

A.B. Sawyer Park, the home base of the Lyndon Recreation Association since at least the 1960s, is in line for some major improvements under a master plan developed for the 47-acre site in Lyndon.

Tim Lentz, a 30-year supervisor and groundskeeper for the Lyndon association, said its summer and fall programs bring about 1,500 youths, ages 4 to 17, to the park for T-ball, softball, baseball and football.

“Most of these kids grew up around here, and the park is awesome for them,” Lentz said. “It keeps them out of trouble. We have a good environment for everybody.”

The park, much of which is undeveloped, is located at 9300 Whipps Mill Road, just north of the University of Louisville Shelby Campus, now called ShelbyHurst research park.

Sawyer Park, established in 1969, has two small playgrounds, 12 ballfields, two multipurpose fields used mainly for football, a restroom and concession stand complex, tennis courts, parking, some footpaths, an office for the Lyndon Recreation Association and undeveloped land along Beargrass Creek at the south end of the park. Other facilities include a metro recycling site, and Metro Parks landscape and maintenance shops.

Noteworthy terrain and geological features include two springs, several sinkholes, woodlands, wetlands and meadows.

The master plan ideas include improving the sports fields, adding and reconfiguring parking, adding more trees and landscaping, building new restrooms, developing a “greenway” for walkers along Beargrass Creek and adding a signature entrance off Whipps Mill.

The 14 sports fields are now laid out in “hodgepodge” fashion and need to be realigned, said Metro Parks spokeswoman Erika Nelson.

But perhaps foremost is improving accessibility, officials said. Plans call for new pathways between the park’s facilities as well as developing trails and other linkages to nearby small cities and neighborhoods such as Bellemeade, **Forest Green, Foxboro and areas of Lyndon.**

The desire is to improve the park’s “walkability” internally and “connectivity” off site, Nelson said.

(Page 2 of 2)

The public is invited to a meeting at 7 p.m. Aug. 21 at Lyndon City Hall, where Metro Parks officials will outline the master plan concepts developed for Sawyer Park. The plan was developed over the past year with a consultant’s help and after a series of meetings with park users and neighbors.

Metro Parks officials said they will refine the plan after getting final public comments and develop cost estimates for the improvements that are incorporated into the final plan. The recommendations will be phased in as available public and private money is identified, Metro Parks assistant director Marty Storch said.

Lentz said the association has raised about \$500,000 in the past several years that has been spent for new bleachers, dugouts and internal walkways. He said the association and its supporters, mainly Lyndon-area businesses, intend to continue raising money to implement elements of the master plan.

Lentz would like to see the proposed master-plan improvements phased in over five to 10 years, as money is raised.

Metro Councilman Jon Ackerson, a Republican whose 18th District includes Sawyer Park, provided \$55,000 from his discretionary account to pay for the master-plan work. It was used to hire a design consultant, Gresham Smith & Partners.

Sawyer “is a major metro park. It has very strong programs. We are trying to make it even more family-friendly, with more diverse uses. It has so much potential,” Ackerson said.

Tim Hawkins, a Lyndon resident who lives a mile or so from Sawyer, said the park means a lot to Lyndon. He said he is primarily “a hiker and a walker” and would like to see the park developed with more trees as well as improvements to the tennis courts and other facilities.

“We want to see a thriving, beautiful park. (Sawyer) is a cog in the machinery in the lifestyle of Lyndon.”

As an initial step to improve access, Louisville metro government developed a bike lane and sidewalks along Whipps Mill past the park. Plans call for extending the bike path to the north and to the east, along La Grange Road.

Storch acknowledged that “there is a tremendous amount of confusion” between A.B. Sawyer Park, which Metro Parks manages, and E.P. “Tom” Sawyer State Park, a Kentucky-owned urban park about two miles to the east.

E.P. Sawyer was a one-time Jefferson County judge-executive and the father of CBS News anchor Diane Sawyer.

A.B. Sawyer, a dairy company executive and civic leader, died in 1988 at age 99. He was known as “the grand champion of underprivileged children” for his work with juveniles at the old Ormsby Village children’s home. The home was located near the park that now bears his name. He served on the children’s home board for 40 years.

Storch said park officials plan to erect a plaque in A.B. Sawyer’s honor near the entrance to the park off Whipps Mill.

What’s next

A public meeting at 7 p.m. Aug. 21 at Lyndon City Hall, 515 Wood Road, will collect opinions on the proposed master plan for A.B. Sawyer Park’s development.