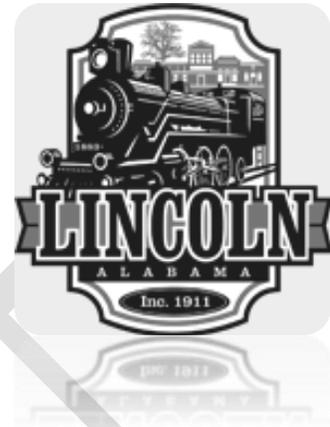


Chapter 6: Recreation and Senior Services



Introduction

Parks and Recreation services play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for a city's residents.¹ Among the benefits of a strong parks and recreation program are:

- Improved quality of life through recreation programming, leisure activities, and resource conservation;
- Parks, recreation and leisure activities provide our youth with opportunities to develop healthy lifestyle habits and grow into strong community participants.
- Parks, recreation and leisure activities create lifelines and ongoing life experiences for older members of our community and generate opportunities for citizens to come together around common activities.
- Public parks and recreation facilities create enormous economic value through increased partnerships, which improves the job base and the economic viability of the local economy, including business relocation and expansion in the community, generation of new jobs, increasing home values and increased tourism.

Executive Summary

The City of Lincoln maintains approximately 84 acres of parks, and recreational facilities within the city limits. Additionally, Lincoln residents have nearby access to State, National and privately maintained park land and multi-use trail facilities. These facilities range from a large National Forest to walking and biking trails, ball fields, tennis courts and an off-road trail facility. City officials past and present have understood the role parks play in a healthy, livable and balanced city and that preserving land for future generation should be a priority.

Existing Conditions

Currently the Lincoln Parks & Recreation Department manages seven (7) parks, three (3) of which include walking trails –

- **Moseley Park:** This is a twelve (12) acres park featuring a one-half (½) mile walking trail, softball field; baseball field; pavilions with picnic tables and grills; tennis courts; basketball court; and a playground.
- **Pine Grove Park:** A .83 acre neighborhood park featuring 2 pavilions, a playground and basketball court.

- **First Avenue Park:** A 2.7 acre neighborhood park featuring a playground, baseball field and pavilion.
- **Randolph Park (OldTown Park):** A one-half (½) acre passive park in Historic Downtown featuring an Honor and Memorial Walk. This “open space” area is the site of many of Lincoln’s citywide events including Music on Magnolia, Veteran’s Day Ceremony, Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony and the Farmers Market.
- **England Park-Blue Eye Trail:** A five (5) acre passive park with a 1/3 of a mile walking trail and picnic area located adjacent to Historic Downtown. This facility also directly connects to the Blue Eye Creek walking trail.
- **Blue Eye Creek Fishing & Walking Trail:** Is a 3.95 acre passive park located in Historic Downtown, features a pavilion, accessible fishing stations and a one-tenth mile long trail with plans for future extensions. This facility is also the host to both the youth and senior citizens fishing derbies each year.
- **Lincoln Park:** This 59 acre recreation area features 4 Youth baseball fields; 1 boys/high school baseball field; 2 softball fields youth and adult; 1 soccer field; concession stand; 2 playgrounds; archery range, BirdieBall®, and a 9 hole golf course.

The City of Lincoln maintains approximately 84 acres of parks, and recreational facilities within the city limits.

Together these facilities provide a wide array of activities including walking trails, ball fields tennis & basketball courts, pavilions, toddler areas, picnic and fishing areas, archery and the State’s 1st BirdieBall® golf course. The Parks & Recreation Department also sponsors a number of activities including the Spring Opening Day Parade, quarterly senior citizen days, as well as several activities planned around various annual holidays. In addition, the Department host such events as Taste of Lincoln, Music on Magnolia, Movies in the Park, Farmer’s Market & Hometown Harvest and an annual Bike Ride.

Existing Plans

Even with all of the facilities and activities that the Lincoln’s Parks and Recreation Department oversee there is no comprehensive “recreation master plan” for the future. Land is purchased, and facilities built on an as needed basis or as money becomes available. While this may be acceptable for the short term, over the course of time this approach is not sustainable. It is

important to plan ahead for potential development while land best suited for future parks and recreation facilities is available.

Despite the lack of a “comprehensive” parks plan, there are several existing plans related to Parks and Recreation. These include:

- Development of a phased master plan for Moseley Park through grant funds received from the Land and Water Conservation Fund of ADECA. Plans are to include new features such as additional pavilions, new playground equipment and play surface and improvements to parking and accessibility.
- The planned addition of new playground equipment to Piney Grove Park.
- Repurposing of select fields in Lincoln Park, to allow for baseball and softball play, will allow for the future hosting of additional tournaments.

Any future development of a recreation master plan should include all existing facilities, all future planned improvements and long range recommendations for park locations, land acquisitions, and new facilities. Additionally, this -recreation master plan should include future program planning and maintenance and management requirements.

Athletic Programs

The Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of youth athletic programs including baseball, softball, basketball and soccer on a seasonal basis. These leagues take advantage of Lincoln’s lighted fields and facilities.

Lincoln should begin developing adult recreation programs including athletic, fitness, and culture. There are many great examples of these types of programs being developed across the State. These types of activities should be made part of a Recreation Master Plan and efforts should be made to incorporate them, over time, into the Parks and Recreation program.

Senior Citizen Programs

The City of Lincoln provides some basic programs for their senior citizens including a senior center with meeting space, quarterly senior citizens day, and regular bingo nights. However, these activities are limited and should be expanded particularly to include today’s more active senior adults.

According to a 2010 report by The Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics People who reach age 65 will live another 18.5 years 14 years longer than in 1960.

- From 2006 to 2008, 74.5% of those 65 and older reported being in good to excellent health.
- About 22% of seniors reported regular physical activity.²

Exercise of all types benefits people with arthritis, heart disease, diabetes or high blood pressure. Some options that might be considered for inclusion in Lincoln's Recreation programming for seniors are: walking, jogging, swimming, aqua aerobics, cycling, yoga, Pilates, strength training, line dancing, square dancing, ballroom dancing, golf and volunteerism. Again, as with adult activities, there are examples of many cities in Alabama providing a variety of recreational and cultural activities for seniors. These activities should be explored and included in the proposed Recreation Master plan.

Recreation Centers and Programs

The Parks and Recreation Department has two facility buildings for organized sports and activities. These facilities may be rented by the public on an as available basis.

- ***Lincoln City Center*** has an exercise room, gym, basketball court, a fitness room with cardio and weight equipment and 2 meeting rooms. Rental and use of this facility has been growing recently and should anticipate continuation of this trend. Activities currently conducted in the Center include after school programs, Boys & Girls Club, Girl Scouts and other fitness and cultural activities.
- ***Lincoln Senior Center*** includes a large activity room, perfect for meetings and gatherings. The Center is rented to a number of for profit and non-profit groups and serves as a warming station during inclement weather conditions.

Non-City Managed Facilities

When developing an inventory of recreation facilities, it is important to include facilities that are not owned or managed by the City. Existing public and private facilities assist in determining appropriate locations for new public recreation areas.

Areas of recreational interest that are not managed by the City of Lincoln include, but are not limited to:

- **Talladega County Schools**

Located on approximately 63 acres at the intersection of Highway 77 and Highway 78 in Lincoln are three state of the art public schools, elementary, middle and high school. These schools provide recreational facilities such as football and baseball fields, tennis courts, track, playgrounds and open space areas.

- **Honda Park**

At the intersection of U.S. Highway 78 and Russell Road, Honda Corporation provides a large recreation facility for their employees' use which includes a walking rail, tennis courts basketball courts, ball fields and a playground.

- **Cheaha State Park & Talladega National Forest**

Locate approximately thirty minutes away, Cheaha State Park is the home of Cheaha Mountain which, at 2,407 feet, is the highest point in the State of Alabama. The park hosts hiking trails, mountain bike trails, a lake for swimming and fishing, an indian artifact museum, a CCC museum a restaurant, and a wide range of lodging options from camp grounds to motel rooms.



Blue Eye Fishing Trail

The park is completely surrounded by the Talladega National Forest which offers additional recreational resources including easily accessible trails to waterfalls and natural vistas.

- **Coosa River, Lake Logan Martin**

Lincoln is located along the shores of Logan Martin Lake on the Coosa River in east-central Alabama. This 17,000 acre Coosa River reservoir was built in 1965 by Alabama Power Company. Nicknamed "Lake of a Thousand Coves" by locals, Logan Martin has 275 miles of shoreline along its 48.5 mile length sandwiched between Logan Martin Dam on the south and Neely Henry Dam on the north. The depth of the lake is 35 to 110 feet with five feet average water level variance. Lake Logan Martin boasts some of the nation's finest bass fishing, as well as opportunities for recreational boating, skiing and swimming.

- **Top Trails Outdoor Recreation Park**

Located 20 minutes south of Lincoln, this is a 2,800 acre off-road recreational trails park offering more than 70 miles of OHV trails a Kiddie Track, a technical 12 mile Single Track Trail Loop, archery ranges and primitive camping sites with more activities planned. This is a Public Park Authority sponsored by the Cities of Lincoln and Talladega.

Cultural Programs

Cultural venues near Lincoln include:

- **Anniston Museum**

<http://www.annistonmuseum.org/>

The Anniston Museum of Natural History and Berman Museum offers great family entertainment.

- **Ritz Theatre of Performing Arts**

www.ritztalladega.com

Presentation of stage plays and musical in the historic 1930s Art Deco Ritz Theatre.

- **Barber Motor Sports Park**

<http://barbermotorsports.com/vintage-home.php>

The Barber Motor Sports Park in Leeds is likely the largest motorcycle museums in the world. This facility is a modern building holding almost every motorcycle one can imagine. Adjacent to the museum is the 2.38 miles long track.

Park Standards

Many communities have adopted standards based on the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) guidelines. The NRPA recommends a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of open space per 1,000 people. It also suggests a classification system for parks. These range from

mini-parks to regional and national parks. In addition to NRPA criteria, Park and Recreation standards should be based on the following:

- **Relevance.** They should reflect the needs and lifestyles of today’s residents.
- **People Orientation.** They should reflect the unique needs and preferences of people in the area being served.
- **Performance Standards.** They should provide a basis for measuring achievement of community objectives. They should measure the quality of recreation service rather than simply the quantity.
- **Feasibility.** They should be attainable within a reasonable timeframe and with available funding sources.
- **Practicality.** They should be simple to understand and apply. They should be based on sound planning principles, information and a credible development process. They should also be flexible enough to handle unanticipated situations and rapidly changing needs.

The following table shows the classification and standards per NRPA. These should be considered minimum standards until such time as the City of Lincoln determines if they fit the City’s needs or should be modified.

Park Type	Acres/1000 population	Minimum Size	Service Area Radius
Mini Park	0.25 – 0.50	1 Acre or Less	<0.25 mile/5 minute walk
Neighborhood Park	1.0 – 2.0	15 Acres	0.5 mile/12 minute walk
Community Park	5.0 – 8.0	25 Acres	1-2 miles/5 minute drive
Regional Park	Variable	Variable	30 miles/1 hour drive

www.nrpa.org

Land Acquisition

As Lincoln continues to grow, land acquisition is very important for future park construction. While it is impossible to tell with full certainty where growth is going to occur, the Future Land Use Plan can help direct growth and provide guidance regarding where future development will occur. At present the areas in the western portions of Lincoln, both north and south of the interstate, are underserved compared to the rest of the City. Either of these areas could be looked at for a lake front park with boat ramps.

Future park locations can be divided into three categories: *planned future parks*, where the City already owns the property and plans a park at that location; *possible future parks*, where the City already owns the property in question, but has not committed to a park at that location; and *identified needs*, where there is the need for a future park based on projected growth in the area.

Funding/Incorporating Open Space into New Development

With the implementation of the Future Land Use Plan, it will be easier for the City to justify land purchase in certain areas established by this plan. The City can also acquire land through development agreements, by donation or by first right-of-refusal agreements with surrounding property owners to expand existing facilities.

One way to help fund open space programs is the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. In 2014 this program handed out \$43 million across the United States to help preserve open space and recreation land. Funding for this program is funneled through the State government, and is quite limited. “To be eligible for grants, every State must prepare and regularly update a statewide recreation plan (sometimes called a SCORP, for Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan). Most SCORPs address the demand for and supply of recreation resources (local, state and federal) within a state, identify needs and new opportunities for recreation improvements and set forth an implementation program to meet the goals identified by its citizens and elected leaders.”³ The State of Alabama received \$683,000 from this fund for new parks in FY 2012.² While this program would require cooperation with the state, it is still an attractive option for additional funding.

Funding Sources

In order to maintain a high level of service for an increasing population, funding will need to increase as well. A well-maintained park system can be an economic development tool in the form of higher property values and by hosting regional tournaments for soccer, baseball and softball. These sports are becoming a large industry and local tournaments bring in significant revenue in the form of entry fees, hotels, and support of local businesses.

There are a number of ways to acquire funding for park and recreation maintenance and development. Funding sources may include tax revenue, user fees, fund raisers and donations. Additionally, grant funding is available from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) Recreation Division and through Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) and the Recreational Trails Fund.

Maintenance of Facilities

Maintenance is important for aesthetic value and for the health of those using the facilities. While the general consensus of the community is that parks and facilities are well maintained, it is very easy for these facilities to rapidly decline if this is not kept up. As the footprints of parks and facilities stretch farther away from the center of Lincoln, it may become necessary to prioritize maintenance of grounds, structures or equipment if staff and budget resources are stretched.

Goals

The Recreation Committee identified four primary goals for inclusion in the City's Comprehensive Plan. Along with these goals have been provided recommended action items for which the City will need to formulate policies and programs to carry out.

RS-1. Address Level of Service Issues.

- a. Work to provide needed facilities and programs to address level-of-service deficiencies.
- b. Provide additional park facilities in the western portions of the City, both north and south of I-20 where none currently exist. Consider a lake side facility with boat ramp and/or marina.
- c. Consider Development of a multi-purpose facility for community & senior activities.
- d. Explore opportunities to build additional community center(s) outside the core of the City.
- e. Encourage the offering of more diverse cultural programs throughout the City, including adult level athletic programs and programs for active senior adults.
- f. Provide additional athletic facilities, as needed, to meet the demands of local users and better position the City when competing for athletic tournaments.
- g. As demographics change, create programs to meet the needs of youth, senior adults and the special needs population. Market these programs specifically to these groups through various outlets with which they are involved.
- h. Develop public relations program to inform and invite citizens to participate in Parks and Recreation activities.
- i. Continue to utilize City website, social media and newsletter to highlight recreation facilities and activities.
- j. Provide regular articles of interest to local outlets and the Chamber of Commerce regarding parks and recreation improvements, additions, and activities.

RS-2: Create a Parks, Recreation and Cultural Master Plan to grow the City's parks, recreation, and cultural opportunities as the City grows.

- a. Use the Land Use Plan to help determine the timing and general location of future parks.
 - Maintain up-to-date parks level of service standards.
 - Review potential changes to the existing parks to determine need for additional, or a change in, amenities.
- b. Analyze the best locations for new parks using census data, and departmental and stakeholder input.
 - Work with the Parks and Recreation staff and citizens to select the most ideal location in or around the areas being considered for future parks.
 - Maintain an up-to-date map of future facilities and when they are expected to be needed.
- c. Develop a parks and recreation and a cultural master plan document.
 - Create a committee to develop the parks, recreation and culture master plan through the Lincoln planning process.
 - Engage with individual stakeholders to determine facility and programmatic needs, including conducting surveys and holding public meetings.
 - Incorporate the Parks and Recreation Planning documents into the master plan as appropriate.
- d. Acquire additional land as needed and feasible to fulfill the recommendations of the parks, recreation and culture master plan and to maintain a high level-of-service.
 - Secure funding to purchase properties as growth and opportunities occur.
 - Tie the parks and recreation capital improvements program to the Future Land Use Plan to help implement the recommendations of the Plan.
 - Explore grant opportunities for parks or open space, including benefits from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

- Create a parks and recreation opportunity fund to provide funding for unexpected park opportunities.
 - Work with property owners adjacent to existing facilities in need of additional space to develop first right-of-refusal agreements.
- e. Encourage donation of land for future parks and recreation facilities.
- Explore opportunities for offering incentives for land donation.
 - As development occurs, leverage opportunities to acquire and build additional parks and recreation facilities, including voluntary land swaps and donations via development agreements.
 - Develop a program for land donation via bequests.
 - Develop a marketing program to educate potential donors about the possibilities and benefits of property or monetary bequests and donations for parks development.

RS-3. Develop partnerships within the community and region to make better use of available resources and increase funding sources and sponsorships for recreation facilities, special events, athletic tournaments, and other exhibitions.

- a. Develop partnerships within the community and region to make better use of available resources.
- b. Develop additional funding sources and sponsorships for recreation facilities, special events, athletic tournaments, and other exhibitions.
- c. Market the Lincoln Parks and Recreation system as an economic development strategy tool for the City through community and regional outlets.
- d. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to promote youth and amateur sporting events, which are the fastest growing segment of leisure travel.
- e. Identify and promote revenue-generating activities, programs, and facilities to help offset costs associated with providing excellent public recreation services.

RS-4. Ensure that a facility maintenance program is maintained and funded for all City parks, recreational facilities, athletic fields, vehicles, and maintenance equipment.

- a. Maintain existing facilities at an established high level-of service.
- b. Insure that recreation facilities are safe for patrons by providing adequate and well maintained lighting, regular police patrols and other security monitoring devices.
- c. Maintain a current list of maintenance priorities, updated annually.

¹Recognizing the importance of Parks and Recreation facilities. . . .111th Congress H.RES 288 March 26, 2009

²www.seniorliving.org/lifestyles/active-senior

³ADECA Land and Water Conservation Funding 2012

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