



aurora
parks & recreation

2010
Master Plan

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Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to the following people who contributed to the success of this report.

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Mayor Lynn McGill

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this plan is to provide a vision and establish property uses for the Parks and Recreation properties in the City of Aurora. The City of Aurora is required to review and update its Master Plan every 5 years as designated by the City Charter. The most recent City Master Plan had an action item (Objective. 3.1) for Parks and Recreation to review and update the 2000 Parks and Recreation Master Plan if needed. This Plan is a shared vision from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Review Committee (PRMPRC), local stakeholders (school, parks and sports organizations) and the public. The PRMPRC was comprised of 13 people: the Parks and Recreation Director; two City Councilman, and nine community members of which four also serve on the Parks and Recreation Board. This Plan is intended to help guide future decisions regarding Parks and Recreation projects, emphasis and focus by combining research from the 2000 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the current City Master Plan, the 2007 Parks and Recreation public survey, the 2008 Quality Committee survey, stakeholder discussions and committee meetings.

Planning Process

The master planning process began in August 2009 with the assembly of the committee and opening discussions providing a baseline of information. This baseline information included a map of city properties, a copy of the 2000 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the current City Master Plan, results from the 2007 Parks and Recreation community survey and 2008 City of Aurora Quality Committee Residential Survey. The committee next toured the City properties and City to help become more familiar with existing facilities, locations and physical characteristics. A meeting was conducted to which local stakeholders and community groups were invited to provide an overview of their respective program, needs, uses and any recommendations. From this information, the committee began developing recommendations regarding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. These recommendations were then initially prioritized based on three categories of time frames (1, 2 and 3). Each committee member was asked to further prioritize each category (1.01, 1.02, etc.) to help finalize the priority time frames. The final recommendations are summarized and discussed in the Major Recommendation section of this document.

Overview of Facilities

The City of Aurora Parks and Recreation facilities are summarized below with information regarding size, general description and any distinguishing characteristics of the facility. Other non-city owned park properties are shown on the map but not evaluated include: Tinkers Creek State Park, Molnar Audubon Sanctuary, Blanche-Novak Audubon Sanctuary, Aurora Audubon Sanctuary.

Aurora Wetlands

Size: acres 366 acres
Amenities: Grass walking trails,
 parking lot

The Aurora Wetlands are located along State Route 82 and was acquired in cooperation from the Trust for Public Land and contains category 3 wetlands and many natural areas. This property has many restrictions as outlined in conservation easements managed by the Western Reserve Land Conservancy.



Bicentennial Park

Size: 1.9 acres
Amenities: Gazebo, benches, paved pedestrian walkways

Bicentennial Park is located in the hub of the City next to the Aurora Memorial Library. The Victorian gazebo and period lighting throughout the park compliment the historic center of town and surrounding properties.



Breezy Point Park

Size: 2.4 acres
Amenities: Gazebo, benches, paved pedestrian walkways, retention pond, Veteran’s Memorial

Bicentennial Park is located near the hub of the City in the Barrington Town Square shopping plaza along State Route 82. Similar to Bicentennial Park, the Victorian gazebo and period lighting throughout the park compliment the historic center of town and surrounding properties.



Harmon Properties (Ray and Margaret)

Size: 140 acres
Amenities: 2 historic houses, 3 barns (2 historic), flying field, sod field

This property is located on Page and Bartlett Roads and is open to the public in a limited basis



Hartman Property

Size: 126 acres
Amenities: Farm fields, house and barns, maple sugar production house

This property located on Townline Road is not currently open to the public and has the Hartman family residing on the property.



Kiwanis-Moore Park

Size: 29.6 acres
Amenities: 3 playgrounds, 2 climbing rocks, swing set, 4 baseball/softball fields, skate park, 1 picnic pavilion, benches, picnic tables, paved walking path, restrooms

This centrally located park on the south side of West Pioneer Trail and next to Fire Station #1, provides many recreational opportunities.



Liz Strahan Park

Size: 1.5 acres
Amenities: Playground structures, swing set, 2 picnic pavilions

This park is located along California Street in the densely populated Geauga Lake area of the city and primarily serves the neighborhood residents.



Picnic Lake Park

Size: 10 acres

Amenities: 1 baseball/softball field, outdoor basketball court, playground, parking lot

This park is located on East Boulevard in the densely populated Geauga Lake area of the city and primarily serves the neighborhood residents.



Sheldon Park

Size: 5.5 acres

Amenities: Playground, benches, picnic tables, parking lot

This park served the Four Seasons neighborhood primarily due to its location off Greenbriar Drive and next to Aurora-Hudson Road.



Sunny Lake Park

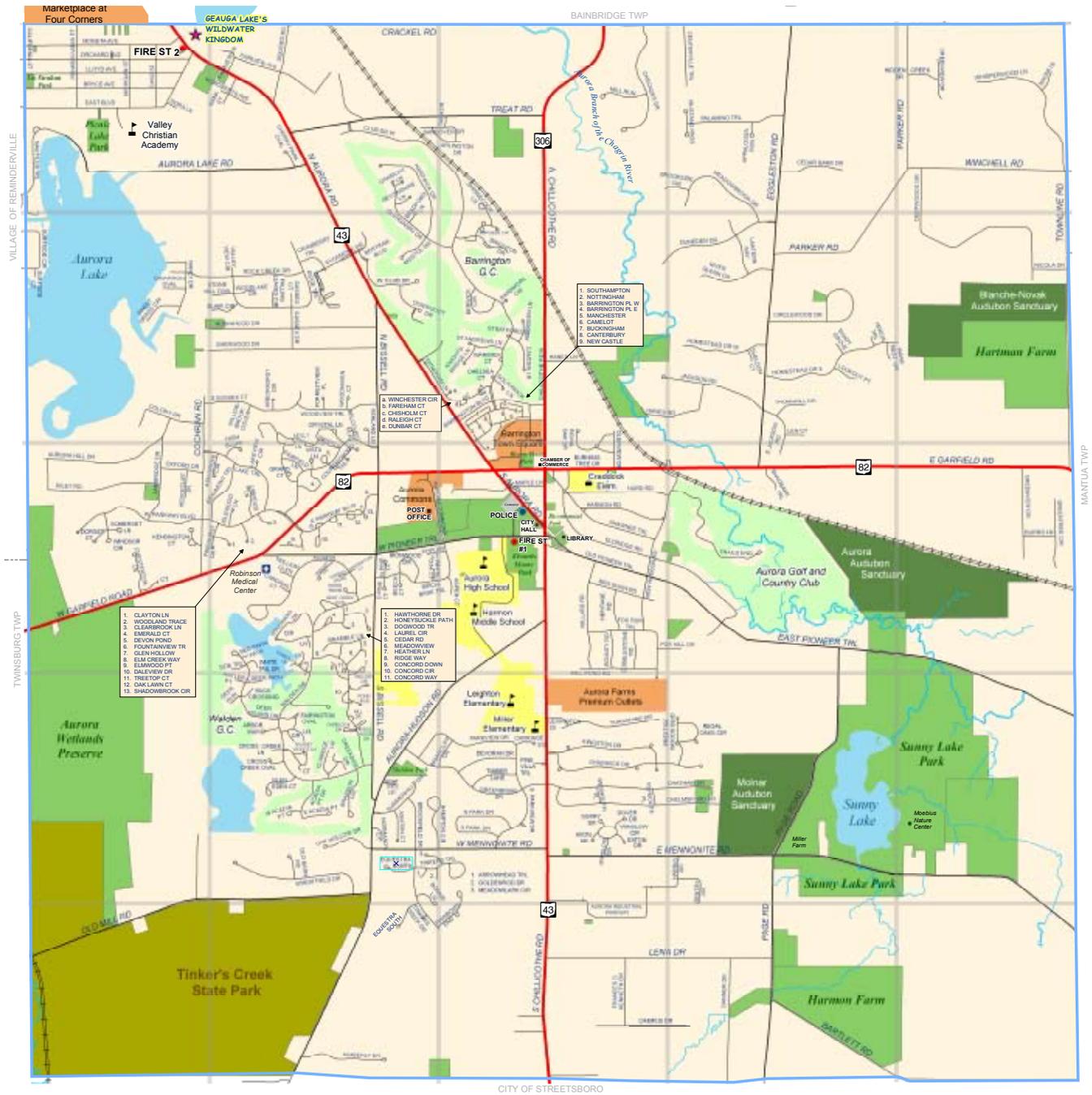
Size: 605 acres

Amenities: 68-acre lake, 1 ¼ mile paved exercise walking path, 2 large picnic pavilions, 6 small picnic pavilions, dog park, 4 parking lots, 3 lighted baseball/softball fields, par course exercise stations, sled hill, 2 play ground structures, swing set, sand volleyball court, restrooms, boathouse with boat rentals, 2 boat launch areas, nature trails, and Aurora Conservation Council Moebius Nature Center

This park is the largest park in the city located on East Mennonite Road and Page Road serves residents from Aurora and surrounding communities.



City Reference Map



Summary of City Property Acreage

Aurora Wetlands	366 acres
Bicentennial Park	1.9 acres
Breezy Point Park	2.4 acres
Harmon Properties	140 acres
Hartman Property	126 acres
Kiwanis-Moore Park	29.6 acres
Liz Strahan Park	1.5 acres
Picnic Lake Park	10 acres
Sheldon Park	5.5 acres
Sunny Lake Park	605 acres
Total	1287.9 acres



Summary of Other Property Acreage

Tinkers Creek State Park	977 acres
Aurora Audubon Sanctuary	164 acres
Molnar Audubon Sanctuary	112 acres
Blanche-Novak Audubon Sanctuary	94 acres
Total	1347 acres
OVERALL TOTAL	2634.9 acres

Major Recommendations Overview

The City of Aurora has many assets concerning Parks and Recreation. The main strength and distinguishing factor for the City of Aurora and the Division of Parks and Recreation is the amount of property, over 1,400 acres, that has been acquired for conservation, preservation, education and recreational needs. This amount of property combined with the location, physical characteristics and environmental quality of each property provide an incredible opportunity for development and use for not only Aurora residents but surrounding communities and the region. Another asset is the high amount of participation in youth sports and programs provided by the City of Aurora, the Aurora City Schools and local non-profit sports associations.

There are some concerns that need to be addressed to improve the quality of life in the City. As mentioned in the City Master Plan, the lack of connections between places, a need for more active recreation, a desire for a shared civic-recreation complex, and development of open spaces and parks.

The City of Aurora needs to maintain a balance of revenue and expenses. Given the current economic climate in the city, the general fund is not able to support many projects in the annual operating funds and thus would be largely dependent on the other sources of funding. These other sources include capital funds from general fund and other alternative sources (oil royalties, public space impact fees, etc.), public ballot levy funds, federal and state grants and donations. The time frames for the following recommendation were set based on realistic economic time frames. Project priority time frames can be adjusted as the economic climate changes and funding options become available. A few projects, such as the Rails to Trails Hike/Bike path, are largely dependent and controlled by outside sources which add to difficulty in setting the priority time frame.

Recommendation #1: Develop Sunny Lake Park Property Plan into Regional Park

The City of Aurora signature is outdoor recreational resources, the heart of which is the Sunny Lake Park. Sunny Lake Park and adjoining City property represents the largest single park property in the City of Aurora. Numerous improvements can be made throughout the entire property that would serve a wide variety of users and also provide opportunities to generate revenue.

In 2006, the Save Sunny Lake Committee was charged with finding methods to help improve the water quality of the lake. These recommendations included removing the nuisance fish, establishing shoreline growth and fixing the septic system which was draining into the lake. Since that time the nuisance fish (grass carp) have been removed and the lake restocked with channel catfish, blue gill and bass. The septic system for the boathouse was changed into a holding tank which will be replaced by a sanitary sewer line and pump station currently under construction. This new sanitary sewer line is designed to handle a new 4-season lodge to replace the existing boathouse which was also recommended in the previous plan. A new 4-season building should include a small concession area for park users and boat rentals, meeting space for groups and rentals, rest rooms and catering kitchen. Green design practices should be incorporated in the design and construction of this 4-season lodge as possible.

The Chesnes Property, 97 acres, is contiguous to the East of the Sunny Lake parcels. Over the past few years, the Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts of Aurora have held camp outs on the portion of the Chesnes Property and used the house garage and barn for storage. The City of Aurora has recently decided to list the front 32 acres of the property for sale including the house, barn and lake. Therefore the need to develop a new location for camp outs and storage exists to continue this relationship and usage.

In 2006, the Tremont house garage was renovated by the Aurora Conservation Council to create the Moebius Nature Center. An outdoor pavilion, large surface parking lot and boardwalk have been added

and the stable barn has been renovated with a concrete floor to help improve the amenities and uses of the property. These developments have helped the Aurora Conservation Council Moebius Nature Center bring educational programs to the public and increase usage of the property. The continued partnership with the ACC MNC should be maintained. A recently completed Eagle Scout project of cleared camping areas in the nearby woods to the ACC MNC in combination with the large parking area, boardwalk and stable barn storage could provide a viable location for camping for scouting programs and possibly public. In addition to scouting areas for camping, the City should also investigate developing specific areas for public camping and possibly cabins for rent to help further develop the park and increase park users.

Another opportunity would be the development of a high ropes and low ropes challenge course with a zip line throughout the property. Given the lack of similar facilities in the area and the presence of the Bertram Inn and Conference Center in Aurora, the challenge course would help provide additional revenue to the City. The construction of low ropes course elements as part of Eagle Scout projects by local scouts can help minimize City construction expenses as well as improve community involvement.

The City of Aurora currently conducts a few community events at Sunny Lake: July 4th fireworks, Classic Car Show, Labor Day 5k/1-mile Run and the Fall Festival. The construction of an outdoor amphitheater would enhance these events as well as provide additional event opportunities such as summer theatre and music concerts. The City has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Ohio Cultural Facilities Commission that is restricted for cultural and educational projects to which can be used towards the outdoor amphitheater.

A few years ago, the City constructed a third baseball/softball field with lights next to the existing two softball/baseball fields with lights. These fields are used from mid-April through end of October almost every day and night each week by Parks and Recreation programs, local sports associations and rentals. Due to the amount of usage and the proximity of water line and a sanitary sewer line that is currently being constructed, the addition of a concession stand with rest rooms would improve the amenities to the park. One possibility to help minimize operational costs would be to develop a partnership with local sports associations and share a portion of the revenue with the City.

The opportunity also exists on the Sunny Lake property for the development of a disc (frisbee) golf course throughout the property. Cost to implement a disc golf course would involve the baskets, a designated tee area and signs. An opportunity exists to solicit sponsors for holes as well as develop a local disc golf association which could help fund raising and maintenance advantages. Discs could be sold at the existing boathouse or the new 4-season lodge when completed.

In conjunction with Recommendation #4 (Develop an Open Space and Trails Plan to improve park and property connections) the development of trails for mountain bikes and horses (bridle trail) should also be investigated and incorporated into the property plan as possible. A partnership with a local stable would be beneficial to providing a horse riding for park users. Renting mountain bikes would be another option to provide a service and additional revenue for the City.

Action Items	Priority
• Property plan design	2010 - 2011
• Consolidate parcels	2010 - 2011
• Concession stand at ball field	2010 - 2011
• 4-season Lodge to replace existing boathouse	2010 - 2012
• Disc Golf Course	2011 - 2013
• High & Low Ropes Challenge Course with Zip Line	2012 - 2013
• Camping areas and facilities	2012 - 2014
• Outdoor Amphitheater	2012 - 2014
• Mountain Bike and Bridle Trails	2012 - 2015

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Recommendation #2: Develop Farm Park and Historical Museum at Harmon Properties

Given the historical nature and uses of the property and structures, an opportunity exists to provide programming, facilities and services at the Harmon Properties that would provide social, educational, historical and ecological benefits to the community. As recommended in the previous master plan, the Harmon Property should be developed into a farming educational area. Both the Ray Harmon Property and Margaret Harmon Property are locally landmarked with the intent to become national landmarks. Both properties have large farm fields that are currently hayed in the summer by a local contracted farmer. The City maintains an area on the eastern portion of the Ray Harmon property as a sod farm to help replenish various areas of activity fields and city property when necessary. This practice has been able to improve the quality of the fields as well as reduce costs in maintenance and should be continued.

In 2008, the City of Aurora the City entered into a shared usage agreement with the Mantua Township Missile Agency, a model rocket flying club, and the Flying Aces, a local radio controlled model plane flying club, to develop a portion of the Ray Harmon field next to an oil and gas well as a flying field. These agencies have been excellent tenants on the property and should continue to use the property to provide programs and recreational opportunities to their members who are largely Aurora residents.

The Parks Maintenance staff currently uses the house and barns on the Margaret Harmon property for offices and storage respectively. Relocation of the staff and storage items would be necessary in developing the structures and property for other uses. The Aurora Historical Society currently stores items in the Margaret Harmon house and barns and the Ray Harmon house. Hiring an outside consultant should be hired to develop an historic preservation plan for the structures on the properties. Development of the Margaret Harmon house into a museum would be largely dependent on the Aurora Historical Society.

A community garden in the farm field on the Margaret Harmon portion of the property would provide an opportunity for residents to share and experience gardening as well as generate some revenue for the city. The renovation of the small historic barn on the property could serve as a space for community garden users to meetings, storage or other related uses. As similar to the Countryside Conservancy program, the Ray Harmon house and barn should be renovated to allow a lease arrangement to selected individual(s) who propose a farming use for the property. This arrangement would provide revenue for the City, security and maintenance for the structures and property and additional farming programs on the property. Both of these developments would provide for a Farmers Market on the property to which the community gardeners, lessee(s) and other community and neighboring community members could participate.

Action Items	Priority
• Community Garden at Margaret Harmon property	2010 - 2011
• Plan for preservation of historical structures	2010 - 2011
• Relocate parks maintenance facilities	2011 - 2013
• Farmer’s Market	2011 - 2014
• Working Farm with Property Lease for Ray Harmon property	2013 - 2015
• Historical Museum for Margaret Harmon structures	2013 - 2015

Recommendation #3: Develop Open Space and Trails Plan to Improve Park and Property Connections

As recommended in the City Master Plan, the City should establish an Open Space, Trails and Sidewalks Master Plan. Parks and Recreation programs and services are one of the most important factors in

influencing the quality of life in a community. Developing connections within parks and between park properties provides an opportunity to help the community become a more walking friendly community. Increased walking can help improve health and wellness of users which in turn can help decrease medical expenses. Some recent studies also have shown an increase in property value the closer a property is to a trail. People and places need to be linked so that the community is connected and pedestrians must feel safe.

The location and proximity of City properties creates an opportunity to provide a physical linkage between the parcels. In addition, the Portage County Parks Master Plan incorporates a Western Reserve Heritage hike/bike trail that runs along a train line through Aurora. Development of trails on city property to connect to the train line is important in connecting many parts of Aurora and the county. Partnership with Portage County Parks to continue the development of the train line in Aurora should be continued as the City develops the trails and paths to connect to the train line.

Action Items	Priority
• Establish Open Space and Trails Plan	2010 - 2011
• Trail from Sunny Lake to East Pioneer Trail	2010 - 2012
• Trail for Aurora Wetlands to Tinkers Creek State Park	2010 - 2012
• Trail from East Pioneer Trail to Train Line	2012 - 2014
• Expand parking facilities on properties	2012 - 2014
• Trail from Sunny Lake to Harmon Property	2013 - 2015
• Hike/Bike Trail on Train Line	2015 +

Recommendation #4: Create New Community Recreation Center as Gathering Place

As recommended in the 2000 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, a new facility to serve as a gathering center for the community and incorporate recreation, education and cultural uses should be investigated and eventually built. The City of Aurora must investigate the feasibility for potential users, programming, overall size, cost of implementation and operation of the center in order to determine how to best proceed with design and implementation. An independent consultant should be contracted to assist in the preparation of the study. Once the study is completed, reviewed and adopted by the City, the most appropriate course of action can be taken for implementation.

It is recommended the community recreation center be designed and built to meet the needs of the community. This center could include activity spaces such as: competition pool, leisure pool, sports courts, exercise rooms, indoor exercise track, community meeting rooms. A public library could also be incorporated to improve the community gathering place concept. Priority site would be on Aurora City Schools property by placing adjacent to the Aurora High School. Secondary site would be City property on West Pioneer Trail across from the Aurora High School.

Action Items	Priority
• Feasibility Study	2010 - 2012

Recommendation #5: Develop and Implement Hartman Property Plan as Active and Passive Recreational Park

The Hartman property is the only City property in the northeast corner of the city and wasn't City owned at the time of the adoption of the 2000 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The size, location and physical characteristics of the property provide an opportunity for active and passive recreational opportunities as well as educational and revenue opportunities, There are 3 large farm fields, a maple sugar production house with surrounding maple trees, a small lake, 2 gas wells, water well and house and barns on the property. Mr. and Mrs. Harold Hartman currently reside on the property and must be included in any planning and development of the property prior to their departure.

The large farm field to the south of the property and neighboring Townline Road would be an excellent opportunity to develop a multi-sport complex in the City with athletic fields, baseball/softball fields, pavilions, playgrounds, concession stand with restrooms, and passive walking/hiking trails. This development would provide active and passive recreational opportunities for residents in this part of town which is currently void. The development of athletic fields would help alleviate stress on the existing athletic fields in the city as well as provide additional space for programs. All the City-owned athletic fields are located in the outfields of baseball fields. The City does share usage with some of the Aurora City Schools athletic fields. This partnership has allowed for the creation recreational spring soccer program. Usage of the athletic fields increases during the fall season with flag football, tackle football and outdoor soccer programs. This large amount of participation on the athletic fields has caused stress on the fields and limited participation and programs.

The existing maple sugar house and trees are currently used to produce maple sugar in the spring. The City has recently planted additional maple sugar saplings in one of the back farm fields in an attempt to grow maple sugar trees. This should continue with additional trees being planted each year for the next few years. Development of a modern maple sugar production facility should be developed to improve the production process to help serve as an educational and revenue generation opportunity for the City. The existing sugar house should be maintained for historical and education reasons.

Action Items

- Multi-use Sports Complex
- Maple Sugar Production

Priority

2011 - 2013
2015 +

Recommendation #6: Develop Cooperative Projects between the City and the Aurora City Schools

Over the past few years, the cooperation between the City of Aurora and the Aurora City Schools has improved as a few projects have been completed. This cooperation should continue and increase as both entities are using public tax dollars and have common interests in numerous areas. Athletic facilities and classrooms are types of facilities that can be shared between the City of Aurora and the Aurora City Schools. Involvement of athletic coaches and teachers with collaborative programs is another area in which the City of Aurora and Aurora City Schools can partner to improve the overall quality, efficiency and facility usage for the community.

In 2006, the City renovated field #5 in Kiwanis-Moore Park to become the varsity baseball field. Donations from the Aurora All Sports Boosters, the Aurora City Schools and the Aurora Baseball League helped in the completion of the project. This cooperation should be utilized again in the construction of a new varsity softball field next to the varsity baseball field in Kiwanis-Moore Park as proposed in the property plan for Kiwanis-Moore Park that was approved in 2007 which is included in the Appendices of this report. This Master Plan has led to the construction of the parking lot, skate park, additional youth ball field, paved walking path, 2 climbing rock structures and a gathering plaza over the past few years. Other proposed items in the plan include a concession stand by the existing varsity baseball and proposed varsity softball field, an outdoor basketball court, outdoor inline skating rink, and spray park.

The only public tennis courts are located on school property and are in need of renovation due to cracking and other problems. The renovation of these courts would benefit the Aurora City Schools programs and also the City programs as the City uses these courts in the summer for summer camps.

Due to the lack of a public pool, indoor or outdoor, the Aurora High School swim team practices at Hiram College. The school need for a pool for swimming and the City need for a community recreation center (see recommendation #5) provides another opportunity for partnership with the Aurora City Schools.

Action Items

- New Varsity Softball Field at Kiwanis-Moore Park
- Renovate Tennis Courts
- Community Recreation Center

Priority

2010 - 2012
 2013 - 2015
 See recommendation #5

Recommendation #7: Improve Community Involvement and Park Security

In many park districts, volunteers can be the life blood to operational success and community support. Volunteers are essential and can work throughout a park system to help preserve and protect the natural and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of this and future generations. Developing a comprehensive volunteer program is essential for the City to help improve programmatic and financial efficiency as well as help engage the public and garner support for projects and purchases. A comprehensive volunteer program involves developing a list of volunteer positions with job descriptions and a volunteer training program. Volunteers are provided with a uniform and any training needed to perform their job safely. Volunteer opportunities, either individual or groups, can offer some flexible scheduling options. Based on current park practices and recommendations in this report, some opportunities exist for increasing volunteer positions such as Community Garden Volunteer Board, Dog Park Volunteer Board and Trail Maintenance and Security Board. Volunteering offers many benefits including the chance to meet interesting people, work in a park environment, and contribute to a worthy cause and also gain valuable work experience.

Action Items

- Develop volunteer board for Community Garden
- Develop volunteer board for Dog Park
- Develop volunteer board for Trail Maintenance and Security
- Security Cameras for Parks

Priority

2010 - 2011
 2011 - 2012
 2012 - 2013
 2013 - 2015

Recommendation #8: Continue Support and Increase Collaboration with other Parks and Nature Organizations

Over the past few years, the City has worked to improve the relationships and cooperative programs and planning with local park and nature organizations in the community. These organizations include the Portage Park District, the Aurora Conservation Council Moebius Nature Center, the Greater Cleveland Audubon Society, Tinkers Creek State Park, and Local Boys & Girls Scouts. The City should meet with each group annually to help improve operations for each party. These partnerships are essential in improving the environmental, financial and programming operations for the City of Aurora, Portage County and northeast Ohio.

Other Recommendations for Consideration**Property Purchases**

The City of Aurora should continue to add to the property portfolio as opportunities become available that would continue to enhance the conservation, preservation, education and recreational opportunities for the residents of Aurora. Some recent properties that have been discussed include the Spring Hill Farm on East Pioneer Trail and the property formerly known as the Aurora Country Club. Other properties to consider if available in the future would be the property between the Sunny Lake and Harmon properties and properties between the Hartman property and East Garfield Road (State Route 82).

Green Building Techniques

Environmentally friendly building materials and techniques should be incorporated as much as feasibly

2010 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation #1 - Develop and Implement Sunny Lake Park Property Plan into Regional Park

Action Item	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Property Plan Design						
Consolidate parcels						
Concession stand at ballfield						
4-season Lodge to replace existing bathhouse						
Dix Golf Course						
High & Low Ropes Challenge Course with Zip Line						
Camping areas and facilities						
Outdoor Amphitheatre						
Mountain Bike and Hike Trails						

Recommendation #2 - Develop Farm Park and Historical Museum at Harman Properties

Action Item	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Community Garden at Margaret Harman property						
Plan for preservation of historical structures						
Relocate parks maintenance facilities						
Farmer's Market						
Working Farm with Property Lease for Ray Harman property						
Historical Museum for Margaret Harman structures						

Recommendation #3 - Develop Open Space and Trails Plan to Improve Park and Property

Action Item	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Establish Open Space and Trails Plan						
Trail from Sunny Lake to East Pioneer Trail						
Trail from Aurora Wetlands to Tinkers Creek State Park						
Trail from East Pioneer Trail to Train Line						
Expand parking facilities on properties						
Trail from Sunny Lake to Harman Property						
Hike/Bike Trail on Train Line						

Recommendation #4 - Create New Community Recreation Center or Gathering Place

Action Item	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Feasibility Study						

Recommendation #5 - Develop and Implement Hartman Property Plan as Active and Passive Recreational Park

Action Item	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Multi-use Sports Complex						
Maple Sugar Production						

Recommendation #6 - Develop Cooperative Projects Between the City and the Aurora City Schools

Action Item	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
New Varsity Softball Field at Keanin-Moore Park						
Renovate Tennis Courts						
Community Recreation Center	See Recommendation #5					

Recommendation #7 - Improve Community Development and Park Security

Action Item	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Develop volunteer board for Community Garden						
Develop volunteer board for Dog Park						
Develop volunteer board for Trail Maintenance and Security						
Security Cameras for Parks						

Recommendation #8 - Continue Support and Increase Collaboration with other Park and Nature Organizations (ongoing)

Appendices

Summary of Parks and Recreation Master Plan Review Committee Meeting Minutes - December 3, 2009

Summary of Parks and Recreation Survey - 2007

Summary of City of Aurora Quality Committee Residential Survey 2008

Kiwanis-Moore Park Master Plan

Summary of Minutes

Parks and Recreation Master Plan Review Committee Meeting

The following is a summary of the information presented by each local organization that was present at the December 3, 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Review Committee Meeting. For complete minutes, please contact the Parks and Recreation Office.

Portage County Park District

- County wide metro park organization governed by 5 volunteer park commissioners
- Top priority is extension of Headwater's Trail from Mantua through Aurora to Solon
- Also would like to partner with conserving the Chagrin River corridor

Aurora City Schools

- Schedule demand for athletic space is heavy
- Would like to establish additional outdoor fields to help with field rotation for maintenance
- Indoor facilities has high demand for basketball courts
- School pays approximately \$30,000 annually for ice and pool time for athletic teams

Aurora Baseball League

- 700-750 children between ages 6 - 15 playing from April - July in recreational and travel baseball and recreational softball leagues
- Would like to see a complex with fields, rest rooms, concessions that would be suitable for hosting tournaments
- Work closely with city on field scheduling and have contributed money in past for field projects
- Typically teams practice twice a week before games start and once a week after games start for 2 hours each for both recreational and travel teams
- Typically play one game per week for rec leagues and 1 - 2 games per week for travel leagues depending on schedule

Aurora Youth Basketball Association

- Started 7 years ago
- Travel basketball teams for 4th - 6th grade boys and 5th - 6th grade girls
- Approximately 70 participants annually
- Try-outs in October, practices start in November and league plays December - March
- 2 practices a week for about 1 1/2 hour - 2 hours each
- Have had to rent some gym time outside the city to accommodate practice times

Aurora Tackle Football Association

- Started in 2000
- Approximately 200 participants from 1st - 6th grade for football and 100 participants from 2nd - 6th for cheerleading
- Play the 3rd/4th and 5th/6th grade teams in the Western Reserve Youth Football League with 4 teams in each league.
- Practice on high school fields for 3rd - 6th grade teams 4 nights a week before school and 3 nights a week when school starts for 2 hours each starting in July and running to end of October depending on playoffs
- Mighty Mites program for 1st - 2nd grades that plays in Aurora
- Practice one hour a week at Leighton field
- Partnership with middle school and high school program and donate funds back to the high school program and school board
- Need more practice fields and improved concessions, rest rooms and parking

Aurora United Girls Soccer

- 9 teams with over 100 girls participating for 10 months a year
- Spend \$18,000 to rent and play games at an indoor facility
- Purchases paint for city to help with field lining for outdoor seasons
- Could use additional fields for play

Academy Volleyball Club

- Started in 2007 and now have over 35 teams and 340 participants with a small percentage of Aurora residents
- Rent 28 hours a week at Pinnacle using 5 courts from January - May
- Also use 4 hours a week at Aurora High School and 6 hours a week at Hiram
- Have clinics and camps in summer
- Total budget is about \$500,000 with costs ranging from \$50 per participant in clinics to over \$1000 per participant for travel leagues
- Currently have 4 directors, a steering committee of 8 people and 50 coaches on staff
- Coaches are paid \$15-\$20/hour for Junior Volleyball, \$500 - \$2000 for travel coach per season

Aurora Raptors Softball

- Started in 1996
- Currently have 9 teams for girls ages 10 -18 with approximately 110 participants annually
- Play in the Cuyahoga Valley League and have 2 competition levels (A and B divisions)
- Each participant pays \$115 per player which covers uniform, umpires and basic equipment
- Play in tournaments with fees paid by sponsors
- Rent indoor space at Hilltopper Gym and Valley Christian School in winter months for clinics (total \$3,500 for about 30 hours week for 3 months)

Aurora Historical Society

- Currently uses Margaret Harmon and Ray Harmon houses and barns for storage in addition to the museum in the Library
- Interested in keeping these properties as passive recreation

Summary of Parks and Recreation Survey from 2007

The following is a summary of the survey results from a Parks and Recreation Survey completed in 2007. This survey was internet based and sent to all participants in parks and recreation programs with valid e-mail addresses as well as handed out in the Walker Building. For complete minutes, please contact the Parks and Recreation Office.

Overview of Respondents

- Total respondents: 237
- 61 male, 176 female
- 129 were ages 35 - 44 and 53 were 45 - 54
- 108 lived in 3-4 person households and 86 lived in 4-5 person households

Additional programs that would like to see:

<u>Class</u>	<u># of responses</u>
Swimming pool	42
Lacrosse	4
Ice skating at Sunny Lake	4
Pre-school age classes in evenings	4
Volleyball	3
Workout classes	1
Nature programs	1
Baseball clinics	1
Yoga	1
Babysitting program	1
Music/Art education	1
Sports camps	1
Concessions at ball fields	1
Floor hockey	1
Exercise class for kids	1
Online registration	1
35+ baseball league	1
More teen programs	1
Weight training class	1
Engineering classes for all ages	1
Easter egg hunt	1
Ghost hunting	1
Tennis for adults	1
Adult flag football	1
Archery club	1
Basketball court	1
Summer family fun events	1
Football for women	1
Pumpkin patch	1
Adult soccer	1
Full-day summer camp	1

Amenities like to see added in parks:

<u>Item</u>	<u># of responses</u>
Bathrooms	9
Bike paths	4
Clean up goose poop	3
Dog park	2
Water fountains	2
Tetherball	1
Camping	1
Skateboarding	1
Benches at Kiwanis-Moore Park	1
Bike lanes to get to parks	1
4-season boathouse	1
Amphitheater	1
Tennis court	1
More at Sheldon Park	1
Better sports fields	1
Rest stops around Sunny Lake	1
Disc golf at Sunny Lake	1
ATV trails	1
Deer hunting	1
More swings	1
Padded playground	1
More equipment at Kiwanis-Moore Park	1
Swim area at Sunny Lake	1
Playground at Breezy Point Park	1

Activities like to be added to Sunny Lake

<u>Item</u>	<u># of responses</u>
Outdoor Amphitheatre	116
Playground at North End	95
Mountain Bike Trails	88
Low Ropes Challenge Course	64
Disc Golf Course	62
Camping Area	58
4-season Boathouse	51
High Ropes Challenge Course	43

Annual contribution to improve P & R

<u>Item</u>	<u># of responses</u>
\$25	61
\$100	52
\$50	40
None	35
\$250	16
\$500 or more	7

Items like to see in Recreation Center

<u>Item</u>	<u># of responses</u>
Indoor Swimming Pool	210
Exercise Equipment / Weight Room	193
Exercise/Walking Track	193
Aerobic Rooms	140
Leisure Pool	139
Indoor Courts	135
Supervised Children Area	128
Meeting Rooms	82

Amount of Levy Support

<u>Item</u>	<u># of responses</u>
0.5-mil levy	75
1-mil levy	65
2-mil levy	47
1.5-mil levy	27
No levy	20

Main challenges

<u>Item</u>	<u># of responses</u>
Understanding need of rec center	34
Upkeep	8
Community support to pass levy	7
Communicating activities	4
Things everyone enjoys	2
Developments that have no amenities	1
Spending money on things we don't need	1
Limited budget	1
Keeping residents happy	1
Sports programs need to be overhauled	1
Growth community	1
More staff	1
Monitor non-resident use of parks	1
Wide appeal of programs	1
Working with city groups	1
Scheduling field time	1
Keeping up with other communities	1

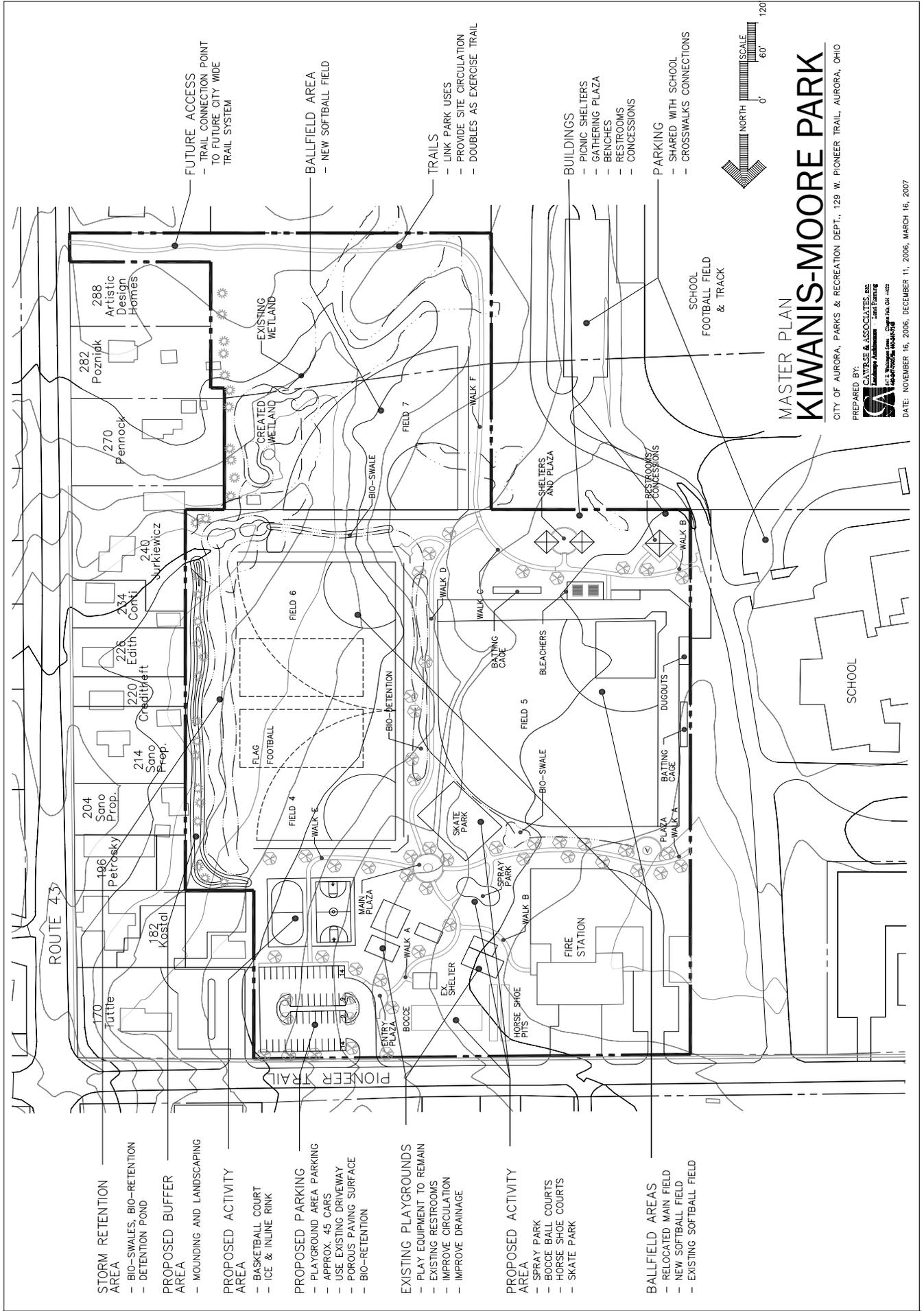
Additional Comments

<u>Item</u>	<u># of responses</u>
Community Rec Center and Pool	45
Baseball field improvements	3
Great programs and parks	2
Female coaches	1
Camps for longer than a week - all day	1
More bleachers at Craddock fields	1
City needs to use money more adequately	1
Cut grass more often	1
More toddler activities	1
Maps of city property and things to do	1
More teen programs	1
Focus on needs of young families	1
Upkeep on younger kids baseball fields	1
Teen center	1
Brochure to come out sooner	1

**Summary of Residential Survey 2008
from City of Aurora Quality Committee**

The following is a summary of the survey results from the residential survey conducted by the Marketing Research (MKT 35050) class at Kent State University under the direction of the City of Aurora Quality Committee. For complete copy of results, please contact the City of Aurora City Council Office.

Department Satisfaction Level		Summary of Comments	
<u>Department</u>	<u>% Satisfaction</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u># of responses</u>
Fire	91%	Need community rec center and pool	42
Police	86%	Acquire more greenspace	4
Parks and Recreation	81%	No more greenspace	4
Service	76%	Senior coordinator is great	4
Cemetery	65%	Conserve greenspace	3
		Need city golf course	3
Parks and Recreation Areas to Improve		Improve historical structures	2
<u>Item</u>	<u>Unsatisfied</u>	Improve field quality	2
Fees charged for programs	37%	Develop Aurora Park Guide	2
Community Education programs	32%	Public greenspace at old Geauga Lake site	1
Community Events	26%	Use greenspace	1
Senior Programs offered by City	26%	More things for kids to do	1
Sports Programs offered by City	25%	Senior center is wonderful	1
Parks and Rec Facilities	20%	Improve walkways, trails, sidewalks	1
Maintenance of Parks	14%	Remove geese and poop from Sunny Lake	1
		Clean litter on paths	1
		More adaptive programs	1
		Lengthen sled hill	1
		Community garden	1
		Better marketing of programs	1
		Too many part-time seasonal staff	1
		Concessions at Sunny Lake	1
		More playground equipment	1
		Too many programs held in other towns	1
		More maintenance at Liz Strahan Park	1
		Excellent dog park	1
		Too many vehicles for staff	1
		Too many bees at Sunny Lake	1
		More money for tree management	1
		Need sports for 40+	1
		Need rides for July 4th event	1
		Facility restrooms more than porta-potties	1



STORM RETENTION AREA
 - BIO-SWALES, BIO-RETENTION
 - DETENTION POND

PROPOSED BUFFER AREA
 - MOUNDING AND LANDSCAPING

PROPOSED ACTIVITY AREA
 - BASKETBALL COURT
 - ICE & INLINE RINK

PROPOSED PARKING
 - PLAYGROUND AREA PARKING
 - APPROX. 45 CARS
 - USE EXISTING DRIVEWAY
 - POROUS PAVING SURFACE
 - BIO-RETENTION

EXISTING PLAYGROUNDS
 - PLAY EQUIPMENT TO REMAIN
 - EXISTING RESTROOMS
 - IMPROVE CIRCULATION
 - IMPROVE DRAINAGE

PROPOSED ACTIVITY AREA
 - SPRAY PARK
 - BOCCIE BALL COURTS
 - HORSE SHOE COURTS
 - SKATE PARK

BALLFIELD AREAS
 - RELOCATED MAIN FIELD
 - NEW SOFTBALL FIELD
 - EXISTING SOFTBALL FIELD

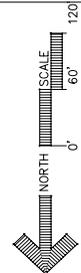
FUTURE ACCESS
 - TRAIL CONNECTION POINT TO FUTURE CITY WIDE TRAIL SYSTEM

BALLFIELD AREA
 - NEW SOFTBALL FIELD

TRAILS
 - LINK PARK USES
 - PROVIDE SITE CIRCULATION
 - DOUBLES AS EXERCISE TRAIL

BUILDINGS
 - PICNIC SHELTERS
 - GATHERING PLAZA
 - BENCHES
 - RESTROOMS
 - CONCESSIONS

PARKING
 - SHARED WITH SCHOOL
 - CROSSWALKS CONNECTIONS



MASTER PLAN
KIWANIS-MOORE PARK

CITY OF AURORA, PARKS & RECREATION DEPT., 129 W. PIONEER TRAIL, AURORA, OHIO

PREPARED BY:
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