



City of Fairview Parks System & Other Local Recreation Opportunities



Introduction and Background

The City of Fairview is dedicated to the enhancement of the community and the quality of life afforded its residents. Along with excellent schools and a relatively low cost of living compared to other Nashville suburbs, Fairview possesses a large amount of natural foliage, including an expansive nature park. The Board of Commissioners approved the forming of a Park Commission in order to serve as an advisory committee to the Board in matters such as park improvements and expansion, and to serve as a conduit for public input to priorities and desire for those improvements.

Working with the City of Fairview Park Staff, the Park Commission has developed a comprehensive approach to the maintenance and development of our city park system. While Bowie Nature Park remains the cornerstone of our system, the survey recently conducted by the Park Commission clearly indicates a public desire to expand both the locations and services being offered.

The Park Commission has developed 6 areas of focus. In order to provide continuity and achieve the desired goal, each new project must conform to one of the long term focuses. They are:

- Maintenance of Current Services and Facilities

Prior to improving or expanding our parks system the City must first ensure that the current facilities are staffed and maintained. This is the first step in providing a quality list of recreation opportunities to the citizens. Currently, the Park Commission believes that the level of staffing is at maximum work capacity, and as other projects are brought online the analysis of additional staff and equipment needs must be addressed as part of the development. Failure to keep pace with resources will negate any effort to improve the park system.

- Complete Outstanding Projects

Once a project is initiated, the completion of that project becomes a priority. Multiple semi-completed efforts are not an enhancement to the park system; they are a detractor. The Park Commission endorses an approach that moves incrementally rather than one that starts a number of projects but completes none.

- American Disability Act (ADA) Accessibility

While the law requires certain actions to accommodate handicapped citizens, the overall goal of the park system ADA compliance effort should not be limited to just meeting the requirements, but should be structured in a way that truly enhances the experience for our handicapped citizens and visitors.

- Expand Parks and Services

The survey provided several ideas for expansion of the park system. Prior to initiating any of these suggestions or any new suggestions that may arise, a full analysis of the best location, cost, and maintenance resources must be completed. While some projects may take multi-

years to fund and build, the goal should be to complete the new service or park within the same fiscal year cycle as approved.

- Utilize Automation to Improve Operations

Currently the park system charges only limited fees for use. In the long term, fee for service is a method by which services can be expanded. There should remain some services that are free; however others should charge a fee in order to help transfer the cost from the taxpayer to the user. The current manual collection system needs an overhaul and the security of multiple locations will present new challenges for the Park Rangers that must be addressed. Automation and electronic surveillance are less expensive than manpower and should be pursued as the system expands.

- Partnership with Williamson County

Williamson County provides a wide variety of recreational services to our citizens. They have indicated a willingness to partner with us on the expansion of services to our city provided we share the cost. Rather than absorbing the cost entirely the City should actively pursue assistance from Williamson County Parks and Recreation (WCPR) in the development of large cost projects.



PARK SYSTEM SURVEY

In 2012, The City of Fairview and Fairview Park Commission created a survey to better understand how Bowie Nature Park was being used and how often people typically visit. The survey also included questions about a citywide Park System, and what initiatives the public would like to see pursued in terms of the Park System as a whole.

The survey was first available in September 2012 at Nature Fest in Bowie Nature Park. It then was made available on the City of Fairview's website and at the Nature Center through December 2012. A total of 327 survey responses were collected.

The results from this survey have helped shape the issues, challenges, and opportunities for the City in developing a comprehensive recreation and parks vision.

Based on the survey, a majority of visitors to Bowie Nature Park come for the trails, with the majority of those accessing them for walking or hiking. The next largest group to use the Park comes to picnic or play on the Treehouse Playground.

A majority of responders indicated that they visit the Nature Park one to two times a month. When looking at how participants ranked initiatives, more than 50% of the survey responders saw five initiatives as very important or somewhat important. They were 1) More programs and events 2) more trails 3) additional parks 4) more picnic areas and 5) a community garden



City of Fairview Parks Department Staffing and Equipment

Currently the Parks Department has the responsibility for the programs, camps and events at Bowie Nature Park and peripheral support for other events such as the annual Christmas Tree Lighting, decorating City Hall and the annual Independence Day celebration. Parks Maintenance staff provides lawn maintenance, development, oversight and performance of construction projects, emergency repair services and landscaping efforts at all the City Parks and City Hall. The Parks Maintenance staff also serves as a back-up resource during citywide times of emergency. The two work units are organizationally aligned under the Director of the Community Services Division, who is also responsible for the Public Works and Streets Department. Security for the City Parks is provided by three part-time Park Rangers (Park Police Officers) who are aligned under the Fairview Police Department.

Currently the Park's staff is larger than at any time since Dr. Bowie deeded the land to the City of Fairview. The Park Staff is divided into 2 separate functions.

- The Park Maintenance Staff is managed by the Park Superintendent whose duties include overseeing the various parks maintenance and landscaping including City Hall; managing the Park's maintenance budget; overseeing the Park's different management plans (i.e. forestry, burn, trails, etc.); and ensuring the park maintenance equipment is properly maintained. In addition, smaller construction projects and event support fall to the maintenance team. This team includes an equipment operator and a part-time maintenance worker.
- The Program Director manages the Program and Event Staff. This team's duties include the planning, developing, and implementation of classes, summer camp, and special events; overseeing the volunteer program and marketing/public relations programs for the Parks Department. This team includes one full-time Naturalist, a part-time receptionist and several part-time camp counselors/naturalists.

Providing security and event support for the parks is the Park Police Officers (Park Rangers). The three part-time officers use a rotating schedule to ensure their presence during the times when the parks are most active and to cover events.

The Parks Department has its own set of vehicles and equipment. They include 2 trucks, a mini-van, two (2) zero-turn mowers, a utility vehicle for program use, a maintenance ATV for the trails, a small tractor and 2 trailers. Most of the equipment is aged, however each year as the budget allows, equipment or vehicles are being added or replaced.

As we expand our City Park System, the Parks Department will need additional staff and more equipment. The Board of Commissioners and the Park Commission are in support of this identified need and are taking steps to provide the resources required to make our Parks System better.



Bowie Nature Park is an important natural and recreational resource for the City of Fairview. It's almost entirely pristine terrain, spread over approximately 680 acres, accommodates a range of uses and needs, spanning from conservation of wildlife habitat to recreational activities such as mountain bike and horseback riding.

Bowie Nature Park is part of the Land Trust of Tennessee ensuring its viability for years to come. The Conservation Easement of Bowie Nature Park require that all permanent improvements or actions such as forestry plans, buildings, trails, picnic areas, etc. must have prior written concurrence from the Land Trust.

Bowie Nature Park is located just off Highway 100 within the City of Fairview in the northwest corner of Williamson County, TN. The property is accessed off of Bowie Lake Road which runs east-west off of Highway 100. Bowie Nature Park is primarily a natural forest habitat consisting of pine forest, mixed deciduous upland forest and mixed deciduous riparian forests. The Park possesses scenic natural beauty and is located in the midst of an area of increasing development and subdivision of land for residential and commercial purposes.

Elevations range from 900' above sea level in the eastern area of the Park, to 720' above sea level in the park's western-most portion, at the lower reaches of Little Turnbull Creek. Slopes are generally mildly steep and increase in the hollows.

Fairview City Hall, which fronts on Highway 100, is adjacent to the Park in the northeast corner. Fairview Fire Hall is located adjacent to the entrance of the Park on Bowie Lake Road.

HISTORY OF THE PARK

Beginning around 1954, Dr. Evangeline Bowie began buying property in the Fairview area. Large areas of this land were stripped to the bare soil for farming and tree farming purposes. Agricultural practices in the 1920's and 1930's by family owned farms did not include techniques used today to prevent erosion and soil depletion. Dr. Bowie was faced with barren land, scored by deep, long gullies that carried off 20 to 30 tons of topsoil a year during rains. Equipped with a bulldozer and pine seedlings, Dr. Bowie began a reclamation process that would continue well into the next century. Using different techniques of conservation, gullies, terracing, building dams and planting trees, Dr. Bowie was able to bring life back to what was previously an ecologically distressed land.

The land that is now known as Bowie Nature Park was deeded to the City of Fairview on December 22, 1988 by Dr. Bowie for use as a nature park and totaled 722 acres. Some of the land was sold or

used by the City to build City Hall and to allow for the land to build the Bowie Commons Shopping area. In 2003, Bowie Park Nature Center was completed and opened. The center offers programming activities, nature and art exhibits, as well as the opportunity for visitors to learn more about the park itself through brochures, art, and a small museum that details the Park's unique history.

The property is used by the City as a nature park, with recreational and educational uses, and serves as a cornerstone of the City of Fairview Park System. Improvements are made periodically; however, limitations are placed on these so that the land will retain its core value as a nature park.

The Park contains over three miles of streams, all of which are located within the Harpeth River watershed and the Little Turnbull Creek sub-watershed. Little Turnbull Creek bisects the park from southeast to northwest and enters Turnbull Creek northwest of the Park. Turnbull Creek flows into the South Harpeth River approximately 8 miles north of the Park. Several first-order streams drain into Little Turnbull Creek inside the park. In addition the Park contains several fishing lakes. Anglers are required to possess a Tennessee fishing license. No boating or swimming is allowed in the lakes without Park Ranger approval.

The majority of the Park is a Nature Park. Areas of access are generally intended for passive activities that minimize the disturbance to the natural areas. Currently the Park Staff, in conjunction with the Land Trust and the Park Commission, is working on a Forestry Management Plan that includes thinning some of the overpopulated Loblolly Pine Trees, establishing a regular burn cycle for the underbrush and a tree replacement program.



The park's trails offer many opportunities. They include hiking and walking, wildlife viewing, running, mountain bike riding and horseback riding. Most of the Park's trails, which also offer abundant educational resources, are semi-improved grass, dirt, mulch, or gravel paths. Several benches are available along the trail system along with informational kiosks that provide information about the trails and upcoming events.

Trails are well marked with directional signage. These signs were purchased by The Friends of Bowie Nature Park. The signs help visitors find their way on the 17 miles of trails. Additionally spaced throughout the park are 7 informational kiosks providing information about trails, the Park and upcoming programs.



Active uses of the park are centered on the picnic and play areas. Three picnic shelters exist within the park. Two are on the shores of Lake Van, where picnic tables and grills can also be found. The third shelter lies in the northwestern part of the Park, between Lake Anna and Lake Byrd. Other opportunities for active use can be found at the Treehouse Playground, Bowie Nature Center, and Joann's Outdoor Classroom. All are situated in the east end of the Park, near the Lake Van area, with the Playground and Nature Center being accessible via the main entrance road. The Outdoor Classroom can be gained by means of a short trail leading from the rear of the Nature Center.

Programs at Bowie Nature Park include summer day camps, nature classes for adults and/or children, school tours, scout programs, special events like the Fall Fun Day, concerts, and Star Parties. The Program staff partner with organizations like Bernard Seyfert Astronomical Society and Williamson County Health Department to put on many events and programs. Programs have greatly increased in the last several years with participants in programs nearly doubling since 2011.



Bowie Park Nature Center was completed in 2003. It acts as a welcome center, and also houses programs, special events, the Bowie Museum, staff offices, and the Discovery Room. The Nature Center is occasionally rented by the public. The building has two public restrooms and the foyer consists of a large open area with fireplace, nature exhibits, Bowie Museum and welcome desk.

Joann's Outdoor Classroom was built in Bowie Nature Park October 2002 in memory of Joann Tiesler. The Classroom is a 1,000 square foot facility that can seat 100 people and features a stage, 2 lockable storage areas, mobile tables and benches, and a wooden fence with gates. Its primary use is as an outdoor classroom to support the park and schoolteachers when students come to the park for nature classes. Sharing a parking lot with the Nature Center, the Classroom also can be rented for special occasions. Electricity was provided to the Classroom in 2011 through a grant obtained by the Friends of Bowie Nature Park.



Treehouse Playground

In May of 1998 the Fairview Community built the "Treehouse Playground". The Treehouse Playground is a fantastic playground for children and parents that provides safety without sacrificing fun. It has multi-level wooden structures with mazes, inter connecting tunnels, ramps, bridges and ladders. There are areas set aside for toddlers as well as a wheelchair assessable area. The playground area includes picnic tables and a 1/4 mile hard-surface walking trail.



Pine Tree Stage is an open-aired covered stage with bench seating in front located between Lake Van and the Main Power line. The stage's floor and roof areas were expanded in 2004 with help from the Friends of Bowie Nature Park. A nonprofit group open to the public, the "Friends" have contributed more than \$50,000 in financial support and countless volunteer hours since their inception in 1994. One of their more recent projects resulted in improvements at the playground, including a new overhead entrance sign and repainted art installations."

The terrestrial environment of the Bowie Nature Park consists primarily of hardwood forest, pine plantations, and an open field area. Before Dr. Bowie purchased the land in the 1950's, most of the areas had been cleared for cultivation. Woodlands currently occupy more than 650 acres in the Bowie Nature Park, a majority of the park's total area.



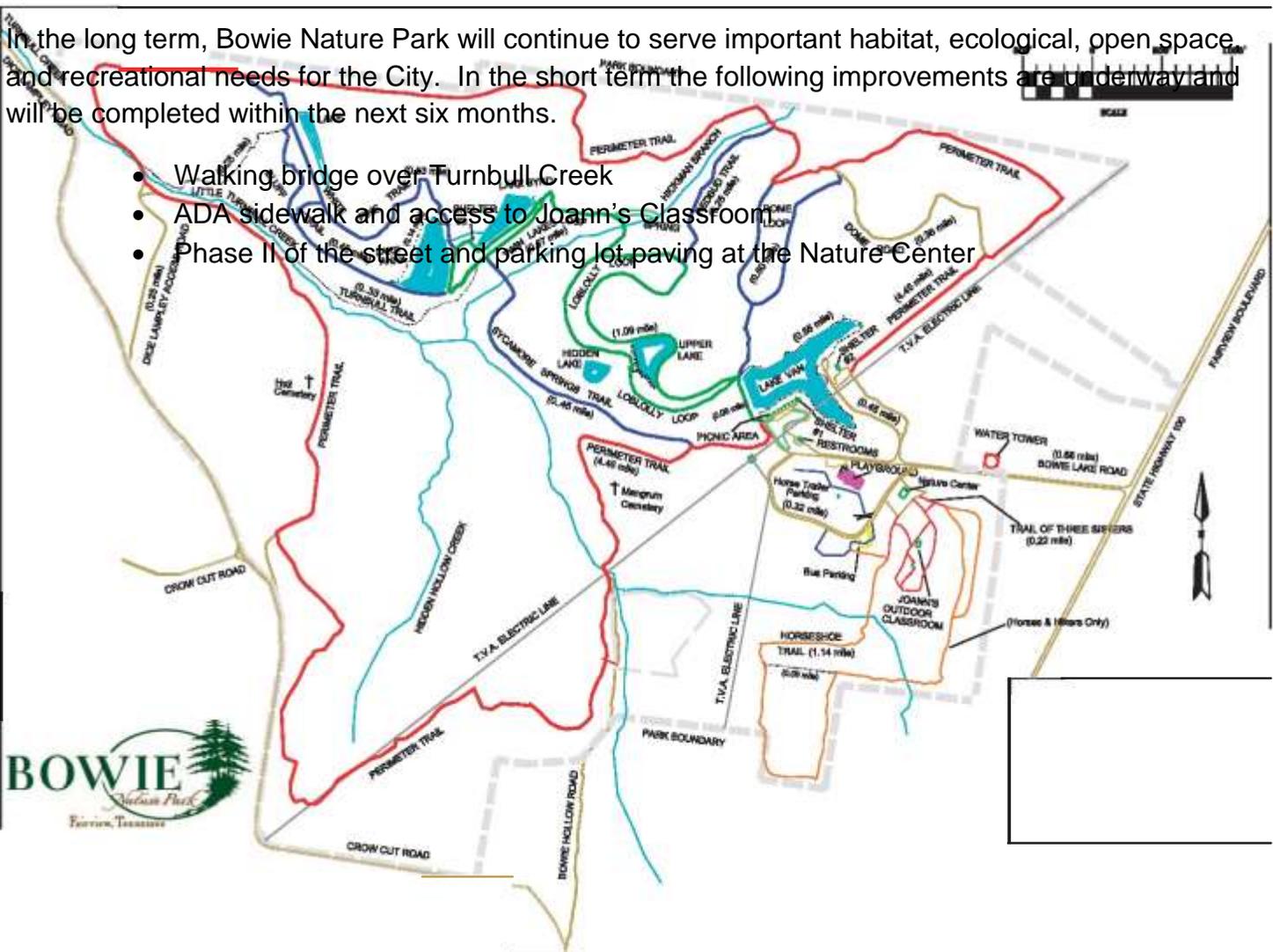


Bowie Park is home to a diverse community of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish depending on both terrestrial and aquatic habitat types. Over 40 species of amphibians and reptiles have been observed in the park, with more than 80 species of birds. Over 200 individual fish species representing 45 families were collected according to Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation protocols.

The Park offers several special events throughout the year. The most recently-added have been Barks for Parks, a summer concert series and a Fall Fun Day. The Park also participates in ecological events and celebrations.

In the long term, Bowie Nature Park will continue to serve important habitat, ecological, open space and recreational needs for the City. In the short term the following improvements are underway and will be completed within the next six months.

- Walking bridge over Turnbull Creek
- ADA sidewalk and access to Joann's Classroom
- Phase II of the street and parking lot paving at the Nature Center



HISTORY VILLAGE



The restoration of the Triangle School and the History Village Area is a joint project between the City of Fairview and the Fairview TN Historical Association (FHA).

Triangle School opened as a three-room school in January, 1939. It served students in grades 1-8. From then until its closing in 1962, Triangle was the educational, social, and cultural center of the community. In addition, during World War II, it also served as a community cannery. Triangle School is the only remaining restorable country school building in the First District of Williamson County, an area that includes the City of Fairview. From 1962 until 2006, the building was used as a private residence and as a storage facility for the City of Fairview. With the founding of the Fairview Historical Association in late 2007, the initial goal was protection of the entire 3.5 acre site against division and development. The needed protection was obtained once historical zoning was established and the property was re-zoned from Residential to Historic. The plan of the Historical Association is to develop the 3.5 acre site into The Historic Village of Fairview. Triangle School will serve as the anchor for the Village. In addition to the restoration of the Triangle School, the FHA has secured and placed on the property the original 1858 Jingo Post Office as well as the building that housed the original Medical Clinic in the 1st District of Williamson County. Both of these buildings are being restored and will be displayed in their original condition with artifacts from the time period.

The complex is scheduled for opening in June 2015. Though the property will serve primarily as an historic landmark, plans are eventually to allow rental space for events and possibly house the Fairview Chamber of Commerce or a City of Fairview Tourism office



VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK at EVERGREEN LAKE



Veterans Memorial Park (officially named Veterans Memorial Park at Evergreen Lake) is an approximately 11-acre, city-owned property that lies within the confines of the much larger Evergreen Industrial Park. Veterans Park has two picnic tables, three benches, and a lake or pond ringed by a walking trail. Covering 3.3 acres, the lake is approximately 200 feet long by about 150 feet across at its widest point, with a small foot bridge over its narrower, southwest end. The trail and the body of water are the predominant features, comprising the majority of the park's land area, although vegetation and trees—deciduous and loblolly pine in roughly equal amounts—are abundant throughout. The park is located off Highway 96 on Black Pine Road.

The area comprising the Evergreen Industrial Park was left to the city by Dr. Evangeline Bowie as part of her estate upon her death on February 10, 1992. The lake, from the time of the city's acquisition in 1992, was used by local fishermen, but the Evergreen property was never officially designated as a city park until 2012. Until that time few efforts were made to improve the facility, however, within the last few years that situation has changed in response to several major subdivisions beginning development in the immediate area and the desire to expand the City Park System.

In June of 2012 the Board of Commissioners designated the Evergreen Lake property for use as a public park, and the following year the board named the park **Veterans Memorial Park at Evergreen Lake**, in honor of U.S. veterans. At that time, the Parks Department staff began an extensive project to clear brush and make other improvements. Presently the park can be used for picnicking, jogging, walking, and fishing.

An assessment of fish population of the lake was conducted in June of 2013 by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. TWRA found bluegill and sunfish (shell cracker) in ample sizes and

numbers. The assessment also detected the bass population to be of insufficient sizes, and the abundance was not great. TWRA collected crappie but no channel catfish were detected. However, the pond has since been stocked with catfish, and based on the TWRA assessment and recommendations, the city decided to hold the 2014 fishing rodeo at Veterans Park.

The Park Staff has already begun another round of improvements to this park. Among the items on the immediate horizon are the construction of an ADA trail including fishing access to the lake, a flag stand monument, fishing piers, improved signage and an improved parking lot.

As public awareness and use of the park continues to grow, long range efforts will include restrooms and the upgrading of the access roads.



Cooperative Efforts with Williamson County

Recreation Center



The City of Fairview and Williamson County have had a strong relationship in providing recreational facilities and activities for the western part of Williamson County. Currently the WCPR provides a full-service recreation center complete with the following amenities:

- Gymnasium
- Meeting Room
- Classrooms
- Game Room
- Concessions/Restrooms
- Playground
- Walking Trail
- Wellness Center
- Sitting Service
- Arts & Crafts Classes
- Group Fitness Classes



Athletic Fields and Programs

In addition the WCPR provides several athletic fields and coordination for youth and adult leagues. At the time of this writing, Fairview has a youth football field, several soccer fields with additional fields in the works and a baseball/softball complex complete with concession and restroom facilities.



Swimming Facilities

WCPR provides a Seasonal 25-yard, 6 lane "Z-shape" competition pool with 4 tube waterslide and zero entry including pavilion facilities that can be reserved for events, parties or family gatherings.



Library Facilities

In conjunction with the Williamson County Public Library System, a branch library is available in Fairview for the citizens of Fairview and Western Williamson County. The branch is a full-service library offering reading programs for children and adults alike. Library accounts are free to Williamson County residents.

Recently the City of Fairview and WCPL embarked on an expansion and improvement project for the branch. Funded at 50/50 from each government, the improved facility will offer more meeting and computer space as well as a renovation and realignment of the current floor space.



Community Garden

With a cooperative effort, the City of Fairview and Fairview High School have opened a community garden. The idea was first raised in 2012 by a local citizen and through the efforts of the City Officials, the High School staff and many others became a reality in September 2014. According to Dr. Oyer, the Principal at FHS, "Our current plan for this garden is to use the spirit, the teaching opportunity, and the charisma of both our students and teachers during the school year. We need our master gardeners and citizen volunteers to help maintain, harvest and replant during the summer months so that we are creating that connection and partnership."

Future Cooperative Effort Plans

As Fairview continues to grow, so will the needs and desires of its citizens for improved recreational facilities. Williamson County Government has indicated willingness on a 50-50 cost basis to work with the City to provide these facilities.

Joint projects under early consideration include:

- An expansion of our soccer fields including the possible construction of an indoor practice facility on the Elrod Road location.
- An expanded and modernized recreation center with additional basketball courts and other athletic facilities.
- A water park complete with pavilions and picnic facilities.
- A skate park



FUTURE PARK SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

The City of Fairview is dedicated to providing a park system that its citizens can be proud of and will use frequently. The overall goals of the system are for our parks to be diverse in the programs and facilities they offer, to be ADA compliant so that all can enjoy their use and for them to be safe so that citizens can enjoy the park system without worry.

Through the survey process and the Park Commission as well as the City of Fairview Park staff, ideas are surfaced for consideration. Possible future projects include:

- A dog park
- Camping at one or more parks
- Neighborhood playgrounds
- Expanded greenways and connection of city sidewalks with park locations
- A horse riders arena and facility
- Additional bike trails

This overview is designed to provide an outline of the current thinking and development of the City of Fairview Park System. As the City continues to grow this document will need to be amended to identify and include new forms of recreation and the desires of the ever-changing population. We invite you to visit one of our parks and provide us with any thoughts or suggestions you might have via our website www.fairview-tn.org . We hope to see you soon!

