# 2.0 EXISTING PARKS AND GREENWAYS SYSTEM

The Nashville and Davidson County Metropolitan Parks and Greenways system is currently composed of 100 parks (Figure 1). Parks range in size from ¼ acre to over 2,000 acres. Complementing the parks system, are approximately 13.8 miles of greenway trails. In 2003, construction will begin on another 19 miles of greenway trails. Metro Parks offers a variety of athletic and cultural programming, with its Community Centers serving as the focus of programming for youth and seniors, and a range of concerts, theatre performances, and special events.

## 2.1 PARKS, GREENWAYS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

### 2.1.1 Metro Parks

Four main types of parks currently compose the Nashville and Davidson County Metro Parks system:

- regional parks ( 50 to 500 acres)
- community parks ( 20 to 50 acres)
- neighborhood parks ( 5 to 20 acres)
- mini-parks (< 5 acres)

**A. Regional Parks**

**Regional Parks (more than 500 acres)**
Four large park regional parks are located in the County. These parks provide large undisturbed tracts of land that are important for the protection of wildlife habitats and ecological communities and that provide passive use recreation experiences, including hiking and picnicking.

***Shelby Bottoms Greenway*** serves the downtown Nashville area. This *Greenway* was developed and opened to the public in the late 1990s and offers miles of paved trails through wetland habitats along the Cumberland River.

***Hamilton Creek Park*** serves the eastern part of the County. It is located on the western shore of the Percy Priest Lake and offers the park system's only active marina for non-motorized sailing vessels. Hamilton Creek also offers a BMX track and mountain biking trails.

***The Warner Parks*** serve the southern and southwestern part of the County. These parks are viewed by many as the "crown jewel" of Nashville and Davidson County's park system. The Warner Park Nature Center is located here, providing nature and environmental education programming for the entire Metro Park system. In addition to miles of scenic roads, hiking trails, and bridle paths, the Warner Parks also offer active recreational facilities, including two golf courses, a model airplane field, and ball fields.

***Beaman Park*** is currently undeveloped. Ultimately it will serve the northern part of the County. A master plan has been completed and a stone column gateway entrance has been constructed along the south side of the park property. Beaman Park will be a passive-use park, developed as a component of the County's greenway system.

**Regional Parks ( 200 to 500 acres)**

Regional parks include McCabe, Cedar Hill, Ted Rhodes, Shelby, Two Rivers, Cane Ridge, and E.N. Peeler Parks. Four of these parks, McCabe, Ted Rhodes, Shelby, and Two Rivers, offer golf courses and other active recreation facilities.

**Regional Parks ( 50 to 200 Acres)**

These regional parks represent a diversity of park uses across Nashville and Davidson County:

- Ezell Road, Buena Vista, and Seven Oaks Parks offer active recreation facilities, including soccer fields, baseball/softball diamonds, basketball courts and swimming pools
- Sevenmile, Trinity Hills, and Cockrill Bend Parks are either undeveloped or have not been maintained for public use
- Centennial, Grassmere, and Fort Negley Parks are all considered showpieces of the Metro Parks system and have significant cultural and historic resource value

**B. Community Parks ( 20 to 50 acres)**

Community Parks serve several neighborhoods and typically focus on providing intensive active recreational facilities, including tennis and basketball courts, soccer/football fields, and community centers with indoor gymnasiums. Nashville and Davidson County's community parks include:

- Sevier Park
- Fred Douglas Park
- E.S. Rose Park
- Richard Hartman Park
- Charlotte Park
- Oakwood Park
- William A. Pitts Park
- Thompson Lane / Mill Creek Greenway
- City Cemetery
- Madison Park
- West Park
- Hadley Park
- Paragon Mills Park
- Harpeth River Park
- Heartland Park

### C. Neighborhood Parks ( 5 to 20 acres)

Neighborhood Parks are designed to serve the surrounding neighborhood only. These areas typically include playgrounds, tennis or basketball courts, ball fields, and picnic/sitting areas for passive recreation. Nashville and Davidson County's neighborhood parks include:

- Bicentennial Park
- County Cemetery
- Louise and Rebecca Dudley Park
- Morgan Park
- C.R. Crawford Park
- Granbery Park
- Clinton B. Fisk Park
- Riverfront Park
- Fannie Mae Dees Park
- Antioch Park
- Bellevue Greenway
- Bellevue Park
- Kirkpatrick Park
- Watkins Park
- H.G. Hill Park
- Parmer Park
- Lock II Park
- William Coleman Park
- Hermitage Park
- Whites Creek Park
- Harpeth Knoll Park
- East Park
- Parkwood Park
- Richland Park
- McFerrin Park
- William Whitfield Park
- Willow Creek Park
- Bordeaux Gardens Park
- Elmington Park
- Green Hills Park
- Boyd-Taylor Park
- Joelton Park
- Bordeaux Timothy Park
- Reservoir Park
- Cleveland Park
- South Inglewood Park

### D. Mini-Parks (fewer than 5 acres)

Mini-parks or "pocket" parks are fewer than 5 acres in size and typically include urban plazas, playgrounds, and other small-scale open spaces usually found in a dense urban setting where available acreage for park or open space development is limited. The mini-parks in the Nashville and Davidson County system include:

- Bass Park
- Commerce Street Park
- Church Street Park
- Hope Gardens Park
- Mildred Shute Minipark
- Stones River Greenway
- Shelby Walk
- Monroe St. Playground
- Owen Bradley Park
- Dallas H. Neil Park
- South Park
- William Edmondson Park
- McKissick Park
- Elizabeth Park
- St. Bernard's Park
- Litton School Park
- Eastland Park
- Tom Joy Park
- J.C. Napier Park
- Tony Rose Park
- Bicentennial Greenway
- Hilton Suites Park
- Woodmont Park

### 2.1.2 Greenways

In 1991, Nashville and Davidson County embarked on a new program to develop a greenway system. This decision was motivated by the desire to capture for the region some of the many benefits that greenways offer to communities. Experiences throughout the country reveal that greenways are increasingly popular elements of the American landscape due to their multi-faceted purposes and benefits, including:

- Opportunities for increased physical activity
- Reduced healthcare cost
- Reduced traffic congestion
- Reduced air pollution
- Improved water quality
- Open space conservation
- Reduced transportation cost
- Increased property values
- Competitive advantage (economic development benefits)

The Greenways program began in 1991 with formation of the Nashville Greenway Commission and Advisory Board. The expressed purposes of this group were to:

- Identify areas appropriate for greenways
- Develop a comprehensive greenway plan
- Develop criteria for selecting and prioritizing potential greenway projects
- Recommend pilot projects
- Identify funding resources
- Involve citizens in the planning process

The Joint Greenways Commission and Advisory Board held their first meeting March of 1992. The Commission published *GREENWAYS for Nashville and Davidson County* in 1993. This articulated an action plan for developing the greenway system.

Since 1993 Nashville has made great strides in the development of a greenways system. There are potentially 210 miles of greenways within Nashville-Davidson County. Of this total, 13.8 miles of trails have been constructed, much of which is located in the Shelby Bottoms Greenway (Figure 2). By 2003, another 19 miles will be constructed on various routes.

The proposed greenway system is based primarily on the Davidson County's network of rivers, lakes and streams. By locating greenway corridors along this water-based

network, it utilizes land that would not otherwise be available to development due to flood hazard. Greenways also provide a vegetative buffer that protects water quality.

Due to the nature of the County's drainage network, the Cumberland River provides a great opportunity to serve as the primary connection for all the greenways. However, cross-community connectivity is somewhat limited between greenway corridors without using the Cumberland River, which does not connect with all of Nashville-Davidson County's neighborhoods. These two drawbacks reduce the network's ability to provide a complete alternative transportation network. Therefore, additional greenway corridors in combination with sidewalk and on road bicycle facilities will need to be considered in order to improve the effectiveness of the network.

**Cumberland Greenway**

The Cumberland River Greenway is proposed to be the central spine of the current countywide greenway network. It will connect Nashville's major existing and planned greenways exclusive of the Harpeth River Greenway. The greenway has the potential to encompass nearly 65 miles of multi-use trails as it winds through Davidson County connecting 9 of the City's 14 subareas. These include Subareas 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,11, and 14. Only 12.8 miles have been constructed, primarily composed of the Shelby Bottoms Greenway. Another 4 miles is expected to be completed by the year 2003.

***The following built projects and those that will be completed in the near future are included in the Cumberland River Corridor:***

**Shelby Bottoms Greenway and Nature Preserve.** Shelby Bottoms is an 810-acre park located in Subarea 5, a few miles south of Nashville's Central Business District. It is adjacent to Shelby Park and is easily accessible by many East Nashville neighborhoods. The trail system includes 12 miles of high-use trails. Trailheads are located at Shelby Park, Forest Green Drive, Shadow Lane, and Fortland Drive.

**Eastbank Greenway.** The Eastbank Greenway is located in Subarea 9 at the Adelphia Coliseum site directly across the Cumberland River from Riverfront Park. It is approximately one-half mile in length and includes a series of sculptures that conjure up images of the East Bank's industrial heritage. It offers spectacular views of Nashville's skyline. A combination of a bike route and bike lanes along Davison Road connect this greenway to Shelby Park and Shelby Bottoms. The greenways location is not easily accessible to non-motorized travel.

**Shelby Street Bridge.** The Shelby Street Bridge, located in Subarea 9, has been an important connector between downtown and East Nashville for almost 100 years. It is currently being renovated as a pedestrian bridge with limited trolley traffic. It will provide an essential, safe connection between the Riverfront Greenway and the East Bank Greenway in downtown Nashville.

**Riverfront Greenway.** The Riverfront Greenway (Downtown Greenway) is a 2.3-mile trail that will connect Riverfront Park to the Metro Center Greenway and include a spur to Bicentennial Mall. One mile of this segment is currently under development and is expected to be completed in 2003. The greenway will connect residential and commercial development in the downtown area. The majority of this greenway route is found in Subarea 9. A small portion that connects to the Metro Center Greenway is in Subarea 8.

**Metro Center Greenway.** Located in Subarea 8, the Metro Center Greenway is being developed as a part of the Metro Center Levee Project in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It encompasses approximately three miles of multi-use trails and will incorporate various sculptural elements, trailheads, and shade structures. The greenway is easily accessible to the working population within the Metro Center development. The project is expected to be completed in 2002.

**Old Hickory Nature Trail.** This trail is located in Subarea 14 adjacent to the Old Hickory Dam and is comprised of .3 miles of paved multi-use trails and 1.2 miles of unpaved hiking trails. The site is a part of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property. It is not easily accessible by non-motorized travel.

**Brookmeade Park / JDN Greenway.** As part of the Wal-Mart development on Charlotte Pike in Subarea 6, a greenway was planned. The first phase of this project is approximately one-half mile in length. It is expected to be constructed by 2002.

**Richland Creek Greenway.** The Richland Creek Greenway connects Subarea 7 and 10, following Richland Creek to the Cumberland River. The corridor is approximately 5 miles in length and has the ability to connect many West Nashville Neighborhoods to the Cumberland River Greenway and the Lionshead Commercial area on White Bridge Road. The route is easily accessible by the adjacent neighborhoods. A two-mile portion of the Greenway is currently under development and is expected to be completed in 2002.

**Whites Creek Greenway.** The Whites Creek Greenway is located along Whites Creek as it passes through subareas 3 and 2. The corridor comprises nearly 11 miles of multi-

use trails that connect Whites Creek and Bordeaux neighborhoods with the greater greenway system.

The Whites Creek Greenway Alliance, a community-based non-profit group, has proposed a 2-mile pilot project within the corridor. The greenway will run from the Ashland City Highway to Hartman Park to the north. A trailhead will be located at each end. The route will provide easy access to the Bordeaux and Whites Creek neighborhoods. It will provide a connection between the neighborhoods, Hartman Park, and the commercial areas along Clarksville Pike. Funding is currently being raised for the development of the park. Construction of this segment is anticipated by 2003.

**Eatons Creek Greenway.** The Eatons Creek Greenway parallels Eatons Creek Road. It is located within Subarea 2. This greenway route provides an important connection between the Whites Creek Greenway, the Cumberland River Greenway, Bordeaux Neighborhoods and Beaman Park. The greenway includes nearly 6.4 miles of multi-use paths.

***Several additional projects are envisioned in the Cumberland River Greenway Master Plan, but have not been scheduled for further development at the time of this writing. These projects include:***

**Bells Bend Open Space and Greenway.** An 8.7-mile greenway is proposed along the banks of Bells Bend. It is located within Subarea 3. A portion of this greenway route would occupy the large Metro-owned parcel that was to become a future landfill. In recent years there has been growing support to build a large nature park, similar to the Shelby Bottoms Greenway, on this parcel.

**Cockrill Bend Open Space and Greenway.** Approximately 6.1 miles of river frontage within the Cockrill Bend's flood plain has been targeted for a future greenway route. This greenway would offer excellent connections to West Nashville Neighborhoods via the Richland Creek Greenway. This route is within Subarea 7.

**TSU Greenway.** The river frontage of Tennessee State University property comprises nearly 2 miles within Subarea 8. A future greenway is proposed to utilize this frontage which will connect the TSU campus, TSU's marina, and adjacent neighborhoods to the Metro Center Greenway and Davidson-Cheatham County Rail-with-Trails Route.

**Bordeaux Greenway and Open Space.** This project would be located within Subarea 3 on the former city landfill. A three-mile trail system would follow the banks of the Cumberland River. A one-mile connector would connect the Bordeaux Greenway to the TSU greenway through the conversion of the Bordeaux Railroad Bridge to a pedestrian

bridge and/or the enhancement of pedestrian facilities on the Martin Luther King Bridge. This project offers opportunities to connect Bordeaux Neighborhoods and the Whites Creek Greenway to the entire greenway network.

**Lock One Greenway.** The Lock One Greenway is 0.9 miles in length and is located within Subarea 3. It would link Lock One Park to the American Baptist Theological Seminary Campus. This greenway is not easily accessible by non-motorized travel.

**Pennington Bend Open Space and Greenway.** Nearly 6 miles of potential riverfront could incorporate a multi-use trail that would connect Lock Two Park, Opry Mills, a potential conservation area, and inland neighborhoods. This route is located within Subarea 14.

**Seven-Mile Creek Greenway.** The Seven-Mile Creek Greenway is located within Subareas 12 and 13. The corridor comprises approximately 5.5 miles of multi-use trails as it extends from Old Hickory Boulevard to its confluence with Mill Creek. Its connects many south Nashville Neighborhoods to Paragon Mills Park, Seven Mile Park, Ellington Agricultural Center and the Mill Creek Greenway. No segment of this greenway has been completed at this time. This corridor has also been designated as worthy of conservation by the State and various environmental organizations because of the presence of many rare plants and animals.

**Stones River Spur Trail.** A spur trail of the Stones River Greenway is identified along Two Rivers Court. It offers spectacular views of Shelby Bottoms as it rises above the river. It provides a critical connection within Subarea 14 between the Stones River Greenway, Opry Mills, and the Nashville-to-Lebanon Rails-with-Trails facility.

**Neelys Bend Open Space and Greenway.** A 12-mile multi-use trail loop in Subarea 4 has been identified. Peeler Park would serve as the anchor to the greenway. This greenway offers excellent opportunities to connect existing and future neighborhoods on Neelys Bend to Peeler Park.

**Hermitage Greenway.** A 5-mile greenway trail within Subarea 14 would connect the Hermitage, an historic landmark, and area neighborhoods with the Stones River Greenway.

**Old Hickory Greenway.** A nine-mile multi-use trail in Subarea 14 has been identified as the Old Hickory Greenway. It connects the Old Hickory Lock and Dam and existing nature trail to Old Hickory, the Hermitage neighborhood, and the Stones River Greenway.

**Rails-with-Trails.** The Cumberland River Greenway Master Plan identified 17.5 miles of railroad corridors along the Cumberland River as potential Rails-with-Trails facilities. The first segment runs 7.5 miles through Subareas 8 and 14, connecting Tennessee State University, North Nashville Neighborhoods, Bordeaux Neighborhoods to Whites Creek, the western edge of the County, and beyond to Ashland City. This route is an important component for creating a continuous greenway from Nashville to the City of Clarksville. A second route parallels the Nashville-to-Lebanon commuter rail line connecting Subareas 9, 11, and 14. Approximately 10.5 miles in length, this route will ultimately connect downtown Nashville to the Wilson County Line and beyond to the City of Lebanon.

**Other Proposed Greenways – Partially Completed**

**Harpeth River Greenway.** The Harpeth River Greenway is located within Subarea 6, extending from the Warner Parks system to the Cheatham County Line along the banks of the Harpeth River. The entire greenway encompasses nearly 14 miles of trails, of which only a one-half mile segment on Morton Mill Road has been constructed. This greenway also provides an important connection between Davidson County and Williamson County.

The Harpeth River is considered one of the most ecologically diverse rivers within Tennessee. Because the greenway is located within a fast growing area of the city, it offers a wonderful opportunity to protect this valuable aquatic resource for an increasingly dense population.

In the near future, the built segment of the greenway is expected to be extended one-half mile south to Old Harding Pike where a trailhead will be located. A second extension will extend one-mile north to Harpeth River Park and the commercial area at Highway 70 and Interstate 40.

A second segment is expected to be built in the near future along the Harpeth's southern banks on the Veterans Administration Cemetery property. It will include approximately one-mile of multi-use trails.

**Mill Creek Greenway.** The Mill Creek Greenway comprises 18 miles of multi-use trails connecting Subareas 11, 12, 13 and 14. The greenway route extends south from the Williamson/Davidson County Line to the Cumberland River, passing through a wide variety of natural and urban conditions. Because development has encroached upon its northern segments between I-24 and the Cumberland River, the area experiences significant flooding problems during major events.

Due to the abundant wildlife found within the corridor, the State of Tennessee and various environmental groups have identified Mill Creek as important environmental resource that is worthy of conservation. The most significant of these is the endangered Nashville Crawfish.

Of the 18 miles that comprises the greenway, a one-mile segment located within Ezell Park has been completed. Two trailheads for this segment can be found along the route. One is located within the park and the other is just outside the park's entrance along Harding Place.

Four additional projects will complete another nine miles. The first is a 3-mile extension of the existing segment at Ezell Park to Blue Hole Road where it will connect with the Antioch Community Center. This segment is expected to be completed in 2002. (It will later be extended three miles north to Seven Oaks Park and the Thompson Lane Mill Creek Segment.)

The second project is a one-mile segment located between Thompson Lane and Briley Parkway. It is approximately one mile in length and will connect many of the neighborhoods and businesses in the area. This project is expected to be completed by 2003.

A planned segment along Culbertson Road will add an additional 2 miles to the system. It will follow Culbertson Road from the Davidson-Williamson County line to Old Hickory Blvd. There is growing public support within the surrounding neighborhoods for this route. No date has been set for the completion of this segment.

**Stones River Greenway.** The Stones River Greenway located in Subarea 14 comprises nearly 57 miles of trails. Seven of the 57 miles is currently under development and is expected to be completed in 2002.

The 7-mile segment under construction starts at the Percy Priest Dam and follows the Stones River until it empties into the Cumberland River. It then extends west through Two River Park until it reaches Opry Mills along the banks of the Cumberland River. From this point a ferry or pedestrian bridge will connect the Stones River to Shelby Bottoms. The majority of the length of this segment is easily accessible by the local neighborhoods.

The balance of the greenway is nearly 50 miles in length. It will extend south from Percy Priest Dam along the edges of Percy Priest Lake until it reaches Rutherford County, where it will connect with the City of LaVergne at Hurricane Creek. The Greenway would further extend past the City of Smyrna where it would connect to the Stones River in

Rutherford County. This segment provides a critical regional connection between the greenway networks of Davidson County's and Rutherford County. It also connects the numerous federal, state and local recreational facilities around the lake.

The greenway route is home to many rare plants and animals. Because of these resources the State of Tennessee and various environmental groups have designated the area comprising the corridor as worthy of conservation.

**Beaman Park.** Beaman Park is a 1,500-acre park located within Subarea 3 along the border of Subarea 1. The master plan for the park includes approximately 2 miles of paved trails and 12 miles of unpaved hiking trails. It is home to many rare plants and animals and has been identified by the State of Tennessee and various environmental organizations as worthy of conservation. Officially the park is not open, but The Friends of Beaman Park organize guided hiking tours of the park on a regular basis. No date for completion has been determined.

**Other Proposed Greenways - Not Yet Partially Completed**

**Browns Creek Greenway.** The Browns Creek Greenway traverses an industrial section of Subarea 11 near downtown Nashville. It will comprise approximately two miles of multi-use trails of which no segment has been built. It is an important greenway corridor because it connects Trevecca Nazarene University, several south Nashville neighborhoods, and the Tennessee State Fair Grounds to the Cumberland River Greenway and the rest of the greenway network.

### 2.1.3 Recreation Facilities

The parks and greenways that currently compose the Nashville and Davidson County system offer a wide variety of recreational facilities. These are mapped, described and assessed in the *Existing Conditions Report* that accompanies this Master Plan. Following is an overview of the facilities in the system

- Golf Courses *(at 7 parks)*
- Wave Country *(wave pool and water slides)*
- Centennial Sportsplex *(aquatics center with 2 swimming pools, fitness center and exercise classes, 2 ice arenas, and a 19-court tennis complex)*
- Community/Recreation Centers *(22)*
- Swimming Pools *(at 11 parks)*
- Baseball/Softball Fields *(at 25 parks)*
- Soccer/Football Fields *(at 3 parks)*
- Basketball Courts *(at 23 parks)*

- Tennis Courts *(at 32 parks)*
- Playgrounds *(at 52 parks)*
- Restrooms *(at 47 parks)*
- Trails *(within individual parks and along greenway corridors)*
- Boat Launches *(at 4 parks)*
- Picnic Shelters *(at 16 parks)*
- Other Features *(Amphitheaters/Band Shells, Model Airplane Fields, Disc Golf Courses, Nature Centers, Equestrian Facilities)*

### 2.1.4 Other Park and Recreation Facilities

#### A. Schools

**Relationship between Metro Parks and the Board of Education**

Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation and the Board of Education have acknowledged that developing and using schools and recreational areas jointly will eliminate unnecessary duplication of facilities and result in savings to the community. Together with the Metro Planning Commission, they have endorsed the policy of establishing a neighborhood park facility adjacent to a school wherever practicable. There are 21 parks in the Metro Parks system which have either a school within a park or a school adjacent to the park. In these cases, park facilities are frequently utilized by the school system (Table 2-1)

The Parks and Recreation Board and the School Board have drafted a policy for sharing facilities. This policy recommends that both boards cooperatively plan for new programs and facilities including their financing, operation, and maintenance.

The policy clearly requires that each Board be responsible for maintenance, supplies, equipment, and staffing of their activities and programs. It states that the Metro Parks and Recreation Board is responsible for all park facilities and that the Metro School Board is responsible for all school facilities. It further requires a written memorandum of understanding outlining specific guidelines to be followed by the staff of the park program and school faculty. The Memorandum of Understanding addresses the following:

- use of buildings or parts of buildings
- use and maintenance of equipment
- use of site facilities
- use, maintenance and custodial care of swimming pools
- coordination of scheduling
- communication among staff at the school and the recreation department

- supervisory responsibilities of school faculty and recreation staff when sharing use of facilities
- sharing of equipment

**Table 2-1. Parks Associated with School Facilities**

| Park Facility | Associated School |
|---|---|
| Buena Vista Park | Hull-Jackson Montessori |
| Boyde-Taylor Park | Moses-McKissack Middle |
| E.S. Rose Park | Rose Park Middle/ Carter Lawrence Middle |
| Fannie Mae Dees Park | Harris-Hillman Special Facilities/ Eakin Elementary |
| Elmington Park | West End Middle |
| J.C. Napier Park | Napier Primary |
| Richland Park | Cohn Adult Learning Center |
| Green Hills Park | J.T. Moore Middle |
| Bellevue Park | Bellevue Elementary |
| McCabe Park | Marth Vaught/ Sylvan Park Elementary |
| Whites Creek Park | Whites Creek High |
| Watkins Park | Martin Luther King Magnet High |
| Litton School Park | Isaac Litton Middle |
| Oakwood Park | Jere Baxter Middle |
| Fred Douglas Park | Meigs Magnet |
| East Park | Warner Elementary |
| Kirkpatrick Park | Kirkpatrick Elementary |
| Two Rivers Park | McGavok High/Two Rivers Middle |
| Antioch Park | Antioch Middle |
| Granbery Park | Granberry Elementary |
| South Inglewood Park | Inglewood Elementary |

*Source: Nashville-Davidson County Planning*

### School Facilities

Nearly all Metro schools have some type of recreation facility associated with them *(see Existing Conditions Report for more details.)* Elementary schools in Metro-Davidson County offer a unique opportunity, by virtue of their proximity to neighborhood centers, to help satisfy the demand for small recreation-oriented open space in each neighborhood, since most elementary school properties offer playgrounds. Middle and high schools offer additional passive and active facilities that may be available for use by the general community. It is important to note, however, that none of the Metro school properties were subjects of this park assessment.

### Other Public Park and Recreation Areas

**Radnor Lake State Natural Area.** Radnor Lake State Natural Area is a state-managed park located in south Nashville. It offers many scenic views, and a diversity of natural habitats, making it a prime spot for wildlife viewing, especially for bird enthusiasts. The uses of this park center on passive recreational activities, including hiking and nature education.

**Long Hunter State Park.** Long Hunter State Park is located on the southeastern shore of the Percy Priest Lake in the southeastern corner of Davidson County. Picnicking, swimming, hiking, backpacking, boating, sailing, fishing, and nature education are the major activities. The park offers complete "barrier-free" facilities, including programs for persons with disabilities and the elderly.

Other state and federal park and recreation facilities include **Natchez Trace Parkway** (National Park Service), **Hermitage Lands State Historic Area** (TDEC), **Marrow Bone Lake** (TDEC), and **Percy Priest Lake** (TDEC and Army Corps of Engineers).

**C. Private Park and Recreation Areas**

Private recreation facilities are also available throughout the County *(see Existing Conditions Report for more details.)*. These facilities have been identified through the survey of Nashville and Davidson County residents conducted while preparing the Parks and Greenways Master Plan. This survey identified YMCAs and health/fitness clubs as the most heavily used private recreation outlets. An inventory of these facilities based on secondary data sources identified a total of 33 such facilities. The number of YMCAs is large compared to other communities of a similar size, while the offering of health and fitness clubs is relatively low.

## 2.2 PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

### 2.2.1 Programs

The Recreation Division of Metro Parks administers and staffs the diverse program offerings and activities throughout the system. Program offerings include traditional athletic leagues, environmental education programs, girl and boy scouts, senior programs and a variety of classes in art, dance, and music. The *Existing Conditions Report* provides an overview of the various recreation programs offered, including a summary of the following:

- community center programs
- cultural arts programs (dance, museums, music, theatre, visual arts)
- Warner Nature Center programs
- Other Program (Walk/Run, Junior Park Rangers, Metro Parks Magic Club)

The Recreation Division has received several awards for its community center programs, including a National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) first place award for

Class I in the National Dorothy Mullen Arts and Humanities Awards Competition for two wall murals and a mosaic wall design installed by youth participants in the McFerrin and the E.S. Rose Park community centers.

Partnerships between Metro Parks and the Metropolitan Development and Housing Authority (MDHA) have succeeded in securing grant funding to support staff, equipment, facility renovations, and programs and activities at several of Metro's community centers.

### 2.2.2 Special Events

Metro Parks coordinates or sponsors many special events, including concerts, theatre performances, storytelling, cultural celebrations, festivals, street fairs, dances, and art exhibits. These are described in the *Existing Conditions Report.*

## 2.3 FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT

As part of the parks and greenways master planning process, the planning team assessed conditions at each of the parks in the Metro Parks system during the summer of 2001 (Figure 3). Three types of assessments were completed:

- **Park Facility General Condition Assessment**
- **Architectural Facility Assessment**
- **Playground Assessment**

The *Existing Conditions Report* includes a description of the methodology used for completing the assessment and a discussion of conclusions. A detailed assessment for each park in the Metro Parks system can be found in the *Parks and Greenways Master Plan Background Materials Notebook*. Following is a general discussion of findings from each of the three assessments. Figure 3 graphically illustrates findings.

### 2.3.1 Park Facility General Condition Assessment

#### A. General Condition Assessment Methodology

The General Condition Assessment included all outdoor facilities and features, excluding architectural and playground features. The assessment criteria ranged from general to specific, including:

- General Condition
- Pedestrian Facilities
  - user accessibility to park
  - provision of accessible parking
  - pedestrian circulation: accessibility within park
  - circulation: general condition
- Vehicular Facilities
  - vehicular circulation: general condition
  - vehicular circulation: traffic pattern
- Recreation Facilities
  - active recreation: courts
  - active recreation: fields
  - active recreation: special facilities
  - passive recreation
- Signage
  - site signage: general condition
  - site signage: presence of signage

During the course of the assessment each park in the park system was visited. A numerical rating was assigned for each criterion. Categories were either scored based on physical conditions or performance. The ratings ranged from poor to excellent.

#### B. Summary of Findings – Parks General Condition Assessment

Assessment findings indicated that the average general condition of Metro Parks ranged from "dilapidated" (Hadley, Mildred Shute, and Napier Parks) to "excellent" (Shelby Bottoms Greenway, Owen Bradley Park) with the majority rating as "fair" (Figure 3). One critical issue evident from the assessment is that Metro parks, as a whole, offered inadequate accommodations for pedestrian users, especially in terms of accessible facilities. Findings suggested major issues associated with accessibility to the park and within the park, and available accessible parking spaces. Also, in some types of parks, passive recreation facilities did not score well.

**Private Park and Recreation Areas General Condition Assessment**

The regional parks scored well in general conditions compared to the other park types. However, regional parks appeared to cater very heavily towards the presence of the automobile. Vehicular road conditions and circulation rated fair to good with no major replacement issues identified. Within the regional park, pedestrian facilities were in need of repair. Pedestrian general conditions, accessibility within the park, accessibility to the park and accessible parking categories rated poorly and were in need of improvement. Passive recreation conditions and wayfinding signage were not amenable to the pedestrian park user in this park type.

**Golf Courses General Condition Assessment**

As part of the regional park type, Metro Parks offered excellent public golf courses to Nashville residents and neighboring communities. Overall ratings were good to excellent with only a few specific low scoring categories. As with many golf courses, the Metro golf courses offered very limited access along the fairways and greens. (This issue may be inherent to the sport of golf.) However, the parking lots and clubhouses needed improved user accessibility to these facilities. Slightly over half of the golf courses offered wayfinding signage.

**Community Parks General Condition Assessment**

Nashville community parks did not rate well in many categories, especially with regard to pedestrian related facilities. Pedestrian walkways and passive recreation facilities rated 85 percent, and 84 percent, respectively, in need of some form of replacement. Half or more of the parks rated poorly for accessibility to the park, accessibility within the park and for provision for accessible parking spaces. One would expect higher pedestrian related scores for community parks because they are smaller than regional parks and service smaller demographic areas for users travelling by other means than a vehicle. Active recreation facilities were split among the higher rated specialty facilities, active fields, and the lower rated active courts. Although wayfinding signage was generally not present in community parks, their need must be based on a case by case basis depending on park complexity and need for clarity.

**Neighborhood Parks General Condition Assessment**

Like community parks, neighborhood parks did not rate well throughout the categories, especially with regard to pedestrian related facilities. Pedestrian walkways and passive recreation facilities rated poorly, with many in need of some form of replacement. The majority of the parks rated poorly for accessibility to the park, accessibility within the park, and provision for accessible parking spaces. Understandably, many neighborhood parks did not offer certain types of facilities (including vehicular routes) nor both active and specialty recreation facilities, due to size constraints and intended park use. Relieved of the need to provide many of these costly facilities, one would expect higher pedestrian related ratings for neighborhood parks that serve smaller demographic areas

for users travelling by other means than an automobile. Although wayfinding signage was generally not present in neighborhood parks, their need must be addressed on a case-by-case basis depending on park complexity and needs.

**Mini-Parks General Condition Assessment**

Mini-parks also did not rate well throughout the categories, especially with regard to pedestrian related facilities. Pedestrian walkways and passive recreation facilities rated poorly and were in need of some form of replacement. The majority of the mini-parks rated poorly for accessibility to the park, accessibility within the park, and provision for accessible parking spaces.

**Greenways General Condition Assessment**

Overall the rating for Nashville-Davidson County's greenways was fair to excellent, with only specific issues related to particular categories. The greenways were relatively newly constructed, which might explain the high rating. However, greenways rated low for accessible facilities when approaching the park. Half of the greenways rated low in accessible routes to their boundaries. They also received a poor rating for not offering accessible parking. Greenways rated well for accessibility for users within their designated facilities. Three-quarters of the greenways offer wayfinding signage, which is a critical component because this park type is usually long and linear and not easily viewed or understood at any given point along a trail or walkway.

**Non-Rated Items**

Many non-rated observations were made during park assessment visits. The most obvious condition was the positive effect of volunteer support on individual park quality. On several occasions volunteer individuals voiced their concerns regarding particular facilities. In all cases observed, the particular facility such as baseball fields or a Frisbee golf course was better maintained and used more often than without the volunteer support. In some cases, local suppliers donated necessary materials with which volunteers maintained the facility.

## 2.3.2 Architectural Facility Assessment

### A. Architectural Assessment Methodology

The Architectural Facility Assessment utilized four criteria to evaluate the condition of buildings and other structures within Metro Parks:

- facility description
- physical conditions rating
- recommendation
- costs for remediation

The description portion of the evaluation criteria began when the assessment team visited all park facilities. During the visits the assessors took photographs, notes and dimensions. The team evaluated the apparent physical condition of the roofs, walls and floors to determine if deterioration of materials or possible differential settlement of the structure were of concern. The team gathered additional information from personnel at the facilities as well as from Metro Park maintenance personnel to ascertain the current and historical state of the facility. Lifecycle expectancies were then used to project the expected longevity of certain building elements, such as the roof system and building equipment.

After the description phase of the evaluation, the facilities were rated utilizing a three point rating system as follows:

- Rating 1 – Satisfactory Condition
- Rating 2 – Repairs Required
- Rating 3 – Complete Replacement of the Facility

Rating 1 means that the facility is in satisfactory condition and no significant repairs beyond normal maintenance are required. Rating 2 means that the facility has items or systems that need to be repaired or replaced. Rating 3 is reserved for facilities that are in such significant disrepair that the most cost-effective alternative is to replace the facility.

The rating then determined what kind of recommendation should be made, if any. The recommendation listed the specific elements of the building that need to be repaired or replaced. In some cases recommendations included new roof systems, finishes, interior and exterior doors, and new HVAC equipment.

The final portion of the evaluation criteria was the cost estimate. Costs were assigned to items called out in the recommendation. Costs were based on a per unit basis (i.e. square feet or linear feet) or on a lump sum basis. Unit and lump sum costs were derived from currently published industry standards.

**B. Summary of Findings – Architectural Assessment**

With the Metro Parks system, there are a significant number of facilities that are in satisfactory condition (Figure 3). However, most of the facilities are in need of some repair. All facilities are heavily used and certain elements (i.e., finishes, roofing systems, and HVAC equipment) are nearing the end of their life expectancy. A small number of facilities are rated for replacement. This is due to the overall age of the facility and general disrepair of significant building features.

The Architectural Assessment evaluated a total of 371 facilities in the Metro Parks System. Overall the facilities scored as follows:

- 60 percent were in satisfactory condition (receiving a Rating 1)
- 33 percent were in need of repair (receiving a Rating 2)
- 7 percent were recommended for complete replacement (receiving a Rating 3)

When considered separately, the Community Centers and Golf Clubhouses had significantly different percentages by rating. Due to the intensity of use and age of the facilities, these facilities had the following percentages by rating:

- 21 percent were in satisfactory condition
- 70 percent are in need of repair
- 9 percent are recommended for complete replacement

The majority of the park facilities that were found to be in satisfactory condition were located outside the urban core of Davidson County, such as Subareas 6, 7 and 14 (Figure 4). Within these areas a number of the parks, particularly clubhouses at the golf courses, had relatively new or recently renovated facilities. Most of the facilities were adequately maintained.

The parks that had facilities that require repair or replacement of particular building features were evenly dispersed throughout Metro Park system. However, a large number of facilities that need significant repairs were older and typically located in the inner city areas such as Subareas 5, 8 and 10 (Figure 4).

The parks that have facilities that were recommended for complete replacement were typically located in the larger and heavily used parks. These facilities were recommended for replacement because of structural and safety concerns as well as the cost feasibility considerations for repairs, and not due to proposed program changes.

### 2.3.3 Playground Assessment

#### A. Playground Assessment Methodology

There are 64 playgrounds in the Metro Parks system. Many of the parks in the system have several playgrounds. Some have no playgrounds. The play facilities at the playgrounds range from a single metal play structure, to large play areas with protective subsurfacing and many play structures, such as swingsets, teeters, rockers, and climbers. The majority of the playgrounds are located in parks within a five-mile radius from the center of Nashville. The complete inventory of playground facilities is included in the *Parks and Greenways Master Plan Background Materials Notebook*.

As part of the park master planning process, two Certified Playground Safety Inspectors assessed conditions at each of the playgrounds in the Metro Parks system. Equipment at each playground was inventoried and playground equipment and play areas were compared to playground safety and accessibility standards. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities were used to determine the accessibility of playgrounds. Criteria for determining the safety of the play area and playground equipment were those from *The Handbook For Playground Safety* by the United States Consumer Safety Commission and *Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use* by the American Society of Testing Materials (ASTM).

After inspecting the playgrounds each one was rated on a three point rating system (Figure 3).

- Rating 1 – indicates that the playground is in “good condition”
- Rating 2 – indicates that the playground is in need of “repair or alterations”
- Rating 3 – indicates that the playground is in need of “replacement”

### B. Summary of Findings – Playground Assessment

Findings of the Playground Assessment indicated that a number of playgrounds in the Metro Parks system were in good condition and met safety standards. However, the majority of playgrounds was either in need of repair or total replacement and did not meet ADA standards for accessibility.

In general, the Playground Assessment showed that:

- 8 percent of playgrounds were in satisfactory or good condition
- 19 percent were in need of repair or alterations
- 73 percent needed to be replaced

Following are a number of major findings from the Playground Assessment:

- Most of the play equipment was over ten years old and failed to meet current standards
- Much of the equipment in the parks was similar and had similar problems
- Many of the current safety problems could be addressed through actions of the Parks Board
- Regular maintenance appeared to occur in many, but not all of the parks
- New playground equipment was found to have been constructed incorrectly, creating safety issues
- New playground equipment that was designed for greater accessibility had been constructed without an ADA access route or with a route that did not meet minimum accessibility standards
- In most play areas, sand was used as surface material. (If the depth and condition of the sand play area were correct it could be an adequate surface material for safety. However, it is generally not a good surface material for accessibility. The play areas that used sand ranged from adequate to very inadequate.)
- Some play areas did not have protective surfacing (which is a very serious safety issue)
- Only one play area fully met the complete criteria for accessibility as set by the ADA