

## **2.4 Parks and Recreation**

### **Open Space and Greenways Overview**

Atlanta's park system accounts for approximately 3.75% of the City's land area, or approximately 3,200 acres. The City ranks among the lowest compared to other intermediate density cities in park acres per 1,000 residents. In 2001 the national average was 19.6 acres, with Atlanta falling significantly lower at 7.5 acres.

Since 2001, the City of Atlanta has established several green space initiatives. Through the green space program, the City has acquired approximately 300 new acres designated for public parks and open space. However, only a small percentage of these new parklands are situated within the BeltLine study area. Atlanta has no public green space larger than one-third of a square mile, and only two percent of the land use in the entire study area is designated as open space.

Park sizes vary from nature preserves and/or conservation parks to regional parks and from small recreation centers to large cultural complexes, such as the Atlanta Civic Center and Chastain Park Amphitheater (Map 10 – Parks and Cultural Facilities around the BeltLine). The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site in Downtown Atlanta and the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area in North Atlanta and Cobb County are two National Park Service properties. The four-acre King Historic Site located on Auburn Avenue is a short distance from the State of Georgia's Centennial Olympic Park, also downtown. Centennial Olympic Park's 21 acres account for all State park acreage in the City. Both parks are located within the study area.

There are 19 historic parks and/or park areas in Atlanta. Approximately half of these parks are located in or just outside the BeltLine study area. Atlanta Memorial/Tanyard, Maddox, and Washington Parks are located in the northwest, with Anderson and Mozley Parks nearby. In the northeast, there is Piedmont Park, along with five small parks in the Ansley area. Grant Park and Oakland Cemetery are in the southeast. Although there are no historic parks located within the southwest, John A. White, Oakland City, and Perkerson parks lie just outside the boundary of study area.

The City's parks inventory includes eight regional parks, 14 community parks, and 53 neighborhood parks. In addition, there are six conservation parks, 47 block parks, and six other special facilities. Two criteria used to categorize Atlanta parks are the total acreage and acres per 1,000 population. In general regional parks are 100 plus acres with five acres per 1,000 population; community parks 20 to 50 acres with five to ten plus acres per thousand population; and neighborhood parks are generally 10 to 25 acres in total.

## **Parks and Recreational Facilities**

In total, there are 32 recreation centers with 18 gyms, five indoor and 16 outdoor pools, one arts and craft center, five tennis centers and other special recreation facilities in the City of Atlanta.

The City's community recreation centers are grouped into two categories:

- those without a gym, of which there are 14
- those with a gym and one or more activities, of which there are 18.

The City owns 21 pools; five natatoriums and 16 outdoor pools. New indoor pools have been built for several parks including Washington Park in the northwest.

## **Northeast**

### ***Regional Parks***

Piedmont Park lies within the northeast portion of the study area and is one of Atlanta's historic parks. The park is located near the Midtown business district and has easy pedestrian access from several intown neighborhoods. The park's walking trails and recreational facilities including swimming, tennis, and ball fields, along with numerous community programs, attract a large number of local users from within the Atlanta metropolitan area. Programmed throughout the year with several major events such as the Atlanta Jazz Festival and the Dogwood Festival, the park also serves as a destination for many tourists.

Owned by the City of Atlanta, and managed by the Piedmont Park Conservancy, the park has undergone several significant improvements through the Conservancy's restoration plan. Completed projects include but are not limited to restoration of 15 acres of new green space, the creation of an off-leash dog park, renovation of the old Boat House at 12<sup>th</sup> Street for a visitor's center, renovation of the old American Legion building on Piedmont Avenue for a community center, restoration of granite throughout the park, and installation of new playgrounds and park signage. Future restoration plans include landscaping, improvement of areas surrounding the ball fields and volleyball courts (better known as the active oval) and development of vacant parkland adjacent to park.

Due to rapid development of the built environment in this part of the City, there are not many opportunities for green space acquisitions for creation of new parks. As the number of park users increases, so has the demand for expansion of the park. The Conservancy is currently conducting planning efforts for expanding and developing the area known as the North Woods. This effort has attracted much public attention and involvement.

### **Community Parks**

The northeast of the study area has no community parks located within the study area boundary. However, Freedom and Candler Parks are located just outside this section of the study area.

### **Neighborhood Parks**

Compared to other parts of the City, the northeast area falls short in its number of neighborhood parks. There are a few neighborhoods parks in or near this section of the study area: Ansley Parks, a collection of 5 small parks, Springvale Park, and Bedford Pine Park.

### **Existing Multi-Use Trails and Bike Lanes**

An easterly extension of the Atlanta-Stone Mountain, Freedom Trail runs east-west parallel to Freedom Parkway. The trail connects Freedom Park to Candler Park, both located just outside the boundary of the study area.

**Table 16. Major Parks in the Northeast**

<b>Park Name</b>	<b>Size (Acres)</b>	<b>Approx. Service Area</b>	<b>Active Recreation Facilities</b>	<b>Passive Recreation Facilities</b>
Piedmont Park	185	Entire city/region	Playgrounds Ball fields Volleyball Courts Tennis Courts Swimming Pools Dog Park	Picnic facilities Gazebo Walking Path

### **Proposed Bike Lanes, Parks and Trails**

#### *Freedom Trail*

The trail extension proposed would connect the existing trail segments running through Freedom Park east of downtown and through Centennial Park west of downtown. The connecting trail segment would run through downtown parallel to Andrew Young International Boulevard.

#### *Piedmont Trail*

The proposed trail segment runs north-south from Lindbergh Drive in northeast Atlanta to Freedom Parkway. The trail would run parallel to the existing eastern boundary of Piedmont Park and to the proposed route of the BeltLine.

### *Bike lanes*

There are several planned and existing bike lanes that run north-south between the southeast side of Piedmont Park to Edgewood Avenue. In addition, another path with a northwest-southeast orientation connects 5<sup>th</sup> Street, or Midtown Atlanta, to Highland Avenue near the Freedom Trail.

## **Southeast**

### ***Regional Parks***

Historic Grant Park is located in southeast Atlanta and is the City's oldest park. Along with the Zoo Atlanta and the Atlanta Cyclorama, the popularity of the park continues to grow as it welcomes over two million visitors each year. Collectively, these three serve as a major destination for Atlanta visitors and residents.

The park has both passive and active recreation amenities. There are two picnic shelters, two pavilions, a gazebo, ball fields, a basketball court, tennis courts, and a recreation center. There is a high level of community programming with a significant level of programs and/or major events attracting regional attention.

The master plan calls for massive renovations and improvements to the park over the next 20 years. However, there are no current plans in the City of Atlanta Bureau of Parks budget to fund these improvements. The Grant Park Conservancy was formed to raise funds for these purposes and to manage/implement improvement projects. Currently, emphases are being placed on the restoration of historic structures within the park, along with major landscaping and tree planting efforts. A new playground was installed in October 2003.

### ***Community Parks***

There are no community parks in this section of the study area. However, there are some open space acquisition opportunities.

### ***Neighborhood Parks***

The southeast portion of the study area is home to several neighborhood parks. Parks in or adjacent to the study area include: Benteen, Chosewood, Daniel Stanton, Joyland, Millican, Phoenix II, Phoenix III, and South Atlanta. These parks are owned and managed by the City of Atlanta's Bureau of Parks. However, the maintenance responsibility is shared by the City and community partners through Park Pride's Adopt-a-Park program.

### ***Existing Multi-Use Trails and Bike Lanes***

At present there are no pedestrian and/or bike trails in the southeast of the study area.

**Table 17. Major Parks in the Southeast**

Park Name	Size (Acres)	Approx. Service Area	Active Recreation Facilities	Passive Recreation Facilities
Grant Park	127	Entire city/region	Playgrounds Basketball court Ball fields Recreation Center	Picnic shelters Picnic pavilions Gazebo Walking Path

***Proposed Bike Lanes, Parks and Trails***

***Grant Park Trail***

The most significant trail proposed is the Grant Park Trail. This trail also follows the orientation of the proposed Beltline loop. It would be constructed just east of Grant Park, with a connector segment running east-west from Boulevard, the location of the park entrance, to the main trail.

***Bikeways***

There are plans for implementation of bike lanes and/or trails in the southeast of the study area. Both run north-south, connecting Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to McDonough Boulevard; one along Hill Street and the other along Capitol Avenue.

**Southwest**

***Regional Parks***

The southwest area is void of regional parks. John A. White Park, located outside the study area in southwest Atlanta on Cascade Road, is the nearest regional park.

***Community Parks***

Though there are no community parks are located in the southwestern, this area contains numerous neighborhood parks.

***Neighborhood Parks***

Compared to other areas of the city, the southwest has a significant number of neighborhood parks. There are six neighborhood parks in the southwest of the study area: Adair I, Adair II, Dean Rusk, Phoenix I, Pittman, and Cleopus

Johnson . In addition, Barbara A. McCoy and Oakland City are two neighborhood parks located outside this section of the study area.

### ***Existing Multi-Use Trails and Bike Lanes***

At present there are no bike paths in the southwest of the study area. However, the Oakland City/Lakewood Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) transit study proposes a pedestrian/cyclist-friendly greenway along Lee Street. Lee Street provides connectivity to Historic West End and the West Side Trail, as well as to Oakland City Park; inside and adjacent to the study area.

### ***Proposed Bike Lanes, Parks and Trails***

#### ***West End Trail***

The West End Trail proposal continues the pattern of following the proposed BeltLine route in the southwest of the study area. It would be a southwest continuance of the Piedmont Trail in the northeast that would connect to the Grant Park Trail in the southeast. The West End Trail would connect to the existing West Side Trail located in the northwest of the study area.

#### ***Bike Lanes***

There are several proposed commuter bike lane projects that would traverse the southwest of the study area. There are two major routes proposed. One runs east-west along Cascade Avenue to Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard in southwest Atlanta, eventually connecting to Grant Park in the southeast. Another runs north-south connecting Lee Street to downtown and to a proposed lane along Peachtree Street.

### **Northwest**

#### ***Regional Parks***

Centennial Olympic Park is the most heavily used park that lies in the northwest of the study area. However, Centennial Olympic Park serves the needs of the region and the city center more than the needs of the neighborhoods of northwestern Atlanta. The park lies close to the center of the city and draws a crowd from the business and tourist activities of downtown. The park is heavily programmed with major events throughout the year, such as outdoor concerts in summer and ice skating in winter. In the hottest days of July and August, the fountains are very popular for children, while parents sit on benches nearby. Centennial Olympic Park has few active recreational facilities. It is primarily used as a staging area for a variety of events that take advantage of its flexible design and central location.

There is a strong interest in the northwest in preserving some of the remaining forested acres for a major regional park. The northwest lacks a large, heavily vegetated green space unlike other areas of the City. Also the northwestern part of Atlanta has a disproportionate share of the City's industrial activities, so the desire for relief from the noise and pollution of the city is strong.

### ***Community Parks***

The northwest part of the study area has a host of medium sized, community parks, including Grove Park, Washington Park, Maddox Park, Mozley Park, and Anderson Park.

Anderson Park is an actively used, 57-acre park in fair condition. The park does suffer from some vandalism. The dominant uses at the park are football and track programmed by local schools and by the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs. There are a number of other active and passive facilities at the park, including a walking path and a recreation center.

Maddox Park is a moderately used, 52-acre park in poor condition. Many of the facilities in this park need to be renovated and the park suffers from sinkholes and vandalism. The nearby community is interested in having more programming for the park to increase the level of use and to deter negative uses of the park. Also, Maddox Park suffers from a lack of safe pedestrian access. Active facilities include basketball fields, tennis courts, and ball fields.

Mozley Park is an actively used 28 acre park in good condition. Families and local organizations often hold events in this park. Its major active facilities include a recreation center and an outdoor swimming pool with a bathhouse. Passive recreation facilities include a PATH trail and a picnic pavilion. MARTA rail runs next to the park creating some noise disturbances.

Washington Park is an actively used, 20-acre park in good condition. Although smaller than some of the other community parks, people are drawn to the park by the new, indoor natatorium and the renovated tennis center with a large number of tennis courts. The passive facilities of the park, including a picnic pavilion and a trail, are also well used by local residents.

Grove Park is a moderately used, 15 acre park in fair condition. Grove Park is predominantly used by the local neighborhood. Active facilities include a recreation center/gym, tennis courts, and ball fields. The passive areas include an open meadow and a stream. The stream bank is scheduled to be stabilized by the Atlanta Department of Watershed Management.

### **Neighborhood Parks**

The northwest portion of the study area has a relative lack of neighborhood parks compared to other areas of the City. There are three neighborhood parks in the northwestern area: Underwood Hills, Rockdale, and Knight.

**Table 18. Major Parks in the Northwest**

<b>Park Name</b>	<b>Size (Acres)</b>	<b>Approx. Service Area</b>	<b>Active Recreation Facilities</b>	<b>Passive Recreation Facilities</b>
Centennial Olympic Park	21	Entire city/region	Playground	Amphitheatre Water Gardens Pavilions Fountain of Rings
Anderson Park	57	10 square miles	Recreation Center Swimming Ball field Tennis Playground	Walking Path Picnic Pavilion and Shelter
Maddox Park	52	8 square miles	Swimming Basketball Tennis Ball field Playground	Picnic Pavilion
Mozley Park	28	4 square miles	Recreation Center Swimming Ball fields Tennis Playground Basketball	Picnic Pavilion Trail
Washington Park	20	4 square miles	Natatorium Tennis Recreation Center Ball fields Playground	Picnic Pavilion and Shelter Trail
Grove Park	15	3 square miles	Recreation Center/Gym Tennis Ball field Playground	Gazebo Creek Picnic Shelter

### **Existing Multi-Use Trails and Bike Lanes**

The West Side Trail runs east-west parallel to Martin Luther King Road, and connects Ashby MARTA Station, Washington Park, Mozley Park, and Anderson Park. Parts of the West Side Trail are designated multi-use trails, while other parts are on-street bike routes.

A second on-street bike route is designated by the PATH Foundation in the northwest of the study area. It meets up with the West Side Trail at the Ashby MARTA Station, runs east to 5 Points, and runs north along Luckie Street to Georgia Tech.

## ***Proposed Parks and Trails***

### *Clean Water Atlanta Proctor Creek Greenway*

Proctor Creek runs through the northwest part of the city for more than four miles and drains into the Chattahoochee River. Much of the land alongside Proctor Creek, starting near the intersection of Donald Lee Hollowell and Marietta Boulevard and running downstream to the Chattahoochee, is designated as Priority 1 (highest priority) for acquisition in Clean Water Atlanta's Greenway Acquisition Plan. To date, three properties consisting of 30 acres have been purchased along Proctor Creek. There is the potential for land acquisition around Proctor Creek to assemble a greenway. In certain areas, larger parks could adjoin the greenway providing further recreational opportunities.

### *Atlanta Water Works Property*

The Atlanta Water Works has two reservoirs on its Hemphill property that are surrounded by several acres of rolling hills and mature trees. Currently this property is off limits to the public and surrounded by security fencing. Several plans in this area have proposed bringing the fences closer to the reservoirs and adding a trail or path, thus opening up these lands as a publicly accessible park.

### *Westside Park*

The intersection of Marietta Street and Northside Drive is the location of the historic Surrender of Atlanta during the Civil War. It is currently marked with a historical marker describing its significance. Northside Drive and Tech Parkway split in this area; between these two streets lies a small green area with trees. Georgia Tech currently plans to close Tech Parkway and integrate its territory into the campus. After Tech Parkway is closed, there is an opportunity to incorporate the green area between Tech Parkway and Northside Drive into an expanded green space.

### *Hollywood Trail*

The Hollywood Trail is a proposed bike and pedestrian trail that would run north from Anderson Park, connect to Center Hill Park and find its terminus at Whittier Mill Park on the Chattahoochee. The northern half of the trail would run along Hollywood Road and then Bolton Road.

### *Arts District Trail*

The Arts District Trail is a proposed bike and pedestrian trail that would run north from the West Side Trail connecting to Georgia Tech, the Atlanta Water Works, Tanyard Creek Park, and terminate at Atlanta Memorial Park on Peachtree Creek.

## **2.4.1 Open Space Opportunities**

### **Northeast**

The proposed BeltLine directly links Lindbergh Center MARTA transit station to Piedmont and Freedom Parks, and Freedom Trail via the proposed Piedmont Trail. This would improve connectivity between parks and trail systems in this area where they are currently lacking. The possibility exists to connect the northeastern parks and trails to those in the northwestern area via the proposed extension of Freedom Park Trail. Centennial Olympic Park would connect to Washington Park and eventually to the existing West Side Trail. Washington Park is one of the proposed BeltLine stops.

### **Southeast**

The proposed Piedmont Trail, in the northeast, would connect to the proposed Grant Park Trail in the southeast thus connecting the two regional parks for which they were named. The BeltLine would link the northeast section of the City to the now newly and rapidly developing southeast Atlanta. The two proposed commuter bike lanes would provide connections from downtown Atlanta, the core of the study area, to the southern boundary of the loop.

### **Southwest**

Most of the existing parks are just outside the study area. However the BeltLine would potentially intersect with streets that provide easy access to these parks. This improved connectivity could spark open space opportunities. For example, the proposed Lee Street Greenway Corridor that leads to Oakland City Park.

### **Northwest**

As proposed, the Beltline runs directly adjacent to Washington Park, Maddox Park, and the proposed Atlanta Water Works Park. In many ways, the Beltline would fulfill the connectivity of the proposed Arts District Trail, serving as a vital north-south connection for many of the parks and green spaces in the area.

If the Beltline were built, Washington Park would be at the intersection of two major bike paths, the West Side Trail, running east-west, and the Beltline, running north-south. Combined, they would provide substantial additional bike access to the northwestern part of the study area.

Also, the Beltline would provide greater access to the proposed Proctor Creek Greenway. The Proctor Creek Greenway and the Beltline could intersect just north of the Bankhead MARTA station. The BeltLine/Proctor Creek Greenway combination would provide a unique opportunity for intown residents to connect to the Chattahoochee River, the largest natural feature of Atlanta.