

PARKS & RECREATION STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN: 2019-2028

TOWN OF WAXHAW



JUNE 11, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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Recreation programs and special events contribute to the quality of life for Waxhaw residents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For a relatively small town, Waxhaw has a good parks and recreation department, considering the department was only formed in 2015, and offers recreation opportunities that are not often found in communities its size. The citizens of Waxhaw enjoy a very high standard of community events and parks and recreational programs. Likewise, residents living outside of Waxhaw are benefiting from these outstanding facilities and programs. With these types of facilities, it is obvious that the Town's Parks and Recreation Department is serving citizens that live outside the town limits.

However, Waxhaw is somewhat lacking for a municipality of its size and only offers about 62 acres of developed recreational space. Based on National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) standards, the typical park and recreation department provides one park for every 2,114 residents served, with just over 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This translates to the need for 152 acres of parkland; the need for 90 additional acres to meet the 2019 demand and another 57 acres to meet the projected demand for 2028. The good news is that Waxhaw can start to catch up fast by beginning to develop some of the 95 acres the Town currently controls and has already dedicated as future recreational open space.

The Town of Waxhaw has long recognized the value of parks and recreation to the quality of life in a community. The Town established an Events Division in 2005 which oversaw the Town's first recreation offerings through community events. To that end, the Town developed its first Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Master Plan in 2012. That plan recommended the formation of a formal parks and recreation department which occurred in 2015. Today, the Department offers citizens of Waxhaw outdoor recreation facilities through six neighborhood, community and special use parks and greenway segments covering over 62 acres of land. Existing facilities provide a good variety of recreational experiences (see inventory sheets) including two indoor community spaces (Duncan McDonald House and The Meeting Place). The Department currently operates under the following Vision and Mission Statements:

Vision – “Professional park facilities, recreational opportunities and quality of life initiatives that unmistakably reflect the unique character of Waxhaw.”

Mission – “To provide recreational, educational and cultural opportunities that promote a healthy lifestyle and excellent quality of life in a safe environment for citizens of all ages, means and abilities.”

In 2012, the town of Waxhaw completed their first Parks and Recreation Master Plan to provide the framework for the growth of parks and recreation facilities for the residents of Waxhaw. The Town has accomplished some of the recommendations of the 2012 plan, but there are still improvements needed for parks and recreation facilities in the community.

The purpose of this master plan is to identify changes that have occurred in the years since the previous plan, work with citizens to develop a recreational needs analysis for the town and provide recommendations on park and recreation facility needs based on those needs.

The most important aspect of this planning study is identifying the public's desire for park and recreational facilities. The public was offered the opportunity to participate in the planning effort through:

- Four public workshops to discuss community recreational needs
- Discussions with town staff
- Discussions with the Town Board and Parks, Cultural & Recreation Advisory Committee
- A community-wide survey

From the community-wide survey, we learned the following:

- High satisfaction ratings for parks, facilities and programs
- Lack of awareness is top barrier to usage of programs/facilities
- The highest priorities for facilities include:
 - Walking, biking and fitness trails
 - Greenway trail system
 - Indoor aquatic facility
 - Splash pad/water park
 - Dog Park
- The highest priorities for programs include:
 - Adult fitness and wellness programs
 - Workshops (CPR, babysitting, cooking, safety, etc.)
 - Seniors/Adults programs 50+
 - Outdoor challenge/adventure course
- There's strong support for making improvements to the parks and recreation system

Based on this input, standards for future park development have been reviewed, compared with other municipalities of similar size and set for the town of Waxhaw.

With the public's desires for park and recreation facilities identified, demographic and population data is reviewed. Based on planning/census projections, the service area population for the Department has been determined to be 15,200, with a small increase in population over the next ten years (20,900).

By overlaying the standards for park development with the current and expected population growth, a needs assessment has been developed.

Park & Recreation Facility Needs

As described in Appendix D and discussed in Section Four: Recreation Standards and Needs Assessment, a park system is typically comprised of eight park types. These park types include:

- Mini Parks
- Civic Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- District Parks
- Regional Parks
- Greenways
- Unique/Special Facilities

Each of these park types provide recreation opportunities that are needed by residents. A variety of public and private agencies often play a role in providing a well-rounded compliment of park and recreation facilities.

As a small municipal Department, the Waxhaw Parks and Recreation Department holds responsibility for providing approximately half of these park types that make up this system.

The Town has significantly improved the facilities and programs offered by the Department over the past few years as well as acquired additional land on which to develop new parks and extend the greenways. However, there are still improvements to be made; as identified in this study's needs assessment. These needs are identified based on the following park types:

Mini Parks

Mini parks are the smallest of park types. They typically range in size from one-half to three acres and provide a limited range of activities (playgrounds, picnic shelters, benches, etc.). Mini parks are usually found in municipal settings. Currently, the Department has two parks in this park classification (David G. Barnes Children's Park and

Dare Steele Memorial Garden).

The national trend has moved away from the development of mini parks. Their small size and limited facilities often limit their recreational value. Likewise, their small size and geographic distribution often make maintenance expensive. Most agencies do not focus park development dollars on mini parks, but instead focus on the development of neighborhood and community parks.

While the national trend has been away from development of these smaller parks, there are opportunities where Mini Parks could provide important civic spaces throughout the community. Another opportunity for building a Mini Park would be the development of a small Town owned property in Wysacky Park. Likewise, development of Mini Parks could be achieved through the UDO by requiring developers of residential communities to provide these small parks in new communities. With the potential development of the Horton property, David G. Barnes Children's Park would be absorbed into the new Downtown Park and cease to be a Mini Park.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks play an important role in providing both active and passive recreation in most municipal park systems. These parks, usually in the 5-10 acre range, are large enough to include both active and passive recreation opportunities. Most Community Parks also serve as a Neighborhood Park to those citizens living within a mile radius.

The citizens of Waxhaw are currently being served by one Neighborhood Park, Town Creek Park on 19 acres of parkland. A bit larger by typical Neighborhood Park standards, Town Creek Park had very limited recreational facilities (open space and trailhead parking) until recently with the addition of a shelter and play equipment. Since Neighborhood Parks typically serve as the primary building block of most municipal park systems, one Neighborhood Park is not adequate to serve the 15,200 people living in Waxhaw.

Utilizing a relatively conservative level of service standard for Neighborhood Parks (2 acres per 1,000 people), there is a need for an additional ± 10 acres of Neighborhood Parkland in Waxhaw. Typically, Neighborhood Parks are 5-10 acres; preferably in the 6-8 acre range. That would indicate a need for at least one or two additional Neighborhood Parks located equitably within the Town. Based on the service radius of the Town's existing parks, there are several neighborhoods that are underserved by

Neighborhood Parks.

In the future, the Town should acquire land and develop Site Specific Master Plans for new Neighborhood Parks with an emphasis on expanding facilities at Town Creek Park.

Community Parks

Community Parks are an important component in most municipal park systems. These parks are usually large enough (30-50 acres) to provide both valuable active recreation opportunities and preservation of undeveloped open space and passive recreation areas.

There is one park in Waxhaw that is currently serving as a Community Park. H.C. Nesbit Park remains the most popular park in Waxhaw, yet it is underdeveloped for the population it serves. While improvements are underway to add restrooms and concessions, additional master planning should occur to address accessible circulation, lighting, shade structures and play equipment, at a minimum.

Based on input received during the public engagement process, there is a need for expansion of Community Parks. Utilizing a standard of 5 acres of Community Parkland for every 1,000 people in the service population, there is a need for 35-40 additional acres of Community Parkland. Based on this need, the Town should look for opportunities to develop the 34-acre tract on Waxhaw-Marvin Road as their second Community Park. A Site Specific Master Plan should be developed for this undeveloped tract.

District Parks

District Parks are another large park type often provided by county agencies or larger municipalities. These parks are typically in the 100-acre range, and provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities.

The closest District parks to Waxhaw are Colonel Francis Beatty Park in Charlotte and Jesse Helms Park in Monroe. Both parks are slightly higher in acreage leaning towards regional park status, but offer more active recreation opportunities than the regional offerings listed above. Both parks are a bit distant from Waxhaw, so it could be noted that there are no district parks in close proximity to Waxhaw and serving Waxhaw residents.

The Town should be open to collaborating with Union County in the development of a District Park proximate to Waxhaw if that opportunity should present itself in the future.

Regional Parks

Regional Parks are large parks that have a service area that cover an entire county or several counties. These large parks are predominately passive and are typically provided by large municipalities, counties, or state agencies.

The citizens of Waxhaw are currently served by one State Park (Andrew Jackson) and one County regional park (Cane Creek) that are within an easy drive. These two parks provide a wide range of low impact recreation opportunities including hiking, biking, camping, picnicking, fishing, equestrian trails, environmental education, wildlife/bird observation, etc. In addition to these outdoor recreation opportunities, these two parks also offer visitor and nature centers for nature study and wildlife appreciation.

Andrew Jackson State Park and Cane Creek Park provide excellent large scale parks for Waxhaw residents. In addition to these two parks, the Catawba River Blueway and Anne Springs Close Greenway, also in South Carolina, are also within an easy drive of the town. Visitors to these amenities can enjoy a wide variety of low impact outdoor recreational experience.

Special Use Facilities

In addition to these basic park types, well developed park systems also provide their constituents with a variety of specialized facilities. During the public input process, much attention was given to the importance (and need) of several special use facilities. These facilities include: Waxhaw Sk8 Park, The Meeting Place, Duncan McDonald House and the Community Corner/Water Tower.

Greenways

Greenways are typically off-road trails that meander through neighborhoods and natural areas providing transportation corridors and recreational opportunities for walkers, joggers, roller bladders, and cyclists. The trail surface can either be natural or paved. Paved trails are normally eight to ten feet in width. Natural surface trail widths can vary based on conditions. In addition to providing environmental protection and recreation opportunities, greenways and bike trails can produce economic development. The community's desire for the development of walking trails, as well as the preservation of public open space, was expressed in the survey and at the public workshops. The Town, in coordination with Lancaster County has begun the development of Twelve Mile Creek Greenway which currently is the Town's most popular recreation facility. Further extension of this greenway should be an immediate focus not only in

procurement of land, but design and implementation of trail.

Renovation & Expansion of Existing Parks

There is a need to complete, improve and expand facilities and infrastructure at several of the Town's existing parks. Important renovation projects which should be considered include:

- Improvements to/completion of H.C. Nesbit Park
- Improvements to Town Creek Park
- Improvements and expansion to David G. Barnes Children's Park
- Improvements to Sk8 Park
- Extension of the Twelve Mile Creek Greenway

As noted in previous sections, master plans should be developed for all of the existing parks and future parks serving Town residents. Site Specific Master Plans should be developed for each of the Town's existing parks. Priority should be placed on the following parks:

- H.C. Nesbit Park
- Town Creek Park
- David G. Barnes Children's Park (with the Horton Property)
- 34-acre tract on Waxhaw-Marvin Road

Two areas of Waxhaw currently lack parks or recreation opportunities on both the public side as well as the private side within new neighborhood development. These recreational deserts occur in the northeast area (defined as the area bounded by NC 16, Waxhaw Indian Trail Road and Main Street) and the southern area (defined as the area bounded by Rehobeth Road, Sims Road, Old Providence Road and the Southern Waxhaw Parkway corridor). Waxhaw should seek land opportunities in these two quadrants for future park development.

The Capital Improvements Plan on Tables 5-1 and 5-2 includes budgets for potential renovations, completions and expansions of existing parks.

Recommended Priority Projects

Recognizing that this is a vision plan for a community-wide park system, Department staff and elected officials must prioritize the recommendations in this document based on the public's input and staff review. The following park development and facility upgrades and maintenance initiatives should also be considered in the recommended priorities in the next 10 years:

- Completion of HC Nesbit Park
- Development of phase 1 of the Horton Property/David Barnes Park Expansion
- Construction of Waxhaw Athletic Fields and support facilities
- Master planning and site preparation for the Waxhaw-Marvin Rd Tract; a phase one development
- Completion of Town Creek Park
- Land Acquisition for the Waxhaw Recreation/Community Center
- Development of a Splash Pad
- Assess safety and security measures for each facility; address any basic policies
- Seek land/opportunities for park development in the northeast area as well as southern Waxhaw

Based on discussions with staff and review of the public input received, park development and facility upgrades/maintenance initiatives could be envisioned in potential phases as follows:

Town Creek Park- Currently, there is a playground, picnic shelter, picnic tables, sensory garden, portable toilets, multi-purpose athletic field, it serves as a trail head for the Carolina Thread Trail.

Phase 2 – install security cameras, lighting, connection of Thread Trail from Nesbit Park

Phase 3 – repave trail, fix drainage, field repair

Phase 4 – install water and sewer lines to enable installation of a restroom facility

Phase 5 – install restroom facilities; additional parking to be added with scheduled bridge replacement

H.C. Nesbit Park - Currently, there are 4 irrigated baseball diamonds with bleacher seating, 2 baseball diamonds have permanent lighting. There are a total of 6 multi-use fields, with 2 fields having permanent lighting. 3 of the fields are regulated for soccer. The other 3 fields are not regulated, but are used for soccer. It has a trail head for the Carolina Thread Trail with a small parking area for the connection and trails. Construction on concession stand

and restrooms is being completed.

Phase 2 – add ADA sidewalks, toppers for fences

Phase 3 – replace gravel, improve parking lot, repair infrastructure; netting for fly balls

Phase 4 – add playground, basic field improvements, toppers for fences, lights

SK8 Park – Currently, offers a half-pipe, quarter-pipe, decking, rails, ramps, a bowl and more. The department is currently in the process of making upgrades and renovations with the aid of a grant.

Phase 1 - new bleacher seats currently in place, erosion and a shade structure; conduct assessment of all elements, including circulation

Phase 2 – repair structures, install additional elements as determined by the assessment

Phase 3 – consider purchase of additional property for expansion

Community Corner / Water Tower – Currently this lot provides an open event space along with an urban garden and has been prominently discussed for other potential considerations in the ULI report for downtown Waxhaw as a park/recreation facility.

Phase 1 – If remaining as a recreation space construct stage, provide shade elements, lights, restrooms

David G. Barnes Childrens Park / Horton Property-

Currently, there are 2 playgrounds, one picnic shelter, walkways, benches and restrooms

Phase 1– Develop 1st Phase of Park master plan; roads, parking

Phase 2 - 2nd Phase of Park master plan

Phase 2 – Street infrastructure, Church Street

Phase 3 – 3rd Phase of Park master plan(final)

Waxhaw Athletic Fields - Plans and engineering drawings have been developed for project.

Phase 1 - construction of fields, restroom/shelter and parking

Phase 2 - pedestrian bridge over 12 Mile Creek and connect to the Carolina Thread trail

Waxhaw-Marvin Rd / 34 Acres -

Phase 1 - Clear off all safety hazards & obtain any environmental permits; develop site master plan for property; determine phasing

Phase 2 – Design and develop phase one of the master plan

Phase 3 – Develop phase two of the master plan

Kensington / Cureton Pkwy land -

Phase 1 - Clear off all safety hazards & obtain any environmental permits

Phase 2 - Work with Quellan & Cureton Neighborhood on Footbridge to connect over a feeder of 12 Mile Creek. Designated public parking in each neighborhood.

Phase 3 - Link trail to Carolina Thread Trail at Waxhaw Fields and to new neighborhood Lindsey Meadows

Waxhaw - Monroe Rd. / 2 acres:

Phase 1 – Develop plan and secure funding for potential development of a dog park

Phase 2 – Develop dog park and support facilities

Wysacky Park:

Phase 1 – Develop plan, secure funding for potential development of a Mini-Park

The Green:

Phase 1 – Assess and master plan for enhancement and extension of the greenway and facilities

Joint Use Opportunities/Partnerships

Partnerships are a relatively recent method of sharing funding resources to provide services. These partnerships can be formed with a wide variety of other public or private agencies. Many times the partners are two or more government agencies such as Union or Lancaster County for which partnering has already occurred for programming and the extension of Twelve Mile Creek Greenway, but can also be private entities such as the Carolina Thread Trail for Twelve Mile Creek Greenway and the Waxhaw Athletic Association (WAA) like at H.C. Nesbit Park and the YMCA for the new athletic fields to be constructed in the next few years. Through these partnerships, the Department receives direct benefit in either facility use, programming assistance, or volunteer hours. All of these benefits add value and help offset cost; thus creating earned income. This earned income requires both agencies to have common visions, values, and goals for the partnership to be successful.

Role of the Private Sector

The private sector provides recreation facilities and programs that the Department and public sector are unable to offer. These facilities can include golf courses, private swim clubs, tennis clubs, and private athletic associations and complexes. When supplied by the private sector, the demand for public development of these facilities is significantly reduced.

Land development is another area in which the private sector can assist in the provision of parks and recreation facilities. Land developers should be responsible for the dedication of open space as required by land development codes. The land development process provides an excellent opportunity to gain additional land for natural area preservation and greenway development.

Capital Improvement Program

An important component of the planning process is to identify the recreational needs of the community and then establish a budget for developing the facilities to meet those needs.

The Capital Improvement Plan for the acquisition, renovation/expansion, and development of parks for the planning period was prepared with input from department staff, the Parks and Recreation Steering Committee, and public involvement. All of the proposed costs are projected from 2019 dollar values. The capital improvement costs include funds for land acquisition, building construction, site preparation, site utilities, access, and parking along with renovation and significant maintenance improvements. The Capital Improvement Plan also includes estimated planning and design fees. It should be noted the capital cost shown in this plan are order of magnitude cost. The budget figures are not based on detailed plans, but instead are based on typical cost for the recreational facilities listed.

Tables 5-1 and 5-2: Capital Improvement Plan shows the costs associated with the capital improvement program for five and ten year planning periods. The table reflects the proposals and recommendations as outlined in Sections Four and Five of this Master Plan.

Recognizing the significance of this capital improvements program to the Department's budget, Section Five reviews key funding/revenue sources that can be used to finance some of the capital improvements.

The following document identifies current and future park and recreation facility needs, and offers recommendations for meeting those needs. Like any planning document, this report is intended as a general guide to elected officials and department staff. It is anticipated that this document will be tweaked and changed to meet community needs/circumstances.

Likewise, acceptance of this document by elected officials does not imply an approval of funding for

any improvements. Instead, acceptance of this plan simply acknowledges the report and the hope that recommendations from this report will be used in incremental decisions regarding parks and recreation in the future.

Master Plan Funding Strategy

This Master Plan identifies a Vision Plan for park development for the Town's Parks and Recreation Department. It is understood that not all of the recommendations will be acted upon over the next decade. Elected officials will ultimately have to prioritize the steps they will take to meet some of these park and recreation needs.

To assist with the prioritization, the following items should be considered by both Town Staff and the elected officials:

- Clearly delineate capital expenses vs. operational expenses.
- Identify any additional staff requirements as a result of proposed projects.
- Identify and evaluate areas of future development
- Prepare potential risk assessments associated with all elements.
- Prepare proforma and cost benefit analysis demonstrating each project's value to Waxhaw.
- Revenue sources must be identified and verified
 - Projected tax base growth, Land sales, User fees, Partnerships, Sponsors, Grants, General Fund, Bond Referenda, etc.
- Project timelines for each project and tasks involved.
- Identify the degree of difficulty involved for each project.
- Indicate the apparent "ripeness" of each project.
- Demonstrate the Public's interest (as expressed in our surveys) for each project / element.

It will require a combination of revenue sources to accomplish the recommendations of the Master Plan.



Table 5-1
Waxhaw Parks & Recreation Department
Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan
Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) (10 Years)

<u>Capital Improvement & Land Acquisition</u>	<u>10-Year Total</u>	<u>2019-2023</u>	<u>2024-2028</u>
Existing Parks Renovations/Improvements			
HC Nesbit Park	\$675,000	\$675,000	\$0
Town Creek Park	\$375,000	\$375,000	\$0
David G. Barnes Children's Park	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	\$115,000	<u>\$115,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Renovations/Improvements Total	\$1,265,000	\$1,265,000	\$0
Land Acquisition			
Mini Parks	\$180,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
Neighborhood & Community Parks	\$2,250,000	\$1,250,000	\$1,000,000
Waxhaw Sk8 Park Expansion	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$0
David Barnes Childrens Park	\$400,000	<u>\$400,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Land Acquisition Total	\$2,980,000	\$1,890,000	\$1,090,000
Park/Facility Development			
New Mini Park (Wysacky Park)	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$0
New Neighborhood Park (Horton Property)	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$0
New Neighborhood Park (Waxhaw Athletic Fields)	\$3,200,000	\$3,200,000	\$0
New Community Park (Waxhaw-Marvin 34 AC)	\$1,800,000	\$1,150,000	\$650,000
New Community Center	\$6,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$2,000,000
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$1,609,000</u>	<u>\$1,344,000</u>	<u>\$265,000</u>
Park/Facility Development Total	\$17,699,000	\$14,784,000	\$2,915,000
Greenway Development			
Twelve Mile Creek Greenway	\$1,000,000	\$750,000	\$200,000
"The Green"	\$1,000,000	\$750,000	\$250,000
Kensington Cureton Pkwy Land	\$275,000	\$275,000	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$222,500</u>	<u>\$177,500</u>	<u>\$45,000</u>
Greenway Development Total	\$2,447,500	\$1,952,500	\$495,000
Special Use Facilities			
New Dog Park (Waxhaw- Monroe 2AC)	\$180,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
New Splash Pad	\$1,150,000	\$650,000	\$500,000
Community Corner/Water Tower	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$0
Waxhaw Sk8 Park	\$275,000	\$275,000	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$205,500</u>	<u>\$146,500</u>	<u>\$59,000</u>
Special Use Facilities Total	\$2,260,500	\$1,611,500	\$649,000
Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost	\$26,652,000	\$21,503,000	\$5,149,000

**Table 5-2
Waxhaw Parks & Recreation Department
Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan
Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) (5 Years)**

<u>Capital Improvement & Land Acquisition</u>	<u>5-Year Total</u>	<u>FY 19-20</u>	<u>FY 20-21</u>	<u>FY 21-22</u>	<u>FY 22-23</u>	<u>FY 23-24</u>
Existing Parks Renovations/Improvements						
HC Nesbit Park	\$675,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$125,000	\$450,000	\$0
Town Creek Park	\$375,000	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$125,000	\$0	\$0
David G. Barnes Children's Park (See also Horton Prop.	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$115,000</u>	<u>\$30,000</u>	<u>\$10,000</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>	<u>\$50,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Renovations/Improvements Total	\$1,265,000	\$330,000	\$110,000	\$275,000	\$550,000	\$0
Land Acquisition						
Mini Park	\$90,000	\$0	\$90,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Neighborhood & Community Park	\$1,250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Waxhaw Sk8 Park Expansion	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	\$0	\$0
David Barnes Children's Park	\$400,000	<u>\$200,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$200,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Land Acquisition Total	\$1,890,000	\$450,000	\$340,000	\$600,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Park/Facility Development						
New Mini Park (Wysacky Park)	\$90,000	\$0	\$0	\$90,000	\$0	\$0
New Neighborhood Park (Horton Property)	\$5,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,500,000
New Neighborhood Park (Waxhaw Athletic Fields)	\$3,200,000	\$0	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$200,000	\$0
New Community Park (Waxhaw-Marvin 34 AC)	\$1,150,000	\$100,000	\$700,000	\$0	\$350,000	\$0
New Community Center	\$4,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000,000	\$0	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$1,344,000</u>	<u>\$160,000</u>	<u>\$370,000</u>	<u>\$509,000</u>	<u>\$155,000</u>	<u>\$150,000</u>
Park/Facility Development Total	\$14,784,000	\$1,760,000	\$4,070,000	\$5,599,000	\$1,705,000	\$1,650,000
Greenway Development						
Twelve Mile Creek Greenway	\$750,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
"The Green"	\$750,000	\$0	\$500,000	\$0	\$250,000	\$0
Kensington Cureton Pkwy Land	\$275,000	\$0	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$177,500</u>	<u>\$15,000</u>	<u>\$72,500</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>	<u>\$50,000</u>	<u>\$15,000</u>
Greenway Development Total	\$1,952,500	\$165,000	\$797,500	\$275,000	\$550,000	\$165,000
Special Use Facilities						
New Dog Park (Waxhaw- Monroe 2AC)	\$90,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$80,000	\$0	\$0
New Splash Pad	\$650,000	\$0	\$500,000	\$150,000	\$0	\$0
Community Corner/Water Tower	\$450,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$450,000	\$0
Waxhaw Sk8 Park	\$275,000	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	\$0	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$146,500</u>	<u>\$5,000</u>	<u>\$58,500</u>	<u>\$38,000</u>	<u>\$45,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Special Use Facilities Total	\$1,611,500	\$55,000	\$643,500	\$418,000	\$495,000	\$0
Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost	\$21,503,000	\$2,760,000	\$5,961,000	\$7,167,000	\$3,550,000	\$2,065,000



The Waxhaw Sk8 Park is a popular recreational amenity located in downtown Waxhaw.

SECTION ONE INVENTORY

Introduction

The first step in the master planning process is to inventory and assess the parks and recreation facilities as well as an inventory of current programming that are currently serving the citizens of Waxhaw. In this time of continuing economic challenge and limited budgets, it is extremely important to utilize existing facilities to their fullest potential. This section identifies the existing parks found in the town, categorizes each park into a classification based on size/function, and inventories the existing facilities found in each park.

For a relatively small town, Waxhaw has a good parks and recreation department, considering the department was only formed in 2015, and offers recreation opportunities that are not often found in communities its size. The citizens of Waxhaw enjoy a very high standard of community events and parks and recreational programs. Likewise, residents living outside of Waxhaw are benefiting from these outstanding facilities and programs. With these types of facilities, it is obvious that the Town's Parks and Recreation Department is serving citizens that live outside the town limits.

However, Waxhaw is somewhat lacking for a municipality of its size and only offers about 62 acres of developed recreational space. Based on National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) standards, the typical park and recreation department provides one park for every 2,114 residents served, with just over 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This translates to the need for 152 acres of parkland; the need for 90 additional acres to meet the 2019 demand and another 57 acres to meet the projected demand for 2028. The good news is that Waxhaw can start to catch up fast by beginning to develop some of the 95 acres the Town currently controls and has already dedicated as future recreational open space.

Union County offers very limited facilities that currently serve Waxhaw residents. While the County's Recreation and Parks Department provides valuable facilities and programs to many of the county's unincorporated areas, few of these programs and facilities are focused on citizens of Waxhaw or in close proximity. While many smaller communities in North Carolina can rely on their County agencies to provide larger parks (sports complexes or large passive parks), Waxhaw must rely primarily on its own facilities as it provides its citizens with parks and recreation facilities.

In addition to municipal and county parks and recreation facilities, Union County Schools has several school campuses (a high school, a middle school and two elementary schools) that serve Waxhaw. These school campuses offer indoor and outdoor recreational facilities that could be used for public recreation. While joint-use agreements for these schools are not currently in place, it is important to recognize the potential value of these facilities for public recreation.



Town Creek Park

Finally, the private sector offers recreational activities throughout the Town and within the region. These private sector options include golf courses, private swim clubs and residential amenity areas operated by homeowner’s associations. These private recreation opportunities are an important component in meeting recreational needs of town residents.

Programming Inventory

In addition to facilities, Waxhaw Parks & Recreation continues to offer an expanding list of recreational programming for all ages to enjoy. With limited Town owned facilities, the Department currently relies on other community partners to host as well as to instruct on some programs and events. The listing of programming and events changes from quarter to quarter, but for the Winter-Spring 2019 Program Guide includes:

Youth Programs (ages 6-12) (2nd Wednesdays, 4-6PM)

- Learn to Draw a Cartoon Face
- Creating Simulations, Animations & Visual Effects
- Paint the Community Mural
- The Secret of Magic with Arty the Clown
- Clown Faces and Balloon Twisting

Teen Nights (ages 12-18) (4th Thursdays, 6-8PM)

- Creating with Digital Electronics
- Preparing Meals for Yourself
- Create a Beautiful Succulent Arrangement
- “Fido I Said Sit” Dog Training Class
- Self Defense for Teens

Adult Programs (age 18+)

- Adult Health/Wellness – Adult Boot Camp (Tuesdays, 6:45PM, Thursdays, 10AM), Community Fitness (Wednesdays, 6:30PM, Fridays, 10:30AM)
- Adult Night Outs (Last Monday of the Month, 7-9PM) – Bring Home the Bacon, Freshen Your Door for Spring, Create a Beautiful Springtime Bouquet, Stranger Danger Awareness and Self defense

Senior Programs (age 55+)

- Senior Fitness (Tuesdays, 10AM, Thursdays, 1PM) - Functional Boot Camp for Seniors, Senior Fit Club
- Senior Trips – Harrah’s Cherokee Casino, Catawba Queen Sightseeing Tour
- Senior Coffee Hours (1st & 3rd Thursdays, 10AM) – Advance care Plans and Directives, Mixed Media Canvas Painting, Back & Spinal Health, Fused Glass, Waxhaw History

As more facilities are developed, the Town will be able to offer more programming.



H.C. Nesbit Park



Duncan McDonald House



Waxhaw Fright Night

Fun Days in the Park (Every Wednesday, June-August)

- Waxhaw “Rocks” Day
- Fairy Trail Day
- Backyard Games

Sports Programs (in partnerships with the Waxhaw Athletic Association)

- Spring/Fall Sports – Baseball, Girls Softball, Adult Slow-Pitch Softball, Soccer
- Winter Sports – Basketball, Cheer, Flag Football

Events, Family Nights, Parades & Patriotic Ceremonies

- Events
 - Kaleidoscope Fest/Taste of Waxhaw (3rd Saturday in May)
 - Autumn Treasures Grill’n & Chill’n BBQ Cook-off (2nd Weekend in October)
 - Fright Night (Saturday before Halloween)
 - Holiday Festival of Lights (1st Saturday in December)
- Family Nights
 - Jammin’ by the Tracks Concert Series (1st Friday of the Month from May-September)
 - Movies Under the Water Tower (April & November)
 - SK8 Event: Blue Light Skate After Dark



Parades

Parades

- Independence Day Parade
- Waxhaw Christmas Parade (2nd Sunday of December)

Ceremonies

- Memorial Day, Patriot Day, Veterans Day, Wreaths Across America, Menorah Lighting Ceremony

This section identifies the existing parks and recreation facilities currently serving the citizens of Waxhaw as well as undeveloped parcels the Town currently owns that are targeted for future park and recreation development.



Teen Cooking Nights



Fun Days

Town of Waxhaw Parks and Recreation Department Inventory of Existing Park Facilities - Active (Developed)

Type	Name	Acreage	Adult Baseball Fields	Youth Baseball Fields	Men's Softball Fields	Women's Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Football Fields	Multi-purpose Fields	Basketball Courts (Outdoors)	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Shuttleboard Courts	Horseshoe Pits	Booce Ball Courts	Playgrounds	Picnic Shelters	Picnic Area	Trail/Greenway (Miles)	Mountain Bike Trail (Miles)	Water Access	Community Garden	Swimming Pool/Splash Pad	Dog Park	Skate Park	Grass Area/Open Space	Restrooms	Disc Golf Course	Gymnasium	Classroom	Fitness Equipment	Senior Center			
Neighborhood Parks																																			
	Town Creek Park	19.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
		19.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Community Parks																																			
	H.C.Nesbit	40	1	3	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		
		40	1	3	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Mini Parks																																			
	Dare Steele Memorial Garden	0.16														2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	David G. Barnes Children's Park	1														2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		1.16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greenways																																			
	12 Mile Creek Greenway (Carolina Thread Trail)																	1	1							1									
	"The Green" - Greenway around North Main	0.13															0	1	1																
		0.13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outdoor Special Use Facilities																																			
	Waxhaw SK8 Park	0.659																						1											
	The Meeting Place	0.07																1	1								1								
	Community Corner / Water Tower	0.58																1	1							1									
	Duncan McDonald House	0.15																									1								
		1.459	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	
Other Facilities																																			
	South Providence School*									1																									
	Broxton Soccer Facility*					3																													
		0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Facilities not owned by Town of Waxhaw nor operated by Waxhaw Parks & Recreation

Waxhaw Area Schools

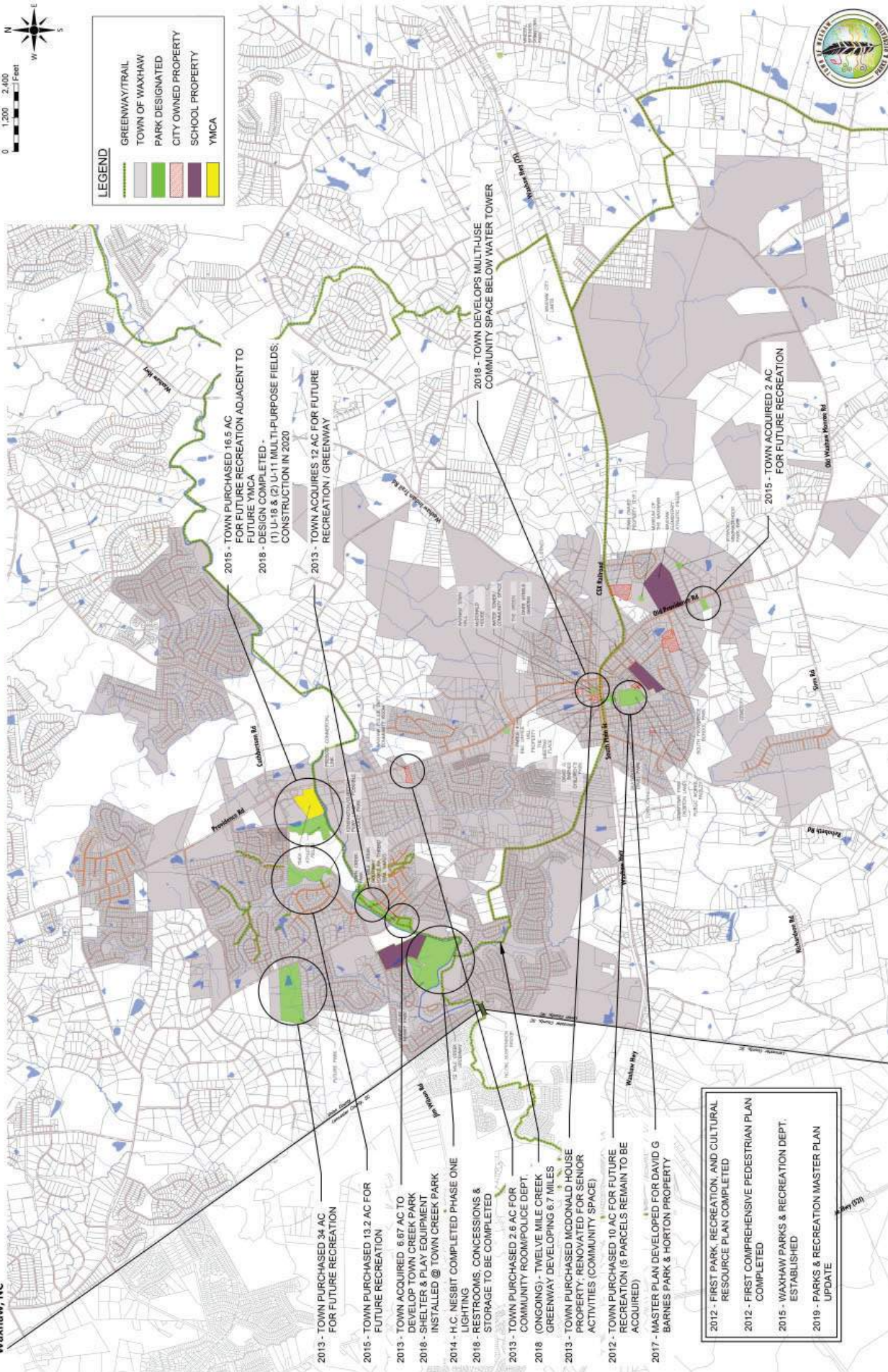
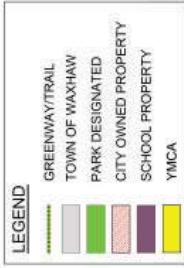
School Name	Public / Private	Municipality	Pool/ Splash Pad	Playground (age)	open field	sport field	trails	Basketball	Tennis	Volleyball	Miscellaneous
Kensington Elementary	Public	Waxhaw	no	yes; 4 (5-12 yrs)	yes	yes; 2	yes	yes; 3	no	no	near Nesbit Park
Waxhaw Elementary	Public	Waxhaw	no	yes; 2 (5-12 yrs)	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	Disc golf - 9 holes
South Providence School	Public	Waxhaw	no	no	yes	no	yes	yes; 1	no	yes	See also "Other Facilities" 1-15
Cuthbertson Middle	Public	Waxhaw	no	no	yes	yes; 3	yes	yes	no	no	pond/disc golf - 9 holes
Cuthbertson High	Public	Waxhaw	no	no	yes	yes; 5	yes	no	yes; 6	no	
Marvin Ridge Middle	Public	Waxhaw	no	no	yes	yes; 5	yes	yes	no	no	pond
Marvin Ridge High	Public	Waxhaw	no	no	yes	yes; 3	no	no	yes; 6	no	
Sandy Ridge Elementary	Public	Waxhaw	no	yes; 4 (5-12 yrs)	yes	yes; 1	yes	yes; 4	no	no	greenhouse

Most school facilities available for use outside of normal school hours.

Waxhaw Parks & Recreation | Implementation Plan (Progress Since 2012 Plan)

Waxhaw, NC

The Town of Waxhaw | 02.26.2019



2015 - TOWN PURCHASED 16.5 AC FOR FUTURE RECREATION ADJACENT TO FUTURE YMCA DESIGN COMPLETED. (1) U-19 & (2) U-11 MULTI-PURPOSE FIELDS. CONSTRUCTION IN 2020

2013 - TOWN ACQUIRES 12 AC FOR FUTURE RECREATION / GREENWAY

2018 - TOWN DEVELOPS MULTI-USE COMMUNITY SPACE BELOW WATER TOWER

2015 - TOWN ACQUIRED 2 AC FOR FUTURE RECREATION

2013 - TOWN PURCHASED 34 AC FOR FUTURE RECREATION

2015 - TOWN PURCHASED 13.2 AC FOR FUTURE RECREATION

2013 - TOWN ACQUIRED 8.87 AC TO DEVELOP TOWN CREEK PARK

2018 - SHELTER & PLAY EQUIPMENT INSTALLED @ TOWN CREEK PARK

2014 - H.C NESBIT COMPLETED PHASE ONE LIGHTING

2018 - RESTROOMS, CONCESSIONS & STORAGE TO BE COMPLETED

2013 - TOWN PURCHASED 2.6 AC FOR COMMUNITY ROOM/POICE DEPT. (ONGOING) - TWELVE MILE CREEK GREENWAY DEVELOPING 6.7 MILES

2013 - TOWN PURCHASED MCDONALD HOUSE PROPERTY - RENOVATED FOR SENIOR ACTIVITIES (COMMUNITY SPACE)

2012 - TOWN PURCHASED 10 AC FOR FUTURE RECREATION (5 PARCELS REMAIN TO BE ACQUIRED)

2017 - MASTER PLAN DEVELOPED FOR DAVID G BARNES PARK & HORTON PROPERTY

- 2012 - FIRST PARK, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL RESOURCE PLAN COMPLETED
- 2012 - FIRST COMPREHENSIVE PEDESTRIAN PLAN COMPLETED
- 2015 - WAXHAW PARKS & RECREATION DEPT. ESTABLISHED
- 2019 - PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE





DESCRIPTION

David G. Barnes Children's Park is a 1 acre park located on W. South Main street in downtown Waxhaw adjacent to Waxhaw Sk8 Park and The Meeting Place. Additional property is also leased from Windstream. There are two (2) playgrounds appropriate for ages 1-5 & 5-12 years old. There is one picnic shelter with two picnic tables. There are also restrooms and surveillance cameras on site.

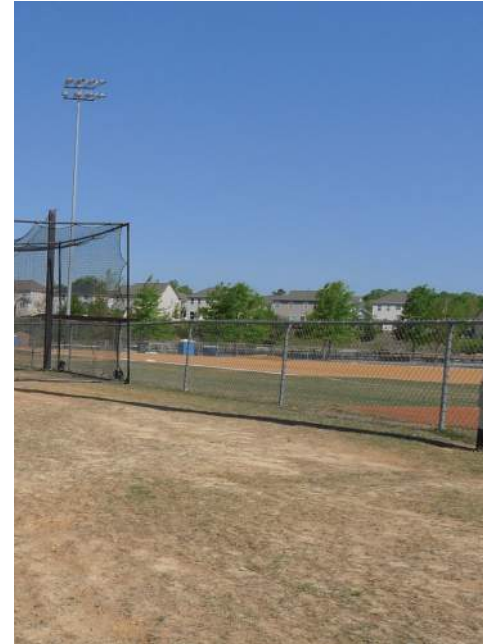
Typical amenities found within the park:

- Two (2) Playgrounds
- On-street parking & adjacent lot
- Picnic shelter with picnic tables
- Restrooms

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Accessible to downtown area and Sk8 Park, but need better connectivity to Main St. sidewalks
- Opportunities for additional amenities, playground, shelter building, etc.
- Accessible parking space is located across Main St.
- Need to update restroom building and address exterior maintenance items





DESCRIPTION

H.C. Nesbit is a 40-acre Community Park on HC Nesbit Park Road and serves as a local sports destination. It is currently home to four (4) irrigated baseball diamonds (two lighted) with some bleacher seating and covered dugouts, and six (6) soccer fields, ranging in size from micro to 6x6 and 8x8. H.C. Nesbit is one of the most used parks in Waxhaw. The Town is in a partnership with the Waxhaw Athletic Association. Tournaments on weekends regularly exceed the available parking. There is also a trail head and small parking area for the Carolina Thread Trail connection located in the park.

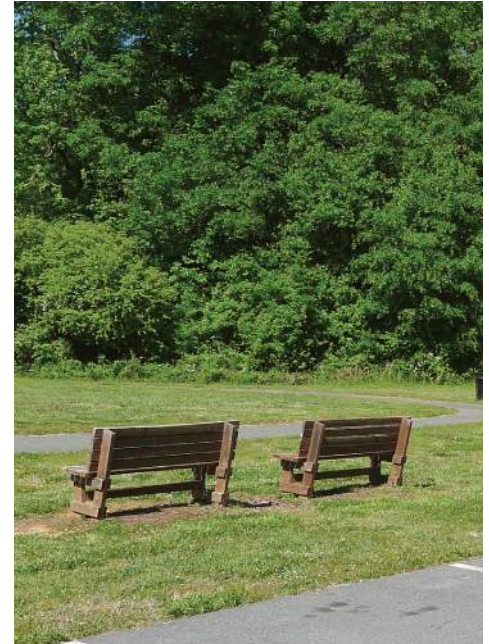
Typical amenities found within the park:

- Four (4) baseball diamonds (1-Adult; 3-Youth)
- Six (6) soccer fields (2-Large; 4-Mini)
- Picnic tables and bleacher seating
- Trailhead to Twelve Mile Creek Greenway
- Restroom building under construction

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Drainage issues
- ADA accessibility is needed from parking to facilities and between facilities
- Opportunities for additional amenities, playground, shade structures, better field lighting
- Additional parking needed for tournaments
- Add fence toppers for all fields; netting between fields





DESCRIPTION

Town Creek Park is a 19.24 acre park with an open space play area and a 1/4 mile walking trail. There is also a paved parking area, benches and picnic tables. It is very accessible by car, located on Waxhaw-Marvin Road, and is moderately accessible to pedestrians as it is adjacent to several neighborhoods. Town Creek Park is also located near 12 Mile Creek, and serves as a trail head connection to the greenway and the Carolina Thread Trail. As part of the Waxhaw-Marvin Corridor improved typical section, better sidewalk connectivity is targeted to enhance multi-modal access, improving service to this location.

Typical amenities found within the park:

- Open space play area
- Benches and picnic tables
- Paved parking area
- New playground and shelter
- Trailhead to Twelve Mile Creek Greenway/ Carolina Thread Trail

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Proposed location for greenway trail head expansion
- Opportunities for additional amenities, restrooms, parking, etc.
- 'Log cabin' on adjacent property would make a great addition to the park as an education center/ restrooms
- Proposed kayak landing onto 12 Mile Creek greenway





DESCRIPTION

Twelve Mile Creek Greenway currently has segments that will extend from HC Nesbit Park and Town Creek Park in Waxhaw to Walnut Creek Park in Lancaster County. The cross state greenway is connected via a 170-foot suspension bridge. Current combined length is around 7.5 miles. Greenway is part of the Carolina Thread Trail network.

Amenities located long the greenway:

- Trail heads located at H.C. Nesbit and Town Creek Parks
- Suspension bridge is a major destination

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Natural surface segments need constant maintenance and repair
- Town continues to acquire land/corridors for future extension
- Future connection between Town Creek and H.C. Nesbit Parks





DESCRIPTION

Dare Steele Memorial Garden is a 0.16 acre park located in downtown Waxhaw at the intersection of S. Providence, King and McKibben Streets. It is a small rose garden with benches and short walking paths. It is meant to be a small pocket park for the local residents. There are four (4) on-street parking spaces adjacent to the site.

Typical amenities found within the park:

- Adjacent to local residential neighborhoods
- Benches and attractive gardens

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Hot during the summer, could possibly use some shade.
- Small garden with little space to expand.





DESCRIPTION

Waxhaw Sk8 Park is 0.659 acre facility located in downtown Waxhaw at the corner of Caldwell and S. Church Streets. The park contains a half-pipe, quarter-pipe, decking, rails, ramps, a bowl and other skateboard features. The park is not open when the surface is wet. It is monitored by video surveillance.

Typical amenities found within the facility:

- Skate Park elements
- On-street parking with sidewalk connections
- Picnic shelter with picnic tables (next door at David G. Barnes Children's Park)
- Restrooms (next door at The Meeting Place)
- Freestanding benches; New shade structures

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Proximity to downtown area and other Park & Recreation facilities (The Meeting Place & David G. Barnes Children's Park)
- Located adjacent to Horton Property (undeveloped)
- Opportunities for additional amenities or expansion of existing facility; add lighting





DESCRIPTION

The Meeting Place is a 0.07 acre special use facility located on W. South Main Street in downtown Waxhaw. It is adjacent to David G. Barnes Children's Park and Waxhaw Sk8 Park. The Meeting Place is a rent-able recreation and meeting room with audio-visual equipment. It can accommodate 20 guests with tables and chairs. Additionally, there are kitchen and restroom facilities.

Typical amenities found within the facility:

- Meeting space for 20 people
- Kitchen and restrooms
- Located next to outdoor garden sitting area

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Small space limits meeting size; may need renovation in the near future
- Challenge to incorporate more effectively into a usable space for Waxhaw Parks & Recreation.
- Street and train noise can disrupt meetings





DESCRIPTION

“The Green” currently extends from N. Broome Street west between W. North Main Street and the rail line in Downtown. A sidewalk (greenway) runs the length of “The Green”. Once past Jackson Street, “The Green” transitions into sidewalk along W. North Main Street until ending across from Eutaw Drive. The Waxhaw Historical Footbridge and Military Wall of Honor are located just east of N. Broome Street, but are not connected to “The Green” with any sidewalk.

Project planning to add more sidewalks, upgrade lighting for safety and aesthetics; subject to CSX approval and negotiation of R/W considerations.

Amenities located long the “Green”:

- Five (5) foot concrete walkway
- Open greenspace with picnic tables
- Bike rack/public parking

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Constrained by the railroad ROW
- Sidewalk connection to the Military Wall of Honor, raised deck and the Historical Footbridge
- Opportunity for addition of floral displays & public art
- Add pet waste stations
- Add benches, seating opportunities
- Proposed enhancement from TAP Grant





DESCRIPTION

The Community Corner/Water Tower property is a 0.58 acre community flex space located on N. Broome St. between McDonald and W. North Main Streets in downtown Waxhaw. It is currently set up as a modular park space with picnic tables, planters and benches, so it can be used for many different kinds of downtown events and recreation needs. This space is also used for special events rented by the community.

Typical amenities found within the space:

- Adjacent to local businesses
- On-street parking
- Moveable picnic tables and benches

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Hot during the summer; need to provide shade and water source
- Iconic flexible place
- Consider addition of public restrooms
- Sidewalks programmed as part of TAP Grant project





DESCRIPTION

The Duncan McDonald House is a small historical property located adjacent to the Community Corner/Water Tower on McDonald Street in downtown Waxhaw. The property is 0.15 acres. The McDonald House was renovated as meeting space within a historical house (1888) which can accommodate 25 people with tables and chairs. It also contains a kitchen, restrooms and audio/visual equipment. There is on-street parking with an accessible space. There is also accessible access to the meeting room.

Typical amenities found within the facility:

- Adjacent to local residential areas, businesses and the downtown district
- On-street parking available
- Attractive historical setting
- Lending library next door at the Water Tower

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Typical issues regarding maintenance and upkeep to a historical building
- Small property with little space to expand
- House could be better connected to Community Corner/Water Tower





DESCRIPTION

The Town owns a 2.08 acre wooded parcel located on Old Waxhaw Monroe Road across from Yamasee Road. The property slopes about 20 feet across.

Natural amenities located on the property:

- Sloped wooded parcel

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Too small and remote for a Mini Park; Wooded site does not lend itself well to a Mini Park
- No sidewalks on Old Waxhaw Monroe Rd; difficult road for a pedestrian crossing
- Could be developed as a wooded dog park with selective clearing and addition of a small parking area
- Town could sell parcel to homebuilder



DESCRIPTION

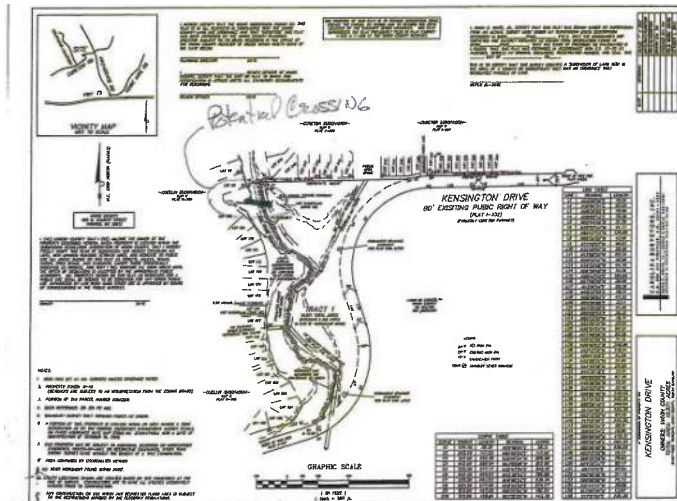
Kensington/Cureton Parkway parcel is 13 acres of land located on Kensington Drive across from the Twelve Mile Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility. The site is heavily wooded with a stream running through it. It is adjacent to several single family neighborhoods.

Natural amenities found on the property:

- Dense wooded area for trails, rolling topography
- Tributary to Twelve Mile Creek
- Small cleared area near the road for a pocket park
- Proximity to neighborhoods with access

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Speed and curvature of Kensington Drive makes safe access difficult for on-street parking
- The creek/drainage-way which bisects the site makes access difficult from the neighborhood
- Well-suited for natural preserve/tree save area
- With careful design could be developed as trail access point





DESCRIPTION

Wysacky Park is a 1.67 acre open parcel located in the triangle formed by Essaw and Yamasee Roads within the Wysacky Park neighborhood.

Natural amenities located on the property:

- Cleared, flat parcel with one large shade tree; open to neighborhood

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Centrally located within neighborhood
- Small parcel with little room for major park amenities
- Could be a future Mini Park or dog park with seating and a shade structure; small fitness units
- No sidewalks in or into neighborhood
- Need to address parking and accessibility





DESCRIPTION

Waxhaw-Marvin Property is mostly wooded undeveloped former residential property now owned by the Town. It is located on Waxhaw-Marvin Road and is in a prime location for a future park development adjacent to residential neighborhoods. The property frontage provides an open meadow with a small pond, but 2/3 of the property is densely wooded and gently rolling topography. There is an old barn structure located on the site which will need to be removed or remediated. Potential for this site includes nature trails, picnic areas and an educational center to highlight the wooded area, all passive types of alternate sports and adventure recreation.



Amenities found on the property:

- Barn structure (Town using for storage)
- Dense woods and rolling topography
- Small pond and open pasture area
- Existing entrance drive with brick columns, iron gates
- Proximity to neighborhoods with relatively good access

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Barn structure needs to be assessed; may be better to demolish
- Infrastructure needed - parking, circulation, restrooms, picnic shelters, utilities, NCDOT accessible driveway
- Safety and security; perimeter fencing needed
- Poor bicycle/pedestrian access, however, part of Waxhaw-Marvin corridor programmed improvements





DESCRIPTION

The future Waxhaw Athletic Fields is a 16.44 acre parcel of land located off Kensington Drive in Waxhaw, between the Twelve Mile Creek Wastewater facility and the Harris Teeter grocery store. The site is moderately wooded around the perimeter with a cleared area in the middle.

Construction plans have been developed for three soccer fields, parking, shelter and restroom with construction proposed FY 2020-2021.

Natural amenities found on the property:

- Retention pond
- Cleared areas for future athletic fields
- Proximity to neighborhoods, commercial center and future YMCA

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Access off Kensington Drive good, but low visibility from the road
- The Pond located on the site may create mosquito problems in summer
- Proximity to the future YMCA site is a benefit.
- Future bridging over 12 mile creek to connect with 12 mile creek greenway





DESCRIPTION

The Horton property is a 9.9 acre parcel located off of Givens Street near downtown Waxhaw. It is located adjacent to Waxhaw Sk8 park and David G. Barnes Park. To the south of the Horton property is the Town’s Public Services Department Facility and the paved trail at South Providence School. The park site is adjacent to different land uses including residential, commercial and mixed use. The topography consists of gently sloping land which is densely forested. There is also an existing sewer easement located on the site. A master plan was prepared in 2017 and proposes developing a community center and park facility on the site.

Natural amenities found on the property:

- Dense wooded area for trails, open space areas off of Givens Street
- Proximity to neighborhoods and downtown Waxhaw

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- Current Master plan for the property is very dense with proposed programming and facility development; needs to be simplified
- Challenges achieving a balance between passive and active recreation development.
- Road accessibility; sidewalk/greenway connection



South Providence School (Park) Facility* SPECIAL USE FACILITY

*NOT A WAXHAW OWNED FACILITY



DESCRIPTION

South Providence School (Park) Facility is located on S. Providence Street just south of downtown Waxhaw. There is a paved walking trail, outdoor basketball court and grassed open space. The Town does not own the facility, but maintains the trail and open space. The Town's Public Works facility is located across the street from the walking trail.

Typical amenities located within the park:

- Asphalt paved walking trail
- Outdoor basketball court
- Grassed open area

Challenges and opportunities for development:

- If Horton Property is developed as a park better accessibility to the downtown and other recreation facilities could be realized





The Duncan McDonald House is a valuable historic event space to the people of Waxhaw.

SECTION TWO THE HISTORY AND PEOPLE OF WAXHAW

Introduction

An important step in understanding the park and recreational needs of Waxhaw is to develop an understanding of the context and the people that make up the community. Section Two includes a review of the town's history, population and demographics and looks at changes that are occurring in the community.

In addition to reviewing the town's projected growth and demographic changes, the Needs Assessment included several initiatives to engage the public to gather information on public demand/expectations for future parks and recreation facilities. These initiatives included:

- Community Survey
- Community Workshops
- Parks, Cultural and Recreation Advisory Board

Through these efforts, considerable insight was gained regarding the public's desire for parks and recreation programs and facilities. This section discusses the information gathered in preparation of this Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Town History and Context

Located approximately 22 miles southeast of Uptown Charlotte, Waxhaw sits in the southwest corner of Union County and on the border with neighboring Lancaster County SC. Located in the Carolina Piedmont, Waxhaw still enjoys a wonderful rolling topography with plenty of woodlands and farmland along the edges of town; in close proximity to both Andrew Jackson State Park and Cane Creek Park. This ideal location, along with its small town feel, railroad history and friendly people, make Waxhaw a favorite tourist destination and most recently a desirable place to live.

As part of the Charlotte/Concord/Gastonia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the town of Waxhaw and Union County are included in the largest metropolitan area in the state. Waxhaw represents the twenty-second largest municipality within this MSA, yet has experienced the second largest change in population growth from 2010 to 2017 (+53.64%) behind only Fort Mill SC (+62.57%).

Waxhaw was chartered in 1889, establishing the town as the third oldest in Union County. Storied in Native American history, the Wysacky tribe, also known as the Waxhaws, were involved in several skirmishes and wars in the 1700's that ultimately led to the freeing of these lands for future European-American settlement in the mid-1700's. Andrew Jackson was born in this region in 1767 with many of his ancestors and family buried within the region.

Early in the settlement of the Town, Waxhaw began to grow with the arrival of the railroad in 1888. The railroad helped connect Waxhaw and Union County with Atlanta to the southwest and created opportunities for agriculture, forestry and tourism. Instrumental in the growth of Waxhaw, the railroad was located through the center of town with the downtown being developed along both sides. The Downtown area, became the center of social life, transportation, wholesale and retail businesses and cotton manufacturing through the 1940s. As the automobile (and ultimately truck transportation) became more prevalent, the railroad declined in importance, but is still a major focus in the current development of specialty shops, restaurants, and even infill residential. Many of the original downtown buildings and houses are now located within the Waxhaw Historic District, a district included on the National Register of Historic Places.

Today, Waxhaw's connections to Highways 521, 75 and 16 along with Interstate 485 are more important than its

physical connection to the railroad. Through the roadway systems, Waxhaw is easily connected to Charlotte, Monroe, Concord as well as Rock Hill and Columbia, making it a very convenient location for both business and personal use.

The history of the railroad has not been forgotten. In 2017, a detailed study and alternate proposals were prepared that address the historic character of the railroad and time period through architecture, streetscape and furnishings in the downtown as well as a proposed miniature railroad park. However, the town has previously decided that any type of railroad park development should not be a public venture.

The People of Waxhaw

An important aspect of this planning process is understanding the people who make up the Department's Service Population. To better understand the park and recreational needs of the community, a review of data from the 2010 US Census with the current population estimates of July 1, 2017 provides valuable information on the demographic makeup of the community.

Waxhaw's population is somewhat younger than the state's population. Only 8.5% of Waxhaw's population is 65 years and over while the State's senior population represents 15.9 % of the total population. Conversely, the town's youth (persons under 18 years of age) represents a relatively large percentage of the overall population. More than a third (40%) of the town's population are youth, while just over a fourth (28.3%) of the state's population is made up of youth. This larger percentage of youth is also reflected in the larger household size found in Waxhaw. While the State's average household contains 2.53 persons, the average household in Waxhaw is comprised of 3.22 persons; indicating many households with one or more children. In December 2018, the number of occupied homes in the Waxhaw town limits surpassed 6,000 compared with 4,143 households in 2017 based on numbers provided by the Town's waste management division.

Waxhaw is very homogeneous. Whites comprise 82.8% of the town's population. Whites make up 70.8% of the State's population. Conversely, Waxhaw has a lower percentage of Blacks or African Americans (10.5%) or Hispanics/Latinos (7.8%) than the State; 22.2% and 9.5% respectively. American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian and "Two or more races" comprise about 5.5% of the Town's population compared to 6.9% of the State's population.

Waxhaw has just under the State's percentage of female residents. While North Carolina's female population represents 51.3% of the State's population, females comprise 50.7% of the Town's population.

Economically, Waxhaw residents are ahead in the State with regard to median household income. Waxhaw's median household income was \$97,904, while the State's median income was \$50,320. Likewise, the town's per capita income (\$37,005) is slightly greater than the State's per capita income (\$28,123). About two-thirds (67.3%) of the town's population 16 years and older were in the civilian workforce. This is slightly above that of the state's percentage of population in the workforce (61.4%). Understandably, the median value of an owner occupied home in Waxhaw is much greater than the median value of an owner occupied home from across the state (\$285,200 versus \$161,000).

Finally, the town has a relatively lower percentage of residents under 65 years of age with a disability. Almost 5.2% of the town's population has a disability, while less than one tenth (9.6%) of North Carolinians have a disability. Likewise, only 4.2% of the town's population under the age of 65 reported not having health insurance, well under the 12.6% of North Carolinians who indicated a lack of health insurance.

These demographic statistics on the town's population provide some valuable information to consider in determining park and recreational needs for the community. Several characteristics that could affect park and recreation facility needs include:

- It is obvious from the age demographics, that while the town doesn't have a very high percentage of residents that are seniors (65 and older), many attended the community workshops and/or participated in the community survey and expressed their passion for recreation. The town should provide facilities and programs that meet the desires and interest of this senior population as well as the 50+ population. Likewise, facilities and programs should be aimed at aiding the senior population in living active and healthier lifestyles.
- While the senior segment of the population is important, the Department should also be sensitive to the needs of its younger citizens, recognizing that almost 40% of the population are youth (persons under 18 years of age).
- Another important finding from this review is the segment of the population outside of the Town limits that live either in Union or Lancaster County, but use

Waxhaw facilities and attend community events. This population should not be discouraged from using Waxhaw facilities, and should be encouraged to use Town facilities for a slightly higher 'out of town' usage fee.

- The Town's location within Union County and adjacency to Lancaster County provide opportunities for partnerships with cross County agencies and organizations on providing parks and recreation facilities and programming.

Service Population

An important aspect of developing a comprehensive plan for parks and recreation facilities is determining the service population of the study. Ultimately, it is impossible to determine the acres of park land or the number of ball fields a community needs unless you know the number of people you are planning to serve.

Based on US Census data, Waxhaw's 2017 (July) population was 15,147. This population figure was 53.6% more than the town's 2010 (April) census number of 9,859; indicating a large increase in population compared to the State's population change of 7.7%. This large increase in population should be noted as the Town continues to be very a vibrant community with a wonderful quality of life; indicating a future with continued positive economic activity and a reasonable expectation of future growth. Further, population projection data from North Carolina's Office of Budget and Management indicates that Union County's population will grow over the next 11 years by approximately 35%; projecting a 2030 population of around 295,737 people.

Based on Census data from North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management(NCOBM) this report will use the town's current population of 15,147 as the service population for this study. For ease of calculations, the report will slightly round up this population figure to 15,200.

As a ten-year plan, recommendations in this report will be designed to meet the need of the town's population in 2029. For planning purposes, it is assumed the town will increase in population similarly to the projected population of the county's population; approximately 35%. Again, for ease of discussion and calculation, the projected population for the town (the projected service population) has been rounded up to 20,900.

There are two other factors that influence the community's need for parks and recreation facilities and indirectly impact the Service Population. First, it is important to realize that many users of the town's parks and recreation facilities are not town residents. Waxhaw's existing parks and recreation facilities are used by Union County residents and some Lancaster County residents living outside the town limits of Waxhaw. The demand for parks and facilities by citizens living outside the town places additional demand on the town's existing facilities. Currently, non-residents are using parks and recreation facilities without paying any fees, except for rental fees for meeting or picnicking facilities.

A second factor that impacts the need for parks and recreation facilities is the proximity of the town of Waxhaw to Charlotte and the southwest corner of Union County, but adjacent to the community of Indian Land in Lancaster County. All three areas are experiencing fast paced growth and need to keep pace with provision of parks and recreation programs and facilities.

Community Input - Public Workshops

Four community workshops to receive input on park and recreation needs were held at different times and in different locations in July and September 2018. Workshops were held as follows:

- July 11, 2018 - H.C. Nesbit Park (10 am - 12 pm)
- July 11, 2018 - American Legion Post 208 (6 pm – 8pm)
- September 6, 2018 – Community Corner/Water Tower (10am – 12 pm)
- September 6, 2018 – St. Matthews Catholic Church (6 pm – 8 pm)

The workshops were held as informal drop-in sessions. Sixty-seven citizens participated in the events; which represents a very good turnout for public workshops to discuss comprehensive needs.

After signing in, attendees were invited to review several display boards that:

- Showed a current map of the Town limits with neighborhoods;
- Identified existing parks and recreation facilities within the Town limits and the local region;
- Offered images of recreation facilities/activities typically found in a town's park system.
- Provided information on existing recreation opportunities typically found in municipal parks;

Following the information sharing displays, attendees were invited to share their opinions on existing parks, facilities

& programs, recreational needs, and ideas for improving parks and recreation facilities in Waxhaw. Many of the questions asked were very similar to questions asked on the community survey.

It should be noted that while 67 people signed up as attending these public workshops, not every attendee signed in, and not every attendee answered every question. Many of those in attendance were focused on voicing opinions on one or two specific issues or facilities and did not take the time and effort to respond to all questions. The following is a summary of the public's responses. A full tally and listing of the responses can be found in the Appendix A.

Where Do You Live in Waxhaw?

There was a good representation from around the Town in attendance though larger concentrations from the neighborhoods of Anclin Forest, Quelin and the Downtown area were represented. There were 8 attendees who lived outside of the Waxhaw Town limits who participated in the workshops.

Where Do You Recreate in Waxhaw?

Almost everyone responding to this question indicating they use the Town's parks and recreation facilities. When asked what parks and facilities are being used, 12 Mile Creek Greenway (36 responses) was the most used facility followed by H.C. Nesbit Park (22 responses). Right behind were David G. Barnes Children's Park (16), Community Corner/Water Tower (13) and Waxhaw Sk8 Park (10).

Where Do You Recreate Outside of Waxhaw?

Almost everyone responding to this question indicated they also use parks and recreation facilities within the local region outside of Waxhaw. When asked what parks and facilities are being used, Cane Creek Park (32 responses) was the most used facility followed by Dogwood Park in Wesley Chapel (19 responses). Right behind were Marvin Ebird Park (13), Andrew Jackson State Park (12), Weddington Optimist Park (8), Catawba River Blueway (7) and Monroe Aquatic Fitness Center (6).

Attendees were given a list of 26 indoor and outdoor recreation activities and asked to identify the activities in which they currently participate within or outside of Waxhaw. Participants were allowed to vote for their top three activities. The following are the most popular activities based on those that responded:

Community Events (51)
 Adult Fitness and Wellness (18)
 Youth Sports Leagues (12)
 Adult Continuing Education (6)
 Outdoor Challenge/Adventure Course (6)
 Nature Programs/Environmental Education (5)
 Youth Art, Dance, and Performing Arts (5)
 Youth Sports Lessons (5)

Attendees were then asked to identify activities they would like to see offered within the Waxhaw parks and recreation system. Participants were allowed to vote for their top 3.

The activities most often listed included:

Outdoor Challenge/Adventure Course (28)
 Nature Programs/Environmental Education (20)
 Youth Summer Camp Programs (18)
 Workshops (CPR, Babysitting, etc.) (12)
 Adult Continuing Education (10)
 Teen Programs (10)
 Water Fitness Programs (10)
 Senior/Adult Programs 50+ (9)

Attendees were given a list of 30 indoor and outdoor recreation amenities and asked to identify the amenities which they currently use within or outside of Waxhaw. Participants were allowed to vote for their top 3. The following are the most popular amenities based on those that responded:

Walking/Biking/Fitness Trails (35)
 Greenway Trail System (31)
 Weights and Fitness Machines (13)
 Baseball and Softball Fields (12)
 Fishing Pond (12)
 Soccer Fields (10)
 Dog Parks (7)
 Picnic Shelters/Picnic Areas (7)
 Outdoor Amphitheater (7)

Attendees were then asked to identify amenities they would like to see offered within the Waxhaw parks and recreation system. Participants were allowed to vote for their top 3. The amenities most often listed included:

Outdoor Amphitheater (31)
 Community Center Indoor/Multi-Purpose Space (19)
 Splash Pad/Water Parks (19)
 Dog Parks (19)
 Picnic Shelters/Picnic Areas (16)
 Fishing Pond (16)
 Community Owned Farm Spaces (13)
 Indoor Aquatic Facilities (12)

In addition, there were 26 responses noted for continued expansion of the greenway trail system.

Before leaving the workshops, attendees were invited to leave comments on their park and recreational needs or anything they wanted to share as the plan is developed. Thirty-two (32) comments cards were collected along with seven (7) emails that were sent to the Parks & Recreation Director during that time period. Many of the comments had similar themes. A total listing of the comments is provided in the appendix. These following issues/ comments were mentioned most often:

- Develop Downtown Park
- Develop 34 acres on Waxhaw-Marvin Road as a passive park
- Provide more open unprogrammed greenspace
- Program and provide more community events
- Keep the Water Tower Park
- Develop and program a community center
- Add more greenways and trails

Community Input - Community Survey

To better understand the public's perception of existing parks and recreation facilities, and to gather input of recreational needs, a six-page community survey was conducted. The survey was prepared and distributed by mail and online to a randomly selected sample of town households. The survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The sample size goal for completed surveys was 400 which was exceeded with 634 completed surveys being returned. The full Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey can be found in the Appendix B.

Top takeaways from the survey include:

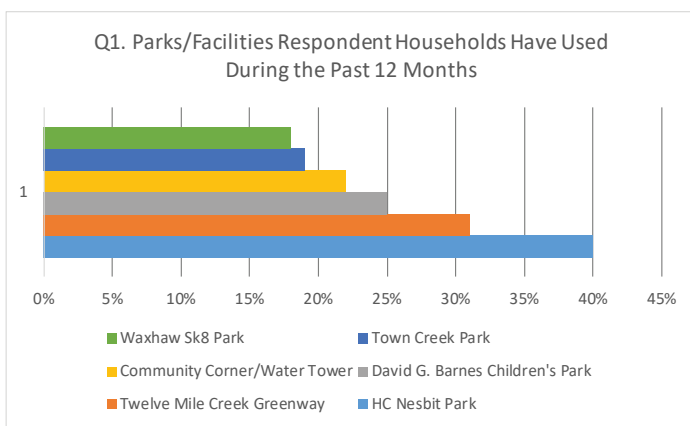
- High satisfaction ratings for parks, facilities and programs
- Lack of awareness is top barrier to usage of programs/ facilities
- The highest priorities for facilities include:
 - a. Walking, biking and fitness trails
 - b. Greenway trail system
 - c. Indoor aquatic facility
 - d. Splash pad/water park
 - e. Dog Park
- The highest priorities for programs include:
 - f. Adult fitness and wellness programs
 - g. Workshops (CPR, babysitting, cooking, safety, etc.)
 - h. Seniors/Adults programs 50+
 - i. Outdoor challenge/adventure course

- There's strong support for making improvements to the parks and recreation system.

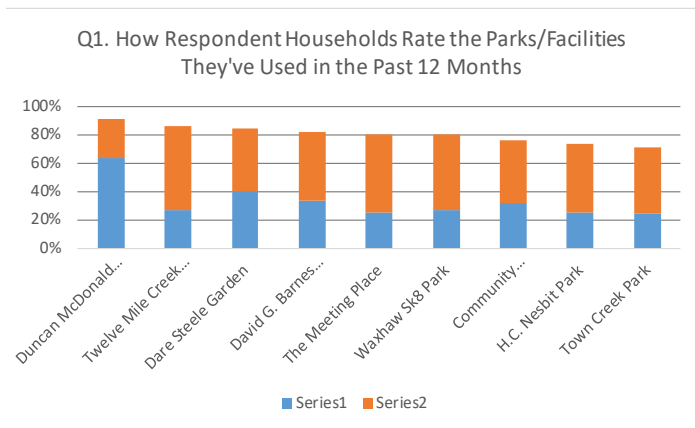
The survey results were segmented into five topics as summarized below.

Topic #1 - Usage of Parks, Facilities and Programs

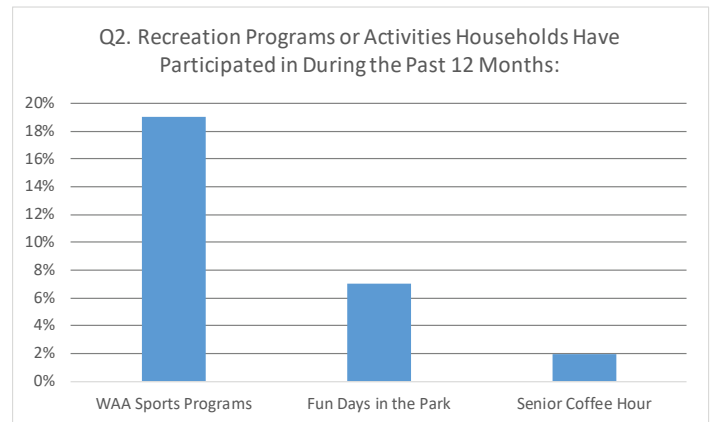
Q1. Parks/Facilities Respondent Households Have Used During the Past 12 Months: 69% of households have used at least one park/facility in the past 12 months; slightly below the national average of 78%. Top 5 parks/facilities include:



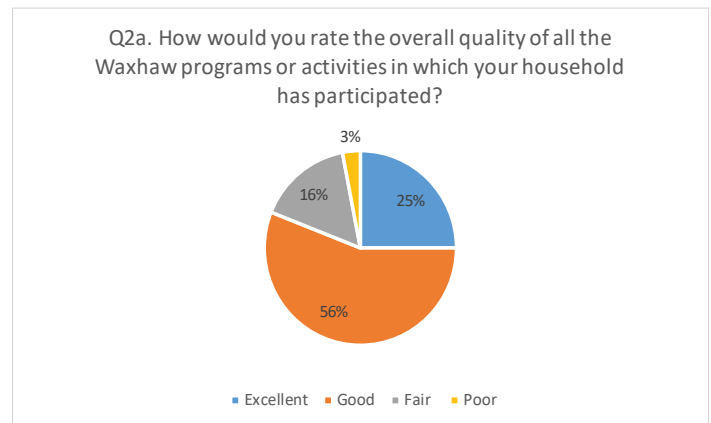
Q1. How Respondents Households Rate the Parks/Facilities They've Used in the Past 12 Months: Overall the parks/facilities used in the past 12 months received high ratings. All of the parks/facilities were rated above 70% for excellent/good.



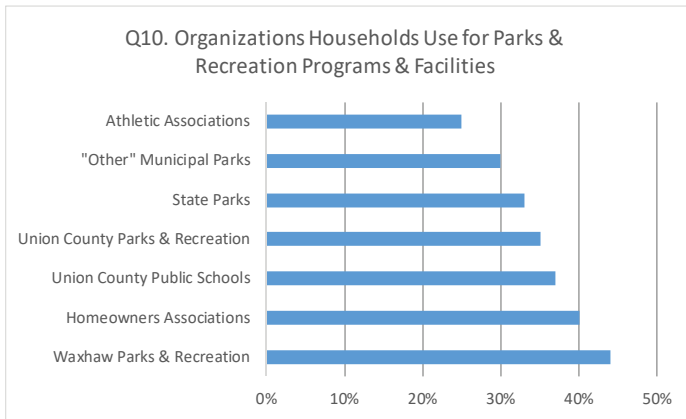
Q2. Recreation Programs or Activities Households Have Participated in During the Past 12 Months: 29% of households have participated in at least one program/activity in the past 12 months; slightly below the national average of 32%.



Q2a. How would you rate the overall quality of all the Waxhaw programs or activities in which your household has participated? 81% rated programs/activities as excellent or good; only 3% rated them as poor:

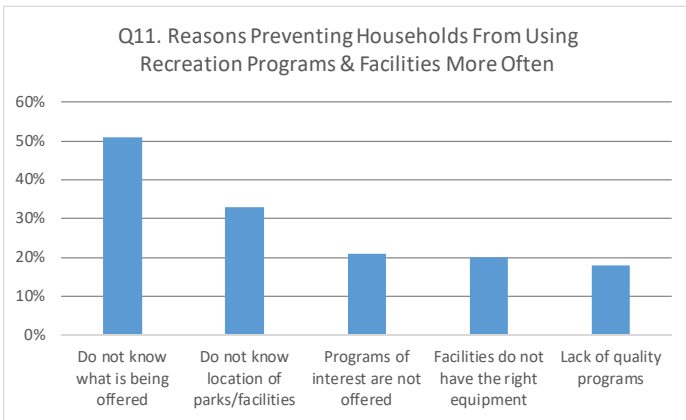


Q10. Organizations Households Use for Parks & Recreation Programs & Facilities: Waxhaw Parks & Recreation is the top provider for recreation programs and facilities. Top seven providers include:

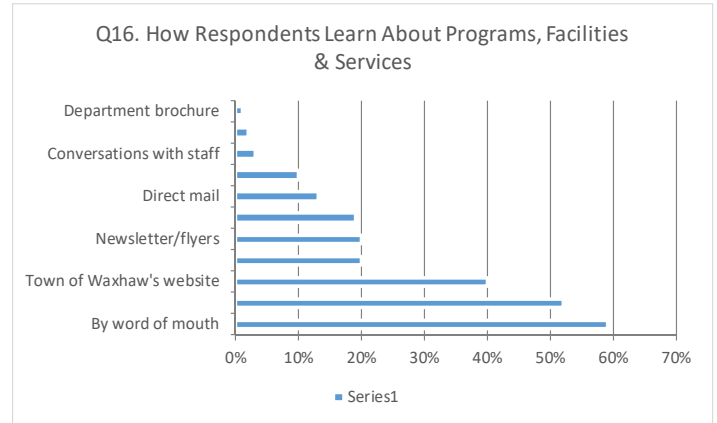


Topic #2 - Barriers to Participation

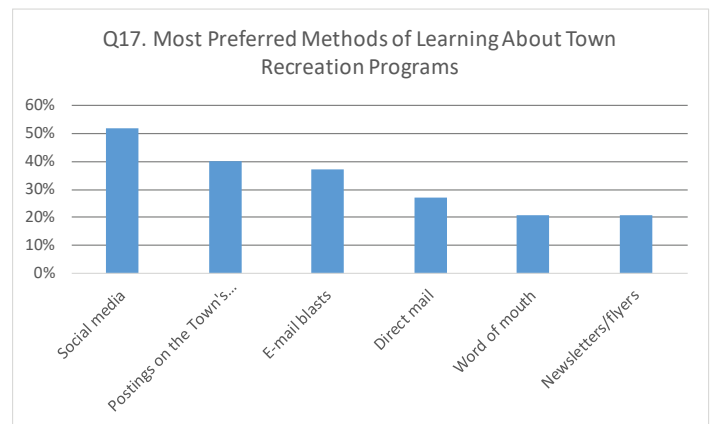
Q11. Reasons Preventing Households from Using Recreation Programs & Facilities More Often: Lack of awareness is the biggest barrier to usage of programs/facilities. Top five barriers include:



Q16. How Respondent Households Learn About Programs, Facilities & Services:

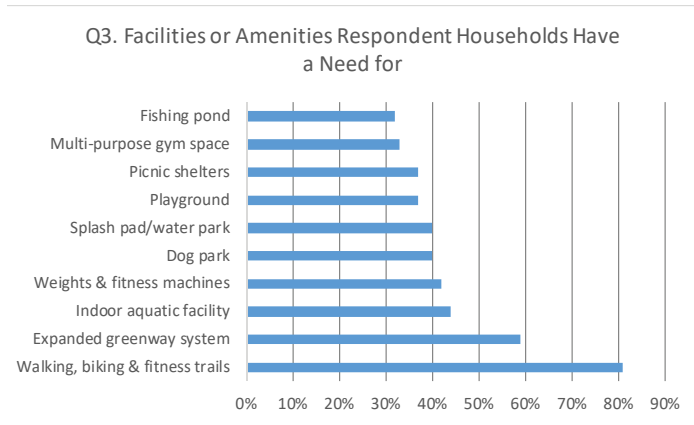


Q17. Most Preferred Methods of Learning About Town Recreation Programs, Facilities & Services: Online resources are the most preferred methods of learning about programs and facilities.

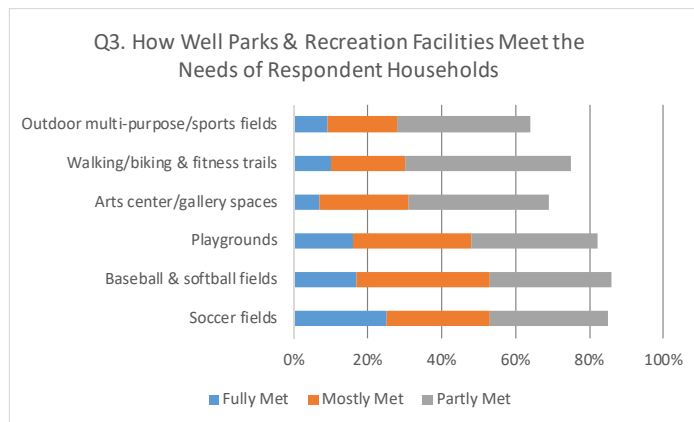


Topic #3 - Unmet Needs and Priorities for Facilities

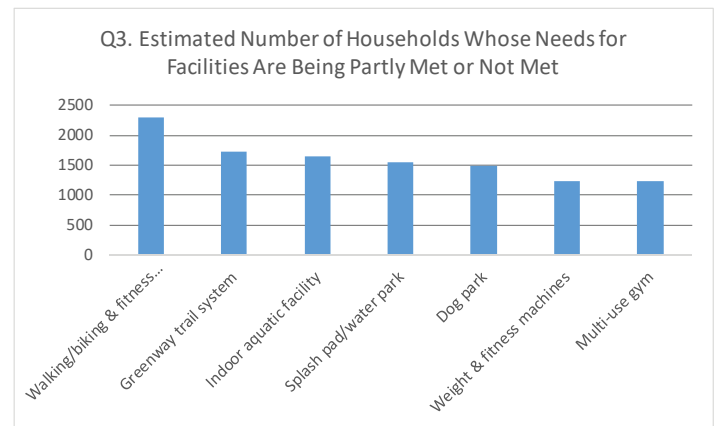
Q3. Facilities or Amenities Respondent Households Have a Need for: Walking, biking & fitness trails continue to be desired by the residents of Waxhaw (81%) along with an expanded greenway system (59%). The next eight unmet needs and priorities noted in the survey were in order:



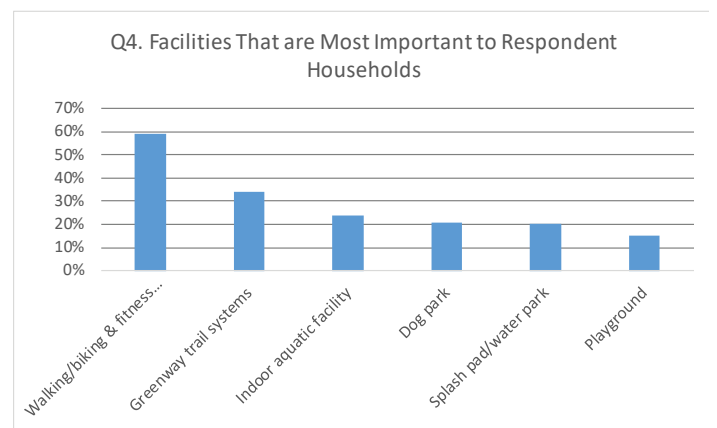
Q3. How Well Parks and Recreation Facilities Meet the Needs of Respondent Households: Survey respondents noted that their needs were (fully/mostly/partly) met for the following top six facilities:



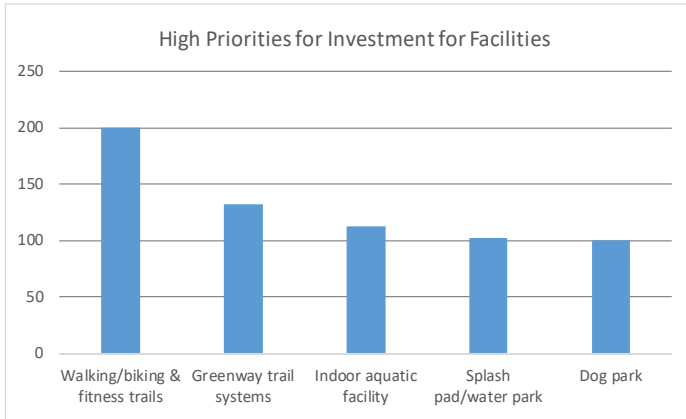
Q3. Estimated Number of Households Whose Needs for Facilities Are Being Partly Met or Not Met: Conversely, the following facilities ranked by number of projected households in the top seven for being partly met or not met:



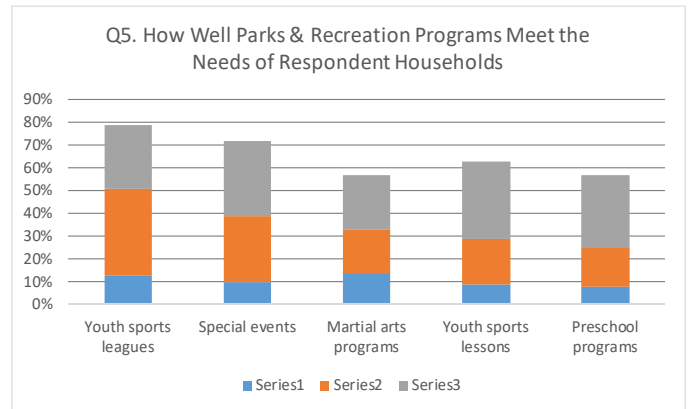
Q4. Facilities That Are Most Important to Respondent Households: The top six most important facilities to respondents based on their top six choices include:



The high priorities for investment for facilities based on the priority investment rating include:

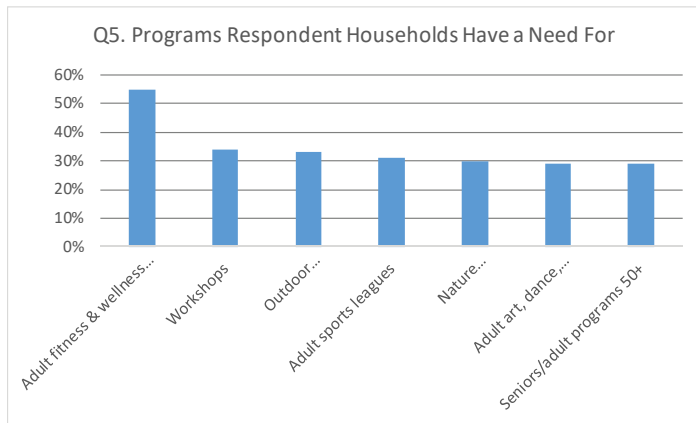


Q5. How Well Parks and Recreation Programs Meet the Needs of Respondent Households: Survey respondents noted that their needs were (fully/mostly/partly) met for the following top six programs:

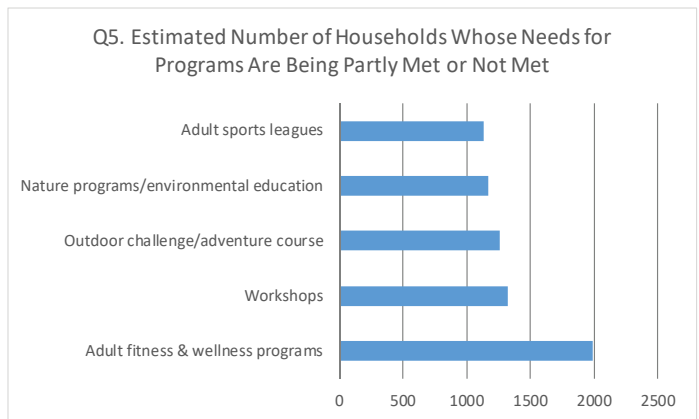


Topic #4 - Unmet Needs and Priorities for Programs

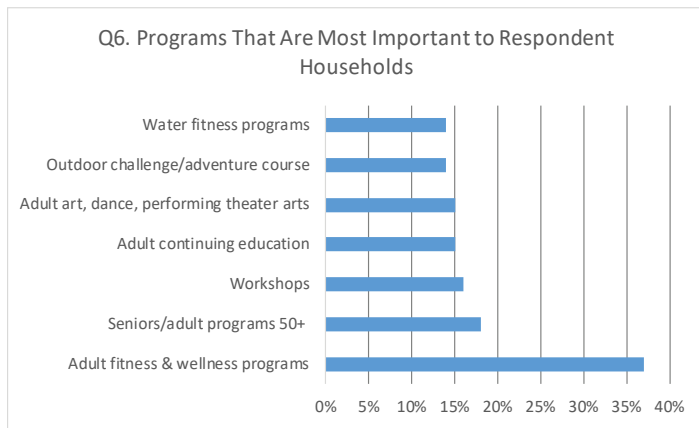
Q5. Programs respondent Households Have a Need For: Adult fitness & wellness programs overwhelmingly have the most needs (55%). The next six include:



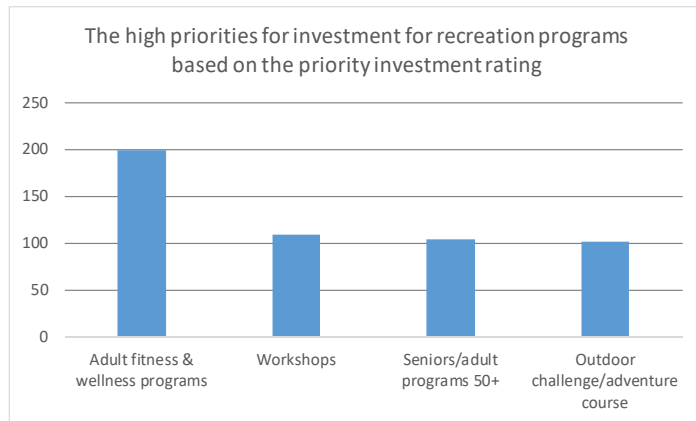
Q5. Estimated Number of Households Whose Needs for Programs Are Being Partly Met or Not Met: Conversely, the following programs ranked by number of projected households in the top five for being partly met or not met



Q6. Programs That Are Most Important to Respondent Households: The top seven most important programs to respondents based on their top four choices include:

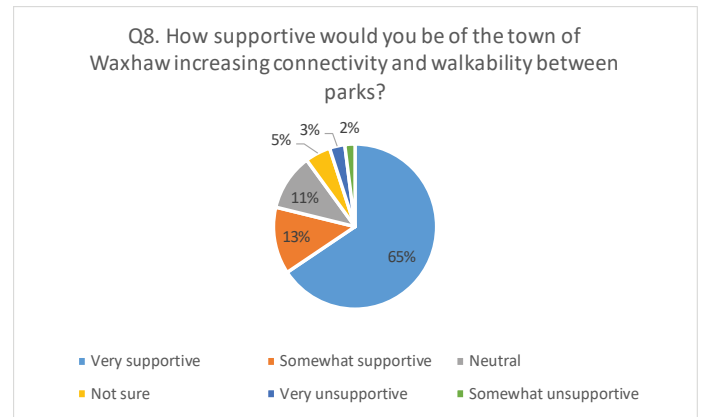


The high priorities for investment for recreation programs based on the priority investment rating include:

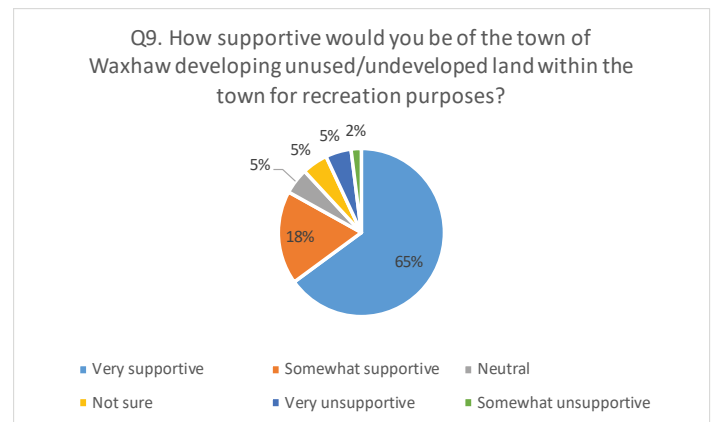


Topic #5 - Improvements to the Parks and Recreation System

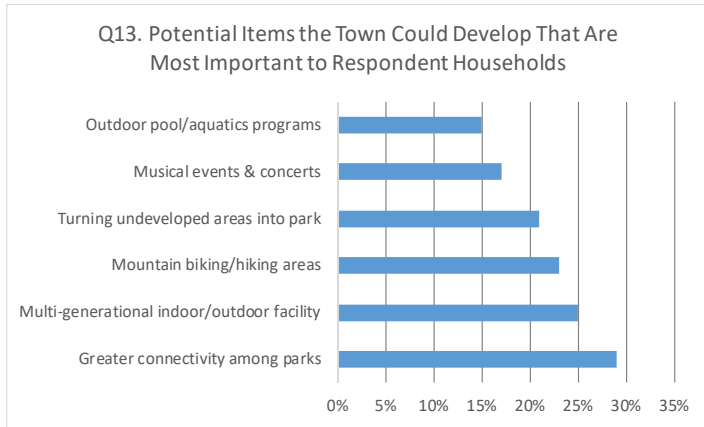
Q8. How supportive would you be of the Town of Waxhaw increasing connectivity and walkability between parks? 78% are supportive of increasing connectivity and walkability between parks; only 5% are unsupportive.



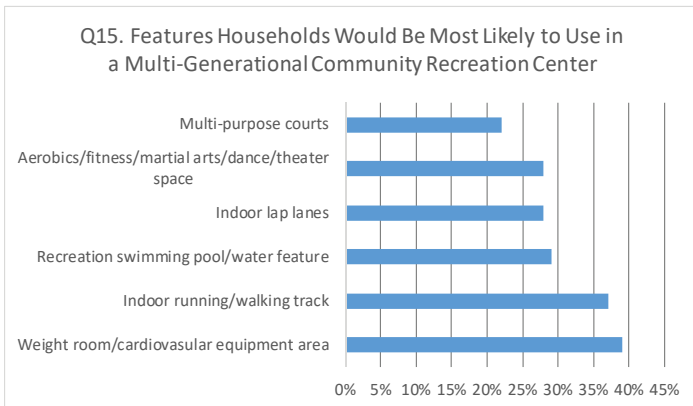
Q9. How supportive would you be of the Town of Waxhaw developing unused/undeveloped land within the town for recreation purposes? 83% are supportive of developing unused/undeveloped land; only 7% are unsupportive.



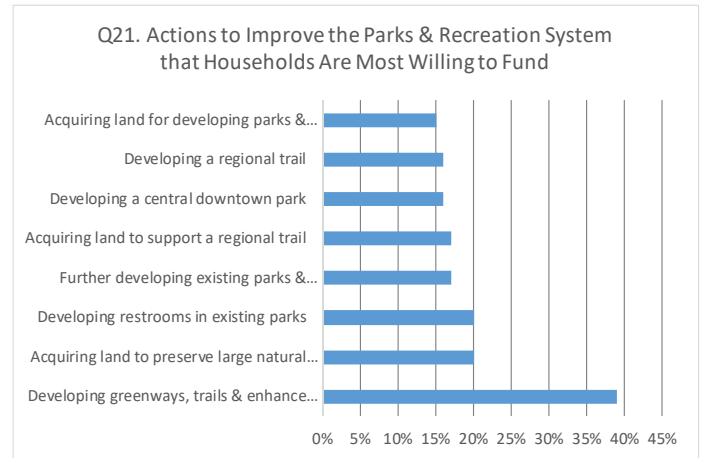
Q13. Potential Items the Town Could Develop That Are Most Important to Respondent Households: 85% feel at least one item is important to develop with the top six based on their top four choices including:



Q15. Features Households Would Be Most Likely to Use in a Multi-Generational Community Recreation Center: 84% are likely to use at least one feature in a multi-generational community recreation center with the top six based on their top four choices including:



Q21. Actions to Improve the Parks and Recreation System That Households Are Most Willing to Fund with Tax Dollars: 74% are willing to fund at least one improvement to the parks and recreation system with the top eight based on their top four choices including:



Community Input - Final Public Workshop

A final community workshop to receive input on park and recreation needs was held on November 6, 2018 in the Police Dept. Community Room (6 pm – 7:30 pm)

Like the others, this workshop was held as an informal drop-in session. Thirty-one (31) citizens participated in the event; which represents a very good turnout for a public workshop considering it was also Election Day. Several of the attendees also attended at least one of the previous workshops and/or participated in the community survey.

After signing in, once again attendees were invited to review several display boards that highlighted the following:

- Map showing implementation progress since the 2012 plan;
- Most visited parks and facilities as tallied from the previous workshops;
- Locations of the 634 respondents from the community survey;
- High Priority Recreational Amenities/Facilities Desired by the Community;
- High Priority Recreational Activities/Programs Desired by the Community;
- Proposed Parks & Recreation Master Plan Goals
- Potential Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Recommendations

Attendees were asked to vote on their top 3 proposed plan goals and top 3 potential plan recommendations. Attendees could also write in goals and/or recommendations. It should be noted that while 31 people signed up as attending this public workshop, not every attendee signed in, and not every attendee voted for three plan goals or recommendations. Many of those in attendance were focused on voicing opinions on one or two specific goals or issues and did not take the time and effort to respond to all proposals. Votes were as follows:

Proposed Plan Goals (Votes)

- Trail connectivity - destinations / regional greenways & trail systems (20)
- Develop location & plan for community center (19)
- Each town resident should live within a 15-minute walk to greenspace, trail, park, amenity (15)
- Maintain quality park management, operations & maintenance (8)
- Strive to provide funding to maintain or exceed minimum level of service standards & create a sustainable economic base for Parks & Recreation (6)
- Provide educational, healthy & active programs & opportunities for all ages & abilities (5)
- Seek & develop partnerships with other recreation providers (2)
- Make all parks & facilities accessible, connecting to & within (1)
- Ensure park & recreation master plan is coordinated with other town plans, ordinances & policies (1)
- Increased community outreach/parks & recreation marketing (1)
- Offer excellent opportunities throughout the Waxhaw parks system for all to use (0)
- Create programming for each park & facility (0)

Potential Plan Recommendations (Votes)

- Plan, fund & develop a park & programming on the 34 AC on Waxhaw-Marvin Road (40)
- Produce a plan for a community center / indoor multi-purpose space (10)
- Create a greenway master plan for continuation of 12 Mile Creek Greenway (8)
- Create an environmental / nature based program (8)
- Fund & develop downtown park / expansion (7)
- Develop a dog park (6)
- Study opportunities for incorporation of an outdoor challenge / adventure course (6)
- Seek usable land acquisition for a new park to be developed in the northeast quadrant of downtown (3)

- Develop & operate additional senior & adult programs (2)
- Study feasibility of development & operation of splash pad or water park (1)
- Provide pedestrian circulation & accessibility at H.C. Nesbit Park (1)
- Shade Structures (write-in) (1)
- Trees (write-in) (1)
- Fishing Pond (write-in) (1)
- Develop a slate of educational workshops (0)
- Locate & plan for development of an inclusive playground (0)

Once again, before leaving the workshop, attendees were invited to leave comments on their park and recreational needs or anything they wanted to share as the plan is finalized. 9 comments cards were collected and can be found in the Appendix A.



Senior Events at the McDonald House



The Community Corner / Water Tower in downtown Waxhaw is one of the town's most popular open spaces.

SECTION THREE RECREATION STANDARDS & NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Introduction

This section contains the analysis and assessment on which the recommendations of this System-wide Parks Master Plan are based. It begins with a brief look at the Parks & Recreation Departments currently serving area residents. This review is followed by a summary of previous community planning efforts relevant to the parks in the community. Next, we look at standards other communities of similar size are using as they build their park systems. This review is based on a description of park types as identified by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) (Appendix B). Using these park types as a backdrop, we develop standards for parks and recreation facilities specifically for Waxhaw. These standards are then used as a basis for establishing a park and recreation facility Needs Assessment for the Town.

It should be noted that the NRPA, in its 1995 report “Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines”, determined there are no “national standards” for park development. Instead, the latest NRPA study recommends that each community is unique, and that standards reflecting the local “uniqueness” should be established. Developing standards for parks and recreation facilities specifically for the citizens of Waxhaw is the focus of this section.

This study looks at two types of development standards. The first analysis looks at total acreage of park land within the system and how this acreage is broken into park types. From this study, it is possible to see how Waxhaw’s existing parks compare with other communities, both in overall park acreage and park types within this overall acreage.

The second analysis looks at recreation activities and the facilities required to program these activities. By establishing a population-based standard for various recreation activities, this study establishes the type and quantity of facilities the Town should develop now and in the future.

The design standards used in this study were guided by citizen input. The development of these standards is perhaps the most important step in this planning process.

Waxhaw Parks and Recreation Department

The Town of Waxhaw has long recognized the value of parks and recreation to the quality of life in a community. The Town established an Events Division in 2005 which oversaw the Town's first recreation offerings through community events. To that end, the Town developed its first Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Master Plan in 2012. That plan recommended the formation of a formal parks and recreation department which occurred in 2015. Today, the Department offers citizens of Waxhaw outdoor recreation facilities through six neighborhood, community and special use parks and greenway segments covering over 62 acres of land. Existing facilities provide a good variety of recreational experiences (see inventory sheets) including two indoor community facilities (Duncan McDonald House and The Meeting Place).

The Department currently operates under the following Vision and Mission Statements:

Vision – “Professional park facilities, recreational opportunities and quality of life initiatives that unmistakably reflect the unique character of Waxhaw.”

Mission – “To provide recreational, educational and cultural opportunities that promote a healthy lifestyle and excellent quality of life in a safe environment for citizens of all ages, means and abilities.”

The Department has 7 full and 1 part time employees, led by a Director, Parks & Facilities Supervisor/Safety Coordinator, Parks & Recreation Technician, Events Manager, Assistant & Clerk, and Administrative Assistant. A seven member Parks, Cultural and Recreation Advisory Board, comprised of Mayor/Board appointed citizens provides valuable guidance to Department staff on matters of parks and recreational programs.

Currently, recreational programming includes social activities, especially for seniors (coffee) and enrichment activities such as fitness, arts and education. In 2018, the Department offered monthly “Fun Days in the Park” with the assistance of community partners. Programs offered included: a nature classroom, library crafts and reading, fitness fun and backyard games.

Community events have long been popular with Town and area residents bringing many visitors into Waxhaw. Events have included: Kaleidoscope Fest, Autumn Treasures/Grill & Chill'n BBQ Cook-off, Memorial Day, Jammin by the Tracks Concerts, Fright Night, Holiday Festival of Lights, and the Senior Christmas Party. These family-friendly

events have helped Waxhaw earn recognition in 2015 and 2017 for “Best City for Young Families in North Carolina” by NerdWallet and the NC Chapter of the American Planning Association’s Great Main Street award in 2018.

Union County Parks and Recreation Department
The Union County Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of active recreation facilities including soccer, baseball, camping, hiking, swimming, fishing, boating, and picnicking through its three facilities. The County’s largest park is Cane Creek Park, a 1,050-acre regional park surrounding a 350-acre lake located south of Waxhaw. Other County recreation facilities include Fred Kirby Park (Community Park) in Lake Park and Jesse Helms Park (Regional Park) between Monroe and Wingate.

The County and Town have worked collaboratively to coordinate efforts on programs whenever feasible. While the County does provide facilities and programs for Union County residents, these facilities have limited impact on meeting the recreational needs of Waxhaw citizens.

Previous Planning Efforts

Town of Waxhaw Park, Recreation, and Cultural Resource Master Plan

In 2012, the town of Waxhaw completed their first Parks and Recreation Master Plan to provide the framework for the growth of parks and recreation facilities for the residents of Waxhaw. Recommendations and specific implementation strategies were proposed to guide the town in achieving their stated goals:

Goal #1: Ensure sound governance of park, recreation and cultural facilities.

Recommendation: Establish a Park, Recreation and Cultural Facilities Department.

Strategy: The first recommendation of the Plan is for the Town of Waxhaw to create a Park, Recreation and Cultural Facilities Department. To establish the department, the Town Manager should submit a resolution for the establishment of a Park, Recreation and Cultural Facilities Department to Board of Commissioners for vote.

Strategy: The Town should refer to the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) for best practice strategies to ensure that the formation of the Park, Recreation and Cultural Facilities Department is in compliance with CAPRA standards.

Recommendation: Hire a Director of Park, Recreation and Cultural Facilities.

Strategy: Once the department has been approved and is a legal entity of the Town of Waxhaw, the Town Manager, with the approval of the Board of Commissioners, shall begin the search process for a Director.

Strategy: In order to facilitate the search, the town should use the Town Manager to facilitate the selection and hiring process. The Town Manager will outline the minimum qualifications, job description and expectations, salary and job expectations for the director position. Once the Town has selected a candidate, they can make the recommendation to the Board of Commissioners for approval and begin the hiring process.

Recommendation: Define a Park, Recreation and Cultural Facilities Department management and governance structure.

Strategy: Once the Director is hired, he/she in cooperation with the Town Manager, should define a management and governance structure for the department. Of note, the organizational structure should include strategies on how to integrate the existing Park and Recreation Advisory Board members into a future governance role.

Strategy: A management structure should also provide for a designated entity (town staff or a management service) to oversee the maintenance and operation of the downtown Skateboard (Sk8) Park.

Recommendation: Adopt Subdivision Greenway and Park Standards.

Strategy: As a requirement for new subdivisions, the Town of Waxhaw's code of ordinances should include a section requiring new developments to be consistent with publicly approved and adopted plans and policies, including parks, greenways and open space.

Recommendation: Develop a facility maintenance management plan and schedule.

Strategy: Identify the life-cycle and replacement costs for key park and recreation facilities such as shelters, trails, playgrounds, parking areas, and lighting.

Strategy: Budget the replacement cost of these assets over their life cycles and fund replacement through the general fund.

Strategy: If necessary, consider downtown benefit assessment district to fund downtown park facility replacement/renovation.

Recommendation: Continue to grow Park, Recreation and Cultural Facilities Department as needed.

Strategy: The Director should fill department staff

positions based on the number and types of facilities currently under its jurisdiction, capital improvement plans for new facilities, programming demands, future needs of the community, and annual budgeting.

Recommendation: Actively pursue and formalize partnership and joint-use agreements with a broad range of public and private entities to supplement facility needs.

Strategy: The Park, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department and the Town of Waxhaw should form partnerships with other local and regional governmental agencies located adjacent to the Town to better serve neighborhoods and communities split by jurisdictional boundaries.

Strategy: The Park, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department and the Town of Waxhaw should formalize agreements with the Union County School District to ensure public access and shared use of school recreation facilities.

Strategy: Partner with the Public Services Department to support the development of integrated management approaches and plans for water corridors that meet multiple goals such as natural resource protection, sustainability, flood control and public recreation use.

Strategy: Formalize a relationship with local historic groups, such as the Museum of the Waxhaws, to promote recreational, cultural and educational programming for residents and visitors alike.

Strategy: Formalize a relationship with the Waxhaw Athletic Association to deliver services and programs to Waxhaw youth.

Strategy: Continue to work with the Carolina Thread Trail for expansion of the greenway and trail system.

Recommendation: Commission a Greenway Master Plan.

Strategy: Continue to develop a town-wide pedestrian & bicycle network. Reference the Town's Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan and the Union County Carolina Thread Trail Plan, in the development of a town-wide Greenway Master Plan.

Recommendation: Update the Park, Recreation and Cultural Resources Master Plan.

Strategy: The Park, Recreation and Cultural Resources Master Plan should be updated every 10 years in order to stay relevant.

Goal #2: Promote Waxhaw as a quality and attractive place to live, visit and recreate.

Recommendation: Improve existing outdoor facilities.

Strategy: Install lights at Harvey Clay Nesbit Park to extend the usable hours of the facility.

Strategy: Partner with Union County Public Schools to repair and update facilities at South Providence School site.

Strategy: Add additional fields to existing facilities (schools and Town-owned).

Strategy: Partner with Museum of the Waxhaws to repair and update existing outdoor facilities for use as a special use park.

Recommendation: Formalize relationship with Union County Public Schools to secure a joint-use agreement to alleviate some of the demand for recreational field space.

Recommendation: Acquire land to accommodate 3 community parks and 8 neighborhood parks.

Strategy: Initiate planning and design studies for new facilities.

Recommendation: Acquire land to build a dog park.

Strategy: In partnership with private and/or institutional land owners acquire land to build a dog park convenient to Waxhaw residents.

Recommendation: Extend the greenway system.

Strategy: Secure easements and initiate a planning study for construction of the greenway from downtown to the South Providence School to Museum of the Waxhaws.

Strategy: Secure easements and initiate a planning study for construction of the greenway on Twelve Mile Creek.

Recommendation: Acquire historic properties in conjunction with and supported by the Waxhaw Historic Preservation Commission.

Strategy: The Park, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department in partnership with the Town should preserve and enhance the historic water tower as a community asset.

Strategy: The Park, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department in partnership with the Town should renovate and enhance the former police station building and site as a community asset.

Strategy: Initiate a feasibility study for the Rodman-Heath Cotton Mill as a senior center.

Goal #3: Improve athletic, leisure and cultural programming for residents of all ages.

Recommendation: Develop leisure programs for a broad spectrum of interests and age levels.

Strategy: Assess existing programming offerings and conduct a needs assessment to identify gaps.

Strategy: Survey existing service providers to determine current usage and participation rates of Waxhaw residents.

Strategy: Formalize relationships with local organizations such as area churches, Council on Aging in Union County,

Centralina Council of Governments and others to develop leisure programs focused on the senior population including trips and outings, card clubs, social events and historic and cultural programs.

Strategy: Partner with local artists, historians, fitness professionals to provide reduced-fee programs available to residents.

Recommendation: Develop historic and cultural resource programs for a broad spectrum of interests and age levels.

Strategy: Assess existing programming offerings and conduct a needs assessment to identify gaps.

Strategy: Survey existing programs to determine current usage and participation rates of Waxhaw residents.

Strategy: Formalize relationships with local organizations such as Museum of the Waxhaws and Waxhaw Historic Preservation Commission to develop programs focused on historic and cultural events.

Strategy: The Town of Waxhaw has a number of annual programmed events, such as the Spring Fest, July 4th Parade, First Friday Events and 12 Days of Christmas. The Park, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department through the Events Division should take an active role in the organization and programming of these events.

Strategy: Promote a monthly historic Waxhaw event.

Strategy: Partner with local artists and historians to provide reduced-fee programs available to residents.

Strategy: Consider an interpretative/working farm at Museum of the Waxhaws.

Strategy: Explore ideas and opportunities with the Waxhaw Central Railroad, Ron Zimmerman, to consider ways to educate Waxhaw residents about the history and importance of the train to Waxhaw's growth and development.

Recommendation: Develop athletic programs for a broad spectrum of interests and age levels.

Strategy: Assess existing programming offerings and conduct a needs assessment to identify gaps.

Strategy: Survey existing service providers, including Waxhaw Athletic Association and area YMCAs to determine current usage and participation rates of Waxhaw residents.

Strategy: Identify the type and level of program to be provided by the Department. The following chart identifies typical athletic program offerings:

Strategy: Outline programming goals for athletic programs including target population, facility needs, costs, funding sources, etc.

Goal #4: Increase community awareness of recreation, cultural and historical amenities.

Recommendation: Promote community stewardship of

recreation, cultural and historic amenities.

Strategy: Host a community clean-up day.

Strategy: Host a community walking tour of existing and planned park facilities.

Strategy: Continue to assist community historic walks.

Strategy: Create a neighborhood adopt-a-park program.

Strategy: Coordinate a community garden.

Recommendation: Enhance marketing of programs and facilities to residents and visitors alike.

Strategy: Partner with business to identify needs of non-resident population.

Strategy: Produce marketing materials to be distributed at local businesses and service providers.

Recommendation: Develop and institute a standardized wayfinding system for parks, greenway, historic and cultural facilities.

Strategy: Develop a wayfinding system that includes consistent signage and a Town map (in-print and on-line) of amenities.

Recommendation: Identify and preserve sites of historic significance

Strategy: Increase programming to educate residents about the region's history, including Native American history, and preservation of historic assets.

Strategy: Adopt evaluation criteria for potential sites and properties to be added to the Waxhaw National Register of Historic Districts.

Strategy: Retool the existing water tower to serve as a town icon.

Union County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan 2025

In 2015, Union County completed a Comprehensive System-wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The plan looked at park and recreational needs for all county residents. Plan recommendations were divided into regions that included the unincorporated areas of the county and several of the county's municipalities. Under this structure, the master plan looked at the County leading efforts that increase coordination with the municipalities among other agencies and other partners in meeting the recreational and open space needs of the County. The plan suggests that the County focus on the development and management of regional and large scale parks, facilities and nature preserves while supporting municipalities in developing and maintaining community and neighborhood parks and facilities.

The plan further recommends that the County work

with the municipalities to develop and manage trails and school parks. The County can assist municipalities by providing mini-grants to build neighborhood and community parks and greenways. As a part of the planning process, Union County Parks & Recreation began to hold quarterly meetings with the municipal park & recreation departments for continued dialogue and coordination. Those meetings have continued with each municipality taking turns hosting the meetings.

Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan for Union County and Participating Municipalities

In 2011, Union County along with Waxhaw and the other municipalities worked with Carolina Thread Trail to develop a long range county-wide greenway master plan. Two main Thread Trail corridors are proposed through Waxhaw: Corridor F which primarily follows Twelve Mile Creek from the Lancaster SC County line connecting with Wesley Chapel and Corridor G connecting Mineral Springs. Corridor K follows Twelve Mile Creek south through Downtown following Highway 75 towards Mineral Springs.

Also in 2011, the Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan was developed for Lancaster County SC. Within that plan, Corridor D would connect Indian Land and Andrew Jackson State Park to Waxhaw (Corridor F in the Union County Plan) via Twelve Mile Creek realizing an excellent opportunity for a cross-state connection and partnership.

Waxhaw Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan

In 2012, the Town completed a Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan. The planning process included an inventory and assessment of the Town's existing sidewalks and greenways, public engagement similar to the process used for this planning report, and recommendations for sidewalk and greenway improvements. The Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan recognized the value of greenways and identified the Town's proposed greenway network and proposed regional Carolina Thread Trail. The following recommendations regarding the development of a safe and inviting trail and greenway system were made:

- Establish conservation easements for farmland that incorporates planned greenways.
- Initiate right-of-way agreements for trails and associated improvements.
- Ensure that all new developments respect planned or proposed corridors for greenways.

- Explore opportunities to utilize creek lands and floodways, utility rights-of-way, and existing parks.
- Utilize existing undeveloped Town-owned street right-of-way for sidewalk and trail development.
- Coordinate greenway planning with the Union County Public Works baseline infrastructure study.
- Incorporate equestrian facilities into greenways.
- Coordinate with neighboring municipalities and Union County on projects within the vicinity of Waxhaw's corporate limits.

In addition to twenty-eight (28) proposed trail or shared trail projects listed in the plan, the planning document provided very helpful information on the development of greenways and multi-use paths. While not a comprehensive greenway plan, the planning document provides very good information with regard to the value of greenways, pedestrian access to parks and improvements to make Waxhaw a more walkable community. It is suggested that the Town revisit the recommendations put forth in this plan as they have restated as parts of the other plans summarized here. It may be time to conduct an update to the pedestrian plan.

Highway 16 Corridor Plan

In 2014, the town of Waxhaw adopted a plan that focuses on the main spine of Highway 16 that connects Downtown Waxhaw to all points north. Recommendations within the plan that relate or have an impact of parks & recreation in the Town included:

- Construction of a multi-use path along Highway 16 that connects to the Carolina Thread Trail.
- Building open space amenities including parks and trails within walking distance to neighborhoods that connect to mixed-use and residential development.
- Include pocket parks and open space in new retail/mixed-use developments.
- Create a Trailhead Park for the Carolina Thread Trail between Prescott and Cureton.

Downtown Waxhaw Vision Plan

In 2012, the Waxhaw Board of Commissioners embarked upon a process to develop a vision for development and investment in the downtown area. The guiding principles of the plan included:

- Mobility
- Parking and Wayfinding
- Marketing and Strategic Positioning
- Civic Investments
- Infill and Redevelopment Strategies



- Regulating Plan and Coding Strategies

The plan incorporated all aspects of community development, including Parks and Recreation. Within the principles above, the following parks and recreation focused projects were identified for future implementation:

Mobility

- Facilitate the construction of the Carolina Thread Trail through Main Street to connect to the greater regional network.
- Construct a multi-use path connecting other areas of the community to Downtown Waxhaw.

Civic Investments

- Locate, acquire and construct a new Town Hall in the Downtown Waxhaw walkable core, and incorporate an “outdoor room” as a civic gathering and community meeting plan in the Town Hall design.
- Expand David G. Barnes Park to connect the South Providence School to downtown.
- Build a Community and Senior Center near downtown and connect it to the larger parks and trails system.

As part of the community engagement process, participants ranked “Large Park/Green Space” as the third most important use behind “Formal Civic Space/Gathering Place” and “Restaurants” needed to have a vibrant, sustainable Downtown Waxhaw.

Waxhaw-Marvin Road Corridor Study

In 2018, the Town conducted a study looking at a vision for the future of the Waxhaw-Marvin Corridor. With the increased development and traffic along NC 16, the Town felt it was important to be proactive in the future development of Waxhaw-Marvin Road which is already becoming heavily traveled with drivers looking to avoid the congestion on NC 16. Recommendations include the development of a multi-use path along the east side of Waxhaw-Marvin Road from Bonds Grove Church Road to Helms Road with safe connections to the Waxhaw-Marvin property, Town Creek Park, Twelve Mile Creek Greenway, and the Carolina Thread Trail.

Technical Assistance Panel Report - Downtown Waxhaw

Technical Assistance Panel Report – Downtown Waxhaw
 Also in 2018, the Town worked with the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) offered by ULI Charlotte to help determine the highest and best use for several municipally-owned properties in the historic downtown district. Six

of the nine parcels studied are currently being used by Waxhaw Parks and Recreation.

- Duncan McDonald House
- Water Tower site
- Broome/Main Corner lot
- Waxhaw Sk8 Park
- David G. Barnes Children’s Park
- Waxhaw Parks and Recreation Dept. Admin. Building

Some of the guiding principles revolve around parks and recreation such as “Enhance downtown as a destination for residents and visitors”, “Promote daytime activity” and “Expand open space opportunities”.

Initial recommendations that could affect parks and recreation including using the Duncan McDonald House for more private functions and income producing community space. The ten-acre parcel south of the Sk8 Park could serve as over flow parking, community space for outdoor events and/or redevelopment as a multi-dimensional public park with walking paths and water features, etc.

NC Outdoor Recreation Plan

The 2015-2020 North Carolina Recreation Plan provide an indication on the most popular recreation activities in the state. The survey conducted for the plan shows that the most popular outdoor recreation activities in North Carolina currently are:

- Visiting a beach or lake
- Walking for pleasure or exercise
- Visiting parks or historical sites
- Hiking, trails
- Fishing – freshwater, bank or pier
- Viewing scenery
- Fishing – freshwater, boat
- Nature viewing
- Swimming, all types

Also, the survey showed that park users feel that the following types of recreation facilities are currently needed across the state:

- Unpaved trails
- Picnic shelters
- Wildlife observation sites
- Paved trails
- Multi-use fields
- Canoe, kayak launches
- Mountain bike trails
- Nature centers
- Playgrounds

Many of the activities listed above also showed up as top priorities in the surveys conducted in Waxhaw as well.

Commonalities Between Plans & Infrastructure

Commonalities Between Plans & Infrastructure

Each of the above plans builds upon the other planning efforts completed to date. Common recommendations among the plans include greenway development and connectivity to the Carolina Thread Trail system as well as development of pocket parks and open space amenities within development of mixed-use and residential communities. Expansion of the David G. Barnes Children’s Park combined with development of the ten-acres south of the park and connection to South Providence School are also familiar themes. Most plans discuss expanding green space and civic opportunities in the downtown district. Partnerships and coordination with neighboring municipalities on projects in or near Waxhaw also showed up in some of the plans.

Standards for Development

The first step in developing a recreation and park needs assessment is to establish standards for park and facility development. Tables 3A-Park Acreage on page 3-9 and 3A-Facilities on page 3-10 provide an overview of standards used for both park acreage and facilities. Each of these tables provide standards used by other North Carolina municipalities in establishing park and recreation needs. The final column on each of these tables indicates the standard of development recommended specifically for Waxhaw. These recommended standards are based on input received from the survey, public workshop and stakeholder interviews.

It should be noted that the standards for development established for the Town of Waxhaw are (in most cases) similar to other communities in North Carolina. Likewise, the needs that are identified in the plan will lead the Town to develop parks and facilities comparable to many other communities of similar size.

Park Needs

The description of park needs identified in this Master Plan are based on park types identified in Appendix H and as defined by the National Recreation and Park Association.

Mini Parks

Currently, the Town has no Mini Parks, although there is David G. Barnes Children's Park located in the downtown area. While the national trend in park development has moved away from Mini Parks because of their limited play value and higher maintenance cost, there are some situations where Mini Parks provide important recreational value.

Based on a fairly common standard of development for Mini Parks (.25 acres per 1,000 people), there is a need for 3.75 acres of Mini Parks in Waxhaw. While the Town currently has several small civic spaces, there is a need for at least two Mini Parks in the Department's park inventory.

One opportunity for meeting this need would be to develop the small 1.67-acre tract in the Wysacky Park neighborhood.

It is also understood that in the future there may be situations/opportunities that may warrant the development of Mini Parks by the Town, or private entities may choose to develop small "Pocket Parks" as part of residential or mixed use development.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks are typically an important component of a municipal park system. Currently, there is only one existing Neighborhood Park (Town Creek Park) in the town covering approximately 19 acres of park land which is a little large by NRPA Standards. Typically, Neighborhood Parks are a minimum of 5 - 7 acres. Facility expansion at Town Creek Park has occurred in 2018 with the addition of a shelter and play equipment adding to its importance as a trailhead for 12 Mile Creek Greenway.

Based on the Town's existing population of 15,200, and a supply of only 19 acres of Neighborhood Parks, Waxhaw residents have access to Neighborhood Parks at a ratio of about 1/2 acre of Neighborhood Park land for every 1,000 people. This is a low parkland/user ratio. Most municipal departments strive to provide Neighborhood Parks at a ratio of 2.0-2.5 acres of park land per 1,000 people. While there was little demand for developing additional Neighborhood Parks expressed in the public workshop or the community survey, based on this low ratio of Neighborhood Parks, there is a need for additional park acreage for Neighborhood Parks.

This planning report recommends a relatively conservative standard for Neighborhood Park development of 2.0 acres

of park land for 1,000 people. This standard reflects the standard used by most municipalities throughout North Carolina. Based on a standard of 2 acre/1000 people, there is a need for 12 to 13 additional acres of Neighborhood Park land in Waxhaw. Based on this assessment, there is a need for one or two additional Neighborhood Parks depending on the available acreage.

Community Parks

Currently, the Town has one Community Park on approximately 40 acres of park land serving local residents. While the park functions as a Community Park, the slow overall completion and limited facility offerings greatly restrict its recreational offerings.

Utilizing a Level of Service (LOS) standard of 5 acres of Community Park land for every 1,000 people, the citizens of Waxhaw need approximately 30-40 additional acres in the Community Park category to meet current needs. As seen in Table 3A-Park Acreage, 5 acres/1,000 people is a relatively common standard of development for Community Parks.

The need for additional park acreage within this classification could be addressed by developing the ten-acre expansion south of David G. Barnes Children's Park and the 34-acre parcel on Waxhaw-Marvin Road.

District and Regional Parks

District Parks and Regional Parks

District Parks and Regional Parks are typically developed by larger municipal departments and/or county agencies. Most small to mid-size municipalities do not develop these larger park types.

Union County currently has two District Parks; Cane Creek Park and Jesse Helms Park. While Cane Creek Park is located somewhat close to the citizens of Waxhaw, based on its facility offerings and distance, it is not fully meeting the needs of Waxhaw citizens for a District Park.

While the development of a District Park may be outside the focus of the Town, the need for a larger District Park seems apparent; however, the development of a District Park should be the responsibility of the County. The Town might consider partnering with the County in the development of a future District Park, if the program of development would include facilities that will benefit Waxhaw residents.

With regard to Regional Parks, the citizens of Waxhaw are

very fortunate because of the abundant resources of the State of South Carolina and other municipal governments in the region. One South Carolina State Park (Andrew Jackson State Park) is with relatively easy driving distance of the town. In addition to Andrew Jackson State Park, Marvin Effird Park (Marvin), Dogwood Park (Wesley Chapel), Mineral Springs Town Park (Mineral Springs) and Monroe Aquatics & Fitness Center (Monroe) also provide the citizens of Waxhaw additional recreation opportunities.

With these and many other natural resources found in the area, the need to develop a Regional Park should not a priority for the Town.

Countywide Park Needs

Reviewing or assessing countywide needs is beyond the scope of this planning report, but one thing seems obvious from this study. Union County offers very limited parks and recreation facilities, and most of the facilities that are offered as not serving Waxhaw residents. Only a few parks have been developed since the Department was established. This situation results in a large number of county citizens not being well served by existing county parks. Residents living in the unincorporated areas of the county have little access to typical park amenities like playgrounds, picnic facilities, ballfields, and walking trails. From the Town’s perspective this lack of parks and recreation facilities in rural areas places even greater demand on the Town’s parks and recreation facilities.

Facility Needs

Minimum standards for recreational facilities (i.e., ballfields, courts, picnic shelters, etc.) proposed for the Town were developed from a review of standards used by other communities similar to Waxhaw, and from input gained during the public input process. These standards, identified in Table 3B-Facility Standards and discussed in greater detail in Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations, are the minimum recreation facility standards for the Town’s park system.

Based on these standards, the number of public facilities needed in the park system are identified in Table 3D-Facility Needs and summarized in the following chart.

The “Existing Facilities” column indicates the number of existing recreation facilities Waxhaw residents currently have available. The “Facility Need” column identifies the number of new facilities currently needed by town residents. Based on the relatively high projected 10-year

growth for the Town, current recreation needs are also the 10-year projected need.

As an example of how the needs assessment is presented; consider playgrounds. Currently, there are 3 existing playgrounds serving community residents. Based on the Standards for Facility Development that have been recommended for the town (one playground for every 2,000 people in the service population), there is a current demand for 7.5 playgrounds ($15,000 \div 2,000 = 7.5$); there is a need to construct 4 additional playgrounds (demand of 7-3 existing playgrounds) to meet the current demand.

	Existing Facilities	Facility Need
Ballfields	4	3
Football Fields	0	1
Soccer Fields	6	4
Multi-Purpose Fields	1	3
Basketball Courts	0	4
Tennis Courts	0	3
Volleyball Courts	0	3
Horseshoes	0	2
Shuffleboard Courts	0	1
Playground	3	7
Picnic Shelters	2	5
Walking Trails (miles)	3.2	6
Amphitheater	0	1
Community Garden	0	1
Indoor Swimming Pool	0	1
Recreation Center w/Gym	0	1
Community Building	1	2
Dog Park	0	2
Skate Park	1	1
Disc Golf	0	1
Pickleball	0	2

Based on the standards established through the public input process, the primary recreation facility needs for Waxhaw residents include indoor aquatics facility, walking/biking/fitness trails and greenways. Sports facilities do not seem to be a priority. Unique recreation facilities (spraygrounds and dog parks) should also be considered. There is a great need for a Multi-Purpose Community Center for flexible indoor physical fitness and education programming. Likewise, there was demand for completion (H.C. Nesbit Park) and or expansion (David G. Barnes/Horton Property) of the Town’s existing parks as well as development of the 34-acre tract on Waxhaw-Marvin Road as a passive recreation facility. See Section Four Proposals and Recommendations for additional recommendations.

**Table 3-A Park Acreage
Town of Waxhaw
Standards for Park Acreage
By Park Classification**

NRPA Guidelines & Communities of Similar Size

Park Type/Typical Acreage (Acres per 1,000 Population)

Park Types	NRPA Guidelines	Union County	Matthews	Mount Holly	Waynesville	Belmont	Waxhaw
Mini Parks	1-3 acres .25 acres/1,000	1-2 acres .25 acres/1,000	1-3 acres .25 acres/1,000	1-3 acres .25 acres/1,000	1-2 acres .25 acres/1,000	1-2 acres 0.5 acres/1,000	1-2 acres .25 acres/1,000
Neighborhood Parks	7-15 acres 2 acres/1,000	7-15 acres 1 acres/1,000	7-15 acres 2.5 acres/1,000	7-15 acres 2 acres/1,000	7-15 acres 2 acres/1,000	10-15 acres 2 acres/1,000	7-15 acres 2 acres/1,000
Community Parks	40-100 acres 5 acres/1,000	20-30 acres 2 acres/1,000	40-100 acres 5 acres/1,000	30-50 acres 4 acres/1,000	20-30 acres 5.0 acres/1,000	20-30 acres 2.5 acres/1,000	20-30 acres 5 acres/1,000
District Parks		200 acres 3 acres/1,000	± 200 acres 5 acres/1,000	200-400 acres 10 acres/1,000	200 acres 2.5 acres/1,000	200 acres 5 acres/1,000	200 acres 2.5 acres/1,000
Regional Parks*	100-250 acres 10 acres/1,000	100-250 acres 10 acres/1,000	100-250 acres 10 acres/1,000	+1,000 acres 10 acres/1,000	100-250 acres 10 acres/1,000	1,000 acres 10 acres/1,000	1,000 acres 10 acres/1,000

* Regional Parks are typically provided by state or federal agencies.

**Table 3B – Facility Standards
Town of Waxhaw
Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

Facilities	National Recreation and Park Association	N.C. Dept. of Environment & Natural Resources	Union County	Matthews	Mount Holly	Waynesville	Belmont	Waxhaw
Fields								
Adult Baseball	1/12,000	1/5,000		1/15,000	1/15,000	1/20,000	1/10,000	1/20,000
Youth Baseball	1/10,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/2,000	1/10,000
Softball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000
Football	1/10,000	1/20,000	1/10,000	1/20,000	1/10,000	1/20,000	1/5,000	1/20,000
Soccer	1/10,000	1/20,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/7,500	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000
Courts								
Basketball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000
Tennis	1/2,000	1/2,000	1/4,000	1/4,000	1/2,500	1/2,000	1/2,000	1/5,000
Volleyball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000
Shuffleboard	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/10,000
Horseshoe	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/10,000
Outdoor Areas								
Picnic Shelter	N/A	1/3,000	1/5,000	1/3,000	1/2,500	1/2,000	1/3,000	1/3,000
Playground	N/A	1/1,000	1/5,000	1/1,000	1/2,000	1/2,000	1/1,000	1/2,000
Activities*								
Trails/Greenway								
Walking	1/region	.4 mile/1,000	1/5,000	.4 mile/1,000	.8 mile/1,000	.6 mile/1,000	.4 mile/1,000	.4 mile/ 1,000
Equestrian				.4 mile/1,000		.4 mile/1,000	.4 mile/1,000	.4 mile/ 1,000
Specialized								
Community Center	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/30,000	1/20,000	1/15,000	1/10,000	1/20,000	1/10,000
Gymnasium	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/60,000			1/10,000		1/10,000
Swimming Pool	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/10,000	1/20,000	1/10,000
Golf Course	1/25,000	1/25,000		N/A	N/A	1/25,000	1/25,000	1/25,000
Bicycling/Urban	N/A	1 mile/1,000		1 mile/1,000	1 mile/1,000	N/A	1 mile/1,000	1 mile/1,000
Camping				1 site/1,000		N/A		N/A
Archery Area	1/50,000	1/50,000		1/50,000	N/A	N/A		N/A
Stream/Lake Mileage	N/A	.2 mile/1,000		.2 mile/1,000	.8 mile/1,000	.2 mile/1,000	.2 mile/1,000	N/A
Stream/Lake Access	N/A	1/10 miles		1/10 miles	1/10 miles	1/10 miles	1/10 miles	N/A

Recreation Facility Standards for Development

**Table 3C – Park Needs
Town of Waxhaw
Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Park Needs Assessment**

Park Types	Waxhaw Standards	Existing Parks	2019 Demand 15,200 Population (2017)	2019 Need	2029 Demand 20,900 Population	2029 Need
Mini Parks	1-2 acres .25 acres/1,000	2 parks	2 parks 3.75 acres		3-4 parks 5 acres	2029 Need 1-2 additional parks 2+ acres
Neighborhood Parks	7-15 acres 2 acres/1,000	1 park 19 acres	2 parks 30 acres	1 additional park: 10 acres 1 additional park:30-40 acres	3-4 parks 40 acres	1-2 additional parks 10+ acres
Community Parks	20-30 acres 5 acres/1,000 200 acres	1 park 40 acres	2 parks 75 acres	Responsibility of County Needs met by County Parks	3 parks 100 acres	1 additional park: 20-25 acres Responsibility of County Needs met by County Parks
District Park*	2.5 acres/1,000 1,000 acres	N/A				
Regional Parks**	10 acres/1,000	N/A				

*District Park needs are typically met by county agencies. Small municipal agencies rarely provide District Parks.

**Regional Park needs are typically met by state parks. Small municipal agencies rarely provide Regional Park facilities.

**Table 3D - Facility Needs
Town of Waxhaw
Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Recreation Facility Needs Assessment**

Based on a Benchmarking Analysis of national, state, and other similar agencies standards, and with input from the community, the following table reflects the recreational facility needs of Waxhaw.

Facilities	Existing Facilities	2019 Standards	2019 Demand Population 15,200	2019 Need	2029 Demand Population 20,900	2029 Need
Fields						
Adult Baseball	1	1/20,000	1	1	1	1
Youth Baseball	3	1/10,000	1.5	0	2	0
Softball	0	1/5,000	3	0	4	0
Football	0	1/20,000	0.5	0	1	0
Soccer	6	1/5,000	3	0	4	0
Multi-Purpose	1	1/9,500	1	0	2	1
Courts						
Basketball	0	1/5,000	3	2	4	2
Tennis	0	1/5,000	3	0	4	2
Volleyball	0	1/5,000	2	2	4	1
Shuffleboard	0	1/10,000	1	0	2	1
Horseshoes	0	1/10,000	1	0	1	1
Outdoor Areas						
Picnic Shelter	2	1/3,000	5	3	7	2
Playground	3	1/2,000	7	4	10	2
Trails						
Walking	3.2	.4 mile/ 1,000	6	3	12	6
Specialized						
Community Center	0	1/10,000	1	1	2	1
Gymnasium	0	1/10,000	1	1	2	1
Swimming Pool (indoor)	0	1/20,000	1	1	1	0
Pickleball	0	1/10,000	3	3	4	1
Outdoor Challenge	0	1/10,000	0.75	0	1	1
Skate Board	1	1/15,000	1	1	2	1
Disc Golf	1	1/7,500	1	1	2	1
Dog Park	0	1/7,500	2	2	3	1
Splash Pad	0	1/10,000	1	1	2	1
Community Garden	0	1/10,000	1	1	2	1
Amphitheater	0	1/10,000	1	1	2	1



Waxhaw residents enjoy various Recreational Programs

SECTION FOUR PROPOSALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Community leaders in Waxhaw have long recognized the importance of parks and recreation facilities in the quality of life in a community and have historically invested in parks. Overall the Town has some excellent parks, and certainly, the creation of the Waxhaw Parks & Recreation Department is an example of the commitment town leaders have made to recreation.

Currently, there are just under 62 acres of municipal park land serving Waxhaw residents. The majority of this park acreage is found in the Town's two largest parks; H.C. Nesbit Park and Town Creek Park. Based on a population of around 15,200 people, there is a need for additional parkland (in Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks). In addition, there are deficiencies in some recreational facilities and all of the town's parks are underdeveloped and/or need completion or expansion. Finally, there is a need, and heavy community desire, to expand walking trails and greenway connectivity throughout the community.

Identification of these recreational needs/opportunities comes at a time when Waxhaw (like most communities in North Carolina) continues to grow out of the nation's worst economic downturn since the Great Depression and continued uncertainty. It is very important for the Town to invest the resources allocated for park improvements wisely.

Waxhaw is not alone in its mission to provide parks and recreational facilities to its citizens. There are a number of public and private agencies and organizations in the community that could share in that role.

The Union County Recreation and Parks Department is also a provider of parks and recreation programs to Waxhaw residents. While the County Department does a good job providing facilities and programs on a very limited budget, as this report indicates, the facilities and parks they offer are limited. There is a need for additional parks and facilities in the County's park system. Wherever possible, the Town and County should work collaboratively to improve park and recreation opportunities.

Another major player with the mission of improving community health and quality of life in Waxhaw and the region is the Carolina Thread Trail (Catawba Lands Conservancy). The Town should continue to look for opportunities to partner with the Carolina Thread Trail in the promotion of healthy lifestyles through the continued development of trail and greenway facilities that keep people active.

Union County Public Schools offer its students a wide range of athletic facilities. Some of those facilities are currently being used for non-school recreational purposes. While there is currently some joint use of facilities, the exploration and expansion of joint use opportunities would benefit taxpayers.

Finally, the private sector plays an important role in providing recreational opportunities within the community. A number of fitness clubs, neighborhood swim clubs and amenity areas, churches, and other private or quasi-private organizations provide valuable recreation opportunities to the citizens of Waxhaw. The facilities and programs these private sector organizations provide should be considered as Waxhaw plans development of future facilities. Existing agreements with the Waxhaw Athletic Association and the future YMCA are important in providing recreation opportunities in Waxhaw.

To determine specific park and recreation recommendations for Waxhaw, it is essential to clearly understand how the Town will partner with the other recreational providers in the community. This cooperative effort will eliminate duplication of facilities and services. The proposals in this Master Plan are based on what each recreational provider is anticipated to offer through the ten year planning period (2019-2029).

State of South Carolina

While the State of North Carolina does not have any state parks within the region, the State of South Carolina does have Andrew Jackson State Park within a relatively short drive of Waxhaw. It is anticipated that the State of South Carolina will continue to maintain and operate the state park. Waxhaw, along with other regional government agencies, should express their interest in seeing this park enhanced to its utmost potential. This may include the expansion of facilities and recreational opportunities. The State should continue to offer a variety of recreational facilities and programs on a regional basis. In addition, the State should be the provider of regional state parks that include opportunities for camping, fishing, biking, and special facilities of regional and statewide interest.

Union County Parks & Recreation Department

As noted throughout this report, Union County Parks & Recreation Department is the primary provider of parks and recreation facilities to all citizens of the county. Since its inception, Union County has been responsible for maintaining its parks and providing recreation programs to all County residents; including those living in Waxhaw.

Unfortunately, the County's park system is limited in the parks and recreation facilities it offers (See Section Three: Recreation Standards and Needs Assessment). A quick review of the County's existing facilities indicates very few facilities offered by the County actually serve Waxhaw residents.

As the Town moves to expand its parks and improve its existing parks and greenways these improvements will enhance Waxhaw residents, and will also benefit County residents as well. It is important that the Town and the County communicate (and work together) as they both strive to provide parks and recreation services to their citizens.

Union County School System

The Town has collaborated with other agencies and organizations in the community in the delivery of quality leisure experiences and the development and management of parks and recreation areas and facilities. The Parks and Recreation Department should seek opportunities to collaborate with Union County Schools.

With three school campuses located in and around the town, there are many opportunities for joint use of school facilities. The Department should look for ways to work with school officials to joint use school facilities. In return, the Department should be open to offering assistance with operation and maintenance of those facilities that are used.

Waxhaw Parks & Recreation Department Proposals & Recommendations

As previously discussed, the Town of Waxhaw is the primary provider of parks and recreation programs to community residents. Starting as a Parks, Cultural and Recreation Advisory Board in 2005, the Department, created in 2015, has continuously worked to provide quality facilities and programs to local residents.

Existing parks in the town are primarily oriented toward smaller parks (Neighborhood Parks and Community

Parks). While the existing municipal parks provide a foundation of recreational facilities and green space, there are several recreational needs that are not adequately being met, and several of the existing parks are underdeveloped and need some improvements and expansions.

While the Town is the primary provider of parks and recreation to Waxhaw residents, it should work with other agencies in the community to provide the park land and facilities whenever possible. This collaborative effort should include working with the County's Recreation and Parks Department. Likewise, the Town should work with Union County Schools by developing and maintaining joint use agreements on school facilities wherever possible.

Through the planning and public involvement process, standards for community park acreage and recreation facilities have been developed. These standards were defined in Section Three: Standards and Needs Assessment and identified in Table 3A-Park Acreage and Table 3B-Facility Standards.

Utilizing the standards for development and applying them to the Town's current and projected population, a needs assessment for both parks and recreation facilities was developed. The summary of this needs assessment is found in the tables at the end of Section Three.

While the tables provide "the numbers" of the needs assessment, this section will define the reasoning behind the numbers and a description of how the numbers are used to provide recommendations that will ultimately guide the Town in the coming decade.

We begin with an overview of the different park types and how these parks will be developed in the future.

Regional Parks

Regional Parks are typically large, passive oriented parks that highlight, utilize and protect a unique natural features. These parks, as the name implies, serve people from across a region; therefore, most people have to travel to enjoy these park types. As noted in Section Three, Regional Parks are typically offered by national, state, or county agencies. Occasionally larger municipalities will provide a Regional Park.

The citizens of Waxhaw are currently served by one State Park (Andrew Jackson) and one County regional park (Cane Creek) that are within an easy drive. These two parks provide a wide range of low impact recreation

opportunities including hiking, biking, camping, picnicking, fishing, equestrian trails, environmental education, wildlife/bird observation, etc. In addition to these outdoor recreation opportunities, these two parks also offer visitor and nature centers for nature study and wildlife appreciation.

Andrew Jackson State Park and Cane Creek Park provide excellent large scale parks for Waxhaw residents. In addition to these two parks, the Catawba River Blueway and Anne Springs Close Greenway, also in South Carolina, are also within an easy drive of the town. Visitors to these amenities can enjoy a wide variety of low impact outdoor recreational experience.

Based on the abundant natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities offered at the two regional parks and other amenities, the need for large Regional Parks for Waxhaw residents has been met.

District Parks

District Parks are another large park type often provided by county agencies or larger municipalities. These parks are typically in the 100-acre range, and provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities.

The closest District parks to Waxhaw are Colonel Francis Beatty Park in Charlotte (12 miles from downtown Waxhaw) and Jesse Helms Park (18 miles from downtown Waxhaw) in Monroe. Both parks are slightly higher in acreage leaning towards regional park status, but offer more active recreation opportunities than the regional offerings listed above. Both parks are a bit distant from Waxhaw, so it could be noted that there are no district parks in close proximity to Waxhaw and serving Waxhaw residents.

The Town should be open to collaborating with Union County in the development of a District Park proximate to Waxhaw if that opportunity should present itself in the future.

Community Parks

Community Parks are an important component in most municipal park systems. These parks are usually large enough (30-50 acres) to provide both valuable active recreation opportunities and preservation of undeveloped open space and passive recreation areas.

There is one park in Waxhaw that is currently serving as a Community Park. H.C. Nesbit Park remains the most

popular park in Waxhaw, yet it is underdeveloped for the population it serves. While improvements are underway to add restrooms and concessions, additional master planning should occur to address accessible circulation, lighting, shade structures and play equipment, at a minimum.

Based on input received during the public engagement process, there is a need for expansion of Community Parks. Utilizing a standard of 5 acres of Community Parkland for every 1,000 people in the service population, there is a need for 35-40 additional acres of Community Parkland. Based on this need, the Town should look for opportunities to develop the 34-acre tract on Waxhaw-Marvin Road as their second Community Park. A Site Specific Master Plan should be developed for this undeveloped tract.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks play an important role in providing both active and passive recreation in most municipal park systems. These parks, usually in the 5-10 acre range, are large enough to include both active and passive recreation opportunities. Most Community Parks also serve as a Neighborhood Park to those citizens living within a mile radius.

The citizens of Waxhaw are currently being served by one Neighborhood Park, Town Creek Park on 19 acres of parkland. A bit larger by typical Neighborhood Park standards, Town Creek Park had very limited recreational facilities (open space and trailhead parking) until recently with the addition of a shelter and play equipment. Since Neighborhood Parks typically serve as the primary building block of most municipal park systems, one Neighborhood Park is not adequate to serve the 15,200 people living in Waxhaw.

Utilizing a relatively conservative level of service standard for Neighborhood Parks (2 acres per 1,000 people), there is a need for an additional ± 10 acres of Neighborhood Parkland in Waxhaw. Typically, Neighborhood Parks are 5-10 acres; preferably in the 6-8 acre range. That would indicate a need for at least one or two additional Neighborhood Parks located equitably within the Town. Based on the service radius of the Town's existing parks, there are several neighborhoods due north and south of downtown that are underserved by Neighborhood Parks.

In the future, the Town should acquire land and develop Site Specific Master Plans for new Neighborhood Parks with an emphasis on expanding facilities at Town Creek Park.

Mini Parks

Mini Parks are the smallest of the park types. These parks typically are less than an acre and provide a limited range of activities (playground, picnic shelter, benches, etc.). The Town currently has two Mini Parks (David G. Barnes Children's Park and Dare Steele Memorial Garden), although there are several small civic sites in and around the downtown area.

Utilizing a fairly common standard of development for Mini Parks (0.25 acres of Parkland per 1,000 people), there is a need for approximately 4 acres of Mini Parks within the Town. Since most Mini Parks are 1-2 acres in size, this would indicate the need for 1 or 2 additional Mini Parks in the Town.

One opportunity for Mini Park development could be to develop Wysacky Park (1.89 acres), just off Waxhaw-Monroe Road. The property, which is currently owned by the Town, could be developed as a Mini Park or small passive park.

In the future, the Town through the UDO may also encourage private developers to construct small amenity areas (playgrounds, shelters, etc.) when building single family residential and/or mixed-use developments.

Civic Parks

Civic Parks are community spaces that often provide a sense of place for a town or city. The size and form of Civic Parks may vary considerably. Likewise, how the spaces are used and programmed varies. Civic Parks may include urban plazas, community green spaces and lawns, memorials, etc.

Waxhaw already has several small civic places in its downtown area including the green along the rail line, Dare Steele Garden and the Community Corner/Water Tower. There may be other opportunities for the development of civic parks as part of downtown or neighborhood improvements.

Greenways

The most popular form of outdoor recreation in the nation is walking. This popularity was reflected in the survey that was conducted as part of this planning study and in comments made during the public workshops. Greenways are typically off-road trails that meander through neighborhoods and natural areas providing transportation corridors and recreational opportunities

for walkers, joggers, roller bladders, and cyclists. The trail surface can either be natural or paved. Paved trails are normally eight to ten feet in width. Natural surface trail widths can vary based on conditions. In addition to providing environmental protection and recreation opportunities, greenways and bike trails can produce economic development. The North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation conducted a study on a bicycle trail constructed along the northern Outer Banks region. This study determined that a \$6.7 million investment in off-road bike paths and shoulder improvements produced an estimated \$60 million annually in economic benefit.

In addition, the study found that Greenways also offer a valuable alternative to automotive transportation. A greenway often provides a linkage between communities, schools, churches, businesses, and parks.

The Town has completed a Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan, Downtown Vision Plan and corridor studies for Highway 16 and Waxhaw-Marvin Road as well as participated in the Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan for Union County. A significant focus of these planning efforts addressed the need for greenways along several of the town's creeks and roadways. The studies and plans recommended the development of a greenways and/or multi-use paths along Twelve Mile Creek, NC 16, Waxhaw-Marvin Road, and the downtown rail that would improve access to existing parks. The Town, in coordination with Lancaster County has begun the development of Twelve Mile Creek Greenway which currently is the Town's most popular recreation facility. Further extension of this greenway should be an immediate focus not only in procurement of land, but design and implementation of trail.

Recommendations from this valuable study should be used to guide implementation of a community-wide greenway system. Greenways should be developed in conjunction with other park and recreation providers in the area to ensure they are coordinated with other planning efforts and that there is continuity between plans.

"The Green" is an important amenity that seems to be languishing. Waxhaw Parks and Recreation should take the lead in assessing and planning this important downtown civic space. Enhancement and extension of the greenway and facilities is important to "The Green" as a linkage and destination within downtown.

Off Road Bikeways

The need for bikeable roads and the development of greenways for biking was mentioned in many of the stakeholder discussions and in the public meetings. With the focus on healthy lifestyles, the environment, and alternative transportation, there is a great need to develop and implement a bike plan.

The Town should encourage the State to include bike lanes whenever roadway improvements are made or new roads constructed. The Town should also address their subdivision process to ensure developers provide bicycle (and pedestrian) routes in the roadway improvements they construct as part of the development process.

The Town should consider applying for federal SAFETEA-Lu and Safe Routes to School program non-vehicular transportation funds that encourage alternative means of transportation. These funds have been used to construct bike lanes and trails in communities throughout North Carolina.

Bicycle facilities in the area could serve as an important attraction to the many tourists visiting the region. Investments in bicycle facilities could improve the safety of the area's transportation system. Bicycle activities provide benefits of health, fitness, quality of life, and the environment.

Renovation & Expansion of Existing Parks

There is a need to complete, improve and expand facilities and infrastructure at several of the Town's existing parks. Important renovation projects which should be considered include:

- Improvements to and completion of H.C. Nesbit Park
- Improvements to Town Creek Park
- Improvements and expansion to David G. Barnes Children's Park
- Improvements to Sk8 Park
- Extension of the Twelve Mile Creek Greenway

As noted in previous sections, master plans should be developed for all of the existing parks and future parks serving Town residents. Site Specific Master Plans should be developed for each of the Town's existing parks. Priority should be placed on the following parks:

- H.C. Nesbit Park
- Town Creek Park

- David G. Barnes Children’s Park (with the Horton Property)*
- 34-acre tract on Waxhaw-Marvin Road

*Master plan already completed; need to study a reduced plan/program for first phase for Downtown Community Park

Two areas of Waxhaw currently lack parks or recreation opportunities on both the public side as well as the private side within new neighborhood development. These recreational deserts occur in the northeast area (defined as the area bounded by NC 16, Waxhaw Indian Trail Road and Main Street) and the southern area (defined as the area bounded by Rehobeth Road, Sims Road, Old Providence Road and the Southern Waxhaw Parkway corridor). Waxhaw should seek land opportunities in these two quadrants for future park development.

Facility Proposals & Recommendations

This report recommends the Town construct several new community, neighborhood and mini parks, expand greenways, and make improvements to existing parks and facilities by the year 2029. The improvements that will be made as part of these renovations and expansions will add many new facilities to the Waxhaw parks inventory. The Town should consider the list of facility needs established in Section Three and described in greater detail in this section as it makes park and recreation improvements:

Softball

Adult softball has traditionally been a popular sport in North Carolina. NRPA and NCDENR standards (one field per 5,000 people) reflect that popularity. While the sport is still popular in some areas, there has been a shift in demand of men’s adult softball in many communities.

This plan recommends a general standard of development of one ball field per 5,000 people (comparable to other North Carolina communities). Even with this standard, adult softball scored very low in the survey and public workshops; the Town does not currently have a need for adult softball fields.

It should also be noted that changes in demand may be considered for adult softball. In the future, softball fields should be considered in community park master plans designed to accommodate men’s or women’s play.

Football

Football’s popularity as a community based youth sport has been reduced by the emergence of soccer and (most recently) lacrosse. The standard for development of football fields is one field for every 20,000 people within the service community (a standard used by many municipal agencies). This standard indicates there is not a need for a designated football field in Waxhaw.

Soccer

Soccer is one of the fastest growing sports in America. This master plan reflects this demand by establishing a standard of one field for every 5,000 people within the service population. The Town currently partners with WAA on six fields at H.C Nesbit Park and will be constructing three soccer fields adjacent to the new YMCA. Though private, FC Carolina Soccer Complex being developed southeast of downtown adds three fields as well. Utilizing this standard for development, the Town does not need additional soccer fields.

Lighting soccer fields effectively doubles their use. Likewise, the development of synthetic turf fields could greatly increase playing time on existing fields and reduce the number of fields needed. Lighting and turf improvements to existing fields could help offset any future need for additional fields.

A final note on soccer, the demand for multi-purpose fields will be made more intense by the new interest in lacrosse. Played on a field very similar to a soccer field (they are slightly larger than soccer fields), lacrosse will likely increase in popularity and should be considered as the Department reviews its soccer field needs. This new sport should be taken into consideration since play for both sports can be programmed on similar fields. One method to accommodate the variety of field games (soccer, lacrosse, rugby, football) is to develop larger multi-use fields that can be used for a variety of field games.

Basketball

Basketball remains an extremely popular sport in the United States. Played by a variety of ages, and increasingly by females, this sport can be played either indoors or out. Currently, the Town does not provide any indoor or outdoor basketball courts. Based on national and state standards of development of one outdoor basketball court per 5,000 people, there is currently a need for at least three basketball courts. Basketball courts scored relatively high in the community survey for not having met the needs.

See the section on Community Centers and Gymnasiums for the community's need for indoor courts.



Basketball courts could be a desirable amenity to add according to the survey results

Tennis

Based on input received in the public workshops, tennis is not a very popular sport in Waxhaw and there does not appear to be demand for tennis courts. Currently, the Town does not have any tennis courts in its system.

Volleyball

There are no outdoor volleyball courts in Waxhaw and the demand for volleyball in the community survey was relatively low. There does not seem to be a need right now for outdoor volleyball for the town unless it could be added in a park setting as an introduction to the sport for the Town.

Shuffleboard

There has been no expressed demand for outdoor shuffleboard courts from citizens; therefore, the Town does not have any courts. This activity provides a recreational outlet and opportunities for social interaction, particularly for seniors, but until there is demand, shuffleboard courts should not be a priority.

The Town may consider building shuffleboard courts in parks if there is a demand for this activity in the future. Like volleyball courts, shuffleboard courts are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.

Horseshoes

There has been no demand for horseshoe pits in the community; therefore, the Town has not developed Horseshoe facilities in its park system. This activity provides a recreation outlet for social interaction, particularly for seniors. The Town may consider building horseshoe pits if there is demand for this activity in the future. Like shuffleboard courts, horseshoe pits are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.

Picnic Shelters

Picnicking was one of the more popular recreational activities listed by respondents in the survey and from responses at the public workshops. There are currently three shelters in its park system. Based on a standard of one shelter per 2,000 people, there is a need for additional shelters; shelters could be added at H.C. Nesbit Park and be included in the plan for the 34-acre Waxhaw-Marvin Tract.

Playgrounds

There are three playgrounds in two parks throughout the Town's system. As parks are improved, existing playgrounds should be improved and the Department should look for locations for additional playgrounds. Larger parks may warrant more than one playground and all Neighborhood Parks should have a playground. Safety inspections and ADA accessibility audits should be conducted at all existing playgrounds. An all-inclusive playground should be considered which can also serve as a regional destination for special populations.

A popular trend in playground development is natural play areas. These relatively new play areas are designed on the concept of providing opportunities for children to interact with the natural environment when playing. Instead of relying on plastic and steel play structures, these play areas use natural features (creeks, rocks, trees, dirt, etc.) to provide play opportunities. Inspired by the book [Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children](#), this recent trend in playground development seeks to re-introduce our youth to the natural environment.



Natural play areas provide opportunities to interact with the environment



Paved walking trails are a desirable amenity within the Waxhaw community

As new playgrounds are completed and existing playgrounds renovated, the Town should replace wood fiber and sand surfaces with poured in place (PIP) safety surfacing. PIP surfaces provide wheelchair accessibility and reduces maintenance and lifecycle costs of the playgrounds.

Pedestrian and Biking Trails

Walking is the number one outdoor recreational activity in the United States. Walking or biking trail use scored high in the public survey and at the public workshops.

With this level of public demand, the development of walking trails should be a priority for future park development. A priority should be placed on walking trail development in all existing and future parks. A paved walking trail is an important component of all park types, and should be provided in all Neighborhood and Community Parks.

The concept of connecting parks and other points of interest with walking trails utilizing underdeveloped property along the Town's creeks was discussed in the public workshops. Perhaps the highest priority for trail development is extension of the Greenway along Twelve Mile Creek and the Green in Downtown.

The Town developed a Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan in 2012. This plan provides valuable information about community connectivity and can serve as a beginning step in developing a community-wide greenway system. The Town should revisit this plan and emphasize the priority of directives (Action items) of this plan. The following exhibit reflects the current and proposed trails.

Biking is a rapidly growing outdoor recreational activity. The Town should expand opportunities for biking through the development of a greenway trail system, including paths suitable for biking in existing and future parks, and through encouraging NCDOT to develop roads with bike lanes or wider shoulders to accommodate bikers. The Town should work with other stakeholders to help promote and facilitate new bikeways throughout the community.

Amphitheaters and Performance Areas

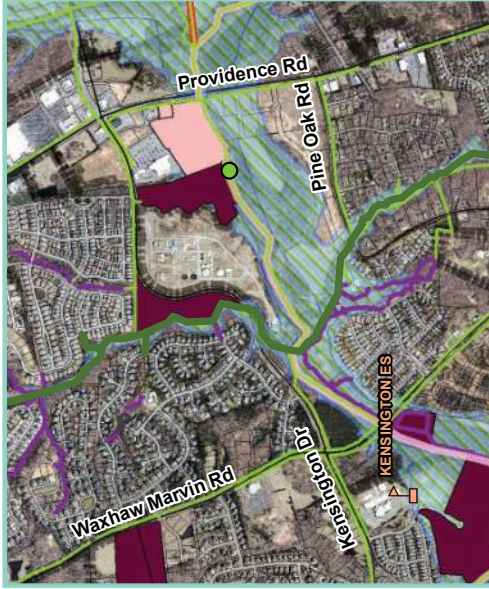
Currently, there are no amphitheaters or outdoor performance areas serving residents. Several stakeholders identified the desire for creating economic impact through festivals and community events. With community events scoring very high with most survey and public workshop participants as recreation programs, and as the initial structure for the Parks and Recreation Department, there is a need to look for opportunities to add an amphitheater and performance area to its system.

Pedestrian Trail Map

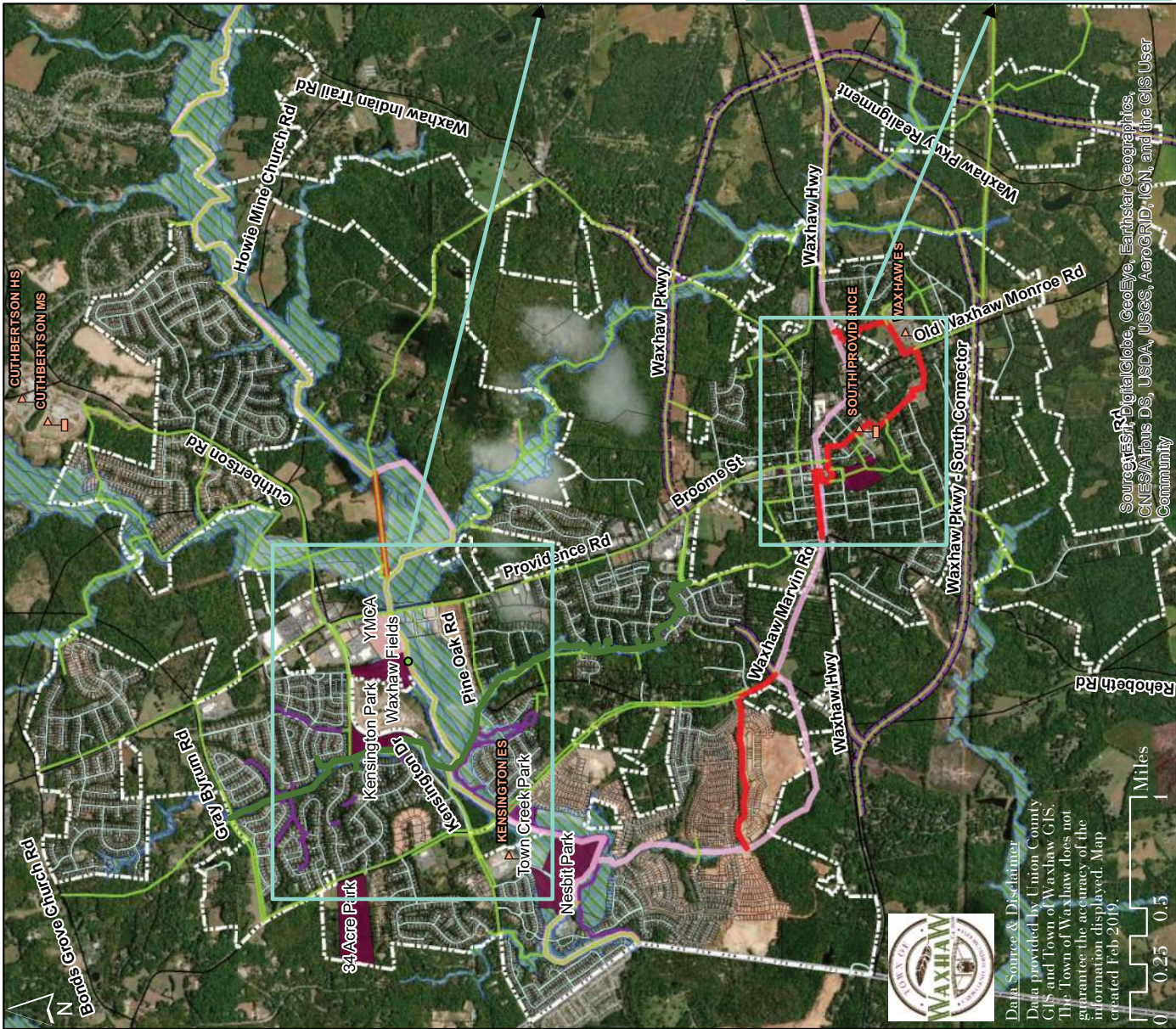
LEGEND

- Schools
- Conceptual Greenway*
- Proposed Trail Paths*
- Proposed CTT Amendment*
- Carolina Thread Trail (CTT)
- Existing Public Trails
- Waxhaw Town Limits
- YMCA
- Town Owned Land
- Floodplain
- Waxhaw Parkway*
- Bridge*

North Waxhaw Trails * Conceptual



Downtown Waxhaw Trails



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A amphitheater could provide opportunities for communitywide events

Special Use Facilities Community Centers and Gymnasiums

The Town does not have a community center or gymnasium of the size to offer quality recreation programming. The Duncan McDonald House serves as a small community space, but serves the Senior population and as a location for small community meetings and programs. The ability to expand the meeting space outside to the Water Tower lot helps with some events.

Multi-use gymnasium space, fitness and wellness programs, teen programs and activities all scored fairly high in the community survey, during the public meetings, and in subsequent citizen emails offering additional input. Based on the Town's population of 15,200 and expectation to increase by another 5,000 or more by 2029, there is a need to construct one large community center or two smaller ones, all with flexible recreation space and classrooms to serve the Town's residents.

Previous planning studies have recommended that a community center be located downtown with the David G. Barnes Park and Horton Property even showing one within that master plan. However, the Town should also consider locating a community center to the north as growth continues to move that direction. Planning for a community center(s) should take into consideration the future YMCA and potential offerings planned for that facility.

Swimming Pools and Spraygrounds

In the past, NRPA and NCDENR provided a standard for pool development of one pool for every 20,000 people. This standard was based on the concept of multi neighborhood or community pools. Today, with the high cost of operation and construction of swimming pools, very few agencies develop neighborhood/community pools to that old standard. Instead, municipalities typically provide more centralized facilities where one pool may serve a greater population.

Waxhaw does not have a pool or aquatic center in its system. With that said, as noted above, there appears to be considerable public demand for making improvements to existing facilities. Some residents do travel to the Monroe Aquatic and Fitness Center to meet their swimming and therapeutic needs, however, aquatic facility and spraygrounds scored highly in both the community survey and public workshops.

Based on the Town's population (15,200), one public aquatic facility should be adequate in meeting swimming pool needs; however, the Town should consider partnering with the future YMCA, should aquatics be a part of their programming/offerings. Among the facility improvement recommendations made from the public, the development of an outdoor sprayground should be considered as priority.

Spraygrounds are growing in popularity across the country. In addition to offering a water-based play experience, the play structures, sprays, etc. afford children of all ages a total play environment and are much more economical to operate than a standard swimming pool. A properly designed, large water park/sprayground can serve as a regional draw, provide revenue, and provide a beneficial economic impact to the surrounding areas.

Trends in Park & Recreation Facilities

The list of recreational activities developed for this Comprehensive Plan is based on national and state standards that have been used in park planning for decades. As noted earlier in this section, these standards are used as a point of reference, with the understanding that every community should develop standards that are unique to their specific needs.

One of the downsides of the national and state guidelines is that they are not updated often and fail to incorporate newer trends and activities. In the past decade, several new activities have been growing in popularity and should be

considered in future park development. These activities include:

Skateboard Parks and Extreme Sports

Skateboarding has been popular for several decades. In the past decade, many communities have recognized its popularity and have tried to provide a safe and vandal resistant setting for this creative sport. Many municipal agencies have developed skateboard parks to provide a recreational outlet for preteens and teens. Waxhaw's Sk8 Park has provided a good setting for years for area skateboard enthusiasts and fulfills the current needs for this activity.

Waxhaw has continued to invest significantly in the Sk8 Park with the recent addition of shade structures along the perimeter. The Town may also consider lighting the existing skateboard area and providing other site amenities (restroom, seating, etc.).

Disc Golf

Disc golf received some support in the survey, and nationally and regionally, the popularity of the sport continues to grow. While the Town does not have any disc golf courses in its system, the Waxhaw Disc Golf Club in partnership with Union County Public Schools, has one 9-hole disc golf course located at Waxhaw Elementary School. This course is very popular and heavily used. Unfortunately, the course is only allowed to be used outside of school hours. The Town should look for opportunities to expand parkland to include disc golf to its facility offerings. There is also a 9-hole disc golf course at Cuthbertson Middle School.

Off-leash Dog Areas

Off-leash dog areas are one of the more recent trends in park development. The popularity of these facilities (also known as dog parks), is a response to the nation's love of pets. Communities throughout North Carolina are now constructing dog parks.

Dog parks take many forms, but are primarily a place within a park where park users can bring their dogs to run, walk, and recreate. They usually include a fenced open area where dogs, accompanied by their owner, are allowed to run free. Often the off-leash dog area is divided into sections for large and small dogs.

Based on comments made at the public workshops, a dog park would be a welcome amenity. The two-acre property

the Town owns on Waxhaw/Monroe Road could be developed as a dog park.

Community Gardens

Community gardens provide a wide variety of community enhancements. They offer health benefits by providing local gardeners with fresh vegetables and increased exercise as they tend the gardens. They also provide environmental benefits by reducing transportation costs for food production and providing more plant cover, which reduces urbanization impacts on climate change. In addition, community gardens provide a venue for social interaction that reduces isolation and supports community involvement.

Several people attending the public workshops indicated a desire of having a community garden incorporated into one of the Town's parks and possibly working with Town officials to expand opportunities for edible gardens throughout the community.

With the many benefits provided by community gardens, many parks and recreation agencies are implementing community garden programs. Public garden space could provide ornamental beauty in the Town's parks and could provide educational opportunities. The Town may consider the development of a community garden in the future. Should this initial garden prove successful, other garden locations should be considered.

Pickleball

Pickleball received some support in the survey, and nationally and regionally, the popularity of the sport continues to grow. While the Town does not have any pickleball courts in its system, the sport is offered in Stallings and Monroe. These courts are very popular and used regularly. The Town may consider looking for opportunities to incorporate pickleball in its system, especially for the Senior population.



SECTION FIVE ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

In the previous sections, the Department's needs for parks and recreational facilities have been identified. Careful planning and strategic thinking will be required if these needs are to be met. This section will identify funding sources for implementing some of the recommendations of this plan and identify possible strategies for funding the proposed recommendations.

Instrumental to the implementation of the Master Plan is the identification of adequate funding for facility development and improvements. Finding adequate funding is particularly difficult in this time of competing municipal budgets as the Town continues to grow at a quicker pace than infrastructure can be provided. Limited budgets place even greater importance on careful planning to meet projected needs.

While much of the focus of previous sections has been on capital needs and facility improvements, physical improvements are only part of the needs if the Department is to offer its citizens parks and recreation services. As civic leaders plan for the future, they should also consider a number of operational and management issues that will position them to meet community needs. This section reviews some of those issues.

This section will look at a Capital Improvement Plan for addressing recommendations found in Section Four and provide a strategy for raising funds to construct the proposed improvements and new facilities.

Implementing the recommendations made in this Master Plan will result in meeting the future needs for parks and recreation services. If the needs identified in this report are to be met, the Town must establish adequate budgets for projected staffing, operations and maintenance costs, and for capital improvements for parks and recreation facilities. This Action Plan is designed to give Town staff and elected officials viable options to help finance the proposals and recommendations of this Master Plan.

Revenue Plan

Upon adoption of the Master Plan, Town staff should consider the establishment of a Revenue Plan for the Department. A Revenue Plan incorporates all available funding resources, prioritizes them, and puts each option into a funding strategy. In a Revenue Plan, the following funding alternatives are evaluated for their appropriate use in funding capital improvements and programs:

Key Funding/Revenue Sources

There seems to be strong public support for the Department to improve parks and expand recreation facilities, but innovative measures will be required to meet the needs identified in this plan. The proposed new facilities and expanded operations will require dollars from a variety of sources. The following funding sources are provided to help the Department evaluate funding options:

General Tax Revenues (Operational & Capital)

General tax revenues traditionally provide the principle source of funds for general operations and maintenance of municipal and county parks. Recreation, as a public service, is scheduled along with health, public safety, schools, etc. in annual budgets established by the governing authority. Assessed valuation of real and personal property provides the framework for this major portion of the tax base. This tax base is then used to fund the majority of municipal and county services. Historically, elected officials in Waxhaw have adequately supported budgeting for parks and recreation services. If the Town wishes to enhance the quality of life and healthy lifestyle opportunities for its residents, the current level of funding for parks and recreation services must be maintained and funds for important capital improvements allocated.

Park Foundation (Operational & Capital)

A park foundation can be instrumental in assisting the Department in acquiring land, developing facilities, sponsoring programs, and buying equipment for park and recreation needs. Park foundations typically create strategies for generating funds to support park projects. These include foundation membership fees, individual gifts, grants from other regional and national foundations, long term endowments, and a land trust for future acquisitions.

General Foundations (Operational & Capital)

Another source of revenue is the direct contribution of money from state and national General Foundations.

Foundation funds should be sought for both development and construction of facilities as well as providing programs. Funding sources should include general-purpose foundations that have relatively few restrictions, special program foundations for specific activities, and corporate foundations with local connections.

Foundations with Emphasis on Conservation, Healthy Lifestyles & Parks

The Department is in a position to receive grant funding from a wide variety of public foundations and trusts. Below is a list of funding sources that are particularly applicable. Some of these funding/trusts are currently at work in the region:

- The Conservation Trust of North Carolina is actively engaged in preserving land and waterways and working with 22 local land trusts throughout North Carolina. They have been instrumental in providing financial and technical assistance for open space conservation and development of greenways in North Carolina. In Union County, they are working with the Catawba Lands Conservancy (CLC) on projects directly related to the Waxhaw region.
- Additionally, through CLC, the Carolina Thread Trail (with whom the Town has previously worked with) offers grant funding for the development of greenways. Specifically, the Thread Trail help fund: trail construction (\$150,000 max.), trail project design (\$50,000 max.), land acquisition (\$75,000 max.) and detailed corridor planning (\$5,000 max.)
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is the nation's largest philanthropic organization devoted specifically to the public's health. RWJF promotes change through partnerships and collaboration, with the goal of building a culture of health for all Americans. RWJF generally supports public agencies, universities, and public charities that are tax-exempt.
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation places optimal development of children at the center of all of their grants. They concentrate on early childhood development within the context of families and communities. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation's areas of focus are: educated kids, healthy kids, secure families, community and civic engagement, and racial equity.
- KaBOOM! is a national non-profit dedicated to safe play for America's children. They envision a place to play within walking distance of every child. KaBOOM! works with communities, volunteers and funding partners to build playgrounds throughout the country.
- BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina Foundation has invested millions of dollars in communities across the state. They support opportunities that impact the

health of our state. Their areas of focus are health of vulnerable populations, healthy active communities, and community impact through non-profit excellence.

- Playworks Grants Database is a good resource for grants. Examples found within this database are:
- The Kodak American Greenways Awards Program, a partnership of Eastman Kodak Company, the Conservation Fund, and the National Geographic Society provides small grants towards the planning and design of greenways. Kodak American Greenways offers grants from \$500 to \$2,500.
- Cigna Health through its Cigna Foundation supports organizations that enhance health in individuals, families and communities. They offer grants up to \$5,000.
- The Home Depot, through its Community Impact Grants Program, offers grants up to \$5,000 to non-profits that use volunteers to improve community health.
- People for Bikes provides a community grant program that provides grants up to \$10,000 to improve infrastructure and programs that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to bike.

Another source of local assistance may be large corporations with foundations established to provide grants for public projects. Companies such as Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Lowes, Walmart, and Duke Energy may have available funding through existing grant programs, or they may be interested in creating a program or partnership for specific projects.

The Department should actively pursue grants from foundation and trust sources on a regional and national level. Information on trusts and foundations can be found through the Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003-3076 (<http://foundationcenter.org/>) and the Non-Profit Gateway to Federal Government agencies (<http://www.usa.gov/index.shtml>).

General Obligation Bonds (Capital)

General tax revenue for parks and recreation are usually devoted to current operations and maintenance of existing facilities. General obligation bonds are often used to finance capital improvements in parks. The State of North Carolina gives municipal and county governments the authority to accomplish this borrowing of funds for parks and recreation through the issuance of bonds not to exceed the total cost of improvements (including land acquisition). For purposes of paying the debt service on the sale of these bonds, government bodies are often required to increase property taxes. Total bonding capacities for

these government agencies are limited to a maximum percentage of assessed property valuation.

Waxhaw has not used this method of financing park improvements in the past. In view of the recommended capital improvements suggested in this plan, borrowing of funds to acquire new land and develop facilities could be a consideration.

An added value of a governing agency's bonding authority and capacity is its ability to use those funds to leverage other funding opportunities. Bonding enables government agencies to utilize funds to match federal grant-in-aid monies or state funds. General obligation bonds are still the greatest source utilized to fund park projects in North Carolina. Through a well thought out and publicly presented bond campaign, voters would be given the opportunity to choose to support park improvements through the sale of bonds.

Revenue Bonds (Capital)

Revenue bonds are used for financing high use specialty facilities like golf courses, aquatic centers, tennis centers, and complexes for softball and soccer. The users, and other revenue sources, pay for operations and sometimes repay the bonds. This revenue source would only be of use to the Town if they choose to change their tax subsidy policy for using this type of funding. The Town is not likely to seek out this option.

The legal requirements for utilizing these funding mechanisms are extremely complicated and can require approval from the state legislature. Use of revenue bonds seems to be unlikely at this time.

Limited Option or Special Use Tax (Capital)

Limited option or special use taxes can be established in various ways. A municipality or county can establish the tax by determining the source, such as property valuation, real estate transfer taxes, or sales tax. This option requires legislative approval. Typically, special use taxes are structured on sales tax or transfer taxes and are earmarked for a specific project. A governing body can approve a tax that is identified or earmarked on property valuation; however, other sources may require state approval. The idea behind a special option or limited option tax is that the tax is identified or limited for a special purpose or projects and the duration can also be limited to accomplishing the projects.

Many travel and tourism authorities throughout North Carolina utilize this funding source to make improvements

to recreation facilities that attract tourists. This funding source could be considered in the development of athletic fields, trails and river access that might enhance tourism.

Federal and State Assistance (Capital)

Federal funding sources are available to assist financing capital improvement recommendations found in this plan. One of the oldest park funding sources has been available from the U.S. Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Some of the city of Monroe's existing parks were funded with monies from this funding source. Unfortunately, funding through this program has been sporadic over the past decade.

Other potential federal funding sources are the National Foundation of Arts and Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

The North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill in 1994 creating a consistent source of funds for parks and recreation in the state. The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) provides money for capital improvements, repairs, renovations, and land acquisition of state and local parks. Revenues from the state's portion of the real estate deed transfer tax support the fund. Revenues vary from year to year. Since 2007, funds from real estate taxes have been significantly lower; although the past few years have seen funding increase.

Of the funds allocated, 65% go to the state parks system, 30% provide matching grants to local governments, and the remaining 5% go to the Coastal and Estuarine Water Beach Access Program. The maximum matching grant is limited to \$500,000 for a single project. The PARTF system allows an agency to apply for a 50/50 cost-sharing grant to develop or acquire park land and facilities.

While Waxhaw has not received any funding in the past, PARTF and LWCF funds have been used by other Union County municipalities and the Union County Parks & Recreation Department to build parks. In the future, the Department should consider applying for funds through this program on a regular basis.

The structure of this funding source has recently gone through changes based on legislative action. While the funding structure for this fund has changed, it appears PARTF will continue to fund park and recreation facilities in North Carolina.

Additionally, the State can fund projects such as bikeways and pedestrian walks through the federally funded SAFTEA [formerly known as the Intermodal Surface

Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)]. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) administers the funds and the local government agency can use these funds for developing portions of any proposed Greenway system. Local communities can also apply for assistance with pedestrian, bikeway, and greenway projects by applying for "NCDOT Enhancement Funds."

Another source of state administered funding is through the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF). These funds are set aside for the acquisition of riparian properties, financing of innovative wastewater management initiatives, storm water mitigation and stream bank restoration projects, support for greenways, and some planning programs. The acquired or purchased property can be used for recreation while protecting valuable water resources from the effects of urban encroachment. Money from this grant is particularly applicable to the preservation of open space, greenway development, and water access.

An excellent source to find government grants is on the website www.grants.gov. This website clearing house provides information for all federal grants. Grant opportunities exist in the following categories:

- Community Development
- Environment
- Health
- Natural Resources
- Transportation

Any of these categories could have grants that could be used to develop programs and facilities for parks.

User Fees (Operational)

User fees are often charged by departments to offset operational costs, and (occasionally) provide funding for the construction of facilities. Every agency must establish its philosophy with regard to cost recovery through the use of fees.

Currently, the department charges user fees for most programming and senior trips. There is typically a \$5-6 upcharge for non-residents. Current resident user fees are as follows for the winter-spring 2019 programs:

- Youth Programs (6-12) \$20-25
- Teen Nights (12-18) \$25-35
- Adults (18+)
- Heart Wellness - \$72/6-week session
- Programs - \$20-25
- Seniors (55+)
- Fitness - \$60/6-week session
- Trips - \$35-50
- Craft Programs - \$15

The above fees were arrived at through the Department surveying and talking with other local park and recreation departments.

In addition, the Department rents out facilities for community and group use on an hourly basis at \$12/hour for residents and \$18/hour for non-residents. The facilities include:

- Fields and shelters at HC Nesbit and Town Creek Parks
- Water Tower/Community Corner
- The Meeting Place
- Duncan McDonald House (this space is slightly higher at \$35/hour)

Ultimately, the Department may consider adjusting the user fee structure to help offset more of the cost of some activities. Based on elected officials' direction, the revenue generated by increased fees should then be used to offset impacts on the general fund and possibly be used for capital improvement funding to help make park improvements.

Many of the proposed improvements in this Master Plan are outdoor facilities (playgrounds, open space, trails, etc.) and offer only limited opportunity for cost recovery. There may be some areas where greater cost recovery could be achieved. Examples may include requiring permits or fees for dog parks, disc golf, splash pad, fishing, etc. Likewise, development of a recreation center may warrant user fees for the center and/or specific programs.

Revenue Opportunities

User fees are not the only means of generating revenue. The Department should explore additional opportunities for generating income. Some of these opportunities include:

- Sponsorships from local private businesses. Sponsorships typically come in the form of products, events, programs, cause-related, and in-kind. Sponsorships can also take the form of naming rights for a facility or program. Sponsorship or naming agreements should include very specific details related to sponsorship cost, duration, use of promotional materials, etc. The Department already uses sponsorships to offset costs for some community events.
- Grant applications from local foundations, state and federal agencies, or individuals are typically created by staff or a consultant. Most grants take time to prepare and require coordination effort with other agencies or departments from within the community to create a quality submittal. Grants also require tracking

of expenditures and outcomes for attaining future funding.

- Partnerships are a relatively recent method of sharing funding resources to provide services. These partnerships can be formed with a wide variety of other public or private agencies. Many times the partners are two or more government agencies such as Union or Lancaster County, but can also be private entities such as the Carolina Thread Trail, the Waxhaw Athletic Association (WAA) and the YMCA. Through these partnerships, the Department receives direct benefit in either facility use, programming assistance, or volunteer hours. All of these benefits add value and help offset cost; thus creating earned income. This earned income requires both agencies to have common visions, values, and goals for the partnership to be successful. (See Appendix E)

Examples of partnerships include:

- Church facilities for recreation services. Several churches or religious organizations in the area provide recreation facilities and programs.
- Youth sports associations such as the WAA, are an important partner in organizing and programming many youth sports in the region.
- Trail sponsors can adopt sections of trails for maintenance and cleanup.
- Adopt-a-park partners that help maintain park lands. These sponsors are typically in the form of neighborhood associations and businesses that are in proximity to parks.
- School partnerships, where both partners invest in the development of facilities and programs based on shared use of facilities and staff. These investments may be financial, or may include other means of support.
- Special event partners that assist with the development of community-wide events.
- Program partners who assist in providing services to the community.
- Advertising and licensing in programs, facilities, and events sponsored by the Department. The Department could leverage highly exposed advertising space to businesses willing to pay a fee for the right to advertise.
- Volunteer development programs can reduce staff costs. Volunteers can create advocacy and bring down the cost of programs and services.
- Privatizing the development of facilities or services is an opportunity that is used by some departments when they are unable to control the cost of labor and are unable to find the needed capital to develop a recreational facility or a concession operation. This gives the government agency a management tool to create an asset or improve a service without tapping

into their own resources. Facilities that are typically considered for privatization may include golf courses, marinas, camping and RV facilities, boat rentals, bike rentals, equipment rentals, and other forms of concessions.

- Marketing strategies are an important component in developing untapped revenue opportunities. Promotional activities improve awareness of the activities provided by the Department and assist in bringing more revenue to the system by filling programs and facilities.

Methods for Land Acquisition & Dedication

In order to meet the needs identified in this report, the Department will need to expand its park and recreational lands. Development of new parks and facilities and potential expansion of some of its existing parks will require several land acquisitions. Methods available for acquiring land include:

Fee Simple Purchase

Outright purchase is perhaps the most widely used method of obtaining land. Fee simple purchase has the advantage of being relatively simple to administer and to explain to the general public to justify a particular public expenditure. Unfortunately, fee simple purchase often is the most expensive means of obtaining and utilizing a property.

Fee Simple Purchase with Lease-Back or Resale

This technique of land acquisition enables the Town to purchase land to lease or sell to a prospective user with deed restrictions that would protect the land from abuse or development. This method is used by governments who impose development restrictions severe enough that the owner considers themselves to have lost the major portion of the property's value and it is more economical for them to sell with a lease-back option.

Long-Term Option

A long-term option is frequently used when a property is considered to have potential future value though it is not desired, or affordable, at the time. Under the terms of a long-term option, the Department agrees with the landowner on a selling price for the property and a time period over which the Department has the right to exercise its option. The first benefit of this protective method is that the option may stabilize escalating land cost and establishes land use for the property. Secondly, the Department does not have to expend large sums of money until the land is purchased. Thirdly, the purchase price of the land is

established. The disadvantage of this method is that a price must be paid for every right given by the property owner. In this case, the cost of land use stabilization and a price commitment comes in the form of the cost of securing the option.

First Right of Purchase

This approach to acquiring land eliminates the need for fixing the selling price of a parcel of land, yet alerts the Department of any impending purchase which might disrupt the land acquisition goals. The Department would be notified that a purchase is pending and would have the right to purchase the property before it is sold to the party requesting the purchase.

Land Trust

The role and responsibility of a Land Trust is to acquire park land and open space while maintaining a well-balanced system of park resources representing outstanding ecological, scenic, recreational, and historical features. A Land Trust is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit corporation made up of key knowledgeable leaders in the area who represent a cross section of interest and experience in recreation, historic properties, conservation, preservation, land development, and environmental issues. Their goals and responsibilities are to work with landowners to acquire park land for current and future generations. The individuals appointed to the Land Trust must have knowledge of land acquisition methods and tools used to entice land owners to sell, donate, provide easements, life estates, irrevocable trusts, or a combination of all. This includes seeking out a knowledgeable land acquisition attorney who is trained in these areas to provide the most efficient and effective processes to achieve the balance of types of land to meet the goals of this Master Plan.

The Department does not have to go through the time and expense of setting up a land trust to utilize this vehicle for land donation or conservation. As mentioned previously, CLC operates in Union County. The Department could partner with CLC to provide protection of valuable open space without creating a new entity.

Donations

A significant, and yet often untapped, source for funding acquisition and development of public park projects is through a well-organized local gifts program. Donations of land, money, or labor can have a meaningful impact on the development of existing facilities and the acquisition of new parks.

The most frequently used type of gift involves the giving of land to be used for a park. The timing of such a donation can correspond with a PARTF grant application, thereby providing all or a significant portion of the local matching requirement associated with this fund. A similar use of gifts involves donated labor or materials, which become part of an improvement project and help to reduce project costs. The value of the services or materials can, in some cases, also be used to match non-local grant funds.

Some agencies have developed a gift catalog as a tool for promoting a gifts program. Such a publication should explain the role and importance of the gifts program, describe its advantages, define the tax advantages that may occur to the donor, and identify various gifts (land, labor, play equipment, materials, trees, etc.) that are needed to meet program needs. The gifts catalog should be prepared in a format that can be distributed effectively and inexpensively and should provide a clear statement of needs, typical costs associated with various gifts, and be made readily available to the public.

To aid this type of gift program, a strategy for contacting potential donors (individuals, businesses, foundations, service clubs, etc.) should be developed. An important part of this strategy should include contacting the local Bar Association, trust departments of lending institutions, and the Probate Court. Communicating with these groups regularly will make them aware of the potential for individuals to include a gift to the Department as part of their tax and estate planning.

Life Estate

A life estate is a deferred gift. Under this plan, a donor retains use of his land during his lifetime and relinquishes title to such land upon his death. In return for this gift, the owner is usually relieved of the property tax burden on the donated land.

Easement

The most common type of less-than-fee interest in land is an easement. Property ownership may be viewed as a combination of rights. With this understanding, it is possible to purchase any one or several of these rights. An easement seeks either to compensate the landholder for the right to use his land in some manner or to compensate him for the loss of one of his privileges to use the land. One advantage of this less-than-fee interest in the land is the private citizen continues to use the land while the land remains on the tax records; continuing as a source of revenue for the Town. Perhaps the greatest benefit lies in the fact that the community purchases only those rights

that it specifically needs to execute its park land objectives. By purchasing only rights that are needed, the Department is making more selective and efficient use of its limited financial resources.

Zoning / Subdivision Regulations

Many communities in North Carolina have zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations that require a developer to donate a portion of the property they are developing to the government agency to be used for public park land. Through these regulations (zoning ordinances, subdivision regulation, and mandatory dedications) developers may be required to provide new park land at no cost to the Department. Regulations can require land to be dedicated and/or compensation made to the Town for the development of park land.

The Town does not currently have a provision in their subdivision regulation that requires developers to dedicate land for open space or to pay a recreation fee for each residential lot developed. This fee typically applies only to larger subdivisions and does not impact infill sites. Funds from this fee are then used for park improvements. This is a very valuable tool to expand parks and/or fund facility expansion.

Park Facilities as Economic Developers

John L. Crompton, in his publication “Parks and Economic Development”, determined there are four economic development benefits that a community may derive from park and recreation services. These benefits include: Attracting Tourists: The features and programs that attract tourist to a community include parks, beaches, historic sites, museums, special events and festivals, and athletic tournaments. The majority of these features are provided by public agencies (national, state, local park agencies, etc.).

Enhancing Real Estate Values: Enhancing Real Estate Values: Research shows people will pay more to live close to natural park areas. These higher property values result in owners paying higher property taxes, which in turn offsets some of the cost for the development of parks and preservation of open space.

Attracting Business: Quality of life issues influence where businesses locate. Parks, recreation, open space, and senior services are an important component of the quality of life equation. Good parks help cities attract and retain businesses.

Attracting Retirees: A new growth industry for American communities is the retirement population. The decision to relocate by this segment of our population is primarily governed by climate and recreation opportunities. This segment of the population is extremely attractive to local governments because retirees are unlikely to have children enrolled in the local school system and therefore are less of a burden on the community's tax base.

Through investing in parks and recreation facilities, elected officials can ensure that Waxhaw offers the quality of life that helps attract new businesses, enhances real estate values, and provides an attractive option to the retirement community.

There are many opportunities for economic impact in the Waxhaw region through tourism. Community leaders have recognized the potential for this economic impact by establishing the Union County Chamber of Commerce and the Waxhaw Business Association. These organizations are actively engaged in bringing visitors to Waxhaw and the surrounding region.

John Crompton lists the following opportunities for tourist attractions:

Tournament Sports

- Softball
- Soccer
- Baseball
- Basketball

Arts

- Theaters
- Art Galleries
- Museums
- Performing groups, Music
- Concerts

Heritage Places

- Ethnic cultural places
- Shrines/churches
- Historical sites and structures
- Educational institutions
- Industry factory tours

Parks

- National
- State
- Regional
- Local
- Beaches
- Theme parks

- Recreation
- Events and festivals
- Aquatic and coastal areas
- Outdoor recreation (e.g., camping, fishing, hunting)

Arenas

- College sports
- Professional franchises
- Concerts and exhibitions

Some of these activities and facilities are already found in the area. Many of these potential tourism attractions are in the public realm or are a public/private venture.

Operational Recommendations

Town leadership must also address some of the operational issues that will arise as the result of making facility improvements over the next decade. These issues relate to the manpower and organizational changes that will be required as new parks/facilities are added. These recommendations address some of the critical operational issues the Town needs to identify as it expands the facilities and services it provides.

An important aspect of these planning recommendations is to develop a vision for the Department to improve park and recreational opportunities for residents. Ultimately, the provision of better parks and recreational programs includes both facility improvements and establishing a method of delivery of services. Historically elected officials in Waxhaw have supported parks and recreation in the community and have allocated resources for the Department as it works to meet its mission. If the Department is to continue to thrive and improve the quality of parks, facilities and the programs offered, additional funding will be required to add staff to manage/operate facilities and provide services.

Staff Needs

Action on the recommendations found in this Master Plan will expand parks and facilities. The development of several new parks, expansion of trails and outdoor recreation facilities, as well as the expansion of existing parks will require additional staff to maintain, operate and program these new facilities. While the development of a true operation and maintenance program for these future facilities is beyond the scope of this Master Plan, the Town should plan to add the following positions to effectively operate the future facilities:

- Assistant Parks & Recreation Director
- Program staff
- Additional maintenance staff
- Recreation/Aquatics center staff

It is important that the Town plan and budget for adequate staff positions for any new facilities that are constructed. Likewise, as these new facilities come on line, the Town should actively seek the highest level of programming staff with strong educational experience in the various areas of park and recreation administration.

Operational Costs

As noted above, the development of new recreation facilities will require additional staff. These new staff positions will add to the annual operational budget in both staff and equipment costs. The expansion of recreational facilities will also add to the energy and utility cost of recreation facilities. The recommended facility improvements included in this Plan will increase the Department’s facilities 25-30%. Expansion of this magnitude will have implications on the operational budget. The Town’s management staff and elected officials must carefully consider the financial impact of each major capital improvement project as projects are considered. No capital improvement project should be undertaken without the commitment of support for adequate ongoing operational funding. Likewise, consideration should be given to the positive economic impacts that some facilities may have on the area’s economy, and if applicable, the potential for revenue generation.

Greener Operation

As the world’s population expands and environmental concerns over global warming, conservation of resources, and preservation of our fragile natural systems become more apparent, greater environmental responsibility by public and private agencies has become critical. As a government agency, particularly one that is involved with the management of public open space and the improvement of the public’s health, the Department’s operation should make a concerted effort to minimize its environmental impact.

With this understanding, the Town should evaluate its maintenance and operational procedures with an intent to minimize waste and environmental impact. Where economically feasible, the Town should look to implement operational procedures that emphasize conservation, recycling, and sustainability. Likewise, as the Town looks to build new facilities, it should consider constructing facilities that minimize environmental impacts, conserve energy, and reuse building materials where possible.

As a starting point for this conversion to a “greener” operation, the Town should establish a committee of operation, maintenance, and construction stakeholders to study the options available and develop a plan for becoming “greener”.

Capital Improvement Plan

The Capital Improvement Plan for the acquisition, renovation, and development of parks for the planning period was prepared with input from Department staff and the needs assessed through the community survey and workshops. All of the proposed costs are shown in current dollar values and will need to be adjusted on an annual basis to reflect inflation factors at those times. The capital improvement costs include funds for land acquisition, site preparation, site utilities, and facility development as well as estimated planning and design fees.

The Capital Improvement Plan can be summarized into the following components:

	<u>5 Year Total</u>	<u>10 Year Total</u>
Existing Park Renovations/ Improvements	\$1,265,000	\$1,265,000
Land Acquisition	\$1,890,000	\$2,980,000
Park Facility Development	\$14,784,000	\$17,699,000
Greenway Development	\$1,952,500	\$2,447,500
Special Use Facilities	\$1,611,500	\$2,260,500
Total Capital Improvement Budget	\$21,503,000	\$26,652,000

Tables 5-1 & 5-2 “Capital Improvements Plan” shows the projected costs associated with a capital improvement program for 5 and 10 year projections for potential renovations, completions and expansions of existing parks. The table reflects the proposals and recommendations as outlined in Section Four of this Master Plan.

Three-Five Year Priorities

Recognizing that this is a vision plan for a community-wide park system, Department staff and elected officials must prioritize the recommendations in this document based on the public’s input and staff review. The following park development and facility upgrades and maintenance initiatives should also be considered in the recommended priorities for the next 10 years:

- Completion of HC Nesbit Park
- Development of phase 1 of the Horton Property/ David Barnes Park Expansion.
- Land Acquisition for Recreation/Community Center

- Construction of Waxhaw Athletic Fields and support facilities
- Master planning and site preparation for the Waxhaw-Marvin Rd Tract; a phase one development
- Completion of Town Creek Park
- Development of a Splash Pad
- Assess safety and security measures for each facility; address any basic policies
- Seek land/opportunities for park development in northeast area as well as southern Waxhaw

See Table 5-2 for more detail.

Based on discussions with staff and review of the public input received, park development and facility upgrades/maintenance initiatives could be envisioned in potential phases as follows:

Town Creek Park- Currently, there is a playground, picnic shelter, picnic tables, sensory garden, portable toilets, multi-purpose athletic field, it serves as a trail head for the Carolina Thread Trail.

Phase 2 – install security cameras, lighting, connection of Thread Trail from Nesbit Park

Phase 3 – repave trail, fix drainage, field repair

Phase 4 – install water and sewer lines to enable installation of a restroom facility

Phase 5 – install restroom facilities; additional parking to be added with scheduled bridge replacement

H.C. Nesbit Park - Currently, there are 4 irrigated baseball diamonds with bleacher seating, 2 baseball diamonds have permanent lighting. There are a total of 6 multi-use fields, with 2 soccer fields having permanent lighting. 3 of the fields are regulated for soccer. The other 3 fields are not regulated, but are used for soccer. It has a trail head for the Carolina Thread Trail with a small parking area for the connection and trails. Construction on concession stand and restrooms is being completed.

Phase 2 –add ADA sidewalks, toppers for fences

Phase 3 – replace gravel, improve parking lot, repair infrastructure; netting for fly balls

Phase 4 – add playground, basic field improvements, toppers for fences, lights

SK8 Park – Currently, offers a half-pipe, quarter-pipe, decking, rails, ramps, a bowl and more. The department is currently in the process of making upgrades and renovations with the aid of a grant.

Phase 1 - new bleacher seats currently in place, erosion and a shade structure; conduct assessment of all elements, including circulation

Phase 2 – repair structures, install additional elements as

determined by the assessment

Phase 3 – consider purchase of additional property for expansion

Community Corner / Water Tower– Currently, this lot provides an open event space along with an urban garden and has been prominently discussed for other potential considerations in the ULI report for downtown Waxhaw as a park/recreation facility.

Phase 1 – If remaining as a recreation space construct stage, provide shade elements, lights, restrooms

David G. Barnes Childrens Park / Horton Property-

Currently, there are 2 playgrounds, one picnic shelter, walkways, benches and restrooms

Phase 1– Develop 1st Phase of Park master plan; roads, parking

Phase 2 - 2nd Phase of Park master plan

Phase 2 – Street infrastructure, Church Street

Phase 3 – 3rd Phase of Park master plan(final)

Waxhaw Athletic Fields - Plans and engineering drawings have been developed for project.

Phase 1 - construction of fields, restroom/shelter and parking

Phase 2 - pedestrian bridge over 12 Mile Creek and connect to the Carolina Thread trail

Waxhaw-Marvin Rd / 34 Acres -

Phase 1 - Clear off all safety hazards & obtain any environmental permits; develop site master plan for property; determine phasing

Phase 2 - Design and develop phase one

Phase 3 – Develop phase two

Kensington / Cureton Pkwy land -

Phase 1 - Clear off all safety hazards & any environmental permits

Phase 2 - Work with Quellin & Cureton Neighborhood on Footbridge to connect over a feeder of 12 Mile Creek. Designated public parking in each neighborhood.

Phase 3 - Link trail to Carolina Thread Trail at Waxhaw Fields and to new neighborhood Lindsey Meadows

Waxhaw - Monroe Rd. / 2 acres:

Phase 1 – Develop plan and secure funding for potential development of a dog park

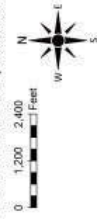
Phase 2 – Develop dog park and support facilities

Wysacky Park:

Phase 1 – Develop plan, secure funding for potential development of a Mini-Park

Waxhaw Parks & Recreation | Parks and Recreation Recommended Priorities (2019-2028)

The Town of Waxhaw | 05.15.2019

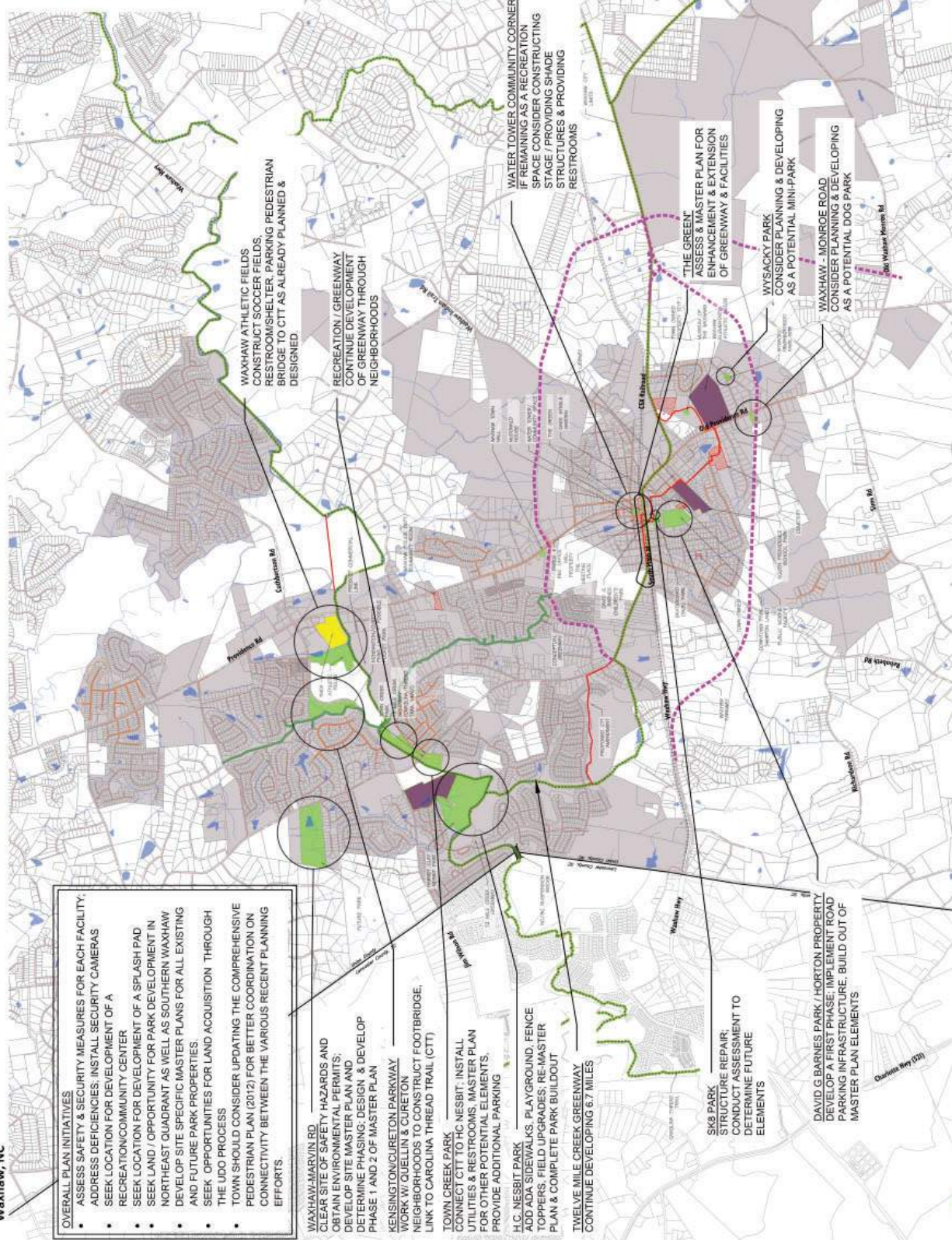


LEGEND

- EXISTING GREENWAY
- PROPOSED GREENWAY
- WAXHAW PARKWAY
- PROPOSED CTT AMEND.
- TOWN OF WAXHAW
- PARK DESIGNATED
- CITY OWNED PROPERTY
- SCHOOL PROPERTY
- YMCA

NOTE:
CONNECTIVITY SHOWN IN THIS EXHIBIT REFLECTS EXISTING AND PROPOSED GREENWAY AND TRAILS ONLY AS DEPICTED ON THE PEDESTRIAN TRAIL MAP CREATED FEBRUARY 2019 BY THE TOWN OF WAXHAW. TO REVIEW THE ENTIRE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY PLANS FOR THE TOWN OF WAXHAW, THE COMPREHENSIVE PEDESTRIAN PLAN SHOULD ALSO BE REVIEWED.

NOTE:
PLAN INITIATIVES REFLECTED ON THIS PLAN ARE RECOMMENDATIONS ONLY. RECOMMENDATIONS PROVIDED HERE AND IN THE STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN ARE PROVIDED TO AID PARKS & RECREATION STAFF, PARKS, CULTURAL & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AND TOWN BOARD WITH DECISION MAKING ON FUTURE PROJECTS.



- OVERALL PLAN INITIATIVES**
- ASSESS SAFETY & SECURITY MEASURES FOR EACH FACILITY; ADDRESS DEFICIENCIES; INSTALL SECURITY CAMERAS
 - SEEK LOCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A RECREATION/COMMUNITY CENTER
 - SEEK LAND / OPPORTUNITY FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHEAST QUADRANT AS WELL AS SOUTHERN WAXHAW
 - DEVELOP SITE SPECIFIC MASTER PLANS FOR ALL EXISTING AND FUTURE PARK PROPERTIES
 - SEEK OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAND ACQUISITION THROUGH THE UDO PROCESS
 - TOWN SHOULD CONSIDER UPDATING THE COMPREHENSIVE PEDESTRIAN PLAN (2012) FOR BETTER COORDINATION ON CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN THE VARIOUS RECENT PLANNING EFFORTS.

- WAXHAW/MARVIN RD**
OBTAIN SITE OF SAFETY HAZARDS AND CLEAR SITE OF SAFETY HAZARDS AND DEVELOP SITE MASTER PLAN AND DETERMINE PHASING; DESIGN & DEVELOP PHASE 1 AND 2 OF MASTER PLAN
- KENSINGTON/CURETON PARKWAY**
NEIGHBORHOODS TO CONSTRUCT FOOTBRIDGE, LINK TO CAROLINA THREAD TRAIL (CTT)
- TOWN CREEK PARK**
CONNECT CTT TO HC NESBIT; INSTALL UTILITIES & RESTROOMS; MASTER PLAN FOR OTHER POTENTIAL ELEMENTS, PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PARKING
- H.C. NESBIT PARK**
ADD ADA SIDEWALKS, PLAYGROUND, FENCE TOPPERS, FIELD UPGRADES; RE-MASTER PLAN & COMPLETE PARK BUILDOUT
- TWELVE MILE CREEK GREENWAY**
CONTINUE DEVELOPING 6.7 MILES
- SIX PARK**
STRUCTURE REPAIR; CONDUCT ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE FUTURE ELEMENTS
- DAVID G BARNES PARK / HORTON PROPERTY**
DEVELOP A FIRST PHASE, IMPLEMENT ROAD PARKING INFRASTRUCTURE, BUILD OUT OF MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS



The Green:

Phase 1 – Assess and master plan for enhancement and extension of the greenway and facilities

Master Plan Funding Strategy

This Master Plan identifies a Vision Plan for park development for the Town’s Parks and Recreation Department. It is understood that not all of the recommendations will be acted upon over the next decade. Elected officials will ultimately have to prioritize the steps they will take to meet some of these park and recreation needs.

To assist with the prioritization, the following items should be considered by both Town Staff and the elected officials:

- Clearly delineate capital expenses vs. operational expenses.
- Identify any additional staff requirements as a result of proposed projects.
- Identify and evaluate areas of future development
- Prepare potential risk assessments associated with all elements.
- Prepare proforma and cost benefit analysis demonstrating each project’s value to Waxhaw.
- Revenue sources must be identified and verified
 - Projected tax base growth, Land sales, User fees, Partnerships, Sponsors, Grants, General Fund, Bond Referenda, etc.
- Project timelines for each project and tasks involved.
- Identify the degree of difficulty involved for each project.
- Indicate the apparent “ripeness” of each project.
- Demonstrate the Public’s interest (as expressed in our surveys) for each project / element.

It will require a combination of revenue sources to accomplish the recommendations of the Master Plan. There are numerous combinations of funding strategies that can be explored and implemented. Upon careful analysis of past budget documents, current practices, available resources, and national trends, an example of a funding strategy is presented as one possible strategy.

General Funds

Allocations from the General Fund will need to increase to pay for operation of future facilities and programs. As noted previously in this section, the proposed facility improvements will require a number of added staff positions. As new staff positions are required, the annual operating budget must be increased. This additional

per capita funding could fund the majority of future operational costs, but will not provide the funding required for capital improvements.

In addition to this increased operational spending, the Department should begin budgeting for capital improvements projects on an annual basis. Annual allocations of \$250,000 to capital improvements over the next ten years could provide \$2.5 million in funds for capital projects and provide valuable matching funds for grants.

General Obligation Bonds

General Obligation Bonds could be used for major renovations and to acquire and develop new parks and recreation facilities. A successful bond campaign for park improvements in the next ten years could generate \$3-5 million for design, construction and acquisitions. This would represent a significant portion of funds needed for the proposed capital improvements budget. These funds can be dedicated to funding the larger park development and making major park improvements. As noted earlier in this section (General Obligation Bonds, page 5-3), this level of bond sales will likely result in the need for additional tax revenues to pay for the debt service created by the sale of these bonds.

Revenues & User Charges

As existing facilities are completed and new facilities are developed, the Department may consider adjusting the user fee structure to help offset more of the cost of some activities. Based on elected officials’ direction, the revenue generated by increased fees should then be used to offset impacts on the general fund and possibly be used for capital improvement funding to help make park improvements.

Partnerships & Gifts

The Department should work to develop a park foundation to help raise sponsorships and gifts. A non-profit foundation can engage private citizens and corporations to donate money and in-kind services for use for parks and recreational services. Through active involvement with a park foundation, the Department may be able to raise \$25,000 - \$50,000 in funds annually. This could result in donations of as much as half a million dollars over the next ten years. This level of funding would require the park foundation to become an active organization within the community.

Sponsorships & Naming Rights

Another excellent source of development capital is

through project sponsorship/underwriting by corporations throughout the community. Quality facilities, properly marketed, provide an excellent venue for raising development funds. Naming rights for athletic fields, shelters, playgrounds, etc. can be used to raise tens of thousands of dollars. The Town should consider adopting a policy on guidelines for accepting sponsorships and/or naming rights.

Grants

As noted previously, grant funding has been an important resource for funding parks throughout the North Carolina. The Department should continue to explore grants such as LWCF, PARTF, CTT, SAFTEA, Clean Water Grants, etc. In addition to the grants focused on typical park development, the Department should explore grants offered by foundations listed previously in this Section, Active pursuit of these funding sources could provide several million dollars in funds for capital improvements over the next ten years.

Overview

Together, these funding options could be used to raise millions of dollars of development capital over the next decade. It may be unrealistic to assume the Department can fund almost \$20 million of park improvements in the next five years especially during these still challenging economic times. Actively pursuing the options that are available should provide funding for many of the needs listed in this Master Plan. Through the continued use of this document, Department staff and elected officials can identify and prioritize community needs and actively seek funds to meet those needs over the next ten (or more) years.

Table 5-1
Waxhaw Parks & Recreation Department
Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan
Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) (10 Years)

<u>Capital Improvement & Land Acquisition</u>	<u>10-Year Total</u>	<u>2019-2023</u>	<u>2024-2028</u>
Existing Parks Renovations/Improvements			
HC Nesbit Park	\$675,000	\$675,000	\$0
Town Creek Park	\$375,000	\$375,000	\$0
David G. Barnes Children's Park	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	\$115,000	<u>\$115,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Renovations/Improvements Total	\$1,265,000	\$1,265,000	\$0
Land Acquisition			
Mini Parks	\$180,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
Neighborhood & Community Parks	\$2,250,000	\$1,250,000	\$1,000,000
Waxhaw Sk8 Park Expansion	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$0
David Barnes Childrens Park	\$400,000	<u>\$400,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Land Acquisition Total	\$2,980,000	\$1,890,000	\$1,090,000
Park/Facility Development			
New Mini Park (Wysacky Park)	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$0
New Neighborhood Park (Horton Property)	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$0
New Neighborhood Park (Waxhaw Athletic Fields)	\$3,200,000	\$3,200,000	\$0
New Community Park (Waxhaw-Marvin 34 AC)	\$1,800,000	\$1,150,000	\$650,000
New Community Center	\$6,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$2,000,000
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$1,609,000</u>	<u>\$1,344,000</u>	<u>\$265,000</u>
Park/Facility Development Total	\$17,699,000	\$14,784,000	\$2,915,000
Greenway Development			
Twelve Mile Creek Greenway	\$1,000,000	\$750,000	\$200,000
"The Green"	\$1,000,000	\$750,000	\$250,000
Kensington Cureton Pkwy Land	\$275,000	\$275,000	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$222,500</u>	<u>\$177,500</u>	<u>\$45,000</u>
Greenway Development Total	\$2,447,500	\$1,952,500	\$495,000
Special Use Facilities			
New Dog Park (Waxhaw- Monroe 2AC)	\$180,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
New Splash Pad	\$1,150,000	\$650,000	\$500,000
Community Corner/Water Tower	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$0
Waxhaw Sk8 Park	\$275,000	\$275,000	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$205,500</u>	<u>\$146,500</u>	<u>\$59,000</u>
Special Use Facilities Total	\$2,260,500	\$1,611,500	\$649,000
Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost	\$26,652,000	\$21,503,000	\$5,149,000

**Table 5-2
Waxhaw Parks & Recreation Department
Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan
Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) (5 Years)**

Capital Improvement & Land Acquisition	5-Year Total	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24
Existing Parks Renovations/Improvements						
HC Nesbit Park	\$675,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$125,000	\$450,000	\$0
Town Creek Park	\$375,000	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$125,000	\$0	\$0
David G. Barnes Children's Park (See also Horton Prop.	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$115,000</u>	<u>\$30,000</u>	<u>\$10,000</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>	<u>\$50,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Renovations/Improvements Total	\$1,265,000	\$330,000	\$110,000	\$275,000	\$550,000	\$0
Land Acquisition						
Mini Park	\$90,000	\$0	\$90,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Neighborhood & Community Park	\$1,250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Waxhaw Sk8 Park Expansion	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	\$0	\$0
David Barnes Children's Park	\$400,000	<u>\$200,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$200,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Land Acquisition Total	\$1,890,000	\$450,000	\$340,000	\$600,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Park/Facility Development						
New Mini Park (Wysacky Park)	\$90,000	\$0	\$0	\$90,000	\$0	\$0
New Neighborhood Park (Horton Property)	\$5,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,500,000
New Neighborhood Park (Waxhaw Athletic Fields)	\$3,200,000	\$0	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$200,000	\$0
New Community Park (Waxhaw-Marvin 34 AC)	\$1,150,000	\$100,000	\$700,000	\$0	\$350,000	\$0
New Community Center	\$4,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000,000	\$0	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$1,344,000</u>	<u>\$160,000</u>	<u>\$370,000</u>	<u>\$509,000</u>	<u>\$155,000</u>	<u>\$150,000</u>
Park/Facility Development Total	\$14,784,000	\$1,760,000	\$4,070,000	\$5,599,000	\$1,705,000	\$1,650,000
Greenway Development						
Twelve Mile Creek Greenway	\$750,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
"The Green"	\$750,000	\$0	\$500,000	\$0	\$250,000	\$0
Kensington Cureton Pkwy Land	\$275,000	\$0	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$177,500</u>	<u>\$15,000</u>	<u>\$72,500</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>	<u>\$50,000</u>	<u>\$15,000</u>
Greenway Development Total	\$1,952,500	\$165,000	\$797,500	\$275,000	\$550,000	\$165,000
Special Use Facilities						
New Dog Park (Waxhaw- Monroe 2AC)	\$90,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$80,000	\$0	\$0
New Splash Pad	\$650,000	\$0	\$500,000	\$150,000	\$0	\$0
Community Corner/Water Tower	\$450,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$450,000	\$0
Waxhaw Sk8 Park	\$275,000	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	\$0	\$0
Planning & Design (10%)	<u>\$146,500</u>	<u>\$5,000</u>	<u>\$58,500</u>	<u>\$38,000</u>	<u>\$45,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Special Use Facilities Total	\$1,611,500	\$55,000	\$643,500	\$418,000	\$495,000	\$0
Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost	\$21,503,000	\$2,760,000	\$5,961,000	\$7,167,000	\$3,550,000	\$2,065,000

APPENDICES

