



City of Union, Missouri - *Comprehensive Plan Update*

PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES REPORT



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Parks & Recreation Facilities

Every community is unique and as users and keepers of the parks, residents and city staff should identify the goals and opportunities for parks and recreation within their parks system. This is achieved through a staff and resident input-driven analysis and planning process. This process forms the foundation for recommendations within the comprehensive plan.

In addition to direct input from the community, this comprehensive plan also looks at benchmark standards analysis to measure the quantity of parkland and facilities within the City of Union. These benchmark standards serve two main purposes in a parks system analysis:

1. Provide a baseline understanding of parkland and facilities within the city compared to regional, state, and national benchmarks.
2. Provide the city with a common analysis used by many state and federal parks and recreation grant programs, which may be utilized in future funding applications.

While these benchmarks are beneficial to understanding the composition of a parks system in the context of the “average park,” they are not the final determinant of need for a parks system. This section of the comprehensive plan reviews the goals and opportunities for the parks system and how they were achieved for the City of Union.

Section 5.01. Introduction

This chapter is intended to provide a preliminary inventory and assessment of the City of Union’s parks and recreation facilities, along with recommendations for appropriate changes. Existing parks were classified and analyzed according to baseline parks and recreation benchmarks to determine needs and opportunities for future growth and improvement of the parks system. **While the benchmarks used provide a starting point for assessing the city’s needs, it is important to keep in mind that every community is different and that benchmark standards are only one factor of many to be considered when planning for future growth and development.** Additional factors include but are not limited to: community input and interest, development and maintenance costs, and periphery as well as private parks and facilities that provide services to residents. For example, Union is unique in its high level of participation in youth league sports and the community’s desire to provide tournament level athletic complexes, and therefore may require more athletic fields and facilities than what the population benchmarks dictate.

Section 5.02. Community Input

The public input gathered during the comprehensive planning process, as documented in the “Critical Issues Report,” provides important insight into needs and opportunities for improving the parks system. Residents and stakeholders provided a variety of input on parks throughout the comprehensive plan public engagement process, which include a survey, a workshop, stakeholder interviews, public meetings with the Steering Committee, and a focus session with City Officials. Community input gathered from Public Forums during the planning of East Park was also taken into consideration in this analysis. Public input identified several key goals for the parks system:



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- A need for fields as well as a possible youth/family oriented sports complex that could provide more activities for all ages.
- A strong interest in prioritizing community wellness.
- A concern for the lack of parks and facilities on the eastside of the city.
- A strong interest in maintaining and improving existing facilities in the parks system as well as pursuing measures to ensure the safety of park users.

Residents viewed the implementation of the planned East Park as a great opportunity to meet most of these goals in an area with a nearby fire station and police patrols. In addition to the goals, residents also acknowledged the lack of connectivity in the current parks system, and their inability to move easily from one park to another.

Section 5.03. Existing Parks System Inventory

A preliminary inventory of the City of Union's facilities was conducted for this plan and the results may be found in Table 5.1. The inventory will aid the city in identifying and organizing existing facilities and should be updated as development and renovations occur. This inventory lists parks and facilities that are managed by the City of Union Parks and Recreation Department, and not does take into account facilities that may be provided by alternate entities. For example, the city's schools may provide open play or athletic areas (i.e. track, fields, playgrounds, gyms) that the public utilize. In addition, semi private facilities (which sell private memberships but are also open for general public use) like the Birch Creek Golf Club provide recreation facilities. Finally, the Bourbeuse River may be utilized by residents for recreational purposes (also represented in the following table by the Conservation Area/Boat Ramp). This inventory does not take into account parks and facilities that are outside Union City limits, even though they may be utilized by residents, but Section 5.10 will address future park growth for the surrounding area.



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Table 5.1 City of Union Existing Parks & Recreation Facilities Inventory

Park/Facility	Approx. Acreage	Classification	Facilities
1. Clark-Vitt Memorial Park	14	Neighborhood Park	Playground with swing set Bathrooms 2 small pavilions Nature walking paths
2. City Lake Park	17	Neighborhood Park	2 large pavilions and 2 small pavilions 4 bench swings Walking path around lake 4 stations of exercise equipment
3. Rotary Park	4	Mini Park	2 pavilions - 1 w/ BBQ grill, 1 w/ electricity Playground Swing Set Bridge that adjoins to main park
4. Union Swimplex & Baseball Fields	9	Neighborhood Park	Baseball: 1 large field, 1 small field, 1 T-Ball Bleachers Swimming pool
5. Union City Park	8	Neighborhood Park	4 pavilions and 1 Gazebo 3 BBQ grills Bathrooms Parking Playground 4 Swings & 1 handicapped accessible swing 6 stations of exercise equipment Walking Paths 4 horseshoe courts 2 shuffleboard courts
6. Friendship Park	>1	Playlot	1 gazebo 1 pavilion
7. Softball Sports Complex	6	Neighborhood Park	2 adult softball fields with dugouts & fencing Concession Stand and Bathrooms Fenced in playground area Bleachers Small Pavilion Parking 1 T-ball field
8. Clearview Park	21	Neighborhood Park	Woodland Trail
9. Hoffert Park	2	Mini Park	Playground with 4 swing sets Small pavilion BBQ grill
10. Conservation Area & Boat Ramp	10	Neighborhood Park	Boat Ramp
11. Soccer Fields	10	Neighborhood Park	5-7 fields, various sizes Concession stand Bleachers
12. College Meadows	0.40	Playlot	Playground Small Pavilion (parking upcoming)
13. East Park	44	District Park	<i>Undeveloped</i>
14. Union City Auditorium	N/A	N/A	<i>Gym Facility at City Hall</i>



Section 5.04. Existing Parks System Analysis

The following discussion focuses on the benchmarks used, the evaluation of the park land and service areas, and the identification of facility and amenity opportunities. The existing park system was evaluated using regional, state, and national parks benchmarks. These benchmarks aid in establishing a baseline for new park land and park improvement recommendations and will support grant funding applications. Since neither Franklin County nor Union have their own set of park benchmarks, those of nearby St. Louis County may be used as a local guideline in this case. The full list of benchmarks referenced in this plan process includes:

- St. Louis County Park Classifications (Regional)
- St. Louis County Standards for Park Land (Regional)
- St. Louis County Recreation Facilities Standards (Regional)
- Missouri Statewide Comprehensive Recreation Plan (SCORP)
- National Recreation and Park Association Standards and Guidelines (NRPA)

Parkland Benchmarks

Each set of benchmarks was applied to the City of Union Parks System to identify a point of reference for goals for the parks system. The NRPA and SCORP benchmarks are based on surveys of national and state wide parks systems, and therefore maintain fairly high expectations of parkland per capita. These benchmarks set a goal of 1 acre of parkland per 47 residents. For Union this would mean a goal of 206 acres or an additional 59 acres to the existing 147 acres. (Note: the figure of 147 acres includes the 44 acres of parkland in currently undeveloped East Park.)

Another set of benchmarks that have been used in the St. Louis County region takes into account more suburban populations. Although Union is not a highly populated suburban area, it is worth incorporating such standards into the analysis, to provide regional perspective and balance. These benchmarks are based on park classifications defined by park size. The classifications also include typical amenities found in that park type as well as a service area for each park classification.

All of these parkland standards are based on population, and this analysis used the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008 estimated population of 9,684 for the City of Union. The regional park classifications that apply to Union are identified in Table 5.2 along with the analysis of the existing parkland compared to the regional benchmarks for parkland in Table 5.3. This regional benchmark identifies a total goal of approximately 44 acres of parkland rather than the 206 acres identified in the NRPA and SCORP standards described above. This benchmark is nearly 100 acres less than the total acreage for the existing parks system.



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Table 5.2 Regional Park Classifications

Park Classification	Function	Size	Service Area	Typical Features
Playlot	Primarily to serve young children in residential areas.	1 acre or less	1/4 mile limited by barriers	Play area; landscape
Mini Park	May serve specific function; serves any and all ages	1-5 acres 3 acre optimum	1/2 mile limited by barriers	Play area, passive recreation, limited sports
Neighborhood Park	Multiple use recreation facility for all ages; may serve organized sports	5-20 acres 10 acres optimum	1 mile radius limited by barriers (5-15 minute walk)	Play area, sports fields, courts, trails, picnic areas, etc.
District Park	Provide multiple recreation facilities for families and all age groups	20-80 acres 40 acres optimum	3 mile radius (10 minute drive)	Recreation center, aquatics, sports fields, trails, etc.

Table 5.3 Current City of Union- Regional Standards for Parkland Analysis

Park Classification (Size)	Existing Facilities	Proposed Standard (# acres/ # of people)	Calculated Demand (acres)	Union's Existing Acreage (approx. acres)	Union's Surplus / Demand (approx. acres)
Playlot (up to 1 acre)	2	0.3 ac. / 1000	3 ac.	0.5 ac.	(1.5 ac.) DEMAND
Mini Park (1-5 acres)	3	0.25 ac. / 1000	2.5 ac.	7.5 ac.	5 ac. SURPLUS
Neighborhood Park (5-20 acres)	8	1.5 ac. / 1000	14.5 ac.	95.5 ac.	81 ac. SURPLUS
District Park (20-80 acres)	1	2.5 ac. / 1000	24 ac.	44 ac.	20 ac. SURPLUS
TOTAL	14		44 ac.	147.5 ac.	104.5 ac. SURPLUS



The following is a summary of this benchmark comparison for the Union parks system:

- Existing parks system has a good mix of park types within the city.
- Existing parkland within the city is approximately 147.5 acres.
- Per the applied benchmarks, approximately 44-206 acres of total parkland is the per capita goal for Union based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008 estimated population of 9,684.
- Union's existing parkland acreage greatly exceeds the low end of applied benchmarks with a total of approximately 100 acres of surplus parkland, but allows for an addition of 59 acres at the high end.
- There is adequate acreage of Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks, and District Parks, based on regional benchmarks.
- There is an opportunity for an additional 1.5 acres of Playlots (about 3 parks), based on regional benchmarks.

Section 5.05. Recreation Facilities Benchmark Comparison

While the parkland benchmarks analyze the Union parks system based solely on park classification and acreage, a review of existing recreation amenities assists in identifying what recreation activities and facilities would be appropriate additions within new and existing parks.

The following page contains a comparison table of some of Union's existing recreation amenities and facilities along with available benchmarks. This table identifies where there is a statistical deficiency or surplus in services based on the population of Union. It is important to keep in mind that the current study did not perform an exhaustive inventory of all facilities at every scale. This analysis is meant to serve as a guide and a starting point for the city to further analyze facility need. Every community is unique, and the benchmarks are just one tool in the decision-making process for future facility development. While the comparisons will identify opportunities, any improvements or new facility development should meet the needs and desires of the City of Union and its residents.

Additionally, the benchmarks do not evaluate the quality of facilities. For example, the benchmark comparison chart would indicate that no additional ball fields are needed. However, the existing ball fields' conditions and locations are not conducive to the community's interest in hosting league sports tournaments. The public outreach process in Union has repeatedly identified a need for tournament quality ball fields, due to the community's strong tradition of youth and league sports. Additionally, existing soccer fields are located in a flood-prone area and therefore are often underwater and not usable. So while the benchmark analysis does not call for additional soccer fields, it also does not take into account the functionality of the existing fields. Such unique, quality-based needs may not be apparent in the quantitative comparison to typical benchmarks, and must be taken into account by City officials and planners.

The following Table 5.4 provides the benchmark comparison (based on SCORP and Regional Standards) for a range of facilities in Union. Note that while the Parkland Analysis included East Park (since it is acquired City parkland acreage), the table below shows only existing recreational facilities and therefore does not reflect any of proposed facilities in East Park, as they are yet to be developed.



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Table 5.4 Recreation Facilities Benchmark Comparison

Recreation Facility	SCORP # facilities / # of people	Regional Standard # facilities / # of people	Benchmark Range of Facility Needs	Union Facility Inventory	Benchmark Need
Parkland Acres	1 acre / 47	Per Classification	44-206	147	0 – 59 acres
(Unpaved) Nature Trails	1 mile / 4,814	1 mile / 2,000	2 – 4.8 miles	approx. 0.80 mile	(1.20 – 4 miles)
(Paved) Exercise Trails	1 mile / 2,624	1 mile / 4,000	2.4 – 3.7 miles	approx. 0.20 mile	(2.20 – 3.5 miles)
Swimming Pools	1 pool / 6,500	1,000 sf / 1,000	1-2 pools (9,684 sf)	1 pool (approx. 11,000 sf)	0 pools
Picnic Pavilions	1 pavilion / 1,379	1 pavilion / 2,000	5 – 7 pavilions	21 pavilions	0 pavilions
Ball Diamonds	1 field / 1,545	1 field / 1,500	6 – 7 fields	6 fields*	0 fields
Playgrounds	1 playground / 1,379	1 playground / 1,000	7 – 10 playgrounds	6 playgrounds	(1 – 4 playgrounds)
Tennis Courts	1 court / 2,333	1 court / 2,000	4 – 5 courts	4	0 - 1
Volleyball	1 court / 4,659	1 court / 3,000	2 – 3 courts	2	0 – 1 courts
Basketball	1 court / 4,410	1 court / 3,000	2 – 3 courts	4	0 courts
Football/Soccer Fields	1 field / 3,274	1 field / 4,000	2 – 3 fields	4 (soccer) fields	0 fields
Multi-Use Courts	1 court / 6,073	1 court / 10,000	0-2 courts	0 courts	0 – 2 courts
Horseshoe Courts	1 court / 2,810	1 court / 2,000	3 – 5 courts	6	0 courts
Shuffle Board Courts	1 court / 4,251	1 court / 3,000	2 – 3 courts	2	0 courts
Golf Course	1 course / 26,647	1 course / 25,000	0 golf courses	0 (city-owned) golf courses	0 golf courses
Campsites	1 / 3,400	-	3 campsites	0 campsites	(3 campsites)
Boat Ramps	1 / 5 river mi.	-	1 boat ramp	1 boat ramp	0 boat ramps
Skateboard Park	1 / 34,435	-	0 skateboard parks	0	0

*Ball diamonds only include fields used solely for baseball &/or softball play. Overlays of green space/multi-use fields/etc. are not included in this definition; T-ball fields are also not included.



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The following is a summary of the existing parks amenities and facilities comparison:

- Union meets at least the minimum suggested facilities for both SCORP and regional benchmarks for the following:
 - Swimming pools
 - Picnic pavilions
 - Basketball courts
 - Soccer fields
 - Boat ramps
- Union meets at least the minimum suggested facilities for one of the sets of benchmarks for the following:
 - Parkland acres
 - Tennis courts
 - Volleyball courts
- Based on the applied benchmarks, Union could benefit from:
 - 1.20-4 additional miles of (unpaved) nature paths
 - 2.20-3.50 miles of (paved) exercise paths
 - 1-4 additional playgrounds
 - 3 campsites
- The suggested addition of 1-4 playgrounds aligns with the noted deficiency of approximately 3 playlots in the park classifications analysis.
- According to SCORP standards, the population of Union does not qualify for a skateboard park. By regional standards, the city does not need a multi-use court.

Section 5.06. Service Areas Analysis

Identification of areas within Union underserved by the existing parks system will help guide the city in identifying locations for the development of new parks. To define these underserved areas of the city, several benchmark standards were used. These included:

- St. Louis County Park Classification Service Area
- Walkable Parks Level of Service Radius

St. Louis County Park Classification Service Area

The St. Louis County Park Classifications and Standards for Parkland were used as the Regional Standard to define the park types. Table 5.2 on page 5:7 shows the service area for each park classification. Map 5.2 on the following page shows these service areas applied to the City of Union Parks System.

The following is a summary of the Regional Park Service Areas Analysis:

- Only one portion of the city was not covered by at least one park's service area. This portion is located in the far northwest of the city limits. However, it is not a residential area and therefore may not be a major priority for parks access.
- East Park, with a 3-mile service area, covers the entire eastern and central portions of Union and meets the District Park needs for the city. However, while there is a planned concept for East Park, it remains undeveloped. Therefore, this analysis is contingent on the implementation of the East Park development plans (see Section 5:7).



- The neighborhood parks' service areas are clustered in one section of Union, centered on the downtown area. Residents in the southern and eastern portions of the city are not in an area serviced by a neighborhood park.
- This standard does not take into account barriers that would limit or prevent residents' direct access to the parks. In Union these barriers could include Highway 50, Interstate 44, the Bourbeuse River, or the railroad tracks.
- This standard does not take into consideration the walkability of the parks system for residents.

Walkable Parks Level of Service Radius

A more appropriate standard to determine the service area of the parks would be a walkable parks standard. The typical standard is a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile walkable service area for each park. This analysis will use a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile as a primary walkable area (accessible for most individuals) and a secondary $\frac{1}{2}$ mile walkable area. Site features such as major roads and waterways that would limit or prevent access become boundaries if they are located within the service areas. A walkable park system is a typical goal for communities to provide residents with access parks for exercise and recreation.

Map 3.3 shows the primary $\frac{1}{4}$ mile and secondary $\frac{1}{2}$ walkable service areas for the Union Parks System. Note that the walkable distance radii on the map are solely for the purpose of analyzing gaps in the parks system's walkability. The radii do not purport to identify walking routes to access the parks within the service areas.

The following is a summary of walkable parks service areas analysis:

- In this preliminary analysis, Highway 50, the Bourbeuse River, and the railroad were all considered to be a barrier to access. While, for the purposes of this preliminary analysis we terminated the service areas at these boundaries, actions can be taken to overcome such barriers. Such actions include creating a trail system with bridge crossings over or tunnels under these boundaries. Other notable boundaries, such as Highway 47, major roads, and the river's many tributaries, were not accounted for as major barriers in the analysis, since it is still reasonable for one to cross them on foot. However, these and additional barriers should still be taken into consideration in future analysis. Additionally, future planning should capitalize on barriers such as the river and railroad by converting them into opportunities to connect the greater parks system. Proper greenway planning can convert the edge of a river that formerly acted as a barrier into an enjoyable primary connection between parks. Other areas have also had success planning 'rail-trails' which provide experienced bikers a bikeway connection that travels along the existing right-of-way of the railroad tracks. Parks planning and development should keep in mind such barriers and opportunities for trails and connectivity.
- Approximately 75% of the city is not within the primary $\frac{1}{4}$ mile "walkable" radius of a park. This percentage decreases to 51% when applying a secondary $\frac{1}{2}$ mile radius to the parks. While the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile walkable areas encompass a much larger area, there are still major barriers that impede residents from walking to parks, and not everyone is capable of walking $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.



Section 5.07. Trails and Greenways

As noted in the above 'walkable' parks analysis, Union's current parks system lacks connectivity, and residents surveyed commented on the inability to move from park to park. While not within the scope of this parks chapter, trails development is an important element in the planning of the parks system. There are currently two distinct trails plans underway, one specific to the City of Union and one for overall Franklin County. The Parks and Recreation Department should work with the community to implement the Franklin County Trails Plan and the City of Union Trails plan. It is also important that the City take into account the plans' proposed routes when planning future park development, to capitalize on the opportunity for increased connectivity through trails.

Section 5.08. Development of East Park

Development of East Park should be a priority for the City's parks system growth. As noted, much of the parks system and inventory analysis is contingent on the development of this park, as it will serve a major portion of the area's underserved eastern and southern residences. This park will also provide a district-size park, providing recreational opportunities for all residents of Union. With public and staff input, an extensive study of East Park was conducted by a landscape architecture and planning design firm in 2010, the products of which were two concept plans and a final park master plan. The final master plan was delivered to the Board of Aldermen on August 9, 2010. It is important that as the City develops the park, the plan is continually reviewed and updated based on current needs of the community.

As a District Park of nearly 44 acres, East Park is vastly larger than any other Union Park (it is more than two times the size of the next largest park which is Clearview Park). It has the potential to provide a number of facilities and amenities for Union residents, especially addressing the city's desire for youth and sports-oriented areas.

The East Park final plan's major elements include:

- Park Entry, Drives, and Parking
- Baseball and Softball Quadplex with Overlaid T-ball Fields
- Championship Ball Field
- Soccer Field Complex
- Destination Playground and Family Picnic Area
- Eco-Education and Natural Area
- Park Trails System and Connectors to outside the park
- Maintenance Facility
- Park Landscape

The City should work to implement and continually review the East Park final master plan.

Section 5.09. Safety Recommendations

A high number of residents surveyed commented that they do not use the Union parks system because they perceive the parks to be unsafe. When it comes to citizen park use and enjoyment, it is important to note that perceptions of a park as unsafe are just as important to address as issues of actual crime or safety. The City's Parks and Recreation Department (along with other City departments such as Police, when appropriate) have prioritized increasing



security in existing parks. This is a complex issue that is only solved through a combination of citizen involvement, design, maintenance, and programming strategies. The City has installed security cameras (15 cameras are located in Union City Park and 7 are located at the Union Swimplex and Ball Fields park. However, the City may want to consider additional safety measures such as increased police/volunteer patrolling of parks or installation of “code blue”-type lighted emergency telephone pedestals. Before taking such steps, however, the City should consider the following recommendations (*summarized from “Planning, Designing, and Maintaining Safer Parks,” a study conducted by Toronto Parks & Recreation*):

- Conducting a “Safety Audit” with residents will help alert the City to the issues of concern. Participants use a checklist to note factors that affect their feelings of safety when using park space.
- Involving citizens in general park improvements and maintenance not only provides an economically viable solution to parks planning, but it is also shown to demonstrate positive benefits in the area of perceived and actual safety issues. When they’re involved in planning or maintenance efforts, users have a stronger sense of ownership and pride and a greater sense of control in their parks. This can be accomplished through programs such as Adopt-a-Park (where volunteers adopt a park and work to maintain & improve it), Park-Watch (where volunteers work to provide security through their own presence and unofficial surveillance), or even events such as a community-wide park clean-up day or weekend.
- Improving signs throughout parks help because they allow users to orient themselves and identify where they need to move about, therefore increasing their sense of control over their environment. Signs tend to have more positive impact in increasing community sense of ownership when they are written in a positive and informational manner (rather than simply a list of restrictive rules).
- Increasing lighting is usually the primary factor in addressing perceptions of safety issues. If the City identifies the need for increased lighting, it should create a plan for installing a system with hierarchies for lighting types in appropriate areas (especially where greater nighttime surveillance is needed).
- Fostering more activities and programs in the parks can also improve perceptions and issues of safety. When more groups of people are using a park in diverse and acceptable manners (i.e. yoga class, parent/child playgroup, nature club), more unofficial surveillance takes place and the space feels safer. This can be especially effective with the activities take place on the perimeter of the park space.
- Maintaining parks, especially correcting graffiti and vandalism as soon as possible, is important in allowing users to feel that the space is cared for, and therefore safe.

Section 5.10. Future Expansion

As noted, the inventory and analysis conducted in this chapter is contained to the public parks and recreation facilities located within the city’s current boundaries. However, as the city prioritizes current and future development and maintenance of the parks system, they must take into account the possible expansion of city limits and/or relevant surrounding growth, most notably along the Highway 44 corridor to the southeast. As commercial development grows along major corridors and interchanges to the southeast of the current city limits, the area will likely begin to connect and be integrated into the overall city footprint, and additional residential areas (whether current or future) will be captured within this footprint.



This entire area would be serviced by the new East Park (pending on its development), as indicated in Map 5.2. However, as portrayed in Map 5.3, not all of the area is captured within a walkable distance to a city park. Smaller-scale parks, such as playlots or mini parks, could be integrated into the development of new residential areas to provide walkable facilities. In addition, trails, greenways, and other forms of connectivity must be included in future planning; most beneficial for the southeastern region would be a system for linking East Park to surrounding residential areas.

Section 5.11. Summary of Recommendations

The analysis conducted in this chapter may be used as a tool by the City of Union as it plans for future park development and maintenance. It is important to note that both public input and benchmark analysis findings support an investment in maintaining and improving the city's current parks system. The public input also indicated a need for increased fields and a sports complex, which, although not fully reflected in the benchmark standards, should be taken into strong consideration due to the community's high level of involvement in league sports. While nearly the entire city is served by current (or in the case of East Park, planned) facilities according to the applied Parks Classification Standards, the percentage of area served drops to 25% when viewed from a primary $\frac{1}{4}$ mile "walkable" standard that takes into account major barriers such as the highways and the river. All of these factors are important when planning future improvements or the expansion of the city's parks system.

Final recommendations resulting from public & staff input, as well as the preliminary inventory and benchmarks analysis are:

- The City should implement the East Park Master Plan. The large, District Park has the potential to provide facilities (such as the desired tournament-quality fields for league sports) for the entire City's population.
- The City should work to implement appropriate trail plan(s) and plan park development in accordance with trail planning in an effort to increase connectivity.
- The community should work to prioritize the issue of parks safety/perceived safety, so that users feel more comfortable taking advantage of the parks system.
- The City could benefit from adding 1-3 more playlot-type parks. Playlots are small parks (1 acre or less) with playgrounds and primarily serve young children in residential areas. Playlots should be located in or near residential areas that are not within $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile of an existing park.
- The parkland benchmark analysis showed that Union currently has a sufficient amount of acreage dedicated to parks (even a surplus by regional standards). The City should therefore place more emphasis on maintaining, improving, and developing current parkland than on acquiring and planning new parkland. A more detailed citywide parks plan should be pursued *before* creating any more substantial parks.