



Meeting Summary

The project stakeholders are individuals who represent a wide array of department interests including staff from departmental teams and membership groups. By facilitating one on one interviews and group discussions the project team was able to learn more about the community and the specific opportunities, and challenges impacting Richmond's Parks, Open Spaces and Recreational Programs.

On Wednesday March 11, 2020, the project consulting team facilitated five group discussions with representatives from Highland Golf Course, the Richmond Senior Center, the Maintenance and Operations team, the Recreation team, the Floral team, front office staff and City leaders and department heads. Each group met for one hour and discussed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the park system and the specific events and tasks that they are involved in on a daily basis.

A SWOT Analysis focuses on identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of a department, system or specific facility. SWOT can further be defined as:

- **Strengths-** Strengths are internal, positive attributes of your department and/or system. These are things that are within your control.
- **Weaknesses-** Weaknesses are negative factors that detract from your strengths. These are things that you might need to improve on to be competitive.
- **Opportunities-** Opportunities are external factors in your environment that are likely to contribute to your success.
- **Threats-** Threats are external factors that you have no control over. You may want to consider putting in place contingency plans for dealing with them as/ if they occur.

In addition to the comprehensive discussion on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, participants were also asked to identify specific big ideas for physical and/ or organizational improvements.

In order to provide a level of anonymity to the group, the findings of the discussions have been summarized and presented as a comprehensive group, rather than by individual.

1. Highland Lake Golf Course

In attendance at the meeting were Richmond Parks and Recreation Department staff, golf team leaders and Highland Golf Course members and volunteers.

STRENGTHS

1. Currently three high schools and one college team practice at Highland.
2. People care about the course. Many of the improvements have been done through donations.

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- a. There is a huge commitment to golf and the golf course here. There are people who work here that work more than 60-80 hours per week. This is a huge strength (membership, team, and staff).
3. Golf as a sport is flourishing within Richmond.
4. We have a great golf history here (golf championships). We have people in the pros that went through Richmond. We need to play on this, it's important. There's a lot of sentimental value here.
5. The restrooms and the new TVs are a win.
6. The new equipment is a win.
7. The First T program is very important in cultivating more youth getting involved in golf in Richmond.
8. People are saying that this is the best the golf course has looked for many years. The floral department has done an excellent job, and we would like to see the beautification continue out onto the golf course. Precedent would be the Indianapolis golf courses, where they have bird houses, and plants, and gazebos (Smock Golf Course, Indianapolis). It's like going on an environmental cruise and playing golf. This may help attract more women. The habitat areas are incredible.
9. Partnership with Richmond Stay and Play: To have the municipal golf course get involved in something like this and take the lead is incredible. Play the big three golf courses in Richmond. However, we need better communication.

WEAKNESSES

1. Some areas of the golf course need to be maintained and/ or improved.
2. The course has drainage issues that need to be addressed.
3. Limited areas for golf practice.
4. Need to level out tee boxes.
5. The cart road is a mess. There aren't enough people to take care of it. There needs to be a yearly clean-up where some of the dedicated members would be willing to help clean-up.
6. Limited number of staff to make improvements and maintain facilities.
7. Clubhouse restroom facilities, and parking lot need to be kept nice in order to make a good first impression for people visiting the golf course. It would be nice to restripe the parking lot.
8. Litter: There are cigarette butts EVERYWHERE. We could get some cigarette but cans. There's also a problem with litter (beer cans, tires, skids).

OPPORTUNITIES

1. The addition of practice areas would allow for additional players to utilize the course at once.
2. Market memberships to IU East to increase participation across City institutions.

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3. Build a stronger partnership with local high schools: The high schools and the college don't really help maintain the golf course. We've asked them to improve the driving range and put their brand on it, which would help the school look more professional. This is just the practice place of the girl's team, not the boy's team (they go to Liberty). If we update the driving range and put their brand on it, we may be able to get both teams here.
4. If improvements are made (practice area, pro shop etc.) there aren't any major competitors in the area.
5. There's a lot of grant money available in Richmond, but we need to reach out to allied partners to help.

THREATS

1. Richmond high school golf teams (boys specifically) do not practice within the City.
2. The golf course runs their equipment until its trash. When you have to replace everything, that's a big hit. The maintenance on the equipment when it gets older and you have to keep patching it gets very expensive. They need to put their equipment on a rotation to make the equipment safer and keep staff happy. It would save A LOT of money.
3. Can't apply to the same entities for different things, since the parks department is seen as a single entity.
4. Low wages: You aren't going to get anyone but young people and old people to work for this kind of money. Staff aren't working because they want the pay, but because they are dedicated to the golf course. It would help to increase pay.
5. Public perception: People perceive that the golf course isn't important to Richmond. They aren't getting the funding, even though a lot of the golf course revenue was going to the city for years.

HIGHLAND GOLF COURSE BIG IDEAS

1. **Golf Simulator:** In order to generate revenue in the winter, we need a golf simulator. One would be nice, two would be awesome. Winchester has one, and a lot of members from Highland Lake go up there and use it. There is a demand for it. The one thing that has to be done here for it is to raise the ceiling, in order to use it. This would promote junior golf, college golf, and recreational golf. This is a big step in the direction of the future and would update the golf course by offering another service that could be used.
2. **Expand the driving range facility:** It is used constantly, and we need new range balls, a concrete t-box with launching pads on it, and a bigger grass tee to accommodate with nets on both sides of the driving range to maintain supply, a ball machine and dispenser that accepts credit cards.
3. **Top Golf Style Facility:** We want a version of Top Golf that wouldn't be as elaborate, but we have the facility and it just needs improved upon. The driving range can't be open because it's too wet, and if we made some improvements it could be open.
4. **Winter Programming Opportunities:** We should model ourselves after Winchester, since they have business in all winter. There are a lot of guys that come out here in the winter that just

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enjoy being here, and they could be spending money on the golf simulator. This would boost revenue.

5. **Additional Retail/ Sales Opportunities:** Consider having more food and clothes out here to boost revenue.
6. **Course Expansion:** There's been talks of buying the land adjacent to put in a larger driving range, but land is expensive. Right now, you have to drive to the driving range and it makes it more difficult. If you could walk to it, it would be more convenient and generate more revenue.
7. **Increase youth participation:** We need to cultivate having more youth involved out here. This is the golfing future! This isn't a cheap sport, and it would be a great way to generate revenue. If we don't get the kids involved now, they won't play in the future. Make golf for youth fun.
 - a. Possible provide free passes to local students to visit the course and try golf. This could be a way in the off-season to get kids more active in golf. Charging for things is great, but we need to get youth involved.
8. **Wayfinding Signage:** We need to have a sign (on I-70 and/ or US 27) that shows the location/ path to the golf course. People are missing the turn because people don't know where we are. We are lacking advertising.
9. **Kitchen Improvements:** We desperately need to improve the food. We have done a ton of catering and food out here, and we are missing a ton of revenue out here by not having that. Just having a conveyor oven out here would make a huge difference.

10. Need additional lockers

2. Richmond Senior Center

In attendance at the meeting were Richmond Parks and Recreation Department staff, Richmond Senior Center Staff and Senior Center members.

STRENGTHS

1. The Senior Center and the widowed person service are two of the best kept secrets in Richmond. We need to let people in the community know that we are here.
2. Pickle Ball brings in a huge group of people that are very committed to the sport. Advertising on the Pickle Ball Facebook page would be helpful.
3. Our parks department is incredible.
4. There are so many wonderful programs here.
5. There are very few senior centers that have this kind of setting and these kinds of programs. It really is incredible.
6. There are so many people that value this place as part of their everyday lives.
7. We had over 35,000 bodies in the door everyday last year.

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8. The support from the council and the activity meetings that are held for the senior center go a long way in making sure things happen. Encouraging more people to get involved in the council would be helpful. We need younger involvement, ideas, etc.
9. Technology Tuesday is growing, where there is a volunteer who comes in and helps people with Apple and Android products.

WEAKNESSES

1. There are times that we could use more space. The things that we want to do in the gym, and the gym is not always available, so we are put in rooms where there really isn't enough space. There are scheduling conflicts, and there are a lot of exercise programs going on now. We need more gyms!
2. A lot of people in Richmond don't even know that it's here. The Winter Farmer's Market has brought increased awareness.
3. The horseshoe pit doesn't get a lot of use.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. There is some interest in the senior center being open Saturday and Sunday, because people are really lonely on the weekends. People want some place to go where there are other people. A lot of people come here for the socialization.
2. If we can play off the strengths here, we would be in great shape. There is a lot of talk that you can't be everything to everyone in your parks system, but this center does this for people 50 and over.

THREATS

1. There's been talk about there not being enough funding to keep the Senior Center going, and we want to make sure it stays and that it stays as good as it is.
2. There is a stigma associated with the senior center. People avoid the center just because they envision that it is for seniors. They think that people live here. People actually get offended if you mention that they should come out to the senior center.
3. The perception that this place should be self-sufficient isn't viable. We need some tax dollar help to maintain the building and programming.
4. We want to make sure the community understands that we are a service agency. We are here to serve people, not make money. However, there does need to be some improvements on engaging revenue.

RICHMOND SENIOR CENTER BIG IDEAS

1. **Continue to Offer Programs for Everyone:** We want to bring people in the door, and offer programs that keep them mentally and physically healthy. We try to offer programming for everyone, and there is a city bus line and paratransit that can get people here.
2. **Add Nursing Staff:** We want to try and have a nurse on staff, or someone here once a week to be able to ask questions. There is a nurse that comes in once a month that does blood pressure and blood glucose.

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3. **Increase Instructor Staff:** We need to have a way to have more fitness instructors, because fitness programs are incredibly popular here. We recently got a new yoga program, but the yoga instructor is having to be paid out of donations.
4. **Strengthen and Increase Partnerships:** We want to get involved with partners in order to get funding for additional programming, in particular fitness classes. Zumba would be a great option.
5. **Updating Branding and Marketing:** A name change would be awesome, and we are trying to land on the right thing. The main way the center is marketing is by word of mouth. Marketing is very limited, but the Winter Farmer's Market has been helpful in bringing people in (radio commercials).
 - a. There are commercials for Go Downtown, but there should be a Go to Your Parks commercial in order to get people there. If there was a commercial like this highlighting different things at different times, it would be very beneficial not only for the parks, but also for the senior center. People listen to the radio all the time, and it's a great way to advertise things going on.
6. **There needs to be some building updates:** We have a roof that leaks sometimes and in order to keep the center nice, we need to maintain it.
7. **There needs to be some signage to get here:** You can hardly read some of the signs. Some of the signage needs to be replaced.
 - a. We need signs pointing to things from the center of the city (i.e., senior center this way). Even informational signs would be helpful. Signs are cheap, compared to other forms of advertising.
8. **Expand Programs and Outings:** The senior center used to have trips with a bus where people could go as a group. The casino trips are popular (run by an outside company). The senior center bus broke down years ago and the program stopped, but there could be some renewed interest in these kinds of trips. Most of these trips were day trips, but you can see a lot of things in a day trip. Everyone looks forward to these kinds of trips. The church paid for the meals.
9. **Cafeteria Improvements:** The cafeteria needs to have more of a restaurant feel, rather than a cafeteria feel. More people would come here and participate in group meals if it were like this. Maybe having some speakers available and have a donation-based lunch. Whitewater Valley Technical Center in Connersville has something just like this, where updates and food were done by the students.
10. **New Programming Options:** Cooking classes, nutritional needs, and how to cook for one person.
11. **New Courts and Facilities:** Indoor pickle ball courts at the end of the building where the horseshoe pits are would be great. There aren't standard-size pickle ball courts here. It's fine for beginners who may not know that the courts are smaller, but for those who are enthusiasts they may choose to play elsewhere for this reason. There is no growth we can have in pickle ball right now (inside) because of this.
 - a. We need some outdoor equipment here where people could go bike (stationary), ellipticals, more things to concentrate on balance. Sit and stand things that could help with balance needs. (outdoor playgrounds for adults).

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3. Maintenance and Operations Team

In attendance at the meeting were Richmond Parks and Recreation Maintenance and Janitorial staff.

STRENGTHS

1. New shelters, decks, and ramps were done this past year.

WEAKNESSES

1. The reduction in staff is purely a result of funding. The department has lost a lot of money. There used to be coordinators of all types, but those positions are gone.
2. There needs to be a lot of things done where repairs have been made, but things really need to be replaced.
3. We don't have responsibilities that need to be done, so we can't have accountability. There is no structure when it comes to doing jobs. We are sending multiple people out to these sites and the jobs aren't getting done because no one is communicating what needs to be done.
4. The pool isn't making enough money to justify it being open. There is a consistent leak that can't be taken care of.
5. The maintenance crew has no say in what comes through the pipeline (new properties).
6. Some of the parks we have could use additional amenities. In example, glen miller and the reservoir could use a basketball court.
7. New bathrooms at the reservoir, and one built on springwood
8. Roads need milled down and repaved at all of the parks
9. Pond at glen miller needs dredged
10. Need new roofs
11. People just kind of expect things they don't really see the improvements that have been made. Most people just don't notice.

OPPORTUNITIES

None mentioned.

THREATS

1. The public doesn't realize how many parks that the city has. They don't realize that the park manages McBride Stadium, the pool, or the Senior Center.
2. There are some major parks that people don't realize were major parks because they fallen into disrepairs. There are situations where the soil is contaminated, where there are no bathrooms, where the adventure labs are sitting empty.
3. Seasonal staff isn't as easy to come by as they used to be. Most staff don't want to come work for minimal pay. Most of the time, they don't come back after the first year. It used to be all college students and they don't want to do that anymore.

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MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS TEAM BIG IDEAS

1. **Increase Staffing:** More staffing would be a major help, including maintenance. It's hard to maintain the parks when there aren't enough people to do it. In the last 20 years or more, there's been less and less staff, and more to maintain. We need to get back to maintaining what we have. We pick up all the maintenance for other departments.
2. **Maintenance Manager/ Department Head Needed:** There needs to be someone down at the maintenance department that can coordinate and knows a little bit about the maintenance things going on and can help coordinate things on jobs. If there was someone to delegate out the projects, that would be very helpful. Assign jobs to people to make sure that they're getting done, that people are taking care of things. Someone from the outside that can run maintenance and can answer to Denise and Jim. We need someone who can go out to job sites and see that everything's getting done. A WORKING maintenance supervisor. This would take a lot of the burden off of Denise and Jim too, so that they are dealing with one person, rather than ten different people.
3. **Inventory of Tools and Supplies:** We need to have a basic inventory of tools and supplies in general rather than spending time going to pick out supplies consistently. We need to have supplies on site before the crew gets there to make repairs. Also, having people consistently on the same job rather than getting pulled off to do other things.
4. **Process and Accountability:** Need to create a process that allows staff to check-in/check-out tools. Staff then needs to be held accountable to tools in their possession.
5. **Explore the Reduction of Park Property:** We need to sell off some of the parks, because we don't have the resources to take care of them. Especially some of the postage-stamp parks that are directly adjacent to backyards, etc.
6. **Minimize Gifts and Accepting Responsibility:** We shouldn't accept gifts that we can't take care of and maintain. No matter what you do, these "donated" properties are going to cost money that has to come from somewhere. Before these gifts or donations are accepted, there needs to be attention and thought put into how these things are going to be maintained. The park/city in general needs to learn how to say "no" and not just accept things because they are donated to you.
7. **Centralized Storage Pole Barn:** We have stuff everywhere, but if we had a centralized location it would make things easier, somewhere with stalls in it where we knew where everything was.
8. **New Equipment:** Need better mowers and trucks
9. **Increased Wages:** Parks department are making \$2-3 dollars less than other city staff. Eliminate divisions of staff and standardize across the board, the pay, to bring it up to the same level as other departments.

4. Recreation Team, Floral Team, Farmers Market Team and Front Office Staff

In attendance at the meeting were members of the recreation teams, the Farmers Market team, the Floral Team and front office staff.

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STRENGTHS

1. We are well-resourced with the backing of the department and the city, from a Farmer's Market perspective. They spend a lot of time on tasks that we don't have to since we are part of the parks department. The whole city is supporting what you are trying to do with community events and programs.
2. JUKO and the Farmer's Market are strengths. Educational garden sessions at the greenhouse have been very successful over the past year.

WEAKNESSES

3. Funding's been the biggest issue, because things have been cut, trimmed, and are gone. We have very basic utility fees left for the sports programs. Maintenance isn't happening anymore for these programs. In example, the fences around ball fields are deteriorating, there are fields that aren't used/can't be used due to the shape that they're in. With the continued downslope are funding, it's going to continue to get worse.
4. There are potential issues/ concerns with raising program fees. There's always issues with raising fees, because no one wants to pay more if they don't have to. Everything has to be approved when fees change. Will people attend if we charge more?
 - a. If JUKO is charged for, we won't get the funding or grants that we receive, and attendance will go down. Thus, costs won't be offset. JUKO is more of a service for the community, rather than making it about money.
5. The Farmer's Market struggles with their current location at the Senior Center. Even the Senior Center struggles with its location. It's difficult to get customers to come there. If it could be a more four-seasons space at Elstro Plaza, or somewhere more centralized, would be helpful. It also doesn't have the ambiance that the Farmer's Market wants to have. Looking for that town-center market feeling. The original plans for the plaza had a four-seasons pavilion at the end of the plaza, and then it was cut entirely. Something like putting a summer pavilion and having a four-seasons market nearby would be helpful.
 - a. The main thing right now is the Winter Market and making the market a year-round habit for people.
6. Looking at our schedule, we don't do much in the winter as far as active recreation. The closest place to do any type of ice skating is in Dayton.
7. Glen Miller is not friendly to walkers at all. You have to walk in the road. Having a dedicated walking area would be great. You could narrow the driving lanes and making them yield flow instead of two-way flow so that it is more focused on encouraging people to walk, rather than drive.
8. Budgets have been cut while the areas that we have to take care of has grown

OPPORTUNITIES

1. There is nothing outside of Earlham where there are places for people to play Ultimate Frisbee. There is grassy space, but there isn't really a field large enough of any kind. There is only one

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place to play soccer, and that is Freeman, which is heavily used. There aren't enough places to play.

2. Donations for outside sources will be needed for additional sports programming. There has been some voice given to intramural sports leagues, but it's all talk when there are no resources to do that.
3. There are potential opportunities to raise fees.
4. Removing the invasive species (honeysuckle) would allow people to walk through the woods.
5. Need better tree maintenance and pruning, and a more established tree program throughout the parks. The city has their own tree ordinance, and have a more specific park tree program is very necessary in long-term planning for the urban forest. Right now, our maintenance over trees is very reactive.
6. More walking spaces within the parks would be beneficial. Middlefork Reservoir would be a great place to have more trails. There are some places that have seen better days, and they could really be improved.
7. Having the city as a whole deciding when things are parks responsibility, and having a way to define that. That ultimately ends up falling to parks as things get beautified.

THREATS

1. We need to sell several parks because they aren't used by the public. We are just maintaining it.

RECREATION TEAM, FLORAL TEAM, FARMERS MARKET TEAM AND FRONT OFFICE STAFF BIG IDEAS

2. **Hire Dedicated Marketing Staff:** We do a lot of funding and sponsorships, and we have no one dedicated to that or marketing. It would really be beneficial to the parks to have a dedicated marketing and fundraising person, because people are too busy running programs to figure out funding. Social media and email marketing, television and radio, etc.
 - a. Need a better-managed marketing and communication program to make it more cohesive. Some people don't even know where the parks and facilities are, and just getting the word out.
 - b. To have that person however, will take more money and that's one thing that we don't have.
 - c. While having that person would cost money, having someone that could write grants might make up for that. Having more large donors would give us the opportunity to do more of things that we'd like to do.
3. **Having more educational programming:** Tree identification trails, information on pollinators, restored prairies, wetlands, and native plants, where you can go out and explore and be in nature, but there's still a learning component involved as well.
4. **Reduce or Minimize Lawn Mowing:** Every area that is a no mow area would save money on mowing gas and paying someone to mow.
5. **Prepare a Greenspace Management Plan:** To understand how we are handling our green spaces

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6. **Increase Partnerships:** Finding partners like the Nature Conservancy might potentially help fund doing installations of no-mow grasses
7. **Increase Sports Leagues:** It would be nice to get new leagues going and different demographics for leagues happening. There is nothing for like the 20-40 range, like kickball, things like that where people can go out and socialize and make new friends.
 - a. Volleyball League at Clear Creek, or disc-golf would be great
8. **Increase Marketing and Communication Efforts:** There's a lot of partners that do things using the parks, but more cohesive marketing and communication would be helpful to promote the events and make people more aware. Offering opportunities to do sign-ups through a central location to allow people a central location to find programs to do. Having better communication would be beneficial.
9. **Prepare a Maintenance Book and Encourage Block Adopters:** Having a maintenance book and block adopters for people living on the bike path downtown for people to take more ownership in how it looks. Since, historically, it's been park people taking care of it, they just expect them to. There are little things like that that would help park staff do their job. If they do want to help, they currently don't know what to do.
10. **Improvement Pedestrian Connections in Glen Miller:** Having a dedicated walking area would be great. You could narrow the driving lanes and making them yield flow instead of two-way flow so that it is more focused on encouraging people to walk, rather than drive.
11. **Create a Program/ Process to Identify Actual Costs:** We have no good way of knowing how much different issues are costing us. For example, we don't know how much time and money we are spending on vandalism, etc. Maybe a centralized work-order system would be beneficial. What type of job is this, how much time should be spent?
12. **Obtain Tree City USA Designation:** We want our Tree City USA back. We are very close to being there. There needs to be a public arbor day.

5. City Leaders and Department Heads

In attendance at the meeting were City leaders and staff from the City's Planning and Sanitation Departments.

STRENGTHS

1. Richmond has number-wise a lot of parks, but a few of them have significantly more amenities than others. There are several that are very much unbuilt. Scantland and Bicentennial Park don't necessarily appear as parks and are very different in nature than the other parks in the system. These parks don't have as many attractions as some of the other ones.
2. Glen Miller and Clear Creek are highly visible and are beautiful.
3. Richmond has one of the best availability of parks for a city of its size. They've been able to accomplish a lot over a long term.
4. The Farmer's Market has been incredible. Every weekend during the summer has been nothing but good experiences with the Farmer's Market.

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5. The parks department is exceptionally well-received by the community. The public has a lot less negativity towards the parks department than any other department. This is on social media and in the newspaper.
6. Parks leadership is one of the more active departments. They really want to achieve goals and get things accomplished. It's Denise's leadership that has created this kind of environment.

WEAKNESSES

1. There isn't really any sort of guidance that allows people to understand what the strengths are of the various parks.
2. We are totally missing the boat on community gardens. Underutilized parks could become a natural gathering place. One of the really important features is free water. Most people can come up with ways of getting plants in the ground, but if the city isn't supporting access to water, it's not going to happen. There has to be a gatekeeper, and paid staff oversight to define areas and make infrastructure work. With a local person who has experience, there's a whole generational and neighbor engagement that can come out of that.
3. The Winter Farmer's Market is a location issue. It's not convenient for access. There needs to be a central location.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. The inner connectivity of the parks as the loop fills in will be great for access.
2. Park variety and having neighborhood parks that people want to walk through and engage with is the biggest thing. People could really benefit from engaging with parks that have great programming.

THREATS

None mentioned.

BIG IDEAS FROM CITY LEADERS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS

1. **Increase Marketing Efforts:** Need to market programming to the community. There's no real guidance on how to access and where to access programs. One example would be pickle ball.
2. **Create a Comprehensive Inventory:** Having an inventory of all the services that are available would be helpful.
3. **Implement a Bikeshare:** Currently there's an issue of connectivity with the campuses. A local bikeshare could increase connectivity and park usage