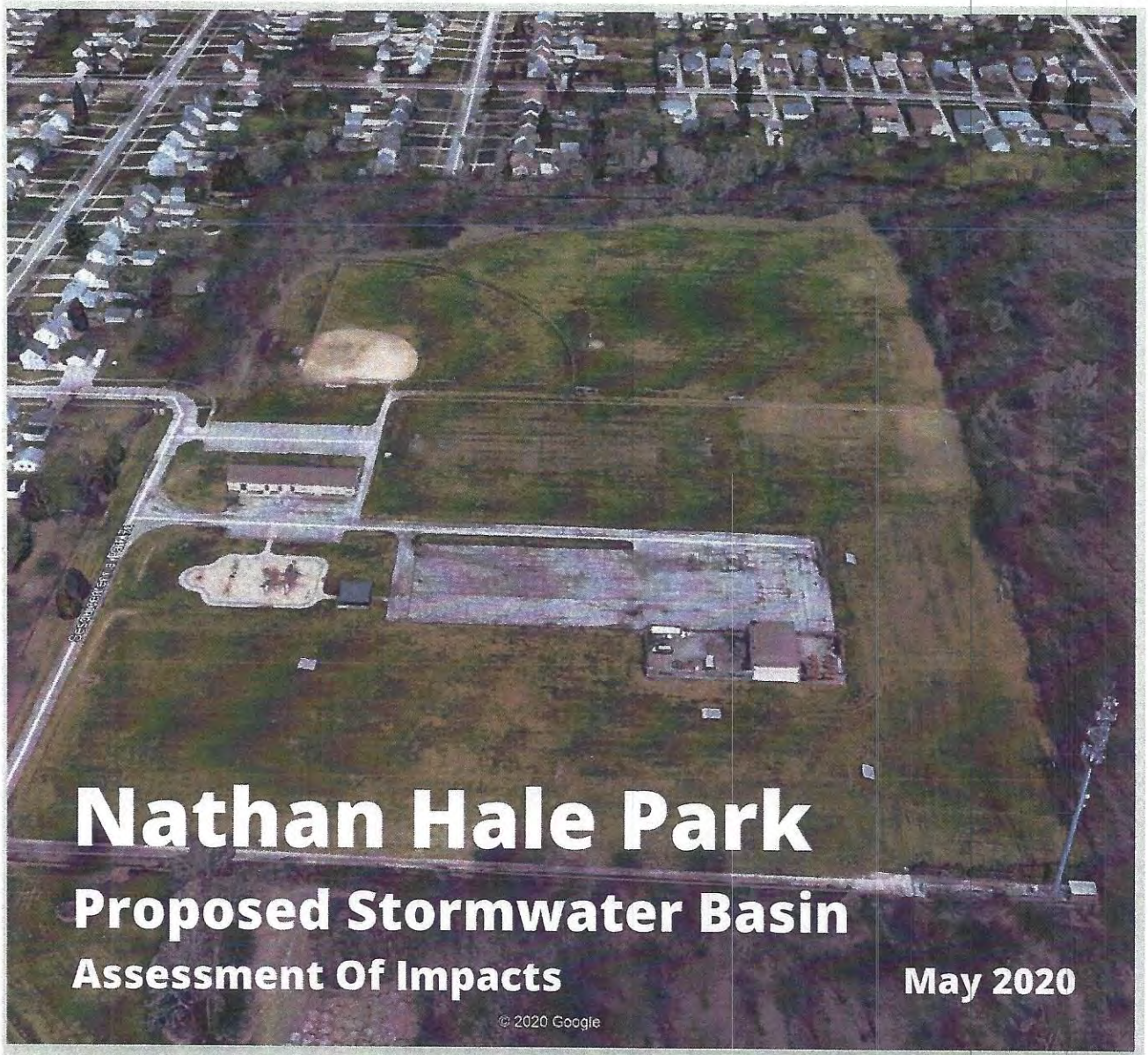
EXHIBIT PP



Nathan Hale Park

Proposed Stormwater Basin

Assessment Of Impacts

May 2020

Prepared for:
Neff and Associates
6405 York Road
Parma Heights, OH

Prepared by:
Kristin M. Hopkins, FAICP
CT Consultants, Inc.
1001 Lakeside Ave, E. Suite 1005
Cleveland, OH 44114

your trusted advisor
consultants
engineers
architects
planners

Introduction

Nathan Hale Park is located in the southwestern portion of the city. Based on its location, size and facilities, it functions both as a neighborhood park to residents in the immediate area, and as a community park with sports fields used for league play. It was formerly part of the Nike Missile Site (CL-59). The City of Parma Heights acquired the 25.5 acre site from the U.S. Government in 1971 for the "perpetual use of the premises for public park and public recreation purposes". The City's proposed use of the land was to create a park with a playground, recreational facilities that would enable the City to expand its existing recreational programs, and other ancillary facilities for persons of all ages. The agreement with the Federal Government allows for the City's program of utilization to be amended only with the written concurrence of the National Park Service.

The City has requested authorization from the National Park Service for a change in use, with the intention of installing a stormwater basin designed to both alleviate ongoing and increasing flooding in the surrounding neighborhood as well as provide passive recreation amenities including a walking path, benches, and new park pavilion. The change includes eliminating a former baseball diamond and two soccer fields.

This report assesses the impact the proposed changes to Nathan Hale Park will have to the viability of the remainder of the park, and how the revised facilities provided at the park will affect the City's recreation programs and satisfy the recreational issues in the city and in particular this park.

Methodology

This report is an independent, comprehensive analysis to document the impact of the proposed changes to Nathan Hale Park. It was prepared by Kristin M. Hopkins, FAICP, Manager of Planning Services at CT Consultants. The conclusions reached in this report are based on the following:

- Personal visits to the site.
- Meetings with the City of Parma Heights Mayor, Law Director, City Engineer, Public Service Director, and Recreation Director.
- Data provided by the City administration regarding park facilities, recreation programming, participation rates, etc.
- Review of publications, including the 2004 Parma Heights Master Plan, 2017 Parma Heights Master Plan, Heritage II (1993 publication of City accomplishments since 1969), and National Recreation and Park Association reports.
- Summary of the needs and proposed uses for Nathan Hale Park in 1971 when Parma Heights obtained the land from the U.S. Government.
- Analysis of demographic trends.
- Current and past inventories of the City's parks and recreation facilities.
- Assessment of how Nathan Hale Park and the City's recreation facilities compare to national guidelines and other communities of similar size.
- Review of public comments provided by the City of Parma Heights from the October 7, 2019 public meeting, resident comments posted on the Internet and newspaper coverage of the meetings on proposed stormwater project.

1970 Application: Nathan Hale Park - Needs & Program of Utilization

After the Nike Missile Site (CL-59) was deactivated, the Federal Government declared the land to be surplus property. The City of Parma Heights filed an APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL SURPLUS PROPERTY FOR PUBLIC PARK OR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES to acquire the property. At the time of application, the City noted that there was no park site in the southwest corner of the city, and that the city was growing quickly and needed more recreation facilities to meet the needs of its young families with children, especially the need for more baseball facilities.

Key facts stated in the Needs assessment in Part "B" of the original 1970 application are noted below.

- The city's population had grown quickly in the previous 20 years from 3,901 in 1950 to 18,132 in 1960. At the time of application, the application estimated the population to be 29,000, and anticipated it would reach 35,000.
- Residents were primarily young and middle-aged persons, mostly families with young children.
- The City had already adopted a Recreation Master Plan, established the administrative capacity to develop and maintain a parks and recreation program, and created a summer recreation program that provided a variety of recreation opportunities for residents.
- The most popular recreation program was baseball, and participation was increasing yearly. The city had five diamonds of its own and leased sixteen others on non-city owned property.
- The City reported having over 1,700 active participants in the baseball program, and would have had more except for a lack of facilities.
- There were only 75.43 acres of recreational land in Parma Heights, and there was no city park within easy walking distance to residents in the southwest corner.
- The rapid housing growth resulted in rising land prices and the City identified the need to acquire land for "open space and recreational purposes."
- The City anticipated the new park would serve over 1,500 families within a one-mile radius.
- There was at the time a minimum amount of city facilities available for the use of arts and crafts, senior citizens, and community civic groups
- The proposed acquisition would permit the realization of the City's goals for expanded outdoor recreation and indoor recreation and programs in the arts and crafts for persons of all.

According to the Program of Utilization in Part "B" of the original application, the City committed to provide recreational facilities that would allow it to continue and expand the existing recreational programs by developing the park in the following manner:

- Build a playground;
- Provide ball diamonds, football fields, tennis courts, hard-surfaced play areas and other ancillary facilities for persons of all ages;
- If at all possible, use the existing buildings, S-100, S-101 and S-114, as a youth center, a senior citizens center, arts and crafts and other recreational and cultural programs;
- Utilize Building S-108, if adaptable, for the storage of recreational equipment and supplies including maintenance equipment; and
- Provide adequate parking.

Nathan Hale Park - Current Recreation Facilities

According to the 2004 Parma Heights Master Plan, "as part of the City's on-going park improvement program", the City in 1999 constructed a picnic pavilion in the southern portion of the park, and a baseball field and three soccer fields in the northern portion of the park, bringing the total number of soccer fields to eight. The sports fields were installed on the site in locations that preserved the existing trees. Sometime before then, two of the four Nike-era buildings and the other miscellaneous structures noted in Part "B" of the Application had been demolished.

In 2006, the City installed a playground immediately west of the picnic pavilion and south of maintenance building #1.

In spring 2019, portions of the fencing around the baseball diamond were removed, and the ballfield taken out of use. There are no formal walking paths or trails in the park, though neighbors noted during public meetings that they walk their dogs at the park.

Figure 1. Existing Recreation Facilities at Nathan Hale Park

Figure 2. Proposed Changes at Nathan Hale Park

Proposed Changes

The City of Parma Heights is proposing to construct a retention basin on approximately six (6) acres of the 25.5-acre park site. It is to be constructed in the northern portion of the park where the former baseball diamond and two soccer fields are located.

The initial design included mounding the excavated dirt onsite; but a number of residents objected. In response, the fill will be hauled away in order to retain the openness and view sheds that currently

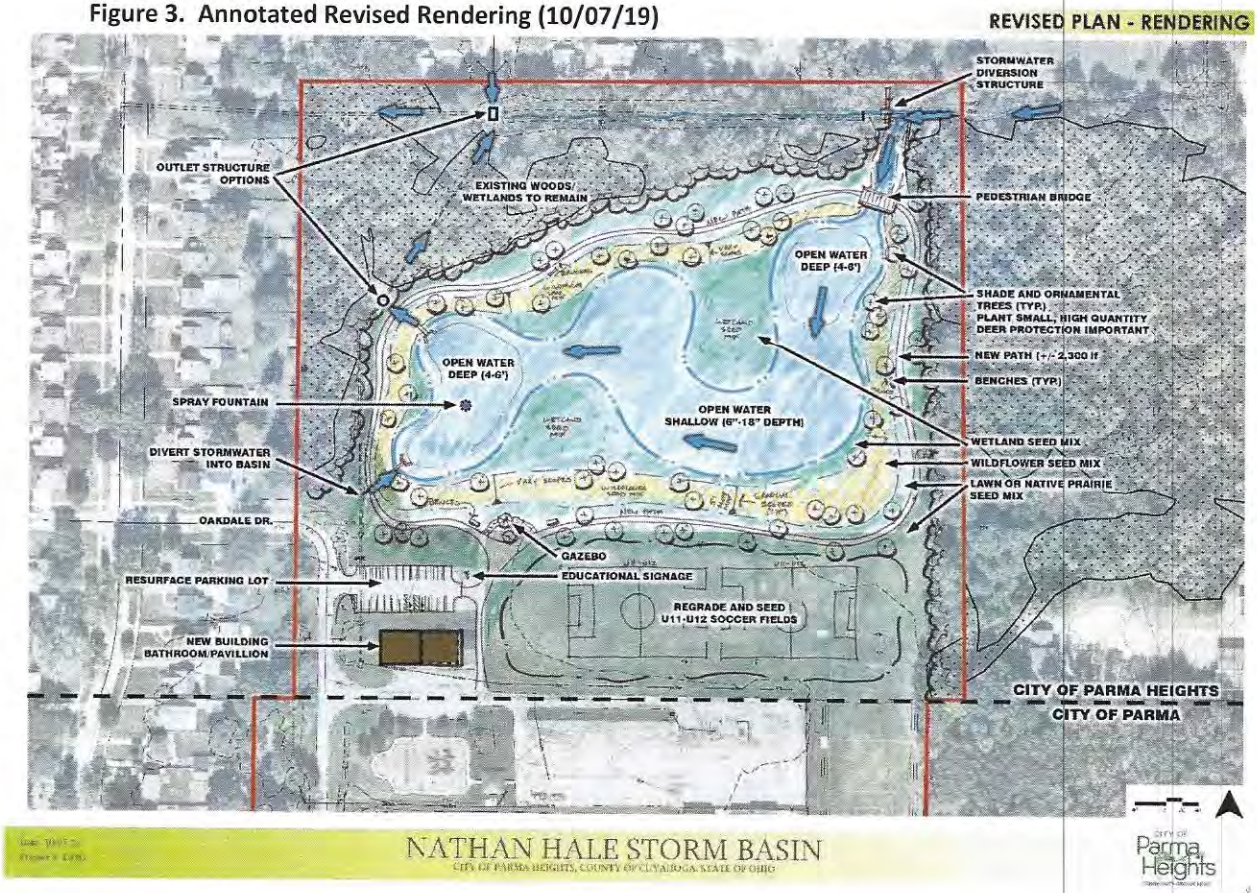
exists. The construction of the basin will not disturb the existing forested wetlands and successional woods along the perimeter of the park.

The proposed basin is designed with a 5:1 slope (horizontal: vertical), compared to a typical slope of 3:1.. While a 3:1 slope provides for ease of mowing and stability enhancement, a flatter 5:1 slope is safer and more suitable for public places. The design also includes a safety shelf at the edges of the deep water area to further safety hazards.

Once the basin is constructed, the site will be planted with native trees and wildflowers, and educational panels will be installed. A number of other amenities are proposed in order to create an attractive passive park amenity with a walking path installed along the perimeter of the "storage" area of the basin, as well as benches, a gazebo and a footbridge over the inlet.

Two soccer fields (#5 and #6 in Figure 2) will be temporarily closed during the construction of the basin; after construction, the fields will be regraded, seeded and designed for U-11 – U-12 league play. The old concession stand with bathrooms (Maintenance Building #1), will be demolished and replaced with a smaller building with restrooms and an attached pavilion. See the Annotated Revised Rendering (Figure 3) for a concept plan of the proposed basin and associated amenities. The City's goal with the revised concept plan is to create both a functional stormwater basin as well as a unique recreational asset that will increase the variety of activities available to neighborhood residents.

Figure 3. Annotated Revised Rendering (10/07/19)



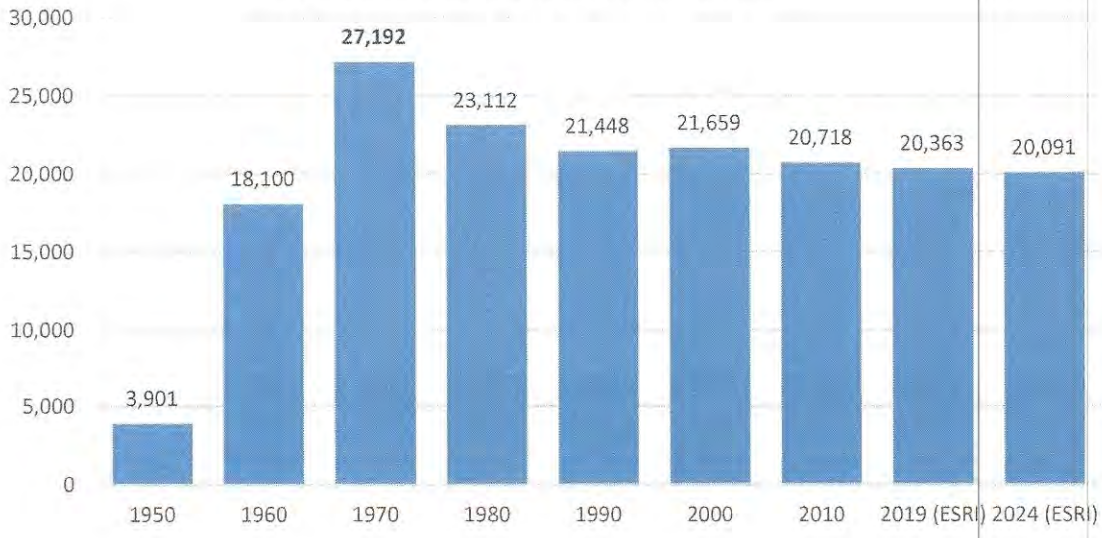
Analysis of Impact

Demographic Trends

Parma Heights, like many other Cleveland suburbs, experienced a housing boom after World War II. By 1960, the U.S. Census Bureau reported Parma Heights' population had grown to 18,100, a 364% increase from 1950, when the population was only 3,901, see Figure 4. By 1970, the city's population increased another 50%, to 27,192 residents. That was the same year that Parma Heights began negotiations with the U.S. Government to obtain the former Nike Missile site in the southern part of the city in order to establish Nathan Hale Park. In its application, the City believed the population would continue to increase and ultimately reach 35,000 residents.

However, by 1980, the city's population actually declined by 15%, to 23,112, and continued to shrink as Parma Heights began to experience the impact of national and regional trends that included an aging populations, smaller family sizes, more one-person households, and an out-migration of the population from Cleveland and its first ring suburbs to exurban areas. Despite a small (1%) population increase reported in the 2000 Census, the city's 2010 population (20,718) was nearly 24% less than its peak population in 1970.

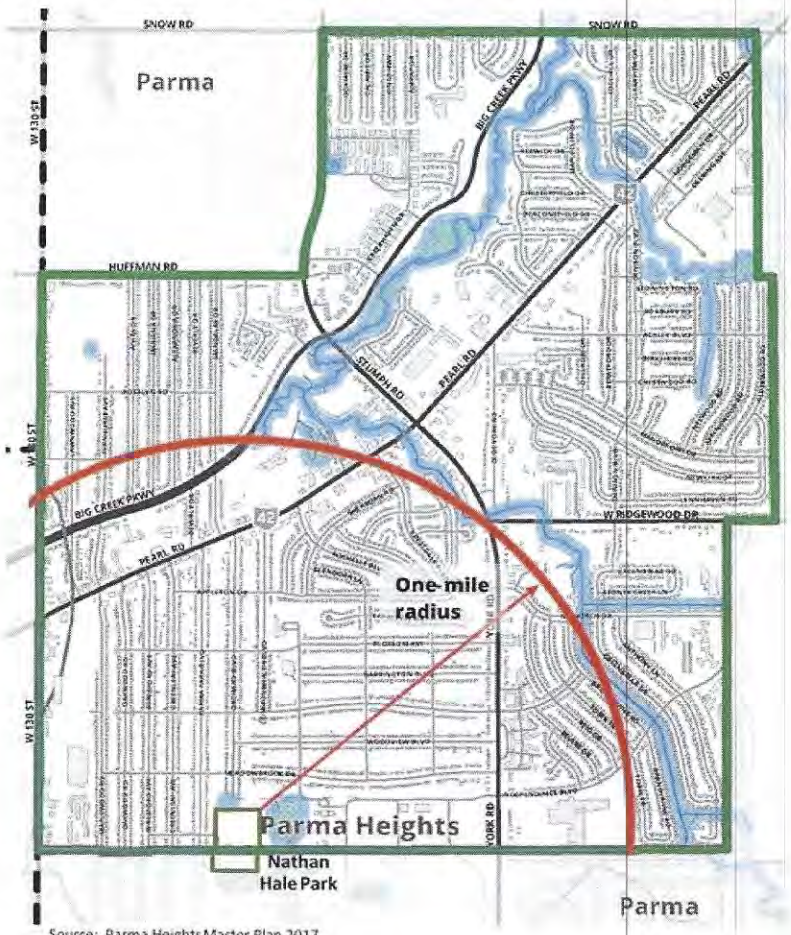
Figure 4. Parma Heights Population Trends



The current population of 20,300 +/- residents is 43% less than the estimated buildout population of 35,000. Trends suggest the population decline will likely continue over the next few decades, though at a slightly slower rate. This is reflected in the 3% decline from the 2010 count to the 2024 projected population reported by ESRI.

When looking more closely at the surrounding neighborhood in Parma Heights[1], the neighborhood population is expected to decline by 5.8%, nearly double the city's 3% rate during the same period, 2010 to 2024.

Figure 5. Nathan Hale Park Neighborhood (1-Mile Radius)



Source: Parma Heights Master Plan 2017

The City's current planning efforts are oriented toward increasing the nonresidential tax base. The priority is redeveloping segments of Pearl Road and W 130th Street, targeting new businesses and mixed-use development. While it is possible new mixed-use development will include residential units, this housing would likely provide only a small boost to the city's population.

Furthermore, new large-scale housing development is unlikely, especially in the vicinity of Nathan Hale Park because Parma Heights is basically fully developed, with very little land for new development, and no land near Nathan Hale Park for new residential development.

Age Characteristics

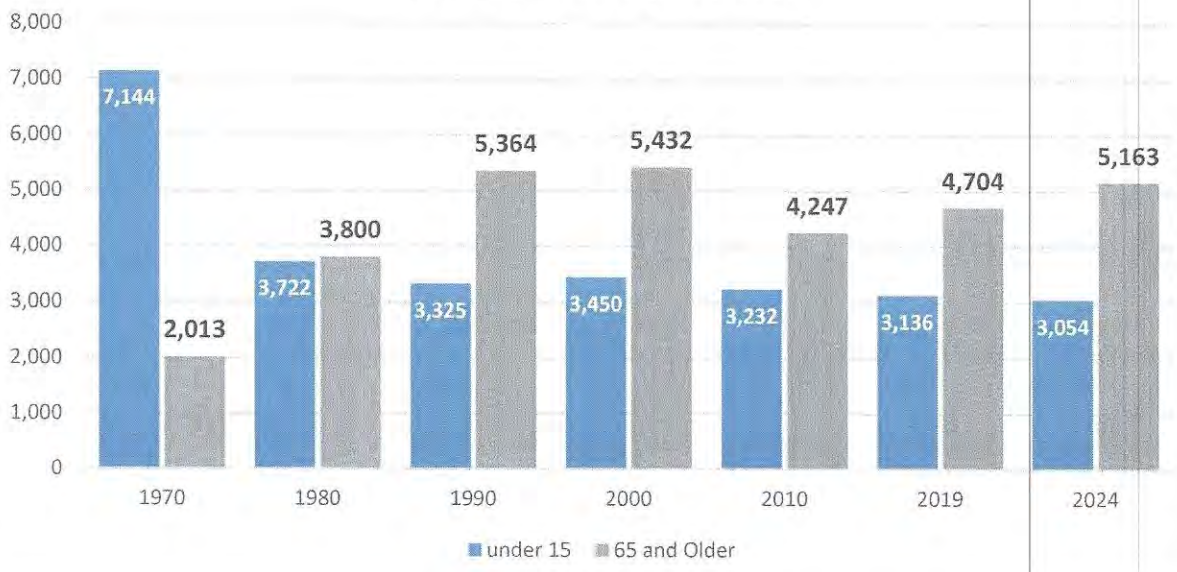
Nationally and locally, there has been a significant shift in population characteristics since the baby boom after World War II. Many communities, including Parma Heights, have seen a significant increase in the percentage of older residents in the last 30 years as the life expectancy in the United States continues to increase. At the same time, the birth rate has declined and children make up a much smaller percentage of the population. This has a significant impact on the type of recreation facilities and programs required to meet the needs of residents. At the same time, older adults are more likely to stay active longer and participate more frequently in outdoor activities than they were even just 10 years ago.

Since 1970, the number of Parma Heights residents that are under 15 years old has declined by 56%, from 7,144 to 3,136 in 2019, see Figure 6. In contrast, the number of Parma Heights residents that are 65 years

[1] Defined as the area in Parma Heights within a one-mile radius around Nathan Hale Park see Figure 5. In its 1970 application, the City anticipated the park would serve families in a one-mile radius.

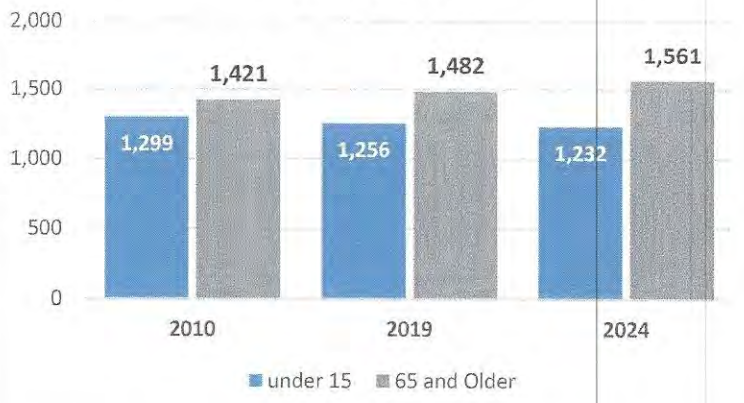
and older has increased by 134%, from 2,013 in 1970 to 4,704 in 2019. In 1970, children under 15 made up 26% of the population, and residents 65 years and older made up 7.4%. In 2019, residents under 15 were 15% of the city's population and those 65 and older were 23%. By 2024, the percentage of residents 65 years or older is expected to increase by 2.5%, while the percentage of the population under age 15 is expected to decline by 0.2%.

Figure 6. Parma Heights Population Trends by Age
Under 15 years and 65 years & Older



Between 2010 and 2019, demographic shifts in the Nathan Hale Park neighborhood (one-mile radius) were similar to the city, see Figure 7. The 2024 projected population for the neighborhood shows a continued decline in the number of children under 15 and continued increase in persons 65 years and older.

Figure 7. Nathan Hale Park Neighborhood Population Age Characteristics

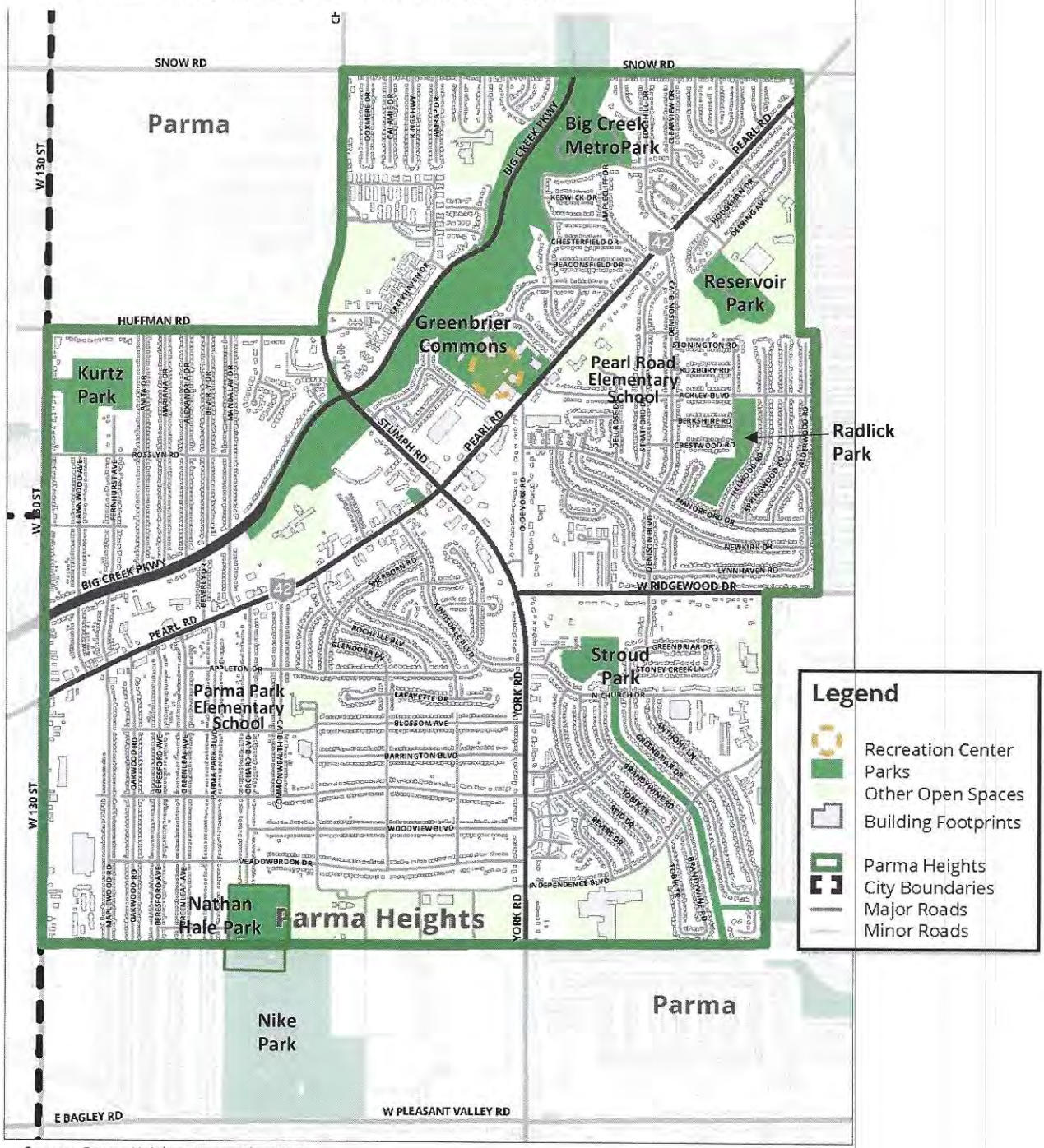


In 1970, the City expected Nathan Hale Park to serve over 1,500 families within a one-mile radius. Currently about 40% of children under age 15 in Parma Heights live within a one-mile radius of Nathan Hale Park; if the same proportion were true in 1970, there would have been approximately 2,870 children in the neighborhood. These changing population characteristics must be taken into consideration when evaluating the types and range of recreation facilities needed at Nathan Hale Park.

Existing Park Facilities and Programs

The City of Parma Heights owns and maintains six parks, see Figure 8. These city parks are distributed around the city, and, according to the 2017 Master Plan, "nearly all residents in Parma Heights are within a half-mile walk from a park." While there is no formal shared-use agreement between the City and the

Figure 8. Parma Heights Parks, Recreation and Open Space.



Source: Parma Heights Master Plan 2017

Parma School District, there are recreation facilities at Parma Park Elementary School and Valley Forge High School that Parma Heights residents are able to use. In addition, a large portion of the Big Creek MetroPark is located in Parma Heights and provides outdoor recreation opportunities for Parma Heights residents.

The city parks provide a variety of recreation amenities. Plus, the Parma Heights Senior Center provides activities and services for residents age 60 years or older, including exercise classes, movies, bingo, crafts, guest speakers, sponsored senior swimming and softball programs.

Figure 9. Parma Heights Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Recreation Amenity	Nathan Hale Park	Kurtz Park	Radlick Park	Stroud Park	The Reservoir	Greenbrier Commons Rec Center	Grand Total
Soccer fields	8						8
Baseball diamonds	0*	1		1			2
Softball diamonds		3	2		3		8
T-ball diamonds					4		4
Basketball court		2	1			0*	3
Bocce ball						1	1
Cassidy Theatre						1	1
Children's play area	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Picnic pavilion/gazebo	1		1			1	2
Pickle ball court						1	1
Sand volleyball						1	1
Swimming pool complex						1	1
Tennis courts						5	5
Trails			1			1	2
Grand Total	**10**	**7**	**6**	**2**	**8**	**13**	**43**

* changed use or stopped use in 2019.
Source: Inventory provided by the Parma Heights Recreation Department, 2020.

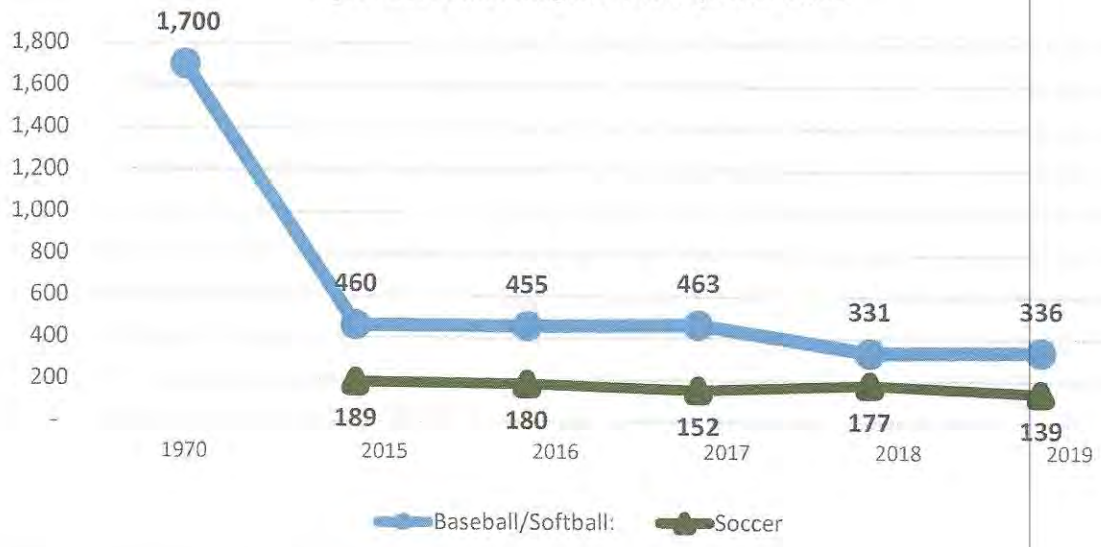
Changes to Parma Heights Recreation Facilities and Recreation Programs

Over time, the City has made changes to the variety of recreation facilities and recreation programs provided in response to changing recreational needs of its residents. For example, the 1970 Program of Utilization for Nathan Hale Park noted the city's recreation department included a football program, and that the proposed uses at Nathan Hale Park will include football fields. The 2004 Master Plan provides an inventory of park facilities and notes there were no football fields at any of the city parks. Instead, Nathan Hale Park had eight soccer fields, a use not anticipated in 1970. The City built the Greenbrier Ice Skating Rink in 1975. The facility closed in 2003, and a year later, the building was repurposed as an indoor soccer complex. In 2019, the City transformed a basketball court to pickle ball courts at Greenbrier, a sport that has grown in popularity among older adults.

For the same reason, communities often revise the recreational programming offered in response to changing needs of the community. Significant changes in the number of residents participating in a particular recreation program is a key sign of changing needs.

In the City's 1970 Application, Part "B", there were reportedly over 1,700 participants in the baseball program, and the program was growing every year. While the baseball program is still popular with Parma Heights youth, the number of participants in 2015 compared to 2019 is down by 27%, and is significantly (80%) less than the 1,700 participants in 1970. The decline in participation in the city's soccer program during that same period is down 26%, but with only five years of participation numbers and some fluctuation during that time, there is no clear trend.

Figure 10. Parma Heights - Participation Rates



Responding to Neighborhood Concerns

The City held three public meetings in 2019 to provide an opportunity to discuss the flooding issues and the obtain public feedback on the proposed stormwater basin. Based on a review of the public comments from the October 7, 2019 community meeting, neighborhood residents are primarily concerned about finding a solution that will fix the sewers and stop the flooding.

Residents who did comment on the actual changes to Nathan Hale Park, were most concerned about:

1. Retaining the ability to walk in the park. Residents noted they like to walk their dogs in the park, despite there not being formal walking paths or trails.
2. Sentimental value of the John Litten Ballfield at Nathan Hale Park, which was dedicated to Mr. Litten who served as the City's Recreation Director. City Engineer Neff stated that the John Litten Ballfield would be replaced at a field at Stroud Park.
3. Replacing the baseball diamond at another park location. City Engineer Neff responded that the City had discussed the potential of constructing a new ball field, possibly at Reservoir Park where seven ballfields were already located. Option to Construct a new Baseball Diamond on another site.

Comparison to National Guidelines

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is the leading non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of public parks, recreation and conservation. The organization provides a variety of metrics that can be used to assess the adequacy of both Nathan Hale Park and the Parma Heights park facilities and programs.

Park Purpose and Facilities based on Classification

NRPA recommends that communities have a diversity of park types. The Association has developed a park classification system to guide local governments in acquiring and developing parks to achieve the recommended range facilities. While there are a variety of park classifications, this analysis highlights the two classifications that pertain to Nathan Hale Park: neighborhood parks and community parks.

Neighborhood parks are usually about five to ten acres and provide informal active and passive recreation for both children and adults; community parks are generally about 20 to 50 acres, serve a larger population than neighborhood parks, and provide a variety of activities for residents of all ages. While total acreage is a consideration when classifying a park, the way in which a park functions for the surrounding neighborhood is a more accurate definition of "park type" than simply size alone.

According to the NRPA, Nathan Hale Park functions as both a neighborhood park and a community park. It serves as a neighborhood park for those within a ½ mile radius which is a comfortable walking distance, and as a community park with a larger service area because of the sports fields that are used for league sports It has the parking facilities needed for community facilities that attract users from outside the neighborhood park's ½ mile radius.

Table 1. NRPA Park Classification Guidelines

Classifications	Neighborhood Park	Community Park
General Description	This remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is primarily on informal active and passive recreation. Geared primarily for residents living within the service area.	Serves a broader purpose than the neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. Community parks allow for group activities and should be developed for both active and passive recreation.
Service Area	Usually ¼- to ½-mile radius, uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods with a ½- to 3-mile radius.
Size Criteria	5 acres is considered minimum size; 7 to 10 acres is optimal.	Although usually between 20 and 50 acres, its actual size should be based on land area needed to accommodate desired uses.
Parking Requirements	7 to 10 off-street parking spaces.	Parking lots should be provided, as necessary, to accommodate the user.

As a neighborhood park, it is appropriate for Nathan Hale Park to provide passive recreation such as walking paths, benches, and picnic pavilions. Plus, because it is the only park within walking distance to a large portion of Parma Heights residents, it is important to balance both community recreation needs and neighborhood recreation needs.

City-wide Park Assessment

The NRPA no longer advocates for a "national standard" that applies to all communities. In fact, over 20 years ago, the NRPA recognized that there "is not a single set of standards for parks and recreation because different agencies serve different communities that have unique needs, desires and challenges. Agencies also have diverse funding mechanisms." Instead, NRPA replaced the single set of standards with the creation of a nationwide benchmarking tool for parks and recreation. The *NRPA Agency Performance Review* is an annual report summarizing the benchmarking data contributed by nearly 1,100 park and recreation agencies to the Park Metrics database. The following analysis uses the 2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review to compare Parma Heights with cities of similar population.

Table 2 compares the number of ballfields and soccer fields that the City of Parma Heights Recreation Department provides and maintains compared to the average number provided by cities of similar size.

Table 2. Comparison of Ballfields and Soccer Fields

Facility	Parma Heights City Park (2019)	Average of Comparison Communities (by Population)		Parma Heights Surplus (2019)	
		Under 20,000	20,000-49,999		
Ball diamonds*	14*	9.7	6.7	4.3	7.3
Soccer Fields	8	6.0	4.2	2.0	3.8

*Combines baseball, softball and T-ball.

The number of ballfields at Parma Heights city parks noted in Table 2 reflects the closure of the baseball diamond at Nathan Hall Park in 2019. Currently, the city has a higher number of both ball diamonds and soccer fields compared to the average number of facilities for cities with less than 20,000 residents and for cities with between 20,000 and 49,999 residents. The construction of the stormwater basin at Nathan Hale Park will eliminate two soccer fields. Even with the reduction, Parma Heights will continue to provide equal to or above the average number of soccer fields for comparison communities.

Noting that the city's baseball program was the most popular program in 1970, it is useful to compare the number of participants per baseball field in 1970 with the same statistic for 2019. In 1970, there were 1,700 residents who participated in the baseball program. At the time, the city utilized 21 ballfields to accommodate the players, which is 81 players per ballfield, see Table 3. In 2019, 336 residents signed up and the city used 14 fields (which does not include the Nathan Hale Park ballfield that was partially dismantled in 2019) for a ratio of 24 players per ballfield.

Table 3. Baseball Participants 1970 vs 2019

	1970	2019
Population	27,192	20,363
Baseball participants	1,700	336
Available baseball fields	21	14
Players per field	81	24

By the metrics above, the city's recreational programming should not be negatively affected by the closure of one baseball diamond and two soccer fields at Nathan Hale Park. Plus, based on the October 7, 2019 public meeting, there is potential that a new baseball field will be built at Reservoir Park to replace the one eliminated at Nathan Hale Park.

Best Practices from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

The National Parks and Recreation Association maintains that parks and recreation facilities are essential to the economic, environmental (physical), and social health of communities. "Just as water, sewer, and public safety are considered essential public services, parks are vitally important to establishing and maintaining the Quality of Life in a community, ensuring the health of families and youth, and contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of a community and a region".1

Recommendations for Park Facilities:

- Local parks should accommodate as many ages, abilities, activity levels, and amenities as possible given site constraints; plan for a diversity of uses and users, according to community needs.
- support public health objectives. Parks can be important contributors to public health, as they can improve access to recreational opportunities, improve air quality, and reduce polluted stormwater runoff.
- Balance the need for active recreation, passive recreation, and green stormwater infrastructure.
- Provide programming and facilities that encourage active physical recreation for all users.
- Create as much variety as possible in the types of recreational opportunities parks provide.
- Partner with organizations that can provide additional park programming and education.

Meeting the Recreation Needs of Older Adults

An assessment from the Trust for Public Lands found that playgrounds, tennis court and ballfields accounted for over 60% of city park facilities in the U.S., which reflects a bias toward the young. The research revealed that the types of amenities provided in neighborhood and community parks often influence the range of users attracted to the park. For example, a study that compared U.S. parks with parks in Asian countries, which intentionally provide adult-oriented spaces, found major differences in the percentage of older adults in parks: 5% in the U.S. compared to 50% in Asian countries. Typical amenities in these adult-oriented parks included walking trials, water features, adult-oriented fitness machines, and exercise pavilions.[2]

With 23% percent of Parma Height's population currently being over age 65, it is reasonable and prudent to design parks and provide amenities that meet the recreational and social needs of older adults.

[2] Why communities should be designing parks for older adults." The Conversation US, Inc. March 15, 2017, Updated June 6, 2018. https://theconversation.com/why-communities-should-be-designing-parks-for-older-adults-67626

Green Infrastructure in Urban Parks

Community resiliency is at the core of the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA's) mission. GI uses nature-based methods to reduce flooding, enhance water quality and produce other benefits. NRPA created the Great Urban Parks campaign with a focus on green infrastructure. One of the organization's primary goals is to help communities across the nation implement new green infrastructure projects.

Storm water detention ponds are widely used and are among the most effective storm water treatment practices. Often these ponds are designed to create an aesthetic site amenity, wildlife habitat and/or a development focal point or recreational area.

NRPA recommends that the design of green infrastructure be enhanced by including walking trails, educational panels, seating, and connections to a larger trail network.

The image to the right is from NRPA's publication that highlights ways to design green infrastructure as park amenities, which is similar to the examples presented to the Parma Heights community at the City's October 7, 2019 public meeting.

A two-acre detention pond was created as the centerpiece of an urban park in Atlanta's historic Fourth Ward Park.

Parma Heights 2017 Parks & Recreation Goals

The 2017 Parma Heights Comprehensive Master Plan includes a chapter titled "Parks, Recreation and the Environment". The plan notes that "Parks and Recreation amenities are important components of a healthy community. They provide space for active living, community interaction, and physical activity." The proposed changes to Nathan Hale Park align with the following goals and policies related to Parma Heights Parks, Recreation and the Environment, particularly the underlined text.

Vision for Parks, Recreation, and the Environment

In the future, Parma Heights will ***"Celebrate, protect and enhance our community's significant natural features, parks, and recreational areas by maintaining the high quality of park spaces, encouraging greater levels of participation and visitation, and adopting ecologically responsible practices."***

GOAL 1: ENSURE THE QUALITY OF RECREATION AND PARK AMENITIES REMAINS HIGH WHILE EXPANDING RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH APPROPRIATE ENHANCEMENTS AND ACQUISITIONS.

Policy 1.2: Investigate potential enhancements to current parks and City-owned open space, including safety features.

Action: Investigate ways to attract more users to existing park spaces.

Action: Install benches and pathways into and out of parks to encourage greater presence of people throughout the parks.

GOAL 2: ENSURE THAT CURRENT AND FUTURE PARKS AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES ARE ACCESSIBLE TO RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.

Parks, recreation facilities, and other areas associated with active living should provide opportunities for physical activity. However, the success of a park and its impact on a population is determined by its level of access. Access depends more on just the physical presence of facilities, it also includes suitability of facilities and programing for all ages, abilities, and cultural affiliations.

Policy 2.1: Ensure people of all ages and abilities have access to parks and recreational facilities, and appropriate programs.

Action: Incorporate elements of universal design when designing and building infrastructure, buildings, and programs to ensure all ages and abilities can partake in an active lifestyle.

Goal 4: REDUCE STORM WATER RUNOFF RESULTING FROM IMPERVIOUS SURFACES.

Continue working with NEORSD to implement proactive stormwater management retrofits and encourage property owners to take advantage of their programs, incentives, and expertise to reduce their stormwater bill.

CONCLUSIONS

Conditions have changed significantly since 1970 when the City submitted its Program of Utilization. In addition, the City's goals as stated in the original Need statement were to (1) purchase property for "open space and recreational purposes" and, as noted in the Program of Utilization, to provide "facilities for persons of all ages".

The City initially set out to solve the area's flooding problem, but, after listening to the feedback from neighborhood residents, they responded with an innovative solution that redesigned the facilities to be both an engineering answer to a public works problem AND an attractive recreation feature that will increase the range of facilities at Nathan Hale Park. Furthermore, providing a walking path, educational panels, a new picnic pavilion, gazebo, etc. to create a passive recreation amenity is consistent with the City's original goals.

Based on the unanticipated changes in the population, changes in recreation programming needs and a growing awareness of the importance of well-designed open space, the construction of the proposed stormwater basin project at the expense of one baseball diamond and two soccer fields is a prudent investment in the city's future. The loss of the ball fields will not have a negative affect on the city's recreation facilities or recreation programs. This opinion is supported by the following facts:

1. The population in the city never reached the estimated population of 35,000.
2. The number of children participating in baseball programs in 1970 was 1,700, it is currently 336.
3. There is an increased need for a range of recreational uses that provide activities for all neighborhood residents, of all ages and abilities
4. Adding the proposed amenities will enhance the park and will provide a greater variety of activities, which should increase the number of residents using the park.
5. The remaining facilities at Nathan Hale Park will not be negatively impacted by the change. With two parking lots, the northern one to accommodate users for the walking path and the southern parking lot to accommodate the six remaining soccer fields, the active recreation facilities will remain grouped in the southern portion of the site.
6. The proposed changes continue to preserve open space, and provide for environmentally friendly, green infrastructure.
7. The basin includes design elements to increase safety: providing mild (5:1) slopes and a safety shelf around the perimeter of the detention pond which reduces the risk of someone falling into the permanent pool, and placing wetland plants on the safety shelf combined with shrubs on the slopes and an unmowed buffer around the pond to discourage wading and swimming. This approach also creates wildlife habitat and an attractive natural shoreline.