



Responses to a Parks Questionnaire
(from the *Save Red Bank Central Park* Citizens' Group)
by the 2022 Candidates for the Red Bank, TN, Commission
September 2022

Side-by-Side Candidate Responses to Each Question

Question 3. What is your opinion about the merits of the City's current "10-minute Walk to a Park Initiative" compared with other Red Bank parks and recreation needs?

District 1 Candidates

Hollie Berry:

I am so proud of all five of our unanimous 2022 commission goals, including our 10-minute walk to a park initiative. The 10-minute walk initiative is a national movement headed by The Trust for Public Land and adopted by cities like ours across the nation. To make sure we serve all the needs of our community, I believe we need a robust park network that includes all six types of parks:

- A Regional park (a larger multi-use park like White Oak Park with playgrounds, a pavilion, and a dog park)
- Special-use parks (like the Norma Cagle Softball Fields, Skipper Fairbanks Recreational Complex, Red Bank Wrestling Center, Red Bank Pool, Red Bank Tennis & Pickleball Courts, Kids Corner Playground, Red Bank Community Center Playground)
- Urban ecology parks (open space and natural habitats, like Stringer's Ridge)
- Neighborhood pocket parks (small parks embedded in neighborhoods)
- Linear parks (greenways and blueways)
- A Signature park (a highly-visible destination park truly unique to its place)

As you can see from the list above, Red Bank excels in certain special-use park types like ballfields, and White Oak Park is a regional park to be proud of. At the same time however, we are lacking a signature park (the former Red Bank Middle School Property would be ideal for this!) as well as neighborhood pocket parks and linear parks. Diversifying our park network with these categories of parks we presently lack would be an incredibly efficient way to achieve our 10-minute walk goal. Working toward that initiative would by no means preclude the creation of other types of parks, whether linear parks to travel safely between parks, neighborhoods, or different areas of town or a signature park where we can all come together as a community and hold festivals and concerts. These varied park and community spaces work together to form a safe, enjoyable, and strong city where we can all thrive.

Dari Owens:

I see no specific issue with the initiative, and as with anything, we just simply need to do a cost-vs-benefit analysis, including all of our citizenry in the conversation.



[Owens, continued]

We have existing parks and recreational areas that do need attention as well.

The North end of Red Bank has no park, and has been developing quickly. It would be wise to see how we might bring in a public park for that area.

We have tennis courts behind the ball fields on White Oak that are in desperate need of repair, or even rebuilding.

The dog park at White Oak park is only lightly used because it has no shade, no seats, is frequently muddy, and feels like it's on an island by itself. We need to look into how to improve that experience for our citizens and their dogs.

District 3 Candidates

Jamie Fairbanks-Harvey:

My opinion about the “10-minute walk to a park initiative”: do constituents want more parks?

Lawrence Miller:

I am an enthusiastic supporter of the initiative as an aspirational goal for Red Bank. There are two questions that we will need to answer to make a sincere effort to launch this initiative in Red Bank:

- 1) How many people have access to a park within a 10-minute walk of home and how many do not?
- 2) How many new parks do we need to close that gap?

Given the fact that the City of Red Bank has a total area of 6.56 square miles (4,122 acres) and only thirty-six acres of parks and recreational facilities, it is obvious that we have a long way to go.

We will not get there through the City of Red Bank alone. To move incrementally towards a better number, we must be creative and opportunistic. Also, we will only make progress if we align ourselves with other government agencies, not-for-profit-organizations (including Red Bank churches), businesses, and property developers. The community must work to convince these stakeholders of the benefits that will come from more parks with more access.

There will be some opportunities for low-hanging fruit. But there are some significant obstacles. For one, Red Bank does not have an infrastructure that is conducive to walking. Our busiest thoroughfare, Dayton Boulevard, does not have enough sidewalks in spite of efforts by the City. More daunting is the near-complete lack of sidewalks in neighborhoods. Walking needs to be safe and some neighborhoods with minimal traffic at slow speeds may not need sidewalks to get to a nearby park.

We need to look for opportunities to create small “pocket parks” within neighborhoods. Opportunities will be there, but we must be ready to use all of the tools in our community tool belt.

Our community-wide planning process will encompass parks and the 10-minute Walk to a Park Initiative in a rational manner that has multiple opportunities for citizen input. I encourage all folks in Red Bank to become familiar with this process and weigh in with their ideas and energy.



At Large Candidates

Jeff Price:

The principal idea of the initiative is admirable, but executing this plan will be financially challenging to justify with competing priorities. Many of the citizens I have spoken with would prefer more sidewalks to access our current parks and amenities.

Hayes Wilkinson:

I'm 100% in support of the 10-minute walk to park initiative. Three-quarters of Red Bank residents do not have access to a park space within a 10-minute walk of their home. I'm especially concerned about park access for residents on the northern end of Red Bank, as there are no public parks north of Kids Corner Playground on Unaka St.

In addition to creating a central park and town center at the former middle school property, an efficient and effective way to expand accessibility to park spaces throughout the city could be to create "micro-parks" or "pocket parks". Micro-parks are typically less than an acre and can be created at a very low cost to the city. These tiny parks can feature any combination of neighborhood amenities like picnic areas, gazebos, benches, shade trees, or small playgrounds. Shaw Park in the Highland Park neighborhood in Chattanooga is a prime example. It's roughly 0.25 acres and features benches, some nice tree cover, and a playground that's easily accessible from the surrounding neighborhood.