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INDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITY ASSESSMENT

Jonesboro Parks and Recreation Master Plan
for the
City of Jonesboro, AR

Prepared by

BARKER RINKER SEACAT ARCHITECTURE

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Purpose and Introduction

The purpose of this portion of the Master Plan effort is to focus on indoor recreation facilities, and associated programs and services related to indoor recreation opportunities. The scope of this area includes a high-level facility assessment of existing conditions of indoor recreation facilities owned by the City of Jonesboro, program capabilities, needed repairs, renovation and/or expansion possibilities and the need for new facilities.

Additionally, an analysis of the “level of service” City owned facilities are providing to the existing population was conducted to identify gaps in service while also developing strategies of where new indoor recreation facilities might be located to serve a growing and expanding population.

Other tasks included reviewing and analyzing community input. With this information, priorities were identified for new and/or improved facility amenities that would serve community needs. Staff interviews were conducted to better understand their hopes to expand services and limitations to doing so. Two more tasks were to consider future city indoor recreation plans and or existing funding along and impacts on community priorities, and to present findings and recommendations to City Council members and advisory groups.

Existing Conditions

The consultant team, along with City staff, conducted an onsite visit and assessment of all City owned and operated indoor recreation facilities to include:

- The Jonesboro Pool & Community Center
- E. Boone Watson Community Center
- Parker Park Community Center
- Allen Park Community Center
- Earl Bell Community Center

The following describes findings of the facility reviews:

JONESBORO OUTDOOR POOL & COMMUNITY CENTER

The Jonesboro outdoor pool is the only municipally operated aquatics facility and is highly used during the summer months for swim lessons, swim team practice, meets, and open swim times. The facility has had a very recent renovation that includes a new gymnasium (middle school size), indoor turf (practice, youth leagues), party room with kitchenette and renovated locker/restrooms. Office spaces have been renovated and added along with extensive storage space for Parks and Recreation Department uniforms and equipment. This area also includes a laundry service area for end-of-season uniform washing.

Assessment

Overall Condition

- Very Good

Access to Outdoor Recreation Elements

- Yes – soccer practice fields

Maintenance Issues

- No accessible entry to pool with the exception of portable stairs and handicap lift
- Pool chemical storage issues
- Water damage to pool storage building

Expansion Possibilities – N/A

- Recent renovations and expansion make this unnecessary

Improvement Possibilities

- Improve chemical storage systems as to not mix incompatible chemicals
- Improve exterior lighting i.e., parking lot
- Facelift and finish upgrades to pool support spaces i.e., concessions and lifeguard room
- Replace children’s fun features in kiddy pool

E. BOONE WATSON COMMUNITY CENTER

The E. Boone Watson Community Center has one community room (with a warming kitchen) which is primarily used for meetings and rentals. The center also houses the Craighead County-Jonesboro African American Cultural Center. Across the street from the center is a historic house but it is in very poor condition and will need to be renovated.

Assessment

Overall Condition

- Good

Access to Outdoor Recreation Elements

- William Evans Park (basketball courts, playground, shelter)

Maintenance Issues

- Water intrusion at base of west wall and floor slab

Expansion Possibilities - Difficult

- Challenges with metal building expansion
- Renovation of historic house would be a major undertaking

Improvement Possibilities

- Relocate museum and create an additional community room
- Facelift to lobby, community rooms and kitchen
- Lighting in parking lot

EARL BELL COMMUNITY CENTER

The Earl Bell Community Center has been recognized as a historic building. Built in 1936 it houses a gymnasium, meeting rooms, rock climbing wall and boxing ring. The bathroom facilities have been recently renovated. The Harlan Henry Senior Center shares the campus of the Earl Bell Center and is currently operated by a nonprofit organization.

Assessment

Overall Condition

- Good

Access to Outdoor Recreation Elements

- Julian James Memorial Park (outdoor basketball court, tennis courts (3), playground, dog park)

Emergency Shelter Designation

- Yes

Maintenance Issues

- Water intrusion at east wall
- Roof leaks (isolated)

Expansion Possibilities – Difficult

Historic designation creates expansion challenges

Improvement Possibilities

- Circulation to some spaces is difficult requiring access through adjacent activity rooms.
- Facelift to lobby, office, community rooms
- Exterior lighting (i.e., parking lot)

PARKER PARK COMMUNITY CENTER

The Parker Park Community Center has two community rooms mainly used for private rentals and an accessory catering kitchen (supporting one of the community rooms). There is a two-court (middle school) gymnasium with a dividing curtain between each. Courts are also used for volleyball and pickleball. Men's and women's restrooms/locker rooms also are available.

Assessment

Overall Condition

- Good

Access to Outdoor Recreation Elements

- Playground, spray park, picnic shelters (2), lighted soccer fields

Emergency Shelter Designation

- Yes

Maintenance Issues

- Water intrusion at east wall
- Roof leaks (isolated)

Expansion Possibilities – Difficult

- Challenges with metal building expansion

Improvement Possibilities

- Facelift to lobby, community rooms and kitchen
- Update and modernize locker rooms and restrooms including accessible locker room facilities.
- Addition of outdoor aquatics is planned and funded

ALLEN PARK COMMUNITY CENTER

The Allen Park Community Center has the same floorplan as the Parker Park Community Center. It also has two community rooms and an accessory catering kitchen that supports one of the community rooms. There is a two-court (middle school) gymnasium with a dividing curtain between each. Courts are also used for volleyball and pickleball. Men's and women's restrooms/locker rooms also are available. This center is further augmented by multiple outdoor recreation amenities.

Assessment

Overall Condition

- Good

Access to Outdoor Recreation Elements

- Playground, spray park, picnic shelters, skatepark, tennis courts (12), lighted soccer field

Maintenance Issues

- Water intrusion at base of wall and floor slab
- Roof leaks apparent through stained ceiling tile
- Mold smell – Potentially from roof leak

Expansion Possibilities – Difficult

- Challenges with metal building expansion

Improvement Possibilities

- Minor facelift to lobby, offices and kitchen i.e., ceiling tiles
- Update and modernize locker rooms and restrooms including accessible locker room facilities.
- An outdoor aquatics amenity (TBD) is planned but not funded

FUTURE JONESBORO SPORTS COMPLEX

As of the writing of this report, the City of Jonesboro Advertising and Promotion Commission is in the process of designing a new indoor athletic complex that will support a multitude of recreation interests. A schedule for construction and opening is yet to be determined. Programs at this facility will primarily serve competitive sports leagues run by the Jonesboro Sporting Commission. The current program elements planned for the facility include:

- 10 Basketball Courts
- 20 Volleyball Courts
- 2 Indoor turf fields
- 50 Meter Pool
- Therapy Pool
- Splash Pad
- Locker Rooms

These facilities are subject to change based on continued study.

Level of Service

An evaluation of the level of service offered by current indoor recreation facilities to the residents of Jonesboro was conducted. In discussion with Jonesboro Parks and Recreation Department staff, it was determined that in an ideal world, residents would be within a five-minute drive to an indoor community recreation facility. A community recreation facility is defined as providing *“localized recreation amenities serving neighborhood areas and not major regional indoor recreation facilities,”* such as the future Jonesboro Sports Complex.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

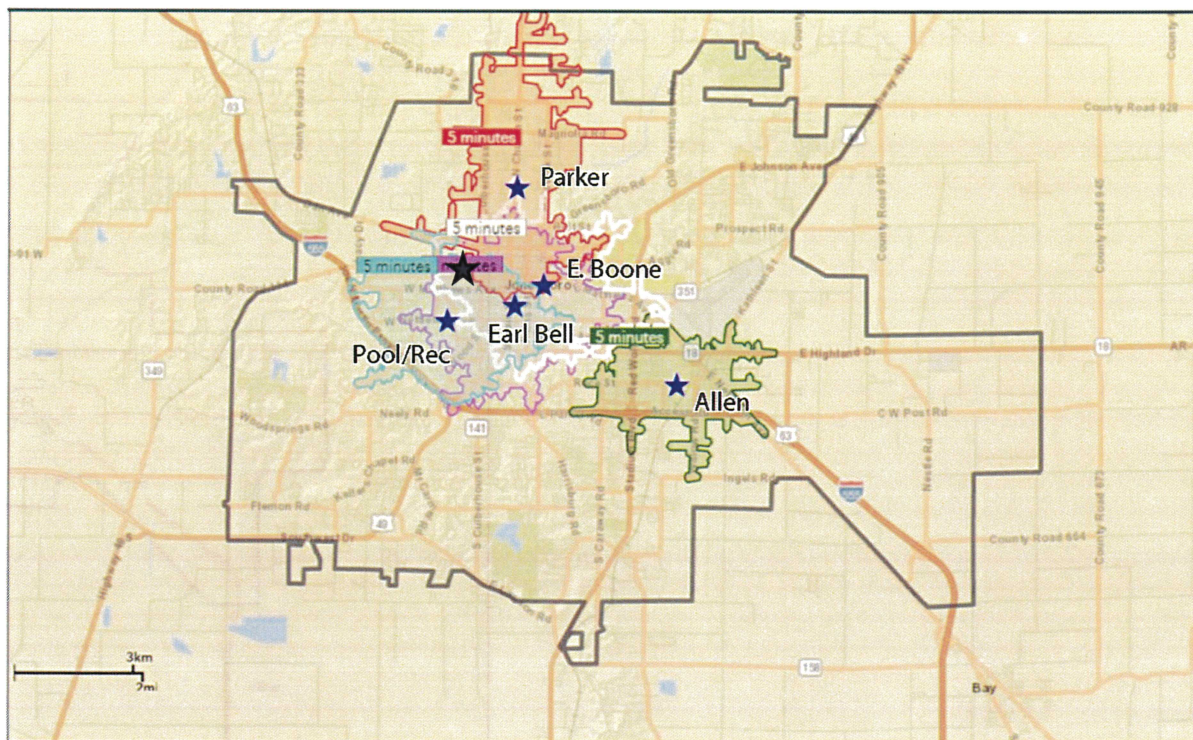
Looking at all existing centers (i.e. Jonesboro Pool, Earl Bell, E. Boone Watson, Parker Park and Allen Park Community Centers), an analysis was conducted to understand the reach within a five-minute drive to residents of the city. The analysis included the total geographic area of the five-minute drive along with the total population, median age and household income contained within that area.

Analysis – Future Strategies to Improve Level of Service

As shown in **Figure 1** (page 5), the current five-minute drive level of service of existing indoor recreation centers covers the historical established neighborhoods of the city. The analysis clearly shows that the northeast, south, southwest and northwest areas of the city may be underserved when it comes to indoor recreation due to new residential and population growth. Since the east side of the city appears to be primarily for commercial and industrial uses, this area was not considered for recreation services.

The current level of service provides indoor recreation opportunities to the total population of approximately 59,000 residents as shown in **Figure 2** (page 5). Additionally, the current indoor recreation centers primarily, but not solely, serves the lower income areas of Jonesboro.

Figure 1. Five Minute Drive (Geographic Area)



April 24, 2023

Figure 2. Five Minute Drive Demographics

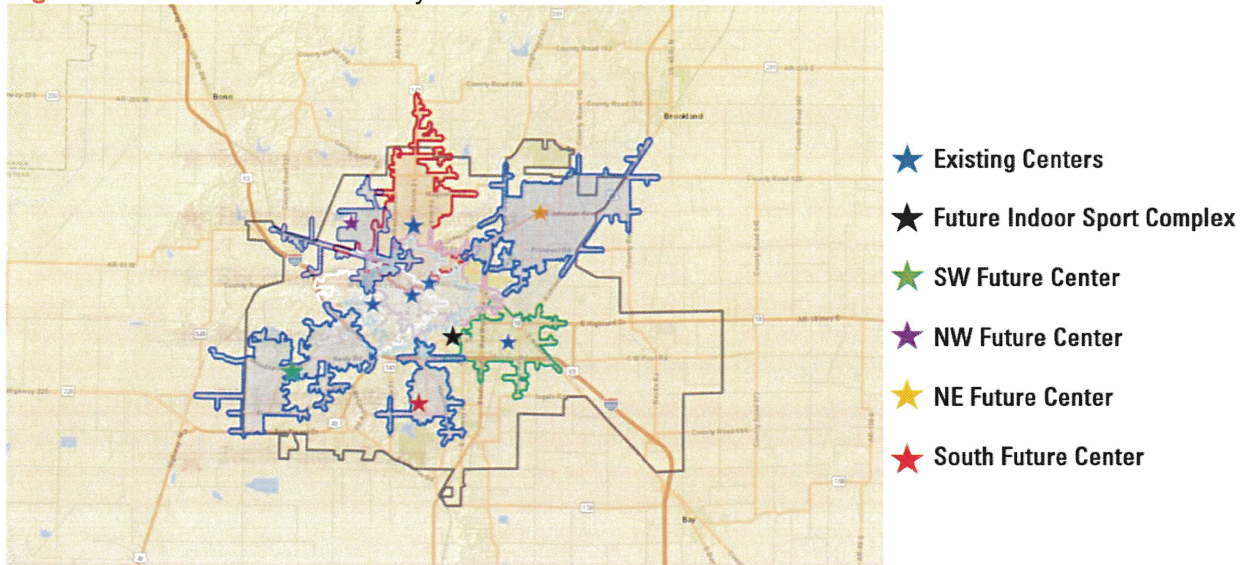
Name	Pop	Med-Age	Income
Parker	9,243	29.5	\$27,290
E. Boone	15,565	29.7	\$28,638
Earl Bell	15,325	36.1	\$36,171
Pool/Rec	14,401	37.7	\$42,630
Allen	4,412	30.6	\$25,155

FUTURE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE LEVEL OF SERVICE

Using the five-minute drive level of service goals, areas were identified as possible locations for new indoor community centers. This analysis identifies four (4) areas for additional community centers, which

included the southwest, northwest, northeast and southern parts of the city as shown in **Figure**. No specific location or priority is meant to be identified in this report. Over time the development of these new indoor community centers along with the new Sport Complex will begin to fill in the level of service gaps that currently exist.

Figure 3. Future Indoor Community Center Level of Service



AQUATICS LEVEL OF SERVICE

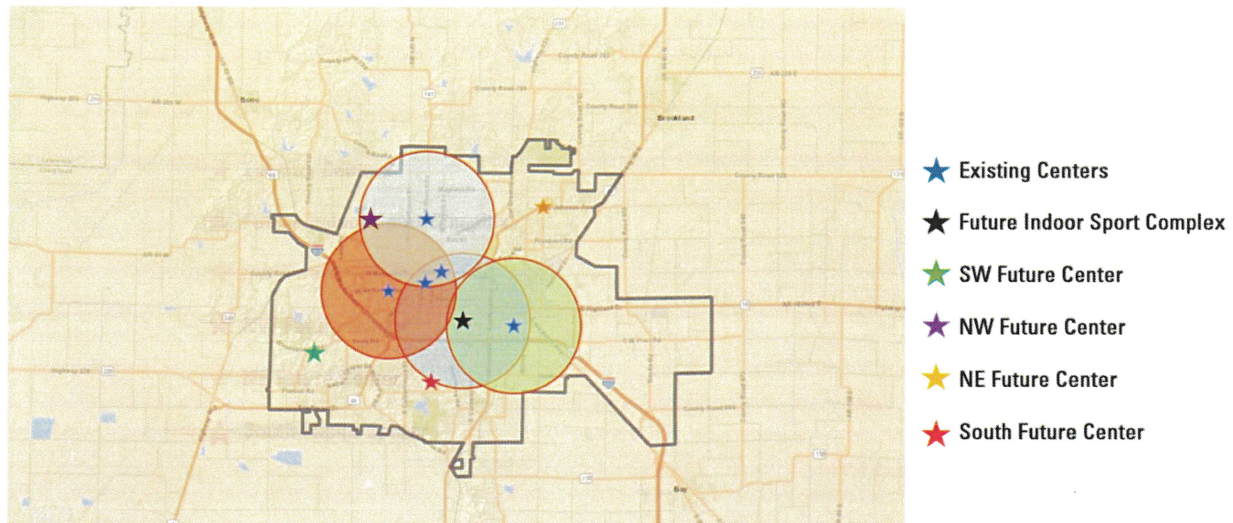
The community survey conducted as part of the Master Plan (page 7) showed that indoor leisure pools, outdoor water playgrounds and indoor lap pools ranked in the top ten recreation amenities residents desired. (Indoor leisure pools ranked #1) Currently the Jonesboro Pool at the Jonesboro Pool and Community Center is the only public aquatics facility in the city. The future Sports Complex will contain a 50-meter pool which will help serve the competitive swimming community, and more than likely local high school and club teams, and provide the ability to host larger regional or statewide swimming meets.

Additionally, the Parker Park Community Center has a planned and funded outdoor aquatics facility currently in the design phase. The pool will have fun features suitable for children and lap lanes to be used for fitness swimming, water aerobics, and swimming lessons. Allen Park has an outdoor aquatics facility planned, but it is not yet funded.

A two-mile level of service area agreed to by Parks and Recreation Department staff given to existing and future aquatic facilities was analyzed as shown in **Figure 4** (pg. 7). Existing and future aquatics amenities will provide reasonable aquatics access to Jonesboro residents. Determination for future aquatics will need to be made to fill in increased aquatic services where they are most needed. The proposed NE Future Center would fill the greatest gap in the existing and funded system.

In fall through spring, the only indoor aquatics facility will be the Jonesboro Sports Complex. As noted above, the focus of this facility will be competitive swimming. For the recreational swimmer, access may be limited. The inclusion of an indoor leisure pool may be a consideration for one or more of the future centers to serve recreational swimming users.

Figure 4. Aquatics Level of Service



Public Input and Future Indoor Recreation Amenities

As part of the master planning process, several public engagement opportunities were provided which included a community survey and several pop-up events around the Jonesboro. Contained in those actions were opportunities to provide input on indoor recreation priorities and its importance in meeting the needs of the community.

Based on the results of the public input process many indoor recreation amenities rose to the top of the community desires. While the City of Jonesboro should work to provide these amenities in the coming years, there are also other amenities that may not be seen as a priority, that will need to be provided to meet the City's mission and goals. The consultant team has provided a "Potential Model Center" sample of what a new and/or renovated community center may look like in the future (pages 8-9).

INDOOR RECREATION PRIORITIES

Figure 5 (page 8) lists the top priorities for indoor recreation from both the community survey and pop-up events. Additionally, the figure shows the indoor recreation amenities deemed important by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board created for the master planning process. The figure is initially sorted by the top ten priorities identified in the community survey. The pop-up column is sorted by how their priorities corresponded with the community survey. While the Advisory Committee identified what was important, they did not prioritize them in any order. That column shows what was consistent with the community survey. (Note: N/A indicates that the choice was either not an option or not a priority on the public input event.)

Figure 5. Public Input Priorities

Amenity	Public Survey	Pop Up Events	Advisory Board
Indoor Leisure Pool	#1	#1	X
Indoor Walking Track	#2	N/A	X
Indoor Child Playground	#3	N/A	X
Multi-use Activity Court	#4	N/A	X
Outdoor Water Playground	#5	#2	X
Indoor Lap Pool	#6	#4	-
Climbing Wall	#7	N/A	X
Gymnasium (Courts Sports)	#8	#5	X
Outdoor Patio Space	#9	N/A	-
Ice Rink	#10	#6	-
Other (Tennis Courts)		N/A	-

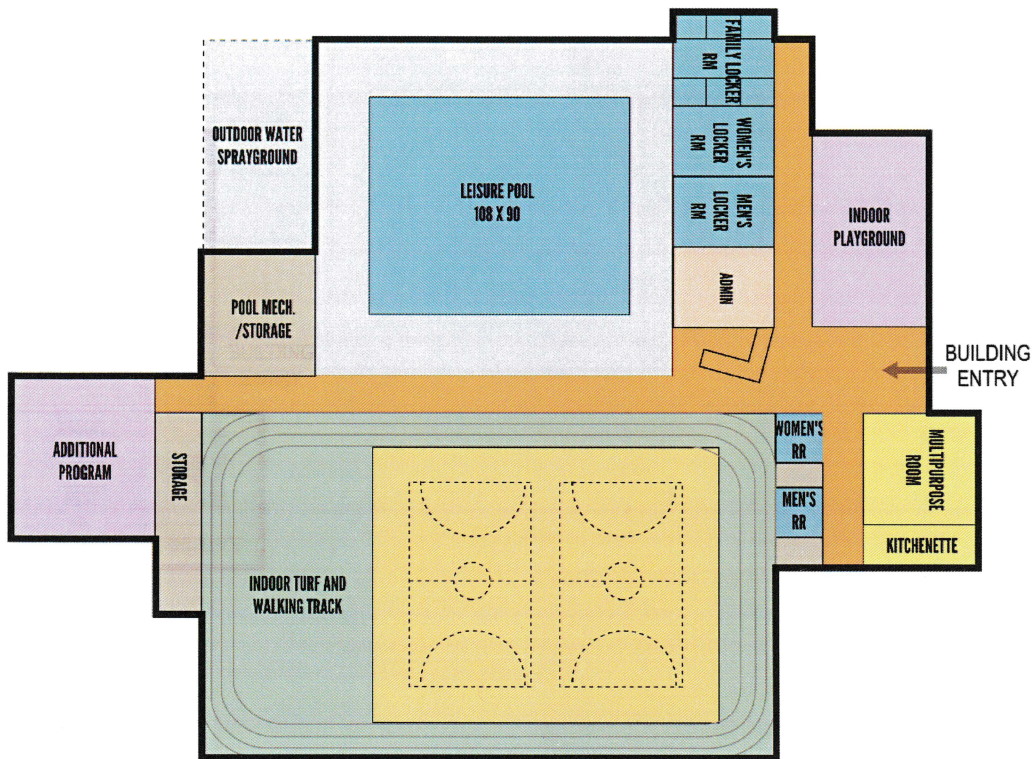
POTENTIAL MODEL CENTER

Based on the public input process and conversations with staff, a “Potential Model Center” was created for the Master Plan. The priorities identified in the public input process are not limited to a new community center but also potential additions to existing centers. A great example of that is outdoor aquatics ranked high on the survey and this amenity is planned and funded for the Parker Park Community Center and is being considered for the Allen Park Community Center.

Components of the Potential Model Center (**Figure 6**, page 9) may include:

- Gymnasium (preferably a minimum of two courts)
- Indoor walking track
- Indoor leisure pool
- Outdoor water sprayground
- Indoor playground
- Indoor turf
- Multipurpose rooms
- Kitchenette
- Locker rooms
- Administration offices

Figure 6. Potential Model Center A sample floor plan is shown below.



The actual size and cost of a new community center or renovation of existing centers is not projected in this report as the accuracy of these are unreliable without understanding the actual timing of such development. It is recommended that before undertaking new construction or renovation, feasibility studies should be conducted to determine actual financial viability and operational impacts.

Potential Model Center – Special Amenities

In addition to the creation of a model center and to not create “cookie cutter” buildings, several indoor recreation amenities were identified that could make each unique from one another. One or more of those amenities could include:

- Climbing wall
- Fitness and cardio space
- Ice rink
- Child watch
- Indoor event space