

# CLINTON COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN 2016



**Focused on enhancing the access,  
quality, and quantity of parks and  
open space in the rural and  
incorporated areas of Clinton County**

*Clinton County  
Wilmington  
Blanchester  
Sabina  
New Vienna  
Clarksville  
Martinsville  
Midland  
Port William*



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The original objective for this plan was to provide some planning support for the Wilmington Parks and Recreation department as they were preparing for a couple of capital projects and the Clinton County Parks District as they were planning for a future park at a former rock quarry. However, as the plan began to unfold, it took a different course as it quickly became apparent that there was a need to document the current state of parks and open space amenities county-wide--something which had not been done up to this point.

This shift in focus allowed for the RPC to put together a planning study on an issue that affects all of its member jurisdictions, and through the study, help the county as whole better understand the integral role that parks and open space play in communities. In the latter half of the 20th century, many public parks system focused almost exclusively on developing parks as active recreational space with amenities.

Today, across many communities, public parks are developing much more diverse infrastructure that have come to provide active transportation corridors, nature preserves with little to no active amenities, social spaces to host events, or unprogrammed spaces to relax and bond with other community members, a natural refuge from the urban environment. Across the county, public parks have come to be viewed as quintessential indicators of a community's level of quality of life.

Because of this, it is often the condition of public parks that draws the attention of visitors to a community, or plays a substantial role in influencing where potential residents "vote with their feet" when moving.

Parks and open space are meant to be, like all public services, distributed equitably. Residents, no matter his or her socio-economic status, should have comparable access and opportunity to use and enjoy parks and open spaces. Through this study, there appears to be a need to improve the equitability of public parks and open spaces in Clinton County.

With 3,821 acres of parkland spread over 35 sites (over 90 acres per 1,000 residents), Clinton County, as a whole, does not suffer from a lack of park infrastructure.

However, unless one is traveling by automobile, many residents are without means to safely access public parks. Even with an automobile, many residents currently do not live within a reasonable traveling distance to a public park.

There have been numerous studies that have shown that close proximity to a park is strongly correlated with higher rates of physical activity in both adults and children, lower rates of obesity, increased levels of economic development, and improved mental health and well-being. Among those surveyed in the 2015 Community Health Needs Assessment, led by HealthFirst for Clinton County, it was found that 20.4% of adults do not engage in any physical activity. 71.8% of adults are overweight and 34.8% are obese.

In addition to disparities in access and proximity to parks and open spaces, there is also a grave disparity in the sharing of costs for park and recreation services county-wide. Wilmington and Blanchester are the only two communities in which residents regularly contribute to their parks system. These residents are obviously not the only ones in the county to enjoy the use of parks, or demonstrate a demand for parks and open space services, nor are they expected to be. The fact is that the number of county residents who contribute tax dollars to support park facilities does not come close to matching the number of residents (and non-residents) that use and benefit from these facilities.

From this study, this does not appear to be by choice, as many residents, county-wide, shared that he or she would be willing to contribute to parks and open spaces, especially if it meant an improvement in the quality of those services.

The truth that remains is that in order to maximize the public good that our public parks provide, it is essential to not only improve access and proximity to parks, but to also explore and identify ways to more efficiently and effectively provide the needed financial resources to parks and open spaces county-wide. It is our hope that this study will help to kickstart this conversation and improve the state of parks and open spaces in Clinton County going forward.

# GOALS OF THIS PLAN

Through the completion of the 2015 Clinton County Parks Plan, the following are the outlined goals for all parks in Clinton County.

## **1. Access and Proximity should be a high priority for park development.**

An individual living within walking distance of a park increases their likelihood that they will visit parks on a regular basis. As a result of frequent park use, individuals can improve their physical and mental health, while experiencing increased property values due to their park proximity. For residents living within a municipality, a ten-minute commute by walking is the standard set to encourage residents to walk to parks. Throughout the county there are instances where proximity to the park is not the issue, but pedestrian infrastructure is. In order to create a connected ecosystem of parkland, park connections through trails and sidewalks is encouraged and will strengthen park usage.

While every resident should live close to a park, delivering parks in walking distance to every County resident is not feasible. Therefore, ensuring that parks are within a ten-mile commute by car for rural residents by strategically developing parks in underserved areas in the county will lead to greater park visitation and access for all county residents.

## **2. Park amenities should be reflective of features desired by the community and should be well-maintained.**

The amenities provided in a park should be responsive to current trends in recreational sports and activities and should be of a quality that meets community standards. Given the existing challenges of proximity and access, ensuring that our parks offer features that the community desires should be a priority. Similarly, duplication of popular activities may be an inefficient use of park funds and opportunities to collaborate amongst jurisdictions should be explored.

## **3. Parks should be safe places with activities for all ages.**

Parks which don't feel safe are not likely to be utilized. Through environmental design, parks and trails can cater to a broad age range while creating safe spaces. Context-sensitive park planning will produce environments that are equitable, walkable, and visible. Encouraging broad participation in the park planning process will increase the likelihood of meeting community expectations for park safety and multi-generational applicability.

## **4. A community's park inventory should strike a healthy balance between active and passive parkland.**

Versatile park inventories offer a balance of nature (passive) and structured activities (active). Communities that have a deficit of sports and fitness facilities are forced to commute to areas with those opportunities; and communities with deficits in trails, forests, water resources, and open spaces must do the same. Moving forward, park planning should strive to develop in ways that promote a balance of offerings in both active and passive park facilities and amenities.

## **5. Clinton County as a whole should take steps to fund parks equitably and sustainably.**

As a valuable community resource that must be maintained and grown, park and recreational infrastructure better serves the Clinton County community through funding which equitably benefits all of the county and provides resources required to continually deliver quality park services. In addition to developing new park facilities, more must be done to provide the financial resources to maintain and sustain existing park infrastructure.

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Parks serve as a frequent point of contact with Clinton County residents, and involving residents with this plan has informed the plan's recommendations. Through an online survey and planning charrettes (workshops), over 357 residents of Clinton County were involved (not including formal and informal interviews with local leaders at the City, Village, and County levels of government).

In addition to the public engagement done specifically as part of the plan creation process, an online survey distributed by the City of Wilmington Parks in early 2015 was also utilized. This survey focused on the awareness of each park, park features important to residents, and the frequency of visitation.

As stated previously, the public participation process largely informed the recommendations that were produced by this plan, and the goals for the plan were directly tied to feedback from residents.

## CHARRETTES

Two different charrettes were conducted in order to gather input for the proposed splash park in the David R. Williams Park in Wilmington. These charrettes were primarily geared towards children and families, with them being the primary users of said splash park. Altogether, 44 individuals were engaged at the charrettes.

The first charrette was on July 14, 2015 in the Community Room of the Wilmington Municipal Building. The charrette was advertised to the public through the Wilmington Parks and Recreation Facebook, and park volunteers were notified through the Wilmington Parks email list. This one-hour charrette offered a personalized format where parents and children were separated into specialized groups, where adults groups were discussion-based and adolescent groups were project-based.

The participants were given stacks of photos that showed different types of splash park "features", such as a fountain, a slide, or buckets. These were then used as discussion points about which features would be good or bad for the site. After desirable features were identified, participants were asked to draw their ideal splash park. The last segment of the exercise was to create a site plan that placed the location of the splash park somewhere in David R. Williams Park.

The second charrette was held at the summer lunch program at the Wilmington Middle School. Families that participate in the summer lunch program were engaged on-site to give input on the splash park designs. Renderings and site plans were put on display, along with photo examples of features that were used in the previous charrettes. Given a more casual format with people coming and going quickly, participants voted with "happy face" or "sad face" stickers to indicate how they felt about each photo and graphic.

**Results:** Many of the parents expressed concerns over sharp edges that some concrete landscaping created in some of the examples. Another concept brought to the table was the idea of "zoning" the splash park for different age groups. One side of the park could have many features and high-powered fountains for older kids, while the other side of the park could have calm, meandering streams for toddlers. As expected, adults gave a lot more emphasis on shaded seating areas than the children participants did. In terms of features, kids favored brightly-colored features that were dynamic. Water slides and mounted water guns were very popular, and large amounts of jets were always favorable. Features that children participants were not very fond of included: "mistlers", streams with stepping stones, wall fountains, and anything that was not capable of being directly interacted with. Overall, many people were happy with the splash park being located northeast of the wooden playground.

*Right: Youth charrette at the summer lunch program at Wilmington Middle School. Pictured (from left to right) is Clinton Community Fellow Tevin Amburgy, and UC students Stephen Crouch, Di Meng, and Chang Suo.*







*At the school charrette, input was given informally by placing stickers on pictures of favorite features.*

*At the charrette in the Community Room, the program was more structured and produced design schemes for the park layout.*



### ONLINE SURVEY

While the charrettes were specific to the splash park project, county-wide input still needed to be gathered for an informed understanding of how the residents of Clinton County use parks. Given the large geographical area, an online survey was created and distributed through email lists and multiple Facebook groups and pages, and advertised in the Wilmington News Journal. A portion of the survey respondents opted to fill out a printed survey, which were made available upon request.

The goal of the survey was to reach residents of Wilmington, the villages, and the townships about the opinions on parks in Clinton County. The following questions were addressed:

1. Do residents use the parks provided by their municipality or township, or do they travel elsewhere to use parks?
2. What mode of transportation are they using to travel to parks? What mode would they prefer?
3. What are the barriers to using a park?
4. Are there parks located near where people live, based on a half-mile radius (10 minute walk)?
5. What park amenities are most important to park users?
6. Would a shared services, or specifically, a Joint Recreation District be supported?

There were 313 respondents to the survey, and over half of the respondents were residents of the City of Wilmington with the remainder coming from the villages and townships (Figure 1). The survey had strong responses from ages ranging from 25-65, but did not have as much response from individuals under the age of 25 (Figure 2).

Despite this low turnout for younger ages, 42.9% of respondents stated that they had children under the age of 18 living in their home, indicating that their needs could be represented by parents taking the survey.

When asking respondents how often they visit parks, the options were:

- (a) Daily
- (b) Once a week
- (c) Once a month,
- (d) Once a year or less
- (e) Other

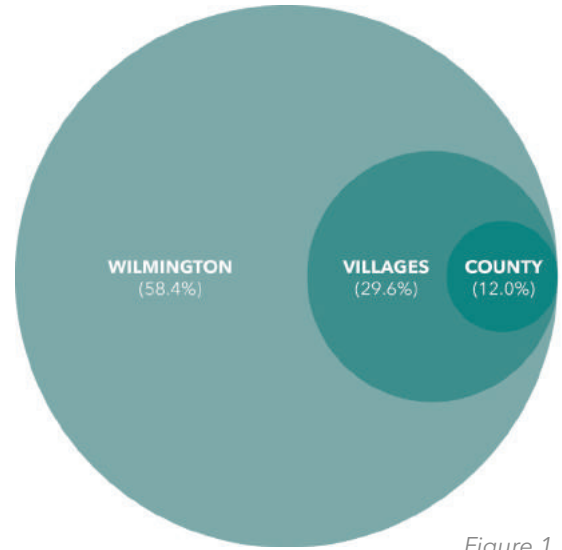


Figure 1

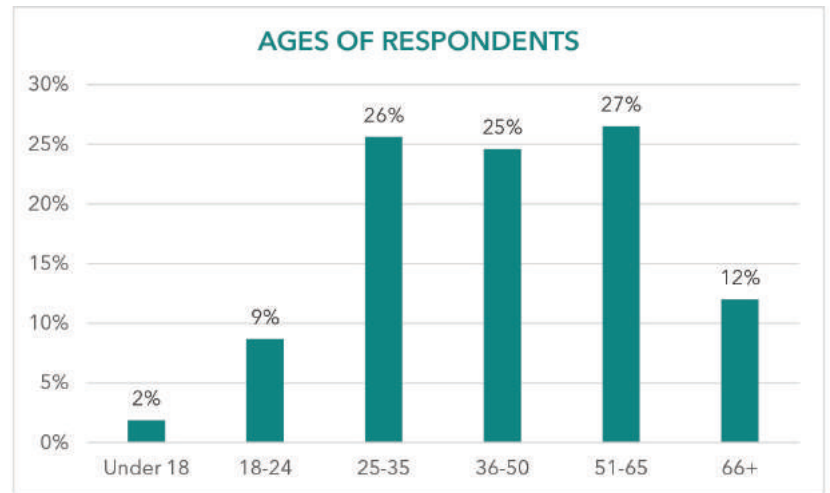


Figure 2

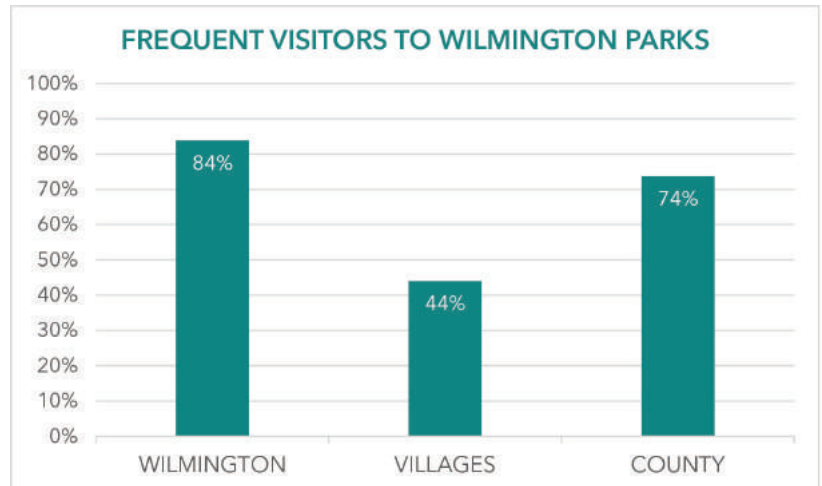


Figure 3



When forming graphs from the data, individuals who indicated that they visit parks at least once a month was considered a frequent visitor (Figure 3).

In the 2014 Wilmington Parks survey, 42% of respondents who lived outside the City use Wilmington Parks at least once a year. The Clinton County Parks survey showed larger figures for outside visitors, with 44% from villages and 74% from the County (Figure 4). The lower rate from village residents can be explained by the local park facilities present in their municipality, while County residents are more likely to commute to Wilmington parks.

The use of village parks are similarly shared between village residents and County residents. Despite living within close proximity to Village parks, Village residents are only 33% likely to be a frequent user of their own parks.

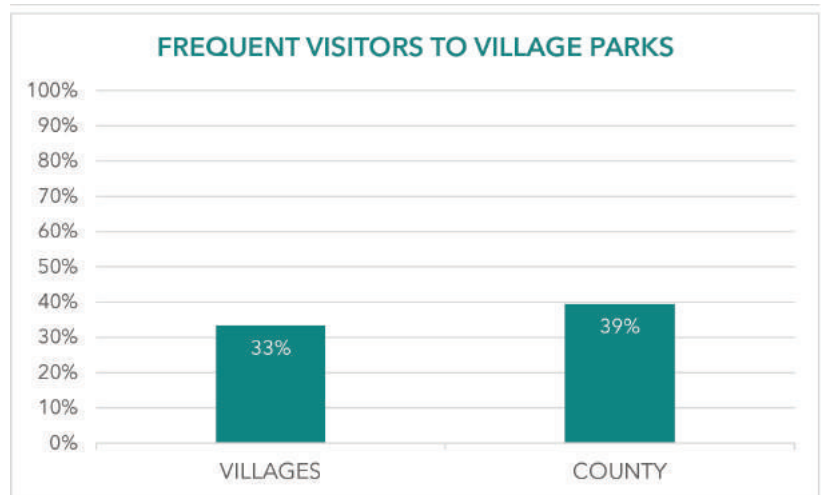


Figure 4

When asking how residents travel to parks, they were given the option of driving, walking, or biking. Since bicycling and walking often take place on shared paths and sidewalks, these were grouped together to be graphed. Many answers indicated that people are limited to driving to parks when they would rather be walking or biking (Figure 5). 35-41% of municipal residents stated that they would prefer to walk or bike to parks.

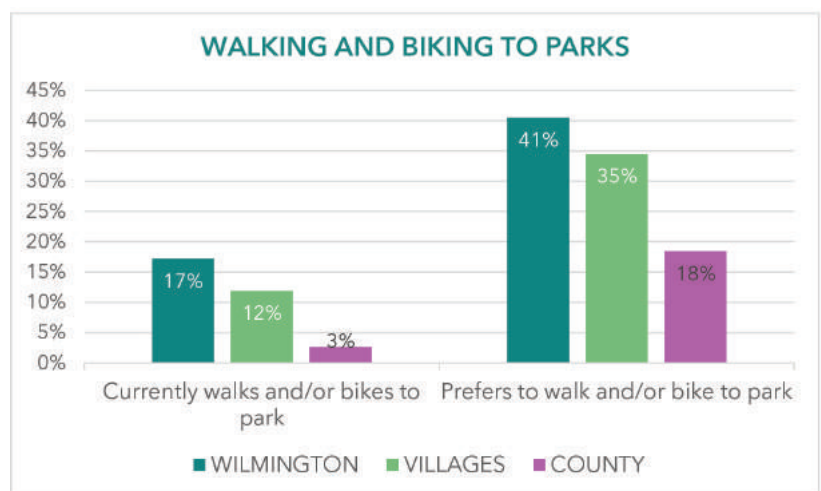


Figure 5

The survey also asked if people lived close to a park to determine if people have adequate access. Living close to a park was defined as a half-mile radius for urban residents, which is approximately a ten-minute walk. For rural residents, the standard was set at a ten-mile drive with a car.

The results showed that 56% of Clinton County residents can reach a park within ten miles, and 29% cannot (Figure 6). The graph "Residents Living Near Parks" breaks down the number of residents with access by jurisdiction, citing lower levels of access for villages. The survey also found that out of those who did not live close to parks, 13% of those residents were close to a school playground.

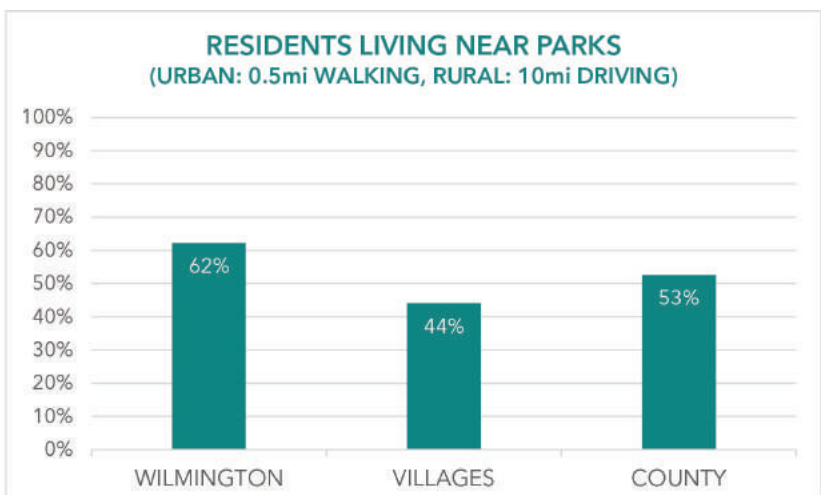


Figure 6

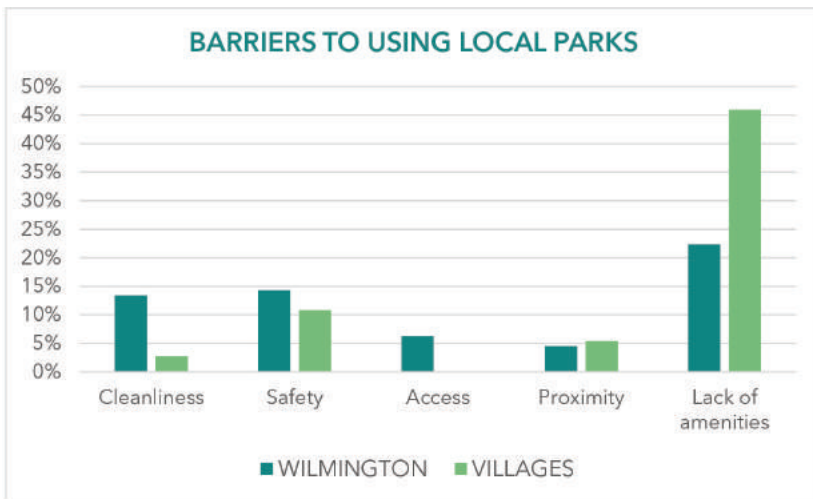


Figure 7

If a respondent stated that they do live close to a park, they were asked what barriers prevent them from visiting it, if at all. 46% of Village residents overwhelmingly cited “lack of amenities” as a barrier to visiting local parks (Figure 7). The following barriers were “safety” and “proximity”, although these figures were 10% or less.

For Wilmington, 22% cited “lack of amenities” as the biggest barrier, followed by “safety,” “cleanliness,” “access,” and “proximity” respectively.

Due to “lack of amenities” being a key barrier to visiting local parks, data on amenities that are valued the most will be important for suggesting capital improvements.

Passive amenities, which includes trails, shelters, and picnic areas, were most valued in local parks (Figure 8). 72% of respondents stated that walking and biking trails were important for local parks. Following trails, were shelters and picnic areas, playgrounds, splash parks, and baseball/softball fields.



Figure 8

Lastly, the survey asked if residents would be open to the idea of a “Joint Recreation District”, which would combine multiple park jurisdictions in the County in order to fund parks (this policy will be explained further in detail on page 79). The survey question explained that the Clinton County Parks District (CCPD) operates without tax revenue.

Reception to the idea was mostly positive, with 89% that were either “possibly interested” or “interested” (Figure 9). The highest level of opposition came from villages with 17% not in favor.

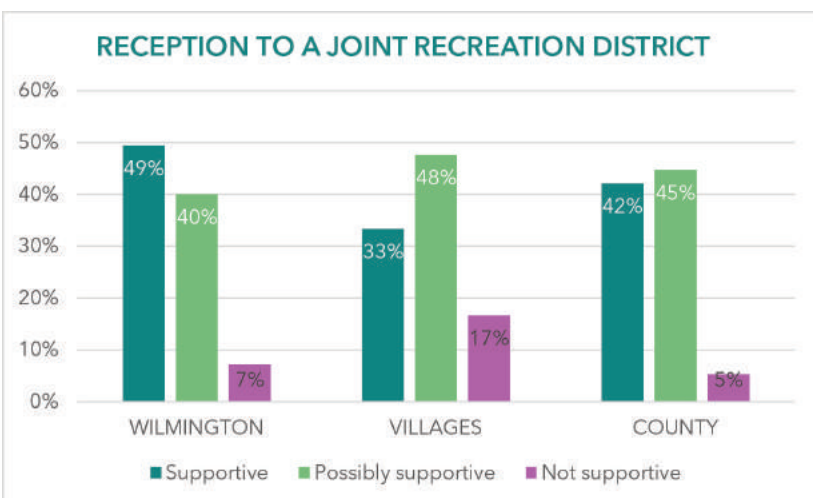


Figure 9

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## OVERVIEW

In order to approach a plan for future growth for parks and open space in Clinton County, a first-ever complete inventory of existing facilities was created for this plan. Originally it was thought that this plan would be focused on County parks (Clinton County Parks District) and Wilmington Parks, but it was soon realized that village parks had to be studied to truly understand how people use parks in the County. This helped us to better understand the different needs from a Wilmington resident, and village resident, and a rural, township resident.

## PARK CLASSIFICATION

Components of the criteria for evaluation of parks included access, location, size, type, condition, and the balance of active and passive space. Park types were characterized by:

**Regional Parks:** Service areas extend beyond the County and are usually State Parks. Regional Parks are generally composed of over 100 acres of land and offer unique natural features, such as lakes or mountains.

**Community Parks:** Serving as destination parks to the entire county, these parks offer a rich variety of active recreation opportunities. Ranging in size from 20-100 acres, these parks are appropriate locations for sports fields, large community events, and open fields.

**Neighborhood Parks:** Located in residential areas of villages or cities, serving nearby residents. Neighborhood parks are easily accessed by walking or biking, and are between 2-20 acres in size. These parks focus on active amenities, namely playgrounds and walking tracks.

**Nature Preserves:** This category is less concerned with service area and more about preserving natural resources. These preserves vary in size and are almost entirely passive space. Preserves are designated to protect wildlife, natural habitats, and plant species.

**Greenways/Trails:** Also known as linear parks, these can either be paved or natural surface. Greenways are often used on floodplains along rivers or as a means to connect other parks. Walking and biking trails have increased in popularity in recent years by public health experts, senior citizens, children, and bicycle enthusiasts.

## METHODOLOGY

In visiting the various parks around the County, existing facilities and the condition of facilities were recorded. Notes were also taken of park signage to determine if there was any graphic consistency. Developing a brand

for the parks through signage is a goal for future growth and maintenance. Consistent signage creates a stronger identity for the parks system and aids in wayfinding for park users.

Additionally, the context and the connectivity of each park was largely considered. If it was a neighborhood park in a residential area, adequate sidewalks and handicap accessibility was evaluated to determine walkability. If a park was disconnected from a residential area, it was looked upon as a “destination park” only accessible by car.

## ACTIVE AND PASSIVE ACRES

Studying the availability of active and passive outdoor recreational acres helps to determine whether an adequate level of service is being delivered. Active space is defined as areas with man-made facilities for structured activities. Playgrounds, sports fields, splash parks, and skateparks are considered active spaces. Passive space is defined by natural features and requires more space. A forest, stream, prairie, walking path, shelter, and seating are considered passive space.

A good balance of active and passive space is sought after in order to meet the needs of the public. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends that 75% of the parks inventory should be passive with the remaining 25% as active. In the collection of park data in Clinton County, ratios for active and passive space were calculated for each jurisdiction.

Type of Recreation Area	Acres per 1,000 Population
Active recreation	2.5
Passive recreation	7.5
Total	10

*Source: National Recreation Association*

While this is not the only factor in a great parks system, it contributes to a balance of open space and active space that is healthy for a community. It is equally important for a resident to have access to preserved nature as it is to use a playground or a ball field.

## THE STATE OF CLINTON COUNTY PARKS

Park classifications, active space, and passive space do not individually attest to the quality of a single park or a group of parks, but viewed together can help understand the quality and access of parks in Clinton County. For this section, the existing conditions, the quantity, quality, and access of parks are being analyzed. In later sections,

## EXISTING CONDITIONS (CONT.)

we will also be looking at the current availability of financial resources available to parks throughout the county as an “existing condition.”

Clinton County as a whole is well-served in the quantity of park space and the variety of active amenities. With approximately 3821 acres of parkland distributed across 35 sites in the County, this number equals to over 90 acres of land for every 1000 County residents.

While Clinton County has a large supply of parks, residents have difficulty finding recreational opportunities to keep them healthy. The 2015 Community Health Survey conducted by Professional Research Consultants Inc., revealed that 20.4% of adults in Clinton County do not engage in physical activity in their free time. In Clinton County alone, 71.8% of adults are overweight and 34.8% of those residents are obese. Given that Clinton County appears to have an adequate supply of parks, the lack of physical exercise and high rate of obesity could be linked to access and issues related to usage of facilities.

Most recently, there have been investments made in linear parks and trails--an amenity in high demand locally, statewide, and nationally. A regional trail network is growing in every county adjacent to Clinton County, and a continued commitment to trails must be made in order to stay competitive with other areas. While trails add to the already diverse inventory of park amenities, the quantity and quality of amenities in the County has room for improvement. Especially true for the County and Village residents, amenities often do not reflect the needs of the community. In some cases, these active amenities are non-existent. According to the online survey results, amenities such as shelter houses, trails, playgrounds, and baseball fields were highest in demand and lowest in supply.

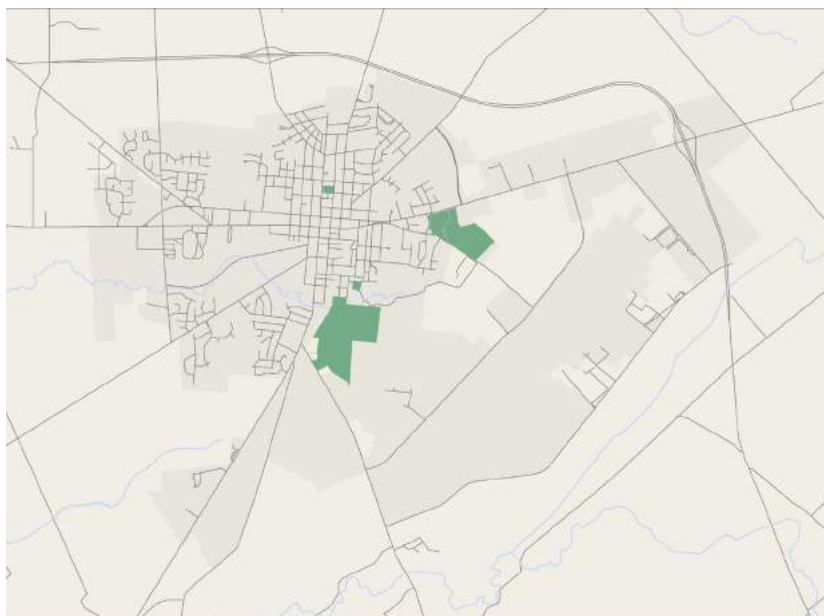
In general, park facilities are well-maintained. On a local basis, access proves to be the largest issue facing municipalities. Many municipalities have a good amount of parks but lack the sidewalk infrastructure or the correct location to place them within walking distance of residential areas. In terms of villages, active space is held at a priority with passive area lacking in some areas. Some villages have little-to-no parks at all. Consistent funding has never been established for the Clinton County Parks District (CCPD), which currently maintains nature preserves. At this point in time, many rural residents in the northeastern part of the County do not have adequate access to parks via driving ten miles or less.

*“Given that Clinton County appears to have an adequate supply of parks, the lack of physical exercise and high rate of obesity could be linked to access and issues related to usage of facilities.”*

# WILMINGTON PARKS

## OVERVIEW

With 19.4 acres per 1000 residents, the Wilmington parks system far surpasses the NRPA standard of 10 park acres for every 1000 residents. The City offers a wide variety of active amenities, preserved open space, and linear trails. The quality of park facilities remain in good condition and are, overall, well-maintained. The largest challenge for the Wilmington Parks system is the issue of accessibility. With a goal of having parks within a 10-minute walking distance of residents in urban areas, Wilmington only serves half of its residents in this capacity. The largest tracts of parkland exist towards the exterior of the City with limited infrastructure to connect residential areas to allow for pedestrian travel. Southeast Community Park and Galvin Park are great neighborhood parks that are easily accessible to residential areas, yet Point Park remains isolated in the middle of an intersection.



## WILMINGTON CITY PARKS INVENTORY

### Community Parks

David R. Williams Park	52.3
J.W. Denver Williams Park	22.0

### Neighborhood Parks

Southeast Community Park	3.1
Galvin Park	2.8
Point Park	0.9
Stuckey Farm Park	7.0

### Nature Preserves/Open Space

Lytle Creek Nature Preserve	128.0
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### Trails

Luther Warren Peace Path	5.9
Urban Trail Connector	3.5
4-C Bicentennial Trail	6.6
Lowe's Drive Trail	3.2
Dr. Nathan Hale Nature Trail (natural surface)	2.5
Lytle Creek Nature Preserve Trail (natural surface)	4.8

### TOTAL

**242.6**

0 0.2 0.4 0.8 1.2 1.6 Miles



\*Trail measurements were made in acres rather than linear miles to be compared with the acreage of parks. Since many trails intersect with parks, the acreage of the trail within a park was subtracted from the total acres of said park.



## J. W. DENVER WILLIAMS PARK

### OVERVIEW

#### CLASSIFICATION:

Community Park

#### TOTAL ACRES:

39

#### ACTIVE ACRES (%):

21.5 (55%)

#### PASSIVE ACRES (%):

17.5 (45%)

#### LOCATION:

Between Fife and Rombach Avenues, east of Eastside Drive

#### FACILITIES:

5 baseball fields

3 shelters

2 multipurpose fields

2 tennis courts

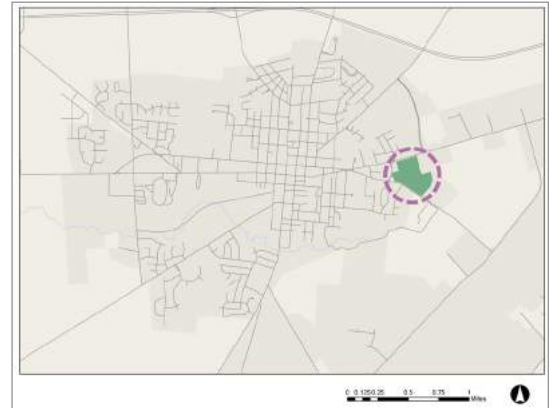
2 volleyball courts

2 basketball courts

1 skatepark

1 biking/walking path

1 playground



Donated by J.W. Denver and Dorothy S. Williams in memory of their son who was killed in WWII, this park serves as a memorial and a frequent event space. Annual activities include the City of Wilmington Fourth of July Celebration, the Banana Split Festival, and Relay for Life.

Boasting a diverse range of active opportunities, J.W. Denver Williams Park remains to be a popular destination park for Wilmington and all of Clinton County. The park also offers attractive passive features, such as a pond and half-mile Dr. Nathan Hale Trail in the woods to the east. In addition, the Judy Gano Trail travels through the entire park, connecting the 4-C Bicentennial Trail and the Lowe's Drive Trail. Although the trails help to draw in

walkers and cyclists, sidewalk and crosswalk infrastructure around the park are lacking. The surrounding neighborhood does not have safe access for pedestrians wanting to enter the park.

The overall condition of park amenities is good. The playground area is one of the oldest in the City parks system, and is becoming outdated. In addition, there is a lack of handicapped-accessible restrooms. Reservation records show that the three shelter houses at the top of the hill from the pond are frequently used by both Wilmington residents and outside visitors.



## DAVID R. WILLIAMS PARK

### OVERVIEW

#### CLASSIFICATION:

Community Park

#### TOTAL ACRES:

25

#### ACTIVE ACRES (%):

13 (52%)

#### PASSIVE ACRES (%):

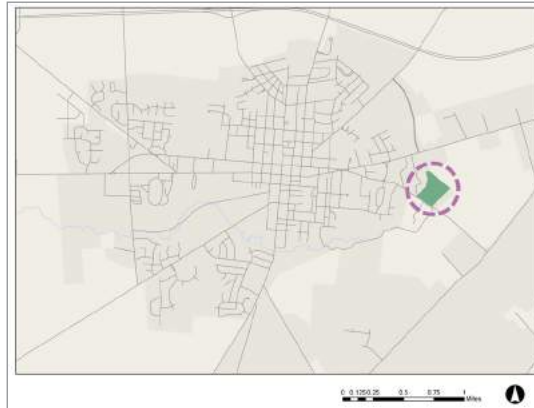
12 (48%)

#### LOCATION:

East of J. W. Denver  
Williams Park on Fife  
Avenue

#### FACILITIES:

2 baseball fields  
2 multipurpose fields  
1 playground  
1 biking/walking  
path  
1 dog park



David R. Williams Park was added to the parks inventory following J.W. Denver Williams Park. As a result, this side of the joining tracts of land has been developed more in recent years.

With a ratio of active and passive space similar to J.W. Denver Park, it contributes to the function of a destination park of which many County residents commute to use. The nearby shelter house is used heavily and is conveniently located near the wooden playground. This park is also home to two multipurpose fields, which offer versatility and relatively low maintenance.

The latest addition to the Park is an off-leash dog park, which is the first in the region and consequently sees frequent use. Currently, the baseball field to the north, Kroger field, is in poor condition and is expected to be replaced with a skatepark, splash park, and pump track.

In terms of passive space, this park shares 6 acres of woods, the Judy Gano Trail, and the Dr. Nathan Hale Trail with the neighboring park.





## GALVIN PARK

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Neighborhood Park

**TOTAL ACRES:**

2.8

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**

0.5 (18%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**

2.3 (82%)

**LOCATION:**

Bordered by N. South Street, N. Walnut Street, and E. Birdsall Street

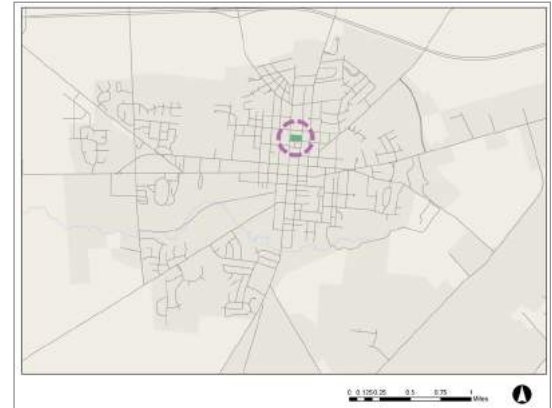
**FACILITIES:**

1 gazebo

1 shelter

2 basketball courts

1 playground



Donated by Mrs. Brady Galvin, this park was the former site of Smith Place school. Presently, the park functions as an accessible neighborhood park adjacent to many homes and the Wilmington Public Library. The majority of the park is on a slope, which has made it historically a popular destination for sledding in the winter.

Galvin park offers two basketball courts and a playground, both of which receive frequent use. Although there are two shelters, they are too small to host the large social events seen in the shelters at other parks.



## SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY PARK

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Neighborhood Park

**TOTAL ACRES:**

3.1

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**

2.7 (87%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**

0.4 (13%)

**LOCATION:**

Intersection of Doan Street and Wall Street

**FACILITIES:**

3 shelters

1 multipurpose fields

1 basketball court

1 biking/walking

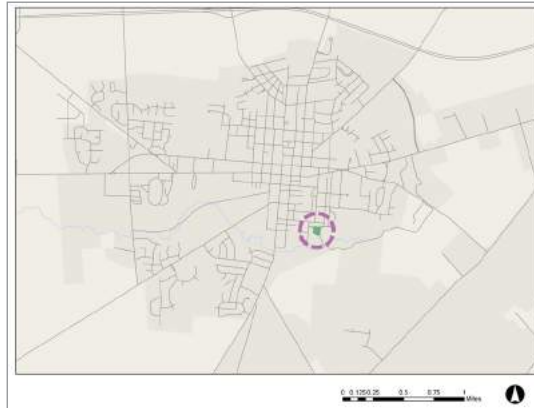
path

1 playground

1 climbing wall

1 Outdoor fitness

area



This land was purchased by the City to develop a neighborhood park, which receives a high volume of pedestrian traffic from the community. The three shelter houses on the property receive heavy use throughout the week and especially on the weekend. The park features many amenities made from upcycled materials, such as the climbing wall and a mound made out of old tires. The state of amenities has changed dramatically in recent years, with the addition of a multipurpose field, shelter house, and playground equipment. In addition, natural playscape themes have been incorporated through native

plants and hilly features. The park is situated at the trailhead for the 4-C Bicentennial trail making it highly visible to trail users.





## POINT PARK

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**  
Neighborhood Park

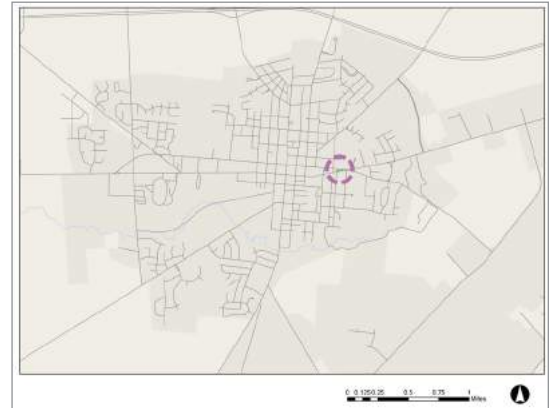
**TOTAL ACRES:**  
0.9

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**  
0 (0%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**  
0.9 (100%)

**LOCATION:**  
Between Locust Street  
and Main Street, east  
of Wall Street

**FACILITIES:**  
1 gazebo



Although classified as a neighborhood park, Point Park does not serve the same function as Galvin Park and Southeast Community Park. Wedged in between two high-volume traffic corridors, Point Park receives maximum visibility by those driving through town.

The park is aesthetically appealing due in large part to the Wilmington Garden Club who maintain the landscaped trees, plants, and flowers.

The small size of the park allows for a gazebo, but limits any amenities from taking a spot. As a consequence of the high-traffic location and poor allocation of

pedestrian infrastructure, this park has little incentive for an individual to visit and linger for an extended period of time.





## LYTLE CREEK NATURE PRESERVE

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Nature Preserve

**TOTAL ACRES:**

2.8

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**

0.0 (0%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**

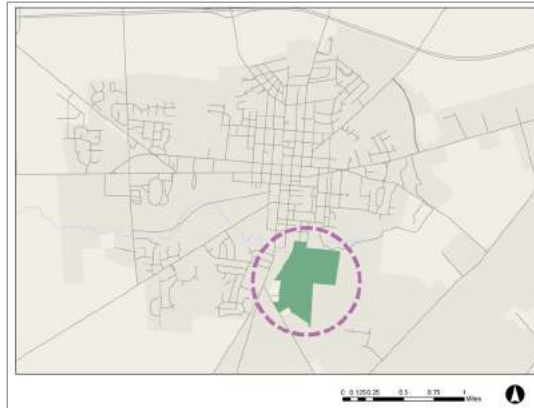
132.8 (100%)

**LOCATION:**

Dauids Drive south of  
Fife Avenue.

**FACILITIES:**

1 swinging bench



Lytle Creek Nature Preserve is the largest park in Wilmington with arguably the lowest level of public awareness of its existence. Direct pedestrian access is limited except via the 4-C Bicentennial Trail, which connects to Southeast Neighborhood Park. The preserve offers the opportunity to see many animals in their natural habitat; such as birds, deer, and wild turkeys. Additionally, native wildflowers, and prairie grasses have been sown on 62 acres of the tract. The water quality of Lytle Creek and erosion control methods are being studied. Active amenities are non-existent and physical

man-made amenities are limited to benches, bridges, and signs. The park provides a setting for educational opportunities as well as opportunities for civic and neighborhood service projects. Additionally, there is a two-mile natural surface trail, an audio tour, and a recently-installed observation deck.



## TRAILS

### **LUTHER WARREN PEACE PATH 1.2mi**

Built in 1999, this was the first trail to be constructed in the City. The “Peace Path” as it is known locally crosses two bridges including a covered bridge built by Eagle Scout Jonah Hein and named after local naturalist Dr. Nathan Hale. The second bridge was named after E.E. Mac McKibben, a long-time trail advocate who was instrumental in building this trail. It was resurfaced with the addition of handrails as the Eagle Scout service project of Micah Hein. The Luther Warren Peace Path is almost completely level and accommodating to wheelchair, scooter or stroller users. Deer, many birds, and other wildlife can be seen from this trail, and an audio tour is available. Lytle Creek can be viewed at several points from the trail.

### **URBAN TRAIL CONNECTOR 0.7mi**

The Urban Trail Connector connects the Mulberry Street trailhead of the Luther Warren Peace Path to the Southeast Community Park trailhead of the 4-C Bicentennial Trail. The trail heads east from Xidas Park down Sugartree Street, goes south down Grant Street, then connects to Southeast Community Park via Doan Street. The trail is marked with signs and painted logos along the roads. This trail also ties into the Wilmington College “Q-Path”, which consists of painted sidewalks to lead pedestrians from the college to downtown Wilmington.

### **4-C BICENTENNIAL TRAIL 1.3mi**

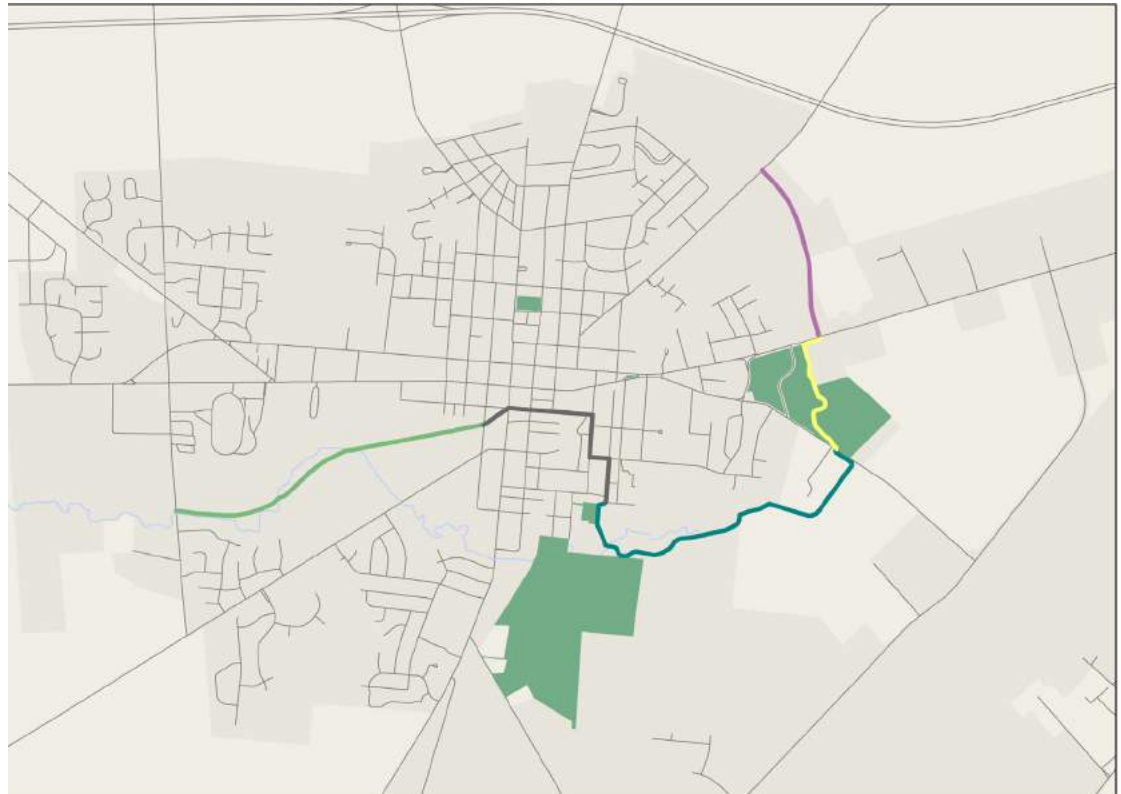
This trail was built as a partnership between the City, the County, Wilmington College and the Clinton County Trails Coalition. Built in honor of the State’s Bicentennial (2003). It is wooded, gently rolling, and has three bridges. Another bridge, known as the “Farm Bridge”, was resurfaced with the addition of handrails as the Eagle Scout project of Chase Yeakley. The trail also passes near the College’s Hazard Arboretum. The Lytle Creek Nature Preserve is adjacent to the trail and marked by an informational kiosk and a bench. Horseback riders occasionally use this trail. The natural surface trails in the 133-acre Lytle Creek Nature Preserve can be accessed from the 4-C Trail (near the westernmost bridge). Lytle Creek can be viewed from several points along the trail.

### **JUDY GANO TRAIL 0.4mi**

This trail was opened in 2008 and is named after community activist and attorney Judy Gano. This trail connects the 4-C Bicentennial Trail with the sidewalk on Rombach Avenue, providing an important link to the Lowes Drive Trail and a future County-wide trails system. Because of its location, it is ideal for use by many people, but particularly families with young children. It is short, paved and it connects key family attractions in the park such as the Castle Playground (a project organized by Judy Gano), the pond, and playgrounds. Using this trail makes it easy to move from one playground to the other,

## LEGEND

- Luther E. Warren Peace Path
- Urban Trail Connector
- 4-C Bicentennial Trail
- Judy Gano Trail
- Lowe’s Drive Trail



0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles



via the pond bridge.

**LOWE'S DRIVE TRAIL 0.7mi**

This trail is parallel to Lowe's Drive and is a connector trail between Rombach Avenue and Prairie Avenue.

This trail is functional, an important connector between Rombach Avenue and the future County-wide trails system to the east, north and west sides of town. Trail users are able to walk from J.W. Denver Williams Park to Generation Pizzeria (with bicycle parking). However, the crosswalk on Rombach Ave. is not pedestrian-friendly and improvements are needed to make a safer connection between the Judy Gano Trail and Lowe's Drive.

## VILLAGE PARKS

In general, village parks score the highest on access. Due to their small corporation lines and dense housing patterns, village parks are often placed in residential areas with slow-moving traffic. These settings create a walkable environment for a “neighborhood park”. While village parks usually have space allocated for active park acres, passive acres are lacking in most circumstances. In some villages, parks are either lacking in space or are non-existent altogether. Village parks are funded in a variety of ways, which contributes to the diverse conditions from village to village. Some take from the general fund, and the smallest villages rely on fundraisers, grants, and civic organizations. The quality of existing park facilities are generally in good shape, though often with a limited variety of available amenities.

### VILLAGE PARKS INVENTORY

	Acres
<b>Blanchester</b>	<b>25.2</b>
Veterans Memorial Park (Community Park)	18.8
Deweys Park	0.6
State Rest Stop	2.9
Police Station Playground	2.9
<b>Sabina</b>	<b>37.6</b>
Sabina Park (Community Park)	37.6
<b>New Vienna</b>	<b>0.8</b>
Gazebo	0.2
Tennis Courts	0.6
<b>Clarksville</b>	<b>5.8</b>
Clarksville Park	5.8
<b>Martinsville</b>	<b>6.3</b>
Martinsville Park	6.3
<b>Midland</b>	<b>0.9</b>
Midland Community Park	0.9
<b>Port William</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76.6</b>

\*Each park is classified as a neighborhood park, unless otherwise noted.

## VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK | BLANCHESTER

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Community Park

**TOTAL ACRES:**

18.8

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**

16.8 (89%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**

2.0 (11%)

**LOCATION:**

East of S. Broadway  
Street

**FACILITIES:**

4 baseball fields

1 shelter

1 playground

0.3mi walking path



Veterans Memorial Park serves as the community park for the Village of Blanchester. It is located on the southern end of town, and is accessible on foot. The four baseball fields consume most of the park land, which satisfies the community's baseball needs. The back of the property is dedicated to passive space with a walking path, a shelter, and a small playground. The park receives much use from the community, but the amenities in the back of the park are a far walk if someone is walking from the middle of Blanchester. Residents who wish to use the walking track or playground must walk an additional 1,000 feet to

reach the amenities once they have entered Veterans Park on South Broadway Street. The park is also surrounded by a residential neighborhood with no direct pedestrian connection via sidewalks or pathways. Residents along Maple Grove Avenue, for example, must take a detour to enter the park through the South Broadway entrance instead of taking a straight path to the park.





## VILLAGE PARKS

### DEWEYS PARK | BLANCHESTER

#### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Neighborhood Park

**FACILITIES:**

None

**TOTAL ACRES:**

0.9

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**

0 (0%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**

0.9 (100%)

**LOCATION:**

Corner of Wall Street  
and Railroad Street



Deweys Park was donated to the Village of Blanchester and is located to the west of McDonalds on the corner of Railroad Street and Wall Street. The property is primarily a parking lot, which occasionally hosts community skateboarding events. The remaining grass lot of the property is of poor quality and is unable to allow for much vegetation to grow. Moreover, the park serves Blanchester best as a multi-purpose public space.



## POLICE STATION PARK | BLANCHESTER

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Neighborhood Park

**TOTAL ACRES:**

2.9

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**

0.2 (7%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**

2.7 (93%)

**LOCATION:**

Corner of Main Street  
and Clark Street

**FACILITIES:**

1 playground



Although this site is not formally recognized as a park, it functions as a vital neighborhood park in the heart of Blanchester. The property belongs to the Village of Blanchester and offers a playground as an active amenity. This space also hosts a variety of community events, such as Easter egg hunts and Halloween festivities.



## VILLAGE PARKS

### SABINA PARK | SABINA

#### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Community Park

**TOTAL ACRES:**

37.6

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**

8 (21%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**

29.6 (79%)

**LOCATION:**

North of East Washington Street

**FACILITIES:**

3 shelters

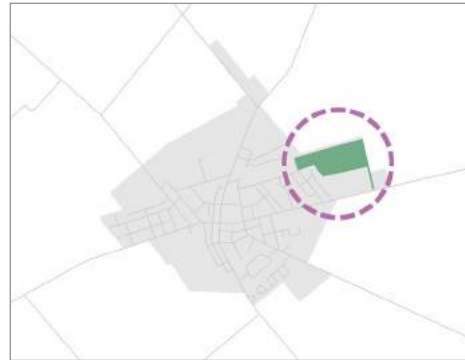
3 baseball fields

1 basketball court

1 multipurpose field

1 playground

0.4mi walking path



Sabina Park is the sole park of the Village, located on the east side. Although viewed as a whole park, the Village only owns the west half with the east half being owned by Richland Township. The park offers a large variety of amenities for the small Village of Sabina, with a good balance of passive and active space. This park hosts all of the local community events, such as church activities, concerts, and the annual Easter egg hunt. Despite the great quality and quantity of amenities and open space,

the park is difficult to reach on foot by most of the Village population.





## GAZEBO PARK | NEW VIENNA

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Neighborhood Park

**FACILITIES:**

1 gazebo

**TOTAL ACRES:**

0.9

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**

0 (0%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**

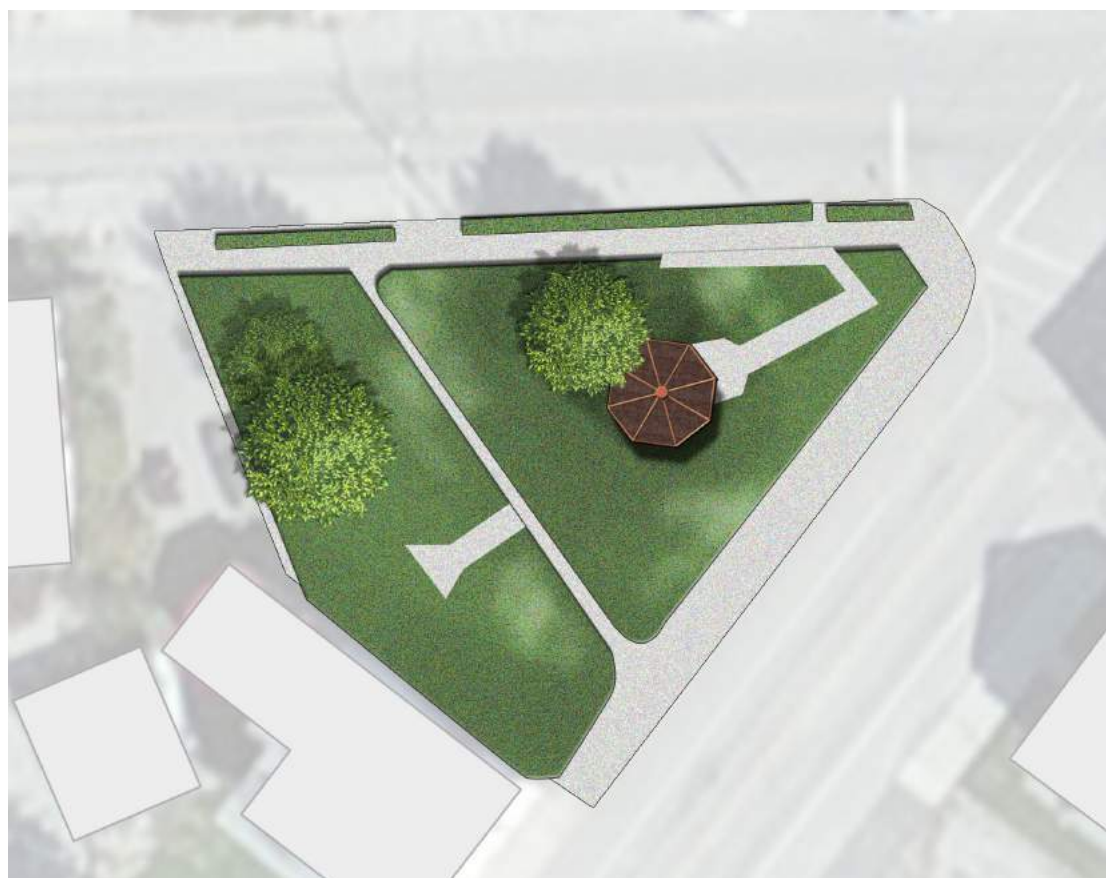
0.9 (100%)

**LOCATION:**

Corner of West Street  
and Main Street



Gazebo Park is a small public space with high visibility of traffic passing through the Village of New Vienna. The park has a gazebo and well-maintained landscaping. Reaching the park by crossing West Street and Main Street is also relatively safe due to the crosswalks and small street widths.



## TENNIS COURTS | NEW VIENNA

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Neighborhood Park

**TOTAL ACRES:**

0.6

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**

0.6 (100%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**

0 (0%)

**LOCATION:**

North of the intersection of College Street and Elm Street

**FACILITIES:**

2 tennis courts



The second park in New Vienna offers two tennis courts, which are very accessible by walking or driving. The courts are in adequate condition but have declined in use over the years. The park has a gravel parking lot.





# CLARKSVILLE PARK | CLARKSVILLE

## OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Neighborhood Park

**TOTAL ACRES:**

5.8

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**

2.4 (41%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**

3.4 (59%)

**LOCATION:**

South of Cuba Avenue  
and Water Street

**FACILITIES:**

1 baseball field



This park in Clarksville is treated as a Village park by residents but is owned and maintained by Vernon Township. The property sits on a hill, with the Vernon Township building on the top of the hill along with a basketball court, and a baseball field at the bottom of the hill. The baseball field is maintained by a local resident and receives a high level of use by the community. The basketball courts are in poor condition and are half-owned by the Village with the other half owned by

Vernon Township. In the wintertime, the large hill is enjoyed by the community for sledding.



## MARTINSVILLE PARK | MARTINSVILLE

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**  
Neighborhood Park

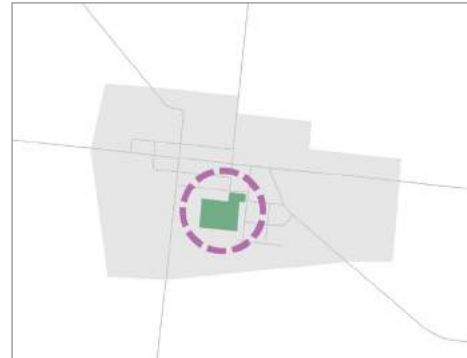
**TOTAL ACRES:**  
6.3

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**  
0.6 (9.5%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**  
5.7 (90.5%)

**LOCATION:**  
South of School Street  
and west of Elm Street

**FACILITIES:**  
1 playground



Martinsville Park was renovated in the Fall of 2015 to include a playground. As the only park in the small Village of Martinsville, the addition of a playground to the existing open space provided a great asset to the community. Located in the core of the Village, the park is very accessible for pedestrians.



## MIDLAND COMMUNITY PARK | MIDLAND

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Neighborhood Park

**TOTAL ACRES:**

0.9

**ACTIVE ACRES (%):**

0.1 (11%)

**PASSIVE ACRES (%):**

0.8 (89%)

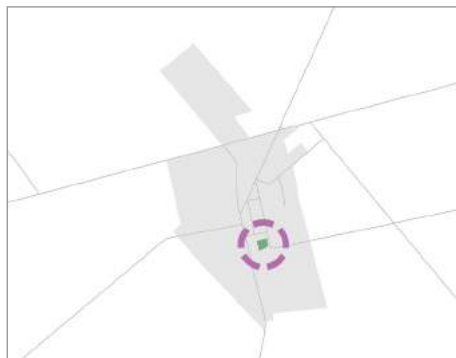
**LOCATION:**

Between Locust Street  
and Main Street, east  
of Wall Street

**FACILITIES:**

1 shelter house

1 basketball court



The Midland Community Park has undergone recent development to add active amenities. The park now has a basketball court and parking lot, and there are future plans to build a picnic shelter and a wildflower patch. The park is a good example of a small-village park, due to its size, location, and amenities.





## COUNTY PARKS

The Clinton County Parks district was established on August 12, 1996, with the primary purpose to provide passive recreational opportunities within Clinton County. A dual focus is devoted to the preservation of natural resources and unique habitats, while providing natural areas for education and enjoyment of users.

From its inception, the CCPD has been entirely driven by volunteers, contributions from the Commissioners, and grants. Kent Vandervort lead the board for the CCPD through 1997, followed by Bob Johnson who assumed board leadership from 1997 to present. Kent Vandervort was replaced by Maxine Hamilton in 1997, and Gene Williams was replaced by Bob Thobaben in 1999.

In the context of providing passive space, the CCPD

works closely with the private sector to address land use, loss of habitat issues, and fulfilling open space needs in the County. With the recent groundbreaking of the Clinton-Fayette Friendship Trail (CFFT) on October 28, 2015, the continued planning and expansion of linear trails will be an important function of the Parks District. The CCPD has a strong brand of promoting outdoor education and activities, which should be communicated through consistent signage and logos. Historically, small projects have been funded through grants and occasional allowances from the County Commissioners, but the CCPD will need to establish a consistent revenue stream to sustain its existing park infrastructure as well as continue to expand to provide park facilities in underserved parts of the county.

### CLINTON COUNTY PARKS INVENTORY

	<b>Acres</b>
<b>Regional Parks</b>	<b>3230.5</b>
Caesar Creek State Park (within County)	1606.7
Cowan Lake State Park	1623.8
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	<b>2.5</b>
Little Hearts Big Smiles Playground	2.5
<b>Nature Preserves/Open Space</b>	<b>285.3</b>
Lytle Creek Prairie	5.5
Lytle Creek Woods	11.8
Collett Woods Nature Preserve	55.1
Anliot-Davidson Nature Preserve	51.2
Dr. Nathan Hale Woods	86.9
East Fork Riparian Nature Preserve	32.1
Hunter Glen Nature Preserve	2.7
Culberson Woods State Nature Preserve	40.0
<b>Trails</b>	<b>17.1</b>
Collett Woods Trail (natural surface)	6.8
Anliot-Davidson Trail (natural surface)	6.8
East Fork Riparian Trail (natural surface)	3.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3535.4</b>

## ANLIOT DAVIDSON NATURE PRESERVE | ADAMS TOWNSHIP

### OVERVIEW

#### CLASSIFICATION:

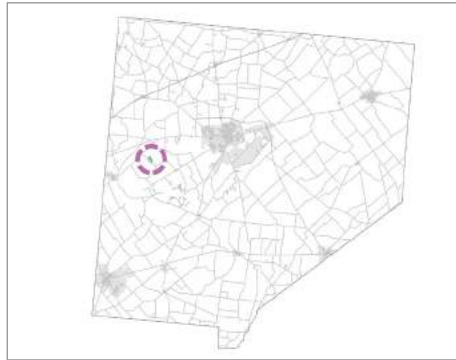
Nature preserve

#### TOTAL ACRES:

51.2

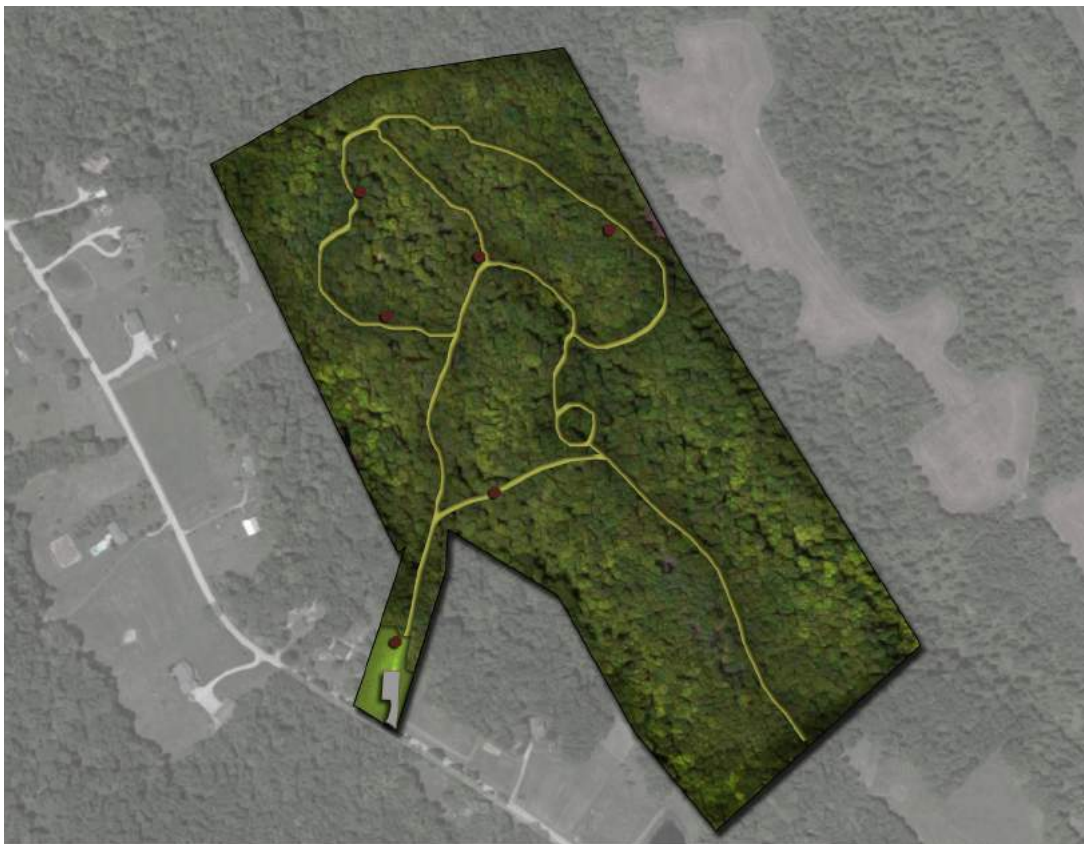
#### LOCATION:

885 Pyle Rd. 1 mile  
east of the Clarksville  
Rd. and Pyle Rd. inter-  
section



Anliot-Davidson Nature Preserve was the second CCPD park, founded in October 2002 in Adams Township. It was named in honor of Wilmington College biology professor Fred Anliot for his impact on students and residents, and his concern for the environment. In addition to Anliot, Bob and Glenda Davidson are credited in the name of the park as the previous owners. The Davidsons tended to the forest after purchasing it in the mid-1960s and sold the property below market value to the CCPD in 2002. The CCPD was able to secure a competitive \$50,000 grant to purchase the place. After acquiring the property, the CCPD built a parking lot, bridges, benches, and a variety of trail markers.

With 58 acres of rolling topography dominated by a mixed forest of deciduous hardwoods and evergreens, the park boasts beauty as well as biodiversity. There is a paved parking lot with five benches, information display and two waste containers. There is 0.8 miles of hiking trails, with three different types: white, yellow, and blue. White and yellow trails are strenuous with steep inclines. There is a rich biodiversity of ferns (12 species), trees (51 species) and many wildflowers and birds. A demonstration prairie is surrounding the parking lot offering 18 species of wildflowers among warm season grasses.





## COLLETT WOODS NATURE PRESERVE | CHESTER TOWNSHIP

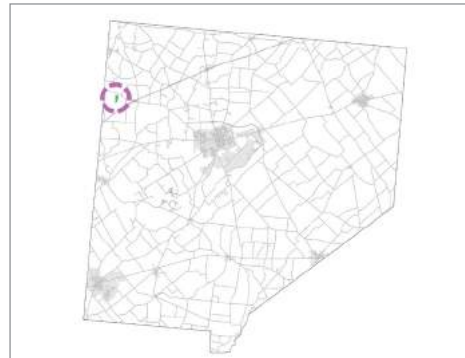
## OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Nature preserve

**TOTAL ACRES:**

55.1

**LOCATION:**8901 West St. Rt. 73,  
1.5 miles west of Caesar Creek Flea Market.

On July 1, 2000, Collett Woods became the first property to be dedicated by the CCPD. The park was part of 4,000 acres granted to Pvt. Daniel Collett of the 1st Virginia Regiment for Revolutionary War Services. He moved to Clinton County from Virginia in 1805 with his wife, seven sons, and one daughter. Wallace Collett, a descendant of Daniel Collett, donated the preserve to the CCPD for the enjoyment of Clinton County Residents.

Located in Chester Township with 60 acres of mature beech-maple forest. It offers 1.2 miles of hiking trails, a paved parking lot with a turnaround, and a bridge at the entrance. There are wonderful wildflower communities, along with several examples of large hunks of Canadian

granite erratic rocks deposited in the preserve that can be seen along the 1.25 mile hiking loop that circles the forest perimeter. Several small mammal species exist in the preserve such as the Eastern Mole, Short-Tailed Shrew, Least Shrew, and White-Footed Mouse, which provide prey for Red and Gray Foxes, Coyotes, and birds of prey. Over 58 species of birds are known to breed within one mile of these woods with at least 100+ species migrating through the preserve in the fall and spring migration. In short, Collett woods is also a Beech Maple climax forest which has not been disturbed, except by a tornado in 1986. The damage the tornado caused to trees can still be observed.



## DR. NATHAN HALE WOODS AND TERRELL PRESERVE | VERNON TOWNSHIP

### OVERVIEW

#### CLASSIFICATION:

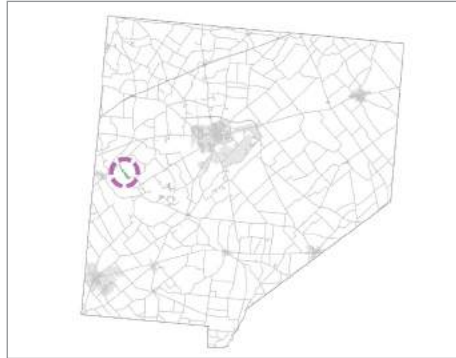
Nature preserve

#### TOTAL ACRES:

86.9

#### LOCATION:

2979 Clarksville Rd.  
at the intersection of  
Cowan Creek Rd. and  
Clarksville Rd.



The preserve offers 60 acres of very unique land referred to in scientific literature as “The Devil’s Backbone”. There is a gravel parking lot with 3 benches, 2 waste containers, and an information kiosk. 1.25 miles of hiking trails along the scenic Cowan Creek. There is great fishing in April through June. Identified by the Ohio Biological Survey in July, 1955 and again in July, 1978 as the most unique biological area in Clinton County. The Devil’s Backbone has more biodiversity in plants and animals than any other square mile in Clinton County. The Ohio Audubon Society has recognized the Cowan Lake Region as an Important Bird Area (IBA) with over 85 species breeding in the area. Only 70 IBA’s exist in Ohio.

Terrell Woods is an 18.2 acre parcel added in 2012, adjacent to the Dr. Nathan Hale Woods to the North. It is located in Vernon Township along Cowan Creek Road. This preserve was identified by the Ohio Biological Survey in July, 1955 and again in July, 1978 as the most unique biological area in Clinton County. It has over 104 species of plants and Native American signal mounds. There is no existing signage for the park, given that only educators and scientists may access it via written permission of the CCPD. Wilmington College botany classes and the Cincinnati Wildflower Society make frequent visits to study the area.

This preserve is administered by both the CCPD and the Tecumseh Land Trust.



## EAST FORK RIPARIAN NATURE PRESERVE | CLARK TOWNSHIP

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

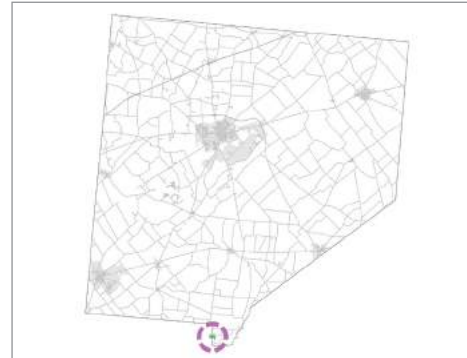
Nature preserve

**TOTAL ACRES:**

32.1

**LOCATION:**

935 Webertown Rd.



East Fork Riparian was added in the Spring of 2007 when Pat Gentile and Laura Curliss sold the property to the CCPD for much below market rate. The 70-acre preserve is located on 935 Webertown Rd. in Clark Township. After purchasing the property, the CCPD used Clean Ohio funds to construct a paved eight-car parking lot.

2.5 miles of hiking trails around a shortgrass prairie and a tallgrass prairie. Two wetlands were constructed and prairie grass seed were donated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Good fishing is available in the East Fork of the Little Miami River, which intersects the preserve. Six distinct habitats can be found in the park;

upland woods, wet woods, riparian woods, short grass prairie, tall grass prairie, and blocks of cedar trees. East Fork is a host to healthy amphibian, wild turkey and white-tailed deer populations. Limited bow hunting is permitted with written permission of the CCPD.





## LYTLE CREEK PRAIRIE AND WOODS | CITY OF WILMINGTON

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

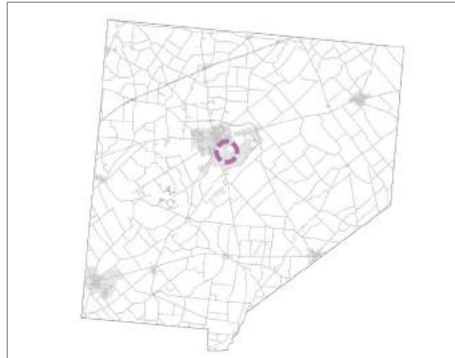
Nature preserve

**TOTAL ACRES:**

17.3

**LOCATION:**

Next to the 4-C Bicentennial Trail and along Lytle Creek to Davids Drive.



The property consists of two separate parcels along the 4-C Bicentennial Trail in Wilmington. There is 11 acres of preserved prairie land with a five-acre historical demonstration prairie and a six-acre woods just south of the 4-C Bicentennial Trail trail. The woods are located between the Lytle Creek League of Conservators pavilion and the bike trail.

The southern portion of land (off Davids Drive) was transferred from the Wilmington Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) to the Wilmington College in 2004. The middle and northernmost parcels were transferred from the County Commissioners to the CCPD in 2008.





## LITTLE HEARTS BIG SMILES PLAYGROUND | UNION TOWNSHIP

## OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

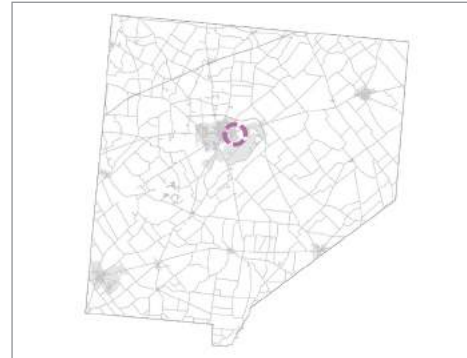
Neighborhood park

**TOTAL ACRES:**

2.5

**LOCATION:**

935 Webertown Rd.

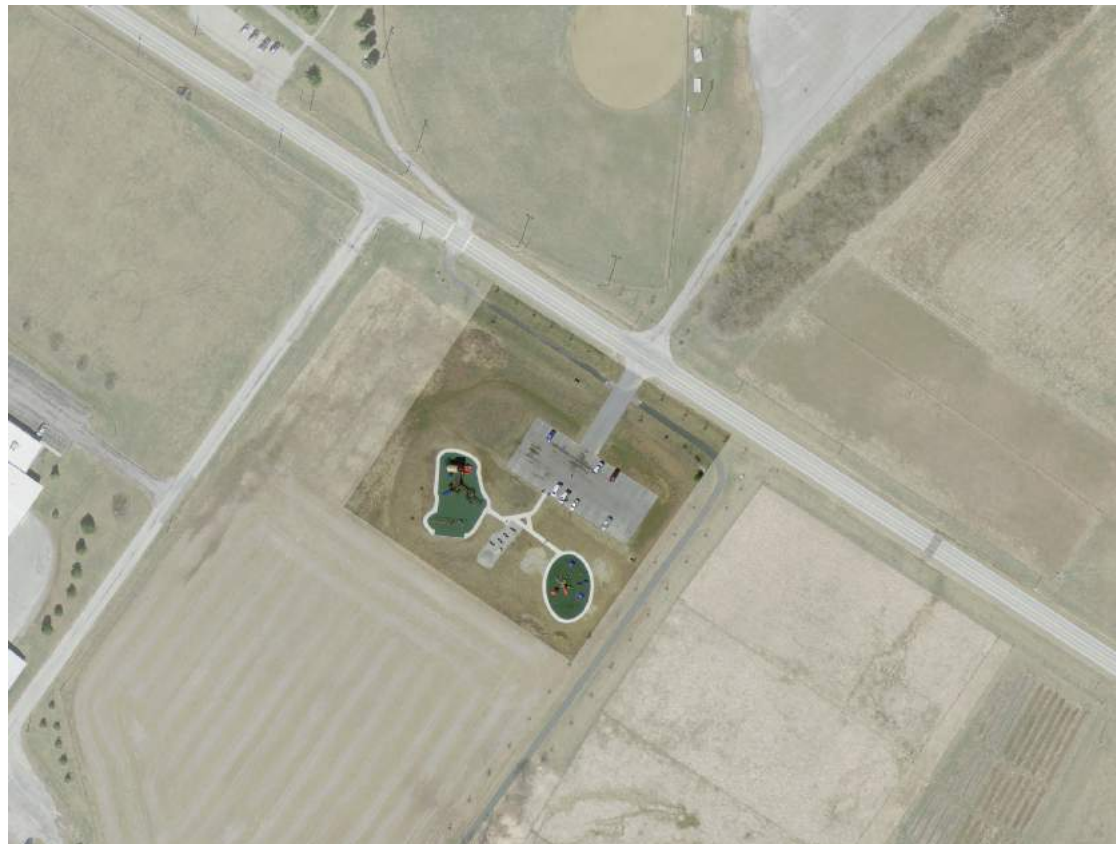


The Little Hearts Big Smiles Playground is a one-acre playground designed to accommodate handicap users. Located across from David R. Williams Park on Fife Avenue in Wilmington, it runs adjacent to the 4-C Bicentennial Trail. The property was donated by the Clinton County Commissioners to the CCPD in 2012 with the intention of providing a playground to Clinton County that is designed for handicap users. Little Hearts Big Smiles of Southwestern Ohio is a local nonprofit that fundraises and maintains the park through a group of dedicated volunteers.

The park design is wheelchair-friendly with a rubberized surface and wide ramps leading up to play components.

The playground is structured to have low platforms where those using wheelchairs can lift themselves out of them and onto the playground equipment. The swingset is also designed with high backs and harnesses to assist special needs children. Lastly, the playground accommodates visually impaired users with Braille panels.

Due to its proximity to the City of Wilmington and David R. Williams Park, the Little Hearts Big Smiles Playground is occasionally mistaken as part of the City parks system. While the CCPD owns the property, the maintenance and capital improvements of the park lies in the responsibility of the Little Hearts Big Smiles of Southwestern Ohio nonprofit.



# COUNTY PARKS

## CULBERSON WOODS STATE NATURE PRESERVE

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

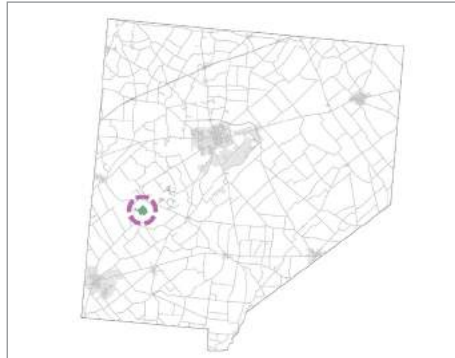
Nature preserve

**TOTAL ACRES:**

40.0

**LOCATION:**

8865 State Rte 730  
Clarksville, OH 45113



## COWAN LAKE STATE PARK

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

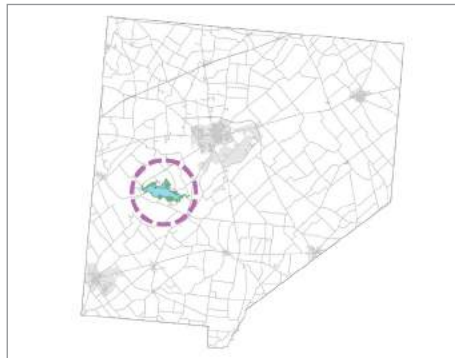
Regional park

**TOTAL ACRES:**

1623.8

**LOCATION:**

1750 Osborn Rd,  
Wilmington, OH 45177



## CAESAR CREEK STATE PARK

### OVERVIEW

**CLASSIFICATION:**

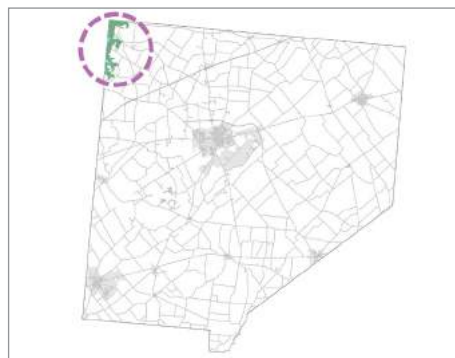
Regional park

**TOTAL ACRES:**

1606.7

**LOCATION:**

8570 OH-73  
Waynesville, OH  
45068



# EXISTING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

## WILMINGTON

For 2015, Wilmington Parks budgeted \$325,002 in expenditures. This is nearly half of what the budget was in 2008 at its peak, which was \$628,474. The Parks historically received an annual allowance from the City's general fund, which stopped after the budget cuts during the economic downturn. Since then, the Parks only receives money from the general fund for special projects and filling gaps in funding. Because the general fund ceased to provide a steady revenue stream, staffing and salaries were cut.

The Parks primarily operate on a 1.25mil tax levy, which, as an example, would cost the owner of a \$100,000 property about \$49 annually.

## VILLAGES

**Blanchester:** \$87,890 from the general fund budgeted for 2015

**Sabina:** \$2500 annually from general fund, \$1000-1500 annually from donations

**New Vienna:** No funds allocated for parks other than for mowing.

**Clarksville:** Allocates no funds for parks. Since the Vernon Township Trustees own the ball diamonds, Clarksville is only responsible for half of the basketball courts.

**Martinsville:** Martinsville spends about \$700 per year on maintenance and mowing. Since the Village has made more improvements in 2015, they spent about \$1230-\$1240 from the general fund, along with a \$24,000 CDGB grant.

**Midland:** Usually spends between \$100-\$200 annually on mowing. In 2014, Midland received a \$9000 Nature Works grant and used \$2000 from the general fund for improvements to Midland Community Park. In 2015, Midland received a \$30,000 CDBG grant to which the general fund added another \$2,000 to fund improvements.

**Port William:** No funding, no parks

## COUNTY

Originally, the Clinton County Parks District was established with no annual revenue source to fund park development or maintenance. As the CCPD acquired more land over time, the County Commissioners would give would give limited contributions of money for particular projects, such as paving a parking lot or mowing. On average, the CCPD estimates that the general maintenance of parks costs \$1500 annually. In 2008, a \$78,500 fund was given to the CCPD by Margerie

Hope Young, who passed away and wished that the proceeds from the sale of her house go to the parks. Margerie Hope Young was a professor at Wilmington College and wrote many books on sociology. The Margerie Hope Young Fund now produces about \$700 in annual interest for the CCPD.

In 2014, \$5,000 in casino funds was donated to the CCPD by the Clinton County Commissioners. In addition, the Commissioners donated \$80,000 for the construction of the Clinton-Fayette Friendship Trail.

The CCPD also receives money from the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA) for building access to parkland. Depending on the number of registered vehicles in the County, between \$22,000-\$28,000 is given biannually. This money has been used to construct parking lots for the nature preserves.

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In the 2015 Clinton County Parks and Open Space needs assessment, the following areas were considered: **quantity, access, and funding.**

## NATIONAL PARK STANDARDS

In order to understand and compare park acreage in Clinton County, a per-capita model was utilized by cataloging the existing park space in a given jurisdiction divided by jurisdiction population. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends 1 acre of park land for every 100 residents. Larger cities have decreased this number due to a denser population, but this figure remains to be an acceptable baseline for smaller cities. The NRPA is also specific about the amount of passive and active space within that prescribed one acre. At least 0.75 acres per 100 residents should be passive space, and at least 0.25 acres per 100 resident should be active. Active space facilities tend to take up less square footage and still serve many people, such as playgrounds. Passive spaces often consume large amounts of space due to the natural resources they contain. For instance, a mowed field needs to be much larger than the size of a playground that serves the same amount of people.

These standards are meant to be a starting point for each jurisdiction to decide what amount is best for them. While the NRPA standards are a healthy baseline, different standards can be created based on what assets are most important to the community. For example, if a community has an unusually large demand for baseball, the fields constructed to meet that need take up much more space than the average active amenity. Consequently, that community's active space standard might be set at a higher level. Conversely, communities with fewer families might not have a need for many large sports fields and would require more passive amenities instead.

## ACCESS

Access to parks has changed dramatically in the past several decades due to sprawling development patterns. Prior to the 1940s, urban areas were built with neighborhood parks that were small, easy to walk to, and a part of the neighborhood grid. The development that followed came in the form of suburban housing models that did not allocate land for parks, and in many cases sidewalks were not included to allow for pedestrian transportation. A trend of “destination parks” followed this era where large tracts of land at the edges of cities were developed and attracted large sums of municipal investment. While these cities were merely meeting the increasing need for parks, adequate pedestrian access was

often left out of development.

In the needs assessment for access, walkability to parks is defined as no more than a 0.5 mile distance from where someone lives. It takes about ten minutes on average to walk a 0.5 mile distance, which is the maximum commute time desired for accessing a park, and is a goal for future park development locally. Distances longer than 0.5 miles can hinder seniors and families being at such an inconvenient distance.

In order to study the walkability of parks in each jurisdiction, we studied the existing sidewalk infrastructure and the proximity of parks in relation to residences. Seeing that the absence of sidewalks and trails would be a significant hindrance to accessing a park, we mapped out all the municipal roads in Clinton County that do not have sidewalks. Although we did not take into account sidewalks that were in poor condition, the data provided valuable knowledge about parts of Clinton County that were developed without sidewalks in mind. Using GIS mapping, we modeled the streets that could access a given park within a 0.5 mile buffer. If a street lacked sidewalks, that street network was cut short since it would not be fit for pedestrian travel. After the walking buffer for each park was created, population data from the 2010 U.S. Census was used to give an estimate of the amount of residents who could walk to a park from their home. Mapping these buffers also gave a visual understanding of where parks could be proposed for areas lacking service.

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The types of funding structures vary widely across the County, whether it be through a property tax levy in the City of Wilmington, or by donations and fees in some villages. Overall, demand for parks is growing as a factor that determines where people want to live. The growing demand for bike trails, sports fields, and passive amenities calls for further investment for park budgets that are increasingly slimmer.

Since annual park budgets tend to be erratic due to occasional projects, we attempted to look at the record of spending for the previous three years for each municipality. By dividing these figures by the number of residents in the municipality, it is possible to calculate a figure to show investment per resident. Studying sources of funding is also beneficial to finding best practices. Additionally, each budget is a mix of public dollars, grants, and donations. Pursuing each of these aggressively is imperative to robust parks investment, and identifying funding opportunities will aid in this.



## WILMINGTON PARKS

### STANDARDS

Wilmington far surpasses the NRPA standards for park acreage (Figure 10). With nearly 243 acres, Wilmington is close to having twice the amount of prescribed acres (for every 1000 Wilmington residents, there is 19.4 acres of park land with 10 acres being the standard). This abundance of park land is mainly attributed to J. W. Denver Williams Park, David R. Williams Park, and the Lytle Creek Nature Preserve located on the edges of the eastern part of Wilmington. These parks affect the passive space requirement due to their large areas that have not been developed. Wilmington also has twice the standard of passive space (for every 1000 Wilmington residents, there is 16.4 acres of park land with 7.5 acres being the standard), which is especially critical for large municipalities like Wilmington, compared with the smaller village populations. For active space, Wilmington exceeds the standard by a smaller amount, which is 3.0 acres per 1000 residents rather than the NRPA's standard of 2.5.

### ACCESS

Walkable access to parks is one of the largest barriers to park use in Wilmington. About 46% of roads in the City do not have sidewalks at all and an estimated 48% of residents cannot walk to a park within a half-mile (Figure 12, 13). If other barriers were considered, such as existing sidewalks in poor condition or inadequate crosswalks, the estimated number of residents able to walk to parks would be even lower. Areas in Wilmington with the least amount of access are newer neighborhoods in the northwestern and southwestern areas of the city. These neighborhoods were built without sidewalks and without parks in close proximity. The Southridge neighborhood has one of the highest populations in the City according to the U.S. Census (2010), but has no pedestrian access to the nearby Lytle Creek Nature Preserve. While Wilmington may have an abundance of parks, connecting residents to these greenspaces will prove to be more meaningful than other forms of investment.

### FINANCIAL RESOURCES:

On average, over the past three years, Wilmington has invested about \$24 per City resident on parks. Through the parks levy, Wilmington residents who own a property close to the median home value (\$94,862 in 2013) pay approximately \$49 annually, which equals out to about \$21 per City resident. Most of the parks is funded through the property tax levy, with about 4% of funds coming from donations and fees.

For 2015, Wilmington Parks budgeted \$325,002 in expenditures (Figure 11). This is nearly half of what the budget was in 2008 at its peak, which was \$628,474. The Parks historically received an annual allowance from the City's general fund, which stopped after the budget cuts from the recession. Since then, the Parks only receives money from the general fund for special projects and filling gaps in funding. Because the general fund ceased to provide a steady revenue stream, staffing and salaries were cut.

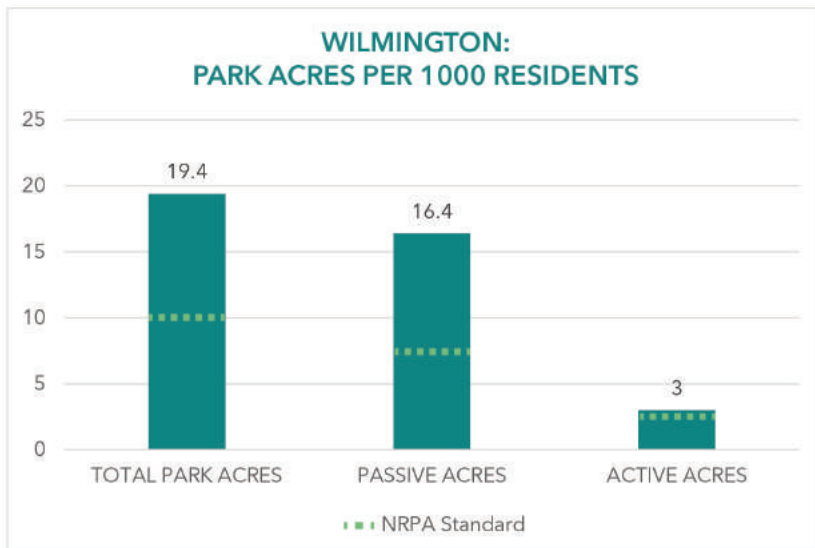


Figure 10



Figure 11

The approved budget for the 2016 Wilmington Parks operating budget shows an increase in proposed spending with expenditures totalling \$403,343. This is the largest budget since 2011, but it must be noted that it involved a \$22,000 carryover. The remaining increase in spending is attributed to building maintenance, hazardous tree removal, trail maintenance, and security cameras.



Existing park land  
No sidewalks  
Corporation line

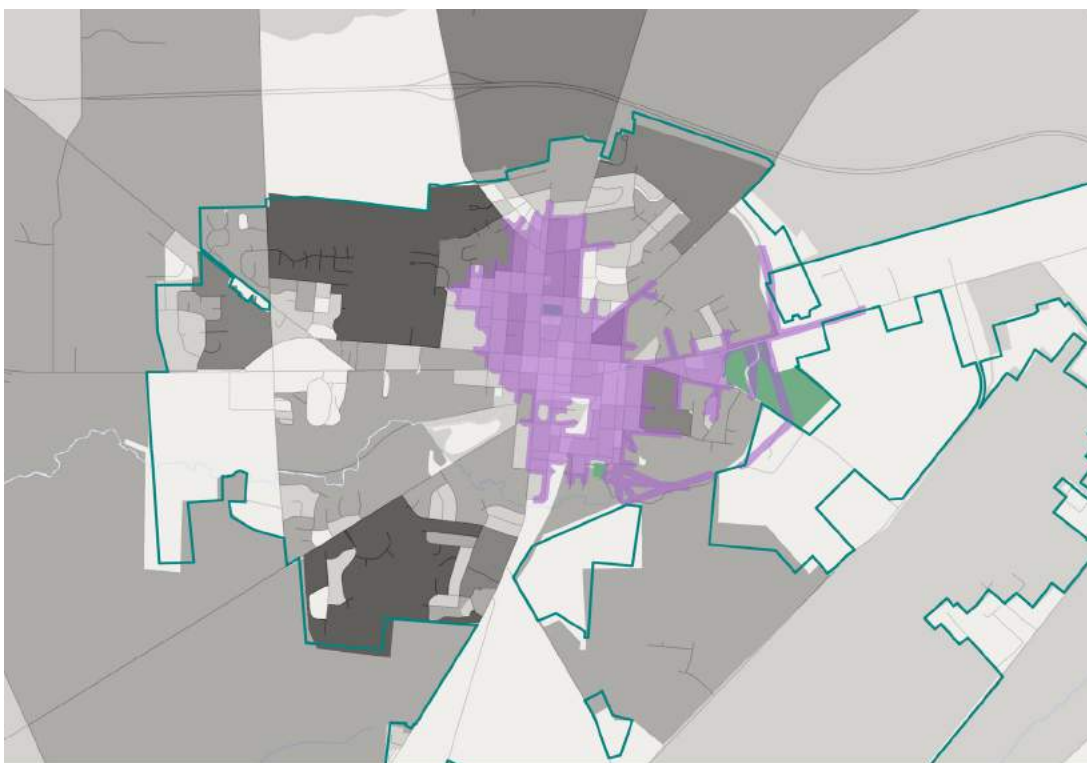
Low High  
Population density  
(Census 2010)

0 0.15 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Miles



Figure 12: Map of streets without sidewalks in Wilmington

Approximately 46% of roads in Wilmington are without sidewalks.



Existing park land  
Walkable service area  
Corporation line

Low High  
Population density  
(Census 2010)

0 0.15 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Miles



Figure 13: Map of walkable service area in Wilmington

Approximately 52% of residents in Wilmington do not live within a five-minute walking distance of parks.

## VILLAGE OF BLANCHESTER

### STANDARDS

Blanchester falls below the mark for total park space with 5.9 acres per 1000 residents (10 acres would meet standard) (Figure 14). However, the Village passes the standard for active space with 4.0 acres per 1000 residents (2.5 acres per 1,000 is the standard). Blanchester is deficient in availability of passive space, which is a common characteristic of villages in Clinton County. Most of the active space is consumed by the four baseball fields in Veteran's Memorial Park, near the exterior of the Village.

### ACCESS

63% of Blanchester's streets remain in a state without sidewalks; however, nearly 80% of the Village residents are within walking distance of parks. This is due to the strategic placement of parks throughout residential areas, although these parks are not large in size. The largest park, Veterans Memorial Park, is not connected to the surrounding residential area via sidewalks. The surrounding neighborhood has the highest populated Census tract in the Village, yet the park can only be accessed safely by those who live on S. Broadway Street.

### FINANCIAL RESOURCES

An average of the past three budgets including 2015 totals \$87,238 from the general fund. This is a standard operating budget and does not include any major improvements to the parks. Blanchester spends about \$22 per resident with this budget. Most of the funding for the parks is generated through the general fund, with about 3.2% of funds coming from donations and fees.

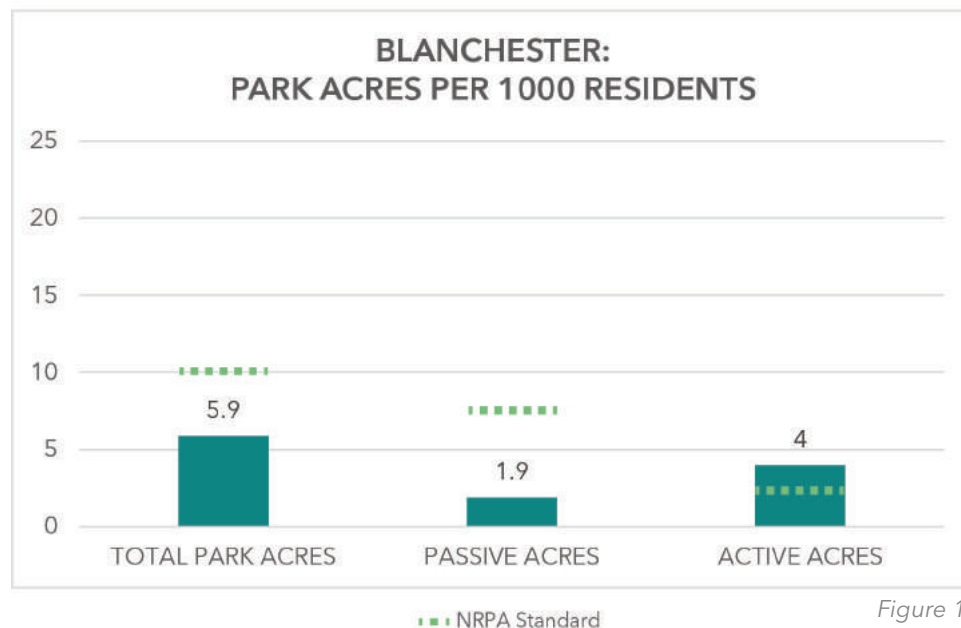


Figure 14





## VILLAGE OF SABINA

## STANDARDS

Sabina meets all the standards set by the NRPA included total acres, active acres, and passive acres (Figure 17). The sole park, Sabina Park, strikes a great balance between passive and active space with a wide range of active amenities. This assessment does not include the yet-to-be completed Clinton-Fayette Friendship Trail, which will pass through Sabina and provide additional park access for the village.

## ACCESS

Sabina struggles most with establishing pedestrian access to its single park, Sabina Park (Figure 18, 19). While the park is a model example of a village park, it lacks connectivity to residential areas. With about half of the streets lacking sidewalks altogether, having a disjointed park only provides walking access to an estimated 15% of residents.

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

About \$3750 per year is used to operate and maintain the Sabina Park. The Village contributes \$2500 annually from general fund, and roughly \$1250 comes from donations. Donations make up a third of the annual parks budget. With these figures, Sabina invests \$1.46 per resident. This number is significantly lower than that of Wilmington and Blanchester in part because there is no salaried employees included in the parks budget, as well as there tends to be greater sharing of municipal workers in smaller villages.

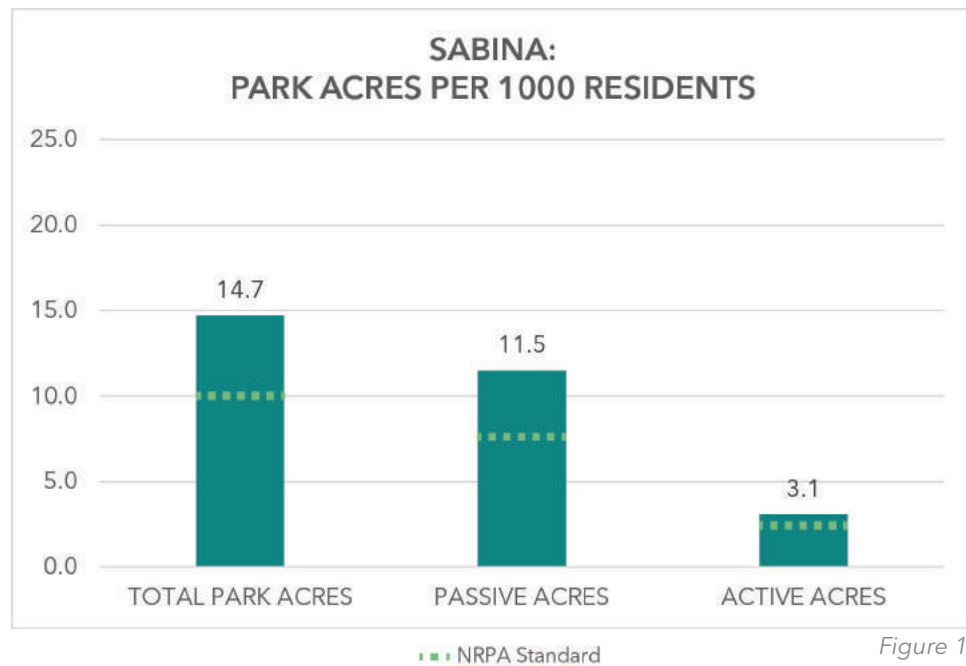


Figure 17

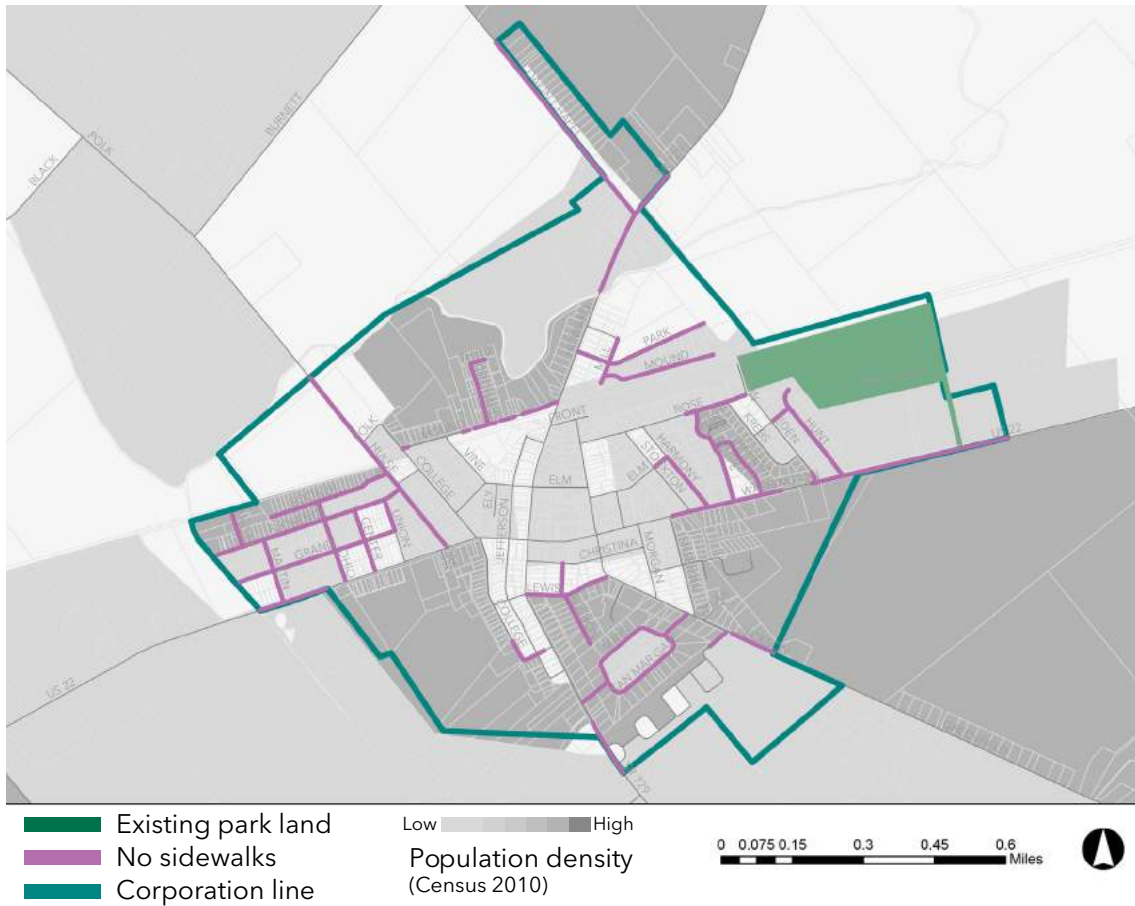


Figure 18: Map of streets without sidewalks in Sabina

Approximately 46% of roads in Sabina are without sidewalks.

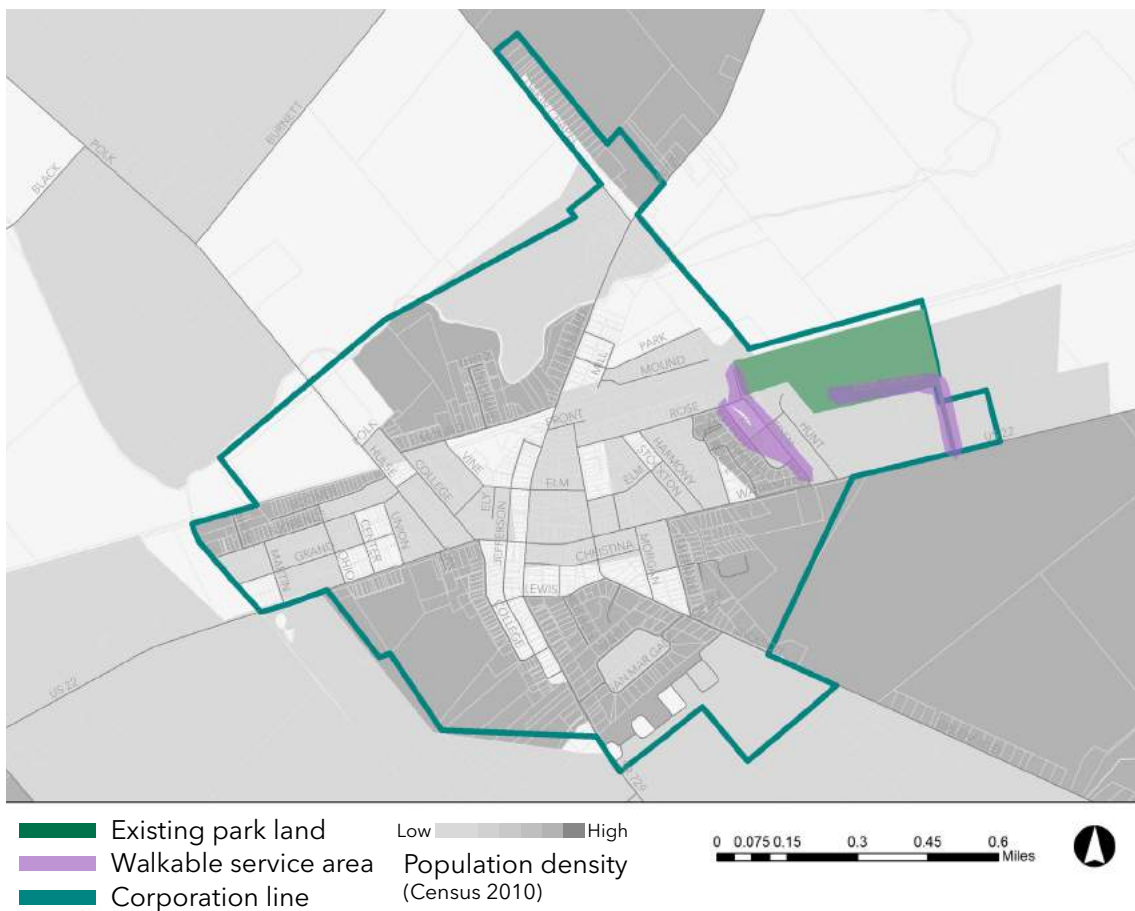


Figure 19: Map of walkable service area from Sabina Park

Approximately 47% of residents in Sabina do not live within a five-minute walking distance of parks.

VILLAGE OF NEW VIENNA

STANDARDS

With only 0.8 acres of total park land, New Vienna does not meet any of the standards for active and passive acres (Figure 20). The Village has a small area in the center of town where a gazebo sits, and also two tennis courts located on the east side of town.

ACCESS

New Vienna has a high level of accessibility due to the existing sidewalks relative to the mileage of streets and the placement of parks within residential areas (Figure 21, 22). The tennis courts exist on a street that does not have sidewalks, but it is a calm street for traffic. About 75% of residents have the ability to safely walk to a park.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Due to the small amount of park acreage, there is no park budget for New Vienna. Any mowing or maintenance that needs to be done is included in the general fund for the Village.

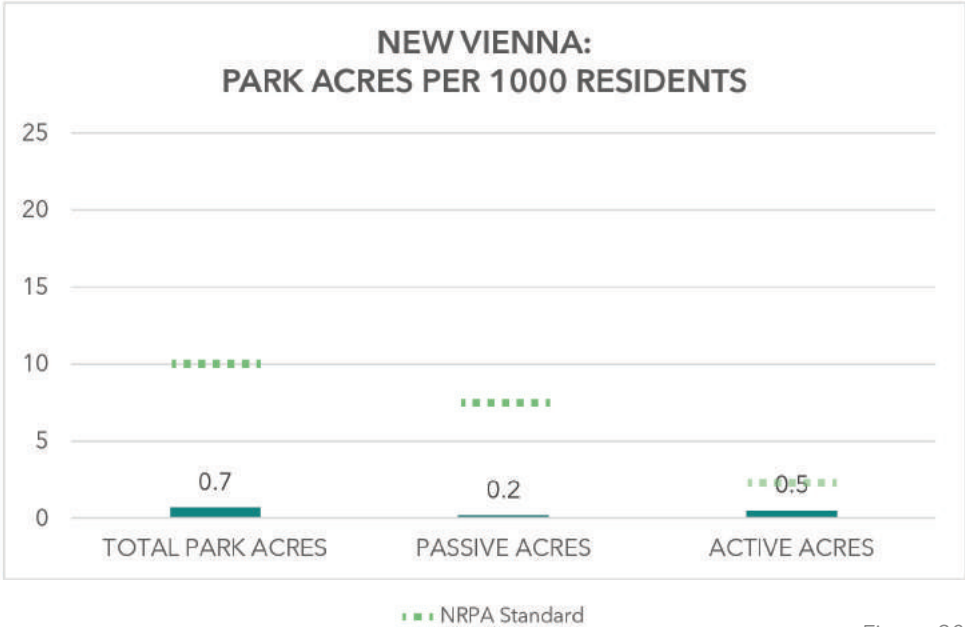
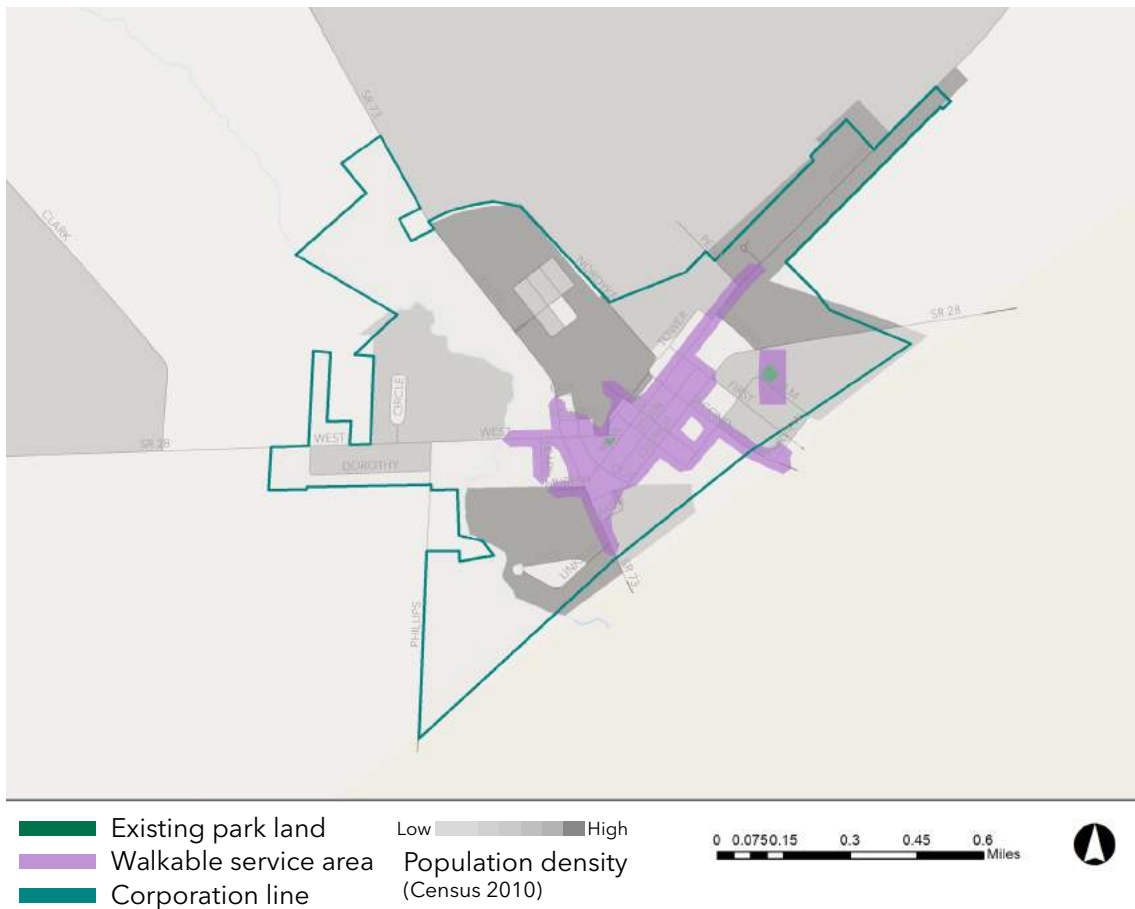
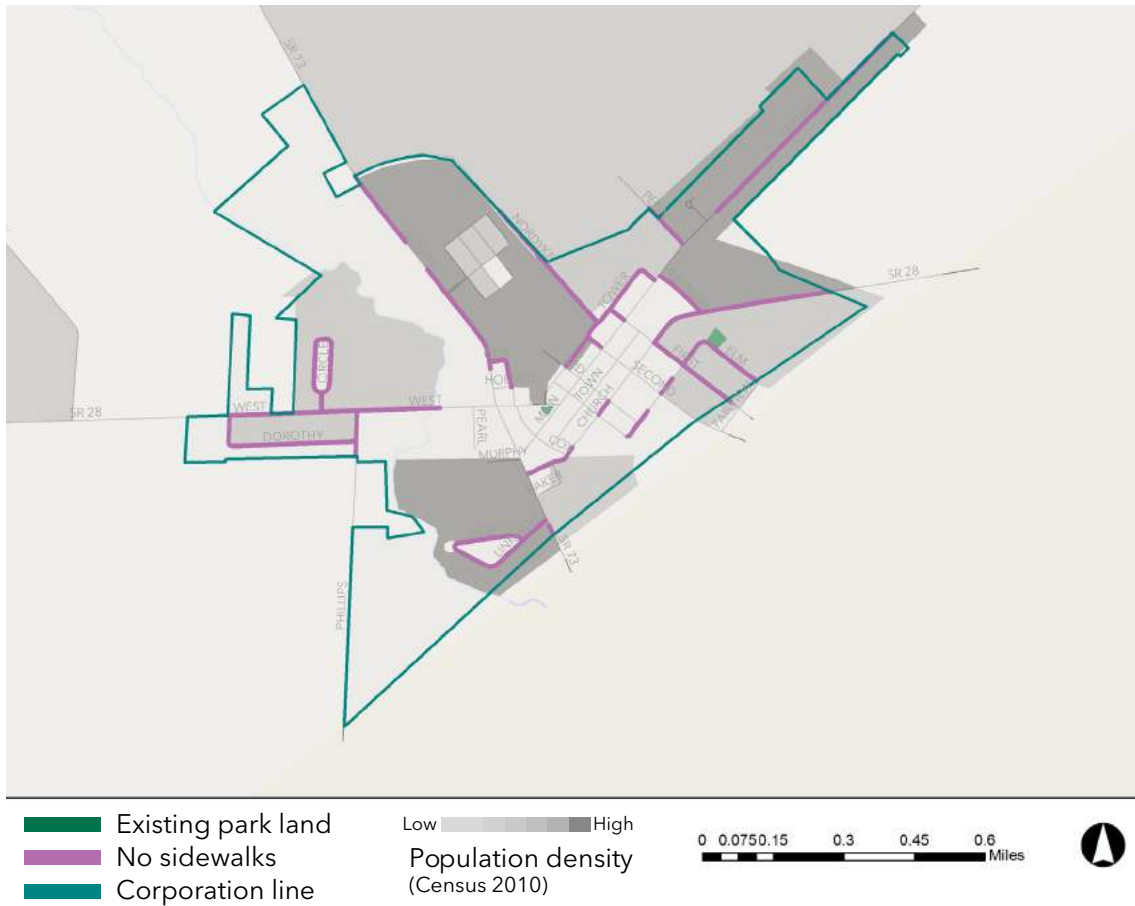


Figure 20





## VILLAGE OF CLARKSVILLE

### STANDARDS

Clarksville meets the standard for total park space with 10.6 acres per 1,000 residents due to having a park owned by Vernon Township located within the village boundaries (Figure 23). This township-owned park is comprised of one large park on the southeast side of the village consisting of a baseball field and a sledding hill. This park leaves the Village slightly under the standard for passive recreation with 6.2 acres, but still provides enough acreage for active use to put it above the standard for active acres.

### ACCESS

The Clarksville Park is not connected to any residential area via sidewalks (Figure 24, 25). Accessing the park by walking on the road is not desirable but is possible for residents living in the southern portion of the village due to the low amount of traffic running through the area around the park.

### FINANCIAL RESOURCES

There are no funds allocated for parks by the Village of Clarksville. Since the Vernon Township Trustees own the ball diamonds, Clarksville is only responsible for half of the basketball courts.

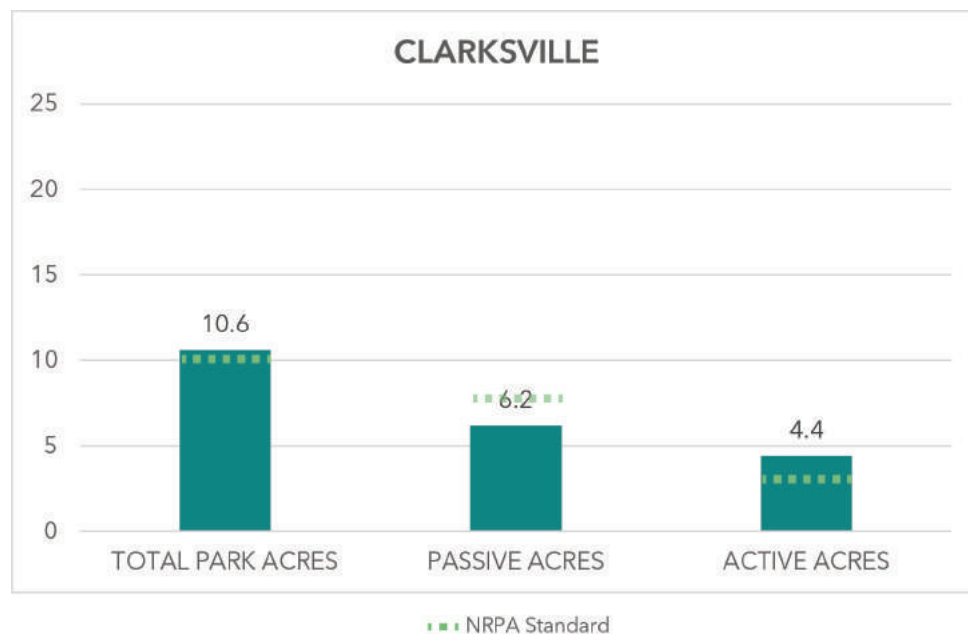


Figure 23



Figure 24: Map of streets without sidewalks in Clarksville

Approximately 71% of roads in Clarksville are without sidewalks.



Figure 25: Map of walkable service area from the Clarksville park

0% of residents in Clarksville are within a five-minute walking distance of parks.

## VILLAGE OF MARTINSVILLE

### STANDARDS

With one park, Martinsville meets the standard of 10 acres with 13.6 acres of park space per 1000 residents (Figure 26). The park itself is not made up of 13.6 acres, but dividing the actual acreage (6.3) by the population of Martinsville (463), this higher number is generated. The amount of active space is below the standard with only 0.4 acres, but it is mainly due to the absence of a sports field. A playground was added to the park in 2015 that provides the park with additional active amenities.

### ACCESS:

Martinsville has the highest rate of park access in the entire County, with an estimated 92% of all residents within a half mile walking distance to parks (Figure 27, 28). The park is centrally located and is in close proximity to the small number of residents.

### FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Annual park expenses for Martinsville have totaled \$700 annually for 2013 and 2014. In 2015, the village received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of \$24,000 for making improvements to the park by adding a playground. The Village increased its annual general fund contribution to \$1240. By averaging the park investment of the last three budgets (~\$6,482/year), Martinsville spends about \$14 per resident on parks. In a normal year of maintenance, this number goes down to \$1.50 (\$694/year budget).

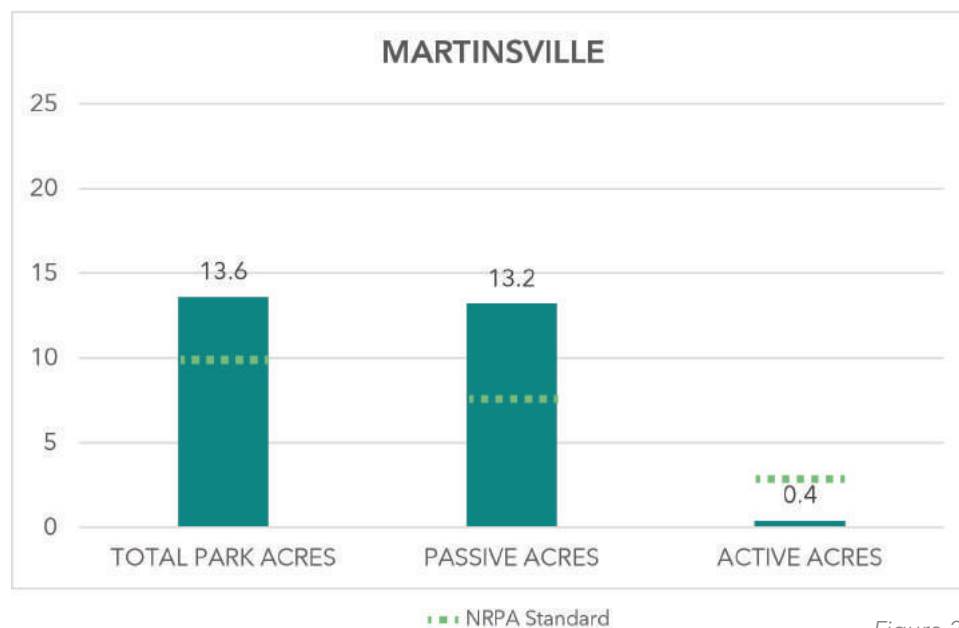


Figure 26



Figure 27: Map of streets without sidewalks in Martinsville

Approximately 53% of roads in Martinsville are without sidewalks.

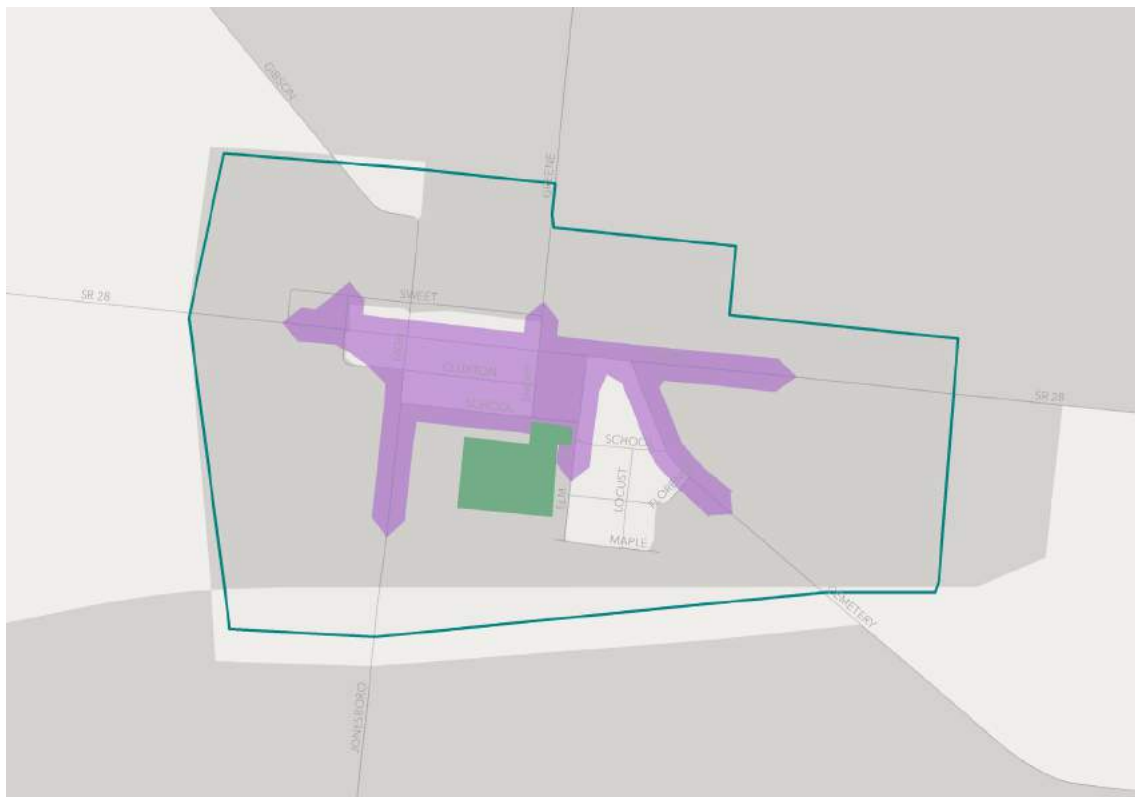
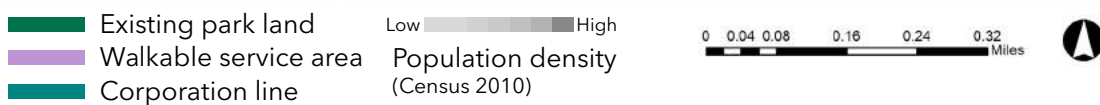


Figure 28: Map of walkable service area from Martinsville Park.

Approximately 92% of residents in Martinsville live within a five-minute walking distance of parks.





## VILLAGE OF MIDLAND

### STANDARDS

Midland does not meet any of the park standards, with 315 residents sharing about one acre of park land (Figure 29). However, Midland has built one of the newest village parks and continues to make progress. Recently a basketball court was constructed which increased the active acres to 1.0 per 1000 residents.

### ACCESS

78% of Midland streets do not have sidewalks, but the central placement of Midland Community Park makes pedestrian access easy if residents are able to and do not mind walking on the road (Figure 30, 31). Village streets tend to be calmer, but sidewalks would increase the safety and availability for everyone to walk to the park.

### FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Midland has made its largest park investment in the past three years with the addition of Midland Community Park. In 2013 Midland was spending about \$150 annually to keep up with mowing the property. In 2014, the Village secured a Nature Works grant worth \$9,000, to which they contributed \$2,000 from the general fund. In 2015, Midland recieved a CDBG grant of \$30,000 to which another \$2,000 from the general fund was contributed. With the average of these three years, approximately \$26 was invested per resident for parks. Prior to 2013, this number was around \$0.50 per resident. This figure will undoubtedly change in the future as new improvements have been made to the park that will need more maintenance from the Village.

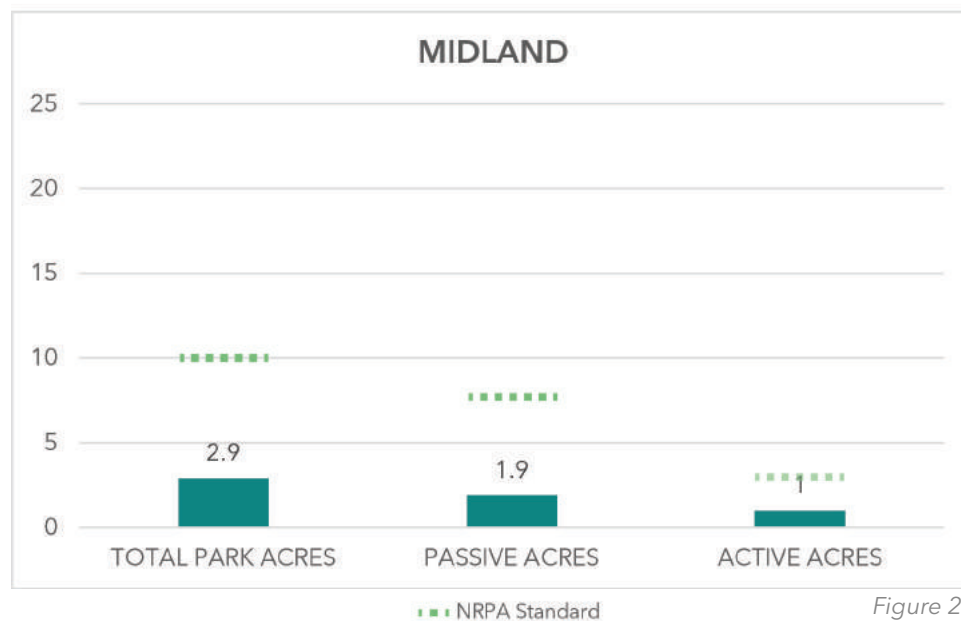
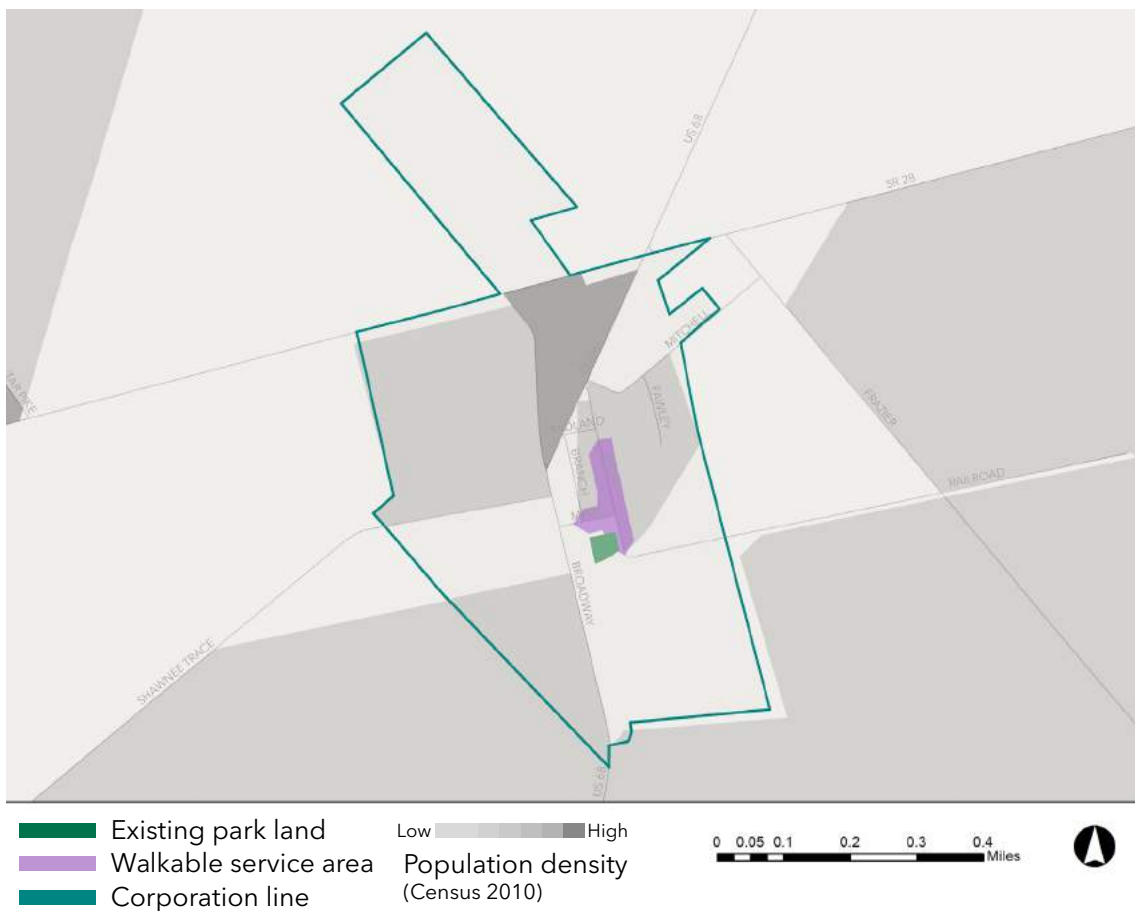


Figure 29



## CLINTON COUNTY PARKS DISTRICT

### STANDARDS

The CCPD has 263 acres of nature preserves (includes the new Clinton-Fayette Friendship Trail), and a one-acre park known as the Little Hearts Big Smiles Playground, which is a handicap-accessible playground located on Fife Avenue, outside of Wilmington. While the CCPD was instrumental in acquiring the County land for Little Hearts Big Smiles, its primary focus has been on nature preserves and more recently, linear trails. The CCPD serves the 19,909 residents in the County who do not belong to a municipality providing parks. In total, the CCPD offers 13.3 acres per 1000 residents, which is above the standard for park acres (Figure 32). Since almost all of these acres are for passive use, residents must go to municipalities to enjoy active park amenities.

### ACCESS

None of the CCPD parks are accessible by sidewalk due to their remote locations in rural parts of the County (Figure 33, 34). The County residents that visit the nature preserves are assumed to have access to a vehicle and, based on the online survey for this plan, prefer to use that mode of transportation. Currently, the northeastern portion of the County does not have adequate access to CCPD parks. This lack of service will be addressed by the completion of future projects, such as the Clinton-Fayette Friendship Trail and the Martin-Marietta Quarry.

### FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The CCPD was not established to receive revenues from a tax levy or direct general fund dollars, therefore funding for the CCPD has been erratic. The most consistent funding has been from the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA) Road Improvement Fund, which is for building access to park land and depends on the number of registered vehicles in the County. The CCPD has received between \$22,000 and \$28,000 biannually from this fund. The second source of consistent revenue comes from the Margerie Hope Young Fund, which produces about \$700 annually from the interest. In 2014, the Clinton County Commissioners awarded \$5,000 in casino funds to the Park District. In 2015, the Commissioners gave an additional \$80,000 to contribute to the \$1.2 million Clinton-Fayette Friendship Trail, which was the first regional bike trail project in the County. In the past three years of spending, the CCPD has invested just under \$2.05 per township resident.

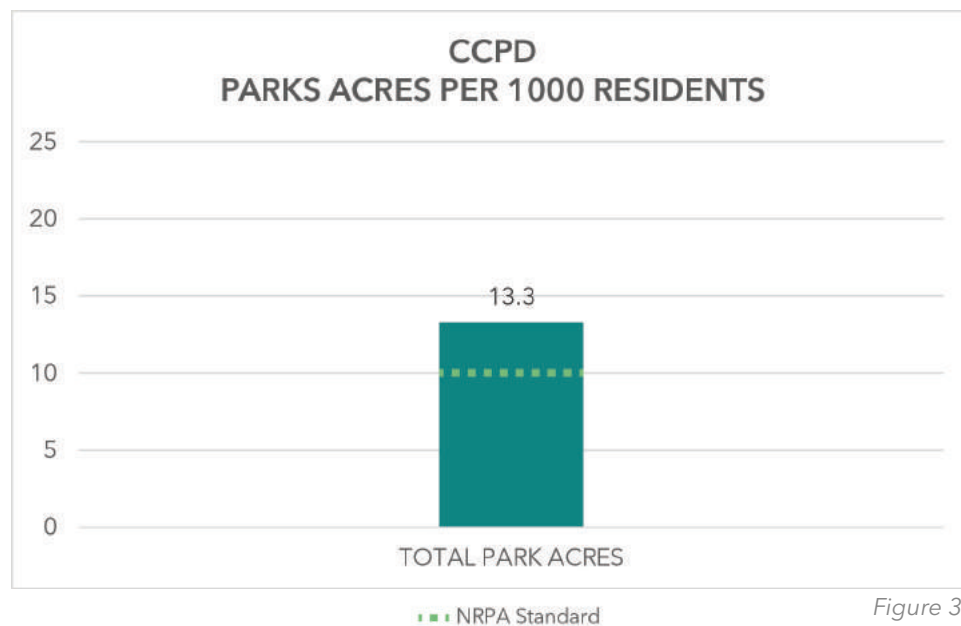


Figure 32

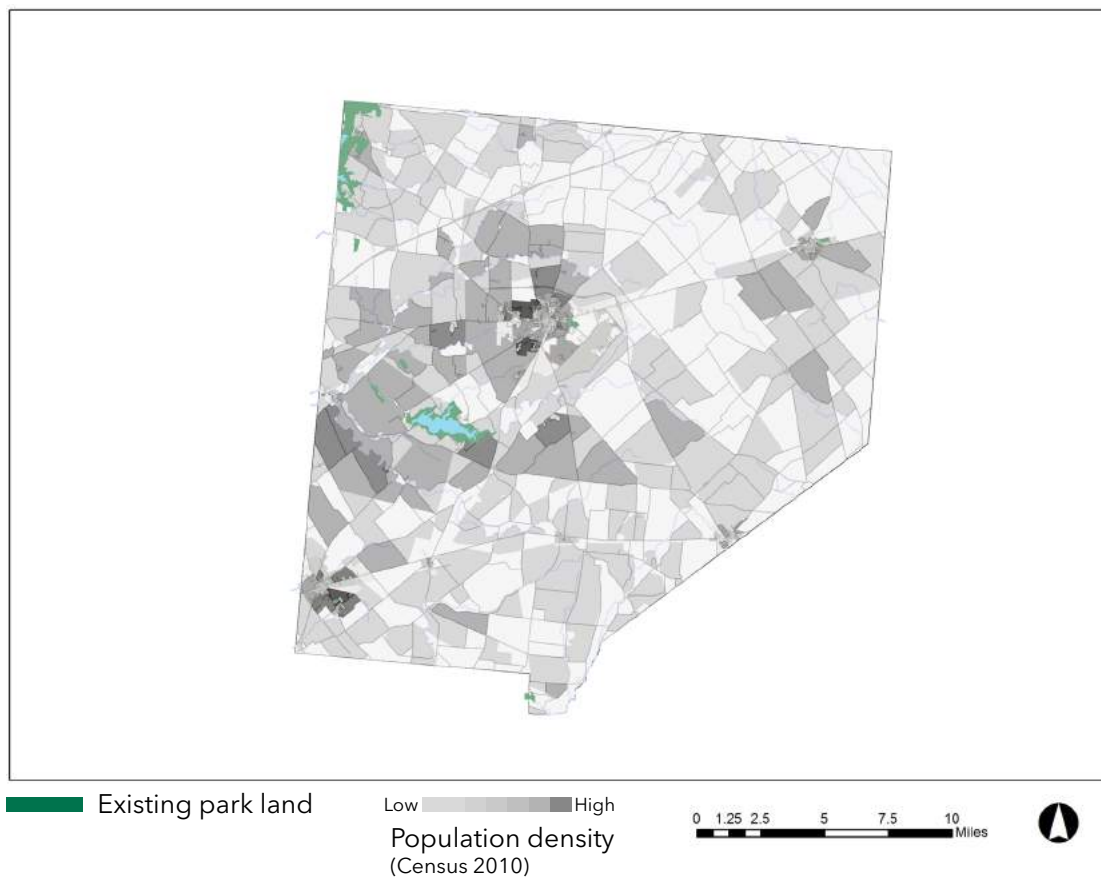


Figure 33: Map of population in Clinton County (Census 2010).

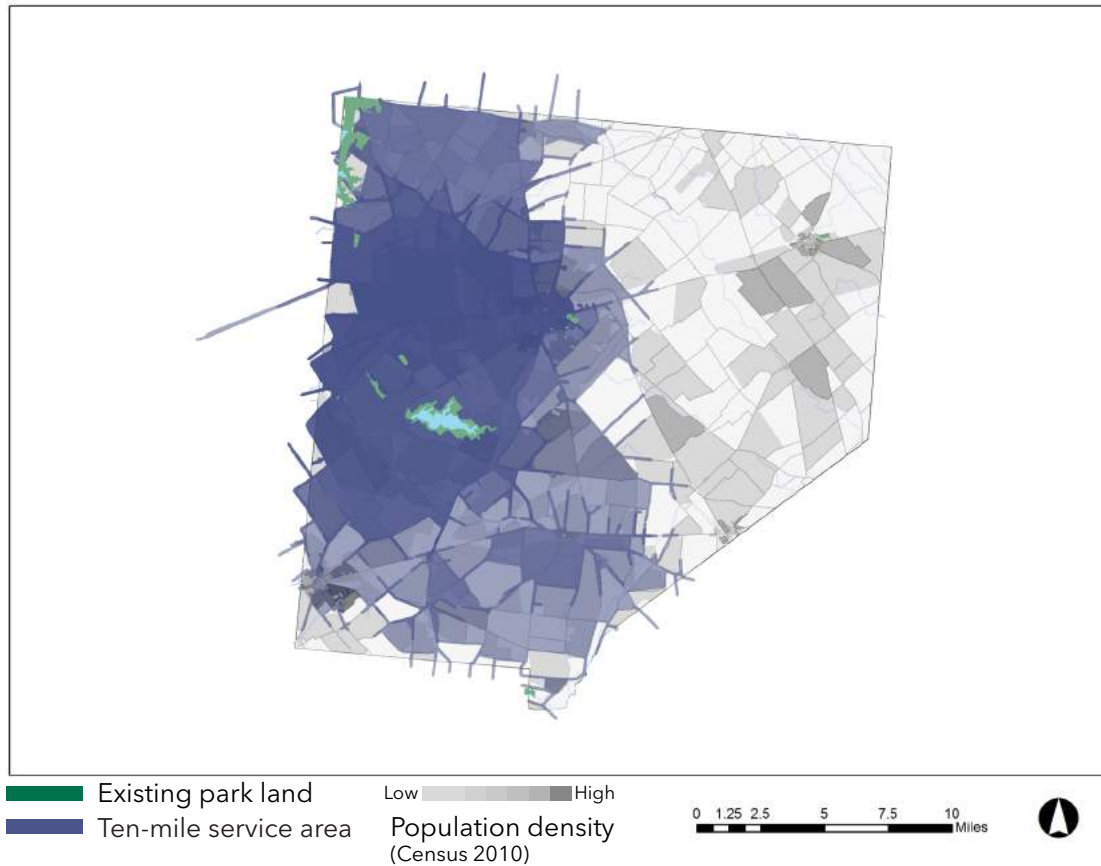


Figure 34: Map of ten-mile service area of existing County and State parks.

Given that rural residents will be driving to parks, a ten mile service area was deemed a reasonable distance for frequent use.

The lack of County parks in the eastern portion of the County forces those residents to use Village and City parks for local use.



# FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Based on research and public input on the existing conditions of the Clinton County parks system, this section reiterates the five goals of this plan as it pertains to each jurisdiction. As mentioned previously, these goals are:

- 1. Access and Proximity should be a high priority for park development.**
- 2. Park amenities should be reflective of features desired by the community and should be well-maintained.**
- 3. Parks should be safe places with activities for all ages.**
- 4. A community's park inventory should strike a healthy balance between active and passive parkland.**
- 5. Clinton County as a whole should take steps to fund parks equitably and sustainably.**

Each of these areas of future growth will be addressed for Wilmington, each Village, and the County. In each of these jurisdictions, allocating parks to be within a ten-minute commute is an attainable strategy for increasing usage of parks county-wide. For this to happen, municipalities must invest in sidewalks and trails, or build more parks within residential areas.

In addition, Clinton County must respond to trends in park infrastructure in order to reflect the needs of residents. Facilities like bicycle trails and outdoor exercise equipment have risen in popularity in recent years, and Clinton County has responded to these changes. In order to move forward, park amenities must be upgraded, added upon, or replaced where space is limited. Communities that stay up-to-date with demanded amenities will witness greater park use and ultimately improved public health.

Finally, the variety of funding structures for parks across the County can shed light on the variety of circumstances in each jurisdiction. The 2015 Clinton County Parks Survey found that 44% of Village residents visit Wilmington parks at least once a month. For residents living in the County, 74% of residents visit Wilmington parks at least once a month. Many of these respondents who commute into Wilmington for park use stated that they see "lack of amenities" as a barrier.

If local parks are to be used, Village and County jurisdictions must upgrade the variety of active amenities offered. For this to happen, the existing methods of park funding must be examined. One of the recommendations in this plan is a Joint Recreation District (further discussed below), which is where communities would jointly fund and manage parks.

*44% of Village residents visit Wilmington parks at least once a month. For residents living in the County, 74% of residents visit Wilmington parks at least once a month.*

*"Many of these (County) respondents who commute into Wilmington for park use stated that they see "lack of amenities" as a barrier.*

# WILMINGTON PARKS

The following recommendations for the future growth of Wilmington Parks is concurrent with the five goals for future park development as stated in the introduction of this plan and is applicable for all of Clinton County. Strategies specific to Wilmington are explained under each point, followed by specific projects that reflect the stated goals and address existing conditions for Wilmington parks.

## **1. Access and Proximity should be a high priority for park development.**

As stated in the existing conditions section, Wilmington has an abundance of park land, but it is concentrated in large tracts of land, with limited access and is mainly comprised of destination parks. The lack of sidewalk infrastructure in Wilmington creates a significant barrier to residents using parks. The following recommendations are intended to improve access for all residents to Wilmington parks.

- Follow the recommendations of the 2015 Wilmington Comprehensive Plan to require all new development to include sidewalks.
- Develop a schedule for building new sidewalks near schools, parks and existing residential development to encourage walking and improve park connectivity and access.
- Develop new neighborhood parks to serve residential areas in the northern and southern parts of Wilmington.
- Prioritize the development of passive park features, such as trails and shelters, as they are in demand as shown by the public engagement process.
- Continue the development of a trail network that connects residential areas to the park system as well as connects to the developing regional trail system.

## **2. Park amenities should be reflective of features desired by the community and should be well-maintained.**

- Identify opportunities to develop amenities that are new to the area and are reflective of current demand for parks and recreational features such as the proposed splash and skate park.
- As mentioned in the previous goal of improving access, trails should be developed for their status of an in-demand amenity as well. Paved trails are one of the most popular and in-demand amenities, as reflected through the public engagement process. Continued development of new trail connectors as well as maintenance of existing trails should be a priority.
- Neighborhood and resident engagement should be a

priority function of all future park development.

## **3. Parks should be safe places with activities for all ages.**

- As previously mentioned, public engagement should be a core part of park planning and development, especially when designing spaces that meet the public's expectations for safety.
- Amenities should be designed with a goal of maximizing multi-generational use.
- Neighborhood parks should be designed with surrounding residential areas as a focal point. Nearby residents provide "eyes on the street," which enhance safety and comfort at park facilities.

## **4. A community's park inventory should strike a healthy balance between active and passive parkland.**

- Wilmington Parks already has a healthy balance and strong inventory of both active and passive park facilities; however, more should be done to create greater access and connectivity to these facilities.
- Wilmington should strive to sustain this balance of active and passive park facilities as they continue to grow the park system.

## **5. Clinton County as a whole should take steps to fund parks equitably and sustainably.**

- The Wilmington Parks are almost exclusively paid by residents of the City of Wilmington through a property tax levy. Yet, through the surveying for this plan, 74% of County residents and 44% of Village residents stated that they use Wilmington Parks at least once a month. The imbalance of those who pay for Wilmington parks and those who actually use Wilmington parks places a strain on the ability to deliver park services. As a result, all users, especially those financially contributing, are receiving a diminished service.
- Explore strategies to increase and broaden funding for the Parks, such as a Joint Recreation District.
- Leverage available funds through matching dollars from the City's general fund for grants and private monies.
- Create a capital improvement plan to create a schedule for park maintenance. When new amenities are built, stewardship funds must accompany the project for continued maintenance.
- Explore opportunities to collaborate with other jurisdictions in delivering park services.

## **FUTURE PROJECTS**

The following projects are either currently under development or planning, or are specific projects to consider following the analysis of this plan. The outlining of these projects does not necessarily represent a prioritization of projects as much as it is outlining potential projects that reflect the five goals of this plan. As a priority, future park development projects should address some or all of the five stated goals of this plan, particularly as they address issues specific to the Wilmington parks system.

### **XIDAS PARK**

Xidas Park began construction in 2015 on the site of the former Manhattan Lounge, which was demolished following the passing of the owner, Jim Xidas. Named in honor of Mr. Xidas, the park will become a needed public space in the downtown area. The park is also positioned to connect the Luther Warren Peace Path trailhead to the Urban Trail and Wilmington College Q-Path. Additionally, the lack of public spaces in the downtown area gives Xidas Park the potential to facilitate social interaction and community events in the heart of Wilmington.

Currently, a seating area has been constructed with a concrete floor, a few picnic tables, and a surrounding stone wall constructed by the Laurel Oaks masonry students under the leadership of Shawn Wilkin. A pergola structure has been constructed over top of the space using the local services of Champion Bridge Company for the structure and Thirey Cabinetmakers for the wooden top. Landscaping for the site has been done by the Clinton County master gardeners under the leadership of Dori Sabino. Electricity was made possible on the site with support of local electrician Nathan Caplinger. More recently, additional lighting was added to the site, and future plans involved the addition of a mural on the adjacent building.

### **SPLASH PARK**

The proposed splash park for David R. Williams Park has garnered much community support in the last two years of planning. The skatepark is to accompany the project in the same park, and has been in the works for an even longer amount of time, led by community leaders, young and older, who saw a need for a concrete skatepark in Wilmington.

The two projects together will create popular amenities for younger children and parents to enjoy the splash park, and many teens and young adults at the skatepark. The addition of these attractions to David R. Williams park will dramatically change the energy of the area, which has already installed an off-leash dog park as of 2015. The projects will be located close to one another with some adequate buffer space so the different activities can operate without interfering with one another. The proposed site will call for the removal of the Kroger/Clintmont ball field, which receives little activity throughout the year.

Of the active amenities that community members valued in a local park, splash parks were the #2 most-valued

feature, second to playgrounds.

In the public engagement process for the physical design of the splash park, participants expressed interest in “zoning” the park for different age groups. The results from the charrettes proposed an elongated splash park that puts high-powered water features on one end, with a calm brook leading out to the other end for smaller children. This model acts as a gradient to cater to different age groups without having the older kids interfere with smaller ones. Additionally, the need for shaded outdoor seating was expressed by parents who would be watching their children at the park. With the budget for the splash park being \$180,000, the design is no larger than 2,500 sq. feet, and should include a donor recognition wall close to the site.

Features that were not desired were sharp concrete edges due them being a safety concern. Children who were involved with the charrettes disliked the jets that sprayed mist, but liked water slides, brightly-colored features, large water jets, and water gun toys.





Pictures from the splash park charrettes that participants found satisfactory. Large jets and interactive elements, such as water guns were popular elements.



(Left: Figure 35)  
Rendering of the proposed splash park in David R. Williams Park.

(Below: Figure 36)  
The proposed placement of the splash park and skate park in David R. Williams Park.









### SKATE PARK

For the skatepark design, a charrette was conducted by Wilmington Parks and Recreation to gain input on the design. The meeting had 16 participants and asked questions about best practices, important features, things to avoid, and how to build local support and fundraising. The skatepark is budgeted at \$150,000, and raising local funds will need to leverage existing grassroots support in order to realize donations. Below are the results from the community input:

#### IMPORTANT:

Flow – circle or figure 8

Skill level – not too hard; something for all levels

Separation of space between skill levels

Accommodate multiple skaters at one time

Variety for all types of skaters

Plenty of run up and roll off space on ramps and rails

#### AVOID:

Banks without transition

Steep rails and ledges

No transition at end of rails

Too many ledges

Bad coping

Bad transitions within bowls

#### MUST HAVES:

6-9 ft bowl

4-5 stair w rail or ledge

Long flat 12-14' with angle iron

Manual pad 6-8" 15-20'

Pyramid hip 3.5' high; 10' long

Mini half or bowl 3'

Flat round bar 15'

A frame 2 1/2-3' tall

Use edges for box and ledges

Fun box (similar to CCYC)

Figure 37:  
Rendering of the  
proposed skatepark in  
David R. Williams Park.



#### POINT PARK REDESIGN

Point Park perhaps receives the most visibility out of any other Wilmington park, as it acts as a gateway to the downtown area. Maintained by the Wilmington Garden Club, the park proclaims exceptional visual appeal, yet receives little use. The park itself is an island between two arterial streets in the City with poor pedestrian access. Pedestrians can often be seen running, or even pushing strollers and wheelchairs, across the intersection by Point Park, where no crosswalk currently exists. Point Park in its current state presents an opportunity to make pedestrian crossing safer in an area where many people can be seen jaywalking.

#### Proposal:

- Add crosswalks at the eastern tip of Point Park, all the way across East Main St. and East Locust Street.
- Landscape the paved areas marked with yellow lines to extend Point Park and create a landscaped median on the east side of the intersection. This treatment would decrease the amount of unnecessary road space and make a safer environment for pedestrian crossing, while enhancing the appeal of Point Park as a visual gateway. By extending landscaped medians, the option of turning left from College St. to travel west on East Locust Street would be removed. This would greatly improve safety for automobile traffic and create a much safer crossing for pedestrians.
- Additionally, increasing access to Point Park helps to address the need for accessible neighborhood parks in Wilmington. Point Park is one of the three existing neighborhood parks in the City.

*Point Park is located East of downtown in Wilmington.*

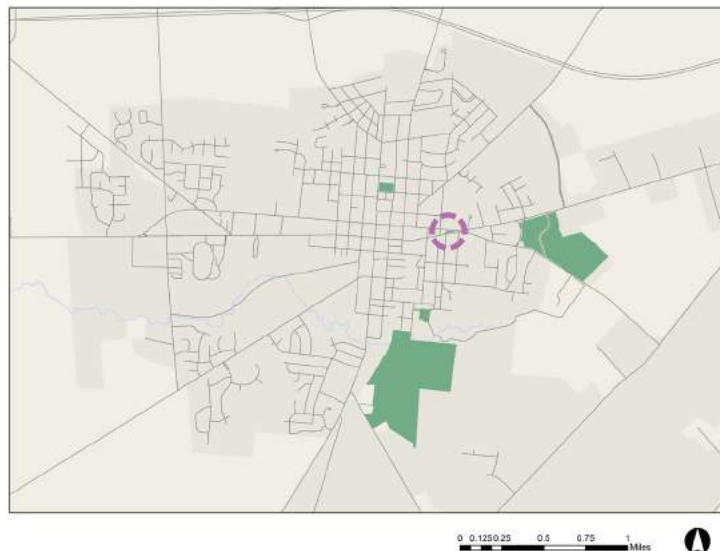




Figure 38: Point Park redesigned

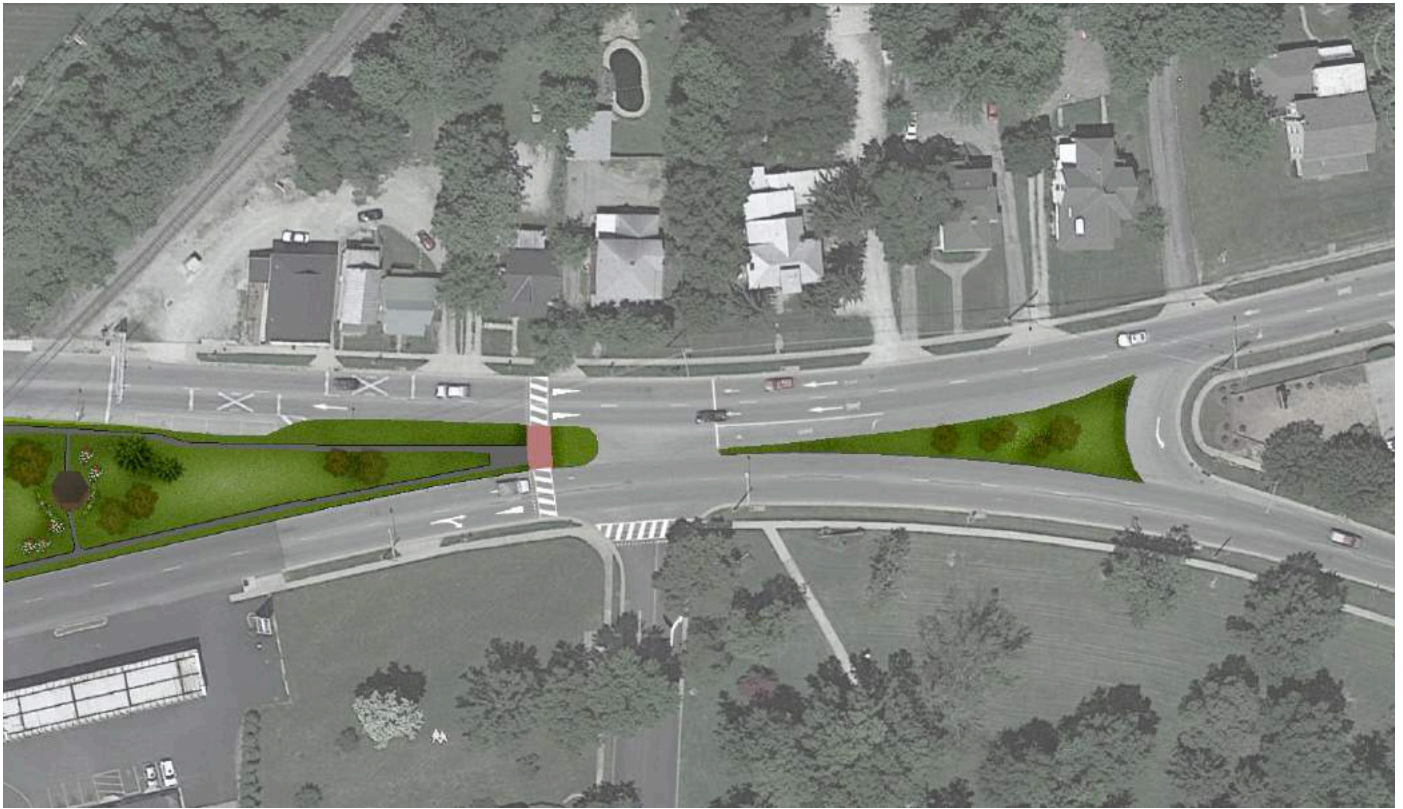


Figure 39: Point Park in existing condition



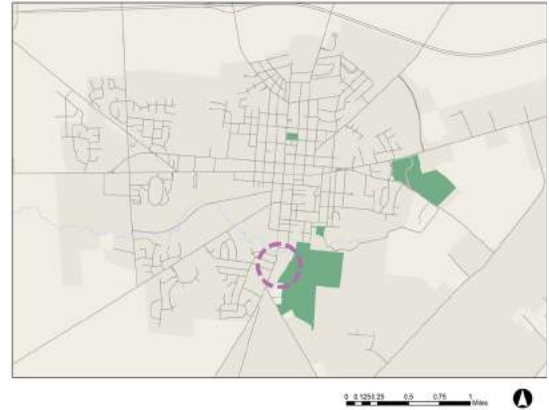


#### LYTLE CREEK CONNECTOR (1.6MI)

The Lytle Creek Connection was inspired by the disconnect between the Southridge Neighborhood and the Lytle Creek Nature Preserve. Southridge, on the southwest quadrant of Wilmington, is one of the most populated Census tracts in the City, directly west of the largest acreage of park land, the Lytle Creek Nature Preserve. Dividing the neighborhood and the park is South South Street (US 68 South), which currently does not have sidewalks or crosswalks to form a safe connection. Even after crossing the street to the east side of South South Street, an entrance to the park cannot be found within walking distance.

Nearby Creekside Dr. and the Lytle Creek, there is a three-arch stone bridge that carries the railroad track over the creek. This postcard from 1911 (Figure 41) was sent from a worker who was constructing the bridge at the time. The hidden, historic bridge in Wilmington would create the perfect passage from S. South St. and the nature preserve. Creating a path that travels under this bridge and northeast towards the prairie would avoid crossing over top of the active rail line, would create a natural passage along the creek, and would add an historic and architectural element to a new trail.

The proposed trail (Figure 42) would stem from the corner of Creekside Drive and South Walnut Street, and travel west towards the arched bridge. Sidewalks along South South Street from Creekside Drive down to Kings Commons shopping mall would have to be built to provide safe access to the Southridge neighborhood. In addition, a pedestrian crosswalk along this span would be created to cross the street.



Once the trail is built through the bridge, it would connect to the 4-C Bicentennial Trail which links to the nearby Southeast Community Park. Additional connections can be made from this trail by adding a pathway from the new trail to Belmont Avenue, which would then connect the Southeast neighborhood. Finally, a pedestrian bridge could be constructed over the creek that would connect to the large Lytle Creek Preserve.

The open space north of the proposed trail is also a potential development area for some active amenities for the neighborhood. The land is owned by Wilmington College.

These improvements would connect Wilmington's largest park and nature preserve to a neighborhood that is underserved by parks at this time. Moreover, extending the City trail network will attract more users with the additional mileage and beautiful scenery.

Figure 40:  
Rendering of trail  
connection beneath  
bridge.





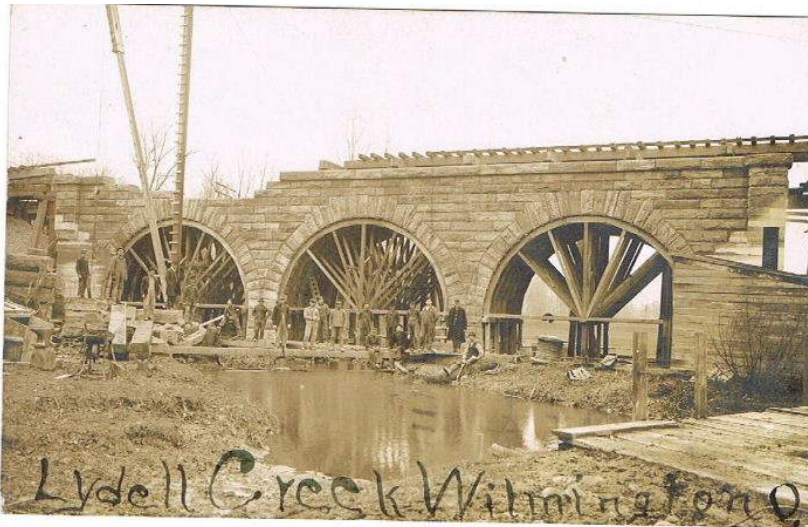


Figure 41: 1911 Postcard from a construction worker at the site of the Lytle Creek bridge.



Figure 42: Map of proposed connection from the Southridge Neighborhood and the Lytle Creek Nature Preserve.

## WILMINGTON PARKS

### STUCKEY FARM PARK

Stuckey Farm Park is located on a 125-acre parcel of land on the west side of Wilmington on St. Rt. 22. The land was sold to the City by the Stuckey family in 1983 with the intention of it becoming a City park with an agricultural theme. Consequently, Wilmington Parks has established a relationship with the Wilmington High School FFA and Wilmington College to gather input for creating a convincing theme and to create service opportunities. To date, the park has a split-rail fence installed on the property by the Wilmington High School FFA and a monarch butterfly habitat.

Improvements have already been made to the park by adding natural playscape elements, which are less formal playgrounds built with natural materials. These natural playscapes aid in naturalistic education and allow children to strengthen their creativity in how they interact with the site. An amphibian pond has been added to the park to contribute to the Wilmington City Parks strategy of educational playscapes.

The property occupies 116 acres of the land with the southern portion currently operating as the City's landfill. However, only the frontage of the property (about 7 acres) is undergoing development, and is considered a formal park. The southern part of the parcel joins with the Lytle Creek and an old railroad corridor, which has potential to become an integral part of a trail network to extend to the Little Miami Trail.

#### Access:

Since Stuckey Farm Park is adjacent to a street without sidewalks, building sidewalk infrastructure a half-mile east to Nelson Ave. will connect it to the City network. Stretching sidewalks this direction will also connect the large subdivision stemming from Dana Ave. to the park. With the current absence of parks on the west side of the City, connecting this subdivision to Stuckey Farm Park would provide it with park access for the first time.

Lastly, the very southern end of the parcel runs along the Lytle Creek. Once this part of the park is open for development, there is potential to build a bike trail that connects the Luther Warren Peace Path, running along the Lytle Creek, and finally connecting to Stuckey Farm Park.

### FISHER PLAINS TRAIL (3mi)

The Fisher Plains Trail would be a three-mile extension of the Lowe's Drive Trail to wrap north around Wilmington and connect back to State Route 73, run south down Nelson Avenue, and connect to the Luther E. Warren Peace Path. This loop would serve the residents of the City while also connecting to a regional trail network stretching east to west across the County.

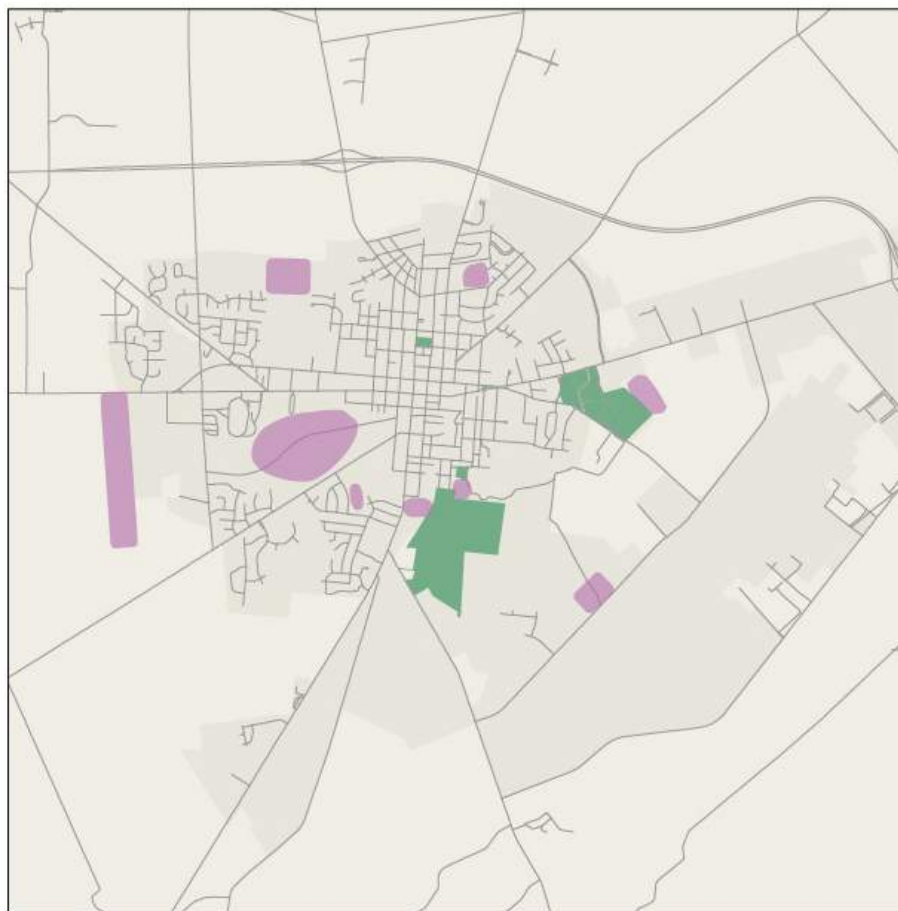
In the 2012 Clinton County Comprehensive Trail and Greenway Plan, the Fisher Plains trail was proposed to run north of the City using buffers from residential areas and connecting them simultaneously. The plan explored a variety of barriers to create a buffer between the trail and the adjacent neighborhoods, including mixed planting, hedging, land mass berms, and large spacing. A combination of barriers was proposed, composing of a drainage basins, berms, landscaping, and a split-rail fence. The trail will connect many of the northern neighborhoods in the City to local outdoor recreational opportunities.

### ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

To further increase park access in the western half of Wilmington, opportunities lie along the Luther E. Warren Peace Path for natural area preservation. The existing land along the path is a heavily wooded area lying on a floodplain. This land, along with several other parcels, make up a greenspace corridor along Lytle Creek that should be preserved. Several of these parcels are depicted in the map on page 69.

New park development should be considered in areas that are currently underserved by park facilities (mainly the western half of the city). Some of these areas could simply be better served through access improvements to existing parks.

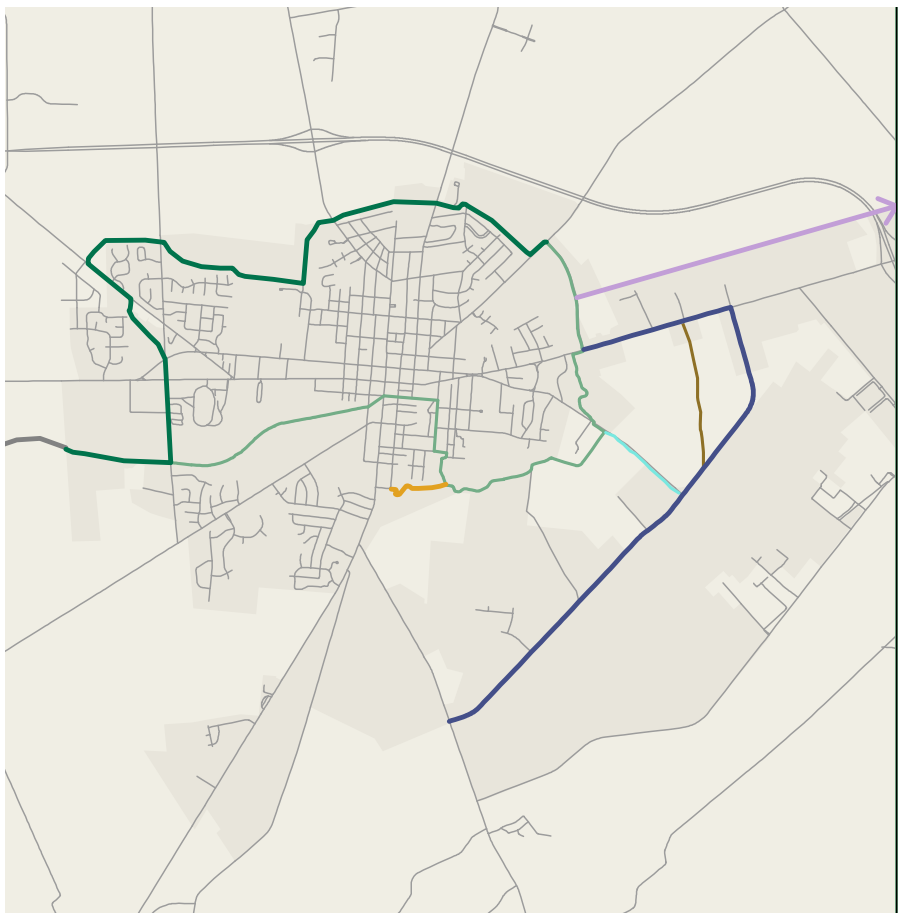
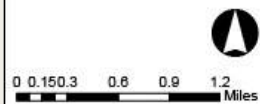
Land belonging to Wilmington High School and Denver Elementary would bring beneficial park access to underserved neighborhoods, should such land ever become available.



## WILMINGTON POTENTIAL PARKLAND

### LEGEND

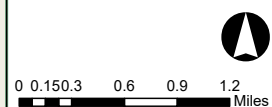
- Existing parkland
- Potential parkland



## FUTURE WILMINGTON TRAILS

### LEGEND

- Existing trails
- Fisher Plains Trail
- Lytle Creek Connector
- Fife to Davids Drive
- Davids to Rombach
- Davids Dr. Trail
- Clinton-Fayette Friendship Trail
- Wilmington to Clarksville Trail





## PARK LOGOS

In the 2014 Wilmington Parks Survey, many residents were unaware that other parks existed in the City. Between 25-30% of respondents did not know the following parks and trails existed: Southeast Community Park, Lytle Creek Nature Preserve, Galvin Park, Point Park, and the Luther Warren Peace Path. This is compared to the 4% that did not know that J.W. Denver Williams Park and David R. Williams Park existed. There is a clear visibility issue with other neighborhood parks that could be addressed through branding.

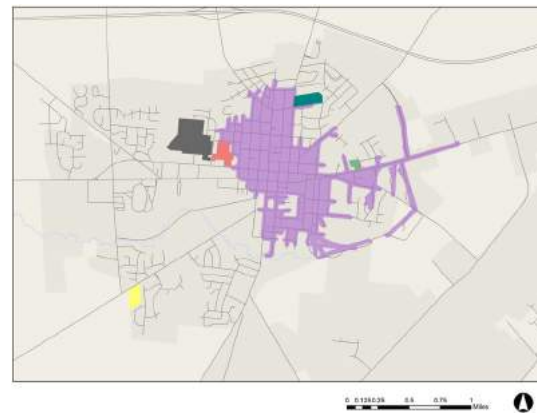
Branding Wilmington Parks and Recreation could enhance the image of Wilmington Parks and educate residents about where parks exist and what events are going on. Through consistency in logos, maps, wayfinding, and signage, park users will identify with their favorite parks. Employing these strategies through the existing Facebook page for the Parks will be a key outreach component.



## JOINT USE AGREEMENTS

Joint use agreements can be made between school playgrounds and municipalities that are attempting to increase the availability of parks. Agreements between a school and a City can take different forms, depending on the nature of the agreement. Some school playgrounds are designed to be open to the public, usually connected to the sidewalk network and void of fences. Other agreements are formal, where school gymnasiums become community centers that are jointly financed by the City and the schools.

For Wilmington, Holmes Elementary and Denver Place Elementary are located in and around residential areas of the City that are not within close distance of a park. Although the playgrounds are enclosed by fences, paths could be built to connect the playgrounds to the sidewalk networks and formal City park signs could be posted. Under an agreement, improvements could be made to these playgrounds to serve a broader age range through a variety of active amenities.



- Walkable service area
- East End Elementary School
- Denver Place Elementary School
- Wilmington Schools Athletic Fields
- Wilmington High School/Middle School
- Holmes Elementary School

Figure 43:  
Map of each school in  
Wilmington and the  
walkable service area  
from the Wilmington  
Parks.

# VILLAGE PARKS

Due to the wide variety of situations facing villages in building and improving parks, it is difficult to recommend a one-size-fits-all approach. Therefore, further community input is needed in each individual jurisdiction to ensure the needs of each community is met. Villages with little or no parks should engage residents to procure a site and design for a park that meets their needs. Additionally, villages with existing park infrastructure should ensure that they are delivering quality parks that are accessible. According to the 2015 Clinton County Parks Survey, 33% of village residents indicated that they frequently use Wilmington parks. What remains to be seen are the reasons why a village resident may choose to commute to Wilmington to use its parks. Whether it is an issue of access, quality, or quantity of parkland, each village must seek these answers out.

The following recommendations are based on the five focus areas of this plan, and they are tailored to each village. While these recommendations are based on surveys, park acreage, active and passive space, sidewalk infrastructure, and population data, further community participation is still imperative for effective delivery.

## **1. Access and Proximity should be a high priority for park development.**

Villages in Clinton County have the greatest potential for walkable neighborhoods. Many of them have dense residential blocks with low levels of traffic running through the streets, making walking safe and enjoyable. Upgrading the sidewalk infrastructure around schools and parks is a key solution to ensure that walking is a convenient mode of transportation. If lack of sidewalks are not the issue in a particular village, then the issue may be the distance the park is from residential areas. If this is the case, proposing small neighborhood parks in residential areas could be a more practical solution instead of a large park on the exterior of town.

**Recommendation:** The following villages should focus on building more neighborhood parks within their residential populations: Sabina, New Vienna, and Port William.

The following villages should focus on building sidewalk infrastructure within walking distance of parks: Blanchester, Sabina, New Vienna, Clarksville, and Midland.

## **2. Park amenities should be reflective of features desired by the community and should be well-maintained.**

Needed amenities should be evaluated on a community basis to find what is best for residents. The interests of village residents vary widely and must be understood in order to choose the amenities and standards that are right for them. For many small villages, having one or two sports fields with a playground might be the best use of active space. For larger villages such as Sabina and Blanchester, the existing community parks on the peripheries of town work best when supplemented with small parks in the residential areas.

**Recommendation:** The following villages should evaluate whether their park amenities are meeting community demand: Blanchester, New Vienna, and Clarksville. These jurisdictions have park amenities that are not reflective of community needs and desires, based on the 2015 Clinton County Parks Survey.

## **3. Parks should be safe places with activities for all ages.**

In general, all villages should continue to ensure that their parks serve a wide range of people through safe and equitable environments.

## **4. A community's park inventory should strike a healthy balance between active and passive parkland.**

Finding the desired amount of passive space will also be a challenge for villages. Municipalities located close to natural resources, such as the streams in Clarksville and Port William, might want to maximize their passive spaces.

With so many villages lacking in passive space, acquiring land that can be used for events and a variety of field sports will be advantageous. If space is limited, multipurpose fields are great ways to preserve passive space while adding active areas.

**Recommendation:** The following villages should focus on adding more active space to their park systems: New Vienna, Midland, and Port William.

The Following villages should focus on adding more passive space to their park systems: Blanchester, New Vienna, Clarksville, New Vienna, Midland, and Port William.

## **5. Clinton County as a whole should take steps to fund parks equitably and sustainably.**

Throughout Clinton County, there remains a disparity, the severity of which varies by location. In addition, the research shows that village residents not only rely on the parks within their village, but also on the City of Wilmington for parks to satisfy demand for park usage.

Increasingly, villages are struggling to provide the needed resources to maintain or develop park facilities.

**Recommendation:** Villages should have great interest in exploring the viability of consolidated park services; whether that is a joint recreation district, or some other structure. In addition, villages should utilize available grant funding for park development; but should be cognizant of the resources that are needed to sustain and maintain any developed park.

*For many small villages, having one or two sports fields with a playground might be the best use of active space. For larger villages such as Sabina and Blanchester, the existing community parks on the peripheries of town work best when supplemented with small parks in the residential areas.*

## COUNTY PARKS

Moving forward, CCPD has the potential to take on an additional 563.8 acres of parkland, bringing the total inventory to an approximate 848.1 acres. This includes the acreage of an additional 19.6 miles of trails needed to connect Clinton County to the regional trail network through Sabina, Wilmington, and Clarksville. Future parks for the CCPD include McKee Park, FER Woodland Farms, and Martin Marietta Quarry Park. Moreover, the CCPD would triple its current size if these projects are realized.

In addition to the acquired property, the CCPD would like to increase the amount of amenities, such as shelters, picnic areas, trails, and fishing areas. Building access and parking lots for new parks will be a necessary expenditure for providing access to new parks. The CCPD would also like to increase the educational value of its parks by introducing programs for orienteering, geocaching, expanding the amount of nature tours, and continue to preserve biologically-unique parts of the county.

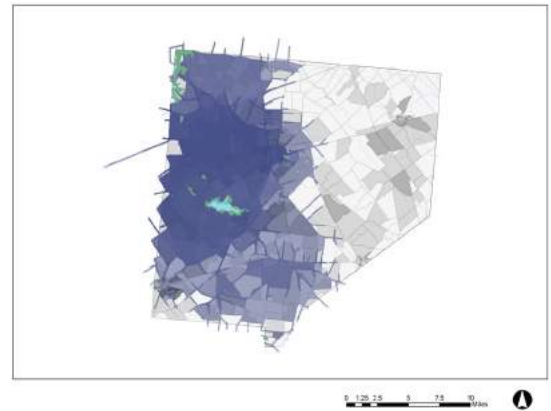
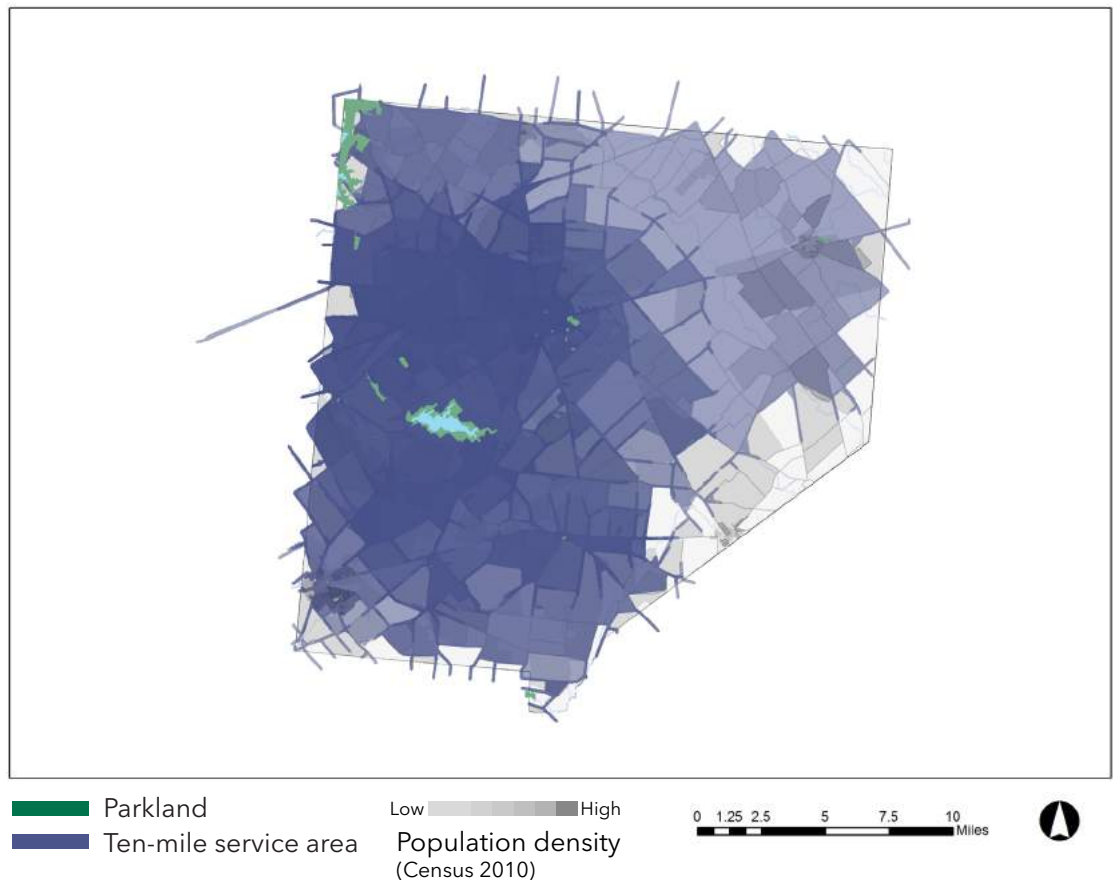


Figure 44: Existing ten-mile service area of CCPD and State Parks

Figure 45: Future ten-mile service area of CCPD and State Parks

The eastern portion of the County will be served with the addition of Martin Marietta Quarry Park.



#### MARTIN MARIETTA QUARRY PARK

What will be known as Quarry Park was previously the site of a mining operation owned by Martin Marietta. An agreement was made in 2002 with Clinton County that the 87-acre property be transferred from Martin Marietta to the County for public recreational use.

The agreement states that after 22 years from the commencement of mining activity, Martin Marietta will contribute \$700,000 to be used for the operation and maintenance of recreational facilities on the site.

The site of Martin Marietta Quarry Park is located on Haley Rd. and Gleason Rd. between Sabina and Wilmington (Figure 46). The addition of the park provides the northeastern portion of the County with a large community park, something which it is currently lacking as County parks are located in the western and southern parts of the county.

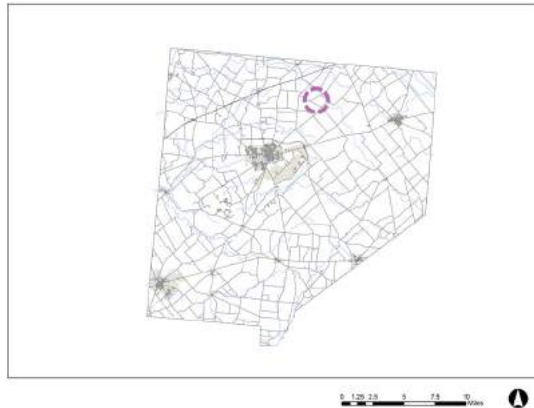


Figure 46:  
Martin Marietta  
Quarry will be the  
first CCPD park in the  
northwestern part of  
the County.



Aerial view of Martin  
Marietta Quarry





Top: Plan-view of  
Martin Marietta Quarry  
Park

Bottom: Rendering of  
dock/shelter area

The CCPD has begun to populate fish in the body of water, and a fishing dock is planned for the eastern side of the pond. A paved entrance and driveway will begin on Gleason Road and lead to a parking lot near the pond. The parking lot will be adjacent to a boat ramp leading into the pond, so that canoes and kayaks can be launched. The western side of the pond has very dry and hilly terrain, and would best be used as a space for mountain biking. Due to the absence of a tree canopy, a shelter will be built near the fishing dock for shade.

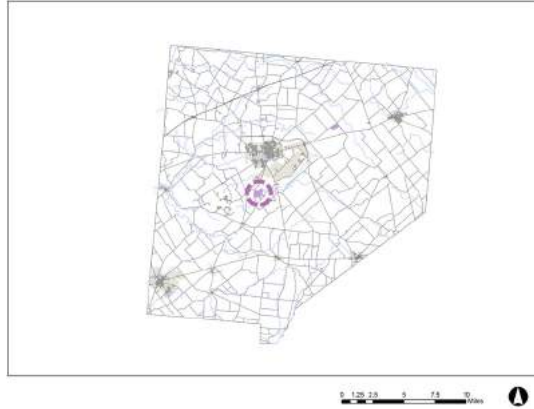




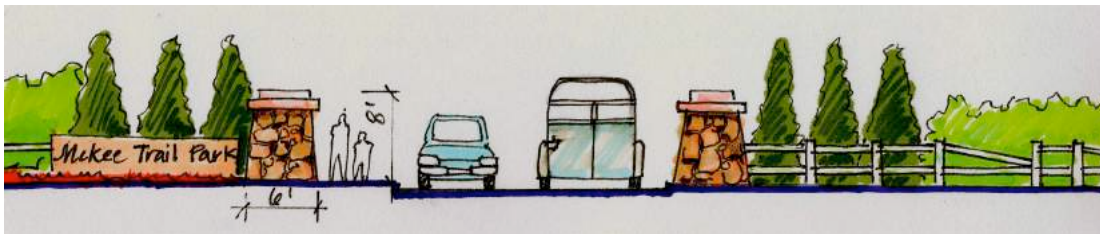
## MCKEE TRAIL PARK

In 2010, Ralph McKee proposed donating his 285-acre property to the CCPD for horseriding and general recreation by the public. The future park is south of Wilmington on 2850 Cuba Road. The large property has fields of native grasses, wildflowers, sycamore trees, and spruce trees. The park is also intersected by Cowan Creek and has a pond. The McKee family contracted with GroundWork Design Cincinnati LLC to produce detailed plans for the future park development. GroundWork Design planned for an entrance on Cuba Rd. with a paved walking path circulating through the entire park. Additional amenities include a steel bridge from Champion Bridge company in Wilmington, and various shelters, restrooms, and mulched trails.

At this time, the CCPD does not possess the necessary funds to develop the park to the level of detail expressed in these renderings.



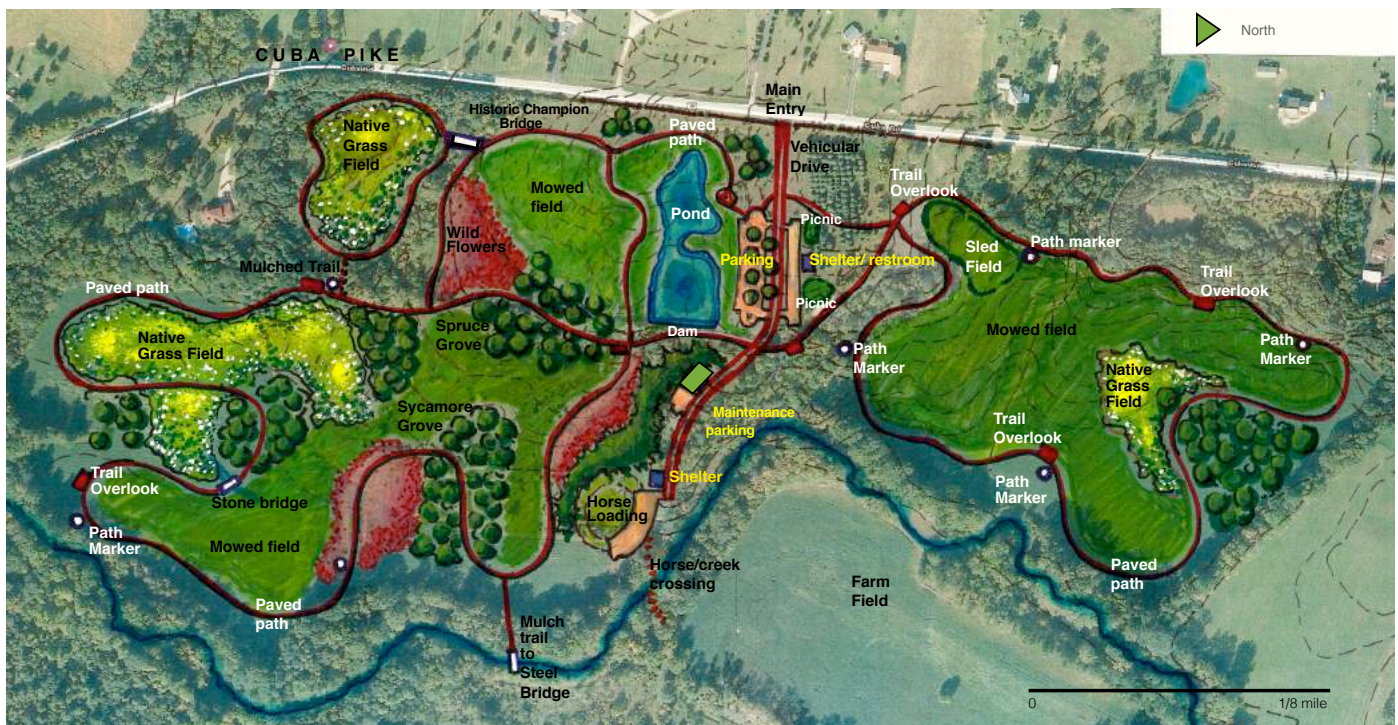
Location of McKee Trail Park, south of Wilmington



ELEVATION SKETCH: MAIN ENTRY  
VIEW OF PARK FROM CUBA PIKE

Left: Elevation sketch of the main entry to the park (GroundWork Design)

Bottom: Conceptual master plan of McKee Trail Park (GroundWork Design)



#### CLINTON-FAYETTE FRIENDSHIP TRAIL (CCFT)

The Clinton-Fayette Friendship Trail (CCFT) is the middle section of the 50-mile corridor connecting Morrow to New Holland. The CCFT section of the trail makes up fourteen of these miles between Wilmington and Washington Court House. The CCPD owns 7.2 miles of the trail that runs westward from Borum Road to Melvin Road in Clinton County. This trail is meant to create a connection to the regional and national trail network. The 50-mile abandoned rail corridor stretching from Morrow to New Holland will provide the right-of-way for the trail, and the corridor was identified in the State Trails Plan (Trails for Ohioans, 2005).

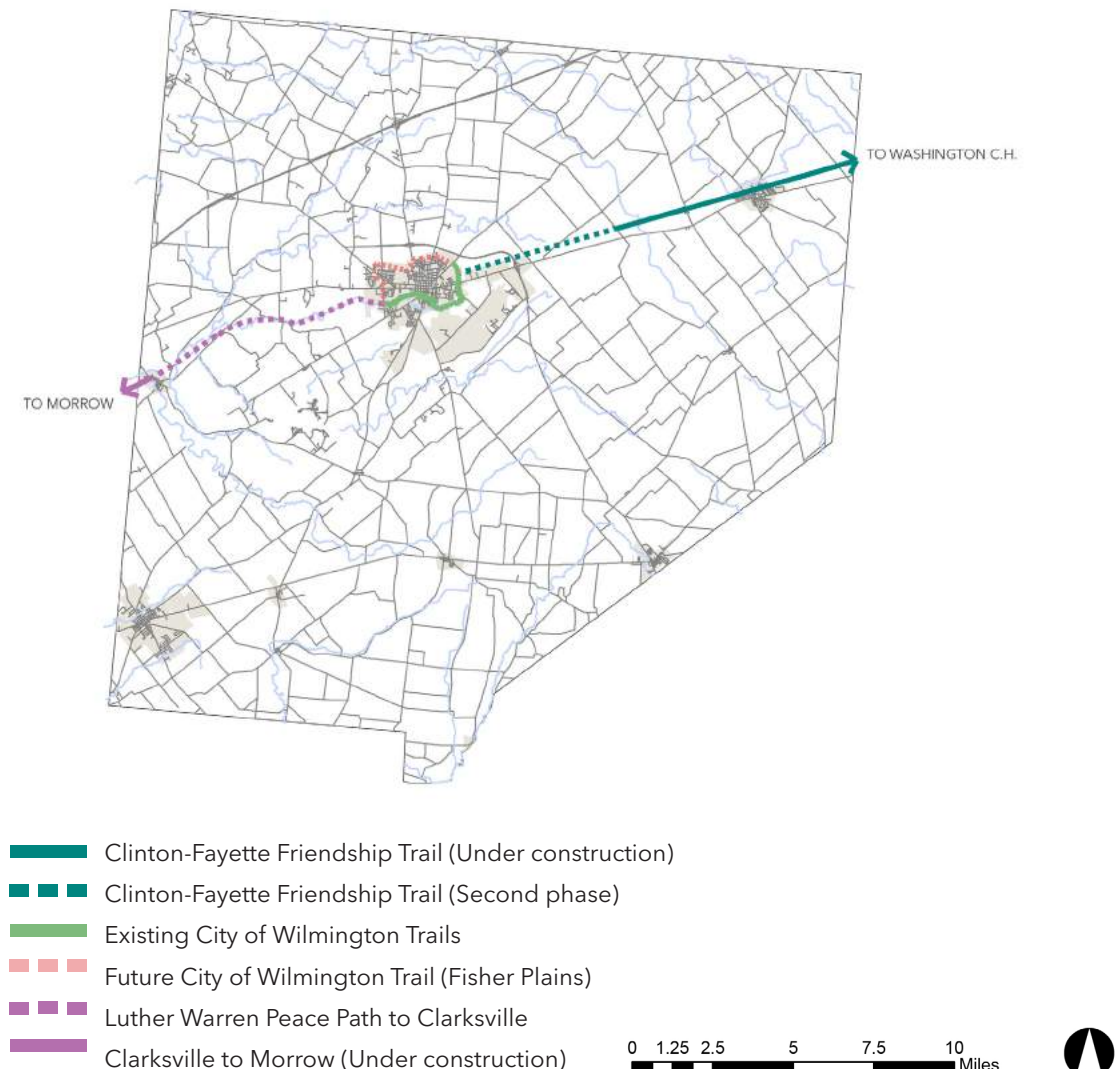
The first phase of the CCFT kicked off on October 28, 2015 in the Village of Sabina in Clinton County. The 7.2 mile stretch from the Fayette County line to Melvin Road runs through Sabina, and will be built with a Clean Ohio Trails Fund and \$80,000 from the Clinton County Commissioners. The second phase of the trail will build the trail two miles eastward from Borum Road into Fayette County. Tri-county Triangle Trails Association (TTT), is generating funding to complete the eight miles

required to connect CCFT to Washington Court House.

The CCFT is regionally and nationally important as it will connect rural populations in the Cincinnati/Dayton area to exurban counties in the regional trail system. Because of the length of this corridor, when complete, it will be an extremely important recreational and transportation corridor facility. Locally, the trail will allow one to travel from Wilmington, to Sabina, and to Washington Court House. The largest employer in Sabina, New Sabina Industries, has also committed to providing access to the trail from the back of their adjacent property making it easier for employees to use the trail to come to work and for lunchtime recreation.

The final phase of the CCFT for Clinton County will connect Wilmington to the finished trailhead at Melvin Road. The corridor will run westward from Melvin Road to Lowes Drive in Wilmington, effectively connecting the regional network to the

Figure 47:  
Proposed Clinton  
County trail network



existing network within the City. This five-mile portion of the corridor is currently under the ownership of private property owners.

**LUTHER WARREN PEACE PATH TO CLARKSVILLE**

In order for the Clinton County trail network to receive maximum utility from users, it is imperative that it connect to the Little Miami Trail to the West. As the CCFT connects Clinton County to the Columbus region, Wilmington must build towards the Little Miami Trail to connect to the Cincinnati region.

The rail corridor extending along the Lytle Creek from Wilmington to Clarksville is the proposed path of the western portion of the Clinton County trail network. Morrow, Ohio, is building a trail to Clarksville in order to extend a path to the Little Miami Trail. The CCPD plans to connect from Clarksville to the Luther Warren Peace Path off of Nelson Rd. in Wilmington. The connection to Wilmington will connect to both a city and regional network.

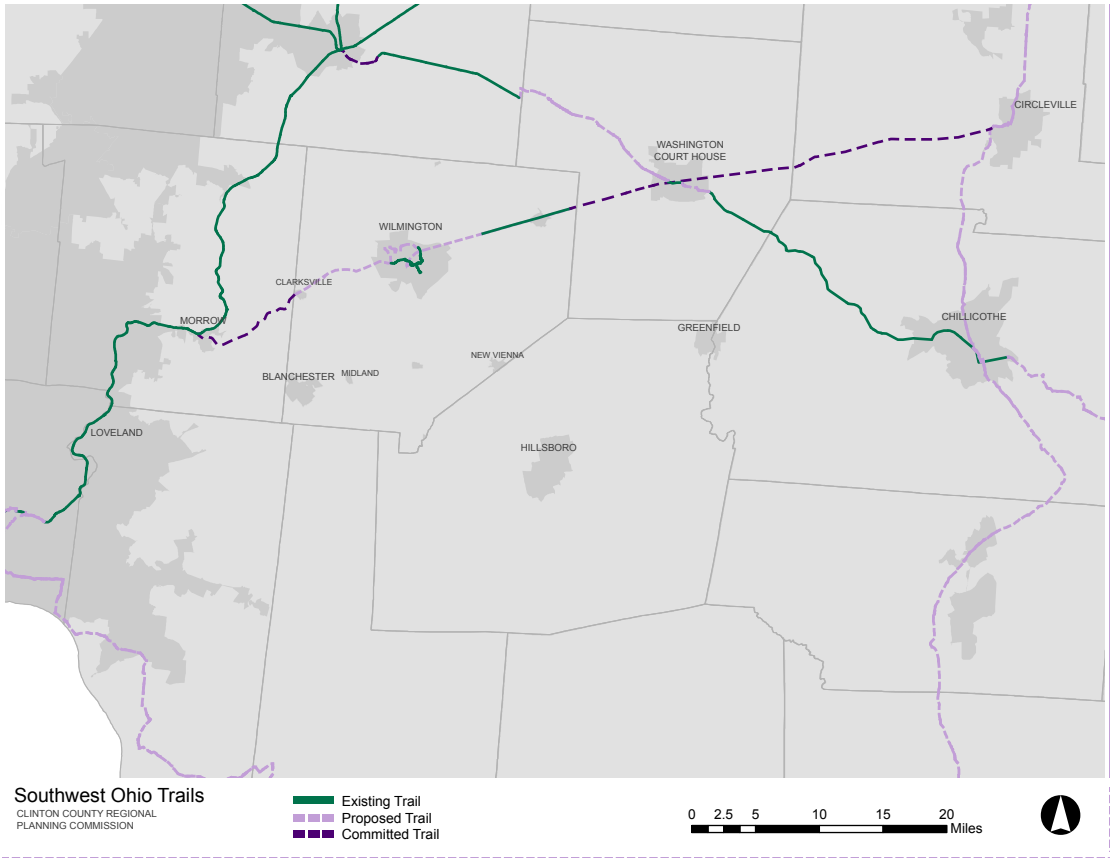


Figure 48:  
Clinton County within  
the regional trail  
network



#### FER WOODLAND FARMS

FER Woodland Farms is a 144-acre nature preserve that will be donated to the CCPD. The site is located east of Westboro on the corner of Lynchburg Road and Chaney Road.



Figure 49: FER Woodland Farms

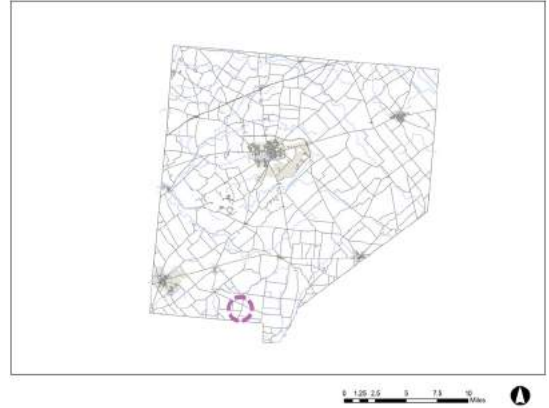


Figure 50: Location of park within Clinton County

#### LITTLE HEARTS BIG SMILES PLAYGROUND

The Little Hearts Big Smiles Playground is designed to accommodate handicap users and is regularly used by families with and without handicap users. As demand increases, there is available land south of the existing facility that could accommodate future growth. In addition, this land could be utilized for other recreational development that functions well in relation to the activity at the existing facility.

As mentioned previously, the land for the Little Hearts Big Smiles Playground is owed by the CCPD, but the Little Hearts Big Smiles nonprofit is responsible for the maintenance and capital improvements of the park. It may be worth exploring how future growth and development could align with the City of Wilmington Parks to leverage resources and capacity for maintenance and capital improvements.

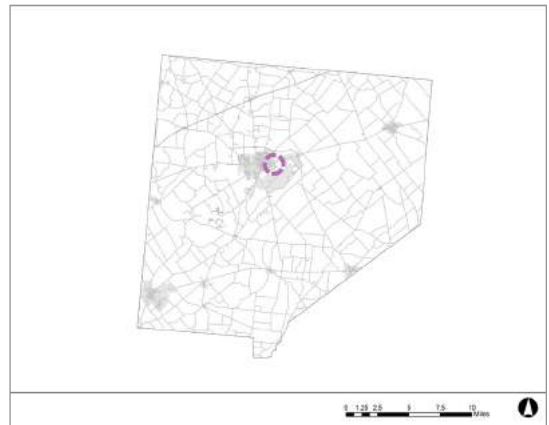


Figure 51: Location of park within Clinton County



# A NEW MODEL FOR COUNTY PARKS

## JOINT RECREATION DISTRICTS

Joint Recreation Districts (JRDs) are governing bodies that operate and maintain recreation facilities in participating political subdivisions. Townships, villages, and cities may form a JRD with one another to jointly manage and fund parks. JRDs possess the same powers that municipal corporations have over parks. They have the ability to buy and sell land, issue bonds, levy taxes, and hire staff. The difference is that JRDs involve more than one political subdivision.

### JOINING A JRD:

If the JRD does not impose a tax, then the subdivision enters on approval of the JRD's board of trustees. If the JRD does impose a tax, then the subdivision enters on approval of the JRD board of trustees and the majority of the electorate of the petitioning subdivision.

### HOW DO COUNTY RESIDENTS BENEFIT?

According to a 2015 City of Wilmington Parks survey, 42% of the respondents that used the City parks stated that they live outside of Wilmington. In the Clinton County Parks Survey, 74% of County residents stated that they frequently use Wilmington parks. Based on median home values, each property owner in Wilmington currently pays approximately \$49 annually to fund parks. By having municipalities and villages in cooperation, not only will the existing facilities throughout Clinton County be improved, but additional facilities could be built. Under a joint system, taxpayers will not only contribute to their own jurisdiction, but also to jurisdictions throughout the County. With over a third of park users coming from outside of the City of Wilmington, City residents are in essence subsidizing park facilities for the use of outside residents. Some might speculate that Wilmington Parks is able to make up for wear and tear from visitors by charging program fees, but in actuality, fees only account for less than 4% of the annual revenue. In addition, the program fees charged for youth sports do not fully cover the costs of field and equipment maintenance. The remaining cost for Wilmington Park youth sports is subsidized by the property tax levy.

### HOW MUCH SHOULD WE PAY FOR PARKS?

The tax levy rate would be determined by the JRD. Currently, there is no tax for County residents for parks. If a JRD introduced a 1.25mil tax levy, same that Wilmington currently has, it would cost each property

owner approximately \$49 annually (based on of median home values in the County). The electorate would have to approve the proposed tax levy by a majority vote.

For Wilmington residents, if the JRD decided to keep the tax levy at 1.25mil, then their taxes would not be affected. If the JRD proposed to change the rate, the electorate would have to approve the proposed tax by a majority vote.

## SURVEY RESULTS

Of all survey respondents, 44.6% were interested in the idea of a JRD, with 44.3% stating that they were possibly interested, but would need to know more (Figure 51). 10.5% were not at all interested in the idea of a JRD. Of the 10.5% who were not interested, 39% came from Wilmington, 52% came from villages, and 6% came from the County (3% outside of the County).

## MOVING FORWARD

In order for a JRD to be established, the jurisdictions interested in joining must move by legislative authority to use the JRD to manage and operate parks. The municipalities and townships involved must form a board and specify the number of members and the method of appointing members and filling vacancies. Then, the board is able to hire staff. If a tax is levied on a new jurisdiction or is changed for an existing one, a majority vote must approve the resolution by the electorate.

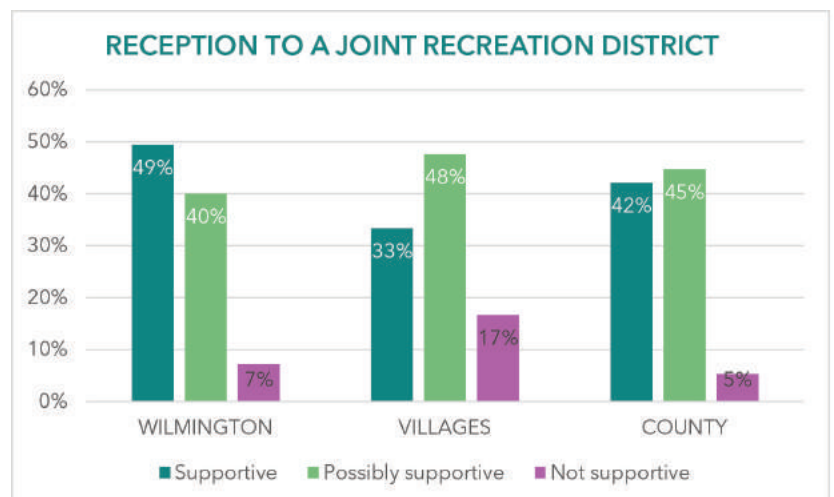


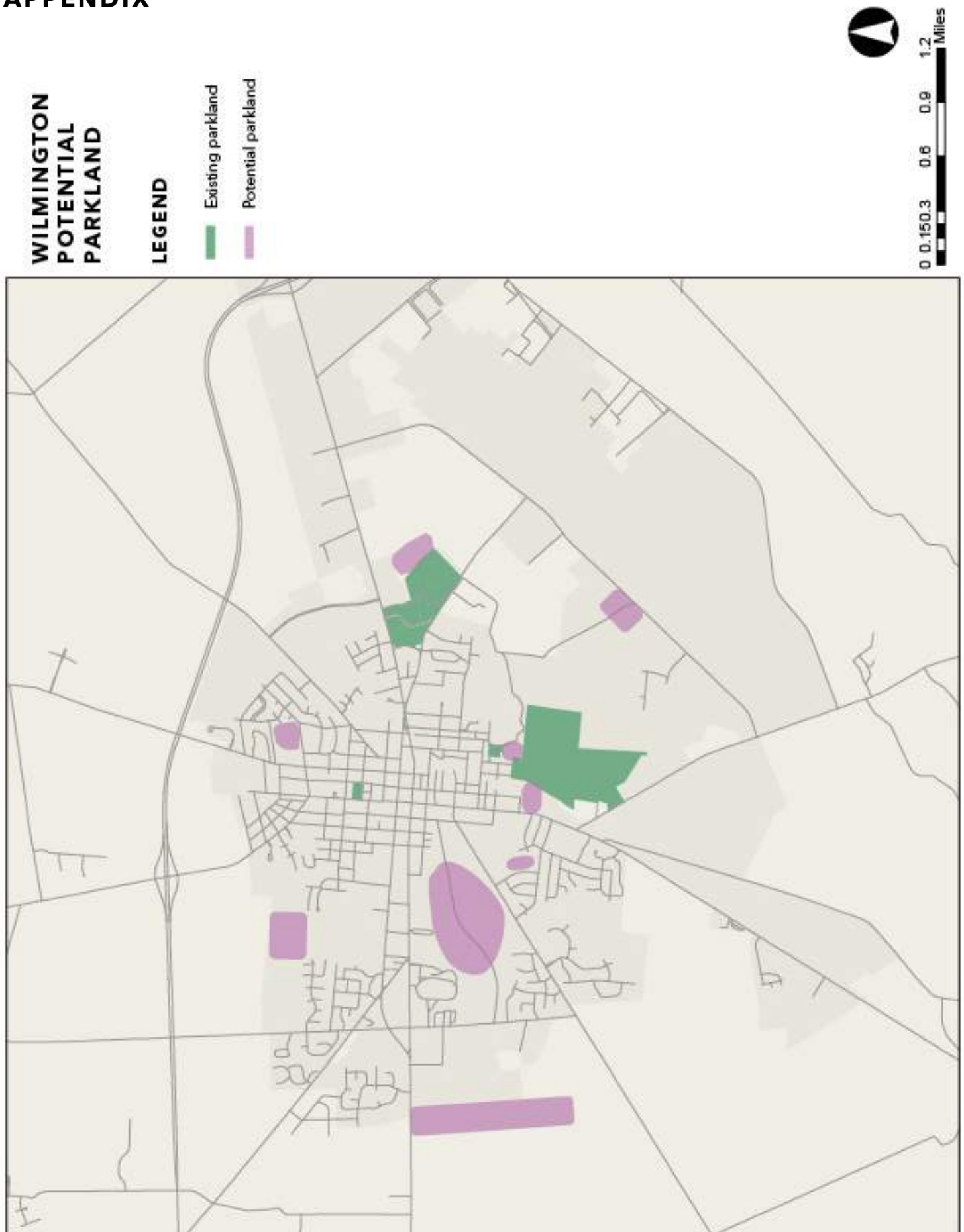
Figure 52

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

An "x" in a cell indicates which of the three improvement categories (Standards, Access, and Financial Resources) a recommendation addresses.

Wilmington Parks			
Project	Standards	Access	Financial Resources
Splash Park	x		
Skate Park	x		
Xidas Park	x	x	
Point Park Redesign	x	x	
Lytle Creek Connector	x	x	
Stuckey Farm Park	x	x	
Fisher Plains Trail	x	x	
Joint Use Agreements			x
Joint Recreation District			x
Capital Improvement Plan			x
Sidewalk Repair Schedule		x	x
Village Parks			
Project	Standards	Access	Financial Resources
Develop parks in Sabina, New Vienna, and Port William	x	x	
Develop a sidewalk repair plan for Blanchester, Sabina, New Vienna, Clarksville, and Midland		x	x
Add parks with passive space in Blanchester, New Vienna, Midland, Clarksville and Port William	x		
Add parks with active space in New Vienna, Midland, and Port William	x		
Host workshops in Blanchester, Sabina, New Vienna, and Clarksville to determine what park amenities need to be added to existing parks	x		
Joint Recreation District			x
Clinton County Parks District			
Project	Standards	Access	Financial Resources
Martin Marietta Quarry Park	x	x	
McKee Trail Park	x		
Clinton-Fayette Friendship Trail	x	x	
Luther Warren Peace Path to Clarksville Trail	x	x	
FER Woodland Farms	x		
Joint Recreation District			x

## APPENDIX





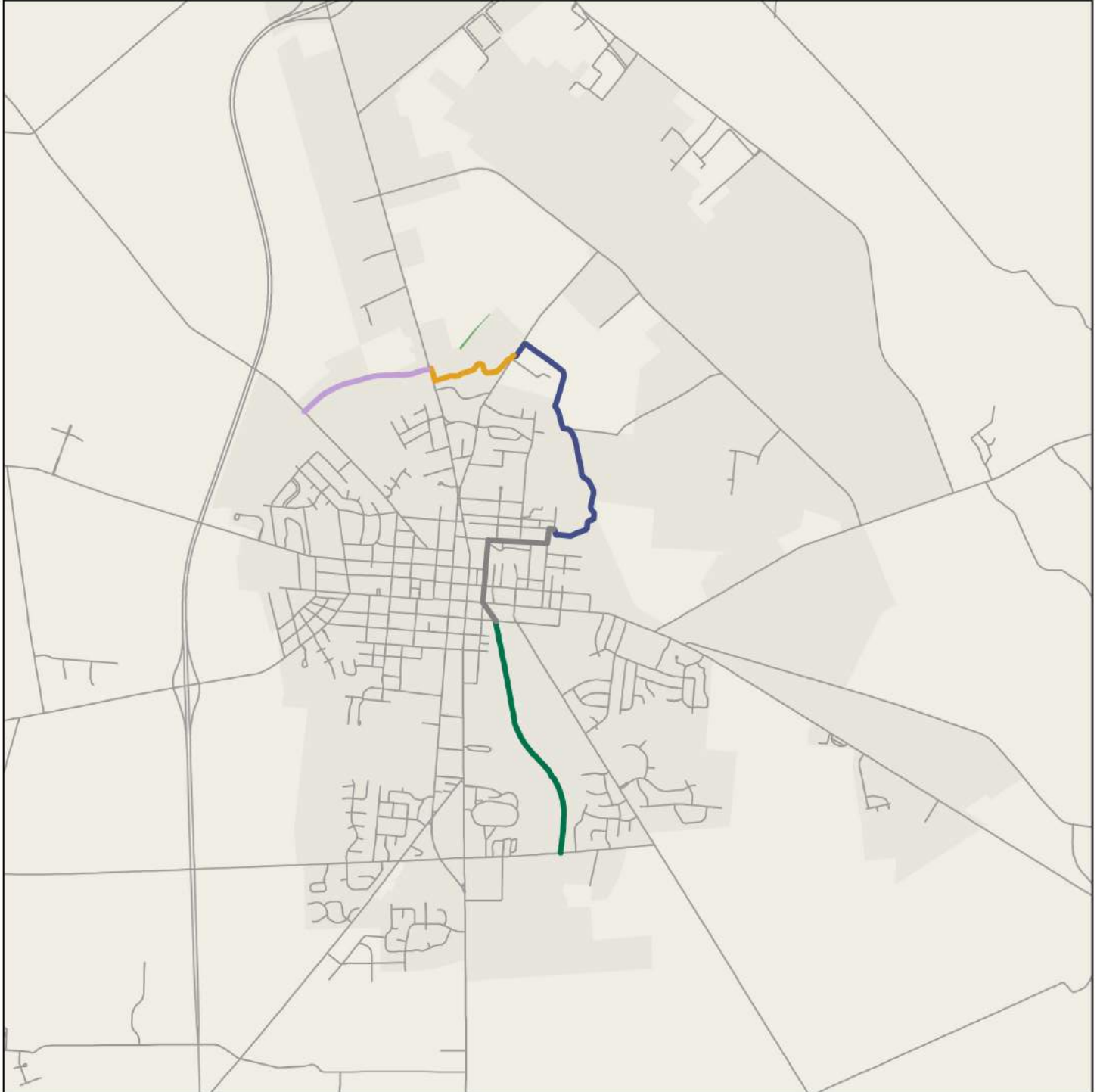
# EXISTING WILMINGTON TRAILS

## LEGEND

- Luther E. Warren Peace Path
- Judy Gano Trail
- 4-C Bicentennial Trail
- Lowe's Dr. Trail
- Urban Trail Connector



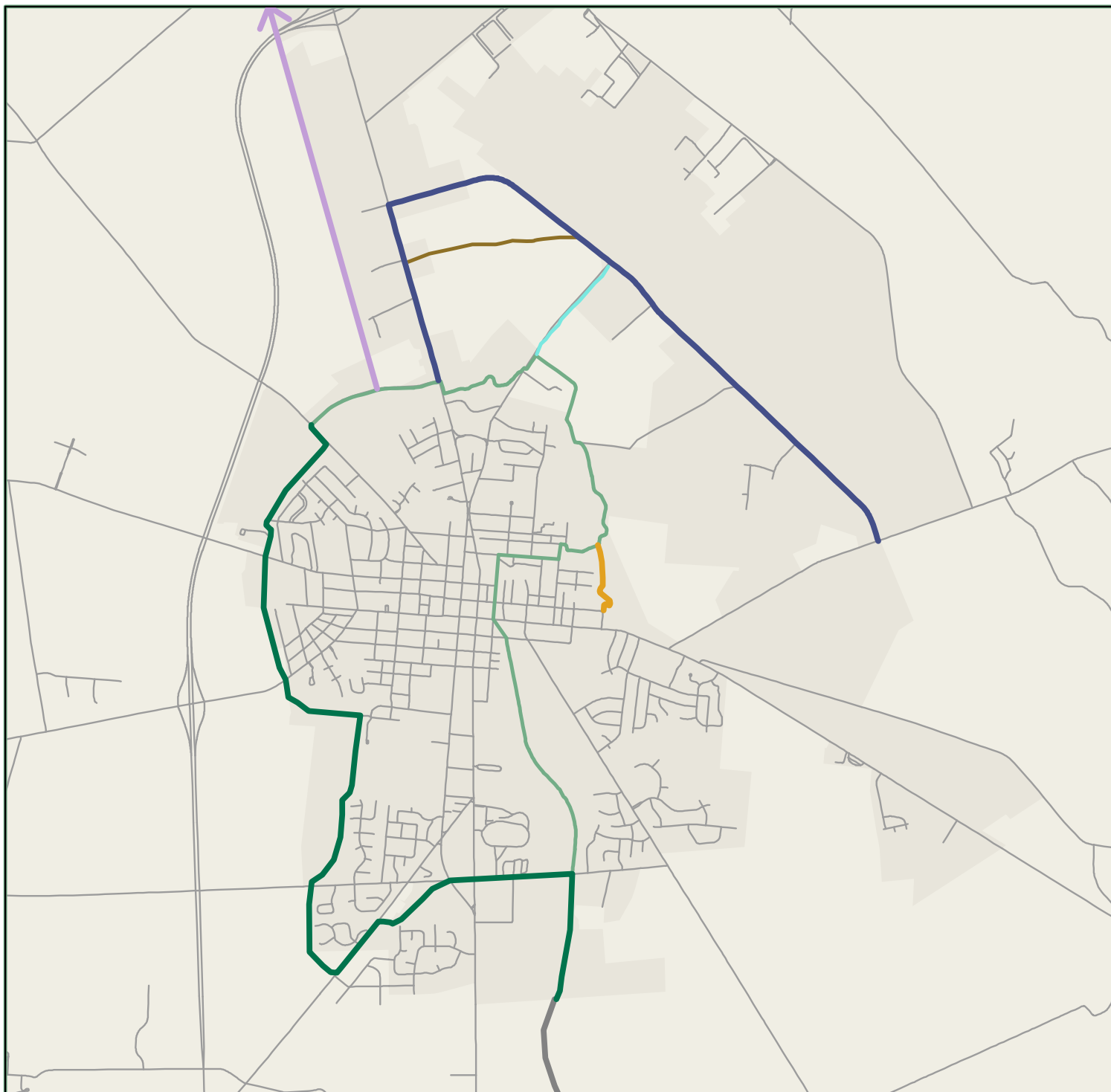
0 0.150.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Miles



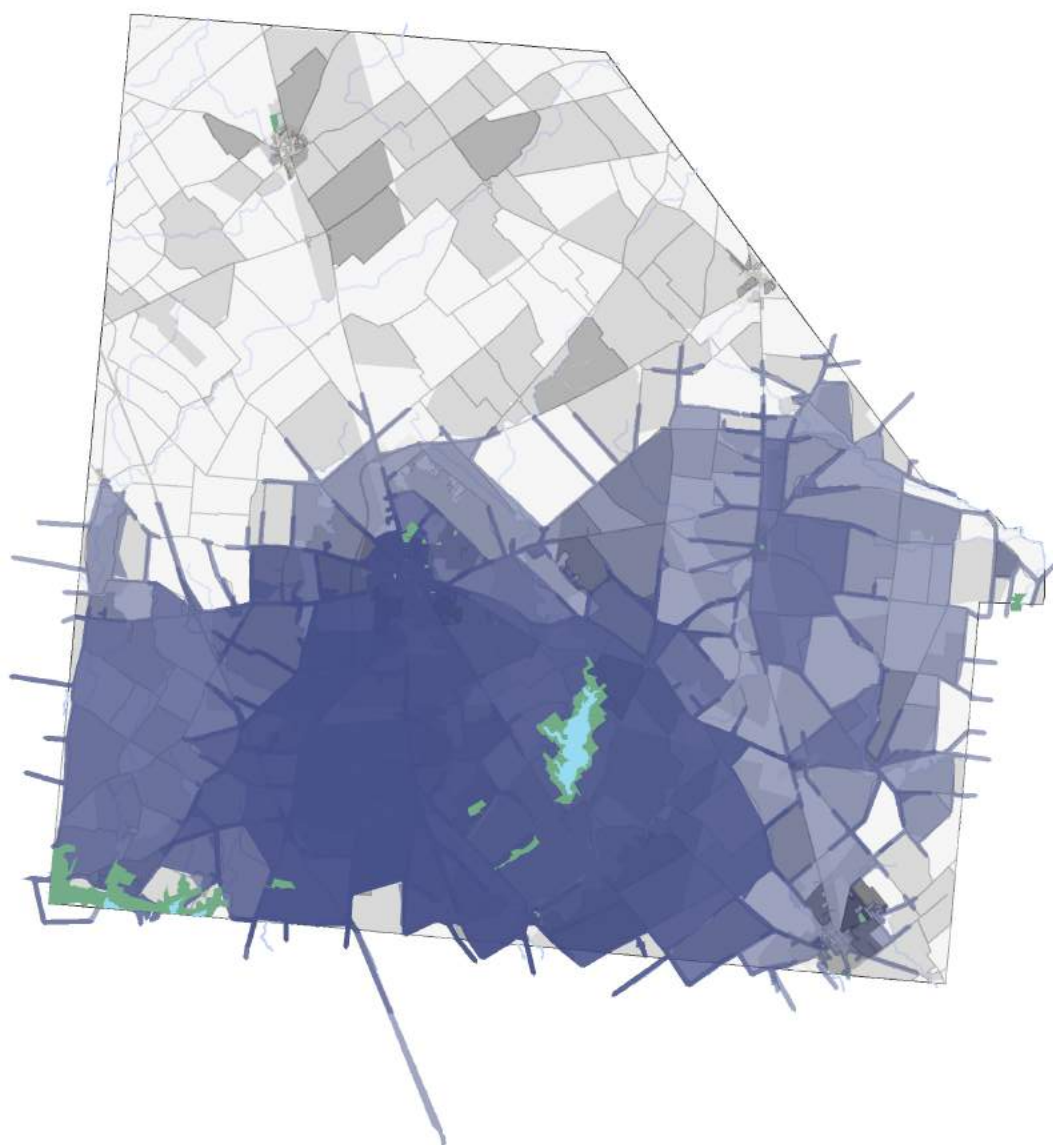
# FUTURE WILMINGTON TRAILS

## LEGEND

- Existing trails
- Fisher Plains Trail
- Lytle Creek Connector
- Fife to Davids Drive
- Davids to Rombach
- Davids Dr. Trail
- Clinton-Fayette Friendship Trail
- Wilmington to Clarksville Trail



0 0.150.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Miles

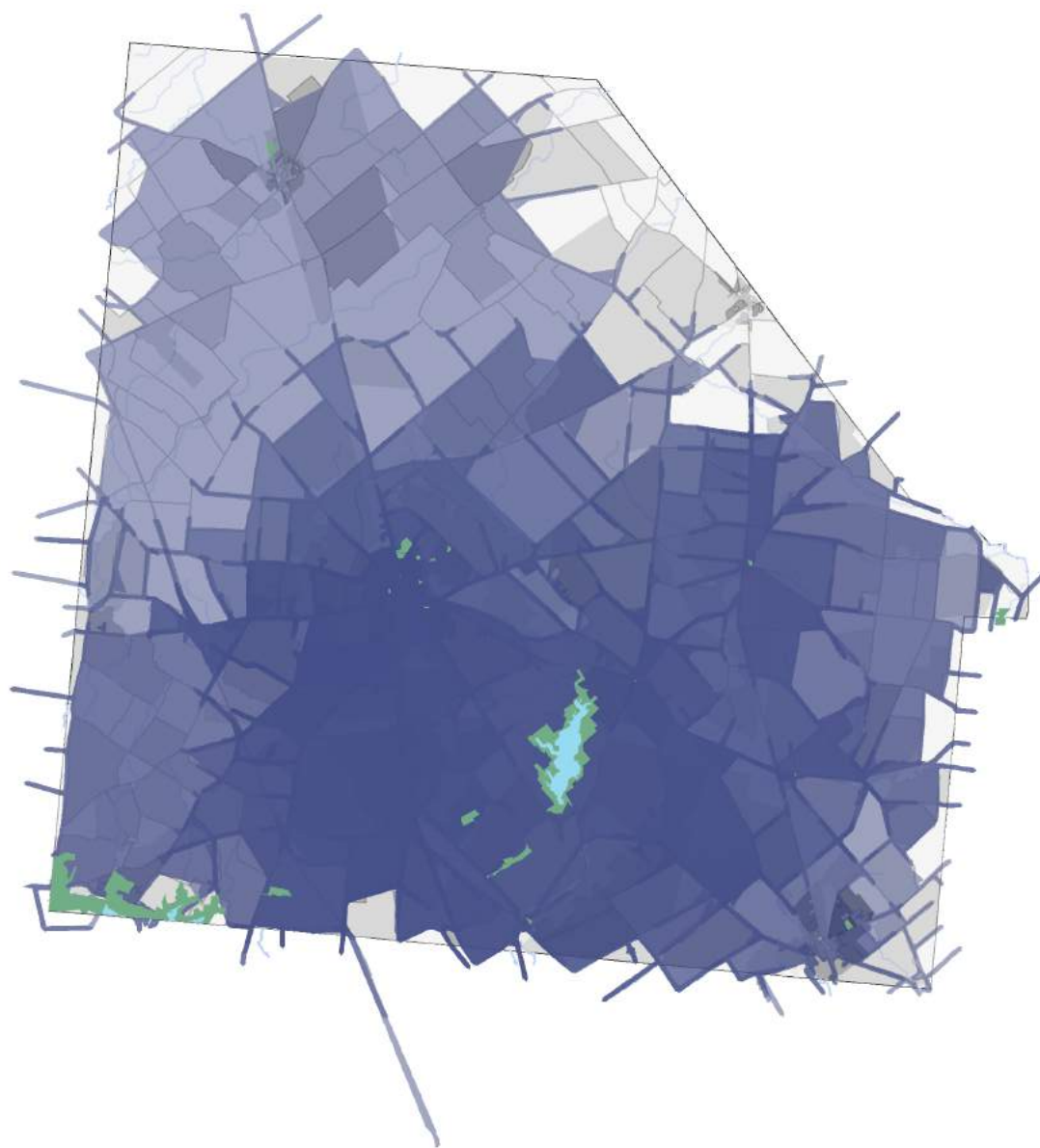


Existing park land  
Ten-mile service area

Low High  
Population density  
(Census 2010)

0 1.25 2.5 5 7.5 10  
Miles





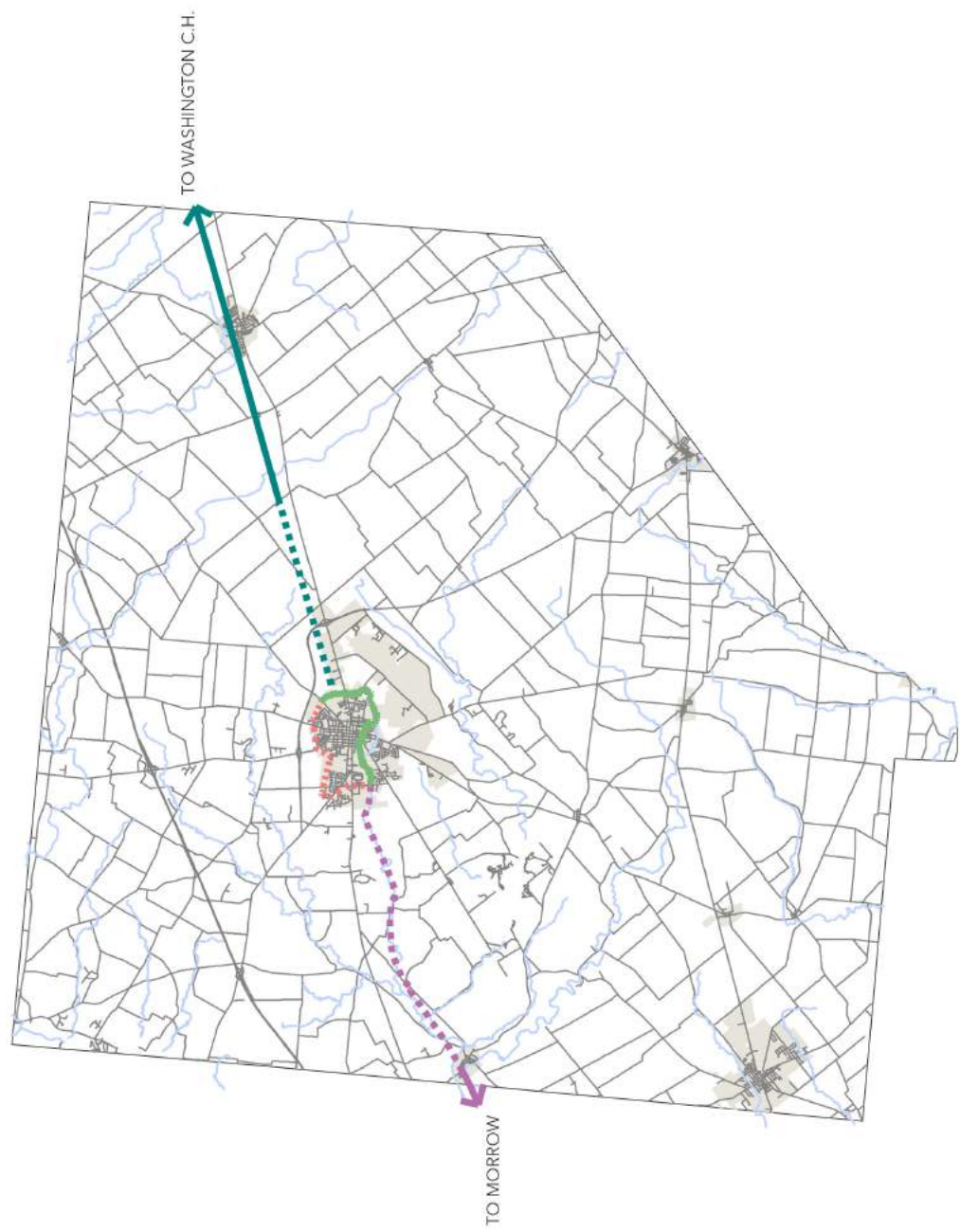
Low High  
Population density  
(Census 2010)

Parkland  
Ten-mile service area



0 1.25 2.5 5 7.5 10 Miles

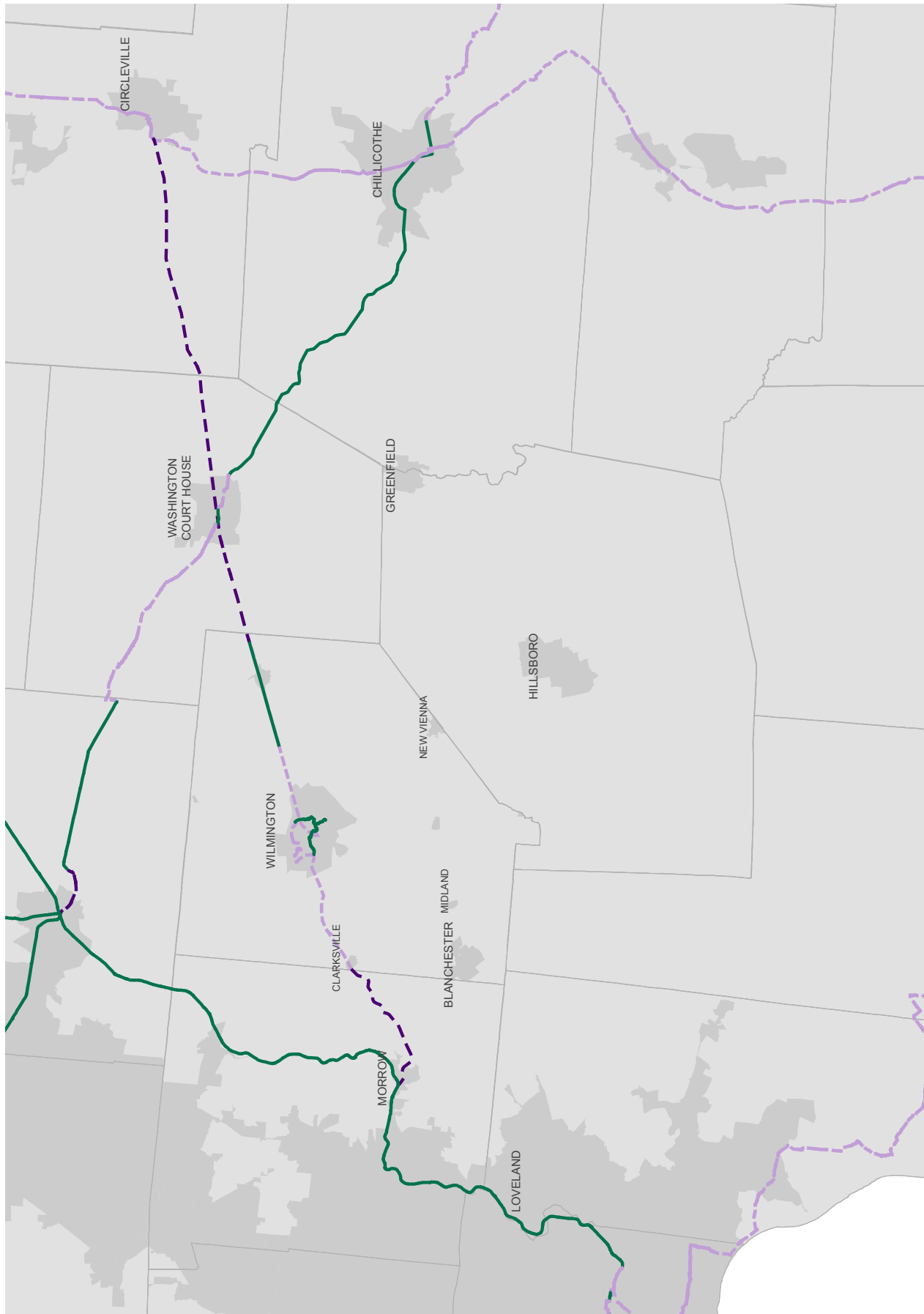




### CLINTON COUNTY TRAILS PLAN

- Clinton-Fayette Friendship Trail (Under construction)
- Clinton-Fayette Friendship Trail (Second phase)
- Existing City of Wilmington Trails
- Future City of Wilmington Trail (Fisher Plains)
- Luther Warren Peace Path to Clarksville
- Clarksville to Morrow (Under construction)





# Southwest Ohio Trails CLINTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

- Existing Trail
- Proposed Trail
- Committed Trail

