



METRO
Parks

Buechel Park Master Plan

**LUCKETT & FARLEY ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS
& CONSTRUCTION MANAGERS, INC.**

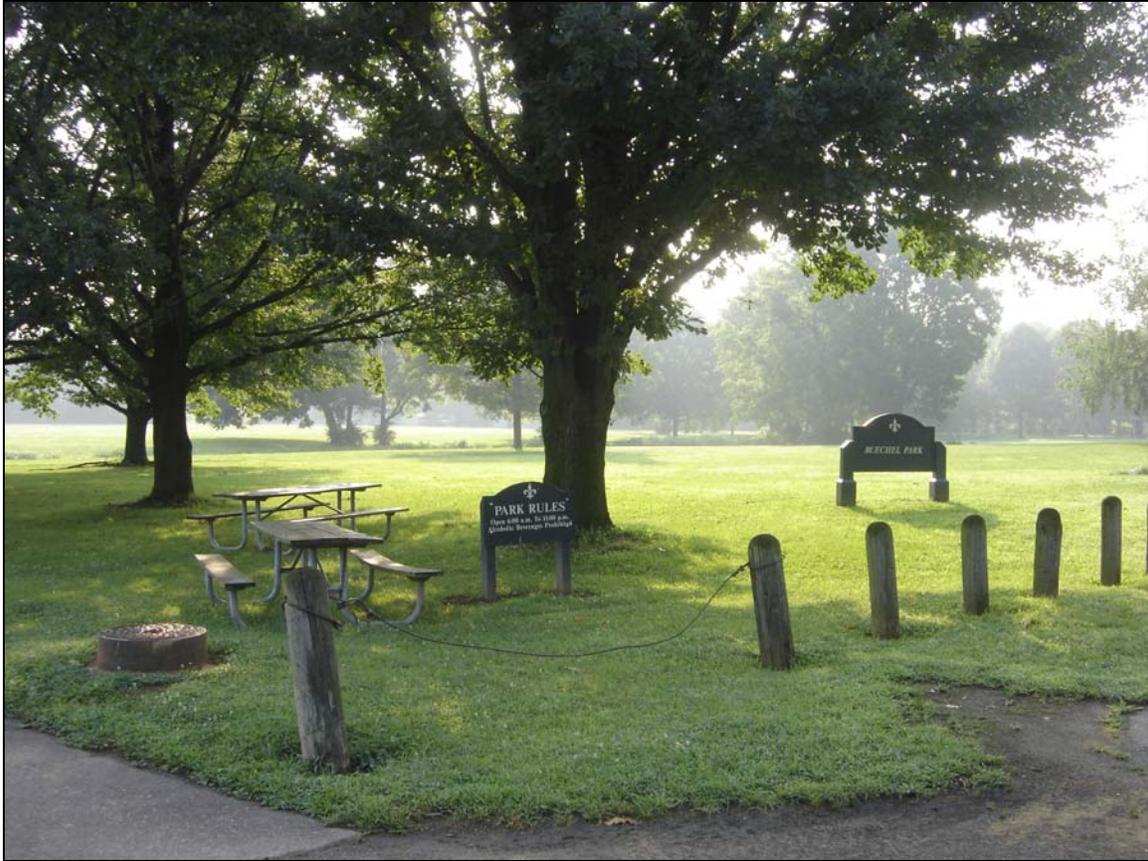
**737 SOUTH THIRD STREET
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY 40202
Telephone Number: (502) 585-4181
Fax Number: (502) 587-0488**

**Report Prepared by:
Jeff Moneypenny, Architect
Senior Project Manager
jmoneypenny@luekett-farley.com**

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Buechel Park Master Plan



Overview

Louisville/Metro Government contracted with Luckett & Farley to prepare a master plan for Buechel Park, one of 123 parks within the Metro Louisville's park system. Located within the neighborhood of primarily Buechel Terrace, the purpose of this master plan is to help guide the future use, improvement and development of the park and the surrounding community. The park is located in Metro Council Representative's Kevin Kramer, 11th district. The 16 acre site was originally acquired and built in 1973.

All base data was provided by Louisville/Metro Government in the form of LOGIC data as well as historical base drawings from Metro Parks and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

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Summary of Planning Process

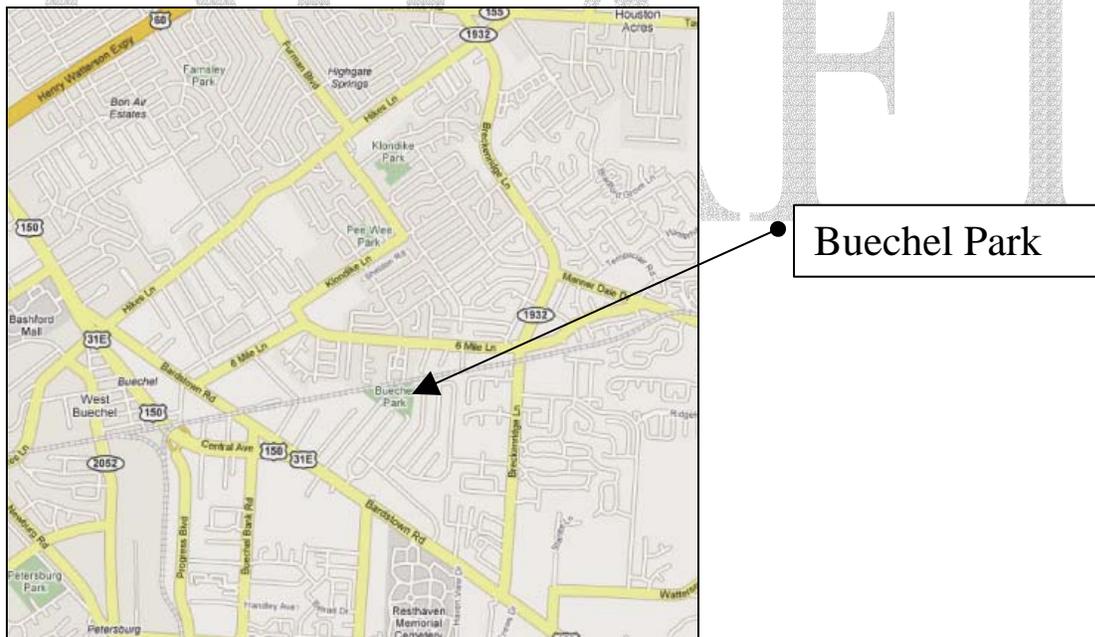
1. Review and summary of public user survey questionnaire
2. Site base data and base map preparation with data supplied from LOGIC, Metro Parks
3. Site inspection, visits and review of existing conditions
4. First public meeting for review of survey questionnaire and preliminary program
5. Concept Development and review with Metro Parks
6. Public presentation of Master Plan
7. Plan revisions based on public comments and Metro Park staff review
8. Final Master Plan development

Existing Park

Buechel Park is located in the Buechel Terrace Subdivision off Bardstown Road and the Buechel Bypass and bordered at the southern and western end of Richland, Beargrass, and Alpha Avenues and Bonnie Lane. The remainder of the park is bounded by Norfolk Southern railroad to the North and Derby Avenue to the east. The park was built in the early 1970's as a neighborhood park for the Buechel Community. There has been very little change to the park since it was built, except for a few modifications to the playground equipment and a bridge replacement.

Located in the center of the park is a small stream that is part of the South Fork of the Beargrass Creek Watershed. Most of the 16 acre site is located in a flood prone area and the soils are primarily Hydric, according to the LOGIC data.

Downstream of the park, on the southwest corner is a newly constructed drainage detention basin. The basin is bounded by the stream on the southeast side and the Norfolk Southern Railroad to the North. It has been discussed that a connection to this open space may be considered since a gravel path exists on the levee top that surrounds the basin.



Location Map

Existing Park Features:

- Two softball fields with backstops
- Concrete Walking path approximately x.... miles
- Four Basketball courts

One Picnic shelter
Playground, including a tot playground recently added
Four asphalt tennis courts
Three asphalt parking areas that can accommodate 61 cars.
A small stream/drainage ditch bisects the site with two pedestrian crossings, one as a wooden bridge and the other a concrete culvert.
A Springhead is located just off the property in the Southeast corner of the park, which helps to feed the existing stream.
Two drinking fountains
Bar B Q Grills
Picnic tables
Benches



Aerial view of Buechel Park

User Survey/ Questionnaire

The Master Plan began with a solicitation from Metro parks staff to the general public in district 11 as a questionnaire about multiple issues and concerns for Buechel Park. The questionnaire was issued to gather the park user's comments on specific items such as safety, facility condition, maintenance, visitation, activities, etc. The surveys were then

given to the consultant for review of the issues, concerns and wish list from the neighborhood and park users, and then organized in a format to summarize the primary components and program for the development of the Master Plan. (See appendix a, user survey) (Color shaded line items are the most popular issues)

The park is used primarily by the surrounding neighborhoods of Buechel terrace and zip codes 40218, 40220 and 40228. Since the park is surrounded by homes, tucked well within an existing neighborhood, the park can be classified as a neighborhood park, and not a metro or regional destination type park. Most of the users live within walking distance, which is reflective of the responses in the survey. Over 60% of park users either walk or ride bicycles as opposed to 39% that drive to the park. No respondents' utilized public transportation (TARC) which further reinforces the fact that the park does not attract users from outside the adjacent neighborhoods. Over 46% of the users frequent the park weekly, with the remainder only using the park monthly or a few times a year. Most of the features that park users like about the park are the fact that it is a neighborhood park within walking distance, with walking paths, playgrounds and ball fields.

Activities include walking or jogging, walking dogs, bringing children to the playground areas, and sitting on benches or picnic areas. The most popular active recreational use is tennis. Additional activities or events mentioned were organized activities such as concerts, festivals or a farmer's market.

The biggest areas of concern and items that are in need of improvement are security, better maintenance, lack of seating, better drainage, poor lighting and no restroom facility.

Public Meeting #1

The first of two public meetings was held with the Buechel Terrace neighborhood association at the Buechel fire house on Tuesday April 18th. The goal of the first meeting was to review the results from the questionnaire and review the recommended program that would begin to suggest future improvements and enhancements to Buechel Park.

The following program was prepared for and presented during the meeting to create discussion and draw comments from the public for the future of the Park:

- Multi Purpose Building
 - Restrooms
 - Water fountains
 - Concessions
 - Concerts/Special Events
- Extended path along stream to the retention basin (700LF+/-)
 - Prefab bridge over stream
 - Prefab bridge across spillway

- Improve stream bank, add rock/boulders, and edge planting along stream for aesthetic enhancements
- New fencing and surfacing for tennis courts
- Re-graded ball fields to accommodate soccer/football
- Two new picnic gazebos
- Add benches (8-10) and picnic tables (7)
- New pedestrian pathway lighting (original loop only) (25 fixtures @ 80'o.c.)
- Resurface and re-stripe parking areas
- Vehicular gates at parking entrances (to be locked after hours of operation)
- Strengthen planting buffer along Railroad corridor and evergreen screening around park
- Additional tree planting (30-40 shade trees and 40-50 evergreens)

Although there was no strong reaction to the items presented, the discussion focused on the following topics.

- Vehicle access needs to continue to be restricted to the three parking areas only.
- Tennis was identified as the most popular sport from the user survey, therefore should be improved.
- Ball fields need better maintenance which may attract more use. Presently, there are no organized leagues that use the fields. The fields are mostly used as practice field sites.
- Sidewalk/path conditions are poor and need repair.
- Light levels for security need improvement, especially in the parking areas and the gazebo location.
- Path lights are not desired. Lighting should be restricted to the parking and high use areas such as the playground area.
- There was a strong consensus to maintaining and keeping the existing park safe and clean before additional improvements are implemented.

Public Meeting #2

The second public meeting was held on Tuesday evening on June 20th, 2006. The purpose of the final public meeting was to present the preliminary Master Plan that was prepared based on the results of the user surveys, and discussions and comments from the first public meeting on April 18th, prior to review and comments from Metro Park staff.

The plan was well received by the group with little to no opposition on the proposed additions and improvements. In an effort to help prioritize the proposed for future funding consideration, the primary improvements were rated in order of importance by the group:

Summary of Improvements

The following components of the Master Plan are identified as the most important improvements in order of priority:

1. Sports facilities improvements
 - a. Renovate the multi purpose ball fields which include the softball/baseball, soccer, football and cricket pitch areas
 - b. Renovate the basketball courts to include the court surface, replace nets and backstops
 - c. Renovate the tennis courts to include court surface, fencing, and nets
2. Stream corridor improvements
 - a. Meander the steam bank and create small pools, add rocks and boulders and native edge plantings to enhance the natural character, and add large boulder to act as informal stream crossings.
3. Security Lighting
 - a. Parking areas, playground and picnic areas
4. Shelters
 - a. Additional shelters with picnic tables should be considered. Additional benches, especially around the playground are needed.

Other components of the plan that need to be considered as part of the plan are:

1. Connection of the existing path to the drainage detention basin path to extend the length of the existing path. Further coordination with MSD will need to be made if this is to be realized.
2. Improvements to the existing path as well as new and improved steam crossings/bridges.
3. Further expansion of the play equipment and consideration of new swings.
4. New Tree planting. Much of the original tree canopy is in poor shape and in need of replacement. In addition, it was noted in the user surveys that additional shade was requested. Also, the evergreen buffers along the property lines, especially the Railroad corridor needs to be improved and enhanced.
5. Parking improvements. Should activity and visitation increase, it is suggested that the Beargrass Avenue parking area be replaced with a new 51 car parking lot. The two additional parking areas at Granville Drive and Bonnie Lane would be resurfaced only. This would increase the parking capacity to the park from 61 to 81 cars.
6. Restroom building. Although maintenance and vandalism are big concerns, there is still strong interest in having public restrooms.