

SPECIAL EDITION

# WESTERVILLE

[WWW.WESTERVILLE.ORG/PARKS](http://WWW.WESTERVILLE.ORG/PARKS)



**WPROS**  
PARKS, RECREATION &  
OPEN SPACES

## MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this Special Edition on the Westerville Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Westerville Parks & Recreation is proud to present the findings and outcomes of a strategic process, built upon examining the most innovative, effective and sustainable opportunities for the Parks & Recreation system for the next generation. This plan looks to the future of our community's beloved parks and green spaces. And, our residents and participants' voices have been key to the plan's development. As you read ahead, we hope you will be inspired by our community's vision and our blueprint for the future.

## WESTERVILLE PARKS & RECREATION

### VISION STATEMENT

"A City within a park where everyone benefits from parks and recreation."

### CITY OF WESTERVILLE MISSION STATEMENT

We are dedicated to providing exemplary municipal services to our community and fostering prosperity while embracing our unique heritage and character.

#### About Westerville Parks & Recreation:

The City of Westerville Parks & Recreation Department is nationally recognized for excellence in parks and recreation and widely respected as a "best practice" agency. A four-time National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Gold Medal winner, Westerville Parks & Recreation is one of only 117 accredited agencies in the U.S. Healthy, active lifestyles, preservation of the environment and economic development are among the core values as we serve nearly one million residents, patrons and guests annually. For more information, visit [www.westerville.org/parks](http://www.westerville.org/parks).

#### About PROS Master Plan:

The PROS (Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces) Master Plan supports the Westerville Parks & Recreation Department in the forecasting and development of initiatives and priorities that include well-balanced parks, facilities and programs. Recommendations are based on resident and user input (focus groups, interviews, surveys), best practices and professional staff and consultants. This document replaces the original PROS Master Plan, written and adopted in 2000.





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Larry Jenkins	Vice Chair
Diane Fosselman	Mayor
Jenifer French	Vice Mayor
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L. Pete Otteson	Council Member

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Julie Colley	Assistant City Manager
Randy Auler	Director of Parks & Recreation
Christa Dickey	Community Affairs Administrator

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Derek Blazo	Commission Member
Jennifer Finfera	Commission Member
Connie Sadowski	Commission Member

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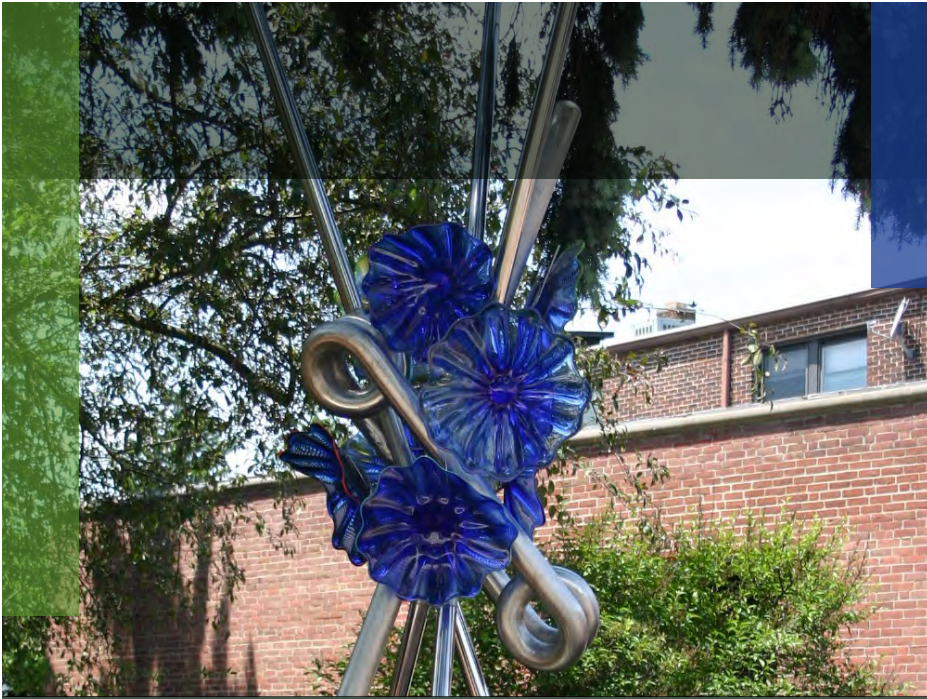
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## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There is no step more meaningful and critical in a master planning process than the involvement and engagement of the community. Nearly 2,000 residents and program users provided their input and opinions via surveys, interviews, community meetings and focus groups. Read on to learn what we heard.





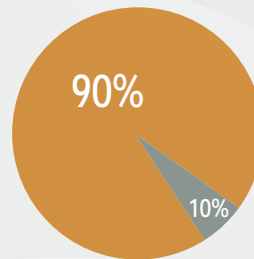
## FOCUS GROUP AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS (RESULTS)

Residents and program users were invited to participate in a series of focus groups to share their comments and help us plan for the future. Participants expressed support for the Department, and rated both park visibility and accessibility well. Programs, amenities and staff were also highly rated. These groups identified several priorities:

- Expand programming for older adults. Plan for a facility to meet the growing older adult population
- Expand the connections and network of the 29+-mile Westerville B&W (Bike & Walk System)
- Ensure funding remains in place to maintain and meet future parks and recreation needs

## COMMUNITY INTERCEPT SURVEYS (RESULTS)

Nearly 1,000 surveys were distributed and collected from multiple special events throughout the City. Two major findings were:



- 90% of respondents utilize the parks and recreation system
- Primary uses of the system are parks, recreational paths (Westerville B&W), aquatics and special events





### COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY (STATISTICALLY VALID)

We initiated a statistically valid survey via postal mail to open another line of communication with residents and further identify priorities. The survey was designed to be complementary to ongoing engagement efforts, and asked participants to rate programs and services on a scale, with Excellent being the highest designation. The results demonstrate that Westerville participants far surpass national standards in terms of their participation and interest levels.



### RESIDENT SURVEY RESPONDENTS



93%

have used a Westerville  
park or facility  
within the last year



60%

have participated  
in a program



85%

believe use of the  
quarter-percent income tax  
dedicated to Parks & Recreation  
has been "Good" or "Excellent"



67%

rated park quality  
as "Excellent"



62%

rated program quality  
as "Excellent"

Survey results have a level of confidence of 95%  
with a margin of error +/- 4.9%



## SURVEY-RATED **IMPORTANCE** RELATED TO **FACILITY** **IMPROVEMENTS**

Expand recreational paths program  
(Westerville B&W)

Expand Westerville Community Center  
(fitness, therapy pool, older adult spaces,  
track, program)

Enhance existing neighborhood parks

Improve access to waterways

## SURVEY-RATED **IMPORTANCE** RELATED TO **PROGRAMS**

Expand adult fitness  
and wellness programs

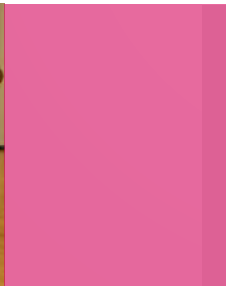
Expand community special events

Create an outdoor adventure  
and nature program

Expand older adult programming







## RECREATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Recreation programs were assessed to identify gaps and overlaps in service. Since nearly 2,400 programs are produced annually by the department, this assessment narrowed in on several core program and service areas:

- Community Events
- Arts and Culture
- Aquatics
- Sports
- Pre-school
- Adult/Seniors
- Fitness/Wellness

The following needs were most evident once this strategic review was paired with community engagement efforts:

- Outdoor adventure and nature programs



Outdoor adventure programs are emerging as a new, exciting recreational option for many who enjoy bringing nature and activity together. These activities can range from rock climbing to hiking to extreme sports that use routes in and around parks and open spaces. Household participation is expected to increase between 60-70% in the next five years. A clear objective of the PROS Master Plan is to introduce outdoor adventure programming

## PARKS AND FACILITIES NEEDS ANALYSIS

Parks and facilities were analyzed to determine our strengths and identify any deficiencies as we chart the course ahead. The following needs were most evident once this strategic review was paired with community engagement efforts:

- Acquire additional park land and open space
- Develop a second dog park
- Develop larger size baseball/softball fields for teens and adults
- Develop additional rectangular fields for Soccer/Lacrosse/other sports





## TREND ANALYSIS

National trends are an important factor in predicting what will impact us at the community level. Learning from parks and recreation agencies across the nation, and setting the standard in many ways here in Westerville, we know more about what to expect as the years unfold. As we look ahead, here are issues and conditions that may impact the Westerville community:

### **Adult and Childhood Overweight and Obesity**

A greater emphasis on public health and physical activity in parks and recreation programming is developing to serve the rapidly rising rates of overweight and obese individuals of all ages.

### **Older Adults**

Demographics for older adult communities are surging ahead, as the Baby Boomer generation ages and retires from the workforce. These older adults are more physically and socially active than any generation before them.

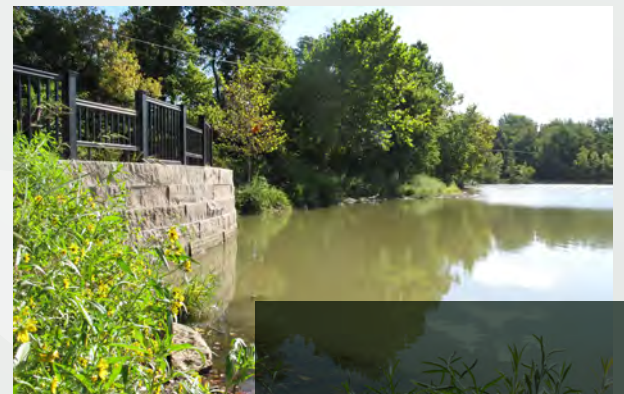
### **Outdoor Adventure Recreation**

Non-traditional recreation that focuses on outdoor and adventure pursuits is gaining in popularity. Many of these activities incorporate nature and outdoor play as their primary components.



### **Cultural and Ethnic Diversity**

In our neighborhoods and our recreational activities, cultures and ethnicities blend together to create a true community. Parks and recreation programs and services are evolving to meet the needs of these diverse communities.





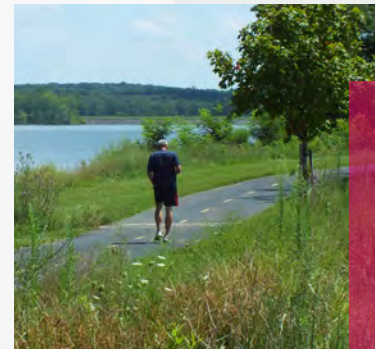
From facility improvements to new parkland and green space, the PROS Master Plan offers a series of community-based recommendations that shape programs and services for the decades ahead. These recommendations are designed to both improve and enhance existing services and fulfill needs in the community that currently do not exist. Ultimately, Westerville Parks & Recreation is committed to remaining a gold standard system at the state, regional and national levels.



## EXPAND THE B&W RECREATIONAL PATHWAY SYSTEM

Recreational pathways are not only a great recreation asset to a community, they can also be vital to the development of the community. According to the recently completed statistically valid survey, recreational pathways are the most desired amenity in the Westerville Community.

- Expand the Westerville B&W Recreational Pathway system to create a totally connected network with and to parks, Uptown Westerville, Westerville City Schools and Otterbein University.







## EXPAND THE COMMUNITY CENTER TO INCLUDE:

- The relocation of the older adult center (senior center)
- Warm water therapy pool
- Fitness and program space
- Additional gymnasium
- Track expansion



# ALUM CREEK CORRIDOR



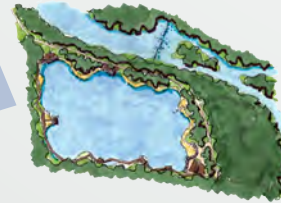
## CREATE RECREATION AND ADVENTURE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

along Alum Creek Waterway and Otterbein Lake





# CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS

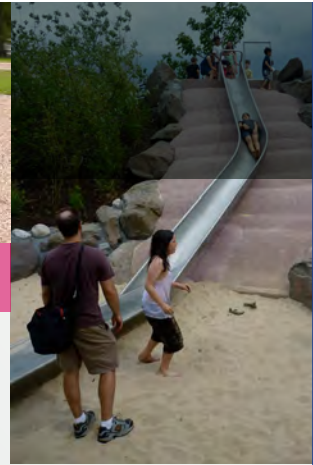




# DEVELOP ADDITIONAL AND IMPROVE CURRENT SPORTS FIELDS







# IMPROVE AND ENHANCE EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS



## THANK YOU

Thank you for reviewing the executive summary of the Parks and Recreation and Open Spaces (PROS) Master Plan. The Department is committed to providing excellent services, parks, facilities and programs to meet citizens needs. You are invited to view the complete PROS Master Plan online at [www.westerville.org](http://www.westerville.org).



