



Wynne, Tomorrow

Nestled into the west face of an east Arkansas landmark known as Crowley's Ridge, Wynne is both a Mississippi Delta town and a town that's totally unique. With a strong, diversified economic base, a quality school system, and a safe and quiet quality of life; Wynne was one of the few communities in the Delta to see population growth in every census since 1900. However, in the last two decades and for the first time in its history, Wynne experienced a decline in population. This decline signaled a red flag to Wynne officials and led directly to the creation of a new quality of life initiative for the city.

In 2010, the Wynne City Council commissioned a master plan for Parks and Recreation. The plan called for an overhaul of the city's current recreational structure, the addition of multiple new parks and greenspaces, and directed special attention to downtown revitalization. Funding for the plan was achieved by passing a new and updated one-cent economic development sales tax that dedicated .375 cents to the new Parks and Recreation Commission. Years one through five of the new plan were adopted by the City Council in 2012 and work began immediately.

The first project on the agenda was the renovation of the City's sports complex. While work is still ongoing, the complex has seen updates to its parking and accessibility, with the addition of new roadways, sidewalks, trails, and storm water management. New lighting has been added for most fields that include aluminum poles and fixtures. The playing fields themselves have been modernized by replacing the dirt and fill with sporting clay surfaces and updating the irrigation and watering system. In addition, five new soccer fields were created in the northwest corner of the complex ranging in sizes to accommodate leagues of all ages. One of the final steps was adding or improving the concessions, pavilions, water fountains, picnic tables, benches, scoreboards, bleachers, and shade structures.

The second portion of the plan called for improvement to multiple parks and greenspaces throughout Wynne. While the details and layout of each differ, ultimately Cottonwood, EU Deshay, Malone St., and John Hayden parks were all impacted. Improvements included new play equipment, accessibility updates, landscaping, pavilion and picnic infrastructure, and drainage. To address the downtown revitalization aspects of the plan, a new farmers market pavilion was erected, and a new children's splash park was created. Also, a total redesign for the main thoroughfare, Merriman Street, was undertaken. The redesign is scheduled to begin construction in the Spring of 2019 and will be similar to Main Street in Little Rock. The new Merriman will feature new sidewalks, planted bulb-outs with storm water collection, porous pavers, redesigned one-way parking, and new gateway arch into the Historic Downtown District.

A final project that emerged during this time was part of the ARDOT's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. SRTS was a partnership between DOT, the Wynne School District, Wynne

Economic Development, the City of Wynne, and other partners to address neighborhood accessibility to the Wynne School District. The project's objectives were to create a safe and active transportation loop between the Primary, Intermediate and Junior High Schools, with a link to the High School. It was designed to promote active lifestyles for our students and the community, while reducing the vehicular congestion during drop off and pick up hours for the streets surrounding the schools. The project will be completed prior to Christmas of 2018 and has created a continuous two-mile loop of sidewalk, that when integrated with existing city sidewalks, connect every campus within the community.

In addition to the local sales tax funding, Wynne has received approximately \$1.25M in grant assistance from multiple state and federal agencies and has completed each project identified in the first five years of the plan. The next phase of projects is being discussed and the community is very excited to see what Wynne looks like tomorrow.

