



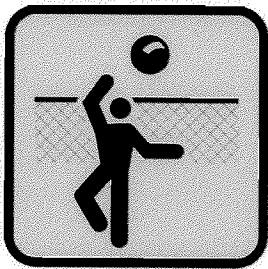
Decatur, Georgia



Citywide Comprehensive



Athletic Facility



Master Plan



Prepared by

Lose & Associates, Inc.

Landscape Architecture

Architecture

Engineering

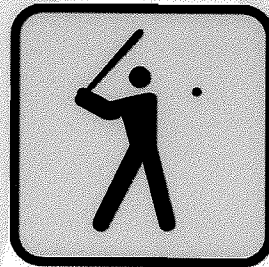




Table of Contents

Executive Summary	ES.1
Section 1 - Introduction	1.1
Section 2 - Community Profile	2.1
Community Indicators	2.2
Population Trends	2.3
Recommendations	2.4
Section 3 - History of Planning	3.1
Section 4 - Public Input	4.1
Interviews	4.1
Steering Committee Workshop	4.3
Public Meetings	4.7
Summary of Public Input Findings	4.8
Section 5 - Facility Assessments and Recommendations	5.1
Mini Parks	5.2
Neighborhood Parks	5.2
School Parks	5.3
Community Parks	5.3
Regional Parks	5.4
Special Use Parks	5.5
Private Park/Recreation Facility	5.5
Natural Resource Area/Preserve	5.5
Greenways	5.6
Facility Assessments	5.6
City of Decatur Park Standards	5.9
Adair Park	5.13
Oakhurst Park	5.14
McKoy Park	5.16
Glenlake Park	5.19
Scott Park	5.21
Ebster Park	5.23
Passive Parks	5.24
City Schools of Decatur	5.25
Decatur Institutions	5.28
Agnes Scott College	5.29
Columbia Theological Seminary	5.31
Private Recreation Providers of Decatur	5.32
DeKalb-Decatur YMCA	5.32
Samuel L. Jones Boys & Girls Club	5.34
United Methodist Children's Home	5.36



Venetian Pool	5.37
Citywide Athletic Facilities Concept	5.38
General Recommendations	5.41

**Section 6 - Implementation Policies,
Strategies and Opportunities6.1**

Softball Field @ Oakhurst Park	6.1
Indoor Swimming @ Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club	6.2
Soccer Field @ Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club	6.3
Skate Park @ McKoy Park	6.4
Dog Parks @ Adair, Oakhurst and Glenlake Parks	6.5
Community Park @ United Methodist Children’s Home	6.5
Facility Implementation	6.6
Joint Use Strategies	6.7
Recommended Policy	6.9
Recreation and Community Services Department Policy	6.9

Section 7 - Facility Phasing7.1

Section 8 - Funding Options8.1

Existing City Funds	8.1
Bond Program	8.2
Community Fund-raising	8.3
Corporate Sponsorships	8.3
Grants	8.3
Benefits	8.3

Reference Sources



Executive Summary

Recognizing the need for improved recreation facilities and the opportunity presented by a wide range of public and private providers, seven organizations formed a partnership to develop a citywide athletic facility master plan. The master plan was initiated to identify opportunities for partnerships and collaborative efforts to assist in meeting Decatur's recreation needs. The seven primary partners in the plan are the City of Decatur, City Schools of Decatur, Decatur-Dekalb YMCA, Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club, Columbia Theological Seminary, United Methodist Children's Home and Agnes Scott College.

These partners represent the primary recreation providers in the community and have the potential to greatly enhance Decatur's recreation opportunities. Each organization is involved in community recreation through programming or as a facility provider or both. The City of Decatur, United Methodist Children's Home and the Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club have valuable resources in existing land while the City Schools of Decatur, Decatur-Dekalb YMCA and Agnes Scott College have recreational needs that require land. The purpose of the master plan was to develop a strategy to merge resources and needs together to enhance current recreation opportunities.

In recent years, the benefits of parks and recreation have received overwhelming attention as quality of life issues have become more prevalent, and valuable open space has been depleted. Also at issue is the growing need to improve the health of the nation through increased activity levels leading to prevention of obesity, heart disease and other chronic health problems.

The City of Decatur has long lost the valuable open pastures, woodlands and other natural areas that surround many non-urban communities; however, the desire for improved health and quality of life brought by indoor and outdoor recreation amenities have certainly not been lost. Decatur recreation programs are offered through a variety of agencies including the City of Decatur Recreation Department, the City Schools of Decatur, Decatur-Dekalb YMCA, Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club, Columbia Theological Seminary, United Methodist Children's Home, Agnes Scott College, churches, private schools and other private recreation and health organizations. These entities provide varying levels of recreation facilities for use by their students, parishioners, paying members and the general public.

Many of the master plan partners have existing agreements in place that provide recreation opportunities that would not otherwise exist in the community. For example, the after-school program managed by the Decatur Recreation Department is held in rooms at the elementary schools. Without this arrangement, the after-school program could not serve the numbers of children whose families require after-school care.

Agnes Scott College has offered use of its indoor aquatic facility to high school and recreation swim leagues. In addition, the college track is made available to the middle and high school track teams. Another example is the use of Oakhurst Park by the high school and college softball teams for practice and league play. Other providers include Columbia Theological Seminary and the United Methodist Children's Home, which

allow YMCA leagues to use open space located on their properties for practice and games. These examples are just a few of the types of partnerships that currently exist in Decatur.

The need to improve existing recreation facilities, offer expanded programs and construct new facilities brought the community together to examine how they could provide high quality recreation amenities for all users and interests. The City Schools of Decatur have been working on a campus master plan for Decatur High School. This plan is exploring ways to meet the needs of a larger number of school athletic teams and interests on campus. Currently, many teams travel to offsite recreation, college and church facilities for practice and/or games. The number of athletic teams and the limited developable space on the high school campus will prevent the school system from ever fully meeting the need on campus; however, the continuation of working agreements with public and private agencies will allow teams to continue to exist. The citywide athletic facilities master plan is seen as a companion piece to the high school plan.

City-owned parks provide some of the only available space in the community to accommodate interests of high school and college athletic teams, but they are outdated and in need of renovations to meet current standards. Many parks, school campus and private facilities are currently overused and are unable to meet demands; therefore, the citywide athletic facilities master plan has been initiated to look at ways to make better use of all facilities found within the city limits.

Lose & Associates, Inc. conducted the master plan. A Nashville-based landscape architecture firm, Lose & Associates is one of the leaders in the southeast in parks and recreation planning. The master plan, which began in October of 2001, involved interviews, facility assessments, public meetings and a steering committee workshop to gather input as to the current and future needs of the community. Using the information gathered in these various forums, the planning team developed recommendations for a citywide athletic and recreation facility concept plan that accommodates all interests and relieves overuse of existing facilities.

The master plan public input process identified critical needs in the community that included improved athletic facilities, indoor and outdoor swim facilities, trails and sidewalks, a skate park, dog parks, and an outdoor track. Information obtained from site-based assessments of the public and private athletic and recreation facilities in the community revealed opportunities and constraints presented by existing conditions. An inventory was conducted of all existing facilities to determine community deficiencies compared to standards established by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and recent trends in athletics and recreation.

The result of this input, research and analysis was a series of recommendations totaling \$17.7 million. General recommendations regarding parks included upgrading of park amenities such as playgrounds and picnic pavilions and improving the handicap accessibility and safety of park facilities. Amenity recommendations were included for each park to provide elements such as signage, benches, trash receptacles, water fountains, bike racks and dog waste receptacles. A citywide concept was devised that optimized the use of existing facilities and recommended construction of new facilities where necessary. In addition, the concept increased the utilization of existing underused facilities in the community.

The recommendations of the citywide concept include the following:

- Dedicated softball facility located at Oakhurst Park for use by Decatur High School, Agnes Scott College and the Recreation Department
- Dedicated baseball facility located at McKoy Park for use by Decatur High School and the Recreation Department
- Replacing McKoy Park pool with interactive water feature
- New community park complex located on the property of the United Methodist Children's Home -- facilities to include little league baseball fields, passive nature trails and picnic pavilions
- Shared use of the indoor pool at the Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club by the Decatur High School swim team and the Recreation Department
- Shared use of the track facility at Agnes Scott College by college, high school and public users
- Shared use of the indoor pool at the YMCA by members and senior therapeutic swim patrons
- Development of a new skate park at McKoy Park in location of existing, underutilized tennis courts
- Shared use of the existing soccer field at Ebster Park by Decatur High School, Renfro Middle School, YMCA and the Recreation Department
- Improvements to the Decatur Recreation Center to include expanded programming, office and fitness/wellness space
- Reconstruction of a new pool at Glenlake Park
- Citywide sidewalk construction and improvements
- Multi-purpose room additions at each elementary school
- Dog Parks at Adair, Oakhurst and Glenlake Parks

In addition to the citywide concept, alternates have been proposed to broaden the options the city has for accommodating all interests. Alternates include:

- Purchasing the Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club and operating it as a community recreation center
- Completing a large addition on the existing Decatur Recreation Center inclusive of an indoor competition pool and fitness/wellness activity areas

Other recommendations contained in the master plan intended to improve the existing condition of recreation facilities in Decatur were:

- The initiation of a park maintenance crew to handle general upkeep of park facilities
- The establishment of a turf maintenance contract to handle all athletic field maintenance thereby guaranteeing a consistent level on all athletic fields throughout the community
- The development of park amenity and sign standard program to create a consistent look and identity for all parks in Decatur
- The initiation of a capital replacement program to allocate funding for the regular replacement of park elements such as playgrounds, picnic tables, benches, pavilions and other common park features when they have exceeded their expected life cycle

- The initiation of a park adoption program that allows residents who live adjacent to parks to get involved in the security, beautification and improvements of their neighborhood parks

The implementation of the citywide concept is dependent on successful partnerships between the various agencies involved in the master plan. Funding for proposed improvements will be dependent on the combination of resources between city departments and private entities. In implementing this plan, the City of Decatur has a unique opportunity to set an example for other communities demonstrating the benefits of successful partnerships between public and private organizations. The planning team has identified six pilot projects to help kick off the implementation of the plan. Key elements have been outlined to assist in developing working agreements between partners. The projects include:

- Softball facility at Oakhurst Park
- Indoor swimming at the Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club
- Soccer field development at the Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club
- Skate Park at McKoy Park
- Dog Parks at Adair, Oakhurst and Glenlake Parks
- Community Park at the United Methodist Children's Home

The implementation of the citywide Athletic Master Plan will be of great benefit to the City of Decatur. These facility improvements will enhance the quality of life for all residents, increasing Decatur's appeal to future residents. These improvements are an investment that will be enjoyed for many years to come.

Since the initiation of the master plan, several of the previously mentioned partnerships and improvements have already taken place. These include:

- Utilization of the Boys and Girls Club pool by the YMCA and Decatur High School
- A playground replacement plan is being initiated by the City
- The City of Decatur and the City Schools of Decatur maintenance departments are working on standards, signage, inspections and installation of similar equipment in community playgrounds.
- A Community Development Block Grant and a Safeco Grant were awarded for the development of a multi-purpose/soccer field at the Boys and Girls Club.
- Private funds have been raised for the development of a skate park.