

# A NEW VISION FOR CHEROKEE GOLF COURSE

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ALGONQUIN PARK | ALGONQUIN PARKWAY | BAXTER SQUARE | BINGHAM PARK | BOONE SQUARE | CENTRAL PARK  
CHEROKEE PARK | CHEROKEE PARKWAY | CHICKASAW PARK | EASTERN PARKWAY | ELLIOTT PARK | IROQUOIS PARK  
NORTHWESTERN PARKWAY | SENECA PARK | SHAWNEE PARK | SHELBY PARK | SOUTHERN PARKWAY | SOUTHWESTERN  
PARKWAY | STANSBURY PARK | TYLER PARK | VICTORY PARK | WAYSIDE PARK | WILLOW PARK

## A New Vision

There are few opportunities in a lifetime to make a profound and lasting impact on the future of a city. In 1891, city leaders had the wisdom to commission Fredrick Law Olmsted to plan and design a park system that would become the framework for future development of our city. The Olmsted Firm spent decades building the system and building around the system a network of landscapes that create some of our most beloved parks, parkways, and neighborhoods.

The General Plan, created by the Olmsted Firm in 1891, envisioned Cherokee as a larger park that would fill the edges of its boundary and provide several access points. The mix of landscape types are critical to the design of Cherokee Park and are created intentionally to provide a variety of experiences to relax and relieve the mind through various natural settings. The mix of uplands, slopes, lowlands, woods, meadows, and water all come together with the choreography of circulation to create variety and interest.



*Cherokee Park General Plan Project #01263 April 25, 1897 (Courtesy of the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)*

We have an opportunity to make a similar commitment in our time. We can choose to find short-term solutions to mitigate liabilities, or we can invest in our future. Golf courses are valued places for recreation, but, like many cities, we have overbuilt, and leave the city vulnerable to the liabilities of maintenance on underutilized assets. How long can these underperforming courses last as golf courses? What do they become when they cannot be maintained any longer? This is an opportunity to be proactive and make smart decisions about the future of our city.

This proposal examines what might become of the Cherokee Golf Course specifically. The course is small, loses money, and is located adjacent to Cherokee Park. The location is desirable for many uses, but currently its designation as a golf course limits it to only one use, by a limited population.



As a more equitable and intelligent use of this land, we propose converting the golf course into a modern interpretation of an Olmsted Park, utilizing the unique landscapes to create a dynamic park space that will be open to all members of the community. It will serve as an important gateway at the intersection of Grinstead Drive and Lexington Road. It will provide an opportunity to heal the land that has been intensively maintained as a golf course. It will provide new programmatic opportunities for the community to enjoy. In short, it will create an attractive and engaging park space on a critical corner and create a new connection to the most visited municipal park in Louisville.

Our proposal outlines a vision statement to create the idea of what might become if we invest in our community's future. The vision centers on a triple bottom line approach, highlighting the social, environmental, and financial benefits of turning an undesirable golf course into a community asset to be enjoyed by all citizens. It offers a proven partner in the form of OPC, with a history of park stewardship that spans 30 years. Finally, it offers some early ideas to showcase some specific programmatic possibilities.

### **Statement of Need**

According to the National Golf Foundation, prior to 2006, there was a 20-year expansion cycle, in which golf course supply grew by 44%. Many of these courses are in residential developments and provide an alternative to private clubs and municipal courses. Here in Louisville, we now have several semi-private courses, including Valhalla, Nevel Meade, and Persimmon Ridge, which are well-maintained and available to local players at a comparable price point.

Unfortunately, at the same time the number of courses exploded, there was a steady decrease in the number of players, as well as an advent of new, alternative ways to enjoy the sport. Since 2003, there has been a 20% decline in the number of golfers nationwide<sup>1</sup>. Over 25% of those who identify as golfers do not even play on traditional golf courses, instead frequenting driving ranges, indoor golf simulators and golf entertainment facilities<sup>2</sup>.

These national trends, coupled with rising labor costs, have put a financial strain on Louisville Metro Government, resulting in a loss of over \$1 million in FY 2019.

### **Site Selection**

We talked to golfers about what makes a course desirable. We learned that some players prefer the prestige and flexibility of playing on an 18-hole course. Many golfers prefer some of the less frequented courses because it is easier to get a good tee time. While there are a variety of factors that can contribute to the financial success of a course, the largest attractant is simply the quality of the course.

People will travel farther to play on a better course.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Most Pressing Question in the Suburbs: What Do You Do When the Golf Course Shuts Down?" Bauerlein, Valerie. Wall Street Journal (Online); New York, N.Y. 20 July 2019.

<sup>2</sup> NGF Issues 2018 Golf Industry Report. National Golf Foundation, May 2018.



Cherokee Golf Course has the second lowest number of rounds played out of all municipal courses. We asked golfers what could be done to make Cherokee a more desirable course to play. **The answer? Nothing.** It was not the steep slopes or the quality of the fairways that were a deterrent to play. It was simply the limited space; Cherokee is not large enough for a 9-hole golf course. At 52 acres, it is the smallest course, featuring very narrow fairways. What John Charles Olmsted stated in 1900 still holds true: Cherokee Park is not suitable for a golf course because there is not enough available space. Further investment in the course will not change this fact, and for that reason, we do not believe golf at Cherokee Park is sustainable or fiscally viable for the long run.

### **A Proven Partner**

In the mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century, city funding for parks was inadequate, and no one was formally advocating for the protection or preservation of our parks. During this time, the Olmsted Parks faced numerous outside challenges to their integrity: a floodwall was constructed in Shawnee and Chickasaw Parks; Iroquois Park suffered damage from landslides and flooding; I-64 was constructed through the middle of Cherokee Park; and the 1974 tornado roared through Cherokee and Seneca Parks, wiping out hundreds of mature trees.

Smaller parks like Boone Square and Baxter Square had seen little maintenance over the years and had become dangerous for everyday park users. Like Central Park in New York City and many others around the country, Louisville's Olmsted Parks had become unsafe, overgrown, and threatened. In 1987, a group of citizens who understood the historic and community value of our parks created the "Louisville Friends of Olmsted Parks." This grassroots organization approached Louisville mayor Jerry Abramson for help and found a willing partner. Inspired by the recent creation of Central Park Conservancy in New York City, Mayor Abramson helped create OPC in 1989. The organization had a bold mission to preserve the legacy of Louisville's Olmsted Parks and Parkways for generations to come.

Over the past 30 years, OPC has overseen **\$40 million** of investment into our Olmsted Parks and Parkways. Beginning with the 1994 Master Plan for Cherokee, Iroquois, and Shawnee Parks, we have raised millions of dollars for capital investments, with ecological restoration, historic preservation and community engagement at the heart of what we do.

### **Team for Healthy Parks**

In the early 2000's, invasive species had taken over the woodlands in our Olmsted Parks, which created a number of problems, including negative impacts to biodiversity and soil and water quality. The remedy required more than money; it required manpower. With support from our donors and over the course of many years, we created the Team for Healthy Parks, who successfully cleared bush honeysuckle from the woodlands at Cherokee, Seneca, and Iroquois Parks.

We know that the work of maintaining natural areas is never done, so in 2018 we officially incorporated the Team for Healthy Parks into our annual operating budget. The team comprises six staff members, with four biological technicians led by a Natural Areas Manager and supervised by a Project Director. This crew works daily in our Olmsted Parks to remove invasive species from our woodlands, plant and care for trees, manage native grass prairies and wildflower meadows, repair and maintain trails, and maintain landscaped and formally planted areas to standards that Louisville residents expect and deserve.



Figure 1 - Team for Healthy Parks clearing invasive species and managing trails

### Growth and Partnerships

While our human resource capacity has grown, our financial resources have grown, too. In 2018, our revenue was 30% higher than 2017. This year, we are on track to again have 30% growth in revenue. That means that in 2019 we will have raised almost 70% more from annual donors that we did in 2017. As our capacity increases, so does our ambition.

We have worked side by side with Louisville Parks and Recreation executing large capital projects, as well as performing daily and routine maintenance of the natural areas of our Olmsted Parks. We have numerous staff members from the parks department on a variety of board committees and have frequent communication between our organizations at all levels. We believe our relationship with the capable team at Louisville Parks and Recreation is stronger than ever.



Figure 2 – Rev. Vincent James, Chief of Community Building with Louisville Parks and Recreation staff Margaret Brosko, Mesude Duyar, Jason Canuel, Dana Kasler, and Layla George from Olmsted Parks Conservancy

Many cities have conservancies and friends groups that support their parks departments. Those that do not are busy trying to figure out how to get them. Tax dollars cannot stretch far enough to maintain and

improve our parks at the level our users deserve and demand. The same situation is playing out in housing, social services, and a host of other sectors<sup>3</sup>. Public tax dollars simply do not adequately support the needs of our community.

*“We’re going to need our people in the city and our businesses to step up in ways they haven’t before. There’s not going to be as much public money available to help many institutions that are worthy of help. So people who think there needs to be a smaller government, we need them to step up and be more charitable and help these types of organizations.”*

*– Mayor Greg Fischer, Insider Louisville, March 2019<sup>3</sup>*

**Olmsted Parks Conservancy is ready to answer the call.**

### **The Triple Bottom Line**

Parks are important civic investments—as public space, they serve as common areas for daily interactions that strengthen social networks and build healthy communities. As an increasing number of people move from rural to urban places in the 21st century, public urban parks are becoming the primary way that a large portion of the population experiences nature. According to a recent study by the National Recreation and Park Association, 7 out of 10 Americans visit their local parks on a regular basis.<sup>4</sup>

A growing number of people are coming to understand and appreciate the many environmental, economic, health, and social benefits that parks bring to our lives. Environmentally, parks can help filter air pollutants, capture stormwater, reduce downstream impact, host wildlife, and add other ecosystem benefits. Economically, parks can attract residents, tourists, and businesses, and in most instances, proximity to parks raises property values and grow a community’s tax base. Socially, parks are important to mental and physical health, and they encourage community engagement, whether through school use or neighborhood activity.

We are fortunate that our city forefathers had the vision and determination to create an entire park system designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, one of the greatest landscape architects of all time. Our system of Olmsted Parks and Parkways is a truly unique asset to Louisville that other cities cannot claim. It is our mission to protect that investment for all our citizens, now and into the future. Below we outline the triple-bottom-line benefits of our vision for transforming an underutilized, underperforming golf course into a modern interpretation of an Olmsted Park.

#### **Environmental**

OPC has the expertise and capability to restore and enhance the natural resources, both land and water, that are under duress due to the practices associated with golf course maintenance.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://insiderlouisville.com/government/local/fischer-casts-blame-at-metro-council-as-city-braces-for-35-million-budget-cuts/>

<sup>4</sup> Economic Impact of Local Parks: An Examination of the Economic Impacts of Operations and Capital Spending by Local Park and Recreation Agencies in the United States Economy, Executive Summary. 2018. <https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/research/economic-impact-study-summary-2018.pdf>

### **Land**

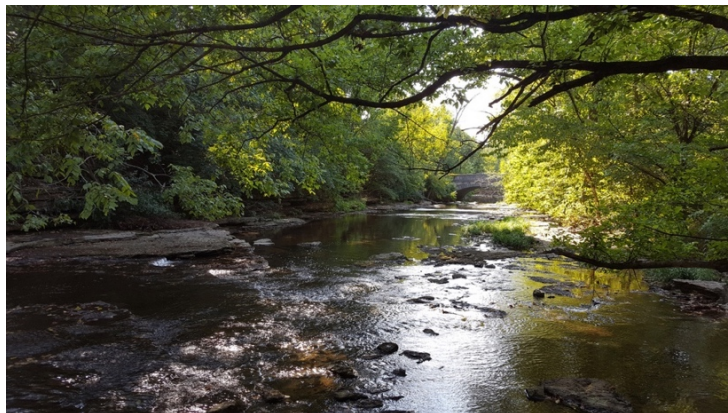
Managing the green space that is currently the golf course property and transitioning it to parkland will improve the area for native plant species, animal species, and park users, as well as reduce the environmental impact that golf course maintenance practices can cause.

An immediate impact of managing the area as parkland will be **reduced mowing**. Greens and fairways need to be mowed daily and weekly to maintain playability. As a park, scheduled mowing will greatly decrease. This translates to decreased carbon emissions, decreased soil compaction, and decreased equipment and labor costs.



*Figure 3 - Creating pollinator plantings in existing parks to improve environmental health*

Portions of these fairways could be restored to **meadows** comprised of native wildflowers and warm season grasses. These plants will provide habitat to native animals and insects. Their deep roots are able to store larger amounts of carbon from the atmosphere than the turf that is currently there. These root systems also provide soil stability and greatly reduce erosion. Utilizing native species will require less herbicide, pesticide, and fertilizer. These chemicals often travel into streams. They can be toxic to fish and other aquatic animals and can also cause nutrient dumps which can disrupt ecosystems.



*Figure 4 - Beargrass Creek is heavily impacted by pollution and would benefit from reduced runoff from the golf course. Woodlands and meadows will also help filter stormwater runoff before it reaches the waterway.*

Conversely, the General Plan of 1897 illustrates almost the entirety of the Cherokee Golf area as woodland savanna. A woodland savanna is defined by scattered large canopy trees with native grasses and herbs present beneath. The large expanse of existing turf will help facilitate a conversion to woodland savanna since the invasive seed bank has been suppressed for so many years. OPC proposes to convert a significant amount of the current 31 acres of managed golf turf into a combination of woodland savannas and planted managed prairies that require no fertilizers or herbicides for management and will significantly reduce the amount of stormwater runoff from the site. The increased acreage of prairies will be a nice addition to the 25 acres of prairie that OPC has created in Cherokee park over the past 10 years. This urban pollinator habitat is vital to the survival of our native insects, including the imperiled Monarch butterfly.



*Figure 5 - Pollinator meadow installation. Installations such as these are vital to environmental to protecting pollinator insects that are critical to the vitality of our food system.*

Increasing the number of large canopy trees with the woodland savannas will contribute significantly to the reduction of the urban heat island effect and provide other important ecological services such as carbon sequestration, runoff reduction, oxygen production and nutrient capture. The woodland savannas provide the appearance and function that Frederick Law Olmsted desired for the park.

Additionally, sections of the course can be reforested, creating greater canopy cover. This will decrease the spread of exotic plant species, contribute to decreased air temperatures, and create wildlife habitat. A combination of installed meadows and reforestation sites will result in a marked decrease in irrigation regimes.

OPC has been managing some woodland areas on the golf course for invasive plants, but much more is required. Large areas have been unmanaged by golf over the last few years, resulting in dense thickets of highly invasive plants eroding wildlife habitat and contributing to the weed seed distribution in the entirety of the park. We propose to eradicate invasive plants from all parts of the golf course, thus creating more useable park space for a positive user experience. Trails for hiking and exercise can be developed throughout the proposed and existing woodlands and the prairies for the enjoyment of park visitors.





Figure 6 – Increased tree canopy, reduced mowing, and active natural areas management will benefit the environment for generations of park users.

### **Water**

The entirety of Cherokee Golf Course drains into Beargrass Creek, either directly or through Willow Pond. Considering that the terrain of the golf course is very hilly, the 31 acres of managed turf represents a significant amount stormwater runoff from the course carrying nutrients and potentially harmful herbicides and pesticides into the pond. Even though turf does add some stormwater retention value as compared to complete impervious surfaces such as parking lots, rooftops, concrete, etc., turf areas still generate significantly more stormwater runoff than woodland areas, especially on sloped land.

Willow Pond has a rich history of fishing and was part of the original plan for the park. Over the years, nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus have been deposited into the pond from Cherokee Golf Course and the surrounding residential areas. The result is an increase in aquatic vegetation which can, and has, led to a number of summer fish kills in recent years and a decrease in the overall depth of the pond due to an accumulation of organic material.

One invasive aquatic plant, Curly-leaf Pond Weed (*Potamogeton crispus*), has become a particular problem over the past 10 years. The vegetative portion of the plant remains dormant in the sediments throughout the winter months and then in very early spring begins to grow. It can be so pervasive that it completely covers the surface of the pond. If treated with herbicide or left to die back on its own as water temperatures increase, the decomposition of all the dead organic material causes a drop in the dissolved oxygen concentration, which has caused massive fish kills. The overall quality of aquatic habitat in the pond has deteriorated, which could result in the termination of the Fishing in the Neighborhoods (FINS) fish stocking project by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.



*Figure 7 - Restoring and enhancing the pond will expand access and use of a unique urban landscape. Park users will get a chance to interact with a natural water feature and learn the benefits of environmental stewardship.*

A future pond restoration project could include dredging the sediments to increase depth and remove stored nutrients in the sediments, essential to the continued existence of Willow Pond. Both the 1994 Master Plan for Louisville's three flagship parks and a 2010 Willow Pond restoration plan call for dredging. In 2012, OPC constructed two bio-cells and a detention basin designed to capture most of the inflow to the pond helping reduce current sediment and nutrient loading to the pond and which will protect a restored pond well into the future for park users to enjoy.

### **Social**

Frederick Law Olmsted designed parks for the everyday person. Public parks were intended to offer a respite from industrialization— a place to escape air filled with coal dust and streets filled with waste. Olmsted firmly believed that natural scenery had the power to heal and that parks should be a democratic space with room for everyone.



*Figure 8 - Park users enjoying the circulation at Cherokee Park. Spontaneous interaction was intentionally designed to create social exchanges and promote a sense of community.*

Olmsted knew then what we all know now: the contemplation of nature, fresh air, and physical activity outside offer tangible benefits to people's health, mental and physical. Countless studies have shown that people exercise more when they have access to parks<sup>5</sup> and that exercising outdoors has a greater positive effect than exercise indoors<sup>6</sup>. The health benefits of parks are broad and well documented.

But what about the other social benefits from parks? Olmsted was intentional in his design and manipulated the land to create spaces which would encourage people to engage or interact with each other a certain way. He believed in the separation of uses – he moved active recreation away from quiet pathways to encourage contemplation. His design was deliberate, and one of his goals in park design was to foster democracy.

Olmsted began his career in the mid-1800s and could easily remember how land had been used in Europe, where the parks were not public, but in fact were the private gardens and estates of the aristocracy. Central Park in Old Louisville is a good example of this, as it was the private garden and estate of the DuPonts before it was donated to the city for a public park. Olmsted worked in Louisville at a time when power was shifting from the monarchies and royals to the people, and ownership of the land was transferring to the people as well. The democratization of our land was a physical manifestation of a cultural shift he was witnessing.

Olmsted believed that for democracy to work, people needed to have a sense of community, a sense of being a part of something larger than themselves – and that parks could help. He designed spaces for gatherings, for parades, for field games, places where people could recreate and meet their neighbor. Our parks were created during a period of rapid industrialization. People were moving from rural communities where there was significant social interdependence: people relied on neighbors to help get fields planted and crops harvested, and there was a strong sense of community. As urban areas began to grow, that sense of community began to fade. Individualism and materialism were new issues facing communities, and Olmsted saw those traits as threats to democracy. Urban leaders sought spaces to foster “fraternity” to counter this.

Olmsted designed our parks to be spaces where people of varied backgrounds and *all classes* could come together – truly democratic spaces, not just beautiful gardens for the wealthy. Our parks were meant to foster human togetherness. It is hard to think of any other place where people of all walks of life come together in a beautiful space that is completely open, free, and welcoming to the public.

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<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Parks, Trails and Health Resources. “Data on Healthy Community Design.” November 2015.

<sup>6</sup> “The great outdoors: how a green exercise environment can benefit all.” National Institutes of Health, Jan 3, 2013.



*Figure 9 - A sense of community is at the core of social fabric.  
Parks, better than any other space, promotes a sense of community.*

In their white paper, “Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System,” the Trust for Public Land writes about “Community Cohesion.” Numerous studies have shown that the more webs of human relationships a neighborhood has, the stronger, safer, and more successful it is. Any institution that promotes this kind of community cohesion—whether a club, a school, a political campaign, a religious institution, a co-op—adds value to a neighborhood and, by extension, to the whole city.<sup>7</sup>

This human web, which writer and activist Jane Jacobs termed “social capital,” is strengthened with parks. In cities with a great amount of social capital, park volunteers do everything from picking up trash and pulling weeds to planting flowers, hosting activities in the park, teaching about the environment, educating public officials, and contributing dollars to the cause. Louisville, and specifically OPC, offers a shining example of social capital in action.

Over the past five years, OPC has averaged 1200 to 1400 volunteers annually, who have contributed a total of more than 7000 hours each year. Additionally, we have approximately 45 Park Stewards, who are highly trained volunteers capable of leading their own projects. This robust volunteer program not only allows us to accomplish a great deal of work, but also builds social cohesion and strengthens our community.

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<sup>7</sup> Trust for Public Land, “Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System”, <http://cloud.tpl.org/pubs/ccpe-econvalueparks-rpt.pdf>



Figure 10 - People love parks, they will volunteer to care for parks, and parks are open to all.

**Cherokee Park is not only a hub of volunteer activity, but quite simply, a hub of activity.** Based on data from the Trust for Public Land<sup>1</sup>, **Cherokee and Seneca Park had an estimated 1,600,000 visitors in 2019. In contrast, Cherokee Golf Course has had only 15,000 rounds played in FY 2019.** While the park has been the most frequently visited and heavily used, the golf course has been one of the most underutilized courses in the city. Restoring the golf course property to a park will increase usage and expand access to all Louisville residents.

Cherokee Golf Course currently acts as a barrier to Cherokee Park for residents approaching the park from the north and west. If the planned improved pedestrian connectivity moves forward as part of One Park, we believe transforming the golf course property into a welcoming entrance to Cherokee Park will further connect the park to residents in Crescent Hill and other nearby communities, further extending the inherent benefits to parkside living.

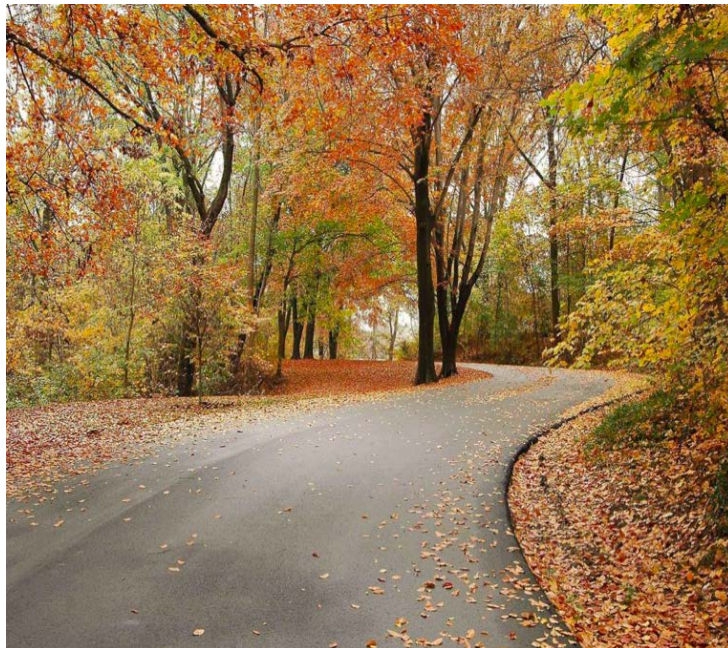
### Financial

The financial benefit to awarding OPC management of Cherokee Golf Course is significant. In FY 2019, the course lost over \$110,000. Given the multi-year downward trend, we do not expect the loss to decrease, but rather increase over time. Additionally, we believe that converting the property to park space will actually increase revenue to the city.

In 2018, OPC contracted Place Economics to develop an economic impact study. In short, we wanted to know if there was a measurable difference between Olmsted Parks and other public parks. Indeed, there was. While parks in general have a positive impact on property values, homes fronting an Olmsted Park have a per-square-foot value of 5.5% more than properties fronting non-Olmsted Parks. For the larger parks, such as Cherokee Park, this benefit extends up to ½ mile from the park boundary. Using 2017 data, this boost in property value resulted in an additional \$900,000 of property tax revenue to Louisville Metro.

Given the One Park development across the street, we believe that making the golf course property not only part of the park, but a welcoming entrance to the park, will further increase the value of that property, potentially increasing property tax revenue to the city.

OPC is prepared to take over management of the course immediately and has the resources necessary to do so. We will develop a master plan with broad public input to determine the best use of the property and will then raise the necessary funds to execute the plan. Given our successful 30-year track record, we have full confidence in our ability to raise the necessary funds to realize the vision of what Cherokee Golf Course might be.



*Figure 11 - Entrance to Cherokee Park. The entrance is designed to relax you as you enter the larger park area.*

## The Proposal

Our vision is to transform the current golf course from a financial liability into a treasured park space, where all members of the community are welcome, environmental stewardship is showcased through timeless design, and, through programming, revenue can be generated to help pay for maintenance. The new park would also have a profound impact on the corner of Lexington and Grinstead by taking away a barrier and replacing it with a gateway into Cherokee Park. The vision provides an idea for what is possible if we approach the problem at hand with a measured balance of creativity and pragmatism. There are several opportunities that come to mind immediately when thinking about how to best capitalize on the landscape.

Initially, the park could be arranged into a series of distinct spaces that highlight the natural attributes of the landscapes, based on slopes, existing vegetation, drainage, and other site elements. Some programmatic opportunities could include converting the existing clubhouse into a family-friendly restaurant, developing a series of well-choreographed walks that highlight experiences moving through different landscapes, a re-envisioned Willow Pond with a boathouse, and even a small outdoor amphitheater for small-scale entertainment.

The site as a whole could be a demonstration that highlights urban ecology principals when converting underutilized golf courses to reintroduce nature into the city. Expanding the tree canopy, cleaning Willow Pond, and reconfiguring turf into native plantings will provide cleaner water and air, and healthier soil. In addition to programmatic and environmental benefits, the park will also convert a space that serves relatively few to a landscape that is open to all.

Every project that we take part in starts with listening and community input, and if selected we would utilize the Master Planning process to create a plan for the Cherokee Park Golf Course site that meets the needs of the people. In a recent survey, to make sure our RFP response aligned with the community we asked current and former golfers (48.77% of responders) and non-golfers (52.93% of responders) if they supported turning Cherokee Park Golf Course into a public park. **74.83% support giving the area back to city residents as a public park.**

A few examples of the new vision for the future Cherokee Park expansion area are provided below. These are visions of what could become if we dare to dream big and invest in our community.

### Willow Pond

Willow Pond is full of potential to become a unique destination. The pond receives some visitors who fish the pond, but it has suffered from lack of maintenance. Silt deposits and nutrient runoff from the golf course impact the water quality of the pond. By implementing ecologically sensitive landscapes and better managing the pond, it could become a destination for fishing, walking, and boating, which would create a unique destination at the corner of Grinstead Drive and Lexington Road.

Introducing a boathouse for boat rentals would add an attraction to activate the pond area and a needed revenue source. Creating a destination at Willow Pond will help activate the corner of Lexington and Grinstead, making it even more attractive for development by providing access to this unique amenity. This approach will also create a welcoming gateway into Cherokee Park, better connect the Beargrass Creek Trail, and create an opportunity to engage with water.

The sketch below illustrates what Willow Pond could look like if reimaged as a center piece to a landscape.



Figure 12 - Artistic rendering of a restored and enhanced Willow Pond, which could become a destination unlike any other in Louisville.



### Nature Walk

Passively walking through natural areas has been shown to reduce stress and improve mental health. The heavy use of the trails at Cherokee Park (and many other parks) demonstrates the demand for this type of amenity. The golf course presents a unique opportunity to create a variety of landscapes for passive recreation. Once developed, the new park area could provide a walking experience that might traverse through wooded areas, meadows, riparian areas, and around Willow Pond. The variety in different landscape types would respond to the existing site by capitalizing on slopes, soils, and intended design features of the new park space. The sketch below illustrates the casual nature of passive recreation at the park.



Figure 13 - Artistic rendering of the golf course converted to a series of meadows, woodlands, and open space to create a verdant oasis in the heart of the city.

### Clubhouse Gateway

The existing clubhouse is in need of maintenance upgrades. As part of the new park, it could be upgraded to provide a family friendly atmosphere as a restaurant in the middle of the park. The restaurant would provide a food and beverage amenity in the heart of the most popular Olmsted Park in Louisville. The restaurant would provide a strong revenue source that will help finance park maintenance and expansion. This would ensure the park is developed and maintained at a high level and can keep up with heavy use. The sketch below is an illustration of what the restaurant and outdoor spaces might look like as a family friendly attraction.



*Figure 14 - Artistic rendering showing a renovated golf club house as a restaurant and patio area which will create a unique destination and revenue generating opportunity.*

## Conclusion

These proposals will be evaluated based on the quality of proposed services, the qualifications and experience, and the capital investment plan. We believe that our proposal offers a superior alternative to golf at Cherokee Park and will score higher in diversity of programming, financial benefit to the city, and community engagement. We know how to manage and maintain parks and believe transforming the golf course site into a vibrant park space is in the best interest of our community.

The Louisville Metro Parks system is a valuable community amenity that enhances the quality of life for all. The rich heritage of the Olmsted system makes the series of green spaces that weaves together our city truly unique. Increasing budget realities and shifts in recreation preferences has resulted in a surplus of golf courses and a deficit of sufficient revenue to effectively manage the courses in the municipal system.

The current approach is to increase revenue through increased fees or turn over management of the courses. The proposal provided here offers a third alternative for a specific course, based on thoughtful consideration of the context of this course. By finding higher uses for less viable courses, the more viable courses can better utilize local resources to provide the best experience for golfers while reducing the impact on the budget. The proposal also recognizes the benefits of a park to a community. These benefits were widely known when our park system was first developed by the Olmsted firm and span social, environmental, and economic benefits.

We envision a future where Louisville is as well known for parks as it is bourbon. Where everyone has access to green space to play, relax the mind, and enjoy time outdoors. Where our neighborhoods are stitched together by a rich fabric of landscapes. We believe this is the best future for our city, it's where families will want to grow, and people will want to move. This is our vision and we are committed to setting an example of how great we can be when we embrace our landscapes.