

Demands/Needs of East St. Louis

The population size of the city of East St. Louis has declined significantly in the last twenty years. Also, the demographics of the city have changed as shown in Appendix A. The percentage of elderly residents has stayed somewhat constant. The amount of children enrolled in school dropped dramatically between 1980 and 1990, but seems to have stayed fairly consistent since then.

Recent economic developments and initiatives are beginning to be reflected in the community. The population size appears to be holding steady and the household incomes have slightly increased as unemployment declines; some census tract household incomes are in the moderate bracket.

New developments such as the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center, new public library, new rail system, and promised school developments are significant elements in the revitalization of this community. Current recreational land space is adequate for a community of this size, but facility conditions need improvement. Particular attention should be devoted to athletic fields, including football, baseball, and soccer. The city has a very low number of football fields, soccer fields, and every baseball and softball field maintained by the park district is in need of repair.

Additionally, since there are many school aged children in this community efforts should be made to improve and replace broken and unsafe playground equipment. Many parks had equipment that will not meet current safety standards.

Ideally, additional programming for both children and the elderly is desirable. Together these two populations make up 50% of residents in the community. Currently the park district does not have the resources to provide such opportunities. Continued partnerships with the neighborhood schools, local organizations, and faith-based groups to develop programming at the recreational facilities are needed.

Limitations of this Report:

It is important to note that there are several limitations to this report. This report has focused primarily on East St. Louis Park District Facilities. While the report has included an updated list of closed school facilities and current school facilities on-site visits were not made to these facilities for current inventory assessments. It has been assumed that recreational acreage at school facilities has not changed since the 1980 assessment. Changes in facility conditions or renovations to existing equipment may have been made at the school facilities. These potential renovations/alterations are not cited in this report. Furthermore, inventory assessments have not been conducted at other locations in the city, including public housing recreational facilities and public facilities. Additional information about the park district and an assessment of community members recreational interests would be beneficial contributions to this report.