

Master Parks and Recreation Plan



September 2005



Town of Wake Forest Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Adopted September 20, 2005

Prepared for:

**Town of Wake Forest
Department of Parks and Recreation**

Prepared by:

Mark Robinson & Associates

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To successfully complete the detailed planning process for the Wake Forest Parks and Recreation Master Plan, both a clear vision and an ongoing commitment were required of everyone involved. The leaders, staff and citizens of Wake Forest listed below provided an outstanding effort in bringing their visions of the future of Wake Forest's parks and recreational facilities to a reality in this plan.

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Mr. Rob Bridges
Mr. David Camacho
Mr. Chris Malone

Town Manager:

Mr. Mark Williams

Recreation Advisory Board:

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Ms. Barbara Avery
Mr. Bill Braddy
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Wake Forest Parks and Recreation Staff:

Ms. Susan Simpson, Parks and Recreation Director

Town of Wake Forest Parks and Recreation Master Plan

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CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE AND NEED

The Town of Wake Forest continues to undergo steady expansion in terms of both population and developed land within its jurisdiction. Through the early 1980's, the Town was able to accommodate recreation needs for a relatively small, stable population through the core park lands long established in the heart of Town. By the mid-1980's, however, the population growth and transformation of Wake County began to influence Wake Forest. It became evident that long-established parks could no longer adequately serve the anticipated population growth and that a broader geographic distribution of park lands would be needed to truly serve the expanding horizons of a growing community. Today, some 20 years after the first pressures of growth and transformation became unavoidably evident, the Town of Wake Forest is a vibrant community within Wake County and, indeed, a nucleus to more rural and newly developing areas to the north and east beyond county boundaries. The desire to provide parks for residents to enjoy today while preserving park lands for future generations is not only alive and well, but gaining in momentum as new residents seek to enrich and enjoy their newfound community.

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update is to review, refresh and expand the framework for Town leaders and the Parks and Recreation staff to use as they chart the course for programming, maintenance and development of the park system over the next 10 years. The planning effort is a deliberate means to step back so to assess progress made and determine needs. The planning effort is also a means to inject public input into the process of programming and developing a parks system so that the Town leaders and staff stay attuned to specific interests and broader sentiments of the citizens they ultimately serve. The plan itself serves as a foundation for budget projections and for grant applications. The Town has been repeatedly successful in being awarded grants for recreational purposes. This success, in significant part, is founded upon the commitments expressed in previous master plan documents and the direct links between such commitments and actual accomplishments. This plan will build upon and reinforce such commitments.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update will use a combination of national planning guidelines and community and staff input, along with the Recreation Participation and Preference Survey, to provide the Town of Wake Forest with the foundation to envision and sustain its park system over the next decade.

CHAPTER 2: PAST NINE YEARS

Since the adoption of the 1996 Parks & Recreation Master Plan the Town has accomplished the following:

- Added a Community Center and 4 tennis courts to J.B. Flaherty Park.
- Secured arrangements to jointly develop 40 acres at Heritage High School for athletic field development.
- Acquired 117 acres for the future Joyner Park.
- Prepared a comprehensive “Open Space & Greenway Plan”.
- Conducted a town-wide “Recreation Participation and Preference Survey” in 2003.
- Developed a master plan for development of Joyner Park.
- Developed plans to add 4 tennis courts, a shelter and a pet exercise facility to J.B. Flaherty Park.
- Developed segments of greenway trails throughout the Town.
- Prepared plans for additional trail construction.
- Added multi-use courts, a playground, and gym facilities at the Dubois School property.
- Made significant upgrades to the swimming pool at Holding Park.
- Acquired and developed the Smith Creek Soccer Center including 3 soccer fields, shelter and playground.
- Successfully won grants from local, state and federal agencies for numerous acquisition and development projects.
- Updated every playground in every park to meet CPSC and ADA guidelines.
- Asphalt-paved gravel parking lots at four park sites.
- Resurfaced basketball and tennis court surfaces every 2-3 years.
- Worked with Greater Wake Forest Area Baseball Commission to add batting cages, scoreboards and landscaping to fields at J.B. Flaherty Park.
- Participated in master planning sessions held by City of Raleigh for Forest Ridge Park in the Falls Lake Reservoir.
- Successfully proposed two bond issues for facility development totaling \$10,200,000.

These items represent the major accomplishments of the Town’s Parks and Recreation Department since 1996. These are in addition to operating facilities, managing and expanding program opportunities, and maintaining all facilities.

The Town of Wake Forest has worked diligently toward the goals established in the 1996 Plan, effectively using the plan as a guide and often moving beyond its scope to expand service provided and plan for the future.

CHAPTER 3: PLANNING PROCESS

Planning Process

The development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update is the result of an interactive process of collaboration between the Wake Forest Parks and Recreation staff, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, interested citizens of Wake Forest and the consultant Mark Robinson & Associates. The process has included an analysis of existing conditions data, facilitation of a public input meeting, identification of opportunities and development of recommendations, and development of maps and documents to convey these recommendations.

The process actually began in 2003, in conjunction with the master plan process for the Joyner property. Dr. Gene Brothers of North Carolina State University prepared a “Recreation Participation and Preference Survey” that was used to develop program guidelines for Joyner Park. More broadly, the survey provided a window into the recreation interests of the Town’s residents and thereby an indication of future needs. The survey was sent to 2,115 households and had a usable response rate of 22.32%.

Using this information, park classifications, facility needs and facility per park concepts were developed based on national standards (NRPA) and local input. These products, in combination with population projections and the survey data, were used to develop the recommendations for facility distribution and park development. From these recommendations, priorities and implementation strategies were prepared.

Community Involvement

In addition to the input and direction provided by Town staff, the planning efforts relied heavily on citizen input. The “Recreation Participation and Preference Survey” was the first opportunity to solicit public input. The second opportunity was a public forum held on June 14, 2005. This forum gave citizens an opportunity to meet with the staff and the planning consultant to discuss directly preliminary recommendations as well as their vision for the Wake Forest park system.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has acted as a source of input to staff well before the planning process got formally underway. A presentation was made to the Board on June 27, 2005 at which time the goals and recommendations were presented, reviewed and discussed. This input was used to further refine the final recommendations presented in the plan. This meeting was also open to the public.

Finally, once the draft of the plan was accepted by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, a public presentation was given to the Town Board of Commissioners. This presentation gave another opportunity for public input.

CHAPTER 4: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Wake Forest Parks & Recreation Master Plan establishes recreational objectives through the year 2015. This plan is also an opportunity to reassess and reaffirm the policies and philosophies that shape and support the Town's recreational objectives. This plan is also part of an ongoing effort to document the needs, objectives and processes that have been the foundation of past planning endeavors and that will continue to inform future decision making.

The goals and objectives outlined below, in conjunction with their related recommendations (Chapter 8) and implementation steps (Chapter 9), enable Town staff, elected officials and community volunteers to work toward and accomplish the development and management of necessary and desired recreation facilities for the next decade.

Goal 1: Provide park and open space opportunities to all residents.

Objectives:

- Provide adequate land for future development by continuing to place a priority on land acquisition.
- Develop a system of parks and recreation facilities that meets current and future needs of the citizens of Wake Forest.
- Provide facilities and programs that serve a broad cross-section of the Town's residents.
- Develop recreational facilities that are universally accessible (ADA compliant) to all citizens.
- Develop recreational facilities that are within reasonable means of access for all residents.
- Capitalize on the value of park and recreation facilities to improve the overall aesthetic character of the Town and as a means of promoting livability.
- Provide facilities with adequate numbers of appropriately trained staff and personnel.

Goal 2: Optimize the appreciation, use and stewardship of Wake Forest's historic, cultural and natural resource heritage.

Objectives:

- The Wake Forest Open Space & Greenway Plan should work in a unified manner with this plan.
- Promote and ensure stewardship of Wake Forest's natural resources.
- Develop and maintain parks and greenways using nationally-accepted sustainable design principles and best management practices.
- Promote, preserve and ensure protection of Wake Forest's cultural and historic resources.
- Develop environmental education and interpretive facilities.

Goal 3: Provide the opportunity for community involvement.

Objectives:

- Ensure meaningful public participation in the planning of park facilities.
- Inform citizens of plans and available services to promote active participation in the success and future direction of the parks system.
- Encourage volunteerism and other forms of private sector involvement.

Goal 4: Encourage inter- and intragovernmental collaboration.

Objectives:

- Continue to pursue additional opportunities to coordinate and cooperate with the City of Raleigh, Wake County, the Wake County Public School System, neighboring municipalities, the State of North Carolina and Federal agencies such as the US Army Corps of Engineers and Federal Highway Works Administration in the acquisition, development and use of parks and recreational facilities.
- Ensure that all partnerships allow for the Town's full participation from the earliest design stages and include active engagement of relevant users in project planning and design.

Goal 5: Encourage private recreation initiatives to supplement public facilities.

Objectives:

- Explore opportunities to encourage the private sector, both for-profit and not-for-profit, to provide additional depth and breadth of recreational facilities and activities.
- Partner with the private sector to provide recreational needs that the public sector cannot or is not providing.

Goal 6: Provide facilities that promote the Town's sustainability goals by developing environmentally sensitive design principles.

Objectives:

- Enhance existing park facilities through the refurbishment and/or replacement of existing amenities to accommodate changing user needs (e.g. extended hours of operation and new recreation trends).
- Encourage the incorporation of sustainable construction and maintenance techniques (e.g. the use of recycled materials, native plantings, streambank stabilization).
- Protect wetlands, woodlands and other natural areas and wildlife habitats as green infrastructure.

Goal 7: Provide facilities that honor and enhance Wake Forest’s open space by providing natural areas and preserves, buffers and linkages to the overall open spaces system.

Objectives:

- Develop a stewardship program within the Parks and Recreation Department to facilitate management of natural resources and to promote environmental education.
- Work in partnership with Wake County and adjacent municipalities to identify lands that can provide open space linkages to connect open space systems and to contribute to the overall County Open Space Plan.

Goal 8: Allow for the flexible future development of land, encourage variations between facilities, and take advantage of unique natural features, community needs and existing adjacent facilities.

Objectives:

- During the selection of activities, programming and amenities within a new facility, review the activities, programming and amenities at adjacent facilities so that users have the opportunity for varied experiences.
- Reserve lands within existing or proposed parks to fulfill future recreational trends and needs that will become known as Wake Forest’s population and demographics evolve.

CHAPTER 5: DEMOGRAPHICS

The Town of Wake Forest has experienced over the past decade the pace of growth more commonly associated with the City of Raleigh and the Town of Cary. The Town's population has almost tripled in the past ten years and has been increasing between 2000 and 2005 at an average rate of 7% per year (as compared to an average rate for Wake County of 4.5%). New development initiatives within the Town's jurisdiction suggest that population growth will continue at least at the county's average rate or higher over the decade to come. This assumption that population will continue to grow within the Town's jurisdiction has significant influence upon the planning of park land acquisition and facility development.

Census data from the year 2000, in addition to a growing population, also indicates some trends that directly influence the provision, programming and management of parks and recreation facilities:

- The percent of population of children 5 years old and younger is 9.8% as compared to Wake County with 7.2%.
- The percent of population of adults 65 years and older is 7.9% as compared to Wake County at 7.4%.
- School age children comprise approximately 12% of the population.
- The median household income is \$52,307 as compared to Wake County at \$54,988.
- The Town's population is becoming more diverse. The percentage of those identified as "white" has decreased to 79.6%. Those identified as "African American" has increased to 15.8%. Those identified as "Asian" has increased to 2.0% and those identified as "Hispanic or Latino" has increased to 2.1%. These shifts in population composition are expected to continue, with a significantly more diverse population profile expected by year 2015.

This information, along with the "Recreation Participation and Preference Survey" and observations by staff suggest that demands for facilities for young and school-age children will rise and that demand for facilities and programs for adults older than age 65 will also rise within the next decade.

CHAPTER 6: EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES

The Town of Wake Forest currently owns and manages 499.5 acres of park lands. This acreage does not include the wastewater treatment plant site, open space holdings along the Neuse River, greenway corridors and other open space parcels. Open space and greenway lands are delineated in the Wake Forest Open Space & Greenway Plan.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Mini Parks

The Town of Wake Forest currently maintains five Mini Parks. These parks are less than two acres in size, and serve the neighborhoods immediately surrounding them. The Town has indicated that while it would continue to maintain these parks it would not develop additional Mini Parks. In part this is due to the fact that private recreation areas (play areas, etc.) are frequently developed as part of new subdivisions that often serve the same role as a mini park. Below is a summary of the Mini Park classification.

Existing Parks	Forrest Park H.L. Miller Park North Taylor Street Park Kiwanis Park Plummer Park
Size	< 2 acres
Typical Facilities	Playground Basketball Court Picnic Facilities

Neighborhood Parks

The Town of Wake Forest currently maintains six Neighborhood Parks. These parks are typically 5 - 20 acres in size, usually serving the immediate surrounding neighborhood, although they can provide town-wide service. As with Mini Parks, private recreational facilities have fulfilled many of the recreational needs typically satisfied by Neighborhood Parks. Further, as maintenance and management costs have increased along with demand, the Town has found it to be significantly more efficient to develop and maintain larger parks. Nonetheless, the Town continues to remain open to Neighborhood Park development if suitable opportunities become available. An example of such an opportunity taken is the Smith Creek Soccer Center. Existing neighborhood parks are proposed to be maintained, improved and developed so they can continue to serve as community assets. Opportunities to develop neighborhood parks and facilities in conjunction with special natural and historical places within the study area, so to preserve and enhance focal points which contribute to the quality and image of neighborhoods throughout the Town, should also be investigated and considered.

Table 2: Existing Neighborhood Parks	
Existing Parks	Holding Park Tyler Run Park Ailey Young Park J.L. Warren Park Oak Street Park Smith Creek Soccer Center
Size	5 - 20 acres
Typical Facilities	Playground Basketball Court Paved or unpaved walking trails Sand volleyball court Free play areas Multi-purpose court Soccer field Buffer or undeveloped lands to remain natural

Community Parks

The Town currently has no parks categorized as a Community Park. Community Parks are intended to provide active recreation facilities for residents throughout the Town's jurisdiction. Community parks also typically serve as Neighborhood Parks for those living within close proximity of the park. These parks are typically accessed via the roadway system and may include community centers.

Table 3: Existing Community Parks	
Existing Parks	None at present
Size	21 - 99 acres (typically 40 - 70 acres)
Typical Facilities	Picnic shelters Playground Basketball court Baseball/softball fields Tennis courts Paved or unpaved walking trails Sand volleyball court Community center Free play area Multi-purpose court Soccer field Buffer or undeveloped lands to remain natural

Metro Parks

The Town currently has developed one Metro Park, J.B. Flaherty Park, and has two sites that will be developed as Metro Parks. Metro Parks are intended to provide for active and passive recreation and may also contain Special Use Facilities for the entire community.

Table 4: Existing Metro Parks	
Existing Parks	J.B. Flaherty Park
Future Development	Joyner Park Town Reservoir Site
Size	100+ acres
Typical Facilities	Boating/fishing lake Amphitheater

	Picnic shelters Playground Basketball court Baseball/softball fields Tennis courts Paved or unpaved walking trails Sand volleyball court Community center Free play areas Multi-purpose court Soccer field Buffer or undeveloped lands to remain natural
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School Parks

The Town currently maintains recreational facilities at three school sites, namely Wake Forest High School, Wake Forest Middle School and the Dubois School site. The Town has already entered into an agreement with the Wake County Public School System to jointly develop a Community Park-level facility at the proposed Heritage High School. These joint arrangements have benefited both the Town and the School System and have enabled the Town to provide recreational opportunities at significantly less cost than independently developing equal facilities.

Table 5: Existing School Parks	
Existing Parks	Wake Forest High School Wake Forest Middle School Dubois School
Size	1 – 40 acres
Typical Facilities	Ballfield Soccer fields Track Multi-use courts Football field

Special Use Facilities

The Town currently has not developed any Special Use Facilities. Special Use Facilities provide for either a single specific or a set of several specific uses and are intended to serve the needs of the entire community. Special Use Facilities vary in size depending upon their use. They can also be grouped as historic/cultural centers, specialized recreation facilities, and outdoor recreation facilities. The location of such facilities should be chosen to provide convenient access to large portions of the community. The activities and services provided respond to specific needs expressed by the community or trends in the region.

Natural Areas

The Wake Forest Open Space & Greenway Plan directly addresses needs and opportunities for the conservation and development of natural areas. The objective is not to duplicate those recommendations, but to build upon and

work in tandem with them. This category has not been a standard park classification, but has merit relative to the desire for the conservation of natural areas as new development patterns take over former woodlands and farm lands. Refer to Chapter 8 “Recommendations” for further description of this category.

Table 6: Existing Parks and Facilities Distribution			
Site	Category	Size	Facilities
Forrest Park	Mini Park	1 acre	1 Little League field (doubles as youth soccer field)
H.L. Miller Park	Mini Park	2 acres	Natural area 3 picnic tables
Kiwanis Park	Mini Park	1 acre	1 playground ¼ mile greenway
North Taylor Street Park	Mini Park	1.5 acres	2 multi-use courts
Plummer Park	Mini Park	0.5 acres	1 playground 1 picnic table
Ailey Young Park	Neighborhood Park	15 acres	1 baseball field (doubles as youth soccer field) 2 multi-use courts 1 playground
Holding Park	Neighborhood Park	5 acres	1 neighborhood center 1 50 m. outdoor pool 1 playground 1 basketball court
J.L. Warren Park	Neighborhood Park	10 acres	Natural area
Oak Street Park	Neighborhood Park	13 acres	Natural area
Smith Creek Soccer Center	Neighborhood Park	17 acres	3 soccer fields 1 playground 1 walking trail 1 picnic shelter
Tyler Run Park	Neighborhood Park	9 acres	1 youth ballfield (doubles as youth soccer field) 1 multi-use court 1 playground
Dubois School Park	School Park	20 acres	1 playground 2 multi-use courts
WF-R High School	School Park	1 acre	1 baseball field
WF-R Middle School	School Park	12.5 acres	1 playground 1 softball field 2 multi-use courts 1 football field 1 track 1 soccer field
J.B. Flaherty Park	Metro Park	100 acres	Natural area 1 youth ballfield 2 baseball/softball fields
Joyner Park	Metro Park	117 acres	Proposed Facilities: 2 ballfields (youth) 2 soccer fields 1 community center 6 tennis courts 2 playgrounds 1 amphitheater 2 multi-use courts (basketball) Overlooks Greenway connections Trail systems Farm buildings Pecan grove Open areas Picnic shelters Public gardens
Town Reservoir	Metro Park	174 acres	Natural area

CHAPTER 7: NEEDS ANALYSIS

Overview

In order to determine the future recreational needs for the Town of Wake Forest, several forms of community and staff input and both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed. These forms of input and data included:

- Comments received during a public open house held in June 2005.
- Written and e-mail comments received by the Wake Forest Parks and Recreation Department.
- Survey data received through the Recreation Participation and Preference Survey, administered in Summer 2003.
- Discussions with Town staff throughout the project process.
- Input received during a meeting with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB).
- National and regional trends identified during the project process.

Of these various sources of input, none were used exclusively, but rather, needs were assessed by using one set of data to establish a baseline and then checking that data through the analysis of the other inputs. The recreation participation and preference survey data was used as the baseline to establish an initial set of facility needs. This survey was developed in conjunction with Town staff. It represents a broad range of the most popular activities and facilities in the region. Once this base set of needs was established, each activity or facility was then examined in relation to the other sets of input in order to verify that the need expressed accurately reflects the needs of the community. These facility needs were then used to form the facilities recommendations found in Chapter 8. Each activity/facility is identified in the “Facilities Per Park Recommendations” tables that set guidelines for the development of new park facilities.

It is important to note that given the needs identified, associated space requirements, and financial resources likely to be available, choices will need to be made; it is unlikely that facilities will be able to be developed to accommodate all of the latent demand for all recreational activities at a given time.

Important factors that Town staff and elected leaders will also need to consider in the future as they develop parks and recreational facilities include:

- The recreational needs of the community as expressed in future public input meetings, open houses, parks master planning processes, correspondence, and surveys.
- Evaluation of actual population change over time versus population growth projections.
- Changes in recreational trends and, thus, facility needs over time.
- Staff interpretation of the facility needs with respect to barriers to participation. (e.g. Are there existing vacancies/underutilization of

- facilities for which latent demand has been identified? Why? Can increased marketing of programs improve awareness?)
- Alternatives to building additional facilities. (e.g. Are there opportunities to collaborate with nearby communities or private groups who could provide the unmet demand for certain recreational activities? Can programs be developed utilizing existing facilities?)

Input Summary

The following summaries represent comments received that relate to desired facilities or activities within the Wake Forest Parks and Recreation System as expressed during the planning process.

Public Input Meeting held on June 14, 2005

The primary input at this meeting received from the public was the desire to develop a tennis facility for casual, league and tournament play and for the development of more softball/baseball fields. The meeting also afforded the opportunity to explain future development plans at Joyner Farm Park, J.B. Flaherty Park and Heritage High School.

Input received from meeting with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

The consultant met with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) in June 2005 and presented an overview of the draft plan's major ideas, perspectives and recommendations. Although a quorum was not present, the initial response was favorable. After this meeting, a revised draft was sent to Susan Simpson who, in turn, forwarded full copies to all PRAB members. During the July PRAB meeting, after having the opportunity to read the plan in greater detail, the plan was unanimously approved and forwarded to Town Commissioners with a recommendation for adoption.

Written and e-mail comments received by the Wake Forest Parks and Recreation Department

Throughout the project process, comments for consideration within the scope of the plan update were solicited by the Parks and Recreation Department. Comments from individuals and groups were received through e-mail, mail and telephone. While many of these comments were similar to one another at times, the result of coordinated e-mail campaigns by area organizations and groups, many distinct comments were considered within the planning process. The comments were summarized by Town staff and forwarded to the Consultant.

Survey data received through the Recreation Participation and Preference Survey, administered in Summer 2003

Recreation facility needs for the Town of Wake Forest were also determined in this plan by calculating three estimates based on the Recreation Participation and Preference Survey. The first estimate indicates a possible level of latent

demand that exists which is the difference between the proportions of the participants using facilities in Wake Forest and the proportions of those residents in the community that have a high to very high interest in an activity but are not currently participating in a given activity. Second, a population service requirement was determined to provide an estimate of the number of individuals served annually by the current facilities and services. Finally, the level of service (LOS) that current facilities provide for the current population is determined. These calculations were evaluated to determine the number of facilities and services needed to satisfy participation of residents with a high to very high interest in an activity who are not currently participating. Estimates of needed facilities were projected for future needs based on the current level of interest and projected population growth. In establishing the current LOS for a given activity, results from the resident survey were used to estimate participation and interests in various activities. In addition to the facility based activities included in this needs analysis, there are also programmed activities included in the listing of activities on the survey.

Level of Service

In addition to the current facility needs due to the residents' interests, the growing population of Wake Forest is also creating additional demand for recreational opportunities. Using the population service requirement (persons served/facility), the needed number of facilities can be projected based on population growth. The population projections are divided by the number of persons served by one facility.

The prioritized activities found in the survey are ordered based on the latent demand which is the difference between the proportion of the population participating in the activity and the proportion indicating that they are very or extremely interested in participating. This rank ordering of activities and the resulting needs for facilities is only one piece of information that needs to be considered when making development decisions. The decisions that must be made as new parks are master planned are difficult in that there are always limitations relative to the capabilities of the landscape, financial resources, and special needs for groups who feel they are being under served. The decisions regarding what specific facilities will be built in the future are made within the site master planning process, not at this comprehensive planning level. The reality of recreation facility development is that not all of the latent demand, indicated by level of interest, can possibly be provided. Nonetheless, identifying and understanding the public's perception of need and preference is an excellent foundation for park system and program development.

Current Parks and Recreation Trends - Regional and National

Another source of information that was considered when forming the recommendations sections of this plan was the effect of regional and national recreational trends as they relate to Wake Forest's parks and recreation system. Many of Wake Forest's parks and recreation facilities are already in step with current trends and initiatives such as greenway and open space expansion and parks with an environmental conservation focus.

Keeping up with trends and providing residents with new and diverse recreational opportunities is a challenge to community governments across the nation. In her report, “Public Park and Recreation Trends: A Status Report”, Ruth Russell cites several challenges faced by parks and recreation departments in the past decade (Russell, 1999):

- Declining park and recreation budgets relative to costs.
- Increasing competition for shrinking federal, state and local tax resources.
- Greater cultural diversity.
- Greater difficulty in providing equal opportunity for leisure to all people.

The Town through its leaders and staff has done an excellent job of staying attuned to the interests and viewpoints of community residents. Maintaining this basis of communication is the best way to balance needs and constraints.

Below is a summary of recreational trends documented during the planning process. As many of the trends have overlapping user groups or are similar in nature, they have been grouped into several themes.

Passive Recreational Facilities

Passive recreational activities such as Walking Facilities and Multi-Use Pathways are increasingly popular. These facilities provide varied loops of paved and unpaved linked systems that provide linear recreation for a variety of users including runners, bicyclists and in-line skaters and pet walkers. Creating interconnected systems both within the community and regionally is a key goal of most communities. Wayfinding and user amenities are provided such as trail heads with parking, restrooms, benches, maps and linkages to user origins and destinations. These facilities also provide vital links to residential areas, commercial zones and workplaces to encourage walkable community initiatives and safe alternatives to automobile commuting.

Environmental Education and Ecological Preservation

Parks and recreation facilities that highlight environmental or ecological processes and have a focus on education are being developed throughout the nation. Natural Areas and Preservation Parks include passive use areas intended for natural resource preservation and minimal access.

Specialty or Unique Recreation Activities

Aquatic Facilities and facilities that provide for a range of water activities are being developed in many communities. These include exercise and team swimming and recreational water play for children such as water slides and spraygrounds.

Dog Parks and Dog Runs are parks or portions of parks dedicated to exercising dogs. These can be fenced off-leash parks for dogs or multi-use pathways that allow pet usage.

Community-wide Indoor Wellness/Fitness Facilities offer programs and services that are designed to provide a broad range of fitness facilities as well as wellness education and services to a broad range of age groups and user abilities.

Funding, Partnering Strategies, Creative Re-use and Community Outreach

Creative Funding Strategies are more frequently sought as funds from traditional sources are limited. Many communities actively monitor searches for development and maintenance funds through non-traditional sources. These often include public or private grants, partnerships with corporations or non-profit organizations, use agreements, and donations. Many communities identify one key staff member to track grants and funding opportunities. Creative Partnering is also an important trend as communities look to adjacent municipalities, hospitals, corporations and State agencies to share facilities, programs, staff, or infrastructure as a means of raising funds and attracting users. These partnerships also include the involvement of community members and groups in portions of the maintenance of park areas and in the development of facilities such as community gardens and playgrounds.

As suitable lands for parks become scarce, Creative Reuse of existing facilities becomes an option for many communities. Efforts to find ways to reuse existing facilities for new uses (e.g. tennis courts to multi-use sport courts) or incorporating new facility development within existing can produce very successful and cost effective results.

Facilities for Targeted Age Groups

As the populations in many communities grow older, Facilities for Seniors are commonly being developed as part of a community's parks and recreation system. These facilities often include senior-focused community centers, extended care facilities, and recreational activities within neighborhood parks that are targeted toward seniors.

To target outdoor recreation activities for youth, "X-Games" parks are being developed. These are facilities that often provide a variety of "extreme" sport activities. These activities include in-line hockey rinks, BMX "Dirt Jump" parks, climbing walls, single-track mountain biking trails, skateboard parks, and competitive whitewater kayak/raft courses.

RECREATIONAL FACILITY NEEDS

Based on Recreation Standards and Population Projections for the years 2010 and 2015

		YEAR 2005*	YEAR 2010	YEAR 2015
Projected Population		18,351	22,868	28,498
FACILITY	STANDARD	EXISTING	EST. NEEDS	EST. NEEDS
Ballfields	1 per 5000	8	5	6
Tennis Courts	1 per 2000	4	12	15
Swimming Pools	1 per 10,000	1	2	2.5
Neighborhood Centers	1 per 10,000	1	2	2.5
Community Centers	1 per 15-25,000	1	1.5	2
Soccer Fields	1 per 4500	4	5	6
Youth Soccer Fields	1 per 4500	3**	5**	6**
Multi-Use Courts	1 per 1500	10	15	19
Picnic Shelters	1 per 5000	2	4	6
Playgrounds	1 per 2500	7	9	12

The recreation standards referenced include NRPA and standards provided by Town staff. The standard used to estimate facility needs was the higher of the standards referenced.

*The existing population for year 2005 is based upon the Census Bureau's estimate of 16,029 for year 2003 that is then projected at a rate of 7% annually to year 2005. From year 2005 to 2015, the annual rate of increase used to estimate population is 4.5% which is the current average rate of population growth for Wake County.

**Includes shared space with some ballfields

CHAPTER 8: RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The recommendations that are included in this section have been organized to respond to the goals and objectives summarized in Chapter 4. These recommendations are intended to:

- establish a structure by which park facilities can be developed with a consistent level of quality yet allow for flexibility and variation at the master planning level for each park;
- identify specific ways in which the Town can strive to develop or enhance stewardship programs, community involvement and partnership opportunities; and
- provide staff and elected officials with the necessary tools to further evaluate and weight the needs of the community on balance with physical and financial constraints as they strive to provide the best possible facilities to the citizens of Wake Forest.

Goal 1:

Provide park and open space opportunities to all residents.

Objective 1:

Provide adequate land for future development by placing a priority on land acquisition.

The Town has made significant progress over the past 10 years to secure park sites for immediate or future development, notably Smith Creek Soccer Center and Joyner Park. The area south of NC 98 Bypass is the one area (or quadrant as referenced in the 1996 plan) where land for parks has not been secured. Acquiring at least one community park- or metro park-size site in the area south of NC 98 Bypass should be a priority.

The Town should actively engage in the identification of potential park sites, such as Neighborhood Park sites, even though their development is not a high priority. Such identification should prepare the Town to take advantage of opportunities and changes in demand that occur over time.

Finally, the Town should engage in the identification of potential sites, already controlled and not controlled, for special recreational facilities such as a tennis or aquatic facility. Again, such identification lays groundwork to take advantage of potential opportunities that may arise should the demand for such facilities warrant their development.

**Goal 1:
Provide park and open space opportunities to all residents.**

***Objective 2:
Develop a system of parks and recreation facilities that meets current and future needs of the citizens of Wake Forest.***

In order to ensure that adequate parkland is available to meet future development needs and recreational trends, it is recommended that the Town continue and expand its process by which Master Plans of future proposed parks clearly delineate intended uses for the park. These delineated use areas include the following:

- areas planned for active recreation
- areas planned for passive recreation
- areas reserved for future active and/or passive recreation
- areas reserved as Natural Areas in perpetuity for which a stewardship plan is developed

This system will allow the Town to better accommodate future recreational needs that arise and to respond to citizens' requests in several ways:

- By creating delineated areas for future development, the Town will be able to create and maintain a supply of available developable parkland for active or passive recreation. This supply can assist the Town in the selection of suitable sites to accommodate future recreational needs by including site data on area size, and opportunities/constraints as identified during the Master Planning process.
- By delineating areas within Master Plans for both existing and proposed parks as Natural Areas, the Town will ensure that some portion of parkland will forever remain natural in character.

**Goal 1:
Provide park and open space opportunities to all residents.**

***Objective 3:
Provide facilities and programs that serve a broad cross-section of the Town's residents.***

As the availability of suitable lands for park development decreases and the demand for additional basic recreation facilities, as well as for facilities associated with new trends, increases, the Town will need to seek creative ways in which to continue providing a broad range of recreational opportunities to its citizens. In particular, the development of new Neighborhood, Community and Metro Parks will require creativity and flexibility. The delineation of the four component parts of a park described above, with its reservation of lands for future active or passive development, is one way in which the Town can proactively establish a flexible system. Another way in which the Town can promote flexibility within the park system is to strategically vary recreational opportunities between parks. For

example, while all parks of a certain type are typically recommended to receive a base set of standard facilities, additional recreational activities may intentionally vary between adjacent parks in order to provide a greater range of activities and provide users with proximity to many different opportunities.

**Goal 1:
Provide park and open space opportunities to all residents.**

***Objective 4:
Develop recreational facilities that are universally accessible (ADA compliant) to all citizens.***

In order to allow recreational facilities that are accessible to all, each phase of the planning and implementation process of new park development needs to include universal design principles as a primary goal. It is also recommended that the Town's existing parks be examined for their compliance to ADA guidelines and that a process be developed within renovation and maintenance programs to bring non-accessible facilities into compliance. Specific areas to address would include but not be limited to:

- Selection of playground equipment that serves children of all abilities.
- Ensuring that accessible links between parking areas and major park elements are provided.
- Use of trail surface materials that allow wheelchair access.
- Providing trails with ADA compliant grades where feasible.
- Seeking to provide accessible trails that form loops or link to other accessible trails in order to provide long segments that are accessible to a variety of users and abilities.
- Seek to provide programming and interpretive facilities that accommodate participants of all abilities.

**Goal 1:
Provide park and open space opportunities to all residents.**

***Objective 5:
Develop recreational facilities that are within reasonable means of access for all residents.***

The Town should continue to seek and develop park sites within all major areas of the Town's jurisdiction.

The Town should take advantage of opportunities to insert smaller-sized parks into existing developed areas of town when such opportunities can satisfy basic recreational needs or special recreational objectives.

Since it is likely that most residents will have to drive to parks, location on suitable roadways for ready identification and access and adequate parking should be major considerations for park development.

Goal 1:

Provide park and open space opportunities to all residents.

Objective 6:

Capitalize on the value of park and recreation facilities to improve the overall aesthetic character of the Town and as a means of promoting livability.

The Town should continue to recognize that its system of public parks is a statement of public pride and an indication of the Town's prosperity, livability and commitment to quality. Therefore, the aesthetic of well-designed and well-maintained parks should be actively developed and nurtured at both new and existing facilities.

Goal 1:

Provide park and open space opportunities to all residents.

Objective 7:

Provide facilities with adequate numbers of appropriately trained staff and personnel.

As programs and facilities are developed to satisfy an increasingly diverse demand for recreational alternatives, it is essential that adequate numbers of well-trained staff are employed to serve the public. One significant strength of the Town's current situation is that the staff is relatively small and united in its communication with and service to the public. As more staff are needed to manage the system, increased funds and training time will be needed to maintain good, consistent communication with citizens and to continue providing a high level of service.

Goal 2:

Optimize the appreciation, use and stewardship of Wake Forest's historic, cultural and natural resource heritage.

Objective 1:

The Wake Forest Open Space & Greenway Plan should work in a unified manner with this plan.

The Master Recreation Plan and the Wake Forest Open Space & Greenway Plan should always be considered jointly when consideration is given to any aspect of park, recreation and open space planning, acquisition, or development within the Town's jurisdiction.

Goal 2:

Optimize the appreciation, use and stewardship of Wake Forest's historic, cultural and natural resource heritage.

Objective 2:

Promote and ensure stewardship of Wake Forest's natural resources.

Stewardship of Parklands Overview

As the Town faces increased demands to develop active-use parkland, it is also under pressure to preserve remaining natural areas within the Town and to adhere to Town, State and Federal environmental regulations. These regulations, along with growing public awareness, support and proactive environmental conservation efforts warrant that the Parks and Recreation Department consider stewardship of parkland as one of its key responsibilities. A dedicated focus on parkland stewardship within the Department is recommended to become one of the key elements in both the continued maintenance and upgrading of existing facilities as well as in the Master Planning process of all new facility developments. This process should also complement the environmental stewardship and conservation efforts being undertaken by Wake County and adjacent municipalities.

Increase Public Awareness

With a dedicated focus on the stewardship of Wake Forest's parkland, the opportunity will exist to greatly enhance the level of public awareness of the unique natural resources currently found within the Town as well as the interpretive and environmental education programming available to citizens. There is significant desire among the community for opportunities to interact with nature. A dedicated focus on enhancing stewardship and environmental education efforts will likely generate interest by citizens in the Town's natural resources.

Ecological Principles for Delineating Conservation Areas

Guidelines recommended for the identification and delineation of Conservation Areas are as follows:

- Preserve interesting, unique, or representative ecological features and habitats. This has the advantage of allowing for interpretive and educational activities.
- Strive to delineate larger contiguous parcels rather than several smaller unconnected parcels. Larger parcels in the landscape typically contain both edge and interior habitats; the larger these two habitat types are, the more beneficial they typically are for the various species that inhabit them. Large parcels also better protect aquifers and interconnected stream networks.
- Select parcels with irregular edges provide higher species diversity and habitat values over narrow linear parcels.
- Delineate linear parcels with substantial width to ensure that edge and interior zones will be broad enough to support associated plant and animal habitats. Preference should be shown for delineating linear parcels that are

linked to larger parcels or adjacent/intersecting parcels to encourage animal species movements.

Goal 2:

Optimize the appreciation, use and stewardship of Wake Forest’s historic, cultural and natural resource heritage.

Objective 3:

Develop and maintain parks and greenways using nationally-accepted sustainable design principles and best management practices.

Sustainable design is increasingly becoming an integral part of park development. The dominant measures for gauging the degree of ecological sustainability of construction projects are:

- The US Green Building Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), and
- The “Minnesota Sustainable Design Guide”.

Additionally, local best management practices for habitat restoration and best management practices for reducing erosion and handling stormwater should be utilized.

Goal 2:

Optimize the appreciation, use and stewardship of Wake Forest’s historic, cultural and natural resource heritage.

Objective 4:

Promote, preserve and ensure protection of Wake Forest’s cultural and historic resources.

The preservation and protection of Wake Forest’s natural and cultural resources entails an effort by the Town, in partnership with area municipalities, agencies and organizations, to play an active role in maintaining ecological, cultural and historic resources. Cultural and historic resources within the community provide a unique opportunity for the Parks and Recreation Department to provide varied recreational and leisure opportunities for its citizens. Facilities such as historic homes, performing arts and arts education centers and public places with cultural themes can provide alternative opportunities to active recreation facilities and represent prime opportunities for community interaction and partnerships with other agencies and organizations.

It is recommended that the Town identify existing historic and cultural facilities and explore means to incorporate them into the provision of recreation opportunities. The Town is also encouraged to look for ways to increase public awareness of these programs and for ways to encourage further community volunteer participation in them. As opportunities to preserve significant historic sites or to develop cultural

arts venues arise, an evaluation of each opportunity should be made and partnerships with area agencies or groups should be sought in order to broaden the historic and cultural facilities and programs available to the public.

Goal 2:

Optimize the appreciation, use and stewardship of Wake Forest's historic, cultural and natural resource heritage.

Objective 5:

Develop environmental education and interpretive facilities.

As the Town pursues further acquisition of Natural Areas, develops additional Community Centers, and places a greater emphasis on environmental stewardship, it is recommended that environmental education facilities and programs become an integral component to these plans. This can be accomplished through new facilities, expanded programs or self-directed environmental education signage in parks, adjacent to important features in Conservation Areas and along Greenway Corridors. The Town is also encouraged to seek partnerships with Wake County, adjacent municipalities and the Wake County Public School System to enhance these educational and interpretive opportunities.

Goal 3:

Provide the opportunity for community involvement.

Objective 1:

Ensure meaningful public participation in the planning of park facilities.

Objective 2:

Inform citizens of plans and available services to promote active participation in the success and future direction of the parks system.

Objective 3:

Encourage volunteerism and other forms of private sector involvement.

Parks and recreation facilities are public lands that are owned by the public and are intended to serve the public good and increase the quality of life of the citizens of Wake Forest. The Town currently has adopted policies that encourage public participation in the planning and development of parks and recreation facilities. The Town is encouraged to continue to implement these policies and to enhance them wherever possible in order to effectively and consistently involve its citizens in the development and management of its parks and recreation system. Following are several recommended principles for community involvement:

- Continue to conduct Recreation Participation and Preference Surveys on a regular basis to track the recreational needs of citizens over time.

- Utilize a variety of public outreach methods during park master planning efforts in order to reach a broad cross-section of stakeholders in the community.
- Seek to collaborate with local schools through organized events that allow children and parents to become part of the park planning process; and through the formation of school programs that utilize environmental education resources within parks.
- Encourage citizens to volunteer within the parks and recreation system by offering opportunities to be involved in recreational programming, park clean up efforts, habitat restoration and special event support.

There is also a need to inform citizens of the broad scope of activities and services already offered through the parks and recreation system. For example, many residents are not aware of the multitude of services offered through the Community Center. The Town is encouraged to conduct an in-depth look at how it is currently disseminating information to the public regarding recreational opportunities and leisure services and to craft a strategy that seeks to consistently improve its citizens' understanding of recreational opportunities within the Park system. This will help the Town to both alleviate the perceived need for services that are actually available but not well known and clarify what needs are actually unmet. This would likely also result in the added benefit of continually monitoring and improving public relations.

**Goal 4:
Encourage intra- and intergovernmental collaboration.**

Objective 1:

Continue to pursue additional opportunities to coordinate and cooperate with Wake County, the Wake County Public School System, neighboring municipalities, the State of North Carolina and Federal agencies (e.g. US Army Corps of Engineers and Federal Highway Administration) in the acquisition, development and use of parks and recreational facilities.

The concept of utilizing Wake County Public School facilities as a partnership opportunity to provide expanded recreation opportunities should continue to be utilized and expanded where and whenever possible.

Work with the City of Raleigh, Wake County, other adjoining municipalities, and state and federal agencies to jointly provide recreational opportunities to Town residents and to regional residents where appropriate to do so.

Goal 4:
Encourage intra- and intergovernmental collaboration.

Objective 2:

Ensure that all partnerships allow for the Town's full participation from the earliest design stages and include active engagement of relevant users in project planning and design.

The Town should always be engaged in any cooperative arrangement to provide recreational facilities or services from the very beginning of the process. All relevant user groups should be brought into the process for input and support.

Goal 5:
Encourage private recreation initiatives to supplement public facilities.

Objective 1:

Explore opportunities to encourage the private sector, both for-profit and not-for-profit, to provide additional depth and breadth of recreational facilities and activities.

Objective 2:

Partner with the private sector to provide recreational needs that the public sector cannot or is not providing.

Community demand for significant increases of many recreational facilities may not in all cases be possible or desirable to satisfy with Town resources alone. In these instances, it is recommended that the Town explore ways in which non-profit groups and athletic organizations can support the Town's initiatives.

Another method that the Town is encouraged to explore is the capability of other private entities within the Town to provide facilities and programming in order to supplement the Town's efforts toward meeting the LOS goals. Private facilities, while not always open to all citizens and often requiring fees of the user (e.g. homeowner's association fees, per use fees, etc.), can and do fulfill some of the current demand for recreational opportunities. These facilities are not counted as existing facilities within the LOS calculation. Although their use is not immediately reflected within the facilities portion of the LOS, their affect is evident by shorter waiting lists for activities and lower latent demand levels both currently and as related to the development of future activities.

Goal 6:
Provide facilities that promote the Town's sustainability goals by developing environmentally sensitive design principles.

Objective 1:

Enhance existing park facilities through the refurbishment and/or replacement of existing amenities to accommodate changing user needs (e.g. extended hours of operation and new recreation trends).

The Town is already updating and refurbishing park facilities on a regular basis, both as a maintenance need and as a means to keep facilities current with demands and user interests. The Town should continue this practice as well as regularly assess opportunities to update, expand and/or enhance existing facilities so that they can be used as efficiently as possible.

Goal 6:

Provide facilities that promote the Town's sustainability goals by developing environmentally sensitive design principles.

Objective 2:

Encourage the incorporation of sustainable construction and maintenance techniques (e.g. the use of recycled materials, native plantings, streambank stabilization).

These practices represent a commitment to maintaining and enhancing environmental integrity. Recycled materials, while often modestly more costly, often have longer service lives and thus are economically as well as environmentally sensible. Stabilization techniques of streambanks and erosive conditions and the use of plantings, not only natives, that are tolerant of conditions without overtaking native populations reduce maintenance and enhance aesthetics.

Goal 6:

Provide facilities that promote the Town's sustainability goals by developing environmentally sensitive design principles.

Objective 3:

Protect wetlands, woodlands and other natural areas and wildlife habitats as green infrastructure.

The Town should take steps to acquire, manage and conserve significant natural areas within its jurisdiction. This is the primary focus of the Wake Forest Open Space & Greenway Plan. This plan reinforces this goal and recognizes that parks, along with corridors, flood plains, wetlands and other natural areas, are part of a green infrastructure system that can define the Town by its substance or by its absence.

Goal 7:

Provide facilities that honor and enhance Wake Forest's open space by providing natural areas and preserves, buffers and linkages to the overall open space system.

Objective 1:

Develop a stewardship program within the Parks and Recreation Department to facilitate management of natural resources and to promote environmental education.

As natural areas and other significant natural resources are incorporated into the ultimate park, open space and greenway system, develop stewardship programs and provide staff for such programs to manage these resources and promote environmental education.

Goal 7:

Provide facilities that honor and enhance Wake Forest's open space by providing natural areas and preserves, buffers and linkages to the overall open spaces system.

Objective 2:

Work in partnership with Wake County and adjacent municipalities to identify lands that can provide open space linkages to connect open space systems and to contribute to the overall County Open Space Plan.

This again is a primary focus of the Wake Forest Open Space & Greenway Plan, but parks are part of this network of green space and should be developed with this network in mind.

Goal 8:

Allow for the flexible future development of land, encourage variations between facilities, and take advantage of unique natural features, community needs and existing adjacent facilities.

Objective 1:

During the selection of activities, programming and amenities within a new facility, review the activities, programming and amenities at adjacent facilities so that users have the opportunity for varied experiences.

The Town should attempt at every opportunity to incorporate different, new and unique elements within parks, even parks of similar size and purpose. This gives to each park an interesting character and purpose and provides a wider variety of recreational experiences.

Goal 8:

Allow for the flexible future development of land, encourage variations between facilities, and take advantage of unique natural features, community needs and existing adjacent facilities.

Objective 2:

Reserve lands within existing or proposed parks to fulfill future recreational trends and needs that will become known as Wake Forest's population and demographics evolve.

Acquisition and individual park master planning can both be undertaken with the goal of reserving land or portions of developing sites for future development. This can relieve pressure when new or additional facilities are needed by not always

having to acquire new sites for development. This strategy also accommodates unforeseen recreational trends by having space available for new development opportunities.

Recommended Parks Classifications

Currently the Town of Wake Forest utilizes a hierarchy of five park classes (Metro, Community, Neighborhood, Mini and School) within the Parks and Recreation Department. In order to respond to current needs, two substantial changes, the establishment of “Natural Areas” and “Special Parks” classifications, and several modest changes are recommended. Following are the seven recommended classifications.

Natural Areas

Natural Areas are intended to serve as a means of conserving land with its natural or restored naturalistic character intact. Natural Areas can be separate parkland units or delineated portions of other parkland identified in order to facilitate resource stewardship. Natural Areas include two sub-classes: Conservation Areas and Greenway Corridors. While these Conservation Areas and Greenway Corridors do not have specific targeted amounts of acreage per thousand persons within the Town, the needs reflected in the survey point to a greater emphasis on passive recreation activities, many of which can be satisfied through increased Conservation Areas and Greenway Corridors. Every effort should be made by the Town to include elements such as park and neighborhood connections to Greenways and Conservation Areas as future development of parks and residential areas occur in the Town. It is also critical that future Capital Improvement Plans and bond issues include funds to secure prime Natural Area lands and continued acquisition of greenway corridors in order to work towards connectivity of this system. It is intended that Natural Areas be delineated for their unique natural character, green infrastructure function (e.g. stream corridor, wetlands, etc.), and their ability to provide access, continuity and linkage of separate trails within the overall system. Once delineated, Natural Areas are to be managed for this use in perpetuity. The creation and management of Natural Areas provides an excellent opportunity for the Town to establish partnerships with Wake County, other area municipalities, and area environmental organizations such as the Triangle Land Conservancy. As each of these entities may have overlapping plans and goals, these partnerships should focus on developing common priorities for land preservation and action strategies for acquisition and long-term management.

Conservation Areas (sub-class of Natural Areas)

Conservation Areas are intended to serve as a means of preserving land with its natural character intact and to welcome passive recreational uses. These areas will be part of another classification (i.e. Neighborhood, Community, Metro or Special Park), and defined as either:

1. a delineated portion of a parkland unit for which a stewardship plan will be developed; or

2. an entire parkland unit that serves the goals of Natural Areas and would benefit from management under a specific stewardship plan.

When evaluating land for designation as a Conservation Area, consideration should be given to unique flora or fauna and the need to strike a balance between developing parkland and designating conservation areas. The overall benefit of larger natural systems should be a high priority in designating Conservation Areas.

By conserving these areas, the Town will also be honoring and supporting the sustainability and open space goals set forth in the Wake County Consolidated Open Space Plan (2002) and the Wake County Inventory of Natural Places. Conservation Areas may contain internal nature trails and connect to the linear Greenway system. It is recommended that Conservation Areas include basic facilities to accommodate visitation such as parking, restrooms, nature trails, signage, and, potentially, environmental education opportunities.

Greenway Corridors (sub-class of Natural Areas)

Greenway Corridors are interconnected linear parks that form a Town-wide open space network that allows for passive recreation while forwarding the Town's environmental protection goals. Greenways can serve many functions within the community. The following goals are established for Greenway Corridors:

1. Preserve natural characteristics of the land.
2. preserve wildlife corridors.
3. Preserve riparian buffers as a means of protecting water quality.
4. Preserve stream corridors to manage storm water runoff.
5. Provide buffers for multiple land uses.
6. provide opportunities for passive recreation.
7. Provide multi-use trails for recreation and safe alternative-transportation routes.

Refer to the Wake Forest Open Space & Greenway Plan for more detail about the Greenway system.

Mini Parks

While not a primary focus of park development, the Town will maintain the existing Mini Parks and remain open to the possibility that small sites, 2 acres or less in size, may be suitable for limited recreation opportunity in underserved areas. These parks typically include:

- Playground
- Multi-use court
- Picnic facilities

Neighborhood Parks

Intended to serve the daily recreational needs of citizens, Neighborhood Parks are planned to provide for a variety of informal, spontaneous recreational use. The underlying assumption for locating this park type is the convenience, ease and safety with which citizens access the park. Neighborhood Parks typically range in size from 5 to 20 acres and serve residents within a mile radius provided that safe access can be provided via signed or grade-separated crossings of high volume thoroughfare streets. Non-programmed facilities are typically provided. Neighborhood Parks are recommended to include a base set of amenities that typically include:

- Playgrounds
- Picnic area
- Unprogrammed open space (for both passive and active recreation)
- Parking

In order to create distinctive and varied neighborhood-responsive parks through the master planning process, and to provide a balanced system as a whole, additional facilities could be chosen from the following list that includes, but is not limited to:

- Restrooms
- Neighborhood Center
- Tennis courts
- Multi-use playing court
- Basketball, volleyball or skate courts
- Walking trail
- Disc golf courses
- Horseshoe pits

Community Parks

Community Parks provide the same facilities and services as Neighborhood Parks, as well as additional features that meet expanded recreational needs not provided at the neighborhood park level. Similar to Neighborhood Parks, it is recommended that Community parks include a base set of facilities equal to that of Neighborhood Parks and that additional facilities differ from other community parks to offer varied recreational opportunities that are balanced system-wide. Community Parks provide more programmed service, have generally structured activities and may have extended hours of use. This commitment to serving specific niches of programming will further allow residents to enjoy varied experiences across the Town and will allow staff to effectively and flexibly meet future leisure trends not yet known. Park sites are, wherever possible, located along major transportation routes. Community Parks range in size from 20 to 99 acres (most typically 40-70 acres) and serve residents throughout the Town's jurisdiction. While Community Parks serve the needs of the Town at large, they also serve as Neighborhood Parks for nearby residential areas provided that safe access can be provided via signed or grade-separated crossings of high volume thoroughfare streets. Base facilities within Community Parks typically include:

- Community Center or Neighborhood Center
- Picnic shelter and picnic area
- Performance area
- Baseball, softball and/or multi-purpose fields
- Tennis, basketball and/or multi-purpose courts
- Walking trail
- Playground
- Unprogrammed recreational open space
- Parking

Additional facilities within Community Parks are intended to vary from adjacent facilities. During the Master Planning process, choices can be made from the following list that includes, but is not limited to:

- Community Center with gymnasium or other specific focus (e.g. fitness center or arts center)
- Additional restroom building
- Pet exercise area
- Skate courts
- Horseshoe pits
- Swimming pool
- Substantial athletic fields with spectator facilities for organized sports ranging from baseball and football to volleyball.

School Parks

Parks that share facilities between the school system and the Town are considered School Parks. Size is not a criterion for this designation. This is a valuable relationship that should be maintained and broadened at every opportunity. Facilities typically utilized jointly at School Parks include:

- Ballfields
- Soccer fields
- Track
- Football fields
- Tennis courts
- Multi-use courts

Metro Parks

Metro Parks should provide a leisure or recreational opportunity which, either by size, scale or theme will appeal to a majority of citizens. A Metro Park often has a unique focus. Future Metro Parks could be developed around specific themes such as a softball complex or a year-round aquatic or athletic facility. These are among many possibilities which may be developed as demand and need are determined. Metro Parks are programmed into the parks system based on the perception of Town-wide appeal and need.

Special Parks

There are many acres of land that do not fit easily into the typical recreation classifications described. These are designated as Special Parks. These lands often provide open space or relief from urban intensity. Proposals for unique facilities will come forward over time as national and regional trends evolve. The Town should consider proposals for unique facilities as they come forward and evaluate the feasibility of each and how they will contribute to the recreational needs of the community and the overall parks and recreation system.

Recommendations By Park Type

2005	2010	2015
18,351	22,868	28,498

Classification	Existing Acres	Existing Number of Parks	LOS Standard (Ac/1000)	Additional Needed Acres by 2015	Projected Park Size	New Parks Needed to Meet 2015 LOS	Total Parks Needed by 2015
Neighborhood Parks*	108.5	14	2.6	0	20 ac	0	14
Community Parks	100.0	1	3.1	0	60 ac	0	1
Metro Parks	291.0	2	4.2	0	120	0	2
Special Parks	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	499.5	17	9.9				

*Includes Mini and School Parks

While it is recognized that, for distribution purposes, a major park site is needed in the area south of the NC 98 Bypass, the total acreage available meets the stated level of service standard through the year 2015. Not all sites included in the acreage totals are developed or are suitable for development. This should be taken into account. Nonetheless, the Town should be able to focus on development of parks and facilities over the next decade, without losing site of acquisition to accommodate future growth.

Facilities Per Park Recommendations

The recommendations for Facilities Per Park are based on estimations of the type of facilities that should typically be included in each park type. These recommendations represent guidelines for facility development within parks. They do not represent minimum facility standards for any single park. Thus, they should not be used in an arbitrary way to set minimum development standards for a given park. As guidelines, these recommendations are most appropriately used for planning and cost estimating purposes.

Facilities Per Park recommendations can be used to achieve two fundamental planning objectives: 1) the basis for equitable distribution of facilities and 2) the

basis for capital improvement planning. Firstly, these recommendations establish a basic relationship between park classifications and level of service objectives. The development of facilities within parks based on these recommendations, systematically applied, will directly contribute to reaching and maintaining level of service objectives. Conversely, reasonable facility per park recommendations can also indicate where level of service objectives cannot be reached without extraordinary measures or a change in objectives. Facility per park recommendations contribute to the geographic distribution of desired facilities in a reasonably balanced manner if the park sites themselves are, in geographic terms, equitably distributed. In other words, equitably distributed park sites have the potential to deliver desired facilities in a consistent manner to all service areas. Facility per park recommendations are baseline models that can be used to plan for the provision and distribution of basic facilities.

The second primary use of facility per park recommendations is cost estimating and capital improvements programming. By establishing baseline models for park types, cost estimates can be generated for each park type based upon the estimated type and number of facilities in that park classification.

The types of parkland addressed in the facility per park recommendations are:

- Neighborhood Parks - Low, Moderate and High Development Potential
- Community Parks - Moderate and High Development Potential
- Metro Parks
- Conservation Areas
- Special Parks

There are three levels of development identified for Neighborhood Parks. Limited land and financial resources will likely limit the development potential of such parks. Community Parks and Metro Parks, at least from a modeling standpoint, serve as the major framework for facility development. Conservation areas have important, specific, but limited facilities associated with them. Special parks are opportunities to focus upon extraordinary, unique recreational opportunities and/or upon ways to accomplish recreational objectives in creative and atypical ways.

The facility list is derived from the Activity Interest List developed for the Recreation Participation and Preference Survey. The activities associated with each facility item is simply a means of demonstrating links between basic facilities and activities in which people have shown interest.

The number of facilities recommended for each park type is an estimation of typical development potential given normal site constraints. When 0.5, a fraction of a facility, is indicated, the implication is that the facility is appropriate for the park type, but not essential to the successful development of the park. However, it is anticipated that approximately half of the parks in that classification will contain that facility. The intent is also to suggest flexibility based on site conditions and more precisely determined service area demands.

The facility per park recommendations are outlined in the table below.

Table 10: Facility Per Park Recommendations – Neighborhood Parks				
Facility	Activities*	Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park
Development Potential	*Taken from LOS activity list	Low	Moderate	High
Community Center (with gym)	Arts/craft classes	0	0	0
	Arts show/festival			
	Fitness related classes			
Neighborhood Center (meeting rooms/restrooms)	Arts/craft classes	0	0	1
	Fitness-related classes			
Restroom Building	N/A	0	1	0
Picnic Facilities	Picnicking with family			
16' x 32' shelter	Picnicking with groups	0	0.5	0.5
40' x 60' shelter		0	0	0
Number of tables		6	8	10
Performance Stage	Outdoor performance	0	0	0
Baseball Field	Playing baseball	0	0	0
	Watching sports			
Softball Field	Playing softball	0	0	0
	Watching sports			
Field Sports: (rectangular fields)	Playing soccer	0	0	1
	Playing football			
Soccer	Watching sports			
Football				
Lacrosse, etc.				
Tennis Courts (unit of 2)	Playing tennis	0	0	1
Basketball Court	Playing basketball	0	0	0.5
Volleyball Court	Playing volleyball	0	0	1
Skate Court	Roller/inline skating	0	0	.5
	Skateboarding			
Swimming pool (indoor)	Fitness/Team swimming	0	0	0
Water Recreation < 50 Ac.	Canoeing/Rowing	0	0	0
	Using pedal boats			
	Fishing			
	Viewing wildlife			
	Nature study			
	Bird watching			
Water Recreation > 50 Ac.	Canoeing/Rowing	0	0	0
	Using pedal boats			
	Sailing			
	Fishing			
	Viewing wildlife			
	Nature study			
	Bird watching			
Number of Boats (all types)	Canoeing/Rowing	0	0	0
	Using pedal boats			
	Sailing			
Walking Trails (miles)	Walking in natural area	0.35	0.5	0.5
	Jogging			
	Walking along trail			
	Viewing wildlife			
	Using fitness trail			

	Walking pets			
	Roller/inline skating			
	Bird watching			
Walking Trails > 1 mile	Walking in natural area	0	0	0
	Jogging			
	Walking along trail			
	Viewing wildlife			
	Using fitness trail			
	Walking pets			
	Roller/inline skating			
	Bird watching			
Greenway Trail:	Walking in natural area	Note # 8	Note # 8	Note # 8
Length of Route	Jogging			
	Walking along trail			
	Bicycling			
	Viewing wildlife			
	Visiting greenways			
	Walking pets			
	Mountain biking			
	Bird watching			
Unprogrammed Open Lawn (1-5 Ac.)	Arts show/festivals	1	1	1
	Kite flying			
	Playing frisbee			
Unprogrammed Open Lawn (6-15 Ac.)	Arts show/festivals	0	0	0
	Kite flying			
	Playing frisbee			
Playground	Playing at playground	1	1	1
Horseshoe Pits (1 set)	Playing horseshoes	0	0	1
Disc Golf	Playing disc golf	0	0	0
Pet Exercise Area (4-8 Ac.)	Walking pets	0	0	0
Parking (1 unit = 20 spaces)	N/A	1	1	1

Table 11: Facility Per Park Recommendations - Community and Metro Parks				
Facility	Activities*	Community Park	Community Park	Metro Park
Development Potential	*Taken from LOS activity list	Moderate	High	
Community Center (with gym)	Arts/craft classes	0	1	1
	Arts show/festival			
	Fitness related classes			
Neighborhood Center (meeting rooms/restrooms)	Arts/craft classes	1	0	0
	Fitness-related classes			
Restroom Building	N/A	0	1	1
Picnic Facilities	Picnicking with family			
16' x 32' shelter	Picnicking with groups	2	2	2
40' x 60' shelter		0	1	1
Number of tables		20	30	45
Performance Stage	Outdoor performance	1 (type 1)*	1 (type 1)*	1 (type 2)*
Baseball Field	Playing baseball	0	1	2
	Watching sports			
Softball Field	Playing softball	2	2	2
	Watching sports			
Field Sports:	Playing soccer	1	1	2

(rectangular fields)	Playing football			
Soccer	Watching sports			
Football				
Lacrosse, etc.				
Tennis Courts (unit of 2)	Playing tennis	2	2	4
Basketball Court	Playing basketball	2	2	2
Volleyball Court	Playing volleyball	1	2	2
Skate Court	Roller/inline skating	0	1	0
	Skateboarding			
Swimming pool (indoor)	Fitness/Team swimming	Note # 10	Note # 10	Note # 10
Water Recreation < 50 Ac.	Canoeing/Rowing	Note # 7	Note # 7	1
	Using pedal boats			
	Fishing			
	Viewing wildlife			
	Nature study			
	Bird watching			
Water Recreation > 50 Ac.	Canoeing/Rowing	0	0	Note # 7
	Using pedal boats			
	Sailing			
	Fishing			
	Viewing wildlife			
	Nature study			
	Bird watching			
Number of Boats (all types)	Canoeing/Rowing	0	0	10
	Using pedal boats			
	Sailing			
Walking Trails < 1 mile	Walking in natural area	0	0	0
	Jogging			
	Walking along trail			
	Viewing wildlife			
	Using fitness trail			
	Walking pets			
	Roller/inline skating			
	Bird watching			
Walking Trails > 1 mile	Walking in natural area	1	1	4
	Jogging			
	Walking along trail			
	Viewing wildlife			
	Using fitness trail			
	Walking pets			
	Roller/inline skating			
	Bird watching			
Greenway Trail:	Walking in natural area	Note # 8	Note # 8	Note # 8
Length of Route	Jogging			
	Walking along trail			
	Bicycling			
	Viewing wildlife			
	Visiting greenways			
	Walking pets			
	Mountain biking			
	Bird watching			
Unprogrammed Open Lawn (1-5 Ac.)	Arts show/festivals	1	0	0
	Kite flying			
	Playing frisbee			

Unprogrammed Open Lawn (6-15 Ac.)	Arts show/festivals	0	1	1
	Kite flying			
	Playing frisbee			
Playground	Playing at playground	1	1	1
Horseshoe Pits (1 set)	Playing horseshoes	1	1	0
Disc Golf	Playing disc golf	1	1	0
Pet Exercise Area (4-8 Ac.)	Walking pets	0	1	0
Parking (1 unit = 20 spaces)	N/A	8	10	15

Table 12: Facility Per Park Recommendations – Special Parks

Facility	Activities*	Special Parks
	*Taken from LOS activity list	
Community Center (with gym)	Arts/craft classes	Note # 1
	Arts show/festival	
	Fitness related classes	
Neighborhood Center (meeting rooms/restrooms)	Arts/craft classes	0
	Fitness-related classes	
Restroom Building	N/A	0
Picnic Facilities	Picnicking with family	
16' x 32' shelter	Picnicking with groups	Note # 2
40' x 60' shelter		Note # 2
Number of tables		As needed
Performance Stage	Outdoor performance	As exists or desired
Baseball Field	Playing baseball	Note # 4
	Watching sports	
Softball Field	Playing softball	Note # 4
	Watching sports	
Field Sports: (rectangular fields)	Playing soccer	Note # 4
	Playing football	
Soccer	Watching sports	
Football		
Lacrosse, etc.		
Tennis Courts (unit of 2)	Playing tennis	Note # 4
Basketball Court	Playing basketball	0
Volleyball Court	Playing volleyball	0
Skate Court	Roller/inline skating	Note # 5
	Skateboarding	
Swimming pool (indoor)	Fitness/Team swimming	Note # 6
Water Recreation < 50 Ac.	Canoeing/Rowing	0
	Using pedal boats	
	Fishing	
	Viewing wildlife	
	Nature study	
	Bird watching	
Water Recreation > 50 Ac.	Canoeing/Rowing	0
	Using pedal boats	
	Sailing	
	Fishing	
	Viewing wildlife	
	Nature study	
	Bird watching	

Number of Boats (all types)	Canoeing/Rowing	0
	Using pedal boats	
	Sailing	
Walking Trails < 1 mile	Walking in natural area	0
	Jogging	
	Walking along trail	
	Viewing wildlife	
	Using fitness trail	
	Walking pets	
	Roller/inline skating	
	Bird watching	
Walking Trails > 1 mile	Walking in natural area	0
	Jogging	
	Walking along trail	
	Viewing wildlife	
	Using fitness trail	
	Walking pets	
	Roller/inline skating	
	Bird watching	
Greenway Trail:	Walking in natural area	0
Length of Route	Jogging	
	Walking along trail	
	Bicycling	
	Viewing wildlife	
	Visiting greenways	
	Walking pets	
	Mountain biking	
	Bird watching	
Unprogrammed Open Lawn (1-5 Ac.)	Arts show/festivals	0
	Kite flying	
	Playing frisbee	
Unprogrammed Open Lawn (6-15 Ac.)	Arts show/festivals	0
	Kite flying	
	Playing frisbee	
Playground	Playing at playground	0
Horseshoe Pits (1 set)	Playing horseshoes	0
Disc Golf	Playing disc golf	0
Pet Exercise Area (4-8 Ac.)	Walking pets	0
Parking (1 unit = 20 spaces)	N/A	As needed

Notes:

1. A community center facility could be developed as a stand alone facility and/or as a special use facility devoted to specific or concentrated activities such as fitness, adventure sports, etc.
 2. Picnic shelters of various sizes may be appropriately associated with special parks such as skate parks, special athletic facilities, etc.
 3. There are opportunities along greenway corridors where there is sufficient room and access (nodes) for modest development including picnic shelters, picnic tables and play equipment.
 4. Parks devoted to certain sports such as baseball, softball, soccer, tennis etc. could be concentrated at one site as a special park.
 5. A skate park is a distinct opportunity as a special park.
 6. Indoor swimming facilities can be incorporated into parks or developed as stand-alone facilities.
 7. Potential for development exists depending upon existence, size and physical characteristics of water body. If water-based recreation is included in a park type, it is assumed that it will replace another facility of approximate equal value.
 8. Park used as trail head or access point.
 9. Area is an integral part of greenway corridor.
 10. Swimming pools are not included in these facility per park standards.
- * Type 1 Performance Stage is a limited facility intended for small groups of 25-100 people.
Type 2 Performance Stage is a larger venue intended for audiences of 200 or more people.

To summarize, Facility Per Park Standards are models used for planning and cost estimating purposes. These models are means of demonstrating how basic services can be incorporated into park types, which, in turn, can be distributed as equitably as possible across service areas to meet level of service objectives. These models are not inflexible prototypes. Flexibility, creatively applied to the opportunities that each park site holds, is highly desirable. Level of service objectives can be achieved across multiple-park scenarios within given service areas rather than imposing rigid criteria to each available site. The balance achieved will rarely be perfect, but the quality and diversity of the parks themselves will more than compensate for slight facility and level of service imbalances.

Public Swimming Pool Recommendations

Identification of Needs

Public swimming pool facilities, whether seasonal outdoor or year-round indoor, are a highly desired amenity to most communities. As expressed by citizens, the Town of Wake Forest is no exception to this. The Town currently maintains one outdoor pool facility. Based upon survey responses to the Recreation Participation and Preference Survey conducted during the summer of 2003, there is a latent demand of 21.12% for pool facilities within the Town.

Market Demand and Prioritization Issues

Though there is an expressed need that appears in the survey results, there are yet several unclear market-related issues that need to be ascertained prior to a Town commitment to developing additional pool facilities. These issues include:

- Need for indoor versus outdoor facilities;
- Type and character of potential facility (i.e. swimming only, tournament quality swimming and diving, family waterpark/spraygrounds);
- Effect of private, non-profit and Wake County Public School System facilities on user demand;
- Relative priority of meeting this latent demand versus meeting unmet demand for other facilities; and
- Cost-benefit evaluation of providing for this costly facility type versus less costly facility types to satiate unmet demand for other activities.

Background and Recommendations

The Town should conduct a public pool feasibility study. If the Town decides to explore the viability of developing a second aquatic facility, this study is recommended to be comprehensive in nature and consider all existing public, private and non-profit facilities, current demands on facilities, costs and economic feasibility. This study is recommended to include:

1. A full survey of the inventory of existing public and private pools and programming available should be conducted that includes:
 - Type of facility
 - Number of pool structures and elements (e.g. swimming, wading, diving, water play, etc.)
 - Condition of facilities
 - Programming offered
 - Hours of programmed activities versus hours available
 - Summaries of uses
 - Analysis of the spatial distribution of facilities across the community
2. Estimated projections of future pool and aquatic center needs based upon population projections.
3. Potential costs of pool development for various sizes and types of facilities.
4. Economic feasibilities of facility developments over time.

Such a study should be initiated only if public demand significantly increases over the next decade. Actual development of a second aquatic facility is not foreseen over the next decade.

Facility Space Guidelines

Facility Space Guidelines were developed for each facility listed in the Facility Per Park Recommendations. The intent is to identify the amount of space typically associated with basic facilities. For each facility, the calculations of required space take into account such construction necessities as clearing and grading as well as space required to access the facility. There are three aspects of space considered for each facility: *Space requirements*, *size/dimension* and *orientation*. *Space requirement* is the estimated sum, in acres, of the total space that will be encumbered by a facility. *Size/Dimensions* is the identifiable footprint of the facility in square feet or the typical dimensions of a facility. *Orientation* is the desired orientation of the facility to minimize the interference of sunlight with people utilizing the facility.

The necessary acreage of a park cannot be ascertained by adding up the space requirements of the desired facilities. The importance of the functional relationships between facilities and site-specific opportunities and constraints will inform the utilization of space. Also, the space between facilities is often at least as important as the facilities themselves. Thus, since the density of facility development in a park is predicated upon on many variables; these guidelines primarily serve as a basic toolkit for estimating facility development potential based on available acreage.

The Facility Space Guidelines are outlined below.

Table 13: Facility Space Guidelines			
Facility/Activity	Space Requirements	Size/Dimensions	Orientation
Community Center	2.0 acres	20,000 SF Center	N/A
Neighborhood Center	0.6 acres	2,500 SF Center	N/A
Restroom Building	0.4 acres	750 SF	N/A
Picnic Shelter 16'x32'	0.2 acres	N/A	N/A
Picnic Shelter 40'x60'	0.6 acres	N/A	N/A
Performance Stage - Type 1	1.0 acres	N/A	Orient along centerline from center of stage to center of gathering/seating area within 15° of north-south axis.
Performance Stage - Type 2	1.5 acres	N/A	Orient along centerline from center of stage to center of gathering/seating area within 15° of north-south axis.
Baseball Field	4 - 4.5 acres	<u>Official:</u> Baselines 90' Pitching Dist. 60.5' Foul Lines 320' min. Centerfield 400' +/- <u>Little League:</u> Baselines 60' Pitching Dist. 46' Foul Lines 200' Centerfield 200-250'	Line from home plate through pitcher's mound to run east-northeast; left field foul line within 15° of north-south axis.
Softball Field	3.5 - 4 acres	Baselines 60' Pitch. Dist. - Men 45'; Women - 40' Foul Lines 300' Centerfield 300'	Line from home plate through pitcher's mound to run east-northeast; left field foul line within 15° of north-south axis.
Rectangular Athletic Fields	2.6 - 3.6 acres	<u>Soccer:</u> 195'-225'x330'-360' (smaller sizes utilized for youth and practice) <u>Football:</u> 160'x360' <u>Lacrosse:</u> 180'-210'x330' <u>Field Hockey:</u> 150'-180'x270'-300'	Orient length of field within 20° of north-south axis.
Tennis Courts (Unit of 2)	1.2 acres	<u>Court:</u> 36'x78' 21' end of court to fence'12' between courts or to fence	Length of court aligns along north-south axis.
Basketball Court	0.5 acres	<u>Court:</u> 50'x84' Min. 4' overrun beyond goal post	Orient length of court along north-south axis.
Volleyball Court	0.4 acres	<u>Court:</u> 30'x60' 10' clear on all sides	Orient length of court along north-south axis.
Skate Court	1.4 acres (smaller facilities are possible)	<u>Court:</u> Size to accommodate tennis if use changes, or custom design	Orient length of court along north-south axis if used for roller hockey. This will conflict with tennis if use is changed.
Swimming Pool (indoor)	2.5 - 3.5 acres	Variable; high school or college standards as a minimum, plus recreation swimming, diving, etc.	N/A
Horseshoe Pits	nominal	40' stake to stake x 10'; 50' total length	Orient length of court no more than 45° west or east or north-south axis.
Disc Golf (18 holes)	7 - 10 acres		
Active and Passive Recreation Areas (Open Lawn): 1-5 acres	2 - 7.5 acres		Assume 50' transition N/A along all edges

Active and Passive Recreation Areas (Open Lawn): 6-15 acres	8.5 - 19 acres		Assume 50' transition N/A along all edges
Playground	0.5 - 1.5 acres	Variable, depending on extent	N/A or facility, associated play and safety zones, number of children and age groups served
Pet Exercise Area: 4-8 acres	4.5 - 9.0 acres	N/A	N/A
Parking (20 space unit)	0.5 - 0.8 acres	Double-loaded bay 61'x90', plus access drives, grading, storm water management	N/A

CHAPTER 9: IMPLEMENTATION

This plan sets forth guidelines to be used by the Town of Wake Forest as it seeks to meet the recreation and leisure needs of the citizens of Wake Forest over the next decade. The vision of this plan, its goals and objectives, and ultimately its recommendations set the framework for these efforts. This plan is a tool to provide guidance to the Town Commissioners, the Town administration, and the Parks and Recreation staff as they carry out planning and development of parklands. This plan also serves as a statement of Town policy to be used by citizens and private organizations as they contribute to planning efforts and respond to matters under consideration by the Town government.

Existing Tools for Implementing the Recommendations of the Plan

The Town of Wake Forest acquires land, develops plans, and constructs facilities utilizing the following:

- **The Capital Improvement Program (CIP).** This is proposed by Town Administration on an annual basis. Several months of preparation from detailed individual citizen requests and staff suggestions to broad considerations of the Town's needs are taken into consideration by Administration.
- **The Master Plan Process (MP).** The Master Plans address the development of specific facilities at an individual park. Master Plans document existing site conditions and constraints, state any proposed special intent for the park, and establish the type of facilities to be included in the park and their organization within the park's physical characteristics. The MP process provides considerable opportunity for public notice and involvement.
- **Trends.** Knowledge of recreation and leisure trends is translated into action primarily by professional recreation staff. Connections with other local, statewide and national organizations offer the opportunity to propose new and/or different programs. Feedback from existing program offerings, citizen requests for new programs and direct comments regarding facilities and parkland provide insight as well. Understanding trends and community input in turn relates to the type of park facilities identified for development in support of the Department's overall program.
- **Special Interests.** Both staff and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) receive specific requests from organized groups. This comes in the form of their appeals directly to Town Commissioners, presentations at RPAB meetings, interaction with neighborhood and special interest groups through direct contact, referral from other Town staff, and various community meetings (master planning, Citizen Advisory Councils, etc.). These requests are typically researched and evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine funding requirements and equitable use of resources. With adequate

approvals, viable initiatives may then be supported through funding or other cooperative measures.

- **Opportunity.** Although implementation of components of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan takes place through a process of budgeting, program development, marketing, etc., sometimes opportunities present themselves that warrant incorporation into the process. One example of this is land acquisition. Development pressures often result in key properties being placed on the market that in turn may necessitate swift action. Having a long-range plan is extremely helpful, but acquiring the land far in advance of when it may actually need to be developed and placed in service may be valuable to ensure future availability for recreational use. These may not involve an immediate commitment of resources for Parks and Recreation, but can result in a shift in program (and facility) needs.

There are several functions of government that contribute to these action steps and to implementation of this plan. When considered as a whole, these are the tools that enable citizens to affect the processes and enable professional staff to carry out the direction of Town Commissioners.

Finally, it is recommended that this plan receive a comprehensive review by Town staff at a frequency of every five years. This review is recommended to periodically validate the base assumptions (i.e. population projections versus actual population), compare the goals and objectives with current Town policies and initiatives, evaluate the recommendations of the plan with respect to recent and ongoing park development, and review costs of development, operation, maintenance and so on relative to Town resources and public demand. The summarization of these reviews should be provided to the PRAB to help guide their efforts.

Priorities For Implementation

The following priorities are intended as a guide to the Town as it pursues the goals and recommendations of this plan.

Short Term: 1 - 2 Years

- Adopt Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update.
- Acquire major park site in area of Town south of NC 98 Bypass.
- Develop first phase of Joyner Park.
- Add 4 tennis courts, shelter and pet exercise facility to J.B. Flaherty Park.
- Continue to reinvest in existing parks.

Medium Term: 3 - 5 Years

- Develop Heritage High School Park in conjunction with Wake County Public School System.
- Explore and study need for concentrated tennis facility.
- Continue to reinvest in existing parks.

Long Term: 6 - 10 Years

- Develop second phase of Joyner Park.
- Acquire additional lands for future development.
- Identify and determine if pool feasibility study is warranted; initiate such study if demand is present.
- Continue to invest in existing parks.

Land Acquisition Strategies

Land acquisition strategies include:

- Fee-Simple Purchase
- Donation
- Easements
- Required Dedication
- Condemnation
- Bargain Sale
- Option of First Refusal
- Utility Sharing
- Transfer of Development Rights

Acquisition of key properties is an essential element of this plan. Acquisition in this section is meant to include all methods of bringing selected locations under public control (e.g. purchase, lease, grant, easement, swap, etc.). The acquisition philosophy of this plan is intended to support the full spectrum of park, recreation, and conservation area objectives.

Proposing Land For Acquisition

Potential parkland acquisitions are identified in various ways:

1. Staff may research land parcels and identify sites that either meet particular objectives, such as connectivity, or contribute on a system-wide basis.
2. An owner of a parcel may ask that the land be considered for purchase.
3. Neighbors or others interested in a particular site may propose that the site be acquired. Staff will research the parcels and determine if there is a public benefit to the acquisition. Acquisition would be dependent on a willing seller.
4. Through the Town development review process, land is often identified as potential park land. Land may be acquired through developer contribution, purchase or combinations of several methods.
5. Other agencies including other Town departments sometimes declare land as excess that may be appropriate for public park use.

Acquisition Guiding Principles

It is recommended that the acquisition process proceed according to the following basic guidelines.

1. Complete greenway linkages and connections.
2. Preserve key, significant natural and cultural features.
3. Provide recreation and/or open space that is a convenient and accessible as conditions allow.
4. Add to existing parks.
5. Enhance the wide range of activities provided in the park system.

Acquisition Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria can be employed when a parcel is being considered for acquisition. They may be summarized and quantified in an objective manner, but they are not meant to exclude other salient considerations, such as urgency as may be driven by a parcel's uniqueness, limited time availability, or an emerging recreation activity. Neither should the criteria be used to the exclusion of good judgment or market considerations. The criteria are meant to assist a subjective decision of whether or not to acquire using objective information.

1. Town-wide system balance/geographic distribution.
2. Natural resource protection.
3. Environmental enhancement.
4. Open space aesthetics.
5. Enhance access and linkage.
6. Appropriate to adjacent land use.
7. Protection of watersheds and water quality.
8. Suitability for intended use.
9. Recreation value.
10. Method of acquisition/direct costs.
11. Multiple use benefit.
12. Community benefit.
13. Provides for future needs/anticipated growth.
14. Overall cost/benefit to parks system.
15. Long term development and maintenance costs.
16. Urgency for acquisition.

Funding Opportunities

The Town of Wake Forest should pursue all potential funding sources for the acquisition and development of parks. Funding sources and mechanisms include but are not limited to the following:

Town of Wake Forest Funding Sources

- General Fund Allocation

- Taxes
 - Sales Tax
 - Property Tax
 - Excise Tax
- Fees
 - Stormwater Utility Fees
 - Impact Fees
 - In-Lieu-of-Dedication Fees
- Bonds
 - Revenue Bonds
 - General Obligation Bonds
 - Special Assessment Bonds

County Funding Sources

- Wake County Open Space Acquisition Funds

State Funding Sources

- North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund
- Clean Water Management Trust Fund
- Farmland Protection Trust Fund
- Natural Heritage Trust Fund
- North Carolina Wetlands Restoration Program (NCWRP)
- Small Cities Community Development Block Grants
- Ecosystem Enhancement Program
- North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit Program
- North Carolina Adopt-A-Trail Grant Program
- Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program
- Water Resources Development Grant Program
- Recreational Trails Program

Federal Funding Sources

- The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)
 - Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways
- Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- Wetlands Reserve Program
- Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Fund (UPARR)
- Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Grants

Private Foundations and Corporations

- American Greenways Eastman Kodak Awards
- Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
- Mitigation Banking

Partnership Opportunities

The Town of Wake Forest has a long history of partnering with public and private organizations to build, manage, operate and program recreation and cultural arts

facilities. These have been beneficial arrangements that efficiently utilize monies and volunteers to achieve specific objectives.

Parks and Recreation

In the public sector, the Town should seek to broaden and strengthen partnering opportunities with Wake and Franklin Counties, the City of Raleigh, and the Towns of Rolesville and Franklinton. The Wake County Public School System, in particular, represents an opportunity to build and refine shared-use facilities beneficial to both the Town and the school system.

At the federal and state levels, The Corps of Engineers and the Wildlife Resource Commission both are potential partners. The Corps shares interests in the Falls Lake area while the Commission has interests in open space/habitat preservation and restoration.

Partnership opportunities also exist in the development of transportation corridors. Federal, State and local agencies and departments can collaborate on such items as pedestrian and bicycle circulation, open space and wetland preservation, and pedestrian crossings.

Public-Private Partnerships

The Town of Wake Forest is very active in partnering with recreation groups, businesses, and non-profit groups to develop and operate recreation and cultural arts facilities. This should continue and expand at every opportunity. As the Town grows not only larger, but also more sophisticated and diverse, new interests and organizations emerge. These interests and organizations should be welcomed, nurtured and ultimately actively engaged if benefits to the private organization and the Town at large can be identified.

The following private organizations are recognized as existing or potential partners:

- Sports Organizations
 - American Legion Baseball
 - Capital Area Soccer League (CASL)
 - Dream Camps
 - Carolina Copperheads
 - Pop Warner Football
 - Greater Raleigh Fall Baseball League
 - Triangle Futbol Club
 - Raleigh Rugby Football Club
 - Mid-Atlantic Cricket Conference
- Trails-Related Organizations
 - North Carolina Bicycle Club
 - North Carolina FATS Mountain Biking Club
 - Triangle Greenways Council

- North Carolina Mountains-to-Sea Trail
 - East Coast Greenway
- Special Use Organizations
 - North Carolina Horse Council
 - Raleigh Area Disc League
 - North Carolina Senior Games
- Conservation Organizations
 - Triangle Land Conservancy
 - Trust For Public Land
- Parks Organizations
 - People For Parks
- Unaffiliated Groups
 - Businesses
 - Hospitals
 - Churches
 - Private Schools

Public Input

Public input is key to improving decisions, building consensus and reducing conflicts. Wake Forest takes pride in its public input process including seeking community input to guide planning for the park system. This information is especially important because it directly reflects how well the park system is meeting the expectations and needs of the community. Wherever possible, residents will be asked to participate in choosing recreational elements and have input into the review of the design. The Town is committed to providing sufficient opportunity for increased feedback regarding park and facility development.