

2014-2024 PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN



November 3, 2014

Nash County

Acknowledgments



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Mr. Troy Blaser, Athletic Coordinator
Mr. Thomas Gillespie, Athletic Coordinator
Mr. Adam Rodgers, Program Coordinator
Mr. Taylor Lewis, Maintenance Supervisor

Planning Consultant

Mr. Derek Williams
Site Solutions
2320 West Morehead Street
Charlotte, NC 28208

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Tar River in Nash County

Executive Summary

In 2004 Nash County took a bold step and developed a plan that identified park and recreation facility needs of county residents. Findings from that plan led county leaders to develop a Parks and Recreation Department and begin working with community partners to build a network of public parks.

In the past ten years, the County has made great strides in providing facilities and programs to county residents. County officials continue to show strong leadership and commitment as they commissioned this update to the 2004 Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Master Plan.

This Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan will help ensure that elected officials, parks and recreation staff, and citizen leaders have a road map to guide decision-making and actions as the county recovers from the recent economic downturn. It will provide a ten year vision (2014-2024) for the Department. This guide was carefully crafted by staff, the public, volunteers, and with the help of outside experts to ensure that future generations will have adequate parks, trails, and open space.

The Plan starts with a description of existing facilities. Section One is a detailed description of current park land and facilities. Section Two describes the service population - The People of Nash County. Section Three covers accepted recreation standards and park needs. Section Four describes proposed improvements to facilities and parks. Finally, the Plan makes recommendations about a way forward in hard economic times. The Plan is comprehensive, and our best thinking in 2014 about how to proceed over the next 10 years.

GETTING STARTED: PUBLIC INPUT

Parks and recreation staff retained Site Solutions to help collect and analyze data and craft a draft plan. The most important aspect of the planning study was identifying the public’s desire for parks and recreation facilities and programs. The public was offered the opportunity to participate through:

- Three public workshops
- Meetings with community stakeholders
- Online survey (Survey Monkey) that attracted almost 500 people
- Working closely with the Parks and Recreation Department staff to understand needs already expressed

Findings from these public outreach efforts, as well as a summary of the methodology, can be found in Section Two: The People of Nash County.

GROWTH & POPULATION

In addition to gathering public input, a critical step in developing this plan is understanding the demographic and population changes that are occurring in the community. The 2010 census data provides very good information on population and demographics for use in this planning study.

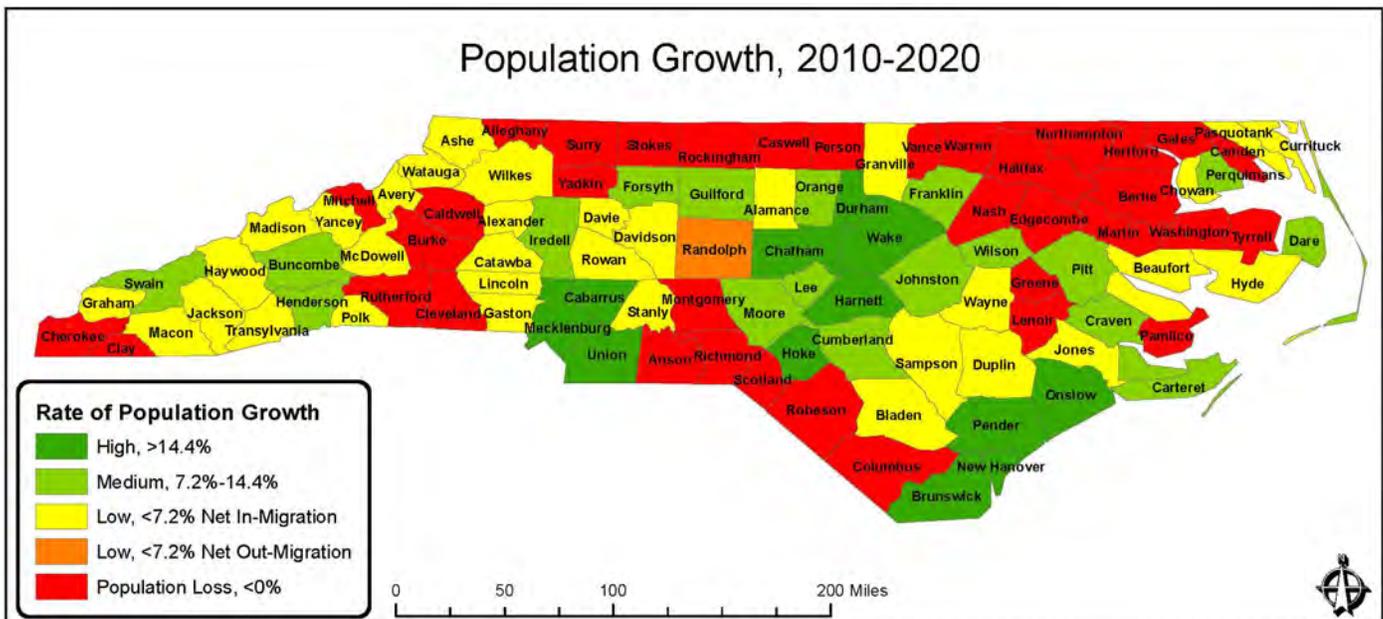
Service Population

An important aspect of any parks and recreation Master Plan is to determine the service population of the county or municipality the plan is designed to serve. While the overall service population of this plan is all Nash County residents, the primary focus of this plan is meeting the park and recreation needs of county residents who are not served by other parks and recreation departments.

Two of the municipalities in Nash County have parks and recreation departments. The City of Rocky Mount and the Town of Nashville provide their residents with parks, recreation facilities and programs. While it is important for the County to be aware of these departments and work in a collaborative effort to ensure all county residents have access to parks and programs, the development of facilities and programs within these municipalities is not the highest priority. With this understanding the service population of these municipalities are not included in the Needs Assessment found within this report (Section Three).

The service population used in this planning document is derived as follows:

Nash County Population	94,500
less Rocky Mount’s population	
living in Nash County	40,000
less Nashville population	5,500
<u>Nash County Parks & Rec Service Population</u>	<u>49,000</u>



PARK & RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS

As described in Section Three: Recreation Standards and Needs Assessment, a community's park system is typically comprised of eight park types. These park types include:

- Mini Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Sport Complexes and District Parks
- Regional Parks
- Greenways
- School Parks
- Special Use Facilities

Each of these park types provide recreation opportunities that meet citizens' recreational needs. A number of public and private agencies/entities provide leisure services in the community. Municipal agencies typically focus on Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Greenways, School Parks, and special use facilities. County and state agencies often address larger park facilities (District and Regional Parks). Schools, universities, churches, and private entities usually provide additional recreation facilities. This comprehensive plan addresses all recreation providers in the community with particular emphasis on the County's role.

PARK NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In the next ten years, the County working with local partners, should focus its park and recreation efforts in the following areas. We begin our discussion with the smallest park types:

Regional Parks

Nash County is very fortunate to have an outstanding State Park within easy driving distance. Medoc Mountain State Park is a valuable natural and recreational resource, located just over the county line in Halifax County.

Medoc Mountain State Park meets the needs of a Regional Park for the citizens of Nash County.

District Parks

The 2004 County Master Plan recommended the development of a District Park with water access to the Tar River Reservoir. There remains a need for a county wide park that could provide access to this valuable water resource. With the high land cost of property in this areas, it may not be possible to acquire a large parcel for this park, but even a small (30-40 acre) District Park could provide valuable water based recreational opportunities.



Community Parks

County agencies usually focus on the operation of larger parks (Community and District Parks). There are currently three Community Parks serving county residents (W.B. Ennis Memorial, Bailey-Middlesex, and Spring Hope). In addition to these three existing parks, the Town of Castilia is currently working on the development of a fourth Community Park.

These parks are valuable assets and provide the foundation of recreational activities in the County. There is one area in central Nash County that is currently not served by a Community Park. The communities of Coppers, West Mount, and Macedonia do not have access to a park, but are currently exploring options for land acquisition and park development through efforts by the Coopers Community Development Corporation.

There is a need for a park in this area of the county, and County officials should work with the Community Development Corporation in their efforts to develop a park.

Neighborhood and Mini Parks

These smaller park types provide valuable recreation opportunities to the local communities and there is a need for additional Neighborhood Parks in Nash County. Typically these smaller park types are built, maintained and operated by local agencies/organizations. While the County should be supportive of other agencies that may consider the development of these smaller park types, this area of park development should not be a County priority.

FACILITY NEEDS FOR NASH COUNTY

The Level of Service (LOS) for recreational facilities (i.e. ballfields, courts, picnic shelters, etc.) proposed for county residents were developed from a review of LOS used by other rural counties similar to Nash County, and from input gathered during the public input process. The LOS, identified in Table 3A-Facilities, and discussed in greater detail in Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations, are the minimum recreation facility LOS recommended for Nash County.

Based on these LOS, the number of public facilities needed in the park system through the planning period (2014 to 2024) are identified in Table 3B-Facilities, “Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment” (page 3-8), and summarized on the following chart. A more detailed discussion of each of the facility needs is provided in Section Four: Proposals & Recommendations.



The “Existing Facilities” column indicates the number of existing recreation facilities currently available in the county. The “Facility Demand” column identifies the total number of facilities needed.

As an example of how the Needs Assessment is presented, consider playgrounds. Currently there are 11 existing playgrounds serving county residents. Based on the Standards for Facility Development that have been recommended for the county (one playground for every 3,500 people in the service population), there is a current demand for 14 playgrounds ($49,000 \div 3,500 = 14$). There is a need to construct 3 additional playgrounds (demand of 14 – 11 existing playgrounds) to meet the demand.

	Existing Facilities	Facility Demand	Facility Need
Adult Baseball Fields	1	3	2
Youth Baseball Fields	7	12	5
Softball Fields	2	7	5
Football/Soccer Fields	4	7	3
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	6	10	4
Tennis Courts	8	10	2
Volleyball Courts	2	3	1
Horseshoe Pits	2	3	1
Shuffleboard Courts	0	3	3
Playgrounds	11	14	3
Picnic Shelters	10	14	4
Hiking/Jogging Trails (miles)	4.85	19.6	14.75
Amphitheater	2	2	0
Community Garden	0	2	2
Swimming Pool	0	0	0
Rec. Center w/Gym	0	0	0
Rec. Center w/out Gym	0	0	0
Dog Park	0	2	2
Skate Park	0	0	0
Disc Golf	0	2	2
Bicycling Routes (miles)	0	49	49

SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

Community Centers & Gymnasiums

Currently the County does not offer its citizens a community center with gymnasium. Youth basketball programs are conducted at the schools. The lack of adequate indoor space eliminates the opportunity for fitness center, volleyball, free play, etc.

Based on the responses from both the online survey and the public workshops, there is some community support for an indoor recreation center with gymnasium. Unfortunately the cost of constructing and (more importantly) operating an indoor recreation center is extremely high. At some point in the future, the County may move to provide a higher level of indoor recreation opportunities, but at this time an indoor facility is not a priority.

Swimming Pools and Spraygrounds

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



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

Greenways

The demand for walking trails, and passive recreation was expressed in the survey and both public workshops. One of the most popular trends in park development is the creation of greenways.

These linear parks typically follow creeks and other drainage features. In addition to providing a wonderful opportunity for walking, jogging, and biking, they preserve open space and protect environmentally sensitive drainage areas.

The County may consider developing greenways in the future.

RENOVATIONS TO EXISTING PARKS

An important component of this comprehensive planning effort was an assessment of the existing facilities currently serving county residents. Section One: Inventory describes improvements needed at each park. An order of magnitude cost estimate for the proposed improvements identifies over \$4 million dollars in potential improvements/renovations. The majority of those improvements are the future phases of Bailey-Middlesex Park.

OPERATIONAL NEEDS

The expansion of park facilities described above will greatly improve the park and recreation offerings in the county, but will come with a cost. Expanding parks and adding facilities will increase operational and maintenance costs 20-30%. The County should consider the operational cost of any capital improve-

ment. Section Five: Action Plan Implementation provides some general guidelines on anticipated staff needs, as well as program and maintenance costs.

JOINT USE OPPORTUNITIES

The public is best served when government agencies work together. There are a number of public agencies operating in the county that have facilities and programs that potentially serve the public's need for parks and recreation. The County should continue to explore ways to work with other agencies to provide services and attain common goals.

The following agencies have missions that may be in alignment with the County's Parks and Recreation Department:

- Nash-Rocky Mount Public School
- Nash General Hospital
- Red Oak
- Bailey
- Middlesex
- Spring Hope
- Castilia

One potential joint use opportunity may be collaborating with the Coopers Community Development Corporation, as it develops a Community Park.

Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations provides greater detail on the roles of these agencies in the community and avenues for partnerships.

CAPITAL NEEDS

The development of a District Park, a Community Park, and park renovations will require a significant financial commitment from all community partners over the next 10-15 years. These new improvements, along with over \$4 million in park renovations, would require a capital improvement program of ±\$8.3 million if fully implemented. See Table 5-1 for details of the anticipated capital cost.

Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations and Section Five: Action Plan Implementation provide greater detail on improvements included in the capital improvements budget. Likewise, these sections provide strategies for funding the recommendations made as part of the comprehensive plan.

IMPACT OF CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

In 2007/2008 our country experienced the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression. Unemployment rates over the past several years have been higher than those experienced since the 1930s. The housing bubble burst, resulting in millions of foreclosures and falling home prices. The failing economy has resulted in significant reductions in government funds. Budget cuts in Washington and Raleigh have placed even greater stress on municipal and county agencies.

Nash County, like counties across the country, is faced with difficult decisions. Lower home values mean a smaller tax base, and a smaller tax base means making harder decisions about community services. Parks and recreation services are an important component of community life. Studies show that recreation resources add to the quality of life in communities that support parks. Even with this understanding, elected officials must carefully consider how to allocate funds for day to day operation and facility expansion.

The park and recreation needs identified in this planning document are significant, and it is understood that not all recommendations will be acted upon in the next ten years. Instead, it is the intent of this plan to identify a vision for the County's park system and provide recommendations for reaching that vision. Parks and recreation staff, working with community leaders and elected officials, will implement the recommendations as financial conditions allow.



W.B. Ennis Memorial Park

Section One Inventory

INTRODUCTION

The first step in the master planning process is to inventory and assess the existing parks and recreation facilities currently serving Nash County residents. In the current economic times, it is extremely important to identify and utilize facilities to their fullest potential. This section identifies all existing parks and recreation facilities found in the county.

The majority of the public parks in Nash County were developed by municipalities with assistance from the County. Facilities include parks located in Middlesex, Whitakers, Spring Hope, Bailey and Red Oak. County staff has been instrumental in grant writing and development of the parks in Red Oaks, Spring Hope, Castalia, Middlesex and Bailey. In addition, they provide maintenance on these parks as well as Spring Hope Community Park. County staff is currently working with the Town of Castalia in the development of a 15 acre community park to serve the north western area of the county.

In addition to public parks, several school facilities are currently used by the County for non-school recreational athletic programs. These schools are identified in the inventory and facilities at these schools have been used in developing the Needs Assessment found in Section Three.

Finally, the private sector offers recreational activities throughout the county. These private sector options include outstanding golf courses, indoor batting cages, private swimming clubs, etc.

PUBLIC PARKS SERVING COUNTY RESIDENTS

Bailey-Middlesex Community Park 65 acres

This park is located between Bailey and Middlesex on Stoney Hill Church Road. The park is scheduled to open in 2014. Phase Two will include disc golf, horseshoe pits, nature trail and picnic shelters. Phase Three will include baseball/softball fields and another concession stand. Phase Four will include a community center.

Existing Facilities

Football/Soccer Fields (3)
Volleyball Court
Horseshoe Pits (2)
Playground
Walking Trail .75 miles
Restroom/Concession Building



Playground at Bailey-Middlesex Community Park

Castalia Community Park 15 acres

This park is located on Hwy 58N across from Town Hall. This park is scheduled to open 2017.

Proposed Facilities

Youth Baseball
Multi-purpose Field
Playground
Picnic Shelters (2)
Walking Trail .5 mile
Amphitheater/Outdoor Stage
Restroom/Concession Building

W.B. Ennis Memorial Park 27.5 acres

W.B. Ennis Memorial Park is located across the street from Red Oak Middle School. The park is fully developed and heavily used. Two additional parking lots were built since the grand opening of the park to better serve the public. Soccer is played on the multipurpose area. Over 300 children participate in soccer and 200 children in baseball/softball each season. Nash County owns the property adjacent to the park. This property was previously used as landfill. The state has completed some investigation on the landfill site, but accurate records of buried material is not available. The Town would like to see nature trails, or passive recreation elements developed on this property. This may also be a good area for a dog park. Currently dogs are not allowed at W.B. Ennis Memorial Park.

Existing Facilities

- Adult Baseball Field
- Youth Baseball Fields (3)
- Multi-Purpose Field
- Basketball Courts (2)
- Tennis Courts (4)
- Playgrounds (2)
- Picnic Shelters (3)
- Walking Trail .6 miles
- Restroom/Concession Building



Kickball at W.B. Ennis Memorial Park

Spring Hope Community Park 5.5 acres

This small community park is located adjacent to Spring Hope Elementary School and serves as a small school park. Park facilities include a picnic shelter, youth baseball field, tennis courts, basketball court and walking trail.

Existing Facilities

- Youth Baseball Field
- Basketball Court
- Tennis Courts (2)
- Playground
- Picnic Shelters (2)
- Walking Trail 1 mile
- Restroom/Concession Building



Spring Hope Community Park

Middlesex Town Park 2 acres

This small Neighborhood Park in Middlesex offers both active and passive recreation opportunities. Developed and maintained by the Town of Middlesex, this park provides a playground, picnic facilities, tennis courts, and basketball court (on one of the tennis courts).

Existing Facilities

- Multi-Purpose Field
- Basketball Court (1)
- Tennis Courts (2)
- Playground
- Picnic Shelters (2)

Middlesex Walking Track

In addition to the Middlesex Town Park, the Middlesex also offers a .25 mile walking track at a separate location.

Existing Facilities

- Walking Track .25 mile

Strickland Park 2 acres

This ball field complex, developed on land offered (but not deeded) to Nash County Parks and Recreation, provides two new little league fields. Currently, the fields are providing valuable play opportunity, but there is still much work to do on the fields.

Existing Facilities

- Youth Baseball Fields (2)

Whitakers Town Park 3 acres

The Town of Whitakers recently completed an outstanding neighborhood park which includes a variety of outdoor recreation activities. This park will be an important source of recreation in the northern part of the county.

Existing Facilities

- Basketball Court
- Volleyball Court
- Playground
- Gazebo
- Picnic Shelter
- Walking Trail .25 mile



Whitakers Town Park

SCHOOLS UTILIZED FOR PUBLIC RECREATION BY THE COUNTY

Nash County currently uses gymnasiums at three Elementary Schools (Coopers Elementary, Middlesex Elementary, and Spring Hope Elementary). The gymnasiums have heat and are well maintained for facility users. The joint use works well without a contract between the school and county. There are close to 400 participants in youth basketball from December - March. Games are scheduled Saturdays from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Coopers Elementary School

Located in south central Nash County, close to I-95, Coopers Elementary School provides several outdoor and indoor recreation facilities.

Existing Facilities

Multi-Purpose Field
Basketball Court
Playgrounds (2)
Gymnasium

Middlesex Elementary School

This elementary school in southern Nash County is an excellent example of joint use opportunities. Nash County started youth basketball in 2007.

Existing Facilities

Playgrounds (2)
Gymnasium

Spring Hope Elementary School

This elementary school is already functioning in some ways like a park school. The school is adjacent to the Spring Hope Town Park allowing joint use of picnic, tennis, and ball fields. Portions of the school property are undeveloped, and offer expansion opportunities for additional fields. There is also approximately 20 acres of adjacent property that could be purchased or donated for potential development.

Existing Facilities

Adult Softball Field (with lights)
Football/Soccer Field
Playground
Gymnasium



Spring Hope Elementary School

Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools Not Currently Used For County Recreation Programs:

Bailey Elementary School (Little League Field is used for baseball, softball and fall soccer)

Cedar Grove Elementary School

M.B. Hubbard Elementary School

Nashville Elementary School

Red Oak Elementary School

Swift Creek Elementary School

Nash Central Middle School

Red Oak Middle School

Southern Nash Middle School

Nash Central High School

Northern Nash High School

Southern Nash High School

W.L. Greene Alternative School

Nashville Boys & Girls Club

Private facilities include:

Bailey Church Park

Camp BTI Boys & Girls Club

Camp Charles Boy Scout Camp

Momeyer Ruritan Club Park

Rocky Mount Area Youth Soccer Association Soccer Complex

**Nash County
Inventory of Existing Facilities**

Type	Name	Acreage	Adult Baseball Fields	Youth Baseball Fields	Adult Softball Fields	Football/Soccer Fields	Multi-purpose Fields	Basketball Courts (Outdoors)	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Shuffleboard Courts	Horseshoe Pits	Bocce Ball Courts	Playgrounds	Gazebos	Picnic Shelters	Track	Walking Trail	Mountain Bike Trail (Miles)	Fitness Area/Exercise Stations	Water Access	Amphitheater/Outdoor Stage	Community Garden	Camping	Swimming Pool/Splash Pad	Dog Park	Skate Park	Grass Area/Open Space	Restroom/Concession Building	Picnic Area	Gardens/Passive Areas	Miniature Golf Course	Disc Golf Course	Geocaching Course	Gymnasium	Kitchen	Meeting/Community Rooms	
Public Parks Serving County Residents*																																						
Neighborhood Parks																																						
	Middlesex Town Park	2				1	1	2						1		2																						
	Middlesex Walking Track																	1																				
	Strickland Park	2	2																																			
	Whitakers Town Park	3						1		1				1	1	1		1					1															
Community Parks																																						
	Bailey-Middlesex Community Park	65				3				1		2		1				0.75											1									
	Castalia Community Park	15		1			1							1		2		0.5				1																
	Ennis Park	27.5	1	3			1	2	4					2		3		0.6																				
	Spring Hope Community Park	5.5		1			1	1	2					1		2		1											1									
Existing Facilities in Parks		120	1	7	0	3	4	5	8	2	0	2	0	7	1	10	0	4.85	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Schools Utilized for Public Recreation by the County																																						
	Cooper Elementary School						1	1						2																						1		
	Middlesex Elementary School													1																						1		
	Spring Hope Elementary School				1	1								1																						1		
	Bailey Elementary School Little League Field				1																							1								1		
Existing Facilities in Schools		0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Facilities Used by County Parks & Rec.		120	1	7	2	4	5	6	8	2	0	2	0	11	1	10	0	4.85	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	
Other School Facilities																																						
	Cedar Grove Elementary School					1																																
	M.B. Hubbard Elementary School								1					2		1											2									1		
	Nashville Elementary School				1									1																						1		
	Red Oak Elementary School					1								1																						1		
	Swift Creek Elementary School					1																														1		
	Nash Central Middle School		1		1																															1		
	Red Oak Middle School		1	1	1																															1		
	Southern Nash Middle School		1	1	1																															1		
	Nash Central High School		1	1	4				6									1																		1		
	Northern Nash High School		1	1	2				6					1																						1		
	Southern Nash High School		1	1	2				4								1																			1		
	W.L. Greene Alternative School/							2						1																								
	Nashville Boys & Girls Club																																					
Private Facilities																																						
	Bailey Church Park																	1																				
	Camp BTI Boys & Girls Club					1	1	2								1					1			1			1											
	Camp Charles Boy Scout Camp																	1																				
	Momeyer Ruritan Club Park							2						1																								
	Rocky Mount Area Youth Soccer Assoc. Soccer Complex					7																																
* Public Parks in Rocky Mount and Nashville are not included in this inventory.																																						

NRMPS - HIGH SCHOOLS

- 1 - Nash Central High
- 2 - Northern Nash High
- 3 - Rocky Mount High
- 4 - Southern Nash High

NRMPS - MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- 1 - George R. Edwards Middle
- 2 - Nash Central Middle
- 3 - Joseph W. Parker Middle
- 4 - Red Oak Middle
- 5 - Rocky Mount Middle
- 6 - Southern Nash Middle

NRMPS - ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- 1 - Bailey Elementary
- 2 - Susie B. Baskerville Elementary
- 3 - Benvenue Elementary
- 4 - Cedar Grove Elementary
- 5 - Coopers Elementary
- 6 - Englewood Elementary
- 7 - Fairview Elementary School
- 8 - M.B. Hubbard Elementary
- 9 - D.S. Johnson Elementary
- 10 - Middlesex Elementary
- 11 - Nashville Elementary
- 12 - O.R. Pope Elementary
- 13 - Red Oak Elementary
- 14 - Spring Hope Elementary
- 15 - Swift Creek Elementary
- 16 - Williford Elementary
- 17 - Winstead Avenue Elementary

NRMPS NONTRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

- 1 - Tar River Academy
- 2 - NRM Early College High School
- 3 - J.C. Braswell Alternative School
- 4 - WL Greene Alternative School
- 5 - JC Braswell Elementary

Nash County Colleges

- 1 - Nash Community College
- 2 - NC Wesleyan College

NASH CO. PRIVATE SCHOOLS

- 1 - 1st United Methodist
- 2 - Cornerstone Christian Academy
- 3 - Englewood Baptist Day School
- 4 - Faith Christian School
- 5 - Falls Road Baptist Church School
- 6 - Grace Christian School
- 7 - Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cath. School
- 8 - Ricky Mount Academy

NASH CO. SENIOR CENTERS

- Nash Co. Senior Center

NASH CO. PARKS

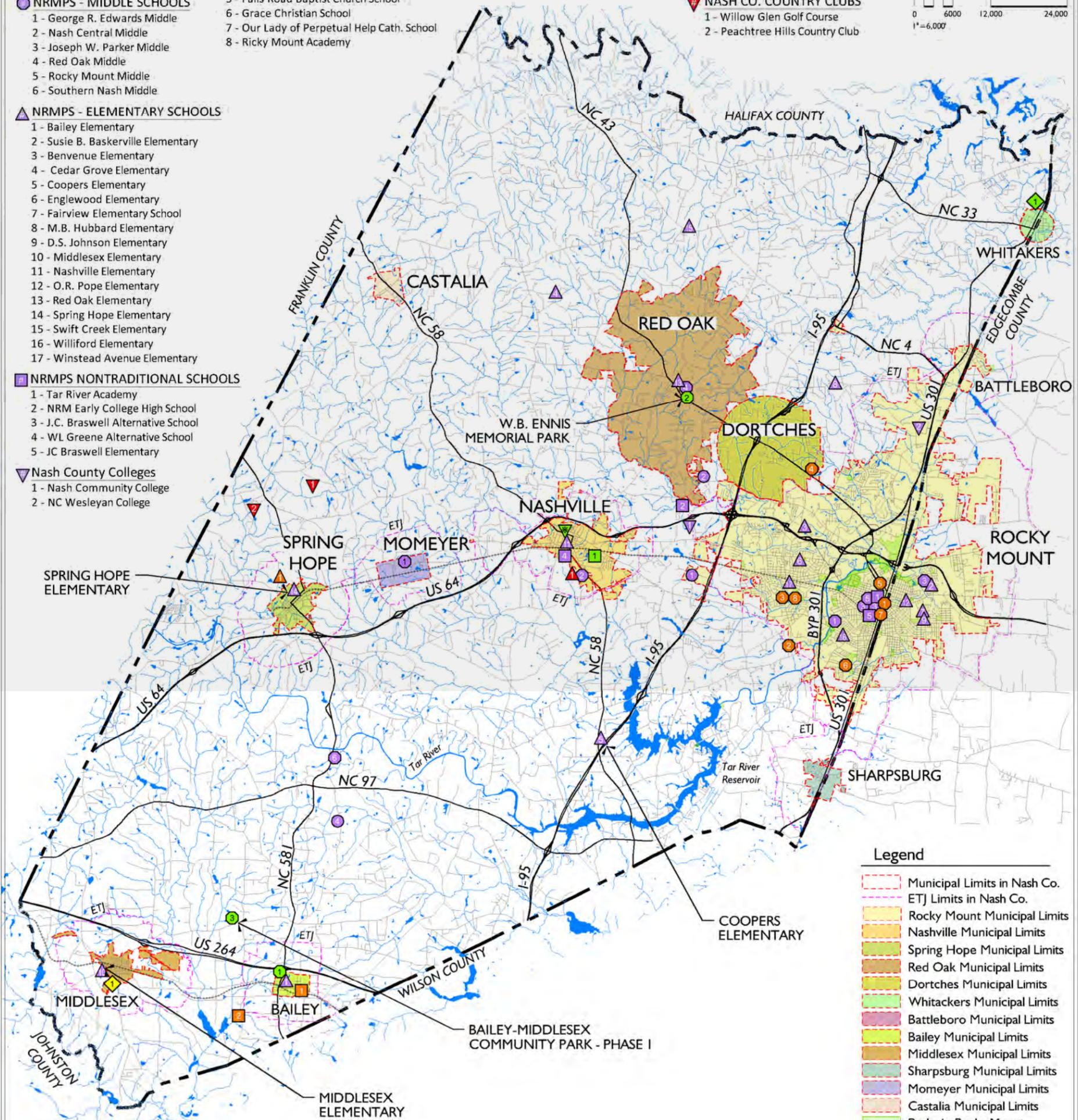
- 1 - Strickland Park
- 2 - W.B. Ennis Memorial Park
- 3 - Bailey-Middlesex Community Park

NASH CO. COUNTRY CLUBS

- 1 - Willow Glen Golf Course
- 2 - Peachtree Hills Country Club

SITE SOLUTIONS

1 1 3 3 0
W. Phares Street
Charlotte, NC 28204
Landscape Architecture
Site Planning
Civil Engineering
www.sitesolutionsnc.com
Telephone: 704-525-9000
Facsimile: 704-525-8955



Legend

- Municipal Limits in Nash Co.
- ETJ Limits in Nash Co.
- Rocky Mount Municipal Limits
- Nashville Municipal Limits
- Spring Hope Municipal Limits
- Red Oak Municipal Limits
- Dortches Municipal Limits
- Whitakers Municipal Limits
- Battleboro Municipal Limits
- Bailey Municipal Limits
- Middlesex Municipal Limits
- Sharpsburg Municipal Limits
- Momeyer Municipal Limits
- Castalia Municipal Limits
- Parks in Rocky Mount

- NASHVILLE PARKS**
1 - Nashville-Glover Park
- NASHVILLE COMMUNITY CENTERS**
1 - Boys & Girls Club of Nashville
- SPRING HOPE PARKS**
1 - Spring Hope Community Park
- WHITAKERS PARKS**
1 - Whitakers Town Park
- BAILEY PARKS**
1 - Bailey UMC Park
2 - Camp Charles Scout Camp
- MIDDLESEX PARKS**
1 - Middlesex Town Park
- MOMEYER PARKS**
1 - Momeyer Ruritan Club Park



Nash County
Parks and Recreation Department

Nash County

Existing Features Plan

November 3, 2014



Games and Sports Camp at W.B. Ennis Memorial Park

Section Two

The People of Nash County

INTRODUCTION

An important step in identifying the park and recreational needs of the county is developing an understanding of the people that make up Nash County. Section Two includes a review of the county's population and demographics and looks at changes that are occurring in the area.

In addition to reviewing the county's demographics, the Needs Assessment included several exercises to engage the public and gather information on public demand/expectations for future parks. These initiatives included:

- Community Survey
- Stakeholder Interviews/Meetings
- Public Workshops

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

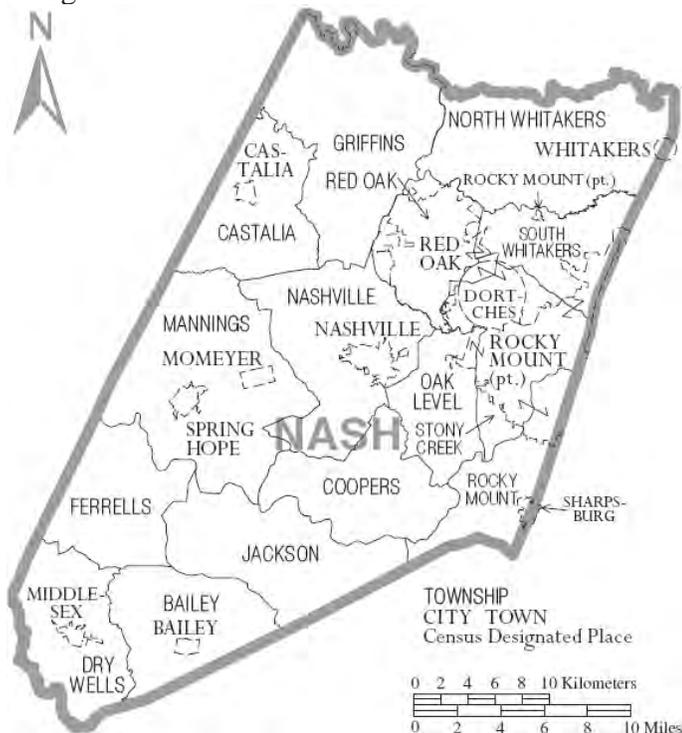
POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

History

In 1777, Nash County was formed from the western part of Edgecombe County. Nash County was named for General Francis Nash, a Hillsborough native and soldier who was killed while fighting under General George Washington during the American Revolution. Nashville is the county seat and was settled in 1780 and chartered in 1815. The county's first land grants date back to 1743.

After the revolution, Nash County became one of the State's leading farm areas. Since the Civil War, Nash County has been primarily known as a leading agricultural county but has experienced steady industrial growth since that time. Currently, only 24% of the total employment for the county is agricultural. Despite this fact, Nash County ranks 8th in area devoted to farmland in North Carolina.

Nash County could fall under two classifications, a northern coastal plain county or a far eastern piedmont county. It has primarily rolling terrain and sandy soil; however, brick and tile clays are found along the riverbanks.



The People of Nash County

According to the 2010 census, Nash County's population was 95,840. This makes Nash County the 29th largest county (by population) in the state. The largest city within Nash County is Rocky Mount, with a population of 57,477. Rocky Mount is located on the Nash-Edgecombe County line. Approximately 40,000 of Rocky Mount's citizens live in Nash County. Other cities within Nash County include:

Nashville	5,352
Red Oak	3,430
Sharpsburg	2,024*
Spring Hope	1,320
Middlesex	822
Dortches	935
Whitakers	744**
Bailey	569
Castalia	268
Momeyer	224

*Portions of the population listed for Sharpsburg live in the counties of Nash, Edgecombe and Wilson.

**Portions of the population listed for Whitakers live in Edgecombe County.

Based on census data, Nash County's population increased 9% since the 2000 census. This represents a slower rate of growth than North Carolina's increase in population.

Population projections by the Office of State Budget and Management indicate the county's population will decrease in the coming decade. Based on the department's population projections Nash County's 2014 population is approximately 94,500. The county's projected 2024 population will be 91,300.

The county's current population is predominantly in the eastern and central part of the county in the areas of Rocky Mount and Nashville. The areas of greatest growth are occurring west of Rocky Mount towards Nashville and in the towns of Red Oak and Dortches. A second area of anticipated growth is in the southern portion of the county, in the Bailey-Middlesex area. This area, which is easily accessible from the

Raleigh/Wake County region, is already beginning to feel the effect from the capital city's growth. As predicted in the County's 1992 Land Development Plan, much of southern and western Nash County will serve as a bedroom community for commuters to Raleigh.

Based on U.S. Census Bureau, 51.7% of the county's population is female. This closely mirrors North Carolina's 51% female population. Nash County has a relatively young population. Approximately 23.9% (22,933) of the entire county population is under 18 years of age. The county's older citizens make up 14% (13,393) of the overall population. This is slightly higher than the State's 12% average for this age group.

55.9% of the county's population is white. Black or African American persons make up over one third (37.2%) of the county's population.

Over 14,000 citizens in Nash County are considered disabled. This represents 15.3% of the community. This figure represents a significant portion of the county's population and is slightly greater than the state average of 13.1%.

Based on this assessment of Nash County's population several socio-economic features are evident which will influence the level and type of recreational services/facilities needed. These include:

- The county's relatively high percentage of young people (persons under the age of 18) indicates a county that is generally young, and would exhibit a higher demand for active recreation.
- With approximately 15% of the county's population being considered disabled, particular attention should be given to accessibility and to providing programs which meet the recreational needs of the disabled.
- Nash County's population is not evenly distributed throughout the county. The greatest concentration of population is found in the eastern/central regions of the county (Rocky Mount, Red Oak, Dortches, Nashville area) with anticipated growth in the southern portions of the county (Middlesex/Bailey).

Service Population

An important aspect of any parks and recreation Master Plan is to determine the service population of the county or municipality the plan is designed to serve. While the overall service population of this plan is all Nash County residents, the primary focus of this plan is meeting the park and recreation needs of county residents who are not served by other parks and recreation departments.

Two of the municipalities in Nash County have parks and recreation departments. The City of Rocky Mount and the Town of Nashville provide their residents with parks, recreation facilities and programs. While it is important for the County to be aware of these departments and work in a collaborative effort to ensure all county residents have access to parks and programs, the development of facilities and programs within these municipalities is not the highest priority. With this understanding the service population of these municipalities are not included in the Needs Assessment found within this report (Section Three).

The service population used in this planning document is derived as follows:

Nash County Population	94,500
less Rocky Mount's population living in Nash County	40,000
<u>less Nashville population</u>	<u>5,500</u>
Nash County Parks & Rec Service Population	49,000

PUBLIC INPUT

Perhaps the most important step in the planning process is gathering input from county residents with regard to their desires for public recreation. As part of the master plan process, the following initiatives were taken to gather public input:

- Community Survey (on-line)
- Stakeholder Interviews/Meetings
- Public Workshops
- Staff Meetings

The following is a summary of findings from each of the public input initiatives:

County Survey (on-line)

A Survey Monkey Questionnaire was posted on the County's website to allow the general public an opportunity to voice their opinions on parks and recreation. A total of 484 people responded to the survey. The following responses were recorded:

Q1 - Are you a resident of Nash County?

Yes	93.18%
No	6.82%

Q2 - What area of the County do you live in?

Bailey	4.34%
Castalia	2.07%
Coopers	5.37%
Dortches	2.27%
Middlesex	2.27%
Mount Pleasant	0.21%
Momeyer	1.24%
Nashville	14.46%
Red Oak	13.02%
Rocky Mount	39.26%
Samaria	0.21%
Spring Hope	9.09%
West Mount	3.72%
Whitakers	2.48%

Q3 - To make sure we receive input from people of all age groups, is your age....

Less than 18	0.21%
18 to 24	1.86%
25 to 34	16.32%
35 to 44	30.17%
45 to 54	18.18%
55 to 64	22.31%
65 or older	10.95%

Q4 - Have you or any members of your family visited the following parks or recreation centers in the past year? Check all that you have visited.

Ennis Park (Red Oak)	59.62%
Rocky Mount Parks	55.63%
Glover Park (Nashville)	35.21%
NRMS Playgrounds	24.88%
Spring Hope Community Park	19.95%
Bailey Middlesex Community Park	7.04%
Middlesex Town Park	3.52%
Whitakers Park	0.70%

Q5 - Which park do members of your household visit most often?

Ennis Park	26.50%
Rocky Mount	15.75%
Sunset Park	12.75%
Glover/Grover Park	9.00%
Spring Hope Community Park	8.25%
Red Oak	6.50%
City Lake	5.25%
Battle Park	4.50%
NRMS	2.75%
Harrison Family Y Park	2.00%
Englewood	1.50%
Middlesex	1.50%
Stone	1.00%
Nashville	0.75%
Tar River	0.50%
Marigold	0.25%
Indian Lake in Tarboro	0.25%
Hornbeam	0.25%
Stoney Creek Park	0.25%
Momeyer Park	0.25%
MLK JR	0.25%

Q6 - For each of the facilities listed below please let us know if you have great interest, some interest, or no interest in that particular facility.

Facility	Great/Some Interest	No Interest
Walking or biking trails	94.25%	5.74%
Open Space or Natural Areas	87.79%	12.21%
Picnic Shelters	86.95%	13.04%
Playground	83.30%	16.70%
Facilities for Classes or Workshops	81.23%	18.76%
Fishing Areas	77.28%	22.73%
Gymnasium/Recreation Center	71.99%	28.01%
Swimming Facility	70.46%	29.55%

Baseball	69.54%	30.46%
Environmental Education	69.30%	30.62%
Senior Activities	68.30%	31.70%
Tennis Courts	67.59%	32.21%
Soccer	65.55%	34.46%
Softball	64.11%	35.89%
Basketball Courts	62.59%	37.41%
Canoe Trails	58.90%	41.11%
Dog Parks	56.69%	43.30%
Football	54.71%	15.30%
Disc Golf	44.39%	55.61%
Skateboard Facility	30.72%	69.29%

Q7 - Using a scale of one to seven, where “1” is very dissatisfied, and “7” is very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the public park and recreation facilities in Nash County?

Very Satisfied	7	8.47%
	6	13.02%
	5	36.78%
	4	28.10%
	3	8.26%
	2	2.07%
Very Dissatisfied	1	3.31%

Q8 - Would you say there is great need, some need, little need, or no need for additional park and recreation facilities in Nash County?

Great Need	45.87%
Some Need	41.12%
Little Need	10.12%
No Need	2.89%

Q9 - If taxes needed to be raised to pay for additional park and recreation areas in Nash County, would you support or oppose the tax increase?

Support	51.03%
Oppose	48.97%

Detailed responses to the online survey can be found in Appendix A.

Stakeholder Interviews/Meetings

Several meetings were held with key community stakeholders to learn more about park needs. Interviews were held April 30, 2014 with the following community stakeholders:

- Sue Yerkes, Director
- Valerie Perry, Administrative Support Specialist
- Troy Blaser, Athletic Coordinator
- Adam Rodgers, Program Coordinator
- Chris Koufopoulos, Athletic Coordinator
- Taylor Lewis, Maintenance Supervisor
- Dr. Eric Cunningham, Nash-Rocky Mount Schools, Associate Superintendent Facilities and Operations
- David Griffin, City of Rocky Mount Parks & Recreation
- James Salmons, UCPRPO
- Harold Winstead, Coopers Community Development Group
- Franklin Lamm, Spring Hope
- Richard Price, Spring Hope
- Amy Belflower Thomas, Nash County Health Department
- Brent Cone, Spring Hope
- Lester Weaver, Coopers Community Development Group
- Russell Cockrell, Coopers Community Development Group
- Eddie McKoy, Nash County
- Pam Williams, Nash DSS
- Nancy Nixon, Nash Planning Department
- Stacie Shatzer, Nash County Aging
- Wayne Outlaw, Nash County District Commissioner
- Paulette Langley, Nash-Rocky Mount Schools
- Alexandra Bonce, Travel & Tourism
- Robbie Davis, Nash County District Commissioner
- Mary Wells, Nash County District Commissioner

Meetings were held during the morning of Wednesday April 30th to discuss parks and recreation issues in the county. Attendees included Parks and Recreation staff and over twenty stakeholders from across the county. Attendees were allowed to discuss issues they felt needed to be addressed in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The following is a summary of comments made during the input sessions.

- Nash County currently has a very good relationship with Nash-Rocky Mount Schools (NRMS). The County is currently using indoor and outdoor facilities at Coopers Elementary, Spring Hope Elementary, Nash Central Middle School, Bakersville Elementary, Northern Nash High School, Southern Nash High School, and Southern Nash Middle School. The school system uses the walking track and tennis courts at Ennis Park in Red Oak and uses county parks for field days and special events.
- The County uses school facilities for a wide variety of sports programs including basketball, self-defense, cheerleading, soccer, baseball, and football. The County programs these events during non-school hours and helps maintain facilities by mowing, trash removal, etc. The County is responsible for policing grounds and facilities during their programmed events.
- NRMS recognizes the value of schools in the community goes beyond the school curriculum and use during the “school day”. In addition to working with Nash County Parks and Recreation on joint use opportunities, the school system is currently working with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation through the Down East Partnership for Children to develop outdoor learning centers.
- There may be opportunities for non-athletic use of schools such as senior events, field days, and 5k run/walks.
- NRMS has an interest in developing formal joint use agreements and plans to work with the County to get new agreements in place.
- The NRMS would like to see additional tennis courts at Red Oak. There is also the need for an additional multi-purpose field and cross country trail.
- The School Board maintains a 10-year Capital Improvement Plan for school improvements. There could be some opportunities between the school board and county for joint planning of capital improvements budgets.
- Improving community health should be an important aspect of this plan. The plan should include recommendations to promote equitable access to facilities and programs. It should also identify community partners and encourage joint use of facilities and programs.
- Several people from the Coopers Community Development Group attended the stakeholder meeting. They expressed a concern that the 2004 Parks and Recreation Plan did not include a recommendation for a park in this area of the county. They provided a map that indicated a gap in service to the Coopers area (Coopers, West Mount and Macedonia).
- Citizens in the Coopers community have organized a 501-C development corporation and have begun raising funds to help develop a park. They are requesting the County include a park in their area as part of the Master Plan Update. There is a need for baseball, soccer, and other youth sports. There is also a need for picnicking, playgrounds, and other park facilities. There are fields at the Coppers Ruritan Club and the schools are also utilized for recreation activities, but there is greater need than these facilities provide. The cost of land in this area is expensive, so developing a 100 acre park is not feasible. A park of 20-30 acres is probably more realistic.
- Several people from Spring Hope attended the meeting to discuss the need for field improvements. Fencing, dugouts, and support facilities at the fields are in very poor condition and major renovations are needed. There is land available adjacent to the existing fields that could be purchased to expand the fields.
- The renovation and expansion of the fields at Spring Hope would fill a need for youth athletics in the southern area of the county. These fields could also provide overflow fields for tournaments being played in Rocky Mount and Wilson.
- Development of a sports complex somewhere close to I-95 could provide additional tourism attraction for other tournament level facilities in the area. It was noted that additional fields, built for a high quality of play, will not complete with other complexes, but will actually compliment the complexes at Rocky Mount and Wilson.
- Several people discussed the need for better youth sports facilities in Nash County. Many of the county’s best athletes go outside the county to play because facilities are lacking locally.
- Rocky Mount is currently developing a city wide parks and recreation master plan. While the document is not finished, two needs that have been

identified are indoor swimming facility and a large regional park (150-300 acres). Exploring opportunities for joint collaboration between the City and County could be a way of approaching both needs.

- The 2004 Master Plan called for a regional park on the reservoir. This recommendation may not be feasible because of land cost.
- Soccer continues to grow in popularity, and lacrosse will soon follow. The County should consider development of a multi-purpose field complex.
- A facility for seniors should be included in recommendations; especially outdoor facilities. New trends in outdoor recreation facilities include outdoor exercise equipment and playgrounds for seniors.
- Tourism in Nash County is regional. Tournaments play a major role in filling beds and restaurants. Baseball and soccer are popular tournament sports. While Rocky Mount's sports complex is the hub, there are opportunities to build on the popularity and success of their tournaments. Tennis could potentially be another tourist draw.
- Nash County Planning has population data that may be relevant to this plan. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan should also incorporate all county wide planning efforts that impact park and recreation needs.
- The plan should also incorporate all planning documents completed for transportation, pedestrian and bicycle routes.

Public Workshops

Three public workshops were held to allow citizens to discuss community park needs and review preliminary recommendations. Over 75 citizens attended these workshops and provided valuable input on recreational needs. Workshops were held at the following locations:

Coopers Elementary School	June 10, 2014
Red Oak	September 8, 2014
Spring Hope	September 9, 2014



Workshop participants provided input

Each workshop began with a brief presentation that explained the planning process and provided information about the history of the department and identified existing parks and recreation opportunities in the county.

Following the brief presentation, attendees were asked several questions regarding their current use of parks and their desire for additional parks and recreation facilities. A summary of their responses were:

What recreational activities currently interest you?

- Art Activities for Children
- Basketball
- Baseball/Softball
- Biking
- Bocce Ball
- Disc Golf
- Swimming
- Picnic Areas
- Playgrounds
- Soccer
- Spray Park
- Tennis
- Volleyball
- Walking
- Walking Trail for Exercise
- 9 Hole Par 3

What park and recreation facilities are you currently using?

- City Lake Park
- Coopers/Bakers Field
- Ennis Park
- Gillette Park

Glover Park
 Imperial Center
 Morton Church
 R.M. Senior Center
 Spring Hope Park
 Sunset Park
 Whitakers Park YMCA

Do you feel the existing parks and recreation facilities in Nash County are meeting your needs?

Yes 0
 No 75

Are additional parks and recreation facilities needed?

Yes 75
 No 0

If yes, what facilities are needed?

Basketball Courts (outdoor)
 Ballfields with lights/complex
 Biking trail
 Cradle to Grave Park
 Spray pads
 Soccer fields
 Swimming pool
 Walking trail

What public agencies should be responsible for providing additional facilities and programs?

County
 Municipalities
 Public Grant sources (PARTF)
 Rocky Mount if reservoir is involved
 Ruritan Clubs
 Schools
 Sponsorships

Would you say there is great need, some need or no need for additional parks and recreation facilities in Nash County.

Great Need 75
 Some Need 0
 No Need 0

Attendees at the June 10 meeting at Coopers Elementary School were invited to “vote” for the activities they felt were most needed in the county. The following table identifies the results from that “voting” process.

Baseball fields	71
Walking or biking trail	28
Playgrounds	22
Swimming facility	21
Basketball courts	20
Soccer fields	19
Tennis courts	16
Picnic shelters	13
Volleyball courts	12
Spray park	11
Walking trail w/exercise	11
Picnic Areas	11
Facility for programs in the arts especially for children	10
Horseshoe pits	7
Biking	7
Open space or natural areas	6
Fishing areas	5
Putt Putt	5
Nature study/observation areas	4
Disc golf course	3
Recreation center/gymnasium	2
Bocce courts	2
Football fields	1
Dog parks	1
Skateboard park	1
9 Hole Par 3	1
Lacrosse fields	

Staff Meetings

The Planning Consultant met with Nash County Parks and Recreation staff to discuss facilities, programming and operation.

The following questions were asked at the Staff Interviews:

1. Which parks and recreation facilities and programs in the county do you think are the most used?

Ennis Park, Red Oak. Place is packed on game nights and Saturdays for soccer and baseball. Playground area is always busy.

Spring Hope Elementary ballfields are also heavily used.

2. Which parks and recreation facilities in the County are least used?

Facilities are heavily used during scheduled programs and rarely used if we don't have games/practices.

Baily Field – Strickland Park and Bailey Elementary

3. Overall how would you rate the condition of existing parks and facilities throughout the county? Are there gaps in service? If so where?

The facilities that are maintained by the County are in good condition. Spring Hope ballfields need a lot of work.

In Red Oak the facilities are new and are supported by the Town. Spring Hope, Bailey facilities are old and Towns do not support updating. Service is about the same, but facilities are very different.

4. What factors do you feel attribute to the current condition of parks and recreation facilities in Nash County?

Town leaders not realizing the importance of improving existing facilities that need to be updated for safety and aesthetic reasons.

For Spring Hope and Bailey it is communications and partnership between the Towns and NCPR. Towns seem to think it is NCPR responsibility to upgrade. Facilities are old and in need of upgrade.

5. Are there facilities that are currently not available within the county that should be offered? What agency should be responsible for providing those facilities?

Soccer Fields. Currently using baseball outfields in Spring Hope and Bailey. More multi-purpose fields are needed.

The County does not have any nature trails or access to lakes or rivers.

6. What recommendations would you like to see come from this report?

Increased cooperation with schools for use of indoor and outdoor facilities.

The development of parks to enhance facilities for passive leisure opportunities (nature trails, open space).

Facility improvements are needed at Spring Hope Community Park (restrooms, fencing and dugouts).



Nash County Parks and Recreation Football

Section Three

Establishing a County Wide Level of Service for Parks & Recreation Facilities

INTRODUCTION

This section contains the analysis and assessment on which the recommendations of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan is based. The planning process includes a review of other North Carolina counties and the Level of Service (LOS) they use to provide park and recreation facilities to their constituents. This review of similar agencies is based on a description of the park types that typically make up a park system (Appendix B). As part of this review, we also look at national and state trends in park and recreation preferences (Appendices C and D). Using this information as a backdrop, we establish a desired LOS for park and recreation facilities specifically for Nash County. This LOS is then used as a basis for establishing a park and recreation facility Needs Assessment for the County.

It should be noted that the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), in its 1995 report “Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines”, determined there are no “national standards” for park development. Instead, the latest NRPA study recommends that each community is unique, and that standards reflecting the local “uniqueness” should be established. This section utilizes input from the public workshops and internet survey, as well as a comprehensive review of other North Carolina communities, to develop LOS specifically for Nash County.

This study looks at two types of service levels. First, we evaluate total acreage of park land within the service area and how this acreage is broken into park types. From this study it is possible to compare the parks in Nash County with other counties, both in overall park acreage and park types within this overall acreage.

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

The service levels used in this study were derived from citizen input and input from the staff. The development of these LOS is perhaps the most important step in this planning process.

It should be noted that the LOS for development established for Nash County are consistent with other rural counties in North Carolina. Likewise, the needs that are identified in the plan are conservative. Even taking this conservative approach, the recommendations in this document should lead the County and its local partners to develop parks and facilities comparable to most other counties of similar size.

LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR PARKS & RECREATION IN NASH COUNTY

The first step in developing a county wide park Master Plan is to establish a Level of Service (LOS) analysis for both park land and recreation facilities. Typically this process begins with a review of the LOS other counties are using as they provide park and recreation facilities. We have included a comparison of other county standards as part of this planning process.

The LOS for both park acreage and recreation facilities is expressed in a population based format. For example, a county may decide to provide Community Parks to its residents at a LOS of 4 acres of Com-

munity Park land for every 1,000 people that live in the county. If the county has a service population of 50,000 there will be a demand for 200 acres of park land dedicated to Community Parks (4 acres x 50= 200). If that same county currently has a Community Park with 50 acres, there is a county wide need for 150 acres of additional park land dedicated to Community Park(s) [demand (200 acres) – supply (50 acres) = need (150 acres)].

The same process is used to determine recreational facility needs. If the same county determines that softball fields should be available to its residents at a LOS of 1 field for every 7,500 people, there is a demand for 7 softball fields in the county (50,000 population ÷ 7,500 LOS = 7 fields). If the county currently has 2 existing softball fields serving the recreational needs of county residents, there is a need for 5 additional softball fields [demand (7 fields) – supply (2 fields) = need (5 fields)].

Utilizing this approach for developing the Needs Assessment, the following needs are identified:



Softball at Bailey Elementary School

PARK NEEDS FOR NASH COUNTY

Mini Parks

A standard of .10 acres for every 1,000 people in the service population has been established for Mini Parks. This LOS of development is less than the standard used by many North Carolina communities, but reflects a trend in park development away from Mini Parks. Based on this service level, there is a need for less than 5 acres of Mini Parks throughout the county.

Currently there are no Mini Parks located in Nash County. Based on the current trend in park development away from these tiny parks, and the fact county agencies typically do not build or maintain small parks, it is unlikely the County will invest in this park type in the future.

If any small play areas are developed, they would likely be developed by one of the municipalities or possibly by residential developers.

Neighborhood Parks

Like Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks are typically developed by municipal agencies. Middlesex Town Park and Whitakers Town Park are examples of a Neighborhood Park.

The service level set for Neighborhood Parks by this Master Plan is 1 acre per 1,000 people. Utilizing this level of development, there will be a need for over 49 acres of Neighborhood Parks. Assuming most Neighborhood Parks are in the 8-10 acre range, there is a need for several Neighborhood Parks.

The responsibility of developing these future Neighborhood Parks should be on municipal agencies. The County may consider working with local agencies in some form of assistance, but development of Neighborhood Parks should not be a priority for the County.

Community Parks

County agencies usually focus their resources on

large parks like Community, District or Regional Parks. There are currently three parks functioning as Community Parks (Bailey-Middlesex Community Park, W.B. Ennis Memorial Park and Spring Hope Community Park) in the county. In addition to these existing parks, the County is currently working with the Town of Castalia on a fourth Community Park. Community Parks play an important role in providing park and recreation opportunities to county residents. The development and operation of these parks have been greatly facilitated by the County over the past 10 years and are a testament to the value of the County's Parks and Recreation Department.



W.B Ennis Memorial Park

Based on a park land/population ratio of 4 acres per 1,000 population, citizens of Nash County have a current need for approximately 83 acres of Community Park land. Assuming a Community Park should be 50-75 acres, this indicates a current need for an additional new Community Park. Assessing the service areas of the existing Community Parks and from input gathered at the public workshops and stakeholder meetings, it is apparent that a Community Park is needed in the Coopers area of the county. A park in this area will meet park needs of residents from Coopers, West Mount and Macedonia.

In addition to the development of a new park in the Coopers area, several of the existing Community Parks need improvements. See Section Four for more detailed assessment of existing park needs.

District Parks

The 2004 County Master Plan recommended the development of a District Park with water access to the Tar River Reservoir. There remains a need for a county wide park that could provide access to this valuable water resource. With the high land cost of property in this area of the county, it may not be possible to acquire a large District Park with water access, but even a small park could provide valuable water based recreational opportunities.

Utilizing a standard of development of one acre per 1,000 people for District Parks, there is a need for 49 acres of District Parks for the county.

While 50 acres is a relatively small District Park, a 50 acre park with access to the Tar River Reservoir would be a valuable public facility for all county residents.

Regional Parks

Nash County is very fortunate to have an outstanding State Park within easy driving distance. Medoc Mountain State Park is a valuable nature and recreational resource just over the county line in Halifax County. This park meets the needs of a Regional Park for the County.

FACILITY NEEDS FOR NASH COUNTY

The Level of Service (LOS) for recreational facilities (i.e. ballfields, courts, picnic shelters, etc.) proposed for county residents were developed from a review of LOS used by other rural counties similar to Nash County, and from input gathered during the public input process. The LOS, identified in Table 3A-Facilities, and discussed in greater detail in Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations, are the minimum recreation facility LOS recommended for Nash County.

Based on these LOS, the number of public facilities needed in the park system through the planning period (2014 to 2024) are identified in Table 3B-Facilities, “Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment”

(page 3-8), and summarized on the following chart. A more detailed discussion of each of the facility needs is provided in Section Four: Proposals & Recommendations.

The “Existing Facilities” column indicates the number of existing recreation facilities currently available in the county. The “Facility Demand” column identifies the total number of facilities needed.

As an example of how the Needs Assessment is presented, consider playgrounds. Currently there are 11 existing playgrounds serving county residents. Based on the Standards for Facility Development that have been recommended for the county (one playground for every 3,500 people in the service population), there is a current demand for 14 playgrounds ($49,000 \div 3,500 = 14$). There is a need to construct 3 additional playgrounds (demand of 14 – 11 existing playgrounds) to meet the demand.

	Existing Facilities	Facility Demand	Facility Need
Adult Baseball Fields	1	3	2
Youth Baseball Fields	7	12	5
Softball Fields	2	7	5
Football/Soccer Fields	4	7	3
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	6	10	4
Tennis Courts	8	10	2
Volleyball Courts	2	3	1
Horseshoe Pits	2	3	1
Shuffleboard Courts	0	3	3
Playgrounds	11	14	3
Picnic Shelters	10	14	4
Hiking/Jogging Trails (miles)	4.85	19.6	14.75
Amphitheater	2	2	0
Community Garden	0	2	2
Swimming Pool	0	0	0
Rec. Center w/Gym	0	0	0
Rec. Center w/out Gym	0	0	0
Dog Park	0	2	2
Skate Park	0	0	0
Disc Golf	0	2	2
Bicycling Routes (miles)	0	49	49

Table 3A - Park Acreage
Nash County
Standards for Acreage by Park Classification
Comparison of Level of Service Used by Other NC Agencies

Park Types	North Hampton County***	Elizabeth/Pasquotank County	City of Fayetteville/Cumberland County	Iredell County	Robeson County	Surry County	Yadkin County	Old NRPA Standards	Nash County 2004 Plan	Nash County 2014 Proposed Standards
Mini Parks	.25-1 Acres/ Park (.25-.5 Acres/ 1,000)	1-3 Acres/Park (.25 Acres/ 1,000)	.5-3 Acres/Park (.5 Acres/ 1,000)	1-2 Acres/Park (.25-.5 Acres/ 1,000)	NA*	NA*	NA*	.25-1 Acres/ Park (.25-.5 Acres/ 1,000)	.5-1 Acres/Park (.25 Acres/ 1,000)	1-2 Acres/Park (.1 Acres/ 1,000)
Neighborhood Parks	5-10 Acres/ Park (1-2 Acres/ 1,000)	7-15 Acres/ Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	7-15 Acres/ Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	10-15 Acres/Park (1-2 Acres/ 1,000)	NA*	7-15 Acres/ Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	NA*	5-10 Acres/ Park (1-2 Acres/ 1,000)	5-10 Acres/Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	3-10 Acres/Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)
Community Parks	30-50 Acres/ Park (5-8 Acres/ 1,000)	40-100 Acres/ Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (1.25 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/Park (5-8 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	50-100 Acres/ Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (1.5 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (5-8 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/Park (2 Acres/ 1,000)	30-75 Acres/Park (4 Acres/ 1,000)
District Parks	+75 Acres/ Park (5-10 Acres/ 1,000)	+60-100 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	40-80 Acres/ Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	100-200 Acres/Park (5-10 Acres/ 1,000)	50-80 Acres/ Park (1.5 Acres/ 1,000)	10-150 Acres/ Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	100-150 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	+75 Acres/ Park (5-10 Acres/ 1,000)	±50 Acres/Park (2 Acres/ 1,000)	+75 Acres/Park (1.5 Acres/ 1,000)
Regional Parks	NA**	NA**	100-250 Acres/ Park (3.25 Acres/ 1,000)	NA**	150-100 Acres/Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	200-400 Acres/Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)	150-1,000 Acres/Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)	NA**	150-250 Acres/ Park (3 Acres/ 1,000)	±200 Acres/Park (3 Acres/ 1,000)

*Many county parks and recreation agencies do not provide Mini Parks or Neighborhood Parks.

**Regional Parks are typically provided by State/National Agencies.

***NRPA standards were used in the plan *North Hampton County Parks-2010*.

**Table 3A - Facilities
Nash County
Recreation Facilities Standards
Comparison of Level of Service Used by Other NC Agencies**

	NRPA Guidelines	State Standard	North Hampton County**	Elizabeth/Pasquotank County	City of Fayetteville/Cumberland County	Iredell County	Robeson County	Surry County	Yadkin County	2004 Standard Nash County	Nash County 2014 Standards
Fields											
Adult Baseball	1/20,000	1/15,000	1/20,000	1/10,000	1/20,000	1/20,000		1/10,000	1/30,000	1/12,000	1/15,000
Youth Baseball	N/A	N/A	N/A	1/5,000	1/6,500	1/6,000	1/8,000	1/25,000	1/12,000	1/8,000	1/4,000
Softball	N/A	N/A	N/A	1/5,000	1/7,500	1/5,000	1/8,000	1/5,000	1/20,000	1/5,000	1/7,500
Football	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/20,000	1/10,000	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/6,000	1/40,000	1/10,000	1/20,000*
Soccer	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/7,500	1/8,000	1/10,000	1/4,500	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/7,500
Courts											
Basketball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/3,000	1/20,000	1/5,000	1/5,000
Tennis	1/2,000	1/2,000	1/10,000	1/3,000	1/4,000	1/10,000	1/20,000	1/2,000	1/10,000	1/2,000	1/5,000
Volleyball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/15,000	1/20,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/15,000
Shuffleboard	1/2,000	N/A	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/15,000	1/20,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/20,000	1/5,000	1/15,000
Horseshoe	1/5,000	N/A	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/15,000	1/20,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/20,000	1/5,000	1/15,000
Outdoor Areas											
Picnic Shelter	1/2,000	N/A	1/2,000	1/3,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/4,000	1/5,000	1/3,000	1/3,500
Playground Activities	N/A	1/1,000	N/A	1/1,000	1/3,000	1/5,000	1/1,000	1/1,000	1/5,000	1/1,000	1/3,500
Trails											
Hiking/Fitness/Jogging	1/region	.4 mile/1,000	1/region	.4 mile/1,000	.4 mile/1,000		.4 mile/1,000	.4 mile/1,000	.3 mile/1,000	.4 mile/1,000	.4 miles/1,000
Specialized											
Rec. Center w/Gym	1/25,000	N/A	1/25,000		1/16,000		1/20,000	1/20,000	1/40,000	1/20,000	1/50,000
Rec. Center w/out Gym	1/10,000	N/A	1/10,000	1/20,000							1/50,000
Outdoor Pool	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/50,000		1/50,000	1/20,000	1/30,000	1/20,000	1/50,000
Golf Course	1/25,000	1/25,000	1/25,000	1/25,000	1/300,000					1/25,000	1/50,000
Bicycling/Urban	1 mile/2,000	1 mile/1,000	1 mile/2,000	1 mile/1,000	1 mile/1,000	1 mile/2,000	1 mile/1,000	1 mile/1,000	1 mile/1,000	1 mile/1,000	1 mile/1,000
Amphitheater	1/20,000		1/20,000								1/20,000
Disc Golf					1/50,000						1/20,000
Skateboard Park					1/100,000						1/50,000
Dog Park					1/50,000						1/20,000
Community Garden											1/20,000

*Football and soccer are combined to maximize flexibility.

** NRPA standards were used in the plan North Hampton County Parks-2010.

Table 3B - Park Acreage
Nash County
Park Sites and Acreage Needs Assessment

Park Types	2014 Existing Facilities	Standard for Development	Current Demand 49,000*	Current Need 49,000*
Mini Parks	-	1-2 Acres/Park (.1 Acres/ 1,000)	5 Parks 4.9 Acres	Provided by Municipal Agencies
Neighborhood Parks	3 Parks 7 Acres	3-10 Acres/Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	5 Parks 49 Acres	Provided by Municipal Agencies
Community Parks	4 Park 113 Acres	30-75 Acres/Park (4 Acres/ 1,000)	5 Park 196 Acres	1 New Community Park 83 Acres
District Parks	-	+75 Acres/Park (1.5 Acres/ 1,000)	1 Park 73.5 Acres	1 New District Park 73.5 Acres
Regional Parks	State Parks	±200 Acres/Park (3 Acres/ 1,000)	1 Park 147 Acres	Needs Met by State Parks

Existing Parks:

Neighborhood Parks: Middlesex Town Park, Strickland Park, Whitakers Town Park

Community Parks: Bailey-Middlesex Community Park, W.B. Ennis Memorial Park, Spring Hope Community Park, Castalia Community Park (planned, not constructed)

Notes:

Future Neighborhood Parks and Mini Parks would be developed by local agencies with potential assistance from the County.

*Service Population

Nash County Population	94,500
Less Rocky Mount/Nash County Population	40,000
Less Nashville Population	<u>5,500</u>
Nash County Service Population for Parks & Rec.	49,000

**Table 3B - Facilities
Nash County
Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment**

	2014 Standard	Existing Facilities	Current Demand (49,000*)	Current Need
Fields				
Adult Baseball	1/15,000	1	3	2
Youth Baseball	1/4,000	7	12	5
Softball	1/7,500	2	7	5
Football/Soccer	1/7,500	4	7	3
Courts				
Basketball (outdoor)	1/5,000	6	10	4
Tennis	1/5,000	8	10	2
Volleyball	1/15,000	2	3	1
Horseshoes	1/15,000	2	3	1
Shuffleboard	1/15,000	0	3	3
Outdoor Areas				
Playgrounds	1/3,500	11	14	3
Picnic Shelter	1/3,500	10	14	4
Trails				
Hiking/Fitness/Jogging	.4 miles/1,000	4.85 miles	19.6 miles	14.75 miles
Specialized				
Amphitheater	1/20,000	2	2	0
Community Garden	1/20,000	0	2	2
Swimming Pool	1/50,000	0	0	0
Recreation Center w/ Gym	1/50,000	0	0	0
Recreation Center w/o Gym	1/50,000	0	0	0
Dog Park	1/20,000	0	2	2
Skate Park	1/50,000	0	0	0
Disc Golf	1/20,000	0	2	2
Bicycling/Urban	1 mile/1,000	0	49	49

*Service Population

Nash County Population	94,500
Less Rocky Mount/Nash County Population	40,000
Less Nashville Population	<u>5,500</u>
Nash County Service Population for Parks & Rec.	49,000



Tar River Reservoir

Section Four

Proposals & Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The County has made great strides in developing a county park system over the past decade. While one of North Carolina's newest parks and recreation departments, county staff, with strong support from elected officials, has established an outstanding department, partnered with local communities to develop several very good Community Parks, and started some wonderful recreational programs.

Even with the many accomplishments over the past decade, there are several areas where improvements are needed. There are areas in the county that are currently not served with a Community Park, there is still a need for public water access at the Tar River Reservoir, and there are improvements to be made at several existing parks. Following the recommendations found in this Plan will allow the County to meet these unmet needs in the future. As in the past, the development of future parks will take a collaborative effort. The County is committed to assisting communities in the development of their parks and will continue to provide operational and maintenance support once parks are in place.

Identification of these recreational needs/opportunities come at a time when Nash County (like most communities in North Carolina) is attempting to grow out of the nation's worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Finding the resources to improve parks must be balanced with the reality of the current economic conditions; therefore, it will require a balanced Plan of Action that seeks partnerships with other community agencies.

Nash County is not alone in its mission to provide parks and recreational facilities to its citizens. There are a number of public and private agencies and organizations throughout the county that take part in that role.

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

The Cities of Rocky Mount and Nashville offer parks and recreation programs and facilities to their citizens. The parks and services provided by these departments serve almost half of the county's residents. In addition, these two departments provide recreational opportunities for some Nash County citizens living in smaller towns and unincorporated areas. It is important for all parks and recreation departments within the county to work closely together to minimize overlap of services and facilities.

The smaller municipalities in the county (Red Oak, Bailey, Middlesex, Spring Hope and Castalia) are significant partners with the county as it builds its park system. Each of these communities have stepped forward and made commitments in time, energy and money in the development of the parks that serve county residents. Through active partnership agreements, each of these municipalities have partnered with Nash County to develop parks.

Another major player with the mission of improving community health and quality of life is Nash General Hospital. The County should look for opportunities to partner with the hospital in the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

To determine specific park and recreation recommendations for the County, it is essential to clearly understand how the County will interface with the other recreational programs in the community. This cooperative effort will eliminate duplication of facilities and services. The proposals in this Master Plan

are based on what each recreational provider is anticipated to offer through the ten year planning period (2014-2024).

State of North Carolina

The State of North Carolina offers several State Parks within relatively easy driving distance of Nash County residents. The closest of these State Parks is Medoc Mountain State Park in Halifax County. It is anticipated that the State of North Carolina will continue to maintain and operate all State Parks within the region. The County, along with other nearby government agencies, should express their interest to see these parks enhanced to their utmost potential. This may include the expansion of facilities and recreational opportunities. The State should continue to offer a variety of recreational facilities and programs on a regional basis. In addition, the State should be the provider of regional State Parks that include opportunities for camping, fishing, biking, and special facilities of regional and statewide interest.

Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools Value of Joint Use Agreements – Parks, Recreation & Schools

The Parks and Recreation Department has a tradition of collaborating with other agencies and organizations in the delivery of quality leisure experiences and the development and management of parks and recreation areas and facilities. Currently Coopers Elementary, Middlesex Elementary, and Spring Hope Elementary Schools are being used for non-school recreational activities. The facilities at these schools provide an important role in the County's parks and recreation programs.

These cooperative efforts should be encouraged and expanded through joint use agreements.



The justification for the creation of joint use agreements is based on the premise that the majority of costs for developing and operating schools and rec-

recreation facilities come from the same source, local taxpayers. The development of duplicate facilities by those entities could constitute a waste of public funds. A shortage of affordable land and rapidly increasing construction costs are reasons enough for encouraging the efficient use of land and tax revenue. Combining resources allows for greater potential in the development of school and recreation facilities that neither entity is likely to afford if pursued independently. Other potential advantages of joint development and management include:

- The development of centralized public facilities usually requires less land than would be required if the schools and the parks department were to develop separate facilities. The creation of a Capital Facilities Review Committee for Parks and Recreation would be a very positive step in helping to assure the coordination and cost-effectiveness of any new facilities.
- Centralized locations for county services (including schools and parks) allows for the convenience of all citizens, particularly parents, by facilitating their children’s participation in various education and recreation pursuits.
- Centralized school/park developments can eliminate the duplication of maintenance functions and result in overall cost savings.
- Many of the outdoor areas and facilities needed for schools are also necessary for park and recreation services. Partnering in the development and management of facilities minimizes the duplication of land acquisition and development needs and represents an efficient use of public resources.
- Joint developments are eligible for grants from the North Carolina Park and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF).
- School/Park partnerships encourage the development of positive after-school and weekend enrichment activities focused on the development of the “whole child”. Seeking opportunities for collaboration on after school programs should be a priority for both the County and the school board.
- Park systems usually have the resources for developing and maintaining higher quality sports fields than can be found in most school systems.

Joint use agreements between local park and recreation agencies and school systems are very prevalent across the country. Examples of school/park and recreation joint use agreements in North Carolina can be found in Fayetteville/Cumberland County, High Point, and Greenville.

Nash General Hospital

Nash County has an outstanding medical facility in Nash General Hospital. This facility provides residents of the county and the surrounding area with outstanding health care. Recent studies on obesity and healthy lifestyles have made it apparent that a community’s health is linked to regular physical activity. Many of these activities are offered by the County’s Parks and Recreation Department.



Nash General Hospital

The Hospital and the Parks and Recreation Department should continue to explore opportunities to work together to assist citizens in achieving a more active lifestyle.

NASH COUNTY PROPOSALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The County, working collaboratively with local municipalities and the school system, currently affords its citizens a variety of recreation opportuni-

ties at over a dozen parks and schools. These facilities provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation.

Most of the parks utilized by the County are well designed and maintained, and are in relatively good condition. Several of the parks are older facilities and could be significantly improved (both in appearance and function) by redesign and/or renovation.

The network of parks currently utilized by the county provides a solid foundation of recreation facilities, however, there are a number of areas where expansion and improvements are needed.

The Parks and Recreation Department must work with other agencies in the community to provide the park land and facilities that will be required. This collaborative effort should include working with the school board and municipal departments to minimize duplication of facilities by developing and maintaining joint use agreements wherever possible.

Through the planning and public involvement process, the standards established in the 2004 Parks and Recreation Master Plan have been updated to reflect current community demand. These standards were defined in Section Three: Standards and Needs Assessment and identified in Table 3A- Park Acreage and Table 3A- Facilities.

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

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

We begin with a overview of the different park types found in the county, and how these parks will be developed in the future.

Regional Parks

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



Medoc Mountain State Park, located just north of Nash County in Halifax County, provides county residents with 2,300 acres of open space and natural features. Park activities include camping, canoeing, trails, fishing and picnicking. This wonderful park, with its variety of outdoor recreation activities, provides a Regional Park for Nash County residents.

District Park

District Parks are another large park type often provided by county agencies or larger municipalities. These parks are typically a minimum of 75 acres, and provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities. The development of this type facility often falls to the County agencies. District Parks are often developed around unique natural or man-made features.

One of the recommendations from the 2004 County Master Plan was the development of a District Park at the Tar River Reservoir. This reservoir, which stretches over 10 miles through the county and covers over 1,800 acres at high-water elevation, is a valuable resource for water supply, the natural environment and for recreation activities.

While it is believed the development of a District Park on the Tar River Reservoir is an important goal for future development, the cost of land with water access may limit the size of any future park. With this concern in mind, the recommendation of this Master Plan is for the County to consider a smaller property acquisition for this District Park.

Acquisition of 50-75 acres (as opposed to 120 acres as recommended in the 2004 Plan) would allow valuable county access to the reservoir while reducing the project cost.



Community Parks

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

Nash County has been very successful working with local municipalities throughout the county to develop a network of Community Parks. Currently there are three Community Parks (Ennis, Baily-Middlesex, and Spring Hope) serving county residents. In addition to these three existing parks, a fourth Community Park is underway in Castalia.

Since the Master Plan process conducted in 2004, there has been strong support for an additional Community Park in the central part of the county in the Coopers area. Community leaders in the Coopers area have been working for years to promote the

concept of a Community Park in this area and raise money toward development. This community need was further voiced when over 75 citizens attended the first public workshop at Coopers Elementary School. During the public workshop there was strong support for the development of a Community Park with a strong interest on youth athletics; especially baseball. It was suggested that the development of athletic facilities would not only serve the community, but could have economic impact through attracting athletic events to the area.

Based on the input received, this report recommends the development of a Community Park in the Coopers community that will serve the citizens of Coopers, West Mount and Macedonia.

There is much community support in the area for a Community Park. The Coopers Community Development Corporation (a 501-CC organization) has been actively engaged in the community for many years raising funds, searching for property, and exploring opportunities for park development.

The County should work with the citizens of this area to explore options for land acquisition and park development. As with other similar Community Parks, PARTF funding will likely be an important funding source.

Once a park is developed, the County should provide operational and maintenance support.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks play an important role in providing both active and passive recreation in most municipal park systems, but are typically not a priority in county park systems. These parks, usually in the 5-10 acre range, are large enough to include both active and passive recreation opportunities. Typically, county park systems do not focus on development of Neighborhood Parks. Instead, Neighborhood Parks are typically constructed by municipal agencies.

Based on a very conservative Level of Service (LOS) for Neighborhood Park development (1 acre/1,000 population), there is a need for two or three new

Neighborhood Parks. These smaller parks should be built in the county's smaller towns and crossroad communities. Development of these smaller parks would be the responsibility of the municipality or township, but the County should be supportive of any effort to develop these smaller parks.

Mini Parks

Mini Parks are the smallest of the park types. These parks typically are less than an acre and provide a limited range of activities (playground, picnic shelter, benches, etc.). Mini Parks, like Neighborhood Parks, provide relatively limited recreation facilities, but are located in close proximity to the service population they serve. County agencies typically do not develop Mini Parks.

Even utilizing a very conservative LOS for development (.1 acre/1,000 population), there is a need for several Mini Parks. As with Neighborhood Parks, development of Mini Parks would become the responsibility of the municipalities or townships, but the County could be supportive of any efforts to develop these smaller parks.

Greenways/Trails

The most popular outdoor recreation activity in the nation is walking. This popularity was reflected in the survey that was conducted as part of this planning study and in comments made during the public workshops. Most larger parks should contain a walking trail. In the future the County may consider the development of a greenway trail system. Greenway trails are typically off-road trails that meander through neighborhoods and natural areas providing transportation corridors and recreational opportunities for walkers, joggers, roller bladers, and cyclists. The trail surface can either be natural or paved. Paved trails are normally eight to ten feet in width. Natural surface trail widths can vary based on conditions.

In addition to providing environmental protection and recreation opportunities, Greenways can produce economic development. The North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation recently conducted a

study on a bicycle trail constructed along the northern Outer Banks region. This study determined that a \$6.7 million investment in off-road bike paths and shoulder improvements produced an estimated \$60 million annually in economic benefit. In addition, the study found that:

- Bicycle facilities in the area are an important factor to many tourists visiting the region.
- Investments in the bicycle facilities improved the safety of the area's transportation system.
- Bicycle activities include the benefits of health, fitness, quality of life, and the environment.



Greenways also offer a valuable alternative to automotive transportation. A Greenway trail often provides a linkage between communities, schools, churches, businesses, and parks.

Currently the County does not have any greenway trails, but the Tar River offers great opportunities for trail development. The County should explore working with other organizations in the area to develop trails along the county's water resources.

Bikeways

The need for bikeable roads and the development of Greenways for biking was mentioned in some of the interviews and in the public workshops. With the focus on healthy lifestyles, the environment, and alternative transportation, there is a great need to develop and implement a bike plan.

The County should encourage the State to include

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

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

Through careful planning, bike routes that will connect all of the county's towns and points of interest will provide both a tourist attraction and a valuable resource for active recreation for county residents.

Water Access and Blueways

Nash County is blessed with an abundance of water resources. The Tar River, Fishing Creek, Little Fishing Creek and the area's lake (Tar River Reservoir) provide a wide range of fishing, kayaking, boating and swimming opportunities. These water resources provide recreational opportunities for economic impact through tourism.

The value of these water resources have been recognized by many citizens and a number of organizations are at work to preserve these valuable resources and enhance their appreciation and use.

RENOVATION & EXPANSION OF EXISTING PARKS

While the focus of the previous recommendations has been on the acquisition and development of new parks, there is also a need to improve and expand facilities at many of the existing parks in the county. As part of the ongoing planning and budgeting process, the County and local municipality agencies annually establish a list of capital improvement projects. This list of capital improvement needs is then used by the various elected officials to establish yearly capital improvement budgets.

Parks and facilities that warrant improvements include:

- W.B. Ennis Memorial Park: There may be an opportunity to expand this park to include park use of the adjacent property previously used as a landfill. This expansion would allow trails and passive recreation opportunities.
- Expansion/improvements for ADA access including the possibility of developing a Miracle Field for special needs youth.
- Spring Hope Park: Improvements are needed to restrooms, dugouts, and ballfield fencing. Once improvements are made, the County should work out a maintenance agreement for this park.
- Bailey-Middlesex Park: The initial phase of park development was an important step in meeting recreational needs in this area of the county. Development of future phases will meet many additional needs.

FACILITY PROPOSALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This report recommends the construction of a Community Park and a District Park, as well as expansion of existing parks. The improvements that will be made as part of these renovations and expansions will add many new facilities to the parks inventory. The list of facility needs established in Section Three and described in greater detail on the following pages should be considered as plans are developed for new parks and expansion of existing facilities.

Adult Baseball

Over the past five to ten years, the popularity of adult baseball has waned, both locally and across the nation. The 2004 Master Plan recommended a standard of one field per 12,000 people for the development of adult baseball fields. Based on this trend away from adult baseball, this Master Plan update recommends that Level of Service be reduced to 1 field per 15,000. Utilizing this standard of field development, there is a need for two additional adult baseball fields in the county.

Youth Baseball

The 2004 Master Plan established an extremely conservative criteria for the development of youth baseball fields (one field per 8,000). Based on the strong support for youth baseball expressed in the public workshops, this standard has been increased to one field for every 4,000 people within the service population. Utilizing this standard for development results in the need for five youth baseball fields.



Softball

Men's adult softball has traditionally been a popular sport in North Carolina. NRPA and NCDENR standards (one field per 5,000 people) reflect that popularity. While the sport is still popular in some areas, there has been a shift in demand of men's adult softball in many communities. The standard used in the 2004 Master Plan reflected NRPA standards, and does not reflect local demand. The 2004 standard has been changed to 1 field/7,500. Based on this new standard, there is still a need for five additional softball fields.

It should also be noted that changes in demand have now placed additional emphasis on women's softball. In the future, softball fields should be designed to accommodate this new area of play, or some of the existing fields should be retrofitted to allow for women's play.

Football/Soccer

Football and soccer are often played on the same field. To maximize flexibility we consider the use of these fields together. Football's popularity as a

community based youth sport has been reduced by the emergence of soccer and (most recently) lacrosse. With that said, most communities still have some field use for football.

Soccer is one of the fastest growing sports in America. This Master Plan reflects this demand by establishing a standard of one field for every 7,500 people within the service population. Utilizing this standard for development, there is a need three soccer/football fields in the future. These fields could be constructed at the future Community Park in the Coopers community or in improvements to existing parks.

The County may consider lighting its soccer fields, which can effectively double their use. Likewise, the development of synthetic turf fields could greatly increase playing time on existing fields and reduce the number of fields needed.

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





Basketball (Outdoor)

Basketball remains an extremely popular sport in the United States. Played by a variety of ages, and increasingly by females, this sport can be played either indoors or out. Currently the County provides six outdoor courts at parks or school facilities, but does not provide an indoor court. Based on a standard of development of one basketball court per 5,000 people, the County has a need for four additional outdoor courts.

Tennis

Tennis has not experienced the same growth and interest as some of the nation's newer sports (soccer, lacrosse, etc.), but as the baby boomers move into their 50s and retirement, the demand for sports that keep people active without physical contact will likely increase.

Utilizing a standard of facility development of one court per 5,000 people less than national and state standards, there is still a need for two new courts.

Volleyball

There are currently two outdoor volleyball courts in the county. Courts could be constructed in the future if demand is expressed. Volleyball courts are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.

Shuffleboard

There has been no expressed demand for outdoor shuffleboard courts from citizens; therefore, there

are no existing courts in existing parks. This activity provides a recreational outlet and opportunities for social interaction, particularly for older citizens.

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



Horseshoes

There are two horseshoe pits in the park system. This activity provides a recreation outlet for social interaction, particularly for older citizens. Horseshoe pits could easily be added if there is demand for this activity in the future. Like shuffleboard courts, horseshoe pits are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.

Picnic Shelters

Picnicking was one of the most popular recreational activities listed by respondents in the County's survey. There are currently ten shelters in existing parks. Based on a standard of one shelter per 3,500 people, there is a need for four additional shelters.

Playgrounds

There are eleven public playgrounds throughout the rural area of the county. As new parks are developed, planners should look for locations for additional playgrounds. Larger parks may warrant more than one playground.



Safety inspections and ADA accessibility audits should be conducted at all existing playgrounds.

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

Pedestrian Trails

Walking is the number one outdoor recreational activity in the United States. Walking trail use scored high in the public survey.

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

Biking Trails

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

Amphitheaters and Outdoor Performing Areas

Currently the County has two planned amphitheaters (Bailey-Middlesex and Castalia Parks). These facilities will provide venues for concerts and special events. With the construction of these two amphitheaters, there should not be a need for additional performance areas.

SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

Community Centers & Gymnasiums

Currently the County does not offer its citizens a community center with gymnasium. Youth basketball programs are conducted at the schools. The lack of adequate indoor space eliminates the opportunity for fitness center, volleyball, free play, etc.

Based on the responses from both the online survey and the public workshops, there is some community support for an indoor recreation center with gymnasium. Unfortunately the cost of constructing and (more importantly) operating an indoor recreation center is extremely high. At some point in the future, the County may move to providing a higher level of indoor recreation opportunities, but at this time an indoor facility is not a priority.



Swimming Pools and Spraygrounds

In the past, NRPA and NCDENR provided a standard for pool development of one pool for every 20,000 people. This standard was based on the concept of multi neighborhood or community pools. Today, with the high cost of operation and construction of swimming pools, very few agencies develop neighborhood/community pools to that old standard.

Instead agencies typically provide more centralized facilities where one pool may serve a greater population or consider development of a sprayground as an alternative.



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

TRENDS IN PARK & RECREATION FACILITIES

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

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

Skateboard Parks and Extreme Sports

Skateboarding has been popular for several decades. In the past decade, many communities have recognized its popularity and have tried to provide a safe and vandal resistant setting for this creative sport. There was some interest in a Skateboard Park expressed in both the survey and public workshops, but this activity ranked relatively low in priority. While not an immediate priority, a Skateboard Park may be considered as a future amenity.

Disc Golf

The popularity of disc golf continues to grow. The County does not currently have a disc golf course. Disc golf courses are inexpensive and have minimal impact on the land. The County should consider development of a disc golf court in one of its existing larger parks.



Off-leash Dog Areas

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

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

The County should consider development of a Dog Park in one of its parks.

Community Gardens

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

With the many benefits provided by community gardens, many parks and recreation agencies are implementing community garden programs. The County should consider developing a community garden in one of its parks.





W.B. Ennis Memorial Park at Red Oak

Section Five

Action Plan Implementation

INTRODUCTION

This Comprehensive Master Plan is based upon an assessment of the county's character and growth, an analysis of the existing parks currently serving county residents, the development of recreation standards, the identification of user needs, and the creation of proposals and recommendations to meet those needs. The plan is designed to provide recommendations that will guide the County's Parks and Recreation Department as it works with local partners to enhance their parks and recreation facilities.

Instrumental to the implementation of the Master Plan is the identification of adequate funding for facility development and improvements. Finding adequate funding is particularly difficult in this time of lower tax base and budget concerns. Limited budgets place even greater importance on careful planning to meet projected needs. In addition to capital cost, the Master Plan must also consider operational and management issues. This section reviews some of these issues.

While much of the focus of previous sections has been on capital needs and facility improvements. Physical improvements are only part of the needs for the Department. As staff plans for the future, they should also consider a number of operational and management issues that will position them to meet community needs. This section reviews some of those issues.

This section will look at a Capital Improvements Plan for recommendations found in Section Four and provide a strategy for raising funds to construct the proposed improvements and new facilities. As in the past, most of the capital improvement funding will come from the local communities. The County will provide assistance to the local agencies in finding and securing funding sources.

Implementing the recommendations made in this Master Plan will result in meeting the future needs for parks and recreation services, as well as preserving open space in the area. The County, as well as the local agencies, should establish annual budgets for projected capital improvements, staffing, operations and maintenance costs that not only meet current needs, but also allow acquisition and development for future needs. This Action Plan is designed to give all the partners a realistic approach to financing the proposals and recommendations of this Master Plan.

REVENUE PLAN

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



Key Funding/Revenue Sources

Improvements to parks and recreation facilities has strong public support, but even so, innovative measures will be required to meet some of the needs identified in this plan. The proposed additional facilities and expanded operations will require dollars from a variety of sources. The following funding sources are provided to help the County and local partners evaluate funding options.

General Tax Revenues (operational & capital)

General tax revenues traditionally provide the principle source of funds for general operations and maintenance of municipal and county recreation and parks systems. Recreation, as a public service, is scheduled along with health, public safety, schools, etc. in annual budgets established by the governing authority. Assessed valuation of real and personal property provides the framework for this major portion of the tax base. This tax base is then used to fund the majority of municipal services. If the County and its local partners wish to offer a park and recreation system that provides quality of life and healthy lifestyle opportunities for county residents, the current level of funding for parks and recreation must be maintained or increased.

Park Foundation (operational & capital)

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

There is support from a core of long time park and recreation community boosters throughout the county, but there is no organized park foundation. Development of a citizen group to support, promote and fund park programs and facilities would be an excellent way to mobilize those in the community who would like to see improved parks.

General Foundations (operational & capital)

Another source of revenue is the direct contribution of money from state and national General Foundations. Foundation funds should be sought for both development and construction of facilities as well as providing programs. They should include general-purpose foundations that have relatively few restrictions, special program foundations for specific activities, and corporate foundations with local connections. The Trust for Public Land and NC Rails-Trail have been instrumental in providing financial and technical assistance for open space conservation and development of greenways in North Carolina.

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

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

General Obligation Bonds (capital)

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

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

While many communities throughout North Carolina utilize this funding source, it is unlikely Nash County will utilize this funding option.

Revenue Bonds (capital)

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

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

Limited Option or Special Use Tax (capital)

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

Federal and State Assistance (capital)

Federal funding sources are available to assist financing capital improvement recommendations found in this plan. One of the oldest park funding sources has been available from the U.S. Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Several of the existing parks in Nash County have been funded with monies from this funding source. Unfortunately, funding through this program has been sporadic over the past few years. Other potential federal funding sources are the National Foundation of Arts and Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

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

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

The County has used funding from both PARTF and LWCF grants for park development. In the future, the County should consider applying for additional funds through this program on a regular basis.

Additionally, the State can fund projects such as bikeways and pedestrian walks through the federally funded SAFTEA [formerly known as the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)]. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) administers the funds and the local government agency can use these funds for developing portions of any proposed greenway system. Local communities can also apply for assistance with

pedestrian, bikeway, and greenway projects by applying for "NCDOT Enhancement Funds."

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

Unfortunately, since the economic downturn that started in 2008, all of these funding sources have been greatly reduced.



User Fees (operational)

User fees are often charged by park and recreation departments to offset operational cost, and (occasionally) provide funding for the construction of facilities. Every department must establish its philosophy with regard to cost recovery through the use of fees. The County has historically charged fees for some facilities and programs, but these fees have typically not been set to cover the total operational cost of the program and have never been used to finance construction of facilities.

Currently the County does receive some revenue from rentals and classes. While these user fees are an important part of the Department's budget, it must also be noted that the user fees do not cover the cost of their respective programs.

Ultimately the County may consider a change in user fees that will help offset more of the cost of some activities. Based on elected officials' direction, the revenue generated by increased fees could then be used to reduce the general fund and possibly increase capital improvement funding to help make park improvements and expansion.

Many of the facilities in the county are outdoors (playgrounds, open space, athletic facilities, etc.) and offer only limited opportunity for cost recovery. There may be some areas where greater cost recovery could be achieved. Examples may include higher rental fees for shelters, fields, etc. or for requiring permits for dog parks, disc golf, etc.

The Department will need to update its current revenue and pricing policy as part of an overall revenue plan based on the values and guiding funding principles of the area. The cost of additional facilities and operation of those facilities must be increasingly borne by the user through user fees.



Revenue Opportunities

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

- Sponsorships from local private businesses. Sponsorships typically come in the form of products, events, programs, cause-related, and in-kind. Sponsorships can also take the form of naming rights for a facility or program. The County is currently using this revenue tool on

some athletic fields. Sponsorship or naming agreements should include very specific details related to sponsorship cost, duration, use of promotional materials, etc.

- Grant applications from local foundations, state and federal agencies, or individuals are typically created by staff. Most grants take time to prepare and require coordination effort with other agencies or departments from within the community to create a quality submittal. Grants also require extensive tracking of expenditures and outcomes for attaining future funding.
- Partnerships are a relatively new method of sharing funding resources to provide services. These partnerships can be formed with a wide variety of other public or private agencies. Many times the partners are two or more government agencies. Through these partnerships, the County receives direct benefit in either facility use, programming assistance, or volunteer man hours. All of these benefits add value to the department and help offset cost; thus creating earned income for the department. This earned income requires both agencies to have common visions, values, and goals for the partnership to be successful. Examples of partnerships include:
 - Church facilities or recreation services.
 - Youth sports associations that help the Department provide the services to the community for the sports that they represent.
 - Trail sponsors that adopt sections of trails for maintenance and cleanup.
 - Adopt-a-park partners that help maintain park lands. These sponsors are typically in the form of neighborhood associations and businesses that are in proximity to parks.
 - School partnerships where both partners invest in the development of facilities and programs based on shared use of facilities and staff. This investment may be financial, or may include other means of support.
 - Special event partners that assist with the development of community-wide events.
 - Program partners who assist in providing services to the community.
 - Advertising and licensing in programs, facilities, and events sponsored by the Department. The County could leverage highly exposed

advertising space to businesses willing to pay a fee for the right to advertise. They are already using this method of revenue generation by selling naming rights to the athletic fields.

- Volunteer development programs can reduce staff costs. Volunteers can create advocacy and bring down the cost of programs and services.
- Privatizing the development of facilities or services is an opportunity that is used by communities when they are unable to control the cost of labor and are unable to find the needed capital to develop a recreational facility or a concession operation. This gives the government agency a management tool to create an asset or improve a service without tapping into their own resources. Facilities that are typically considered for privatization may include golf courses, marinas, camping and RV facilities, boat rentals, bike rentals, equipment rentals, and other forms of concessions.
- Marketing strategies are an important component in developing untapped revenue opportunities. Promotional activities improve awareness of the activities provided by the Department and assist in bringing more revenue to the system by filling programs and facilities.

METHODS FOR LAND ACQUISITION & DEDICATION

With several parks and access to approximately 120 acres of park land, Nash County along with its local partners, has built a very good park system in the past decade. With that said, there is need for land acquisition in the development of some of the facility needs listed in Section Four (District/Community Parks). As the County works with local partners to develop/expand parks, it should explore all options for land acquisition. Methods available for acquiring the land recommended in this Master Plan include the following:

Fee Simple Purchase

Outright purchase is perhaps the most widely used

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

Fee Simple Purchase with Lease-Back or Resale

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

Long-Term Option

A long-term option is frequently used when a property is considered to have potential future value though it is not desired or affordable to the Department at the time. Under the terms of a long-term option, the agency agrees with the landowner on a selling price for the property and a time period over which the agency has the right to exercise its option. The first benefit of this protective method is that the option may stabilize escalating land cost and establishes land use for the property. Secondly, the agency does not have to expend large sums of money until the land is purchased. Thirdly, the purchase price of the land is established. The disadvantage of this method is that a price must be paid for every right given by the property owner. In this case, the cost of land use stabilization and a price commitment comes in the form of the cost of securing the option.

First Right of Purchase

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

Land Trust

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

The Department does not have to go through the time and expense of setting up a land trust to utilize this vehicle for land donation or conservation. The Land Trust of North Carolina is an established land trust in the area. The County could partner with them to provide protection of valuable open space without creating a new entity.

Donations

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

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

also be used to match non-local grant funds.

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

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

Life Estate

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

Easement

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

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

Zoning/Subdivision Regulations

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

The County should review its current land development ordinances to determine if they are currently requiring developers to fund their share of park improvements.

PARK FACILITIES AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS

John L. Crompton, in his publication “Parks and Economic Development”, determined there are four economic development benefits that a community may derive from park and recreation services. These benefits include:

- **Attracting Tourists:** The features and programs that attract tourism to a community include parks, beaches, historic sites, museums, special events and festivals, and athletic tournaments. The majority of these features are provided by public agencies (national, state, local park agencies, etc.).
- **Enhancing Real Estate Values:** Research shows people will pay more to live close to natural park areas. These higher property values result in owners paying higher property taxes, which in turn offsets some of the cost for the development of parks and preservation of open space.
- **Attracting Business:** Quality of life issues influence where businesses locate. Parks, recreation, and open space are an important component of the quality of life equation. Good parks help cities attract and retain businesses.

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

In the past decade the County has placed a high value on parks and recreation programs and facilities that provide quality of life improvement. Development of this master plan is further evidence that the County recognizes the importance parks play in the quality of life.

Through investing in parks over the years, elected officials can ensure that Nash County provides the quality of life that helps attract new businesses, enhances real estate values, and provides an attractive option to the retirement community.

There are many more opportunities for attracting economic impact to Nash County through tourism.



Athletic tournaments attract tourism

Through investing in parks over the years, local officials can ensure that Nash County provides the quality of life that helps attract new businesses, enhances real estate values, and provides an attractive option to the retirement community.

There are many more opportunities for attracting economic impact to Nash County through tourism. John Crompton lists the following opportunities for tourist attractions:

Tournament Sports

- Softball
- Soccer
- Baseball
- Basketball

Arts

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

Heritage Places

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

Parks

- National
- State
- Regional
- Local
- Beaches
- Theme parks
- Recreation
- Events and festivals
- Aquatic and coastal areas
- Outdoor recreation (e.g., camping, fishing, hunting)

Arenas

- College sports
- Professional franchises
- Concerts and exhibitions

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

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to looking at future facility needs of the Department, this Master Plan must also address some of the operational issues that will face the Department in the coming decade. These issues relate to the manpower and organizational changes that will be required as the Department operates new parks/facilities. Likewise, these recommendations address some of the critical operational issues the Department needs to identify as it works to become not only a bigger department, but a better department.

Staff Needs

The County currently has a need for additional staff to operate and maintain its existing facilities. These needs include a parks/maintenance supervisor and a park manager for Bailey-Middlesex Park.

With the expansion of park facilities over the next decade, there will be a need for additional staff to develop, operate, and maintain these new facilities. The expansion of existing parks, a new Community Park and a new District Park will require new grounds crews, park supervisors, and administrative staff.

While the development of a true operation and maintenance program for these future facilities is beyond the scope of this master plan study, it is important that the County plan and budget for adequate staff positions for any new facilities that are constructed. Likewise, as these new facilities come on line, the County should actively seek the highest level of programming staff with strong educational experience in the various areas of park and recreation administration.

Operational Costs

As noted above, the development of new recreation facilities will require additional staff for the Department. These new staff positions will add to the annual operational budget in both staff and equipment costs. The expansion of recreational facilities will also add to the energy and utility cost of park and recreation facilities. The recommended facility improvements included in this plan will increase the

facilities the Department operates and maintains by 20-30%. Expansion of this magnitude will have implications to the operational budget. The Department’s management staff and elected officials must carefully consider the financial impact of each major capital improvement project as projects are considered. No capital improvement project should be undertaken without the commitment of support for adequate ongoing operational funding. Likewise, consideration should be given to the positive economic impacts that some facilities may have on the County’s economy, and if applicable, their potential for revenue generation.

Greener Operation

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



Promoting recycling is one initiative to reduce waste

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

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

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT COST

The Capital Improvement Cost for the acquisition, renovation, and development of parks that are recommended by this plan are provided so the County and its community partners will have a guide as they make plans for future capital improvements. All of the proposed costs are shown in current dollar values. The capital improvement costs include funds for land acquisition, site preparation, site utilities, and facility development as well as estimated planning and design fees.

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

Park Renovations	\$ 4,125,000
Land Acquisition	930,000
Park Development	2,750,000
<u>Facility Development</u>	<u>550,000</u>
Total Capital Improvement Budget	\$ 8,355,000

Table 5-1 “Capital Improvements Plan” shows the costs associated with the capital improvement program (ten-year planning period). The table reflects the proposals and recommendations as outlined in Section Four of this Master Plan.

MASTER PLAN FUNDING STRATEGY

Over the planning period (2014 - 2024), the County and its local partners will need to be creative in finding funding sources to fund park improvements. They will need to use a combination of revenue sources to accomplish the recommendations of the Master Plan. There are numerous combinations of funding strategies that can be explored and implemented. Upon careful analysis of past budget documents, current practices, available resources, and national trends, an example of a funding strategy is presented as one possible strategy.

General Funds

General Funds typically provide the foundation for funding park improvements. In order to meet the park needs identified in this report, the County, along with its municipal partners must include adequate funding for park operations and facility improvements. Through the collaborative efforts of both the County and its municipal partners, many of the park improvements listed in this document can be achieved.

Revenues and User Charges

A crucial strategy to accomplish the goals of this plan is to price services based on the value and benefits received by the participants beyond those of all taxpayers. Increasing the number of participants using the facilities and programs will increase revenue opportunities. A good time to price services to their value and benefits is after new facilities are constructed or when facilities have been renovated to enhance a participant's recreational experience. A proposed user charge revenue strategy designed to recoup a larger percentage of program cost should be considered. This will create more revenue and capacity opportunities for the program needs of the County.

Currently, revenues and user charges account for a relatively small percentage of the operating budget. The County should develop a fee structure that will allow greater net revenue to be realized. Assuming

the level of funding can increase, it could generate \$50,000 to \$75,000 annually, providing as much as a half million dollars in increased income over the next ten years that can be used for operating new facilities developed as recommended in this plan.

Partnerships and Gifts

The County should work to develop a park foundation to explore ways to raise sponsorships and gifts. This non-profit organization can engage private citizens and corporations to donate money and in-kind services for use by the Parks and Recreation Department. Through active involvement with a park foundation the Department may be able to raise \$20,000 - \$30,000 in funds annually. This could result in donations of as much as a quarter of a million over the ten year planning period. This level of funding would require the park foundation to become an active organization within the community.

Sponsorships and Naming Rights

Another excellent source of development capital is through project sponsorship/underwriting by corporations throughout the community. Quality facilities, properly marketed, provide an excellent venue for raising development funds. Naming rights for athletic fields, swimming facilities, playgrounds, etc., can be used to raise tens of thousands of dollars.

Grants

The County has been successful in finding and procuring funds from state and local grants. The County will need to renew those efforts to explore grants such as LWCF, PARTF, SAFTEA, clean water grants, etc. Active pursuit of this funding could provide several million dollars in funds for capital improvements over the next ten years.

Overview

Together, these funding options could be used to raise millions of dollars of development capital over the next decade. It may be unrealistic to assume the funding of ±\$8 million of park improvements in the next ten years, especially during these challenging economic times. Actively pursuing the options that are available should provide funding for many of the needs listed in this master plan. Through the contin-

ued use of this document, County staff and elected officials can identify and prioritize community needs and actively seek funds to meet those needs over the next ten (or more) years.

Table 5-1
COUNTY WIDE PARK IMPROVEMENTS
ORDER OF MAGNITUDE
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COST

Existing Parks Renovation/Improvements

Specific Renovations to Existing Parks	
Ennis Park/Landfill Expansion	\$500,000
Spring Hope Park (Restrooms, Dugouts, etc.)	\$250,000
Bailey-Middlesex Park (Phases 2-4)	\$3,000,000
Planning & Design (10%)	\$375,000
Renovation Total	\$4,125,000

Land Acquisition

Community Park/Coopers (30 acres @ \$6,000)	\$180,000
District Park/Tar River Reservoir (50 acres @ \$15,000)	\$750,000
Land Acquisition Total	\$930,000

Park Development

Coopers Community Park (Phase One)	\$1,500,000
Tar River Reservoir Park (Phase One)	\$1,000,000
Planning and Design (10%)	\$250,000
Park Development Total	\$2,750,000

Special Use Facility Development

Splash Pad	\$250,000
Miracle Field	\$250,000
Planning & Design (10%)	\$50,000
Facility Development Total	\$550,000

Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost	\$8,355,000
--	--------------------

The projects listed above will be funded collaboratively by the following agencies:
Nash County, Town of Red Oak, Town of Dortches, Town of Bailey, Town of Middlesex,
Town of Spring Hope, and Coopers Community Development Corporation.

NRMPS - HIGH SCHOOLS

- 1 - Nash Central High
- 2 - Northern Nash High
- 3 - Rocky Mount High
- 4 - Southern Nash High

NRMPS - MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- 1 - George R. Edwards Middle
- 2 - Nash Central Middle
- 3 - Joseph W. Parker Middle
- 4 - Red Oak Middle
- 5 - Rocky Mount Middle
- 6 - Southern Nash Middle

NRMPS - ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- 1 - Bailey Elementary
- 2 - Susie B. Baskerville Elementary
- 3 - Benvenue Elementary
- 4 - Cedar Grove Elementary
- 5 - Coopers Elementary
- 6 - Englewood Elementary
- 7 - Fairview Elementary School
- 8 - M.B. Hubbard Elementary
- 9 - D.S. Johnson Elementary
- 10 - Middlesex Elementary
- 11 - Nashville Elementary
- 12 - O.R. Pope Elementary
- 13 - Red Oak Elementary
- 14 - Spring Hope Elementary
- 15 - Swift Creek Elementary
- 16 - Williford Elementary
- 17 - Winstead Avenue Elementary

NRMPS NONTRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

- 1 - Tar River Academy
- 2 - NRM Early College High School
- 3 - J.C. Braswell Alternative School
- 4 - WL Greene Alternative School
- 5 - JC Braswell Elementary

Nash County Colleges

- 1 - Nash Community College
- 2 - NC Wesleyan College

NASH CO. PRIVATE SCHOOLS

- 1 - 1st United Methodist
- 2 - Cornerstone Christian Academy
- 3 - Englewood Baptist Day School
- 4 - Faith Christian School
- 5 - Falls Road Baptist Church School
- 6 - Grace Christian School
- 7 - Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cath. School
- 8 - Ricky Mount Academy

NASH CO. SENIOR CENTERS

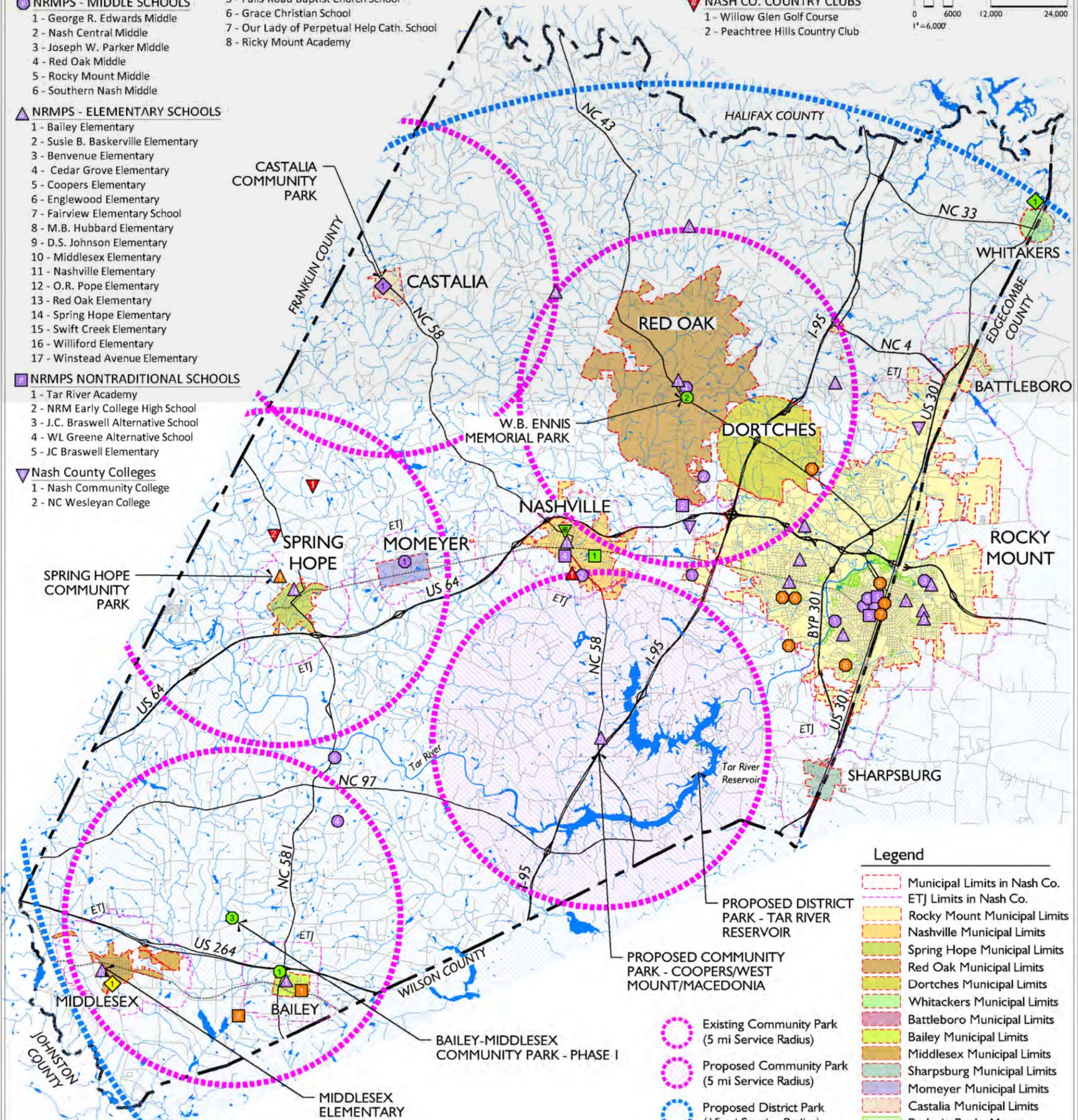
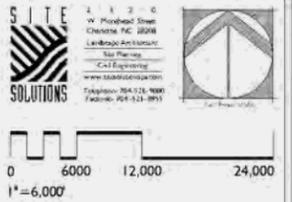
- Nash Co. Senior Center

NASH CO. PARKS

- 1 - Strickland Park
- 2 - W.B. Ennis Memorial Park
- 3 - Bailey-Middlesex Community Park

NASH CO. COUNTRY CLUBS

- 1 - Willow Glen Golf Course
- 2 - Peachtree Hills Country Club



Legend

- Municipal Limits in Nash Co.
- ETJ Limits in Nash Co.
- Rocky Mount Municipal Limits
- Nashville Municipal Limits
- Spring Hope Municipal Limits
- Red Oak Municipal Limits
- Dortches Municipal Limits
- Whitakers Municipal Limits
- Battleboro Municipal Limits
- Bailey Municipal Limits
- Middlesex Municipal Limits
- Sharpsburg Municipal Limits
- Momeyer Municipal Limits
- Castalia Municipal Limits
- Parks in Rocky Mount

- Existing Community Park (5 mi Service Radius)
- Proposed Community Park (5 mi Service Radius)
- Proposed District Park (15 mi Service Radius)

- NASHVILLE PARKS**
 - 1 - Nashville-Glover Park
- NASHVILLE COMMUNITY CENTERS**
 - 1 - Boys & Girls Club of Nashville
- SPRING HOPE PARKS**
 - 1 - Spring Hope Community Park
- WHITAKERS PARKS**
 - 1 - Whitakers Town Park
- BAILEY PARKS**
 - 1 - Bailey UMC Park
 - 2 - Camp Charles Scout Camp
- MIDDLESEX PARKS**
 - 1 - Middlesex Town Park
- MOMEYER PARKS**
 - 1 - Momeyer Ruritan Club Park

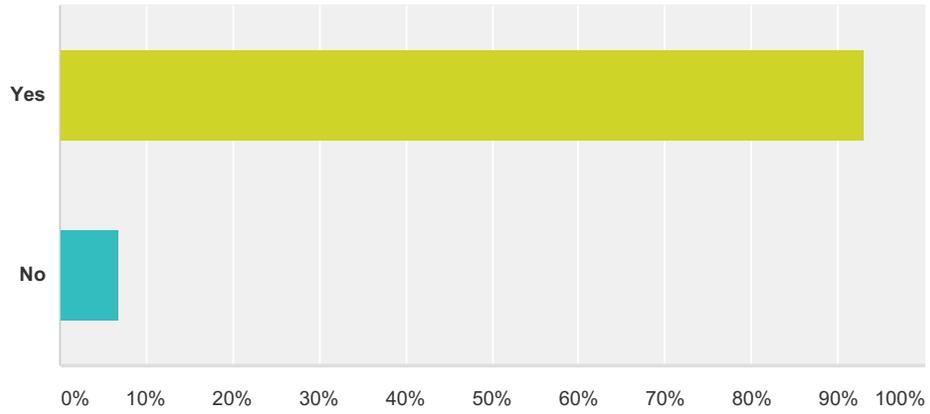
- CASTALIA PARKS**
 - 1 - Castalia Community Park

Nash County
 Parks and Recreation Department
Nash County
 Parks & Recreation
 Master Plan
 November 3, 2014

Appendices

Q1 Are you a resident of Nash County?

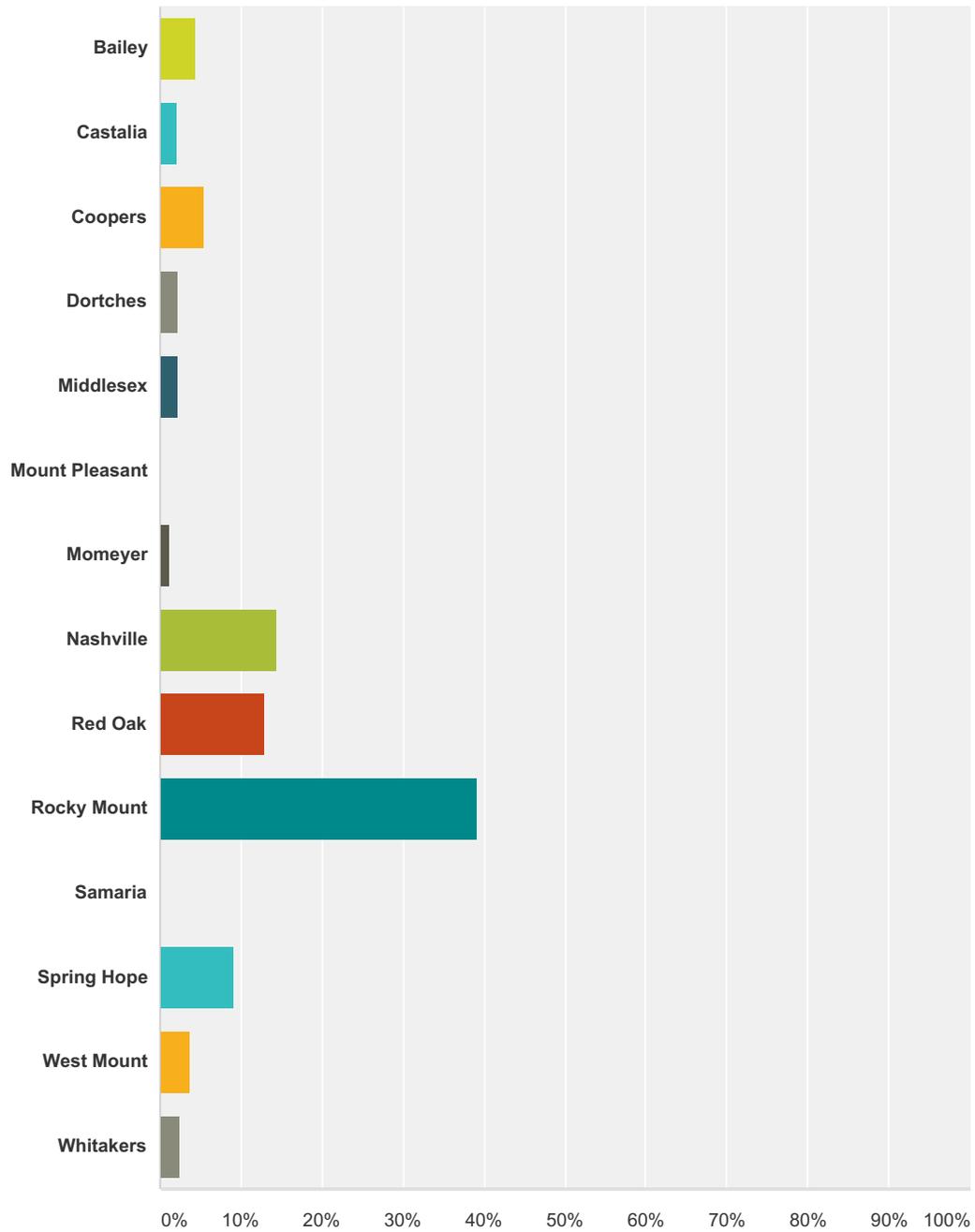
Answered: 484 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	93.18%	451
No	6.82%	33
Total		484

Q2 What area of the County do you live in?

Answered: 484 Skipped: 0

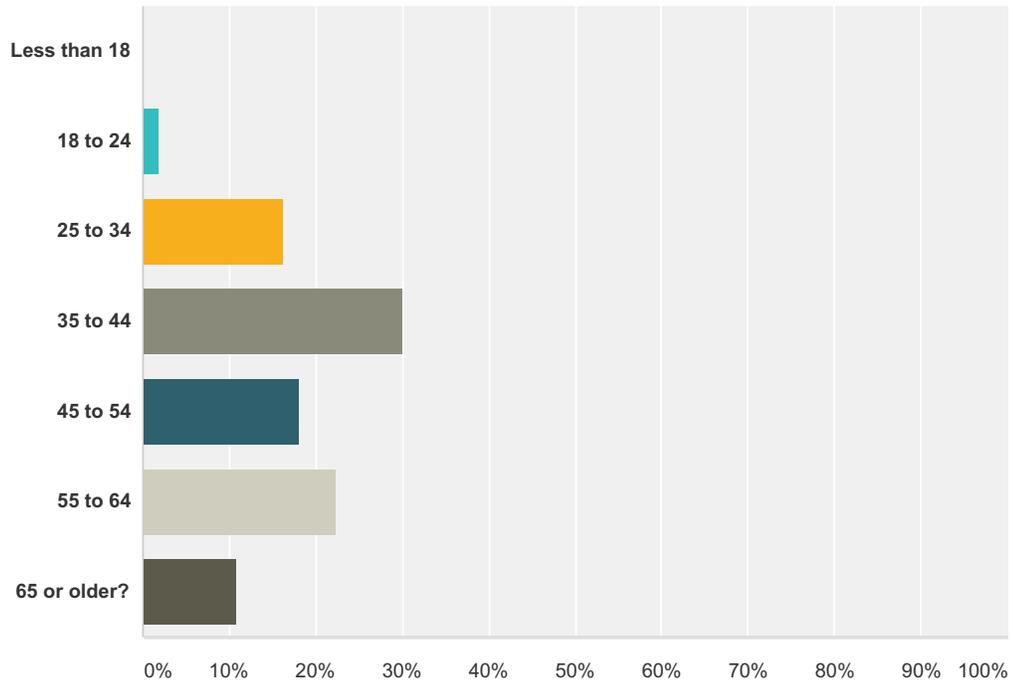


Answer Choices	Responses
Bailey	4.34% 21
Castalia	2.07% 10
Coopers	5.37% 26
Dortches	2.27% 11

Middlesex	2.27%	11
Mount Pleasant	0.21%	1
Momeyer	1.24%	6
Nashville	14.46%	70
Red Oak	13.02%	63
Rocky Mount	39.26%	190
Samaria	0.21%	1
Spring Hope	9.09%	44
West Mount	3.72%	18
Whitakers	2.48%	12
Total		484

Q3 To make sure we receive input from people of all age groups, is your age ...

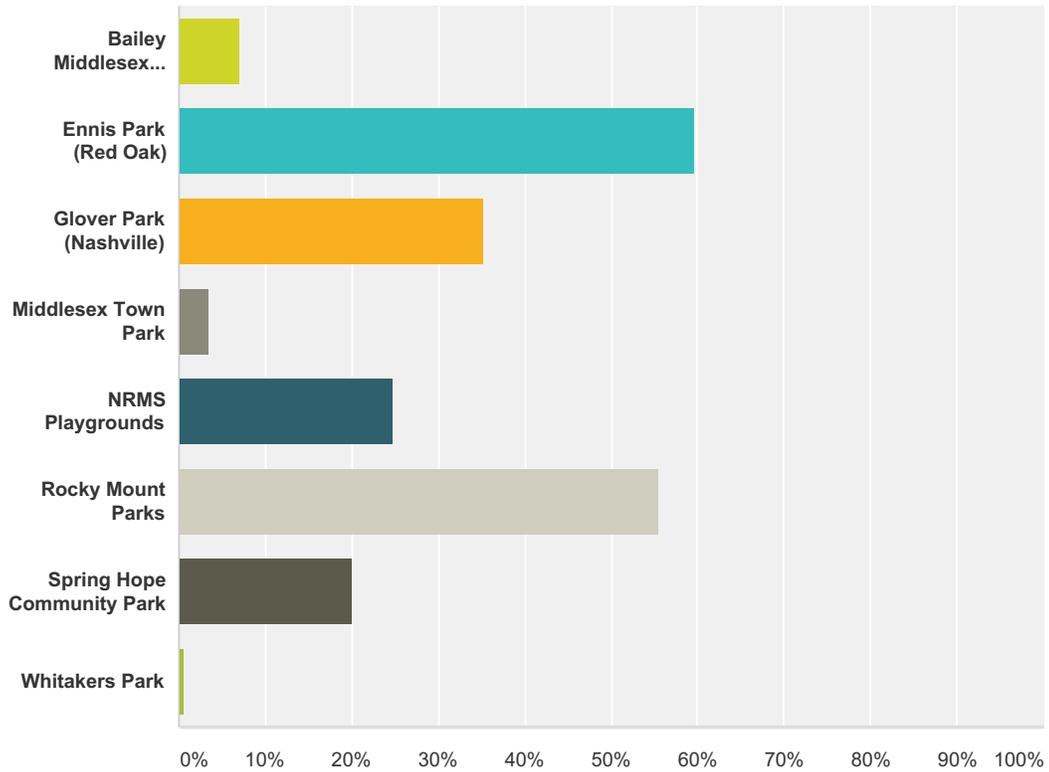
Answered: 484 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 18	0.21% 1
18 to 24	1.86% 9
25 to 34	16.32% 79
35 to 44	30.17% 146
45 to 54	18.18% 88
55 to 64	22.31% 108
65 or older?	10.95% 53
Total	484

Q4 Have you or any members of your family visited the following parks or recreation centers in the past year? Check all that you have visited.

Answered: 426 Skipped: 58



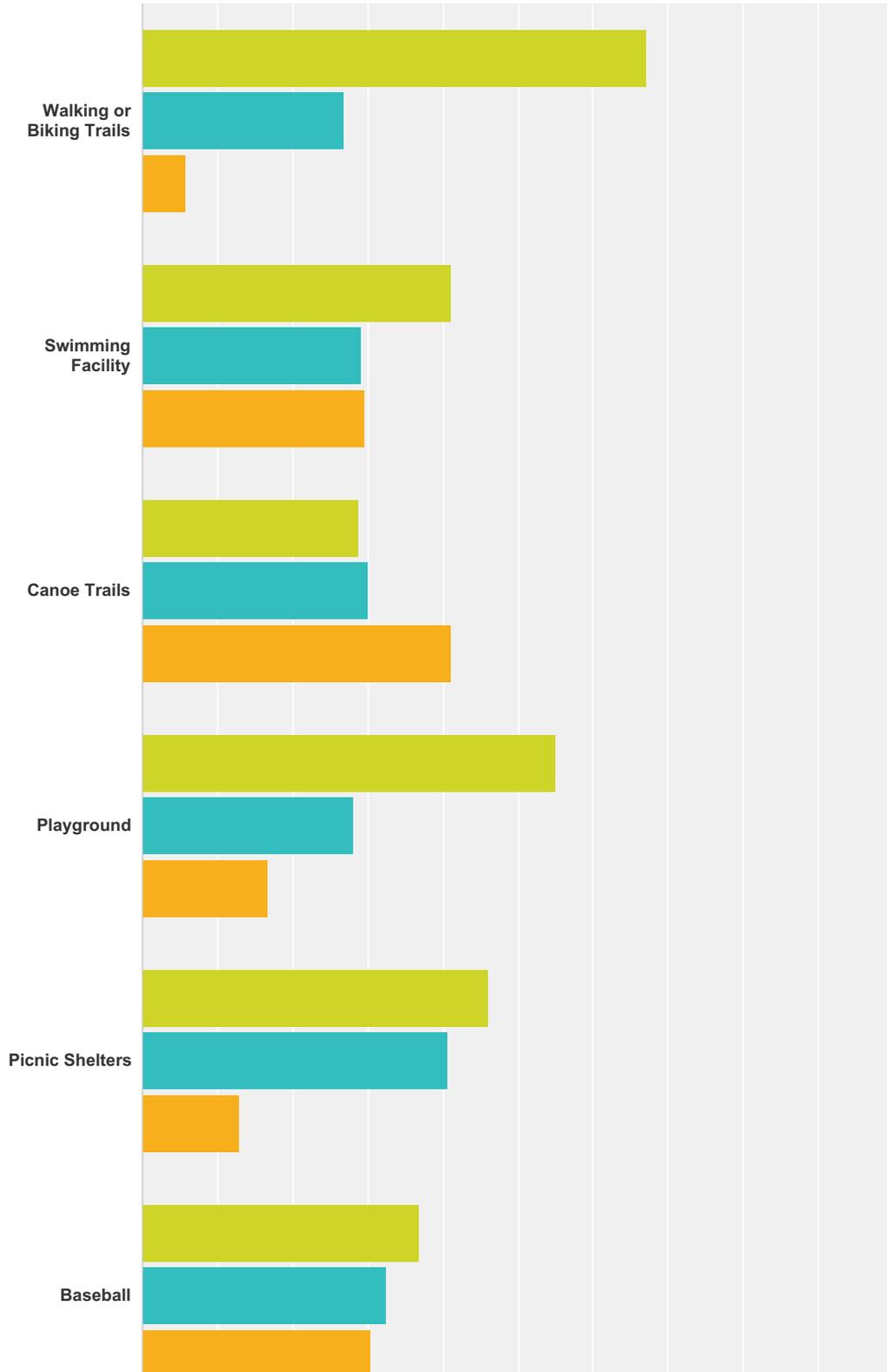
Answer Choices	Responses
Bailey Middlesex Community Park	7.04% 30
Ennis Park (Red Oak)	59.62% 254
Glover Park (Nashville)	35.21% 150
Middlesex Town Park	3.52% 15
NRMS Playgrounds	24.88% 106
Rocky Mount Parks	55.63% 237
Spring Hope Community Park	19.95% 85
Whitakers Park	0.70% 3
Total Respondents: 426	

Q5 Which park do members of your household visit most often?

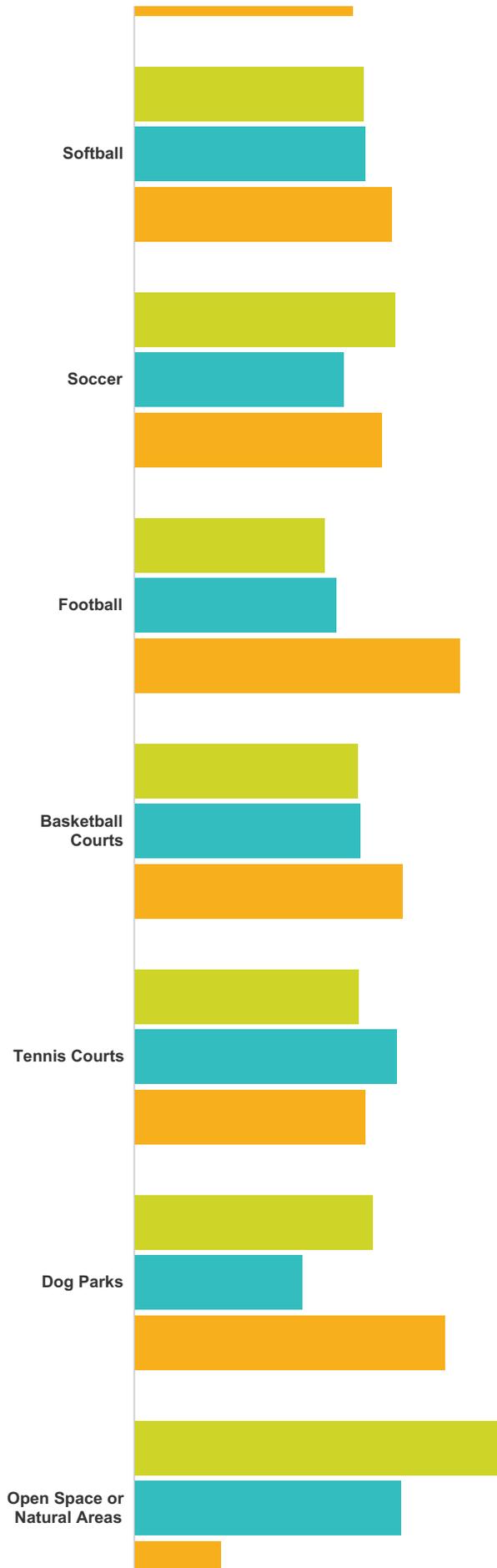
Answered: 360 Skipped: 124

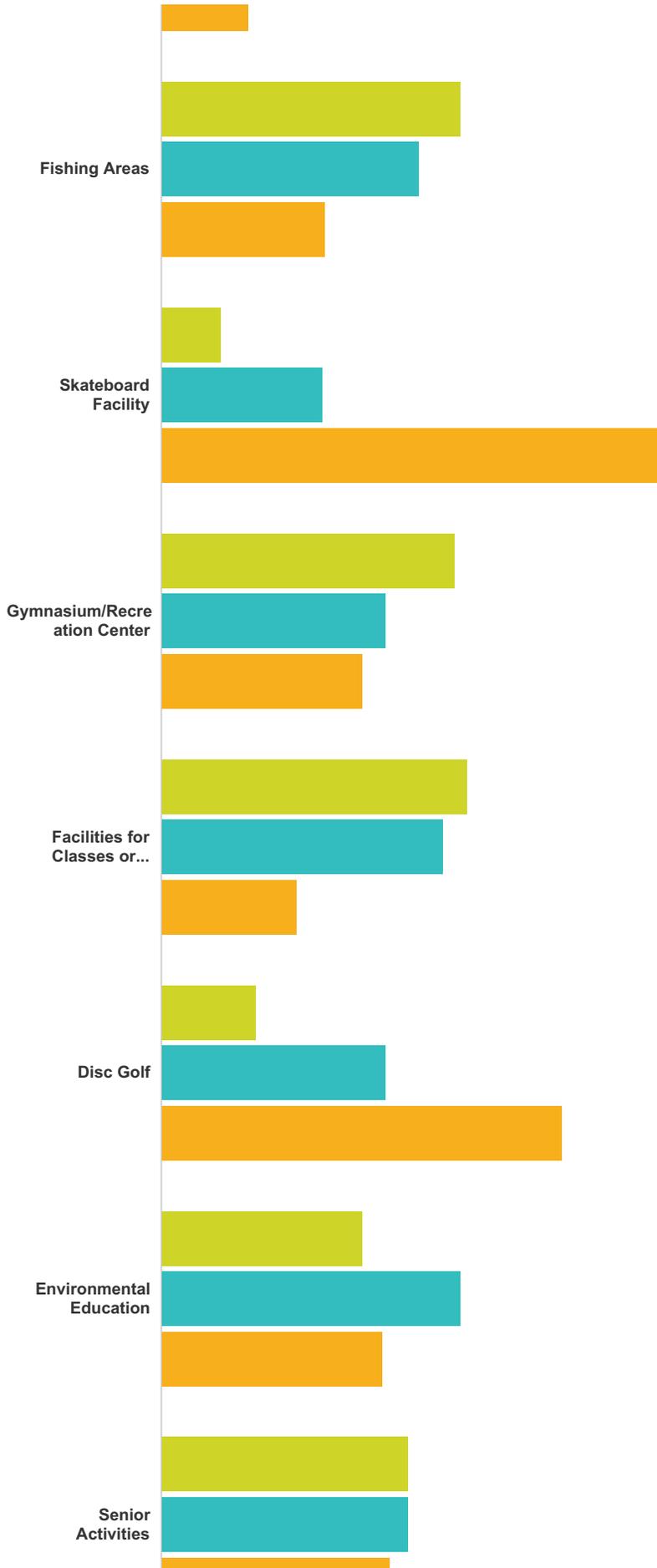
Q6 For each of the facilities listed below, please let us know if you have great interest, some interest, or no interest in that particular facility.

Answered: 484 Skipped: 0

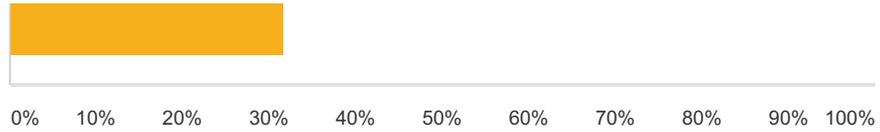


2014 Nash County Parks and Recreation Department Master Plan





2014 Nash County Parks and Recreation Department Master Plan



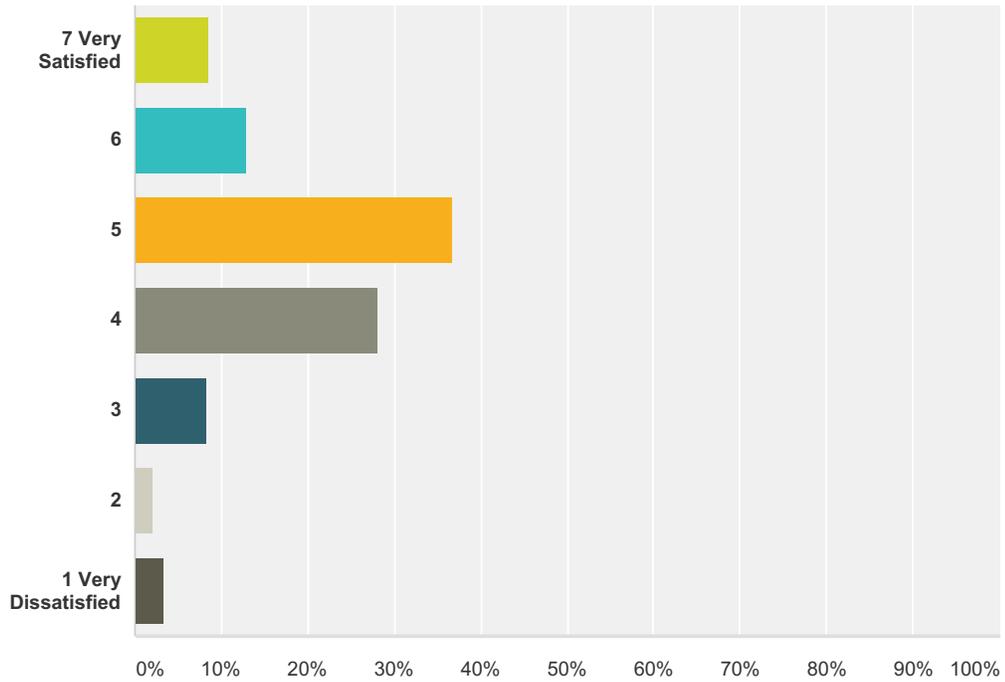
■ Great Interest
 ■ Some Interest
 ■ No Interest

	Great Interest	Some Interest	No Interest	Total
Walking or Biking Trails	67.23% 316	27.02% 127	5.74% 27	470
Swimming Facility	41.14% 181	29.32% 129	29.55% 130	440
Canoe Trails	28.85% 120	30.05% 125	41.11% 171	416
Playground	55.08% 244	28.22% 125	16.70% 74	443
Picnic Shelters	46.22% 202	40.73% 178	13.04% 57	437
Baseball	36.93% 154	32.61% 136	30.46% 127	417
Softball	31.93% 129	32.18% 130	35.89% 145	404
Soccer	36.39% 151	29.16% 121	34.46% 143	415
Football	26.49% 107	28.22% 114	45.30% 183	404
Basketball Courts	31.05% 127	31.54% 129	37.41% 153	409
Tennis Courts	31.25% 130	36.54% 152	32.21% 134	416
Dog Parks	33.25% 139	23.44% 98	43.30% 181	418
Open Space or Natural Areas	50.70% 216	37.09% 158	12.21% 52	426
Fishing Areas	41.63% 174	35.65% 149	22.73% 95	418
Skateboard Facility	8.38% 33	22.34% 88	69.29% 273	394
Gymnasium/Recreation Center	40.79% 166	31.20% 127	28.01% 114	407
Facilities for Classes or Workshops	42.28% 178	38.95% 164	18.76% 79	421
Disc Golf	13.22% 53	31.17% 125	55.61% 223	401
Environmental Education	27.90% 113	41.48% 168	30.62% 124	405

Senior Activities	34.15% 139	34.15% 139	31.70% 129	407
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Q7 Using a scale of one to seven, where "1" is Very Dissatisfied and "7" is Very Satisfied, how satisfied are you with the public park and recreation facilities in Nash County?

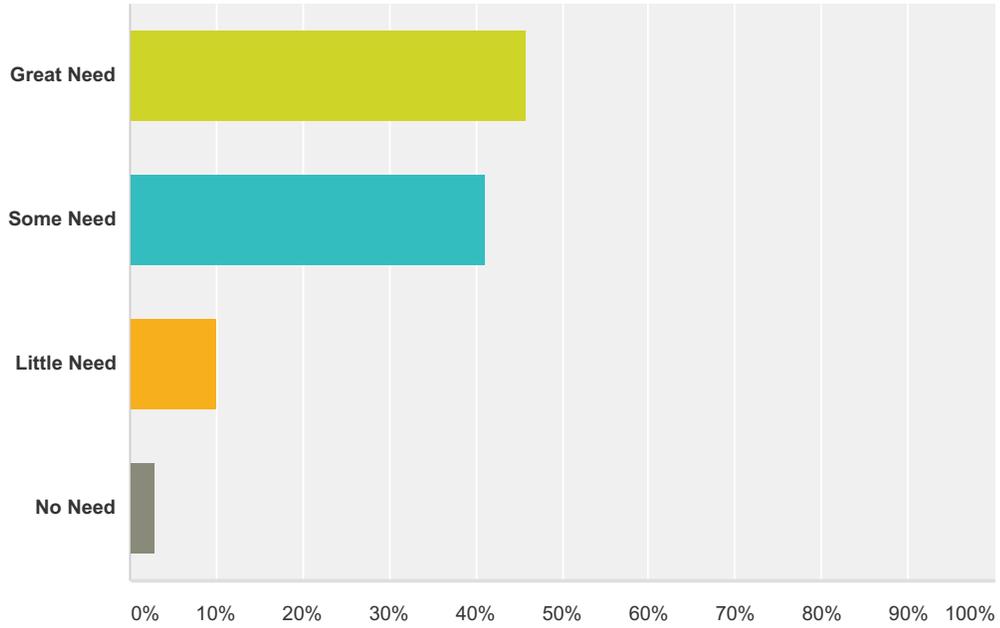
Answered: 484 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
7 Very Satisfied	8.47%	41
6	13.02%	63
5	36.78%	178
4	28.10%	136
3	8.26%	40
2	2.07%	10
1 Very Dissatisfied	3.31%	16
Total		484

Q8 Would you say there is great need, some need, little need, or no need for additional park and recreation facilities in Nash County?

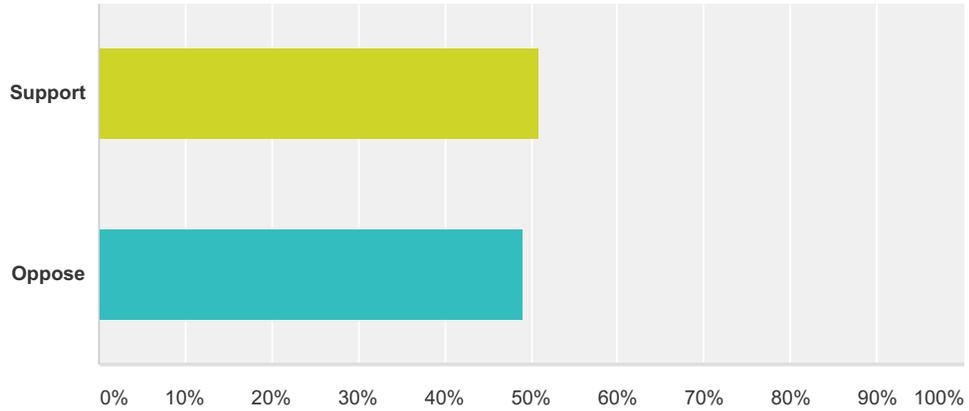
Answered: 484 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Great Need	45.87% 222
Some Need	41.12% 199
Little Need	10.12% 49
No Need	2.89% 14
Total	484

Q9 If taxes needed to be raised to pay for additional park and recreation areas in Nash County, would you support or oppose the tax increase?

Answered: 484 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Support	51.03% 247
Oppose	48.97% 237
Total	484



Tar River

APPENDIX B: CLASSIFICATIONS FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACE & GREENWAYS

A well balanced park system is made up of several park types that range from very large Regional Parks (often encompassing hundreds of acres) to very small Mini Parks (sometimes less than one acre). The descriptions on the following pages define the parks that typically comprise a community’s park system. Numerous agencies (federal, state, county, and municipal) play a role in providing this system. Looking at the entire system helps identify the roles of the various agencies.

The following park descriptions are based on park classifications outlined in the 1995 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) publication “Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines”. They are not intended to serve as park standards, but instead are used as a framework for describing the components found in a park system. Communities should structure their park types based on individual community needs. Table 3A-Park Acreage and Table 3B-Park Acreage reflect the standards for development that are recommended for the Nash County. The recommended standards vary slightly from NRPA guidelines listed on the following pages.

Regional Parks

Regional Parks are typically very large sites, encompassing unique qualities that exemplify the natural features, diverse land formations, and the variety of vegetation and wildlife found in the region. Examples of the types of facilities provided in a Regional Park include environmental centers, camping, nature trails, observation decks, and picnic areas. Open fields for non-structured activities, such as frisbee throwing or kite flying, are also generally found in these parks.

Land chosen for future preserves or the expansion of existing sites should contain the previously mentioned characteristics accompanied with natural water features such as beach areas, rivers, and creeks. The majority of the site should be reserved for passive recreation, with the remaining acreage used for active recreation.

NRPA's guidelines for developing Regional Parks are as follows:

Service Area:	Typically serve the entire county
Acreage/Population Ratio:	10 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	Sufficient area to encompass the resources to be preserved and managed. Typically a minimum of 200 acres; up to 1,000 acres.

Typical Facilities:

Environmental Center	Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)
Equestrian Center	Restrooms/Vending
Primitive Camping	Beach
Group Camping	Swimming
Recreational Vehicles Camping	Boating
Nature Trails	Fishing Piers/Boat Docks
Observation Deck	Parking
Picnic Shelters with Grills	Caretaker's House

Development of **Regional Parks** typically falls within the responsibility of federal, state and/or county agencies.



200 + Acres

Typical Regional Park

District Parks

A District Park provides more diverse recreational opportunities than the Regional Park. The District Park emphasizes passive recreational opportunities that are similar to the Regional Park in addition to including limited active recreational facilities. It is easily accessible by the population (typically 40,000) it serves and maintains a 2.5-5 mile service radius. The park contains a minimum of 5 acres per 1,000 population and should be a minimum of 100 acres in size.

An indoor recreation building/community center may be included in a District Park. These facilities typically reflect the character of the park with a historic, natural, or urban theme. Active recreational facilities located in a District Park include play areas, limited ball fields, hard surface courts, multi-purpose play fields, picnicking locations, and various types of trails.

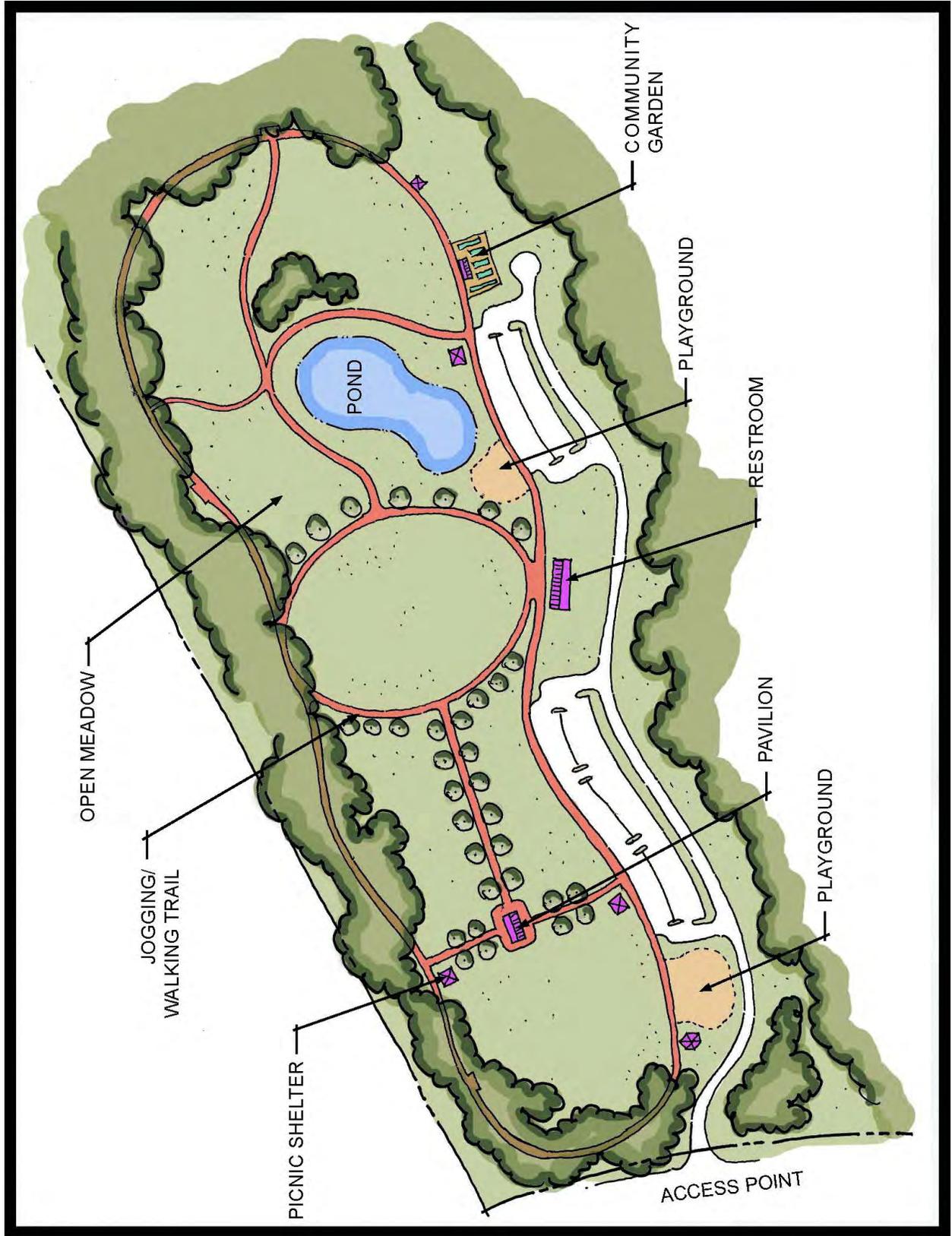
Listed below are NRPA's guidelines for developing District Parks:

Service Area:	Typically serve the entire community
Acreage/Population Ratio:	5.0 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	40 acres minimum, 80-150 acres optimal

Typical Facilities:	
Playground	Picnic Shelter with Grills
Basketball Courts	Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)
Tennis Courts (lighted)	Nature Trail
Tournament Level Tennis Facilities	Benches or Bench Swings
Volleyball Courts	Restroom/Concessions
Multi-purpose Fields	Parking
Tournament Level Soccer Fields	Service Yard
Tournament Level Baseball/Softball Fields	

Alternate Facilities:	
Recreation Center	Amphitheater
Tennis Center	Observation Decks
Running Track	

Development of **District Parks** typically falls within the responsibility of county or municipal agencies.



80-150 Acres

Typical District Park

Community Parks

Community Parks provide for the recreation needs of several neighborhoods or large sections of the community. A range of facilities is typically provided and may support tournament competition for athletic and league sports or passive recreation. These parks also present opportunities for nontraditional types of recreation. Fifty percent of Community Park sites should be developed for passive recreation. These relatively undisturbed areas may serve as buffers around the park and/or act as buffers between active facilities.

Community Park sites should have varying topography and vegetation. Forested areas should have a variety of tree species. Cleared areas should be present for siting active recreational facilities. One or more natural water feature(s), such as a lake, river, or creek, are desirable. Park land should be contiguous and strategically located in order to be accessible to all users within the neighborhoods it serves.

Listed below are NRPA's guidelines for developing Community Parks:

Service Area:	.5 - 3 mile radius
Acreage/Population Ratio:	5.0 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	30-50 acres

Typical Facilities:

Recreation Center	Picnic Tables with Grills
Basketball Courts	Benches or Bench Swings
Tennis Court (lighted)	Nature Trails
Baseball/Softball Fields (lighted)	Restroom/Concessions
Multipurpose Fields	Parking
Soccer Fields (lighted)	Playgrounds
Swimming Pool	Volleyball Courts
Amphitheater	Disc Golf
Observations Decks	Lakes
Picnic Shelters	Paddle Boat/Canoe Harbor
Picnic Shelters with Grills	Fishing Piers/Boat Docks

Specialty facilities may be added to or substituted for other facilities depending on community need or special site characteristics.

Development of **Community Parks** may fall within the responsibility of municipality or county agencies.



Typical Community Park 30 - 50 Acres

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks provide the basic unit of most park systems. These parks are usually located within walking distance of the area serviced and provide a variety of activities of interest to all age groups. While their small size requires intense development, fifty percent of each site should remain undisturbed, if possible, to serve as a buffer between the park and adjacent land users.

The NRPA guidelines for Neighborhood Park development are as follows:

Service Area:	.25 to .75 mile radius to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding populations
Acreage/Population Ratio:	2.5 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	5-10 acres
Typical Facilities:	
Playground	Picnic Shelters with Grills
Court Games	Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)
Informal Play Field	Benches or Bench Swings
Volleyball	50% of Site to Remain Undeveloped
Trails/Walkways	Parking (7-10 spaces)

Neighborhood Parks are typically developed by municipalities.



Typical Neighborhood Park 5 - 10 Acres

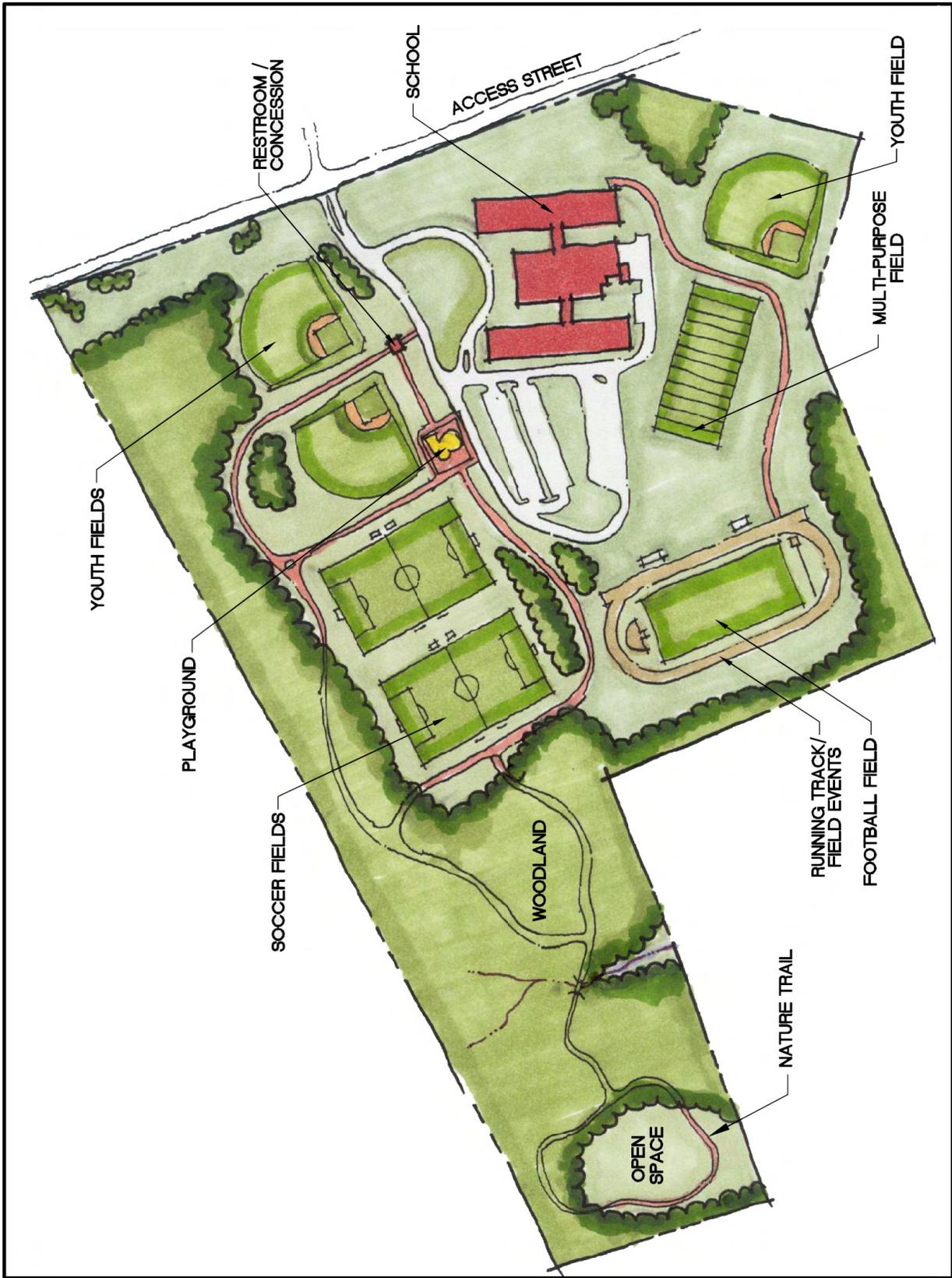
School Parks

Joint use is a mechanism that public agencies use to maximize resources. Through joint use, both the school system and the parks and recreation department benefit from shared use of facilities and valuable land resources. School Park facilities typically go beyond the simple joint use of school facilities. The parks and recreation agency will become a partner in the development of a school site and fund recreational facilities beyond those typically built with a stand-alone school. These facilities may be indoor spaces (gymnasiums, classrooms, meeting rooms, etc.) or outdoor recreation facilities (ballfields, playgrounds, picnic shelters, etc.). The cost of developing and operating these additional facilities is minimized when constructing them in partnership with school development. Savings are also found in shared infrastructure (parking, restrooms, etc.) and shared maintenance and operational cost.

The School Park concept maximizes the joint use objective and provides a planned facility that maximizes public funds. The School Park concept typically varies depending on the school. Elementary and middle schools provide the ideal setting for a Neighborhood Park, while middle and high schools follow the function of a Community Park or sports complex. Access to school sports facilities at high schools and middle schools can be difficult based on team sports needs. This concept only works if there is a mutually agreed upon joint use agreement to define roles, responsibilities, and use of facilities.

Service Area:	Varies depending on school type and park type
Desirable Size:	Varies depending on school type and park type
Typical Facilities:	Varies depending on school type and park type

Development of **School Parks** usually fall within the responsibility of municipalities, county agencies, or school districts.



Typical School Park

± 50 Acres

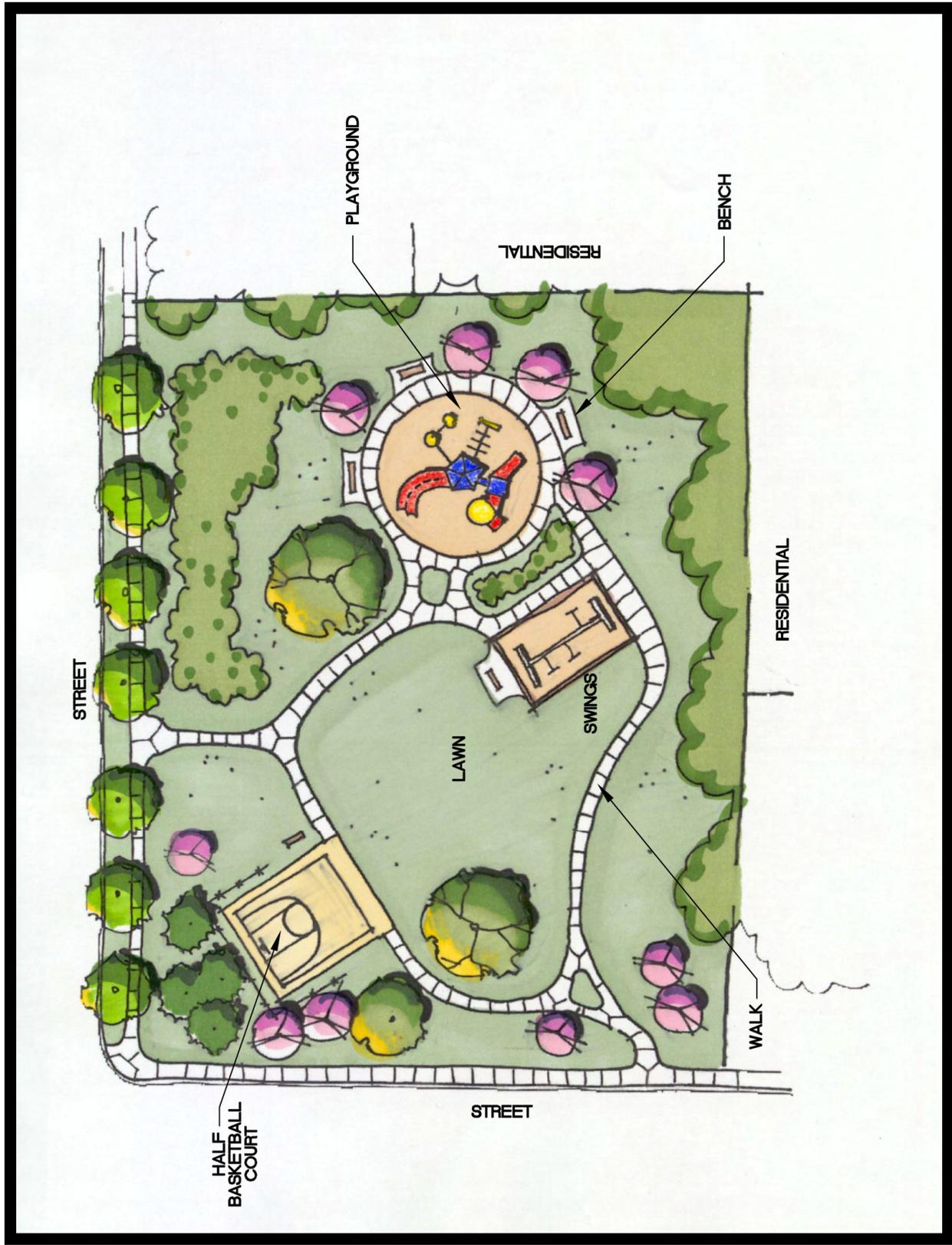
Mini Parks

Mini Parks are the smallest park classification. These parks are located within walking distance of the area serviced, and they provide limited recreational needs. The small amount of land associated with Mini Parks usually results in intense development with little to no buffer between the park and adjacent properties.

NRPA's guidelines for Mini Park development are as follows:

Service Area:	.25 mile radius to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding populations
Acreage/Population Ratio:	.25 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	.25 - 1 acres
Typical Facilities:	
Playground	Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)
½ Basketball Courts	Benches or Bench Swings
Open Play Area	Landscaped Public Use Area

Mini Parks are typically developed by municipalities.



Typical Mini Park

.25 - 1 Acres

Greenway Trails

Greenways provide an important component of the overall park system. They:

- Serve as alternative non-motorized transportation facilities.
- Provide links between parks, schools, neighborhoods, and commercial areas.
- Emphasize harmony with the natural environment.
- Provide safe pedestrian movement.
- Provide resource based outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Enhance adjacent property values.
- Provide linear parks and open spaces.

Greenways are very similar to natural resource sites; the primary difference is the emphasis on pedestrian trails found in the greenway system.

Desirable Size: Greenways form corridors that vary considerably in length and width. A 50' width is generally considered a minimum.



Trail at Medoc Mountain State Park

APPENDIX C: NATIONAL AND STATE STUDIES ON OUTDOOR RECREATION DEMAND

President's Commission

The President's Commission Report indicated the following significant facts:

The top ten most popular outdoor recreation activities nationwide are:

Picnicking	Playing sports
Driving for pleasure	Fishing
Swimming	Attending sporting events
Sightseeing	Boating
Bicycling	Walking for pleasure

Activities rapidly growing in popularity are:

Canoeing	Sailing
Bicycling	Hiking/backpacking
Attending outdoor sports	Walking for pleasure
Camping, all types	Water skiing

The President's Commission report also noted that municipal agencies are providing 39% of the public recreation opportunities.

North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Survey

The North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Survey provided a list of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in the state. The most popular outdoor recreation activities in North Carolina are:

1. Walking for pleasure
2. Driving for pleasure
3. Viewing scenery
4. Beach activities
5. Visiting historical sites
6. Swimming
7. Visiting natural areas
8. Picnicking
9. Attending sporting events
10. Visiting zoos

APPENDIX D: NATIONAL SPORTING GOODS ASSOCIATION SURVEY

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) conducts an annual study of sports participation. The survey lists the following top activities per million participants. A participant is defined as someone seven years of age or older who participates in a sport more than once within a year for all sports except aerobic exercising, bicycle riding, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, running/jogging, step aerobics, weight lifting, and swimming. For these seven fitness sports, participation is defined as six times or more during the year. The following information reviews the findings for the past ten years.

Sport	2010	2008	2006	2004	2002	2000
Aerobic Exercising	38.5	36.2	na	29.5	29.0	26.7
Archery (target)	6.5	na	na	5.3	4.2	4.5
Backpack/Wilderness Camp	11.1	13.0	13.3	17.3	14.8	15.4
Baseball	12.5	15.2	14.6	15.9	15.6	15.6
Basketball	26.9	29.7	26.7	27.8	28.9	27.1
Bicycle Riding	39.8	44.7	35.6	40.3	39.7	43.1
Billiards/Pool	24.0	31.7	31.8	34.2	33.1	32.5
Boating, Motor/Power	20.0	27.8	29.3	22.8	26.6	24.2
Bowling	39	49.5	44.8	43.8	42.4	43.1
Camping (vacation/overnite)	44.7	49.4	48.6	55.3	55.4	49.9
Canoeing	na	10.3	7.1	7.5	7.6	6.2
Cheerleading	na	2.9	3.8	3.8	na	na
Exercise Walking	95.8	96.6	87.5	84.7	82.2	81.3
Exercising with Equipment	55.3	63.0	52.4	52.2	46.8	44.8
Fishing	33.8	42.2	40.6	41.2	44.2	47.2
Football (tackle)	9.3	10.5	10.1	8.2	7.8	8.0
Golf	21.9	25.6	24.4	24.5	27.1	26.4
Hiking	37.7	38.0	31.0	28.3	27.2	24.3
Hunting with Firearms	16.3	18.8	19.9	17.7	19.5	19.1
Hunting w/Bow & Arrow	5.5	6.2	5.9	5.8	4.6	4.7
In-line Roller Skating	7.5	9.3	10.5	11.7	18.8	21.8
Kayaking/Rafting	5.6	na	na	na	na	3.1
Mountain Biking (off road)	7.2	10.2	8.5	8.0	7.8	7.1
Paintball Games	6.1	6.7	8.0	9.4	6.9	5.3
Running/Jogging	35.5	35.9	28.8	24.7	24.7	22.8
Skateboarding	7.7	9.8	9.7	10.3	9.7	9.1
Skiing (alpine)	7.4	6.5	6.4	5.9	7.4	7.4
Skiing (cross country)	2.0	1.6	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.3
Snowboarding	6.1	5.9	5.2	6.6	5.6	4.3
Soccer	13.5	15.5	14.0	13.3	13.7	12.9
Softball	10.8	12.8	12.4	12.5	13.6	14.0
Swimming	51.9	63.5	56.5	53.4	53.1	58.8
Yoga	20.2	16.0	na	na	na	na
Target Shooting	19.8	20.3	19.1	19.2	18.9	16.9
Tennis	12.3	12.6	10.4	9.6	11.0	10.0
Volleyball	10.6	12.2	11.1	10.8	11.5	12.3
Water Skiing	5.2	5.6	6.3	4.7	6.9	5.9
Weight Lifting	31.5	37.5	32.9	26.2	25.1	22.8
Workout at Club	36.3	39.3	34.9	31.8	28.9	24.1

SOURCE: National Sporting Goods Association, Mt Prospect, IL 60056

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