



HOPKINS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

*Parks &  
Open Space*

9

# CHAPTER 9

## PARKS & OPEN SPACE

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This chapter identifies the current inventory of parks, recreation, and open space. These facilities are coordinated with the future growth pattern.

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■ Hopkins County has a variety of park and open space resources that serve the community. From active recreation to passive recreational opportunities, parks and open space are an important quality of life factor that can impact physical health, psychological well-being, improved social functioning and cohesion, youth development, and environmental quality.<sup>1</sup> Parks also have large economic impacts by offsetting costs related to health issues from lack of activity and access to green space. There can also be significant economic development impacts as new residents and employers are attracted to the area.



*Photo: Dawson Springs Sprayground*

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<sup>1</sup> *Summary of Research Papers: The Key Benefits, National Recreation and Park Association, 2010.*

## EXISTING FACILITIES

Hopkins County currently has 812 acres of parks and 4,945 acres of wildlife area within the Peabody Wildlife Management Area (WMA). With a 2010 population of 46,920, Hopkins County has a rate of 17 acres of developed recreational space per 1,000 population. A commonly used national standard for regional/Metropolitan parks, set in 1983, is 10 acres per 1,000 population.<sup>2</sup> However, more locally based methods of determining minimum parks and recreation facilities have emerged called “Level of Service.” This standard at a county level system suggests a minimum 20 acres per 1,000 population.<sup>3</sup> Existing park and recreation facilities are outlined below.

## CURRENT PARKS & FACILITIES

### Wildlife Management & Recreation

The Peabody WMA covers a large area of land spread across several Kentucky counties, including an eastern portion of Hopkins County. Kentucky Tourism describes the park as a sportsmen and recreation haven for the region.

“One of the largest Wildlife Management Areas in the entire state, the Peabody WMA is a popular destination for sportsmen in Kentucky. Over 45,000 acres spread among several tracts make up this WMA. A variety of habitats and terrains may be found on Peabody, making it a good spot to hunt a number of different game species. There are lakes and ponds that also provide anglers with good fishing. Bird watchers will like this WMA as well, as it is home to a large number of birds throughout the year. Anyone planning on entering Peabody WMA must buy an annual \$15.00 user permit, available wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold. Horseback riders may ride on developed roads throughout the WMA, and there is also a shooting range for sighting in rifles.”

### Fair Grounds

The Hopkins County Fair & Ballard Convention Center, with 42 acres of fairgrounds and outdoor arena, serves the residents of Hopkins County all year long providing many recreation opportunities. The fairgrounds are a vital part of the agriculture community in Hopkins County. The County Farmers’ Market is located on the grounds. The fairground also provides the counties’ only camp-site for visiting volunteers such as Habitat for Humanity and disaster relief workers. The fairgrounds support family-friendly, low cost entertainment by providing safe bleachers and pavement for outdoor events such as horse shows, truck and tractor pulls and music festivals.

The site is also home to the Ballard Convention Center which accommodates events ranging from small business meetings to large conferences, expos, weddings and large celebrations.



Photo: Hopkins County Fair & Ballard Convention Center

<sup>2</sup> National Recreation and Park Association Standards, 1983.

<sup>3</sup> The Indiana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan 2011-2015, page 44.

Below is a summary of some of the current facilities in Hopkins County.

<b>MADISONVILLE CITY PARK</b>	<b>MADISONVILLE YMCA</b>	<b>Loch Mary ATV Park</b>
<i>Madisonville</i>	<i>Madisonville</i>	<i>Earlington</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 262 acres</li> <li>• 1.25 mile gravel walking trail</li> <li>• Olympic size swimming pool</li> <li>• 2 sand volleyball courts</li> <li>• playground</li> <li>• fitness trail</li> <li>• 9 hole golf course with club house</li> <li>• 18 hole Disc golf course</li> <li>• 2 fishing lakes</li> <li>• baseball stadium</li> <li>• 2 tennis courts</li> <li>• 13 picnic shelters</li> <li>• outdoor theater</li> <li>• 2 playgrounds</li> <li>• 2 horseshoe pits</li> <li>• Amphitheatre</li> <li>• Performance stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5,400 square foot childcare facility</li> <li>• 3 gyms</li> <li>• skate park</li> <li>• soccer field</li> <li>• 2 multi-use fields</li> <li>• 60' climbing tower</li> <li>• low initiative 25 yard competition pool</li> <li>• free weight room</li> <li>• cardio room and cybex weight equipment</li> <li>• indoor/outdoor pool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 318 acre ATV Park</li> <li>• Opened in July 2010 by the City of Earlington</li> <li>• 608 acres, including Loch Mary Lake, with approximately 500 acres for riding</li> <li>• Trail is approximately 10 miles long</li> <li>• Located at 1865 Earlington Road, between Hwy 1337 and Hwy 112, in Earlington, KY</li> <li>• Permits are a requirement at the park and can be purchased at Earlington City Hall Monday through Friday 8:30am-4:30pm.</li> <li>• Permits can also be purchased online at <a href="http://www.earlingtonatvpark.com">www.earlingtonatvpark.com</a></li> </ul>
<b>MADISONVILLE COUNTRY CLUB</b>	<b>LAKESHORE COUNTRY CLUB</b>	<b>MADISONVILLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE</b>
<i>Madisonville</i>	<i>Madisonville</i>	<i>Madisonville</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 170 acres</li> <li>• Olympic size swimming pool</li> <li>• driving range</li> <li>• 18 hole golf course and clubhouse</li> <li>• tennis courts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150 acres</li> <li>• driving range</li> <li>• 18 hole golf with clubhouse</li> <li>• Olympic size swimming pool</li> <li>• boat dock</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 tennis courts</li> <li>• Hiking trail</li> </ul>

<b>YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION SPORTS COMPLEX</b>	<b>WHITE PLAINS FACILITIES</b>	<b>EARLINGTON FACILITIES</b>
<i>Madisonville</i>	<i>White Plains</i>	<i>Earlington</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31 acres</li> <li>• 8 baseball/ softball diamonds</li> <li>• 4 soccer fields</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Park</li> <li>• walking trail</li> <li>• playground</li> <li>• baseball/basketball fields/court</li> <li>• Veterans Memorial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price Park with handicap accessible playground and restroom facilities</li> <li>• Two family-size and two large group-size picnic shelters</li> <li>• Additional picnic areas with grills and accessible water</li> <li>• New amphitheater</li> <li>• Loch Mary (135 acre fishing lake) with floating boar dock and boat ramp in Price Park – no gasoline motors</li> <li>• Roadside park on Hwy. 112 with picnic area, fishing and boat ramp</li> <li>• 1/3 mile paved walking trail</li> <li>• Basketball courts</li> <li>• 318 acre ATV Park with new ATV trailhead, restroom facilities, and tent/camper campsites (no RV hookups)</li> <li>• City Park</li> <li>• OctoberFest in Price Park: Annual event featuring Backyard BBQ cook-off, Kansas City BBQ Society contest, live music and children’s activities</li> </ul>
<b>MORTONS GAP FACILITIES</b>	<b>HANSON FACILITIES</b>	<b>NORTONVILLE FACILITIES</b>
<i>Mortons Gap</i>	<i>Hanson</i>	<i>Nortonville</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 ball fields</li> <li>• City Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Park</li> <li>• Gordon Park</li> <li>• ball fields</li> <li>• walking trail</li> <li>• City Hall gymnasium</li> </ul>
<b>ST. CHARLES</b>	<b>TROVER HEALTH PARK</b>	<b>PRESERVATION AREAS</b>
<i>St. Charles</i>	<i>Madisonville</i>	<i>Hopkins County</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitness/walking trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peabody Wildlife Management Area (4,945 acres)</li> </ul>
<b>GRAPEVINE LAKE</b>	<b>CHERRY PARK</b>	<b>DR. FESTUS CLAYBON PARK</b>
<i>Madisonville</i>	<i>Madisonville</i>	<i>Madisonville</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 188 acres</li> <li>• Fishing lake</li> <li>• Mountain bike trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 tennis courts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 Acres</li> <li>• 1/2 mile paved walking trail</li> <li>• 2 basketball courts</li> <li>• Sand volleyball</li> <li>• Athletic field</li> <li>• Handicap accessible playground</li> <li>• Spray ground</li> </ul>

<b>MAHR PARK</b>	<b>REGIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX</b>	<b>Dawson Springs Facilities</b>
<i>Madisonville</i>	<i>Hopkins County</i>	<i>Dawson Springs</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 265 acres</li> <li>• Planned amenities include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 5 miles of trails</li> <li>○ Kayak/canoe launch</li> <li>○ Artist-in-residence program</li> <li>○ Growing Warriors Gardens</li> <li>○ Amphitheater</li> <li>○ Fishing ponds</li> <li>○ Sculpture trail</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor archery</li> <li>• Walking Trail</li> <li>• Proposed Baseball Fields</li> <li>• Proposed Softball Fields</li> <li>• Proposed Football Fields</li> <li>• Proposed Soccer Fields</li> <li>• Proposed Picnic shelters and concessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 acre City Park               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• 4 baseball/softball fields</li> <li>• Tennis court</li> <li>• Basketball Court</li> <li>• Paved ¼ mile walking trail/running park</li> <li>• Swimming pool w/splash park</li> <li>• Picnic areas and shelters</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Veterans Park- Trailhead to Lake Beshear, hiking and biking trails</li> <li>• Riverside Park with a functioning replica of the 1914 baseball stadium               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soccer field</li> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Play area</li> <li>• RV park with utility hookup</li> <li>• Boat ramp to Tradewater River</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tradewater Park               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canoe and kayak rentals</li> <li>• Primitive camping</li> <li>• Picnic area</li> <li>• Hiking/biking trailhead</li> <li>• Tradewater River access</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## PARKS & OPEN SPACE STRATEGIES

Several strategies are proposed that seek to improve the connectivity and access of the current park system, promote a diverse user base, increase potential tourism, and create economic development opportunities for Hopkins County. These strategies are described in detail below.

### CONNECTIONS MASTER PLAN



Photo: Dawson Springs trail head

Connecting people with places, especially recreational areas, is an important quality of life factor in any community. A focus needs to be placed on providing connections between neighborhoods and recreational areas in Hopkins County. These connections can be in the form of multi-use paths, trails or sidewalks and can serve as both recreational opportunities and as an alternative

form of transportation. The park & open space map on the following page indicates future connections between neighborhoods and recreational areas by illustrating the broad concept of connecting residential nodes (recreation areas) to activity nodes on a county-wide basis. The green arrows begin to define activity nodes and neighborhoods that could be connected.

This plan recommends that Hopkins County complete a connections master plan. This would begin to identify in more detail the neighborhood and park connections that are needed to create a high level of access for residents. A plan of this nature could also begin to define rough trail or multi-use path alignments for future design and construction as funding becomes available.



Photo: Trover Wellness Park

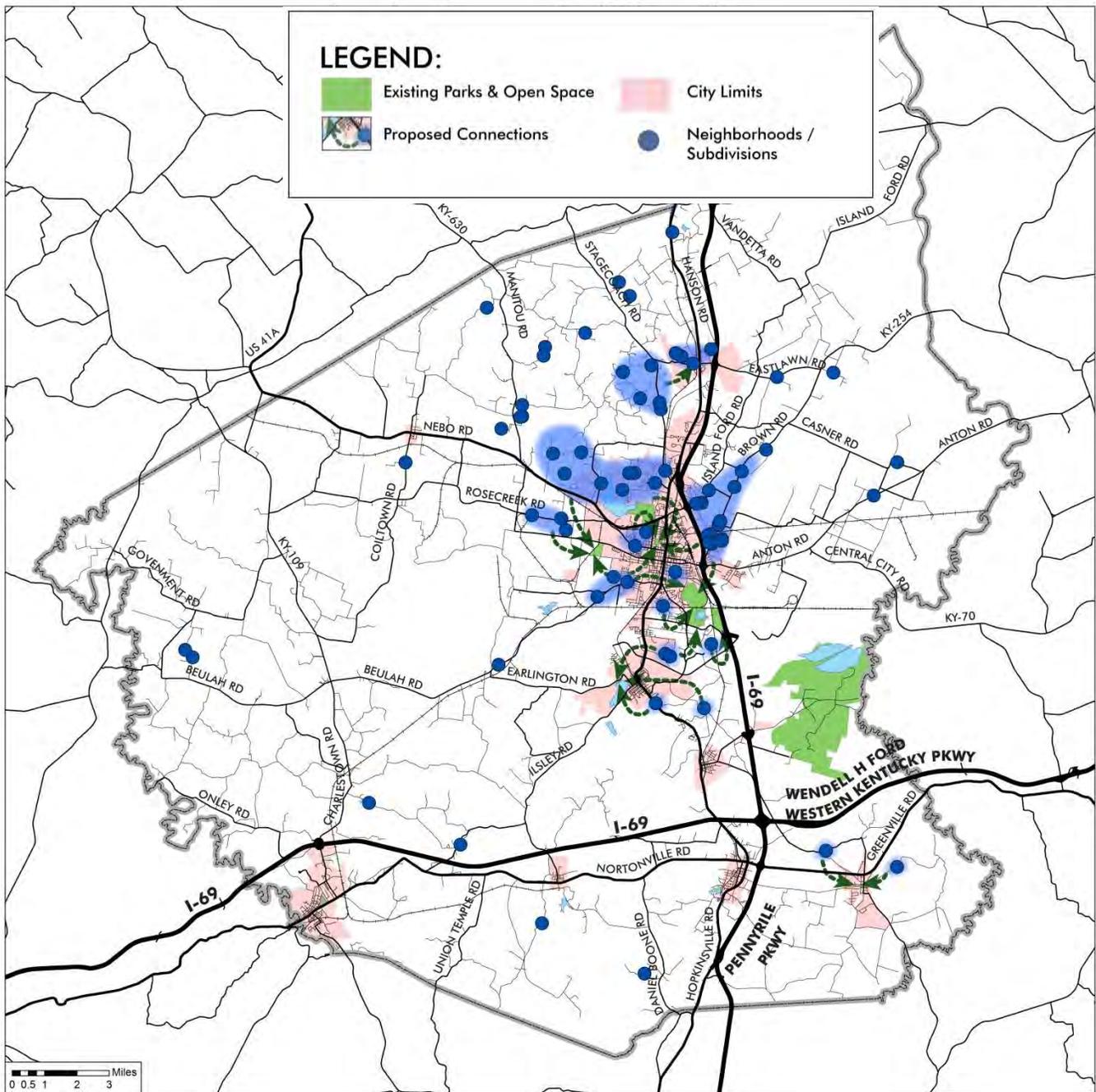


Figure: Parks & open space map

## RECLAIMING MINED LANDS

Hopkins County has historically been the site of significant mining activity, and as a result, has seen significant portions of land be strip mined or undermined. Mining activities have influenced the availability of land for development and placed restrictions on the type of development that can occur on undermined land. When considering the future use of this land, reclamation may be part of a recreation strategy that allows undevelopable land (due to environmental considerations or the cost of engineering a safe and stable structure) to be used productively.

The Division of Mine Reclamation and Enforcement (DMRE) is one of three agencies within the Department for Natural Resources (DNR) responsible for administering Kentucky's mining, reclamation, and abandoned mine land laws. The DMRE works closely with the Division of Mine Permits and the Division of Abandoned Mine Lands to ensure that all established standards of operation are addressed and that the public and the environment are protected.

Reclaiming mining areas means that the land is returned to its original condition or another productive use. This could include parks, lakes, farmland, pasture, wildlife habitat, recreational areas (trails, golf courses, and ball diamonds) or military training grounds.

Additional opportunities exist for private recreation on reclaimed mine sites, including hunting clubs, off-road vehicle driving, nature preserves, hiking trails, fishing, and camping. Private recreational uses on abandoned mining sites should be encouraged.

## PROGRAMMING & PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Creating targeted programming for each type of user is important. From the elderly walker to the family bike riders to the competitive sports teams, all users need to be accommodated through the parks and open space facilities in Hopkins County. Strategies should focus on maintaining and improving existing investments, such as existing parks and facilities. In addition, the new sports complex should be strategically marketed and viewed as an economic development opportunity by attracting major regional events.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC INVENTORY OF PARKS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The following selection of photographs portrays the diversity of recreational activities in Hopkins County. Fishing, biking, hunting, horse-back riding, golfing, and many other activities are available throughout the County.



