to develop local capacity in West Louisville to expand mentoring relationships, create new volunteer opportunities, and expand access to and appreciation of the educational and career opportunities that exist in fields related to nature and the outdoors.

The WLORI is a holistic effort to help address **broader community issues of environmental sustainability, health and wellness, education attainment, and access to green jobs** through creation of outdoor infrastructure and expansion of complementary programming. This master plan proposes a variety of infrastructure improvements including boating and canoeing access along the Ohio River; paved and soft surface trails with art, aviary, and canopy walk elements; adventure forest amenities such as a bicycle pump track and nature play areas, and areas for organized overnight camping.

A key component of WLORI is creation of the Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center. In operating this center, Metro Parks' will develop local partnerships and build volunteer capacity to drastically expand the number and frequency of outdoor recreational program opportunities and significantly increase the number of youth and families provided nature-based programming opportunities. This will involve expansion of Metro Parks' Louisville ECHO (Louisville is Engaging Children Outdoors) program which provides out-of school time opportunities, free public events, and also inquiry-based field trips for local schools. Louisville ECHO is a program supported by many partners, including the U.S. Forest Service (Daniel Boone National Forest), National Park Service (Mammoth Cave National Park), MSD, Jefferson County Public Schools, Wilderness Inquiry of Minneapolis, MN, and Outdoor Afro, Kentucky. It is through Louisville ECHO program that proposed infrastructure improvements, for example restoration of Chickasaw Pond, will enhance community engagement and sense of place. Infrastructure and program enhancements will provide convenient neighborhood-level opportunities to introduce basic outdoor skills (e.g., fishing, flatwater canoeing, and general nature appreciation) that one can then further develop through more "challenging" opportunities that will be created as part of the WLORI (e.g., river fishing, moving water canoeing, hiking woodland trails). Residents either on their own, with the support of mentors or parents, or through organized programming, can gain basic skills that will open windows on exploration of other parks and natural areas in Louisville and beyond.

### WEST LOUISVILLE ENVISIONED AS A PLACE WHERE...

*Every child and their family has safe neighborhood access to nature and outdoor recreation*

*Every child has access to mentors to introduce them to nature and expand their horizons through shared exploration of the outdoors*

*Revitalized neighborhood parks become hubs of activity and positive change is fostered through community engagement in the outdoors*

### POSITIVE CONNECTIONS WITH NATURE EXPERIENCED ACROSS CULTURES

- Picnics and family gatherings rate highly across all ethnic groups as reasons for enjoying recreation outdoors.
- Increased personal health. Recognition that outdoor activities have multiple benefits: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual (e.g., enhanced confidence, physical development, emotional adjustment, social interaction skills, mental acuity, spiritual/religious contact)
- Strong values towards nature ("nature appreciation") and belief in conservation and stewardship of the environment.
- Stress relief, fresh air, natural beauty.



### COMMON CONSTRAINTS ACROSS CULTURES

- Socialization and exposure (e.g., upbringing and/or current social practices)
- "Marginalized" nature of racial ethnic minorities (e.g., cost/financial constraints, lack of transportation, access issues)
- Historical context / perspective of current outdoor natural resources areas based in historical perspectives.
- Safety issues and fears (e.g., physical, emotional safety, concern about being injured, fear of natural elements, navigation and uncertainty of getting around, other people and "places you dare not go")
- Lack of people of color visible in marketing and/or promotional materials.
- Don't feel comfortable or welcome in certain parks, forests, and other outdoor areas.
- Perceived discrimination / interracial interactions (e.g., potential for others to create a negative effect on visitation or avoiding outdoor areas due to possibility of cultural conflicts or discrimination).
- Lack of knowledge and/or awareness (e.g., what to do, where to go)
- "No Time" = more pressing priorities.
- Few friends travel or recreate in more remote natural areas or wildlands.

*Compiled by Nina S. Roberts, Ph.D., San Francisco State University September 2009*

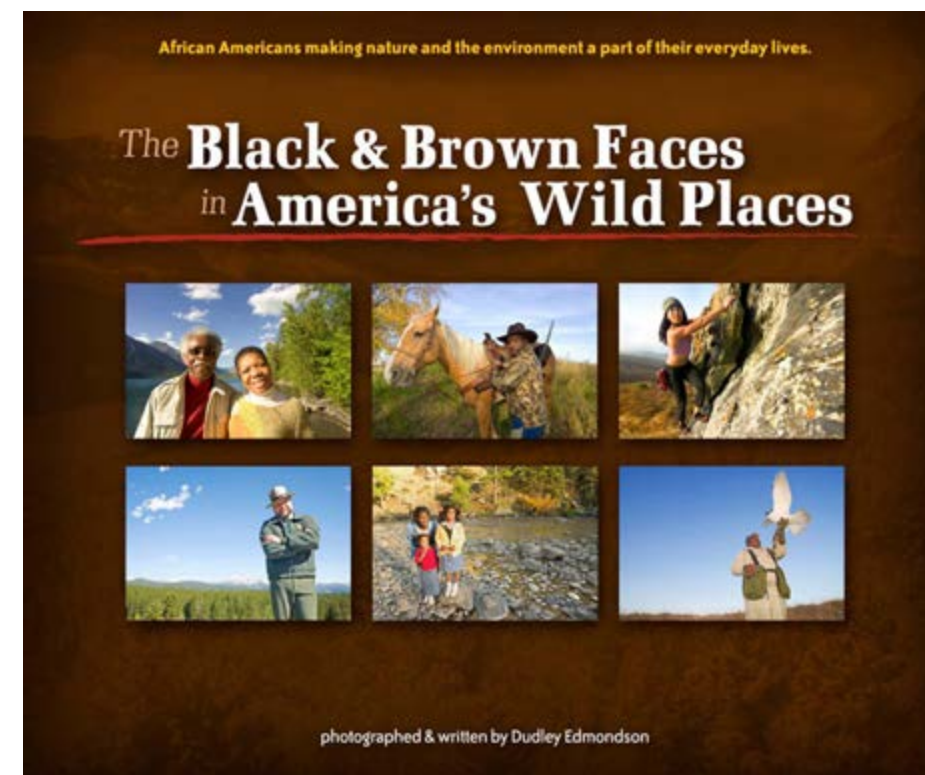


**Dudley Edmondson, Videographer, photographer, author, Duluth, MN**

Dudley Edmondson is a photographer and author of the book, *Black and Brown Faces in America's Wild Places*. He is a leading voice nationally for supporting the inclusion of African American faces and voices in the outdoors. In 2012, he spoke on the value of expanding outdoor opportunities in west Louisville as part of West Louisville Appreciation Days. He is one of the main inspirations for this initiative.

*"...with the outdoor learning center as a part for the plans for the park system, that is going to provide that avenue and that place for folks to connect, right. I think education is important to diversify the environmental field – in order to make sure that everyone sees someone like them in the outdoors teaching and leading. It provides for us a space for us as well as a community organization to have be able to have that opportunity to enrich knowledge through peer learning and mentorship."*

*"What I've been doing a lot of times as a photographer, as a filmmaker, is trying to highlight people of color doing things in the out of doors. To me, one of the things I think is crucial and critical is that we need to see ourselves out there. If we don't see ourselves out there, we might not think it's the thing we are supposed to be doing because we constantly see European Americans doing things and so we say, well "that's not for us". But if we see images of us out there or we hear stories or view stories of people of color in the out of doors being passionate about nature and the environment then we go like, "Hey, maybe this is for me. Maybe this is something that I should be doing." And what I think's important is that it gets passed on as family traditions. I know that's what has definitely happened among European Americans – grandfather passes it on to father, father passes it on to son. So what needs to happen in communities of color, families of color, is that same thing, where you, you know, you can pass it down to the next generation – your appreciation for nature and the out of doors. That kind of think has started to happen in America which to me is very encouraging and very good."*



Graphic provided by the National Environmental Education Foundation

WHAT YOU SAID: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

COMMUNITY INPUT

**WHO:**  
West Louisville community was invited to participate in a one-day event.

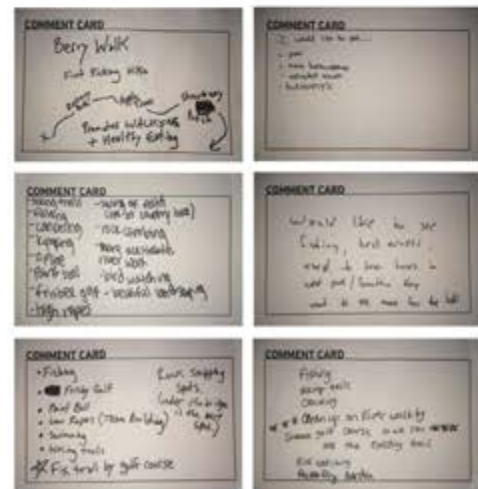
**WHAT:**  
The community attended the event to celebrate their parks and develop ideas for future park programs. Celebration included nature-based outdoor activities such as archery, rock climbing wall, fishing demos, Ohio River canoeing, Bicycle pump track and bike safety, nature photography, equestrian activities, and woodland hikes.

**WHEN:**  
Saturday, July 26th, 2015; 1pm-5pm

**WHERE:**  
Shawnee Park, Louisville, KY

COMMENT CARDS

Members of the community participating in this event were encouraged to provide feedback about the new activities available at the event as well as what other program elements they would like to see in their parks. Some of the comment cards are shown below:



EMERGING THEMES

**Hiking**  
There is a community-wide desire for improved hiking trails as well as new trails. Community members expressed the importance of cleaning the debris from the Louisville Loop by the Shawnee Golf Course so that the connection is complete between parks.

**Climbing**  
The temporary climbing wall at the Community Kickoff proved to be a popular activity. Participants showed great interest in having a permanent rock wall in the parks.

**Water access**  
Throughout the Community Kickoff event, an interest in canoeing, kayaking, boating, boat ramp, river access, and pond clean up was expressed by a multitude of community members.

**Ziplining**  
An up and upcoming activity, ziplines are a unique way to view the natural world. The neighborhood expressed desire for this exciting and eye-opening activity.

**Education**  
With the cherished set of parks in West Louisville, there is a great opportunity for the neighborhoods to be involved in nature educational events, including learning more about plants and wildlife.

**Family Activities**  
Community members requested more family activities within the parks. With many neighborhoods surrounding the parks, families use the parks at a moderate level. With more engaging family activities, the parks would see even more use.

**Other Unique Ideas**  
Community members proposed some unique park recreation ideas, listed below:

- Mobile apps
- GPS data
- River edge exploration
- Embracing views of sunset
- Family berry picking trail/edible plants along trail
- Exercise stations along trail





**WHAT YOU SAID: PROCESS AND CONSENSUS BUILDING**

**Community Survey:**

In the summer and fall of 2014 a survey of attitudes toward nature and outdoor recreation was administered using a combination of the internet and paper surveys delivered through community groups and at community events. Three-hundred responses were received with over fifty percent coming from residents of west Louisville.

**Stakeholder Group:**

Stakeholders groups were identified to represent diverse interests. These groups included west Louisville Residents, Business and Property Owners, Seniors, Historians, Parents, Arts Focus Group, and local schools. Through sessions, distributed over all phases of the project, the stakeholder group was tasked to critically think about content and recommendations through the lenses of their particular interests. This process led to focused discussion and discovery of issues important to each group.

**Project Team:**

Over the course of this planning effort, the Project Team provided invaluable insight into overlapping, and sometimes competing interests uncovered during stakeholder group sessions. It was during the Project Team meetings, throughout each phase of this project, that those varying viewpoints were reconciled. Additionally, the Project Team served as a sounding board for ideas, prior to their presentation at public meetings. This group challenged and tied together the work.

**Public Meetings:**

During the planning process the general public was invited to participate in different forms of public engagement. These included: Louisville Appreciation Day celebration, open houses, and presentations. Each format allowed for specific and detailed discussion between attendees and project representatives.

**Top Nature-Based Recreational Opportunities the Community Desired (ranked in order):**

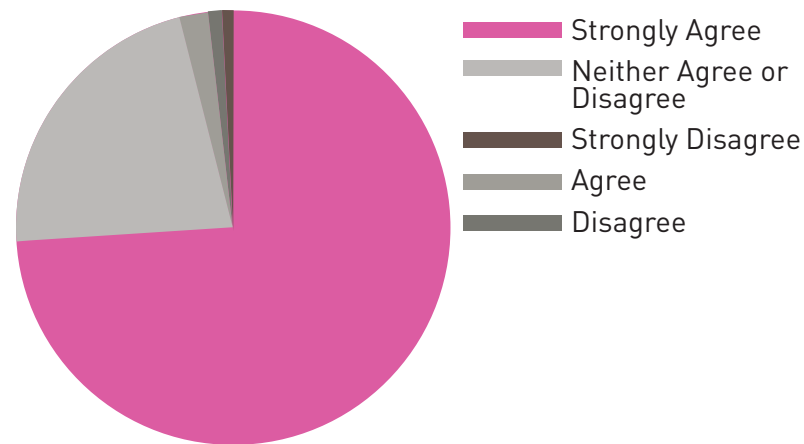
- Bike Paved Trails**
- Hiking Unpaved Trails**
- Canoe the River**
- Archery**
- Fishing on the River**
- Sail on the River**
- Bike Unpaved Trails**
- Boat on the River**
- Take a Nature Class**

**COMMUNITY SURVEY**

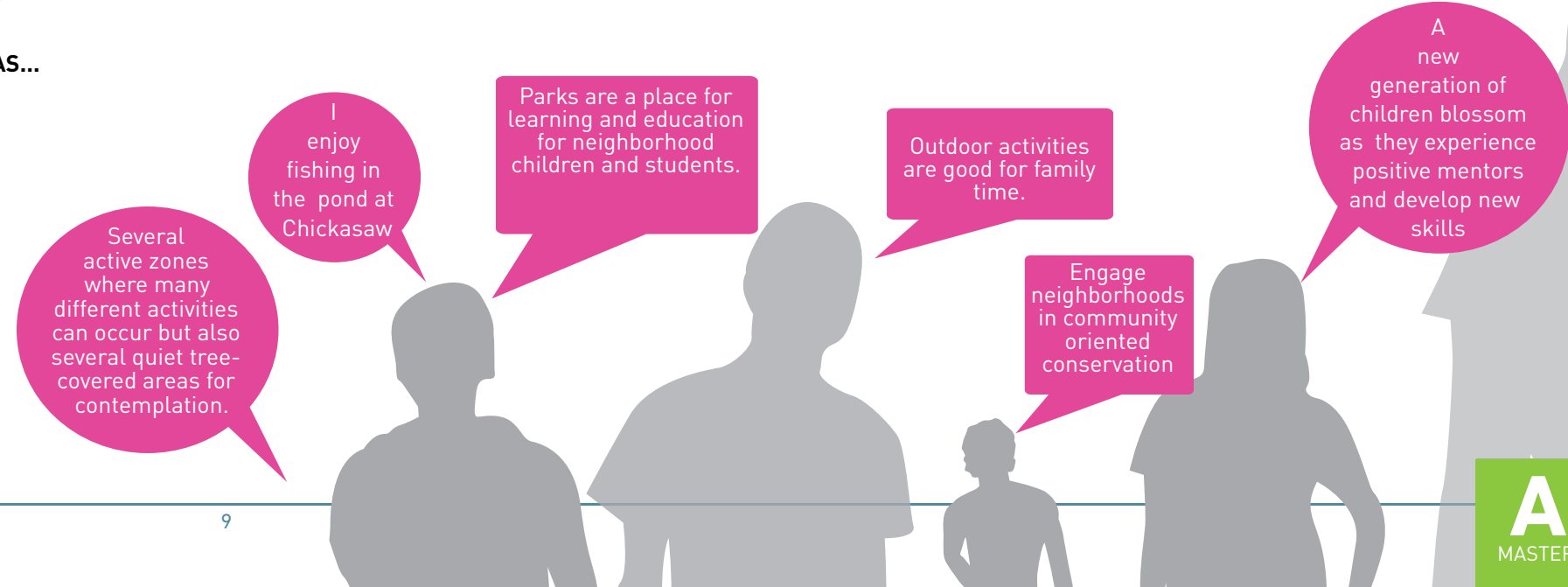
What activities do you participate in regularly?

- Walking / Hiking**
- Exercise**
- Play Ground**
- Bike Riding**
- Cook Out / Picnic**
- Sprayground**

Outdoor Activities are good for family time.



**SOME OF THE IDEAS...**



**Percentage who visited local parks in Louisville**

Jefferson Memorial Forest	43%
Parklands of Floyd's Fork	23%
<b>Shawnee Park</b>	<b>64%</b>
Cherokee Park	58%
Portland Park	18%
Iroquois Park	56%
Bernheim Forest	31%
Portland Wharf Park	7%
Mammoth Cave National Park	21%
Lannan Park	8%
<b>Chickasaw Park</b>	<b>46%</b>
Red River Gorge National Geologic Area	17%
Russell Lee Park	18%
Central Park	39%

**WEST LOUISVILLE APPRECIATION DAY**

The photos on the following pages are examples of events in West Louisville that provide opportunities for kids to engage with nature in both active and passive recreation. Canoeing, fishing, biking, hiking and wildlife exploration are all programmatic ideas that this master plan recommends within Chickasaw, Shawnee, and Portland Wharf Parks.

The West Louisville Appreciation Day has served as an event for the youth and families of the West Louisville Neighborhoods. While this event occurs only once a year, the activities draw hundreds of kids from the surrounding neighborhoods to recreate and socialize within the park setting of Shawnee Park. During the West Louisville Appreciation Day events, children express their interest in engaging more with nature and the river.



Planting Trees



Bike Pump Track



Fishing the Ohio River



Canoeing the Ohio River



Bike Pump Track



Wildlife



Look What I Found!!

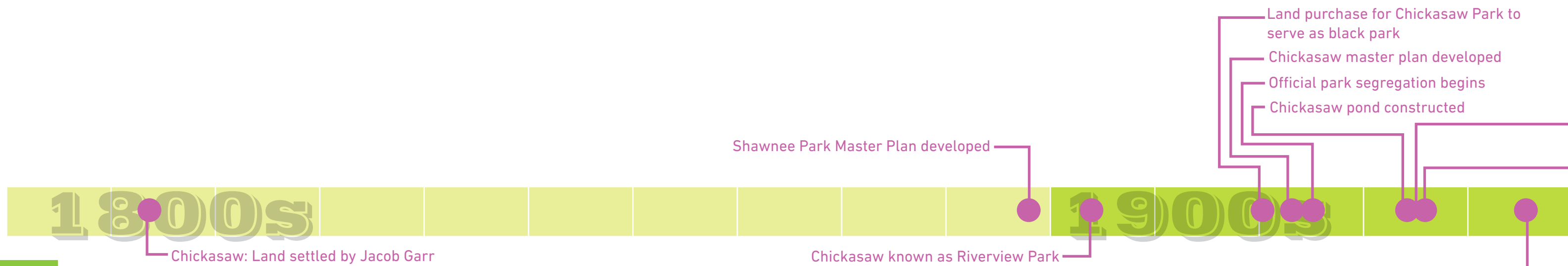
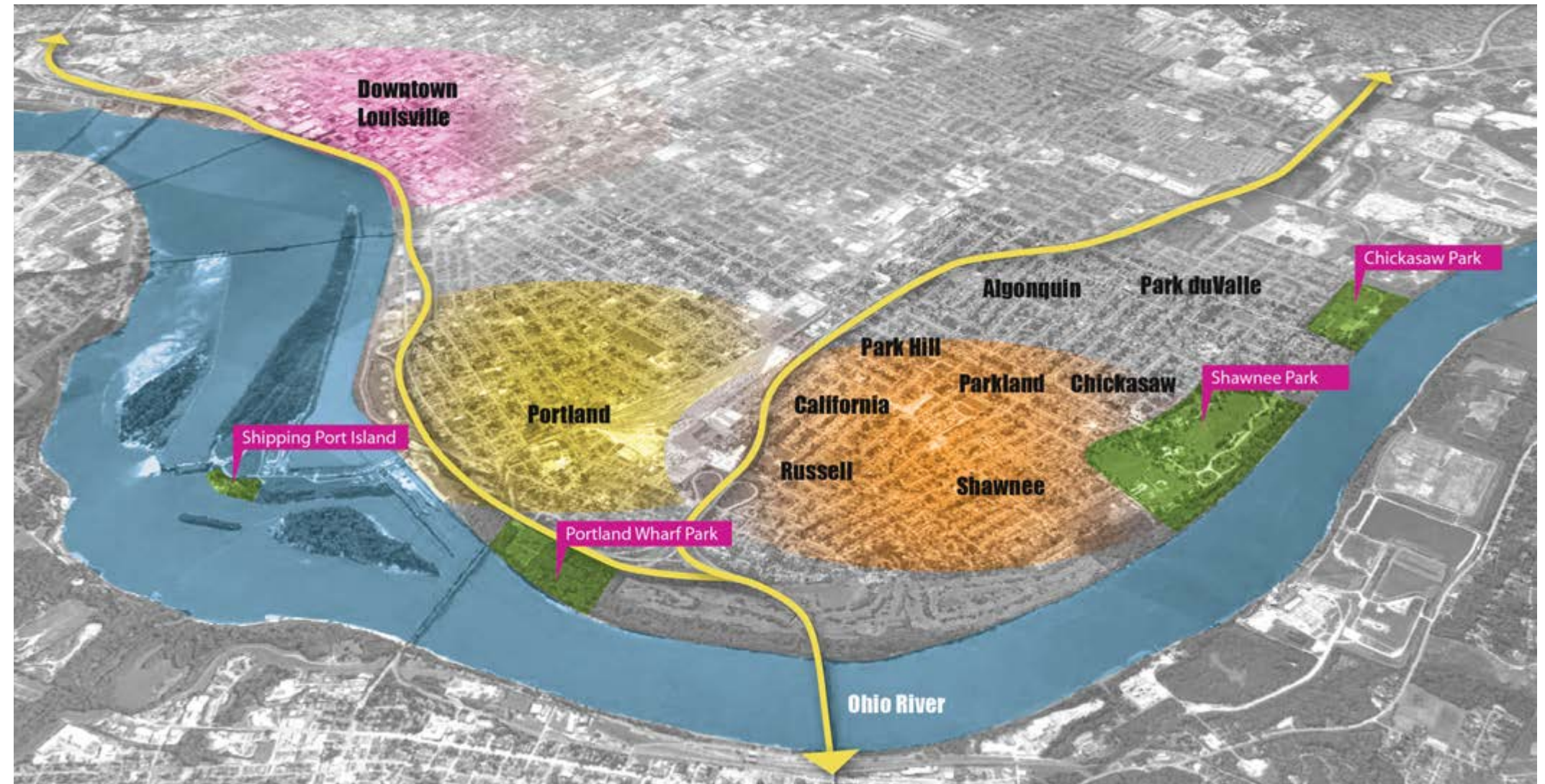


Bird Watchiing

PROJECT CONTEXT: THE PARKS

The West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative project serves as a recreational overlay for three existing parks in west Louisville along the banks of the Ohio River; Chickasaw Park, Shawnee Park, and Portland Wharf Park. Each of these parks have recently been the focus of an intense master plan update process, focusing on the holistic perspective of the parks from historic preservation to facility improvements. In several instances, many recommendations within this report were reflected in the previous master plans including access to the river and restoration of the pond at Chickasaw Park. It was a priority for the planning and design team during this project to honor the legacy of the Olmsted Brother's designed parks (Chickasaw and Shawnee Parks), and the historic significance of the Portland Wharf area. The WLORI project is intended to compliment these existing master plans. Existing comprehensive master plans for Chickasaw Park, Shawnee Park, and Portland Wharf Park are available on Louisville Metro Parks and Recreation's website ([www.bestparksever.com](http://www.bestparksever.com)). This includes the Olmsted Parks Master Plan and the Portland Wharf Master Plan. These plans provide substantial background information beyond what is presented here.

This project also worked closely with Louisville Metro Parks, Army Corps of Engineers, Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Tetra Tech, and POND. The final report produced by Tetra Tech served as planning support for the WLORI master plan. The finding and recommendations within the Tetra Tech report, *West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative - Technical and Regulatory Addendum (2016)*, focused on canoe and kayak access to the river, fishing access, restoration of the Chickasaw Pond, and typical trail recommendations along the banks of the river.



**Chickasaw Park**

Chickasaw Park was developed in the early 1920's and has its history in Louisville's segregated past. The area around the park had been used for recreation and amusement since the early 1900's when the area was associated with a beer garden and later an amusement park. Racial tensions in Louisville were rising in the early 1900s with calls from some groups for exclusion of blacks from parks such as Shawnee Park and subsequent action by city officials to segregate certain park areas. In 1922, Chickasaw Park was formally dedicated as a black park and the Parks Board contracted with the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architecture firm in 1923 to develop plans for the park. The Parks Board formally segregated all parks in 1925.

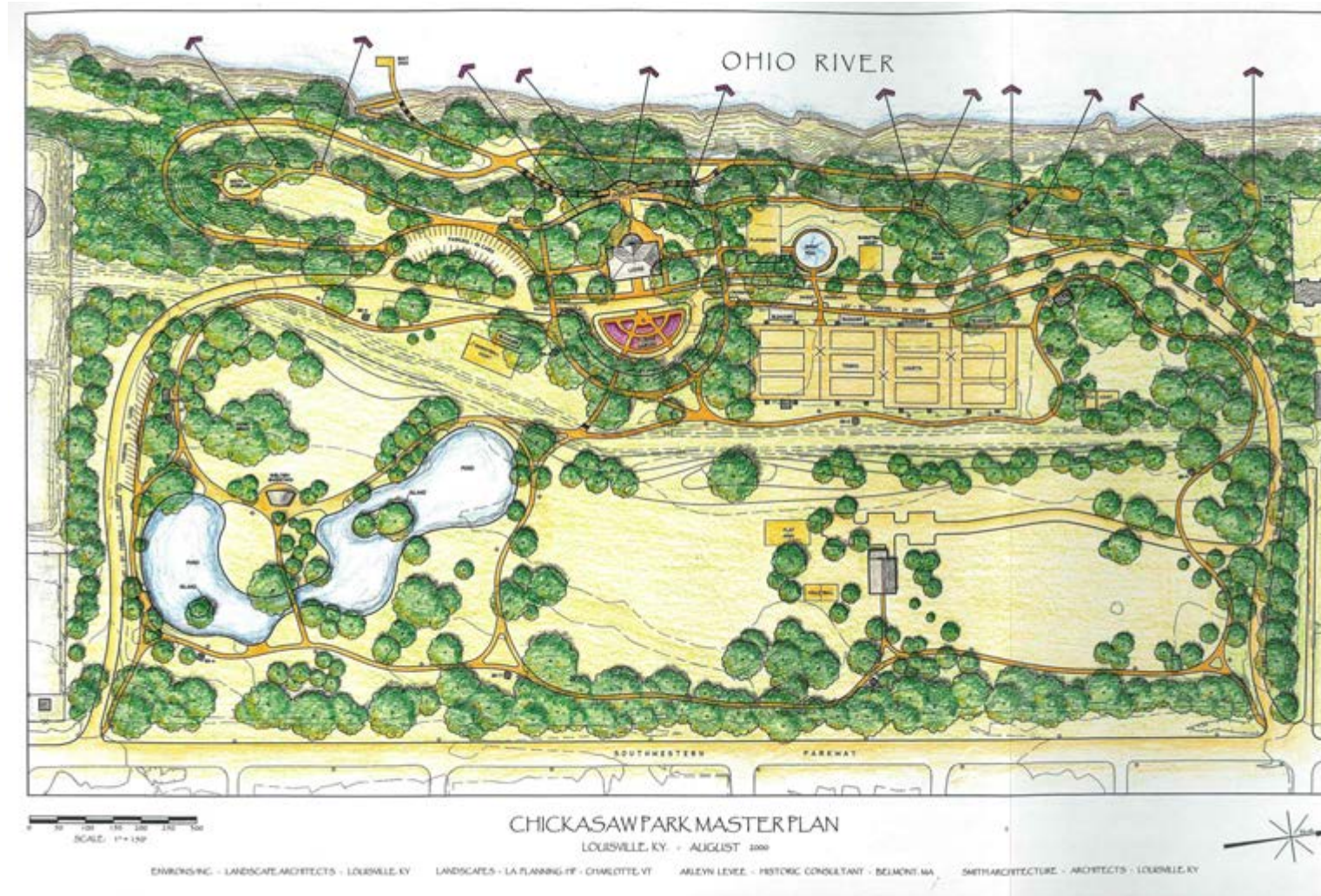
Chickasaw Park, much like other blacks-only parks of the time, was not much more than an open field when it was dedicated with two tennis courts, two baseball diamonds, and one football field. The Olmsted Plan was approved for implementation in June 1927. Construction of the pond for canoeing and skating was completed in 1936. Chickasaw Pond was located where earth excavations had been made for other city park improvements.

The park was completely inundated by the waters of the great flood of 1937 and as a result the Parks Board approved plans for construction of a floodwall in 1938. The levee was completed in 1947 and essentially split the park in two, visually separating half of the park from the Ohio River.

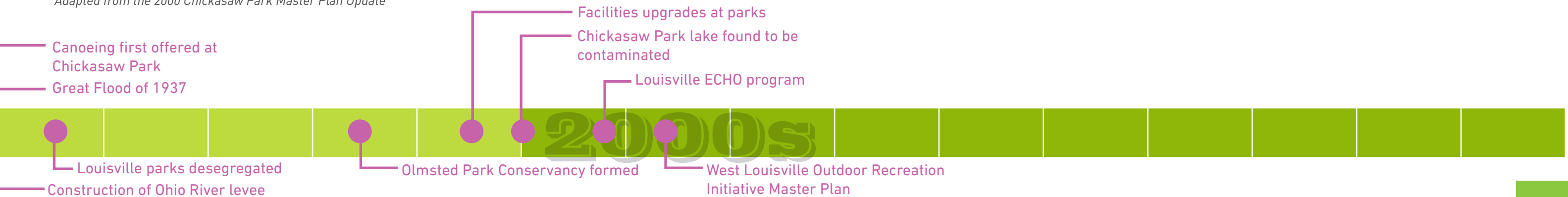
During the 1940's and 50's park usage increased dramatically, but although the city park system was being expanded, black citizens were still limited to just five parks, with Chickasaw being the largest. Louisville parks were not desegregated until 1955. Chickasaw Park was the preferred setting for large company picnics, family gatherings, and summer programs and carnivals. The ability to share public spaces with friends and neighbors fostered a sense of ownership and what made Chickasaw Park an integral part of the African-American community.

Chickasaw Park has suffered from environmental pollution and the pond is considered to be contaminated with low levels of pollutants including dioxin. The ultimate source is unknown, but is believed to be caused by either air deposition or storm water runoff from nearby industrial properties. See this master plan's technical addendum for findings and recommendations regarding the Chickasaw Pond contaminants.

*Adapted from the 2000 Chickasaw Park Master Plan Update*



Chickasaw Park Master Plan Update:  
 Authored by Environs, Inc., 2000



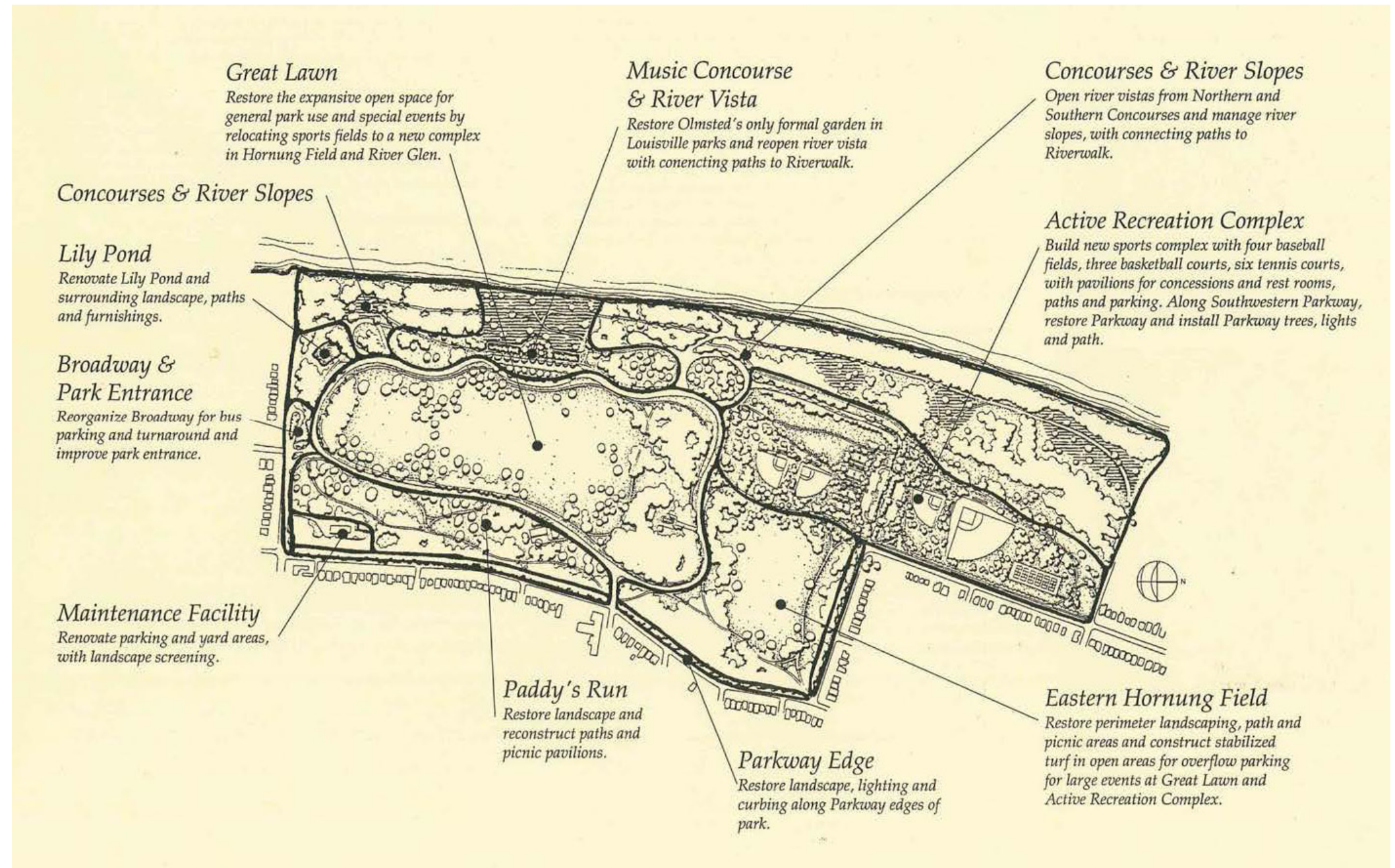
**Shawnee Park**

The environmental setting of the currently 486-acre Shawnee Park has long been valued as an ideal riverside retreat in both private and public avenues. The park was established as Olmsted's Western Park in 1892 with boundaries extending north to what was then Walnut Street (now the east-west segment of Southwestern Parkway). In addition to the original Olmsted design of the 1890s, a portion north of this area was added by 1913. Later, the portion that had been the privately owned Fontaine Ferry Park was added in 1977.

The Olmsted plan for the park incorporated the existing landscape, salvaged valuable trees, and sculpted the earth to accommodate drives and paths, while embracing views of and access to the Ohio River. The park landscape revealed the openness of the central lawn, the edge enclosures, and the nearly continuous concourses for viewing the river. The original Olmsted plans express the parks distinctive and timeless character that shines today despite contemporary changes. The great flood of 1937 prompted the Army Corps of Engineers to fortify the high ground as refuge during flooding. They also added new drainage pipes along Paddy's Run, pump stations, and a floodwall (levee) that runs through the park.

Mapping, newspaper articles, and documents at Metro Parks archives indicates uses of Shawnee Park have included baseball during the early 1900s, socializing with families on Sundays with associated cruising on Sunday nights, and the 7-week Dirt Bowl basketball tournaments in the later 1900s, which had been occurring for nearly 30 years.

Shawnee Park was a whites-only park from the 1920s through 1955, when Louisville parks were officially integrated. Like other parks across the community, facilities in Shawnee Park experienced a period of decay in the 1960s and 1970s. In response to this general decline, the Frederick Olmsted Law Parks Conservancy was formed in 1989. This master plan seeks to continue improvements to the park and addresses some of the recommendations of the most recent Shawnee Park master plan update including providing boating access to the Ohio River and renovating the existing ball house to provide environmental education opportunities.



Shawnee Park Master Plan Update:  
Authored by Heritage Landscapes

**Portland Wharf Park**

Located along the banks of the Ohio River at the base of the Portland Canal in West Louisville, this 60-acre park is part of the Portland Neighborhood and is nestled between the floodwall and the river. This area was once the center of a bustling 19th century river town with buildings, streets, and a wharf for landing riverboats. During the mid-19th century, nearly one-third of the cost to ship from New Orleans to Louisville was spent on the three-mile portage around the Falls of the Ohio. The 1850's were the peak years of river traffic and of Portland's prosperity. By the 1860's, the railroad had begun to overtake riverboats as the preferred transportation system across the country.

The Portland Wharf was made obsolete after the federal government enlarged the canal in the 1870's. In 1937 the great flood ravaged the historic section of town, and in the 1940's plans were approved for the construction of a floodwall that bisected the riverfront from the Portland neighborhoods. The construction of the interstate further limited access to the area and has effectively isolated the park area to date. The WLORI project recommends recreational opportunities that will promote that park as a recreational and educational destination.

Currently Portland Wharf serves as an archeological and historical park inspired by school children during an event at the Portland Museum in 1994. City officials have recognized that cultural heritage tourism could be a means of revitalization of the wharf area.

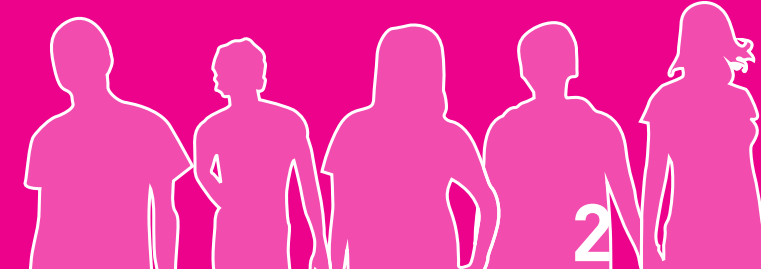


Portland Wharf Park Interpretive Master Plan Update: Authored by Rowland Design.





# THE MASTER PLANS



This section of the report illustrates in both words and graphics the specific recommendations for outdoor recreation in each park. These recommendations are a result of the planning and design efforts

## 2.1 CHICKASAW PARK

The Plan

Renovation of the Pond

Paths and Trails

Aviary Garden

Canoe and Kayak Access

## 2.2 SHAWNEE PARK

The Plan

Paths and Trails

Play Forest

Art Walk Forest

Extreme Sports Forest

Outdoor Learning Center

## 2.3 PORTLAND WHARF PARK

The Plan

Paths and Trails

Ghost Streets

Camping Areas

# Chickasaw Park

The master plan recommends the following improvements and enhancements for Chickasaw Park:

1. Remove contaminated soils from Chickasaw Pond, reshape pond edges, and provide areas for fishing and walking around perimeter
2. Provide access to the Ohio River for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing
3. Provide areas for wildlife observation and view of the river
4. Enhance network of paths and trails to provide access to natural areas of the park
5. Bank stabilization for river observation and trail routing
6. Distribute pond soils on-site creating berms and gently sculpted landscape areas along the southern edge of the levee





**THE POND: RENOVATING AN ECOLOGICAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCE**

The master planning team worked closely with Metro Parks and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' consultant, Tetra Tech, for planning related to the renovation of Chickasaw Pond. Noted as a top priority in previous Chickasaw Park master plans, the pond is a popular destination for the neighborhood in desperate need of improvements for both safety and recreation. Current issues with the pond include: drainage issues affecting the walking path; lack of benches and seating areas; too many ducks creating a nuisance, water lotus clogging the water surface, lack of parking, no restrooms, and the poor quality of the water.

**Existing Pond Conditions**

*Water surface area = 1.78 acres*

*Water surface elevation = 452.67'*

*Average depth = 1.6'*

*Maximum depth = 4.6'*

*6" overflow elevation = 453.18'*

*Bank depth = 1'*

*Bank slope = 3H:1V*

*Bottom slope = 5H:1V to 7H:1V*

*Contributing drainage area = 7 -8 acres*

Dredging of the pond was completed in 1936 for the intended use of canoeing in the summer and ice skating in the winter. Metro Parks intends for the pond to be used as a destination for passive recreation as well as fishing, canoeing, and environmental programming. Metro Parks is working closely with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife to renovate the pond into a healthy ecosystem and resource for the park visitors. In doing so, KDFW issued several requirements the pond must meet to stock with fish. The pond shall be designed per the following KDFWR guidelines to qualify for the (Fishing in Neighborhoods) FIN'S program for stocking the pond.

*Average depth = minimum 6 feet*

*Maximum depth = minimum 12 to 15 feet*

*Surface area = greater than 1 acre*

*Bank depth = minimum of 2 to 3 feet*

*At least one quarter of the pond should be vegetated*

*Keep at least 50% or 1,000 perimeter feet open to fishing access*

*Four 10x10 feet areas of pea gravel should be provided to allow good spawning areas and increase pond productivity*



Existing Pond Photo



Bank access area to launch a boat for routine fish sampling

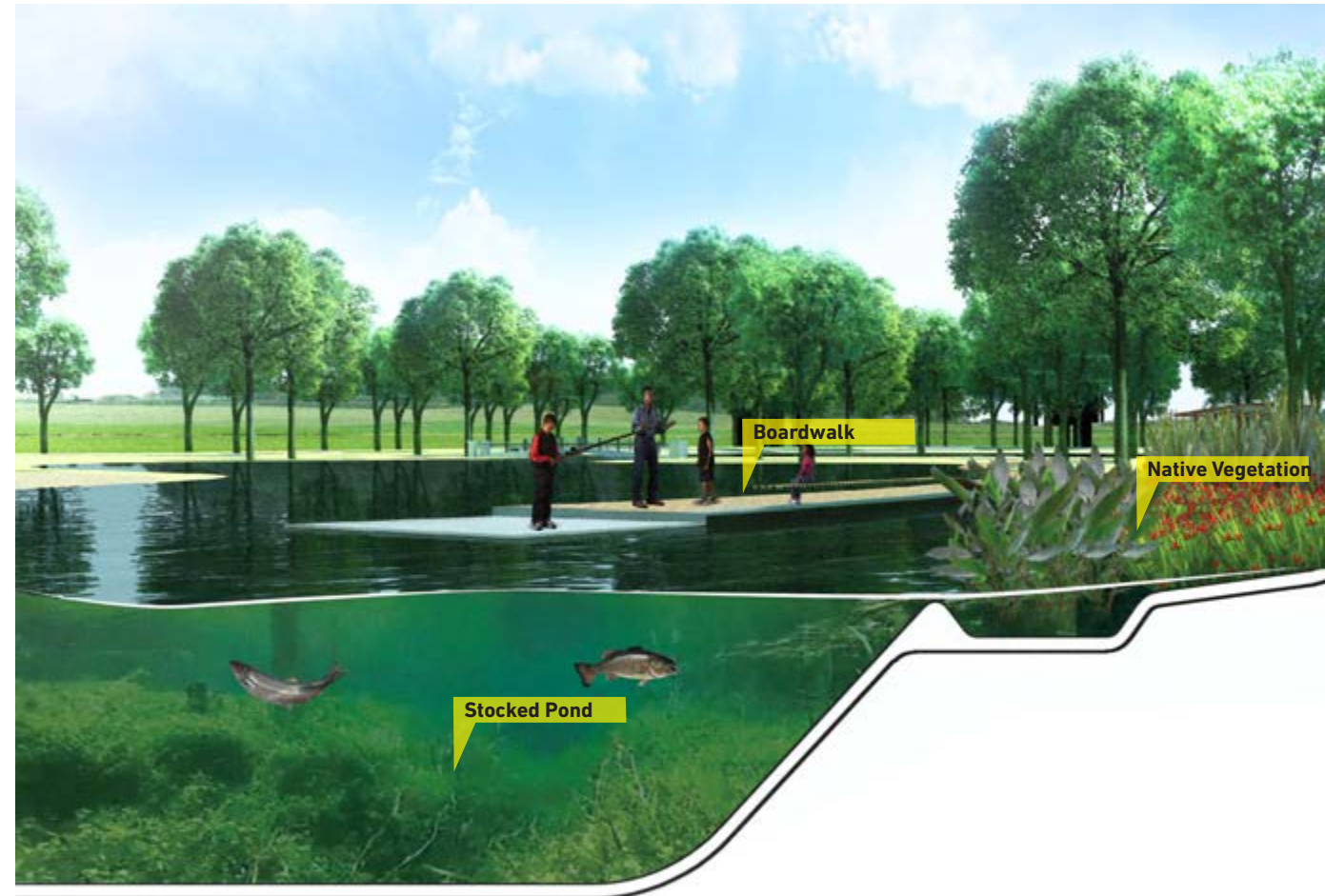
Need access for a large stocking truck to get near water to stock fish, even under wet conditions. Either a paved pad, or fish stocking tube from paved surface to water's edge

Testing of water will be required to show the contaminants are within water quality standards before pond can be stocked with fish

**THE CONCEPT: DESIGNING FOR THE FUTURE**

The diagrams and renderings to the right illustrate the recommended pond improvements, promoting the area as a fishing destination, location for canoe and kayak training, wildlife observation, and walking the perimeter path. The process of removing the contaminated soils provides that pond the opportunity to be resculpted, increasing the size of the pond and providing more perimeter area for fishing and pond access. Pond renovation highlights include:

- Increase overall pond size: Existing = 1.5 acres  
Proposed = 2.5 acres
- Fishing piers: 4
- Boardwalk for canoe and kayak access. Also designed as an educational area hovering over the surface of the pond
- Improved perimeter paths
- Seating and Observation areas
- New visitor parking area
- Native vegetation along perimeter of pond
- Shleved pond edges for plant and wildlife



**Pond Improvements Concept Diagram**



**RENOVATING THE POND: PROVIDING A RESOURCE FOR THE COMMUNITY**

Restoration of Chickasaw Pond to safe water quality levels will leverage a commitment by the KDFWR to include Chickasaw Pond as part of their Fishing in Neighborhoods (FINs) program. Inclusion in the FINs program will allow for annual stocking of the pond by KDFWR and create opportunities for public fishing by neighborhood families as well as fishing programs for area youth. In addition to the fishing opportunities created by the pond improvements, the plan calls for creation of a small pier which will facilitate flat-water canoeing instruction. This will address an expressed community need to improve access to the Ohio River in that local residents can build their skill levels and progress towards further canoeing opportunities on the adjacent Ohio River, made possible in the mid-term by pending construction of a boat/canoe access point in nearby Shawnee park.

The project further enhances public education and outreach opportunities in that it ties directly to Metro Parks' WLORI initiative. A key component of WLORI is creation of the Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center. In operating this center, Metro Parks' will develop local partnerships and build volunteer capacity to drastically expand the number and frequency of outdoor recreational program opportunities and significantly increase the number of youth and families provided nature-based programming opportunities. This will involve expansion of Metro Parks' Louisville ECHO (Louisville is Engaging Children Outdoors) program which provides out-of school time opportunities, free public events, and also inquiry-based field trips for local schools. Louisville ECHO is a program supported by many partners, including the U.S. Forest Service (Daniel Boone National Forest), National Park Service (Mammoth Cave National Park), MSD, Jefferson County Public Schools, Wilderness Inquiry of Minneapolis, MN, and Outdoor Afro, Kentucky. It is through the Louisville ECHO component that the Chickasaw Pond improvements will engage the community and local students around the issues associated with water quality, stormwater and sewer management, and ecological diversity.



**POND IMPROVEMENTS CONCEPT PLAN**



CIRCULATION: PATHS AND TRAILS

One of the most popular responses from the Louisville Metro Parks Outdoor Recreation Survey Report was walking and hiking. There are several paths that weave throughout the park currently, but this master plan recommends improvements to existing trails and the development of several new trails to promote connectivity and access to existing and proposed park improvements. This master plan referenced the Chickasaw Master Plan report (*Master Plan for the Renewal and Management of Chickasaw Park, 2001 Louisville Metro Parks / Environs/Inc*) to ensure that paths planned in this report were coordinated with proposed overall park improvements, and that they are in the spirit of the original Olmsted Brothers designed park.

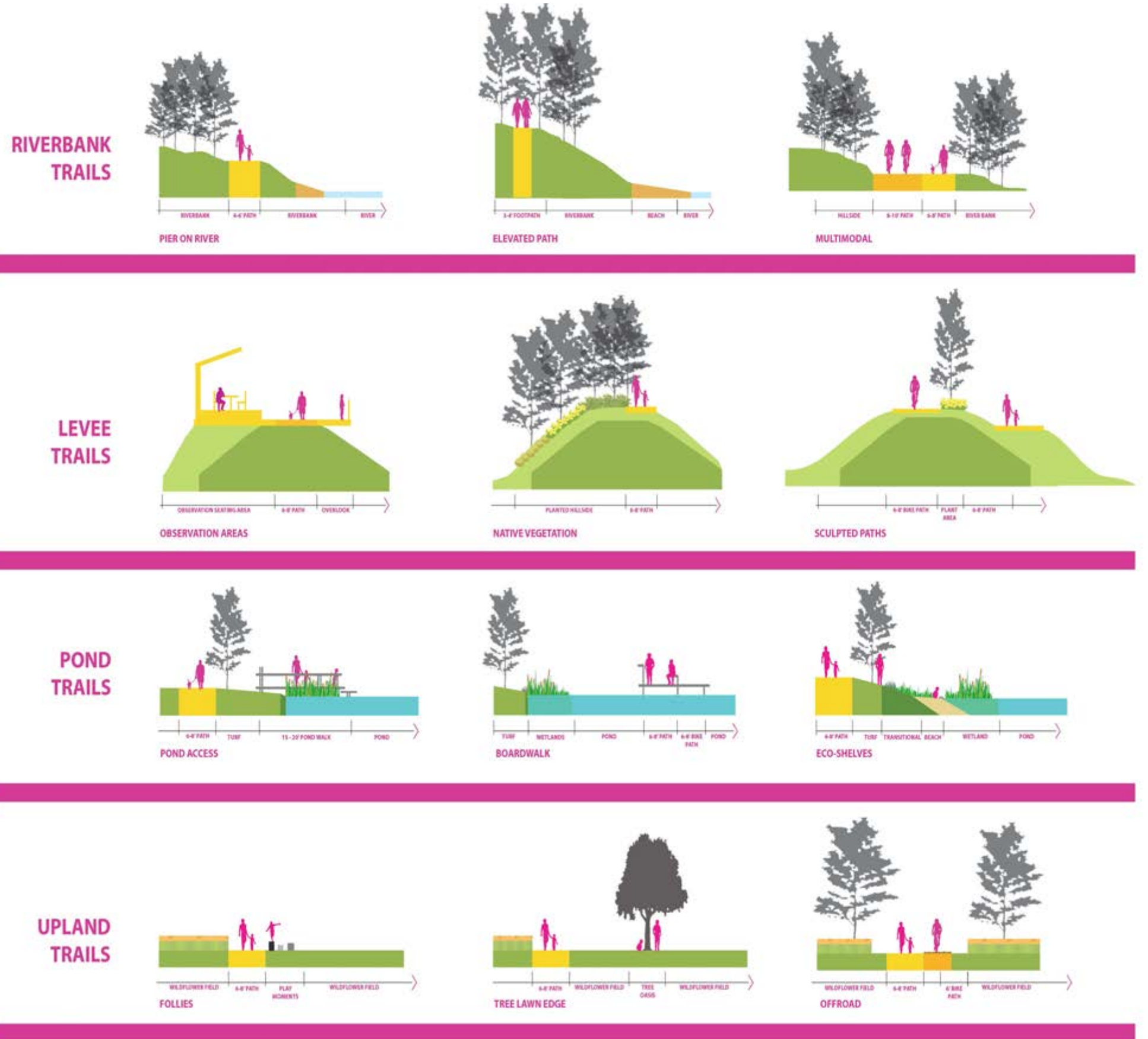
For this report, the paths and trails have been separated into four categories of trail typologies: Riverbank Trails, Levee Trails, Pond Trails, and Upland Trails. Together these trails weave together a variety of park destinations for visitors to engage throughout the seasons. The diagrams to the right illustrate conceptual alternatives for the four typologies.

*Riverbank Trails: These paths are proposed along the banks of the Ohio River providing access to views of the river corridor and physical access to the edge of the water and planned fishing and canoeing/kayaking launch ramp.*

*Levee Trails: The levee that runs through the center of the park provides an opportunity for views of both sides. The master plan recommends providing a path along the top of the levee, and potentially creating seating and gathering areas for park observation.*

*Pond Trails: The resotation of the pond will impact many of the existing trails around the perimeter. New pond paths and trails will need to be constructed to provide access to the edge of the water and establish connectivity to other areas of the park.*

*Upland Trails: These trails exist in the areas of the park that are typically in open fields/lawn areas and are located out of the flood prone areas. These trails shall be 6-8 feet wide and have seating areas strategically distributed for resting and observation while walking and jogging within the park.*





**OBSERVE AVIARY GARDEN**

The Ohio River corridor is habitat for a variety of wildlife, especially for bird migration. Many people expressed in the survey that they often visit the park to observe the birds throughout the seasons. The master plan recommends providing a path along the banks of the river for visitors to walk under that canopy of the trees, view the river, and discover the birds that move through the river corridor and the park. The following are highlights for the Aviary Garden conceptual design:

*Soft Trail:* This new trail will provide access to the bank of the river, connecting destinations for bird watchers to engage with nature. This trail shall consist of tamped crushed stone or decomposed granite.

*Bird Blind:* This structure shall be designed as a feature and destination along the Aviary Garden Trail. Visitors will have the opportunity to observe wildlife while staying out of site. This constructed feature shall be constructed with steel structure and wood siding.

*Seating Areas*



***Parks offer the opportunity for community interaction and the development of “social capital” that can help increase the use, surveillance, care, maintenance, and safety of parks.***

### RIVER ACCESS: CANOE AND KAYAK OPTION 1

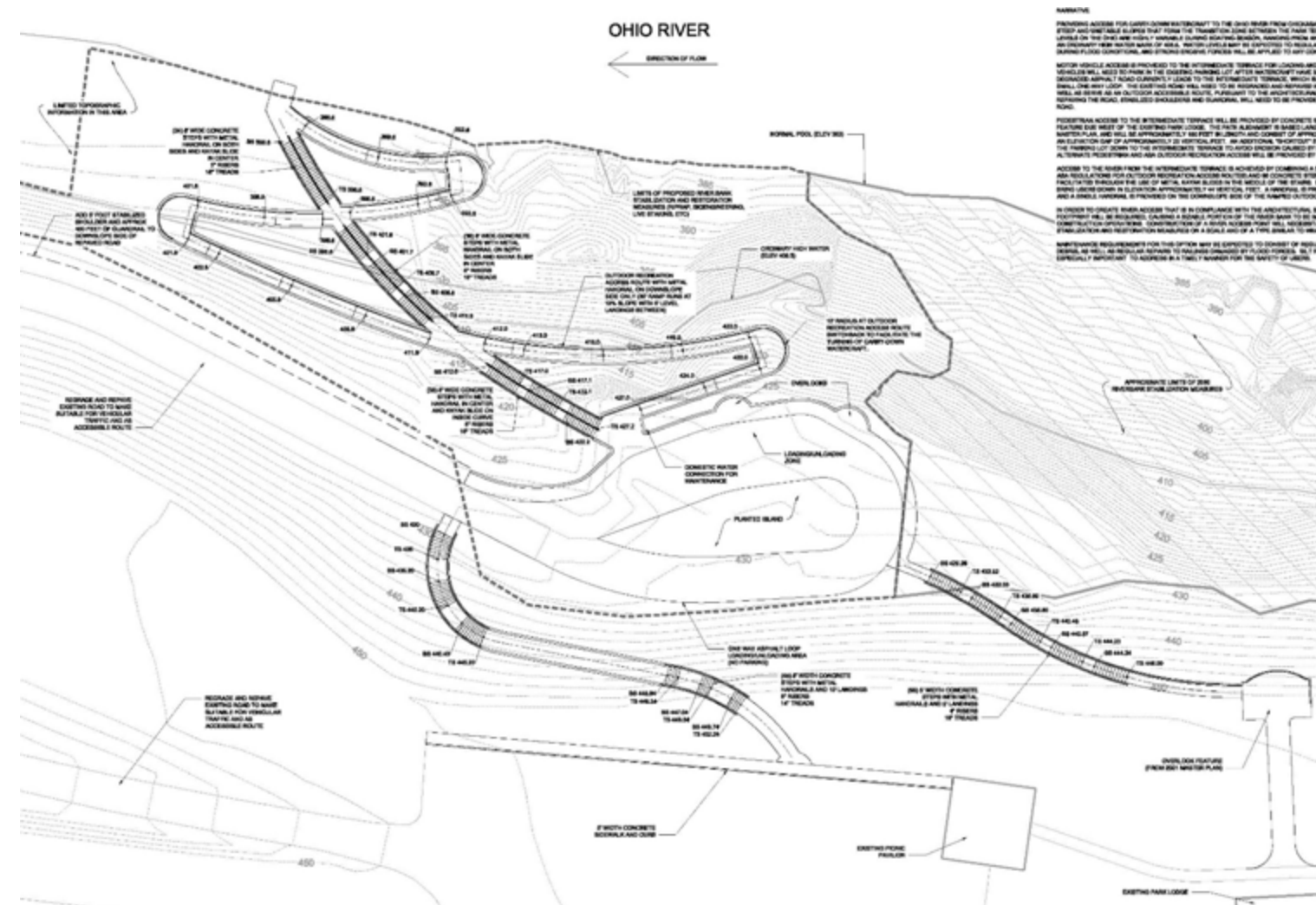
Provide access for carry-down watercraft to the Ohio River normal pool elevation of 383'. Motor vehicle access is provided to the intermediate terrace for loading and unloading of watercraft, but vehicles will need to use the existing parking lot after watercraft have been unloaded. An existing degraded asphalt road currently leads to the intermediate terrace, which is wide enough to accommodate a small one-way loop. The existing road will need to be regraded and repaved in order to serve this function, as well as serve as an outdoor accessible route, in compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA). In addition to repaving the road, stabilized shoulders and guardrail will need to be provided on the downslope side of the road.

Pedestrian access to the intermediate terrace will be provided by concrete steps leading from an overlook feature due west of the existing park lodge. Alternate pedestrian and accessible access will be provided by using the improved road.

Access to the river from the intermediate terrace is achieved by combining ramp (540' in compliance with ABA regulations for outdoor recreation access routes) and concrete steps (96 - 5" rise). Water craft transport is TETRA TECH 5 facilitated through the use of metal kayak slides adjacent to stairs. A single handrail is provided in the middle of stairs, and a single handrail is provided on the downslope side of outdoor recreation access routes.

In order to create river access that is in compliance with the ADA, a large project footprint will be required causing a sizeable portion of the river bank to be impacted by grading and construction operations. Construction of a river access point will necessitate concurrent riverbank stabilization and restoration measures on a scale and of a type similar to what was undertaken in 2010 (Chickasaw Park Bank Stabilization Research Project).

Maintenance requirements for this option may be expected to consist of regular cleaning to remove silt and debris, as well as regular repairs to railings damaged by flood forces.



- Regrade and repave existing asphalt road and provide drop-off loop
- Provides an ABA-compliant outdoor recreation access route to Normal Pool elevation (383)
- 540' long ramp from drop-off loop to Normal Pool
- 96 steps (5" rise) from drop-off loop to Normal Pool
- 55 steps (4" rise) from proposed overlook to drop-off loop
- 450' guardrail along improved road
- +/-1.5 acres of bank stabilization and restoration
- Significant grading and disturbance required for construction
- Responds to Olmstedian character of the historic park



# Shawnee Park

The master plan recommends the following improvements and enhancements for Shawnee Park:

1. Renovation of Ball House for the new Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center
2. Provide access to the Ohio River for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing
3. Provide areas for wildlife observation and view of the river
4. Enhance network of paths and trails to provide access to natural areas of the park
5. Bank stabilization for river observation and trail routing
6. Provide play opportunities for all ages: Woodland Play, Woodland Art Walk
7. Provide bike hub along southern edge of the park with connectivity to proposed city bike network





**CIRCULATION: PATHS AND TRAILS**

One of the most popular responses from the Louisville Metro Parks Outdoor Recreation Survey Report was walking and hiking. There are several paths that weave throughout the park currently, but this master plan recommends improvements to existing trails and the development of several new trails to promote connectivity and access to existing and proposed park improvements. This master plan referenced the Shawnee Master Plan report to ensure that paths planned in this report were coordinated with proposed overall park improvements, and that they are in the spirit of the original Olmsted Brothers designed park.

For this report, the paths and trails have been separated into four categories of trail typologies: Riverbank Trails, Upland Trails, Discovery Trails, and Multimodal Trails. Together these trails weave together a variety of park destinations for visitors to engage throughout the seasons. The diagrams to the right illustrate conceptual alternatives for the four typologies.

*Riverbank Trails:* These paths are proposed along the banks of the Ohio River providing access to views of the river corridor and physical access to the edge of the water and planned fishing and canoeing/kayaking launch ramp.

*Upland Trails:* These trails exist in the areas of the park that are typically in open fields/lawn areas and are located out of the flood prone areas. These trails shall be 6-8 feet wide and have seating areas strategically distributed for resting and observation while walking and jogging within the park.

*Discovery Trails:* These trails are intended to be more narrow for individuals and small groups to weave through the open fields and woodlands. Seating areas shall be distributed along the trail.

*MultiModal Trails:* The plan recommends constructing trails along the eastern edge of the park (Southwestern Blvd) in anticipation of bicyclists and pedestrians. These asphalt paths shall be a minimum of 10 feet wide to accommodate travel in both directions.

**SHAWNEE TRAILS**

**RIVERBANK TRAILS**



**UPLAND TRAILS**



**DISCOVERY TRAILS**



**MULTI MODAL**



**PLAY: WOODLAND PLAY**

Recreation and interaction with nature are increasingly becoming more relevant and imperative in our everyday lives. We often suggest that open space is the anchor for any growing and successful community or city. Open space performs and participates in countless ways, and the participation continues to mature and evolve over time, often decades. The Shawnee Park Woodland Play area serves as a gesture to encourage children, parents, and the community to engage the landscape, recreate in a beautiful outdoor environment, and learn to socialize at one's individual pace.

The Woodland Play area is designed with every child in mind. Inclusive play and accessibility are prime focus. From ADA access and wheel-chair friendly surfaces to play spaces that accommodate kids joined by parents, special attention was given to all children no matter the ability level. In addition, features of the playscape are designed to address the special needs of children with social, emotional and sensory disabilities by focusing on vestibular, tactile and visual learning, resulting in educational aspects throughout the playscape.

It is also important to give a child's sensory system a rest. This sensory rest is possible in special areas of the playscape which provide children a quiet, serene place to relax and enjoy the space away from the action at their own pace.

Specific areas focus on continuous play which provide children the ability to move from one activity to another without ever touching the ground. This concept encourages independent decision-making and interaction - important ingredients in a child's development. Parents may question the intended use of play equipment incorporated into the playscape, but a child's uninhibited mind will find 10 different uses for it. These features will challenge, attract and retain young hungry minds.



**ADVENTURE: EXTREME SPORTS FOREST**

Located in the northern section of the park, the Extreme Play Forest is situated in the location of the former Fontaine Ferry. In the spirit of the former park, the Extreme Sports Forest shall be a fun, challenging, and engaging experience for all ages. The master plan recommends the development of a soil woodland bike trail with sculpted trails that weave through the trees. The plan also recommends the addition of a ropes course (High and Low Ropes) for neighborhood groups, businesses, and schools to utilize and encourage team building, confidence, and health and wellness. Climbing, balancing, and jumping in the woodland provides a unique setting that is accessible, convenient, and connected to a variety of additional destinations within Shawnee Park.







SHAWNEE OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER:

PRECEDENT IMAGES

The core component of West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative is the creation of a satellite center in Shawnee Park. This center will provide a base in west Louisville for Louisville Metro Parks and Recreation's Natural Areas Division to provide nature-based educational, recreation, and stewardship programming. To be called the Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center (SOL Center), this facility takes its inspiration from facilities in other major U.S. cities, such as the Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee, WI.

Development of this center is intended to address barriers that affect participation of urban youth and families in outdoor recreation pursuits and can limit growth opportunities for urban youth. Some of these were referenced in section 1.1 and include such things as lack of neighborhood level opportunities to engage in nature, lack of exposure or awareness to the possibilities in nature, safety issues and fears associated with the outdoors. The SOL Center is intended to be designed and operated with a purpose of building neighborhood capacity for exploration of the outdoors. In addition to providing outdoor programming opportunities, such as through activities associated with Metro Parks and Recreation's Louisville ECHO initiative, it will also serve as a conduit for developing local volunteer and mentoring capacity through active partnership development in west Louisville.



Urban Ecology Center, Cedarburg, WI



Lake Flato Architects



Phil Hardberger Park UEC, San Antonio, TX



Lake Flato Architects

### SHAWNEE OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER:

#### KEY PROGRAMS AND PARTNERS

#### LOUISVILLE ECHO:

Louisville is Engaging Children Outdoors is Louisville Metro Parks and Recreation’s main grant-funded environmental education and outdoor recreation initiative. In partnerships with entities such as the U.S. Forest Service, Mammoth Cave National Park, Outdoor Afro, Kentucky, Jefferson County Public Schools, and Wilderness Inquiry of Minneapolis, it provides hundreds of children and their families each year with outdoor experiences. These include inquiry-based field trips to local and regional natural areas, public events such as the annual canoemobile on the Ohio River, and serve learning opportunities.

#### COMMUNITY-ORIENTED CONSERVATION:

The Metro Parks and Recreation’s Natural Areas Division works with neighborhood and community groups to improve the condition of neighborhood parks and natural areas through invasive plant and weed management, tree planting, litter sweeps, etc.

#### URBAN OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES:

Routine natural areas programming introduces children and their families to the great outdoors (e.g. canoeing, introduction to hiking, camping, fishing, mountain biking, leave no trace principals, etc).

#### CREATING CITIZEN NATURLAISTS

By developing partnerships with local organizations, including local community centers and churches, we will encourage development of a volunteer base of mentors within West Louisville to foster community involvement in nature-based programming.

#### WHO WILL BE SERVED:

West Louisville youth, families, neighborhood and community groups, and schools.

### EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

The following information was provided by Metro Parks programming staff to document desired amenities to meet the center’s potential program offerings.

Indoor space needs for SOLC

Mud room—for when students come from outside to inside, includes storage for kids’ gear/muddy boots (cubbies, hooks). Will need to have a water drain just outside and high rain-barrel fed water. Will need access to both outside and indoor classroom.

Office space—upstairs of exhibit space/bathrooms, like a loft space. One permanent, several flexible office spaces (i.e., cubicles). Will need to include break room/meeting room, volunteer room w/ lockers. If located upstairs the space will need an elevator or wheelchair lift.

Indoor exhibit space that is accessible to restrooms, public, and classroom.

At least one exterior wall will be a climbing/bouldering wall. Size – 20-25’ tall

Indoor multi-purpose room—very large, flexible space (ability to partition.) Doors open to outside as well as exhibit space/restrooms. Lots of windows. High ceiling. Would be used as classroom space, training space, public meeting space.

Patios: Upstairs covered patio above a downstairs patio accessible from ground level that can be used as a breakout classroom space.

Bathrooms: Men’s and women’s restroom with 3 stalls each. If room, a family/unisex single restroom. Because of safety/monitoring concerns this would not open to the outside, but accessible only from the inside

Storage – Ample compartmentalized storage space. Separate storage space for tables chairs, janitorial supplies, recreational equipment, and environmental education supplies. Large closets: 1 for rec gear, 1 for education supplies, and 1 smaller one for tables, chairs, utility.

#### Other needs

Covered boat storage (high-level rain barrels for washing gear) – See attached diagram that shows a general proposed layout.

Exterior space for bulk storage (mulch, soil) to be used in local park restoration projects (no diagram for this is shown).

Small area for heeling in trees/plants to be used in local restoration projects and service learning projects that are a continual part of the ECHO program.

Outdoor classroom and lunch space (potentially redo Paddy’s Run shelters, add bathroom facilities)

Habitats: A diverse grove of trees and shrubs planted that are seed- and fruit-bearing. (A natural bird-feeding station.) Also, a meadow space.

Top of the tank: Open space could be planted with native herbaceous vegetation. Incorporate a rain garden into this area and allow this to be a contemplative space. A council ring that would allow staff to facilitate/debrief groups in the open air.

Parking for staff and the public. Ability to park and turnaround a school bus.

A green roof, if feasible, but otherwise expect that the facility would be a green facility and LEED certified at the highest level possible.

Programmatic elements would run out of the building (some would take place on site; others would be off-site, but require supplies stored at the site and related instruction/trainings that will take place at the site):

- + Archery
- + Fishing
- + Paddlesports
- + Climbing
- + Introduction to hiking
- + Orienteering
- + Camping/survival skills/Leave No Trace Training
- + First Aid classes
- + Service-learning projects (planting, water monitoring, citizen science)
- + Environmental Education (full gamut – check out [www.memorialforest.com](http://www.memorialforest.com) to see our current program offerings)
- + Team-building would have the ability to do field initiatives; Not envisioning a teams course.) Depending upon what is allowed above the tank, this could be that area.
- + Adult-education classes
- + Volunteer training
- + Bike education/possibly storage of a modest number of bikes (depends upon what bike related suggestions come of the West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative (WLORI) master planning process this summer.
- + Equestrian programming (likely with a partner, utilizing space in other parts of the park)

**EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE: SHAWNEE OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER**

Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center:

- + Centralized single-structure hub for outdoor activity / learning / training center with classrooms, exhibition space, meeting space, storage, and restrooms; Integrated office space for the program administrators
- + Integrate inside and outside. Provide spaces for climbing walls and outdoor gathering
- + Utilize existing structure to integrate into park setting
- + Structure presents itself as welcoming from both sides, with generous plaza spaces for gathering outside the structure
- + Materials (wood, limestone, brick) chosen to complement surrounding landscape

**PROGRAM: SPACE NEEDS**

**Mud Room**

Children Gear/Boots Storage - Cubbies, Hooks, Water Drain at outside with high-level rain barrels for washing. Access to both exterior and indoor classroom

**Office Space**

Restrooms, Office Room, Flexible Office Space, Break Room / Meeting Room, Exhibit Space, Elevator (or LULA)

**Indoor Exhibit Space**

Access to Restrooms, Public Space, Exhibit, Climbing Wall near ext. wall - 25 ft, Elevator (or LULA)

**Indoor Multi-purpose Room**

Large Flexible Space with ability to partition (classroom, training, meeting, etc), Access to Outdoors and Exhibit Space, High Ceilings with Windows

**Patios**

Upstairs Covered Patio, Downstairs Patien (below), Breakout Classroom Space

**Restrooms**

Mens and Womens, Family / Unisex, Accessible only from Inside

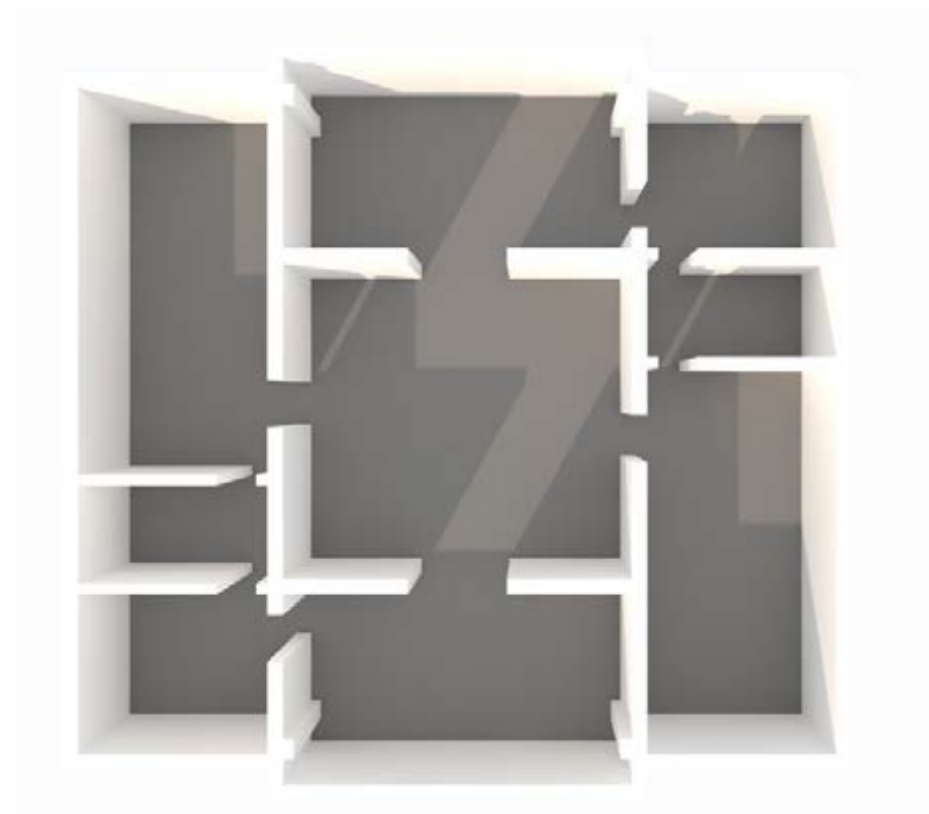
**Storage**

Recreation Gear, Education Supplies, Tables/Chairs/Utility

**Circulation**



Existing Ball House Photo



Existing Ball House Floorplan



Existing Ball House Option 1



Existing Ball House Option 2

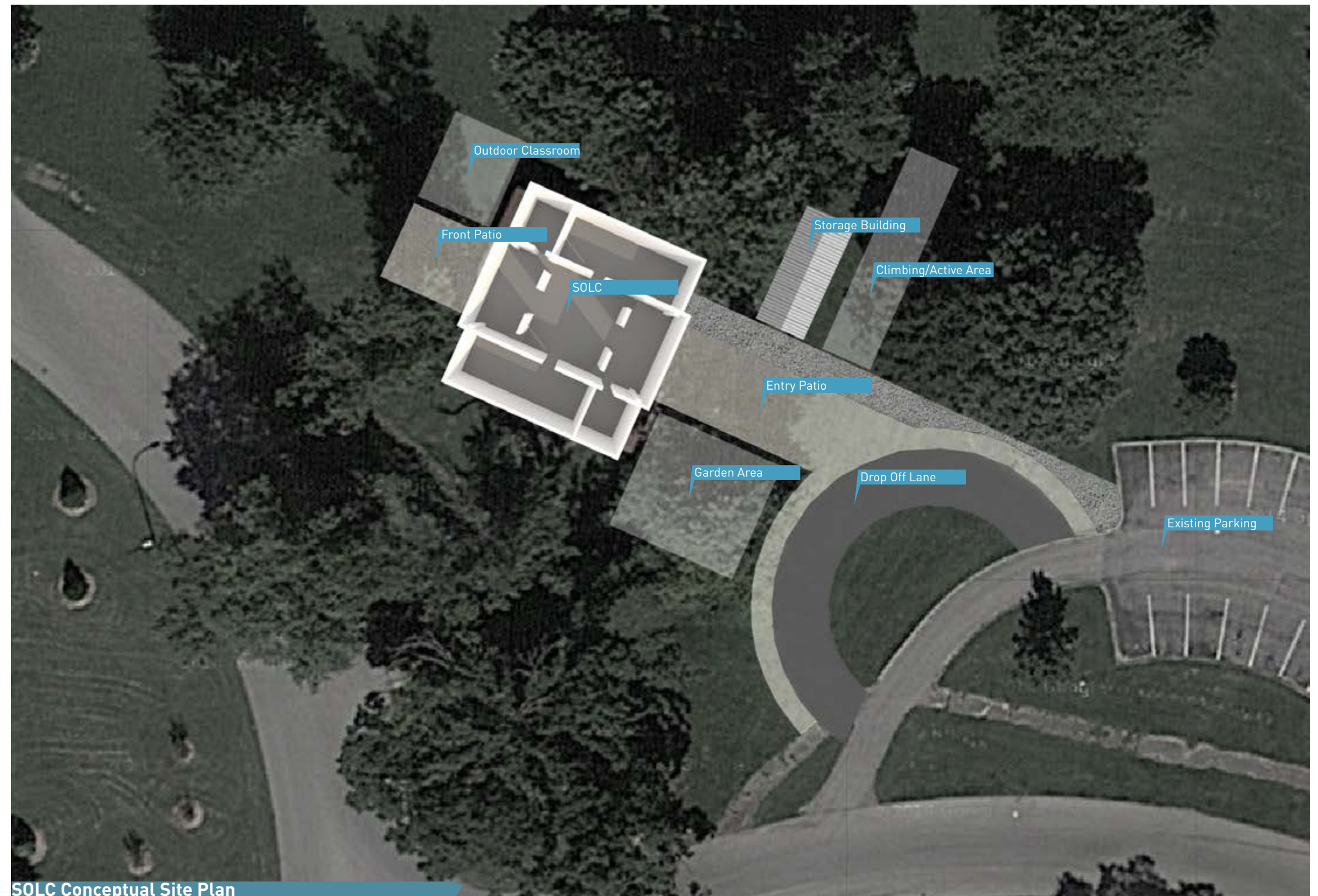


Existing Ball House Option 3

**INTEGRATION WITH SITE: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN**

Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center:

- + Provide inside/outside integration where possible, providing space for gathering and outdoor experience
- + Provide storage facility for boats and gear. Potential to integrate climbing wall structure into building facade
- + Provide outdoor classroom with seating areas for gathering of large and small groups
- + Provide garden areas for hands-on learning
- + Provide vehicular access for drop-off with direct access to existing parking lot



SOLC Conceptual Site Plan

**ALTERNATE OPTION: ADJACENT TO EXISTING MAINTENANCE FACILITY**

The initial proposed location for the Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center is located at the corner of Southeastern Parkway and West Broadway. The concept is to incorporate the existing maintenance structure into the overall design, and take advantage of the sloping topography with views into Paddy's Run.

Below is a list of goals developed by the design team during the initial stages of programming and conceptualization:

- + Take advantage of existing access road from Broadway
- + Adjacent to existing maintenance facility – can use existing facility for storage of program equipment
- + Take advantage of natural slope within the park
- + Generous glass area and decks at multi-story side to provide views into park
- + Multi-story side to accommodate climbing wall in double-height space
- + Single-story side facing Southwestern Parkway minimizes building mass visible to adjacent neighborhood; Opportunity to integrate architectural details of adjacent neighborhood housing
- + Through configuration of immediately surrounding landscape and hardscape, new construction is integrated into park environment
- + Relates to location of historical structures once on site in southeast corner of park; Opportunity to connect SOLC to the historical precedents on Shawnee Park



# Portland Wharf Park

The master plan recommends the following improvements and enhancements for Portland Wharf Park:

1. Clearing of understory plant material and invasive species within the blocks of the historic Portland Wharf
2. Provide trails through the woodland areas of the park
3. Develop the "Ghost Streets" as proposed in the Portland Wharf Park Master Plan in November 2002
4. Provide interpretive signage for education of the history of the area
5. Provide Nature Play space at edge of the woodland with access from the proposed trails
6. Provide camping area for school and neighborhood groups







**INTERPRETATION: GHOST STREETS**

The Portland Wharf Park Master Plan prepared by Rhodeside and Harwell Incorporated in November 2002 recommended the clearing of trees and vegetation along the corridors of the historic streets in the Portland Wharf Park area north of the floodwall. This concept provided areas within the park for passive recreation and education about the history of the area. The plan also called for integration of historic building footprints to convey the historic placement of buildings along the street corridors.

In the spirit of the Portland Wharf Park Master Plan, the West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative recommends clearing and removal of understory vegetation and invasive species removal to open the woodland for views and safety. The plan also recommends clearing of the historic streets to convey the historic streetscape corridors. This shall provide the opportunity for trails and paths throughout the woodland and the “ghost streets”. Trails within the woodland are intended to be more intimate, meandering through the trees and reconnecting with the “ghost streets” at deliberate moments. Larger trails are intended to run down the corridors of the “ghost streets”, providing interpretive moments at intersections. At these moments, the visitor will encounter seating areas and signage that provides insight into the past of the area.



**ADVENTURE: CAMPING AREA**

Expressed as a desired program opportunity in the community survey, camping areas are recommended in the West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative within the Portland Wharf Park area. These areas are intended to be utilized by school and community groups, and not intended for private use unless granted permission by Louisville Metro Parks.

These areas are designed to be very primitive in nature, with clearing of trees for camping areas, and accessible routes for all users to participate in the camping experience.



**CULTURAL: ART WALK FOREST**

Located in the norther section of the park, the Art Walk Forest is designed as a quiet pathway meandering through the existing woodland canopy. Along this trail, the visitor encounters and discovers art and sculpture designed by local artists. The master plan recommends art installations that are site-specific, providing an interesting and unique walking and hiking experience through the woods. Seating areas shall be distributed throughout the trail for viewing and contemplation of the artwork and the woodland setting. The trail itself should be wide enough for passing in both directions (6-8 feet), and the material shall be a hard surface (asphalt or concrete) to provide universal access for all users and visitors.



# IMPLEMENTATION



## *LOOKING AHEAD: IMPLEMENTATION*

The West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative contains a broad series of recommendations that describe physical improvements for the future of the parks. These recommendations have resulted from a master plan study process which involved defining near and long-term park and community issues, the review of planning and design alternatives, design principles and goals, and more detailed project description and definition associated with major master plan recommendations.

The following list of projects comprises the West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative. Implementation of the Master Plan must be achievable over time through a series of individual projects. Community needs may change, priorities will be altered, and not all recommendations will be implemented as planned. It is not contingent upon numerous other projects in order to complete a logical planning and development sequence. It is important that the Master Plan provide flexibility in the manner that recommendations are implemented to serve as a viable tool over time.

The following probable costs are based on general planning and design parameters and represent order-of-magnitude costs, in 2016 dollars, that are suitable for general planning purposes. These are not intended to represent total project costs and should not be referenced as such. Actual project costs must be based on a build-up of more detailed design information.

**BUDGETS: CHICKASAW PARK**

A. Pond Renovation	\$2,900,000
- Earthwork	
- Perimeter plantings	
- 3 Fishing piers	
- Paths and trails	
- Parking lot	
- Site furnishings	
- Utilities	
B. Riverbank Trails	\$135,000
C. Aviary Garden	\$120,000
- Bird blind structure	
- Plantings	
- Paths and trails	
- Site furnishings	
D. Woodland Play / Nature Play	\$300,000
- Play structure	
- Specialty Lighting	
- Site furnishings	
- Signage	
E. Levee Trail	\$300,000
F. Boat Ramp	
- Option 1	\$3,041,748
- Option 2	\$2,504,382

**BUDGETS: SHAWNEE PARK**

A. Park Trails	\$310,000
B. Woodland Play Area	\$150,000
- Play Structures/Features	
- Site Furnishings	
- Signage	
C. Woodland Art Walk	\$100,000
D. Fishing Areas	\$60,000
E. Extreme Sports Forest	\$350,000
F. Bike Hub	\$60,000
G. Shawnee Outdoor Learning Center	\$1,200,000

**BUDGETS: PORTLAND WHARF PARK**

A. Ghost Streets and Trails	\$750,000
- Trails	
- Intersection Pavement	
- Site Furnishings	
- Signage	
- Plantings	
B. Camping Area	\$50,000

**PARTNER LEVERAGING**

The following existing partners are integral to the future success of the West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative.

**Outdoor Afro, Kentucky**

Outdoor Afro is the nation’s leading network that celebrates and inspires African American connections and leadership in nature. Started in 2009, it now has dozens of leaders across the country including here in Louisville, who connect thousands of people to outdoor experiences, and who are changing the face of conservation.

**Wilderness Louisville, Inc.**

Wilderness Louisville, Inc. is the 501c3 non-profit that supports Metro Parks and Recreation’s Natural Areas Division. The mission of Wilderness Louisville is to strengthen natural areas including Jefferson Memorial Forest by creating, restoring and stewarding these assets to promote economic development, educate and unite a diverse community of families, volunteers and advocates, and provide equitable opportunities for all citizens and visitors to experience nature. Wilderness Louisville, Inc. is a primary fundraiser in support of the Louisville ECHO program and will be responsible for fundraising related to certain aspects of the WLORI project moving forward.



**Kentucky Department Of Fish And Wildlife Resources:**

**FINs PROGRAM: Fishing in Neighborhoods**

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) created the Fishing in Neighborhoods (FINs) program in 2006 to provide anglers with quality fishing opportunities close to home. The program currently includes 40 lakes statewide. The aim of the program is to create quality fishing opportunities near cities of all sizes throughout the state. Lakes are regularly stocked with catfish and rainbow trout throughout the year. In addition to these lakes being stocked with catfish and trout, the sunfish and bass populations are regularly sampled to ensure natural reproduction is meeting the needs of anglers. Stocking of hybrid sunfish and/or largemouth bass occur if needed.

Louisville Metro and KDFWR have in place a memorandum of agreement with Metro Parks for many lakes in the area; however the program is currently at full capacity with approximately 40 lakes participating in the program. Due to Chickasaw Park Pond’s urban location within the City of Louisville, the pond will qualify for the FIN’s program assuming additional criteria is met. The pond is on the FIN’s program waiting list, at the time of this report. The proposed pond shall be designed per the following KDFWR guidelines to qualify for the FIN’S program for stocking the pond.

In addition, KDFWR will be instrumental in construction of boat ramp facilities at Shawnee Park to provide improved access for fishing, boating, and canoeing along the Ohio River.

**Wilderness Inquiry, Inc., Minneapolis, MN**

Wilderness Inquiry, Inc. partners with cities across the country to provide access to urban waters ways for school children. Each year since 2012, Metro Parks has partnered with Wilderness Inquiry to provide multi-day free canoeing opportunities in Shawnee Park and Riverview Park.

As part of their national extension Wilderness Inquiry, Inc. started in 2012 visiting seven cities around the country and Louisville, KY was on that list. They took the canoemobile program down and programmed with Louisville Metro Parks and Jefferson Memorial Forest emphasizing improved public access points on the Ohio River. They started with community days – free and open to the public – all day. Each day a few hundred people went out onto the Ohio River and were introduced to the river as a recreational component of their communities. As a result – 2015 marked the fifth year in Louisville - more and more partners are coming to the table and Wilderness Inquiry, Inc. is finally engaging the school districts in Louisville to come out and identify these waters as an extension of their classrooms as well.

*“We see a lot of benefits both academically, socio-emotionally, and amongst the greater community. We see what happens out here – increased leadership, increased confidence, increased competence with the school-kids, increased relationships with their teachers and principals – transfers from here back into the classroom in improved attendance, behavior, less stress and increased core competence. But we also see improved graduation rates and improved academic testing scores. And in the community we see increased engagement.”*

*Chad Dayton, Wilderness, Inquiry, Inc. (Minneapolis), Director of Programs and Partnerships*



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