A scenic view of a park. In the background, a tall, slender brick chimney stands against a cloudy sky. In the middle ground, a wooden gazebo is partially obscured by several large, leafy green trees. To the right, a fountain with multiple jets of water is active. In the foreground, a grassy area is populated by several ducks. A wooden pier or dock extends into a pond in the immediate foreground, which reflects the surrounding greenery and sky.

# City of Rocky Mount

Parks and Recreation Department

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan - 2015

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Published 2015

City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department  
331 S. Franklin Street  
Rocky Mount NC, 27802

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# Acknowledgments



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# Executive Summary

## Purpose

The City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan (Master Plan) is a guiding document that encompasses the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department’s mission to ‘**advance the quality of life by providing positive, inclusive experiences through: People, Parks, and Programs.**’

In addition, the department’s core values, represented by the acronym, I.D.E.A., guide the decisions of business and operations as well as the manner in which the department values staff, customers and the community.

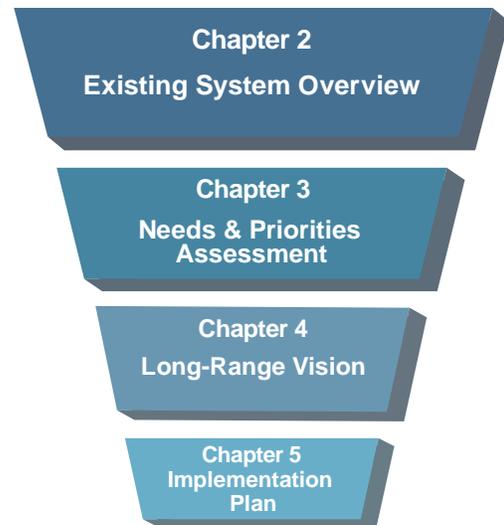
- I. Innovative
- D. Dynamic
- E. Engaged
- A. Aware

Seeking to further the mission and values, this master plan establishes a community-defined set of priorities to advance the quality of life and maximize efficiencies of limited resources. The Master Plan accomplishes this by defining a new direction for development and delivery of the city’s parks and recreation services defined by the public over the next 10 years.



By building upon the city’s existing adopted plans and initiatives, this Master Plan seeks to leverage future projects and limited resources for the betterment of parks and recreation services and facilities. The master plan process is dependent upon extensive public engagement to identify public needs and priorities and vision for the parks and recreation system. Multiple techniques were utilized; such as a citizen-focused steering committee; department website information; social media; seven public workshops; a youth/teen workshop; a statistically valid survey; community visioning workshops; public presentations; and presentations to City Council to fully involve the community throughout the planning process.

### City of Rocky Mount Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan Diagram



## Existing System Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to gain a broad understanding of the current conditions of the City of Rocky Mount's parks and trails. Currently, the City of Rocky Mount manages 43 named parks and seven miles of trails. This chapter takes an in-depth look at the conditions, appearance and functionality of the existing parks and recreation system as a snapshot for analysis.

### Guiding Documents

One of the core initiatives of this Master Plan is to provide a continuation of previously adopted plans and studies. Careful review and analysis of previous work ensures coordination with other adopted plans that could influence the development of this Master Plan. The Master Plan team has researched multiple sources of information, which can be classified into three categories; city and regional documents; area or facility-specific studies and plans; and previous recreation master plans. A listing, though not exhaustive, of significant influencing plans or documents include:

- Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan (2013)
- The City of Rocky Mount Pedestrian Plan (2011)
- Edgecombe and Nash Counties Gang Assessment (2010)
- Raleigh Road/ Raleigh Street Corridor Plan (2010)
- 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan (2009)
- State of the Inner City Neighborhoods (2007)
- Comprehensive Bicycle Plan (2005)
- Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan (2005)
- Collector Street Plan (2004)
- Sunset Avenue Corridor Plan (2004)
- Transportation Plan 2030 (2004)
- Together Tomorrow: Tier 1 Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan for City of Rocky Mount (2003)
- Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan (1999)

## Population and Demographics Overview

The City of Rocky Mount continues to grow and diversify. Historic trends in population growth may mean the city needs to 'catch up' to its needs in areas that experienced growth. The city's changing age profile is important when considering access and renovations to existing parks and facilities as the city has an aging population and fewer children. Demands for specific facilities and services may change over the next 10 years to reflect a growing Baby Boomers age group and fewer young families with children.

### Existing Parks

Through the evaluation of all park and recreation facilities, opportunities and successes can be identified. The City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation 2012 Park Review includes a number of opportunities and successes that can be extrapolated for the entire park and recreation system. The following are examples of these opportunities and successes:

Successes	Opportunities
Park maintenance	Universal accessibility
Recreation opportunities	Stormwater management
General park condition	

# Executive Summary

## Needs and Priorities Assessment

Building on the information gathered as part of the Existing System Overview, the Master Plan team utilized innovative techniques to conduct a comprehensive citywide needs and priorities assessment. Techniques used are a combination of qualitative and quantitative industry best practices that provide a system of crosschecks to determine the top needs and priorities for parks and recreation in the City of Rocky Mount. The following details summarize the findings from each technique.

Ten comprehensive methods of input or data collection were utilized as part of this triangulated approach. Though some techniques are more statistically valid than others, by utilizing a comprehensive array of 10 techniques, the Master Plan team can crosscheck results to better determine an accurate understanding of the city's needs and priorities.

### Priority themes include:

- Emphasize **improving existing parks and facilities**;
- Provide **better connectivity** through community via greenway trails, bike facilities and sidewalks;
- Using **parks as a revitalization** tool;
- Improve biking and walkability **safety**;
- Innovative and **engaging youth and teen** activities;

- Improve existing and provide **more community centers** throughout community;
- Continue to promote the **arts and education**;
- Promote **health and wellness**;
- Increase **equity and access** to parks and services;
- Improve the overall **condition and accessibility** of parks;
- Improve existing and provide additional **restroom facilities** in parks and along greenway trails;
- Develop **regional attractions along the Tar River** such as an amphitheater, museums and open space;
- Increase **safety and security** in parks;
- Partner with **schools and non-profits**;
- Provide **dog park(s)** for citizens and visitors; and
- Increase **marketing** of programs and offerings to citizens, workers and visitors.



		Needs Assessment Techniques									
		Existing Conditions Review	Community Meetings	Stakeholder Interviews	On-line Public Opinion Survey	Citizen Opinion and Interest Survey	Benchmarking	High Level Lifestyle Analysis	Acreage Level of Service Analysis	Facility Level of Service Analysis	Access Level of Service Analysis
Facilities	Greenway Trails	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
	Playgrounds	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●
	Community Centers	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●
	Walking and Running	●		●	●	●		●			●
	Restrooms	●	●	●	●	●					●
	Art Centers		●		●	●	●				●
	Smaller Neighborhood Parks	●	●			●		●	●		●
	Picnic Areas/ Shelters	●			●	●	●			●	●
	Museums		●		●	●	●				●
	Swimming Pools		●	●		●		●			●
Activities	Fitness and Wellness	●	●	●	●	●		●			
	Family	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			
	History and Museums	●	●		●	●	●				
	Senior Adult	●	●			●	●	●			
	Special Events	●	●		●	●		●			
	Performing Arts	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	Visual Arts	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	Nature	●			●	●	●				
	Outdoor/ Adventure Recreation	●	●	●		●	●				
	Youth Summer Camp		●	●			●				

● = Indicates Highest Need  
● = Indicates Need

## Long-Range Vision

Highlighted by extensive public input, the Parks and Recreation Department launched a two-day workshop of visioning sessions to better understand the community's aspirations for its parks, recreation and cultural resources system. Combining the results from the workshop with previous steps allows the community to provide a comprehensive vision for the future. The following chapter describes these results.

The approach for developing the parks and recreation master plan vision is a three-part effort: 1) through a multi-faceted public input process, residents indicated their needs and priorities for parks and recreation facilities. While most residents recognized the role of the city in providing parks and recreation services, there is a strong emphasis on the need to improve existing parks

and facilities, and improve connectivity throughout the city; 2) Supplementing this public input, city staff and the consultant team completed a technical review of the existing parks system that identified continued improvements needed in order to maintain a high level of service for residents; 3) Community input was gathered during a two-day visioning workshop at the Imperial Arts Center.

As a result of the above efforts, the Vision is built upon a framework distilled from broad public input and comprehensive analysis. A unique approach was taken for the City of Rocky Mount, which established a set of subsystems that help guide the development of the parks and facilities across the system. These five subsystems are shown below:



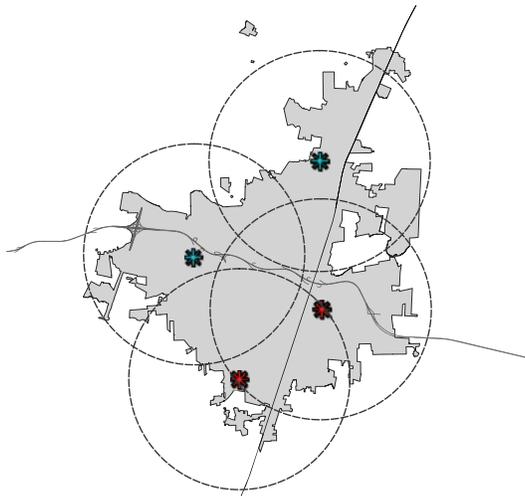
# Executive Summary

## Vision Subsystems

### Neighborhood and Community Parks

Neighborhood and Community Parks serve as a major contributor to the sense of community and quality of life and provide residents and visitors an opportunity to refresh, explore and play. Parks also contribute significant economic and environmental benefits. Using community input from the Needs Assessment and Visioning Workshop, the following guiding principles were developed for neighborhood and community parks:

- **Reinvestment-** Improve and update existing parks, to meet the changing needs of surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Connectivity-** Increase safety and connections to parks.
- **Equity-** Provide access to parks and programs by adding larger community parks with community centers.



Locations of Community Centers in Rocky Mount



Marigold Park with Improved Facilities

### Regional Venues

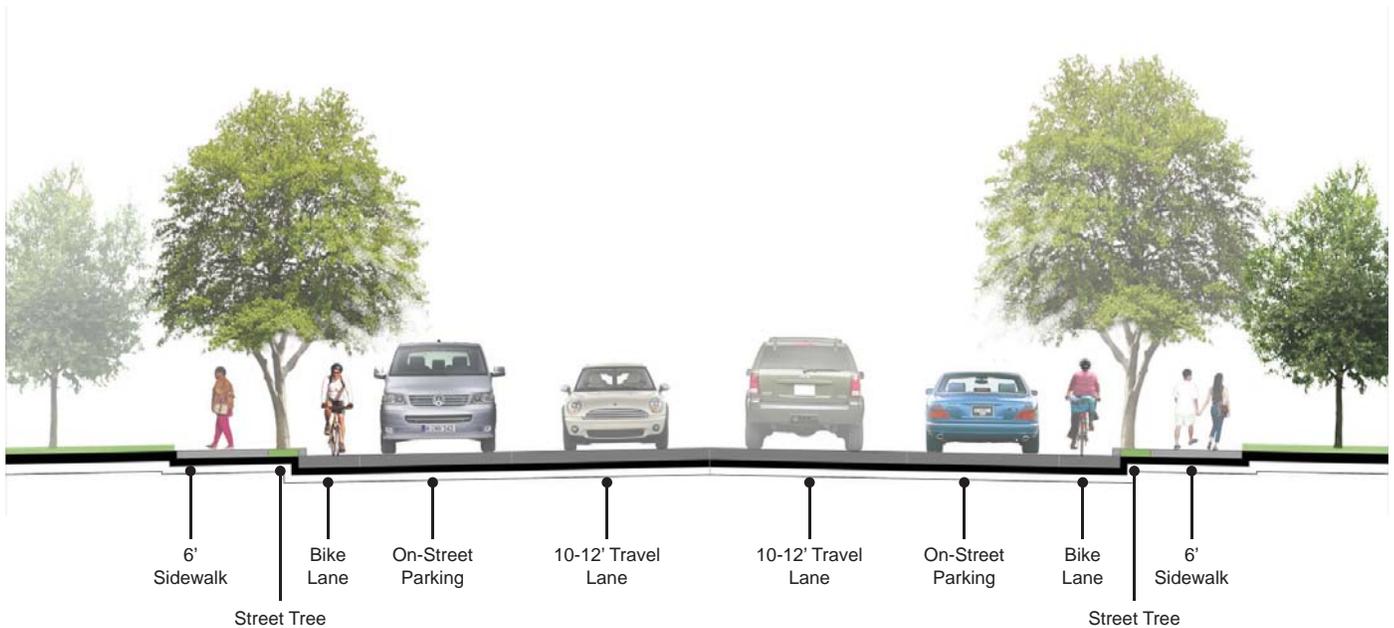
One of the more prevalent ideas that repeatedly came up during the Needs Assessment process was the desire for multi-purpose regional venues that would bring visitors to Rocky Mount. Ideas varied, but it became clear that the citizens of Rocky Mount had a strong desire for venues that would bring attention to the city and provide significant social and economic benefits. The Needs Assessment was instrumental in laying the framework for this concept and established the following guiding principles:

- **Multiple Benefits-** Large scale projects that have significant positive benefits through social, economic and environmental change
- **Revitalization-** Opportunities to revitalize neighborhoods, attract tourists, create jobs and support economic sustainability
- **Utilize Existing Infrastructure-** By using existing features of the city, both natural and man-made



### Streets, Trails and Transit

The demand for connectivity between parks and communities has already been discussed in the Neighborhood and Community parks section of the vision, but connectivity is a concept that the City of Rocky Mount can apply to its overall vision. The guiding principles for connectivity through the parks and



*Typical Complete Street Section*

recreation system support the comprehensive vision that seeks to improve access and quality of life for residents, and stimulate economic growth throughout the city. The guiding principles for streets, trails and transit established through the Needs Assessment and Visioning workshop are:

- **Multi-modal-** Connect every neighborhood through trails, sidewalks and transit
- **Healthy Community-** Promote healthy lifestyle and active living through complete streets as well as safe routes to schools
- **Safety-** Create a pedestrian and bike friendly city with transit stops at trailheads and connections to downtown

### Arts, History, Culture and Community

The City of Rocky Mount has a rich history and culture that make it a unique community in North Carolina. The city has many historical and cultural assets that can be integrated into the parks system to strengthen the community character. Much like the Imperial Arts Center

has provided a venue for community arts, historic areas can be used to provide social and economic capital for the city. During the Visioning Workshop, many residents voiced a strong desire to focus on these assets, particularly those that have been overlooked for many decades. From the workshop, the following guiding principles were established:

- **Awareness-** Increased recognition, celebration, and education
- **Accessible-** Create an accessible historical and cultural systems, with presence in community centers and throughout neighborhoods

### Greenways and Natural Lands

Greenways and natural lands are important resources for the City of Rocky Mount. These lands and their corridors provide wildlife habitat, improve water quality, reduce storm water runoff, lower surrounding air temperatures, and provide outdoor recreation and educational

# Executive Summary

## Vision Subsystems

opportunities. Through the Needs Assessment and Visioning Workshop, the following guiding principles were developed for greenways and natural lands:

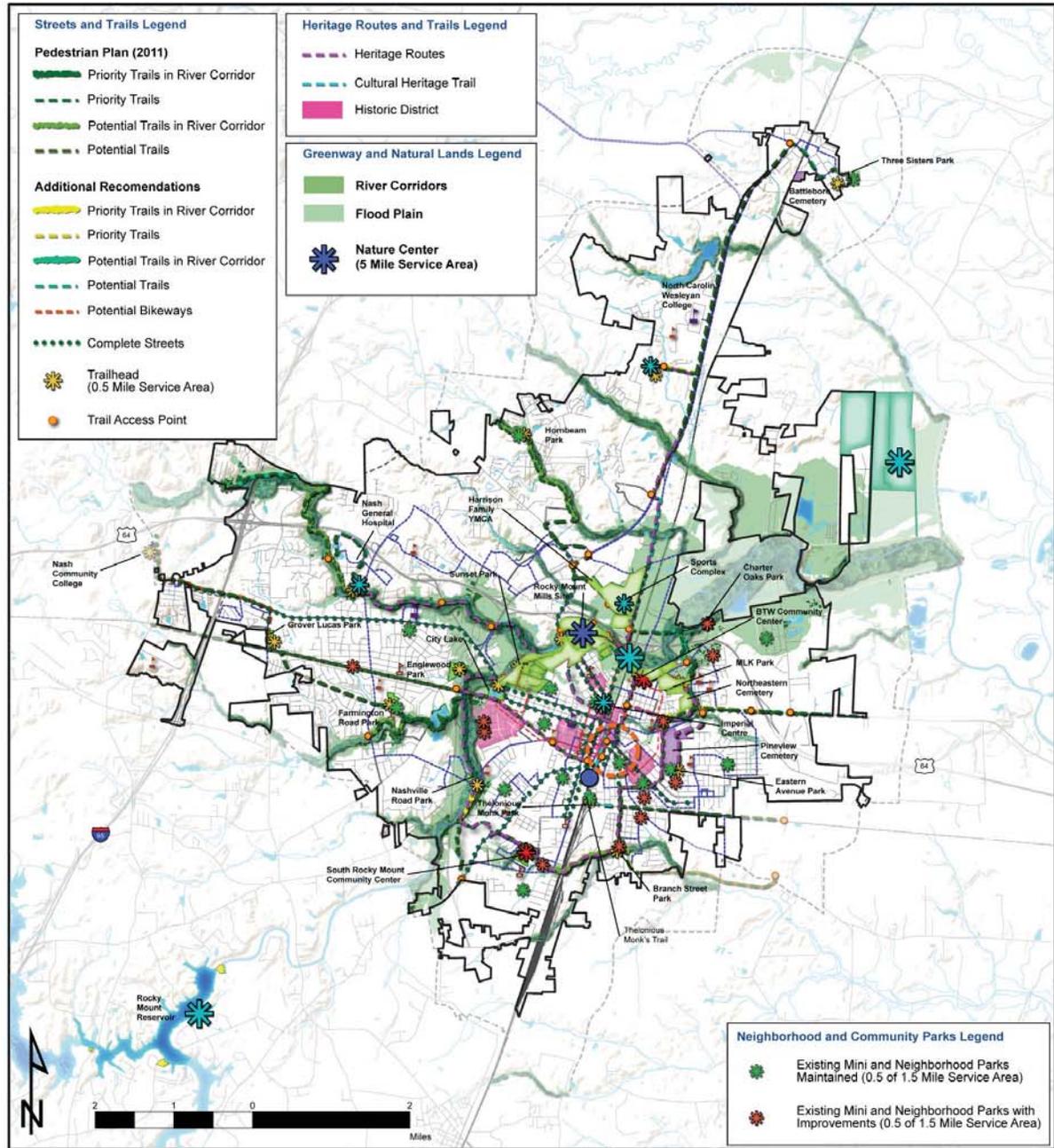
- **Stewardship of the Natural Environment-** Emphasizing the value of natural resources in the community
- **Sustainability-** Environmental restoration and revitalization of natural habitats
- **Education-** Outdoor learning to promote environmental awareness

## Synthesis

With a new vision established for the city's parks, recreation and cultural resources system, along with the guiding principles for eight individual subsystems, advancement of the themes of the city's 2025 Comprehensive Plan and other guiding documents is ensured. As noted, the parks and recreation system will play a key role in the continued development of Rocky Mount and its communities. This vision outlines a continuation of investment in these contributing community assets and is consistent with the needs and priorities expressed through public involvement.



# City of Rocky Mount System Vision



## Legend



## Regional Park Legend



## Arts, Cultural and Community Centers Legend



# Executive Summary

## Implementation Plan

Based on costs derived from current market trends and similar projects, the complete implementation of the vision is estimated to cost approximately \$141 million, (land acquisition is included in overall costs) and includes the following subsystem estimates:

Subsystem	Estimate of Probable Costs (2014 dollars)
Neighborhood and Community Parks	\$38,910,000
Regional Parks and Venues	\$62,647,500
Trails, Streets and Transit	\$31,056,500
Art, History, Culture and Community System	\$7,237,500
Greenways and Natural Lands	\$1,812,500
Total:	\$141,664,000

2014 Estimates

### Projected Funding

The following figures identify the available funding currently projected for implementation of the vision through the use of the City's General Fund's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

- \$2.091M in FY 2015 CIP funding;
- \$5.8M for the five (5) year CIP period of FY 2015–2019;
- Averages approximately \$1.1M per FY CIP;
- Potential of \$10-11M for the ten (10) year CIP period of FY 2017-2026;
- \$39.6M is budgeted in the CIP for the Downtown Community Facility (DCF) through a combination of funding sources that include New Market Tax Credits and debt financing.

In order to complete or expedite the implementation of the vision, additional sources of funding will need to play a greater role in providing capital and operational costs for the city. Sources that have traditionally been used by the Park and Recreation Department to great success are local, state and federal grants, which have contributed on average approximately \$100,000 per year. Over the last five years, many traditional grant sources have seen their overall funding reduced and remaining grants sources have become more competitive. Though it is not expected that all grants

will be secured, an increase in the frequency and scope of grant submissions will improve that funding source. A projection of \$250,000 per year or \$2.5M over the next ten-years may be appropriate. A detailed evaluation of grant sources is included in Section 5.2.2.

In addition to a greater share of funding coming from grants, Rocky Mount may consider the use of general obligation bonds which leverage future revenues such as local sales tax revenues. It is estimated by the city that bonding may generate approximately \$15-\$20M+ over a 10 to 20-year period. With the identified funding sources available totaling approximately \$73.1M over the next 10-years, it is reasonable to state that a significant portion of vision improvements can be met.

### Alternative Funding

Alternative funding opportunities will need to have an even larger role in providing necessary funding for priority projects. Over two dozen alternative funding sources were identified for projects proposed in the vision, with a potential total (not including any leveraging) of approximately \$12M.

The integration of stormwater and other emergency management features into projects such as a recreation center or recreation trail can significantly increase the grant funding opportunities available to Rocky Mount. Examples of design features that would introduce additional grant opportunities would include: the construction of parking areas to act as drainage and/or treatment basins for severe weather events; stormwater retention ponds that alleviate localized flooding as part of park or trail project; and the hardening of an indoor facility such as a recreation center to act as a shelter and/or public outreach center before and after a disaster.

### Phasing Options

#### Option 1 – Pay As You Go Model

This model allows the City to fund only those improvements that can be paid for on the basis of incoming revenues through user fees, existing general fund support and earned income through sponsorship, donations etc. Based on past trends and future projections, the total

anticipated amount available for use on an annual basis is \$1.1M. In addition, the Parks and Recreation Department has been successful at securing grants worth an average of \$100,000 annually. Extrapolating current funding rates, a total of \$12M is projected to be available over the next 10-years. If efforts to secure additional grants are increased, a range of funding can now be projected between \$12M and \$23M over the next 10-years. Phasing strategies may utilize this range in order to prioritize projects.

### Option 2 - Pay As You Go plus Borrowing

This model allows the City to fund up to +/- \$73.1M in capital projects for the Parks and Recreation Vision over the next +/- 10 years . In addition to the +/- \$12M-\$23M in projected CIP funding and grants, the city would also borrow approximately \$15M-\$20M+ through bonds or a special assessment.

Unlike Option 1, where the key challenge is prioritizing the improvements, the challenge for Option 2 is managing the approval, planning, design, permitting and construction of a \$73.1M Capital Improvements Program over a relatively short (10+ year) period of time. Sub-System Prioritized Projects with the focus on work addressing priority projects first, then long-term projects and finally vision projects. If the city chooses to pursue Option 2 or elements of Option 2, the first year of the plan should be spent staffing, planning and preparing to implement the Capital Improvements Program, and beginning implementation on some of the high priority projects.

### Operations and Maintenance

Operations and Maintenance (O&M) costs will increase along with capital spending. According to industry “rule-of thumb” standards, O&M costs will increase annually by approximately 5% of capital costs. This equates to a gradual and eventual increase in the parks and recreation O&M budget of approximately \$7M/ year based on the anticipated \$141M in total vision improvements. Based on identified priority projects, additional O&M costs may range between \$600,000 for Option 1 to \$3.655M for Option 2. The exact amount will adjust as implementation of specific projects are realized.

Project Name:	
Prioritization Criteria Element	Points (0-5)
Equity	
Economic Development	
Safety	
Stabilization	
Revenue Generation	
Leverage	
Public Demand	
Funding Match	
Advance City Goals	
Total Points:	

Use a 0-5 point scale; 0 = Lowest, None; 5 = Highest, Yes

### Project Prioritization

In order for the Park and Recreation Department to be able to prioritize projects, a criteria is needed that responds to community-wide needs and goals for Rocky Mount. The following criteria can be used as a test for each opportunity or project in order to determine its level of priority in comparison to other projects. This will promote the maximum efficiency of limited resources for the department.

In addition to the Project Prioritization Criteria, it is important to note that the siting of park and recreation facilities can be catalysts for development and/or redevelopment of neighborhoods. As such, the primary benefits of new park and recreation facilities should be maximized for city residents. Two levels of priority service areas should be realized by each project as follows:

1. Primary Service Area = City limits
2. Secondary Service Area = Areas within the ETJ and in close proximity of the city limits

Furthermore, facilities expected to be sited, constructed and operated near the city limits or outside the city limits should be undertaken only through explicit inter-jurisdictional agreements with the adjacent city/town/county.

# Executive Summary

## Implementation Plan

When the prioritization criteria is applied to the Park and Recreation Master Plan Vision list of projects, the following are the highest scoring in descending order by two categories; enhanced existing parks and facilities and new parks or facilities:

*New Facilities/ Sites Project Prioritization List*

Rank	Top Project Priorities for New Facilities or Sites	Cost Estimate
<b>1.</b>	<b>Community Park Acquisition</b>	
	West Community Park Acq.	\$1,400,000
<b>2.</b>	<b>Downtown Community Facility</b>	
	Downtown Community Facility	\$39,600,000
<b>3.</b>	<b>Community Center Development</b>	
	West Community Center	\$5,625,000
<b>4.</b>	<b>Community Park Acquisition</b>	
	North Community Park Acq.	\$1,400,000
<b>5.</b>	<b>Develop Priority Trails (Pedestrian Plan)</b>	
	Holly Street Park Connector	\$370,000
	Sunset to Englewood Connector	\$580,000
	South Rocky Mt. Comm Center	\$1,690,000
	BBQ Park Trail	\$369,000
<b>6.</b>	<b>Regional Park Development (River Falls Park)</b>	
	Feasibility Study	\$75,000
	Master Plan Development	\$150,000
	Design and Permitting	\$875,000
<b>7.</b>	<b>Community Park Development</b>	
	West Community Park	\$7,000,000
<b>8.</b>	<b>Develop Priority Trails (Pedestrian Plan) - Phase 2</b>	
	Hospital Area Connector	\$1,584,000
	MLK Jr. Park to Leggett Rd.	\$159,000
	Farmington Park Trail	\$845,000
<b>9.</b>	<b>Community Park Development</b>	
	North Community Park	\$7,000,000
<b>10.</b>	<b>Nature Center at Battle Park</b>	
	Design and Construction	\$1,687,500

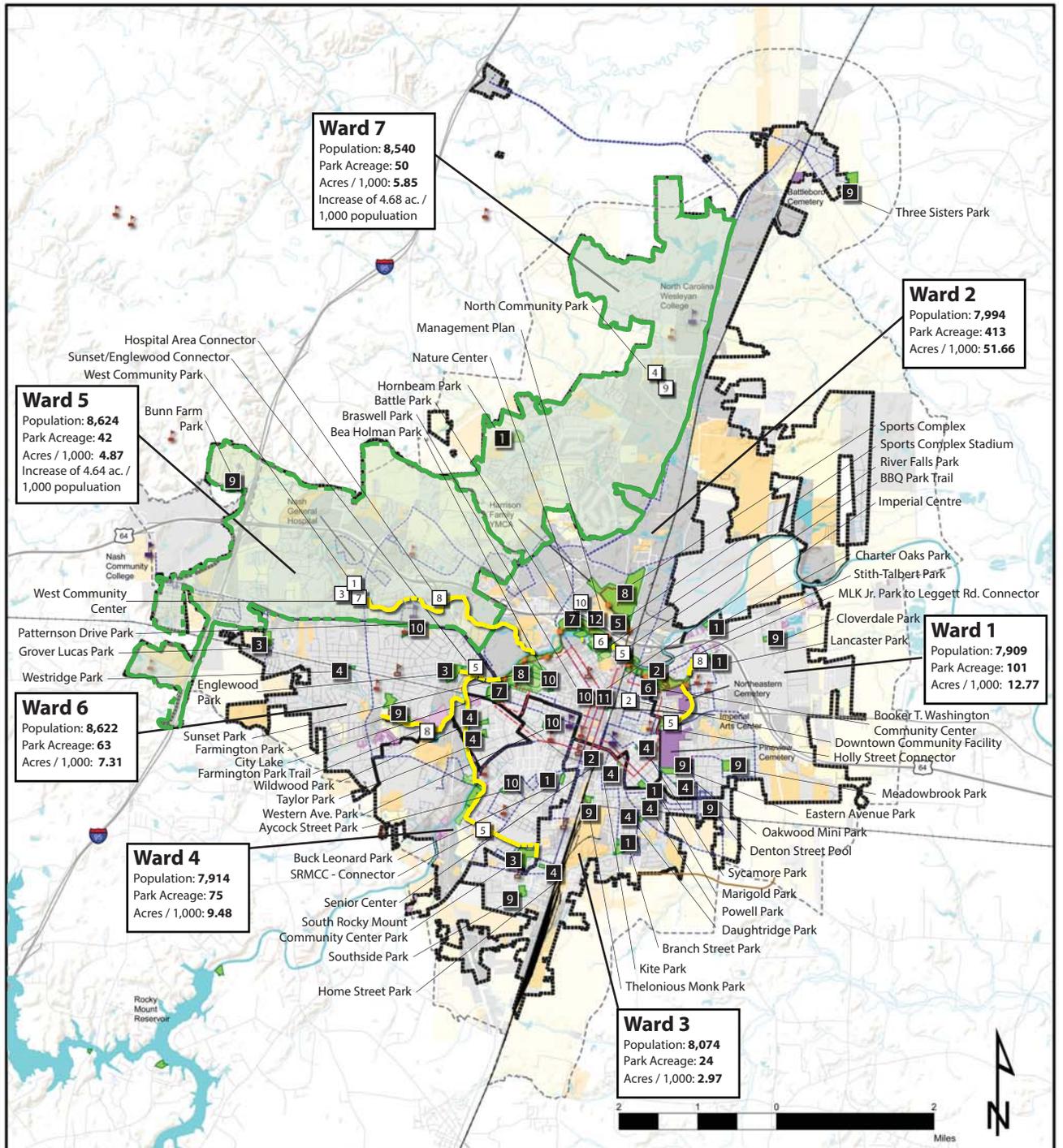
2014 Estimates

*Enhancing Existing Facilities/ Sites Project Prioritization List*

Rank	Top Project Priorities to Enhance Existing Facilities or Sites	Cost Estimate
<b>1.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Neighborhood Parks</b>	
	Priority Neighborhood Parks	\$995,000
<b>2.</b>	<b>Senior Center Renovation/Abatement</b>	
	Feasibility/Bus. Plan & Design	\$300,000
	Phase 1 Reno./Abatement	\$3,375,000
<b>3.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Community Parks</b>	
	Priority Community Parks	\$1,035,000
<b>4.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Mini Parks</b>	
	Priority Mini Parks	\$295,000
<b>5.</b>	<b>Sports Complex Stadium</b>	
	Locker Rm, Training Rm. Office	\$2,250,000
	Restrooms (two)	\$660,000
	Concessions	\$200,000
	Press Box, Scoreboard	\$450,000
	Eq./Maint. Building	\$437,500
	Turf Field (NCAA)	\$750,000
	Parking/ADA Access	\$200,000
<b>6.</b>	<b>Renovation of Booker T. Washington Com. Center</b>	
	Renovation of BTWCC	\$3,375,000
<b>7.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Regional Parks and Facilities</b>	
	Priority Regional Parks	\$425,000
<b>8.</b>	<b>Renovation of Sunset Park and Sports Complex</b>	
	Sunset Park / Sports Com.	\$2,250,000
<b>9.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Neighborhood Parks</b>	
	Long-Term Neighborhood Parks	\$1,765,000
<b>10.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Mini Parks</b>	
	Long-Term Mini Parks	\$395,000
<b>11.</b>	<b>Cultural / Trails / Transit</b>	
	Cultural Heritage Trails	\$562,500
	Priority Trailheads and Transit Shelters/ Signage	\$300,000
	Imperial Center Improvements	\$250,000
<b>12.</b>	<b>Natural Lands Management Plan</b>	
	Management Plan Development	\$125,000

2014 Estimates

City of Rocky Mount Park Acreage by City Ward and Project Locations



**Legend**

- City of Rocky Mount Parks
- City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries
- Trail Access Points
- Tar River Trail
- Southern Loop
- Existing Bikeways
- Existing Transit Routes
- Major Roads
- Streets
- Railroads
- FEMA Sites
- FEMA Sites in Parks
- Lakes, Ponds and Rivers
- Residential Land Use
- Non-Residential Land Use
- Agricultural Land Use
- Split Land Use
- Creeks and Streams
- City Wards
- City ETJ
- Colleges and Universities
- Public Schools
- Private Schools
- Existing Park/Facility Project Priority Ranking
- New Park/Facility Project Priority Ranking
- New Greenway Project
- Ward with Park Acreage Increase

# Chapter 1





## Chapter 1 | Purpose and How to use the Comprehensive Master Plan

### 1.1 Purpose

The City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan (Master Plan) is a guiding document that encompasses the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department's mission to **'advance the quality of life by providing positive, inclusive experiences through: People, Parks, and Programs.'**

In addition, the department's core values, represented by the acronym, I.D.E.A., guide the decisions of business and operations as well as the manner in which the department values staff, customers and the community.

- I. Innovative
- D. Dynamic
- E. Engaged
- A. Aware

Seeking to further the mission and values, this master plan establishes a flexible, community-defined set of priorities to advance the quality of life and maximize efficiencies of limited resources. The Master Plan accomplishes this by defining a new direction for development and delivery of the city's parks and recreation services defined by the public over the next 10 years and as opportunities emerge.

By building upon the city's existing adopted plans and initiatives, this Master Plan seeks to leverage future projects and limited resources for the betterment of parks and recreation services and facilities. The master plan process is dependent upon extensive public engagement to identify public needs and priorities and vision for the parks and recreation system. Multiple techniques were utilized; such as a citizen-focused steering committee; department website information; social media; seven public workshops; a youth/teen workshop; a statistically valid survey; community visioning workshops; public presentations; and presentations to City Council to fully involve the community throughout the planning process.

# Chapter 1

## 1.2 How to Use the Master Plan

This document is intended to be used by all parties involved with the design and/or planning of parks in the City of Rocky Mount. As a comprehensive resource for parks within Rocky Mount, this Master Plan will assist users in the formation of programming needs and priorities and long range visioning for the planning and design of new and existing parks, greenway trails and recreation facilities.

This document has been developed in a linear process, building upon previous work that begins with an overview of existing parks and facilities, analysis of public needs and priorities, formation of a long range systemwide vision, and lastly, implementation priorities, funding alternatives and policy recommendations.

### City of Rocky Mount Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan Diagram

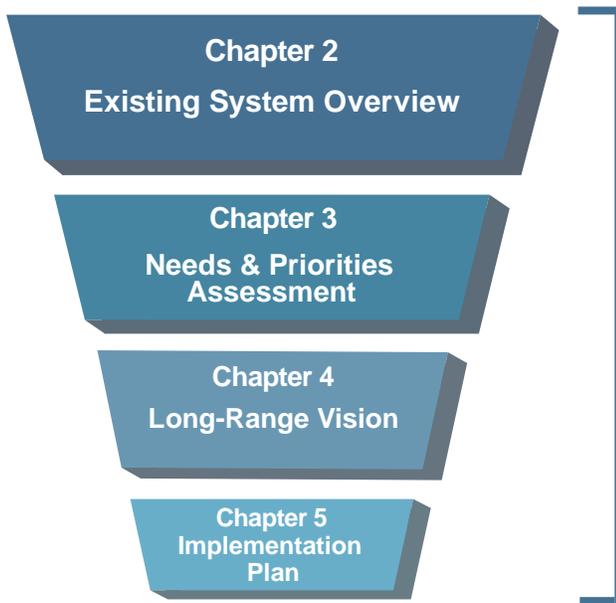


Figure 1 above illustrates the linear four step process utilized in this Master Plan. Following these steps, needs and priorities are refined through the creation of a long-range vision and a detailed implementation plan. The final product is an achievable plan for the design, development and delivery of parks and services throughout the City of Rocky Mount.

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## Data Analysis Process

To gain an accurate understanding of the City of Rocky Mount's parks and recreation system, as well as, residents' needs, the consultant team utilized a mixed methods, triangulated approach to data analysis. The following diagram (**Figure 2**) identifies the techniques used:

*Figure 2: Mixed Methods, Triangulated Approach*



# Chapter 2



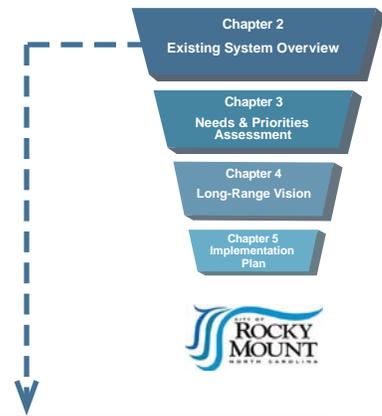
# Existing Conditions Overview



## Chapter 2 | Existing System Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to gain a broad understanding of the current conditions of the City of Rocky Mount's parks and trails. Currently, the City of Rocky Mount manages 43 named parks and seven miles of trails. This chapter takes an in-depth look at the conditions, appearance and functionality of the existing parks and recreation system as a snapshot for analysis.

City of Rocky Mount Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan Diagram



### Chapter 2 Existing System Overview

#### 2.1 - Guiding Documents

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Guiding Documents                    | 4. Previous Master Plans |
| 2. City and Regional Documents          | 5. Summary               |
| 3. Area and Facility Specific Documents |                          |

#### 2.2 - Population and Demographics Overview

- |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Overview                   | 4. Housing Characteristics |
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- |   |            |
|---|------------|
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## Section 2.1 | Guiding Documents

### 2.1.1 Guiding Documents

One of the core initiatives of this Master Plan is to provide a continuation of previously adopted plans and studies. Careful review and analysis of previous work ensures coordination with other adopted plans that could influence the development of this Master Plan. The Master Plan team has researched multiple sources of information, which can be classified into three categories; city and regional documents; area or facility-specific studies and plans; and previous recreation master plans. A listing, though not exhaustive, of significant influencing plans or documents include:

- Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan (2013)
- The City of Rocky Mount Pedestrian Plan (2011)
- Edgecombe and Nash Counties Gang Assessment (2010)
- Raleigh Road/ Raleigh Street Corridor Plan (2010)
- 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan (2009)
- State of the Inner City Neighborhoods (2007)
- Comprehensive Bicycle Plan (2005)
- Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan (2005)
- Collector Street Plan (2004)
- Sunset Avenue Corridor Plan (2004)
- Transportation Plan 2030 (2004)
- Together Tomorrow: Tier 1 Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan for City of Rocky Mount (2003)
- Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan (1999)



Sample of guiding documents researched

### 2.1.2 City and Regional Documents

Several city-wide and regional plans and studies have been reviewed to ensure a comprehensive approach to this Master Plan. Summaries of relevant items from select plans and studies include:

#### Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan (2013)

The Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan represents a partnering of Edgecombe County, Nash County and the City of Rocky Mount to develop a vision and plan for the region. The two-year process included the involvement

# Existing Conditions Overview

of hundreds of residents and officials from each of the participating areas. The process included two goals:

1. Create a shared vision and strategic plan based on the collective quality of life goals that community members have for the region,
2. Position the Twin Counties Region to succeed in a globally competitive economy.

Based on the input of over 360 participants the group was able to develop a regional vision statement and set of goals as follows:

## **Twin County Vision:**

‘The Twin Counties Region is a thriving crossroad of innovation where the broad talents and experiences of our many communities foster shared opportunities for educational achievement, economic success, healthy families, and welcoming neighborhoods.’

Regional goals for eight areas were defined to achieve this vision. These goals are as follow:

1. **Align Regional Leadership** - The Twin Counties Region will align elected officials, local government staff, community-based organizations and citizen leaders around implementation of the Strategic Plan.
2. **Crime Prevention and Safety** - The Twin Counties Region will invest in holistic crime prevention and safety initiatives that emphasize human development.
3. **Food Economy** - The Twin Counties Region will support a robust, thriving local food economy that makes healthy food affordable and accessible to residents in each of our many communities and that grows the economy through support for local producers and businesses.
4. **Health and Mental Health** - The Twin Counties Region will invest in improved health and mental health outcomes for the residents of all of our communities.
5. **Job Creation and Talent Development** - The Twin Counties Region will improve regional economic performance by improving training opportunities, developing talent recruitment strategies, developing business-friendly communities with outstanding infrastructure, and devising targeted business recruitment strategies.

6. **Positive Image** - The Twin Counties Region will promote a positive image of the area, internally and externally, by telling a new story that celebrates the assets and culture of the community, leverages the diverse array of present-day achievements, and articulates its aspirations for the future.
7. **Quality of Life in Underserved Neighborhoods** - The Twin Counties Region will raise the quality of life in underserved communities by investing in human, social, physical and economic capital of these communities and amplifying the efforts of existing community development programs and leaders.
8. **STEP: Improving Educational Opportunities** - The Twin Counties Region will provide a high quality education system for all learners from cradle to career.

**Relevance to Master Plan:** The Twin County Vision and Strategic Plan establishes a vision for the unified region and sets forth a set of goals that include many of the services and programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department. The City of Rocky Mount, as the largest city in the region and one of three primary governmental participants, is a leader in moving this Twin County Vision forward. The Strategic Plan includes a number of objectives and actions that can be aligned with facilities, services or programs that are currently offered or may be enhanced.

## **Together Tomorrow: Tier 1 Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan for City of Rocky Mount (2003)**

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the city’s official policy document for addressing growth. Developed through an open and inclusive planning process, the plan takes its cues from the distinctive history and form of Rocky Mount as it is today and provides the following vision for what it can be:

‘In the year 2025, Rocky Mount will be a beautiful place to live, work and play, a city of new excitement and vitality with a high quality of life for all.’

The plan seeks to balance the restoration of the downtown and older areas of the city while managing and promoting growth that retains the city’s heritage. In doing so, the plan establishes a set of nine principles, which include:

# Chapter 2

1. Future development will be balanced to meet the needs of the community.
2. Special attention will be directed to that portion of the study area located within Edgecombe county to ‘jump start’ investment and revitalization.
3. Rocky Mount will continue as a regional center in eastern North Carolina.
4. The downtown will be the city’s preferred location for government, offices, businesses and cultural institutions, but the city will strengthen its retail and housing components.
5. Major corridors will continue as the city’s primary retail and office locations, but the city will facilitate balance in encouraging future businesses throughout the city.
6. All neighborhoods will be improved to create outstanding places for residents.
7. The transportation system will be upgraded to improve mobility.
8. The open space system will be expanded.
9. Floodplain considerations will play a larger role in the city’s development and infrastructure decisions.

In addition to the above nine principles, 11 goals were developed. A handful of the goals impact the delivery and development of parks, recreation and trail facilities and space ranging from the preservation and reuse of historic structures, to improved pathways for pedestrians, and preserving and protecting the natural features, open space and recreation opportunities throughout the community.

The intent of the Comprehensive Plan is to help guide the future growth into Smart Growth areas located in three locations throughout the city; extreme west and north in Nash County; and to the extreme east of the city limits in Edgecombe County. Growth outside of these Smart Growth areas has been identified as infill opportunities.

Critical and sensitive areas have been identified by the Comprehensive Plan as those that are currently within watershed protection areas, within the Tar-Pamlico buffers and related stormwater management areas, and within the 100-year and 500-year designated floodplains. Together these areas encompass approximately 25-30% of the city’s land area. The plan states that open space preservation efforts should: be focused along the Tar River and its tributaries; publicize the benefits of these areas; reforest the buffers and stream corridors; preserve and restore wetlands; protect woodlands; and enhance

the landscaping of public spaces. Additional areas of relevance include the creation of good community design by promoting safety, beauty and healthy design practices and supporting the community’s tourism industry.

**Relevance to Master Plan:** The Together Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan establishes Rocky Mount’s vision for the year 2025. Most of the plan’s principles are directly impacted by the condition and performance of the city’s parks and recreation system; however, open space expansion is specifically identified. Through the protection of critical and sensitive areas such as floodplains, to the development of better neighborhood through design and economic vitality, this Master Plan will help in the advancement of the Comprehensive Plan.

## The City of Rocky Mount Pedestrian Plan (2011)

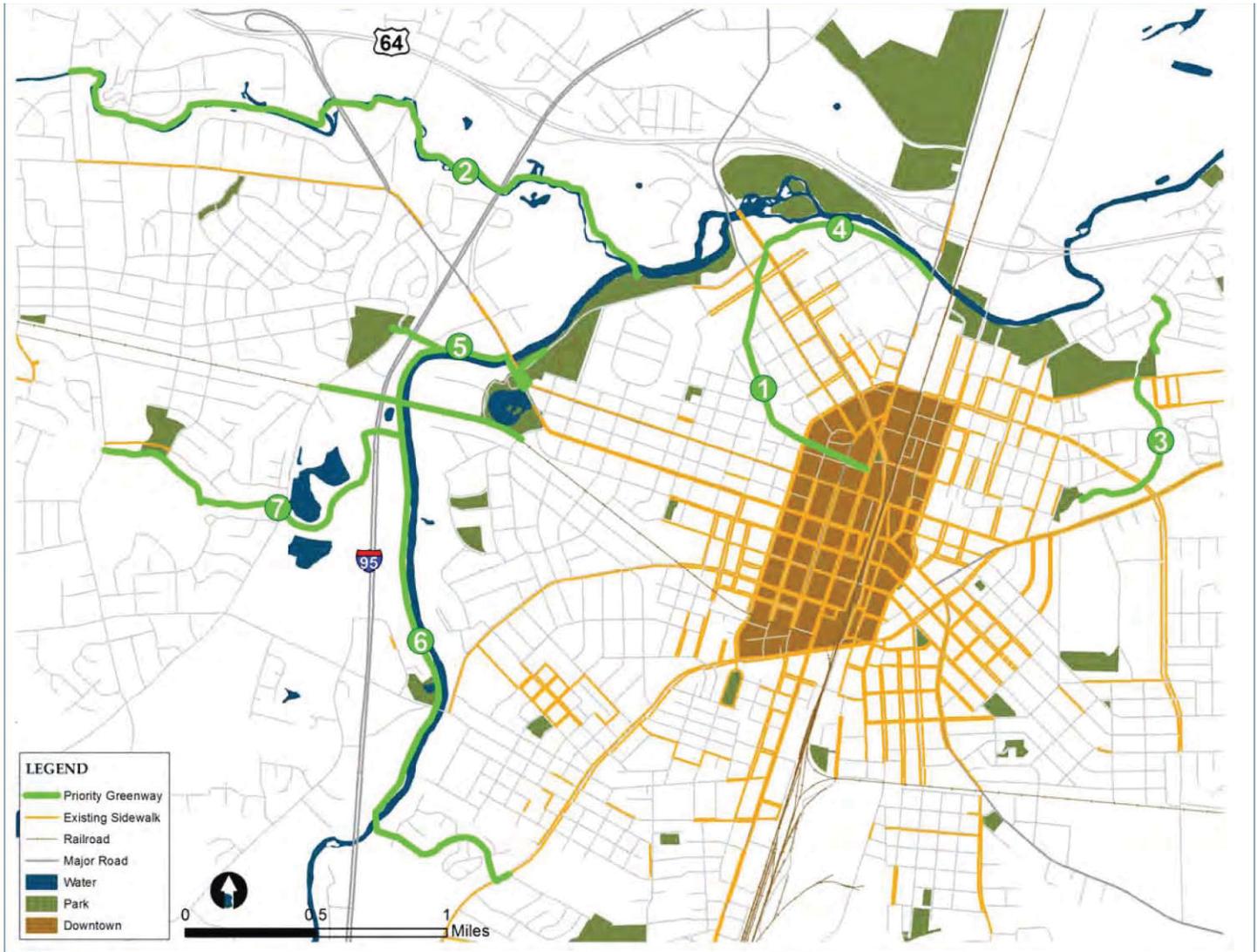
The City of Rocky Mount Pedestrian Plan establishes an up-to-date framework for a set of tangible pedestrian improvements that will preserve and enhance the quality of life throughout the city. City leaders and citizens of Rocky Mount contributed substantial time to outline a vision that includes ensuring access for pedestrians of all ages, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds and encouraging residents to walk to community and public facilities.

The plan also identifies 17 goals that range in focus from reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs) to filling gaps in the existing sidewalk network and becoming a ‘Walk Friendly Community’ by 2016. The plan identifies a number of community-wide benefits associated with a walkable community. An overall pedestrian network is included with the plan and consists of recommended sidewalks, greenways and intersection improvements throughout the city. See **Map 3: Pedestrian Network**.

The plan identifies seven priority greenways, which were developed by the Parks and Recreation Department. These seven routes are prioritized by a criteria that factors access and connectivity to schools, parks, shopping and transit, higher density areas, areas with lower car ownership, and low income areas. Combined, the greenways routes will provide an additional 11.7 miles of greenway trails and provide connectivity to 11 parks and four schools. The top seven greenway trail routes, shown on **Map 2: Priority Greenway Projects**, all provide access to parks within

# Existing Conditions Overview

Map 1: Priority Greenway Projects, City of Rocky Mount Pedestrian Plan, 2011



one-half mile and all but one provide access to a school within a half mile. Total cost of development of the seven greenway trails is \$6.175 million.

The plan also identified ten priority sidewalk projects, and upon completion these sidewalks will provide an additional 7.33 miles of sidewalk within the city and link eight parks to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million. See **Map 1: Priority Sidewalk Projects**.

In addition to the identification of priority sidewalk and greenway trail projects, the plan makes recommendations for intersection improvements and safe routes to schools.

The Parks and Recreation Department has been identified in the plan as a Multi-modal Transportation Committee (MTC) member that will work with other city departments; North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Division 4, Nash and Edgecombe Counties, Rocky Mount Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); and other public and private partners and agencies to implement the plan. Specifically, the department has been tasked with meeting with the MTC, pursuing grants for funding priority projects and programs, carrying out walking-related programs, working with the city's Transportation Planning and nearby municipalities and counties to develop regional trail facilities, partnering for joint-funding opportunities, and working with citizens to improve trails' physical and perception of safety.

# Chapter 2

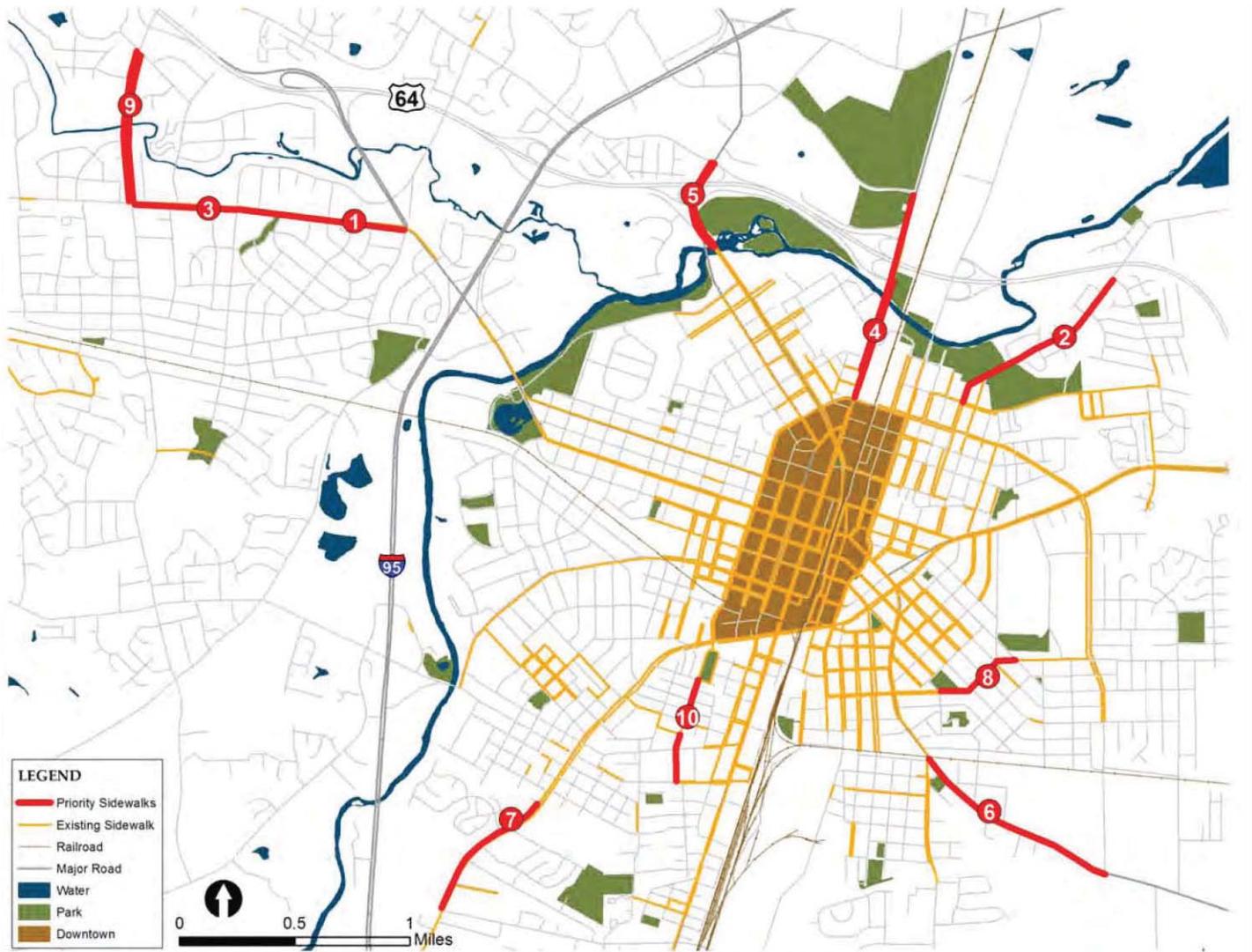
**Relevance to Master Plan:** The City of Rocky Mount Pedestrian Plan identifies, with the help of the Parks and Recreation Department, priority sidewalk and greenway trail projects. Together, these priority projects provide 19 connections to parks and four connections to schools through the development of 7.3 miles of new sidewalks and 11.7 miles of new greenway trails. The plan identifies the Parks and Recreation Department as a key partner in the implementation of the overall plan and has tasked the department with seeking funding opportunities for priority projects and partnering with sister departments, nearby government agencies and non-profits to leverage available funding and identify regional connectivity opportunities.

## Comprehensive Bicycle Plan (2005)

The Comprehensive Bicycle Plan was developed in 2005 by the Rocky Mount Bicycle Advisory Committee, Nash and Edgecombe Counties, Tar River Transit and NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and Division 4. The plan seeks to establish Rocky Mount as a bicycle-friendly community, increase travelways for bicycles, create transportation choices, and advance the community's livability.

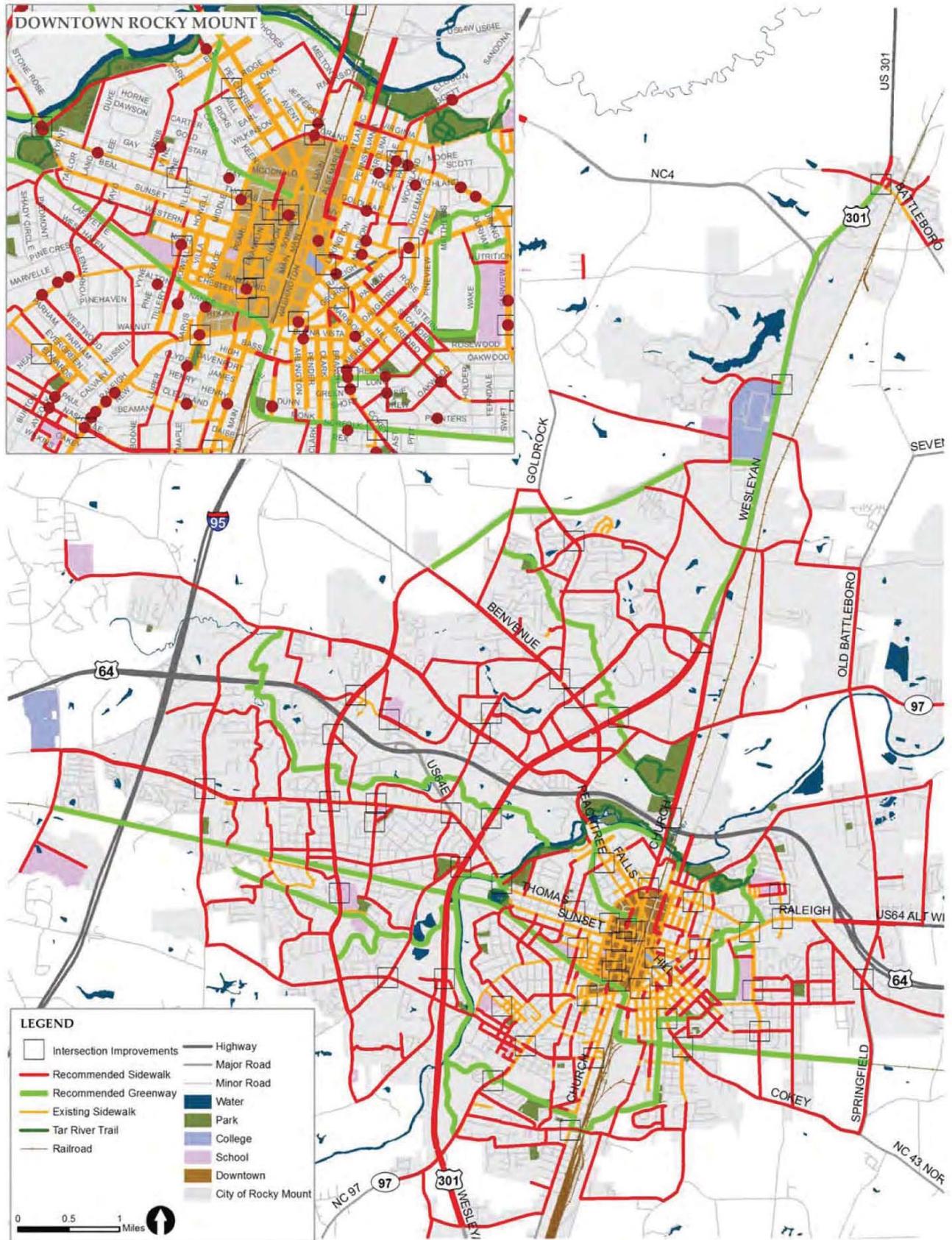
Short-range and long-range goals and objectives have been developed and focus on building support from the community, implementing priority projects and

*Map 2: Priority Sidewalk Projects, City of Rocky Mount Pedestrian Plan, 2011*



# Existing Conditions Overview

Map 3: Pedestrian Network, City of Rocky Mount Pedestrian Plan, 2011



# Chapter 2

information distribution regarding safe bicycling, followed by growing the overall opportunities to bicycle by building new facilities over a longer period of time. The plan acknowledged that 51% of households in the City (2000 Census data) owned either one or no vehicles and are highly likely to use bicycling or walking to complete short trips. 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data estimates that 29% of households in the City of Rocky Mount do not own a vehicle, compared to 9.1% nationally.

Twenty unique routes were developed and together form a citywide system. Each route provides logical connections to neighborhoods and destinations such as parks, schools and shopping opportunities. See **Map 4: Bicycle System Network**. Total mileage of all 20 routes is 111.7 miles, however, 27.1 miles are multi-use path or greenway trails while all other mileage consists of signed routes and bicycle lanes on existing roadways. The total cost for all 20 routes in 2005 dollars was estimated at \$12.46 million. Routes were grouped into three categories: short-term (1-5 years); mid-term (5-10 years); and long-term (10+ years). Of the three routes identified as short-term, only one has not been started, Downtown-Reservoir Connector. Six of the 20 total routes have been started, with four being near completion or completed. These completed trails are primarily in the downtown area and along the Tar River.

Costs for the routes focused on the ability to quickly implement short-term projects while allowing additional time to complete planning and to seek funding opportunities for long-term projects. Short-term routes had an estimated cost of \$80,000; mid-term costs were projected to be \$1.65 million; and long-term projects were projected to be \$10.73 million, or over 80% of total costs.

**Relevance to Master Plan:** The Comprehensive Bicycle Plan advances the theme of Rocky Mount as a bicycle-friendly community. Most short-term projects have been implemented, and a few additional mid-term and long-term routes have been developed. However, the vast majority of the higher cost routes have not been completed. Many of the higher cost routes include multi-use paths or greenway trails, which can typically be more expensive to develop than on-street facilities or bicycle lanes. Additional partners should be sought to continue the development of routes and provide new connections and access point to parks and other public facilities from neighborhoods.

## 2.1.3 Area or Facility Specific Documents

### State of the Inner city Neighborhoods (2007)

The State of the Inner City Neighborhoods report consists of a market analysis of six 'inner city' neighborhoods. These six neighborhoods, three in Nash County and three in Edgecombe County, with the Central Business District, form the primary core of the original city limits and contained 22.5% of the city's total population at the time of the report.

The report identifies a number of neighborhood assets and liabilities for the six study areas. For most of the study areas, city parks generally were identified as neighborhood assets or areas that contribute positively to the overall quality of the neighborhoods. For a few study areas, parks were identified as liabilities. The report does not document the definition of liabilities as used for the study or why these particular sites were designated as such, but it is assumed through various profile maps that the reasons generally consist of higher crime rates and overall condition and appearance. For many of the study areas, vacant or abandoned properties constituted as much as 17% of the housing stock. These properties are important to consider for revitalization efforts or other uses.

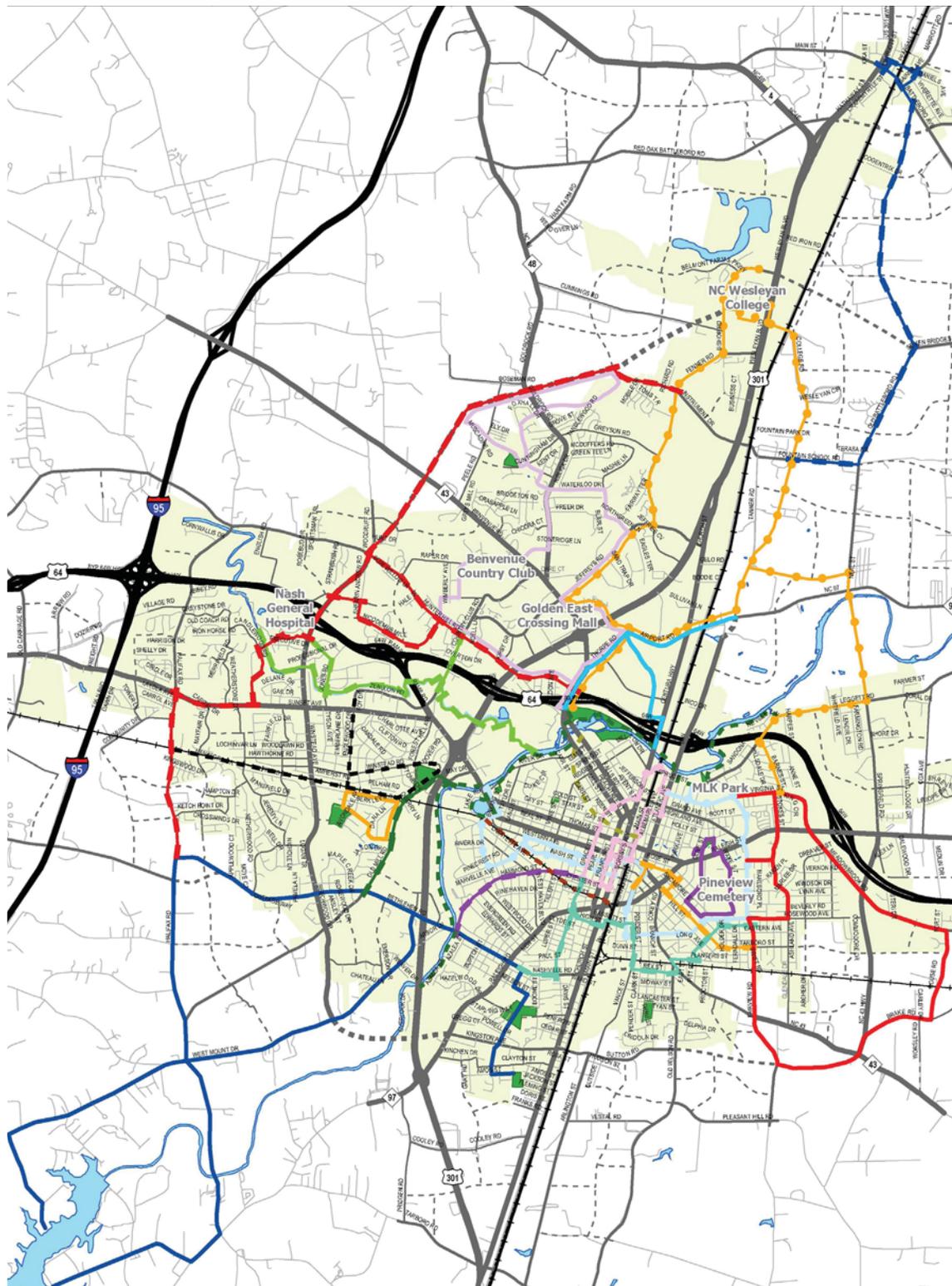
A number of interviews were conducted with property owners, realtors, developers, members of the banking community, and other organizations. Comments generally reflect a concern for the high number of vacant properties, crime, age and condition of housing. Some comments regarding parks included: "Parks in the target areas are negative factors rather than positive factors:" and "Parks are not adequately maintained."

The report identifies a number of recommendations to be considered for the improvement of these six areas. Each neighborhood must identify its individual needs; however, the report notes a recommendation to declare four park sites- Home Street Park, Powell Park, Branch Street Park, and Marigold Park as surplus and to be developed for community development projects in support of the inner city neighborhoods.

**Relevance to Master Plan:** The State of the Inner City Neighborhoods is a market analysis of six 'inner city'

# Existing Conditions Overview

Map 4: Bicycle System Network, Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, 2005



**Legend**

- |                         |                              |  |                           |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Parks                   | Abandoned Rail to Trail      | Downtown-Reservoir Connector             | Mall-Hornbeam Park Loop   |
| Bodies of Water         | Battleboro Connector         | East Side Loop                           | Park-Reservoir Connector  |
| Rocky Mount City Limits | City Lake-Downtown Trail     | East-West Connector                      | Reservoir Loop            |
| County Lines            | College Loop                 | Englewood Park-City Lake Rail With Trail | Tar River Trail           |
| Existing Road           | Downtown Core Loop           | Farmington Park Loop                     | Tar River Trail Extension |
| Proposed Road           | Downtown Neighborhood Loop   | Hospital-Stoney Creek Connector Trail    | West Side Connector       |
|                         | Downtown-East Side Connector | Johnson Pope-Holly Street Park Loop      | YMCA Loop                 |



# Chapter 2

neighborhoods within the original city limits. Comments regarding parks focused on parks contributing a negative impact to neighborhoods rather than a positive one. In addition, the report recommends the declaration of four existing city parks as surplus, to be used for development that supports revitalization of these neighborhoods.

## Edgecombe and Nash Counties Gang Assessment (2010)

The Edgecombe and Nash Counties Gang Assessment was completed by the Nash and Edgecombe Counties Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils through a Comprehensive Community Gang Assessment Grant in 2009. With the guidance of a 30 member steering committee that includes the Parks and Recreation Department, the assessment sought to survey and model the perceptions of the presence and impact of gangs in the community as well as suggestions for intervention and prevention.

Through the use of surveys of school-aged children, parents, residents and community leaders, the assessment documents the perceived presence and impacts of gangs in the community. Suggested strategies for prevention and intervention included questions within the surveys administered asking respondents to pick ‘the top three things you believe should be done about gangs and gang activities in your community.’ Respondents were provided with seven choices and the top three in order of highest percentage of total selections were; Programs and Recreation; Mentoring; and Job Provisions and Job Training. Almost 80% of total respondents selected Programs and Recreation.

**Relevance to Master Plan:** The Edgecombe and Nash Counties Gang Assessment captures a snap shot of the presence of gang activities and perceptions of its impact in the community. Nearly 80% of respondents indicated that programs and recreation should be considered as the top strategy to prevent and intervene gang participation and activities. This may indicate a strong desire by the community for the Parks and Recreation Department to meet an increased level of social programming in order to help with the prevention and intervention of gang activities. Impacts may include: the need for increased funding for program development and operation; development of additional community facilities; identification of new partnerships; and assessment tools to gauge effectiveness.

## 2.1.4 Previous Recreation Master Plans

### Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan (2005)

Begun in 2004, the Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan was the first plan completed after the impact of Hurricane Floyd in 1999. The Master Plan found that many of the existing conditions found in the previous master plan completed in 1999 were similar with little change in demographics and growth patterns. Though the population and growth patterns remained consistent, impacts from the hurricane were significant. Most of the impact was a result of flood damage to properties and facilities. Many of the park facilities, athletic fields, playgrounds and picnic areas were severely damaged. An additional significant impact from the hurricane was the result of property owners utilizing the FEMA Buyout Program to relocate. Some of the properties from the program were provided to the Parks and Recreation Department for management; however, due to this land being within flood prone areas, limitations exist for development on these sites. The addition of the FEMA Buyout properties significantly expanded the open space system along the Tar River and its tributaries but also increased the department’s operational and maintenance duties.

The Master Plan utilized a series of public meetings and a 25 member citizen steering committee to re-evaluate the demand for parks and recreation facilities. The findings from these methods identified a desire for additional parks and improvements to existing facilities. See **Map 5: 2005 Park Master Plan**. Specific additions included:

- Two mini parks
- Four neighborhood parks
- One community park
- One sports complex
- Two regional parks

Special use facilities that may not typically be included in traditional park amenities were also identified and are as follows:

- Downtown Urban Park
- Barbecue Park
- Historic Tree Park
- RV Campground
- Dog Park
- 18-Hole Golf Course

# Existing Conditions Overview

Participants also indicated a desire for the city to continue developing the Tar River Trail and other greenway trails, primarily within the flood-prone areas and for the implementation of the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan. Improvements to existing parks were also desired by participants and suggestions included an evaluation of all existing park sites to determine needed improvements and if underutilized or non-functional, sites maintained by the department should be divested to allow a more focused use of limited resources.

The recommended additional facilities and improvements within the 2005 Master Plan would require a total of \$46.2 million in capital improvements over a 10 year time period. This included \$38.4 million in new facilities and \$7.75 million in improvements to existing facilities.

**Relevance to Master Plan:** The 2005 Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan is the most recent assessment of community's demands for parks and recreation facilities and programs. Though this Master Plan represents the most current assessment of demands, it does not contain a statically valid assessment of needs. Most of the recommendations focused on two categories: new facilities and improvements to existing facilities. The master plan indicated a need to acquire and develop additional park sites to meet the growing needs for parkland acreage. Several of the recommended additions have not been implemented with one significant exception- the sports complex. Improvements to existing park facilities have continued as funding has permitted; however, they have not matched the time period or funding totals estimated in this Master Plan.

## Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan (1999)

The Parks and Recreation Department began their first comprehensive recreation master plan in 1998 and published the plan only months before impact by Hurricane Floyd in 1999. Though most of the recommendations made by this plan were not implemented due to the hurricane, the plan did complete a comprehensive snapshot of the community's demographics and evaluated facility totals using the National Recreation and Parks Association's (NRPA) minimum standards for park facilities.

Each park site's condition was evaluated, and specific recommendations for improvements were developed.

These included:

- Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements
- Equipment conditions
- Complete renovation of both community swimming pools
- Complete renovation of the Booker T. Washington Community Center
- Minor upgrades to the South Rocky Mount Community Center

In total, these improvements were estimated to cost \$9,615,500 in 1999 dollars. Through a series of public meetings and workshops, demand was documented for the following additional facilities:

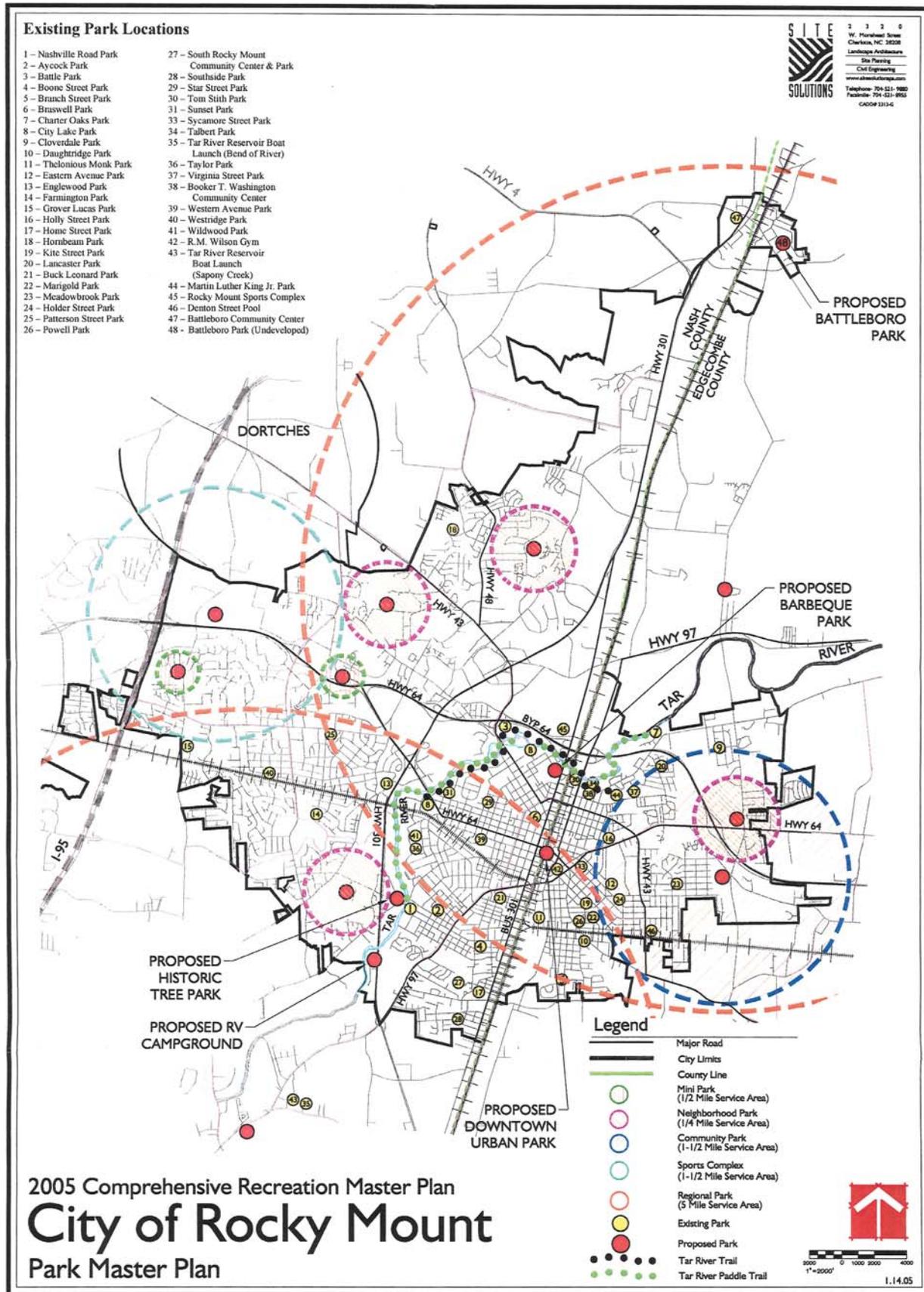
- Three community parks
- One special-use downtown park
- Five neighborhood parks
- Five mini parks
- One regional park
- A senior center
- An 18-hole golf course

These improvements were estimated to cost \$51.5 million in 1999 dollars. In addition to the facility improvements and additional facilities, needs were expressed during community meetings and workshops for the development of park design guidelines, a greenway master plan, landscape standards and neighborhood park and recreation transportation.

**Relevance to Master Plan:** The 1999 Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan was the last plan approved by City Council for the Parks and Recreation system. Recommendations from this plan were largely left unimplemented in the wake of the damage caused by Hurricane Floyd. Since the 1999 plan, the city has gained additional open space through the FEMA Buyout Program, which may help meet some of the needs identified. Through the early 2000s, Rocky Mount has continued to grow and, while park and recreation trends have changed, the demographic characteristics of Rocky Mount have remained consistent.

# Chapter 2

Map 5: Comprehensive Park Master Plan, City of Rocky Mount Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan 2005



# Existing Conditions Overview

## 2.1.5 Summary

and/or operational funds, the department can continue to be a regional leader in providing services and meet recreational needs.

Review of existing or previously completed plans and studies will help recommendations developed through this master planning process progress into implementation through the leveraging and partnering of funding sources and achievement. From helping meet the needs of the Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan, to helping prevent and intervene gang activity, to implementing a new greenway or previously demanded park facility, this plan will seek to match needs with sources and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Previous comprehensive recreation master plans have depended on public workshops or meetings and/or steering committees to determine facilities' needs. Though it is useful to survey existing participants and interested parties' demands, it does not provide a statistically valid picture of the community's needs. Many of the recommendations from previous master plans included additional facilities to meet the city's growing population; however, these plans did not provide adequate information for identifying funding for these capital improvements and their associated operating costs. Most of these projects have not been implemented in their planned timeframe, which allows the city to pause and take a new look at community needs versus demands.

As a vital infrastructure of the city's fabric, the parks and recreation system has grown in size and complexity over its more than 100-year history, just as the city has itself. The parks system now consists of 43 named parks, over 650 acres of maintained parkland and open space, two swimming pools, two splash pads, a sports complex, seven miles of greenway trails and approximately 100 acres of cemeteries. The diversity of this system is vast. However, as a vital piece of the community's fabric the system must still strive to integrate with recommended improvements to the city's bicycle, pedestrian, and transit transportation systems, revitalization projects, crime prevention efforts and economic developments.

Through the incorporation of strategic facilities or programs, the Parks and Recreation Department can easily adapt to provide multiple benefits where two needs exist. With the addition of capital improvement funding

# Chapter 2

## Section 2.2 | Population and Demographics

### 2.2.1 Overview

Better understanding the demographic and population changes and trends will allow this Master Plan to respond to citizens’ needs and help build a stronger community. As essential elements to the quality of life in Rocky Mount, parks and recreation facilities are not places, but spaces that respond to unique experiences and activities. The first step in analyzing the community’s demographics and population is to identify trends in historic data as well as future projections. Although this data is static in nature, analysis will allow the city to make more informed decisions based on trends that may impact the delivery of services over the next 10 years. **Figure 3** shows existing wards based on 2000 U.S. Census data.

In the last two decades prior to 2010, Rocky Mount has experienced significant growth with population rising from approximately 49,000 in 1990 to 57,477 in 2010. With this increase in population the characteristics and needs for parks and recreation have changed. Three main categories have been analyzed: population growth; population characteristics; and housing characteristics. The following sections highlight significant findings.

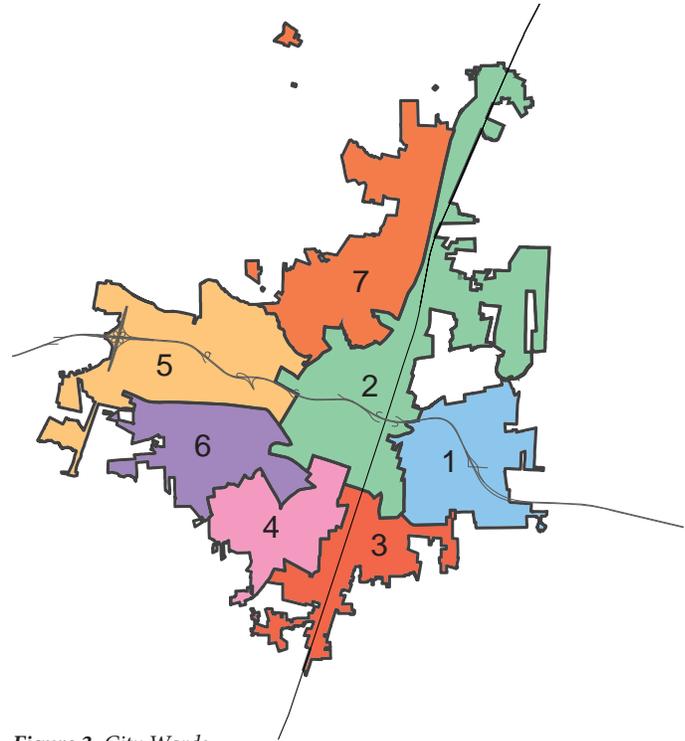


Figure 3: City Wards

### 2.2.2 Population Growth

The City of Rocky Mount has enjoyed a recent period of significant growth, resulting in an over 17% increase in total population since 1990 and a projected 27% growth by 2040. See **Table 1**. This growth, however, has not occurred evenly over the last 20-plus years. From 1990 to 2000, population grew by 14%, but slowed to only 2.8% after 2000. Projections by the Rocky Mount Urban Area MPO estimate that this slowing of population will be a continued trend with a projected 2.5% growth between 2010 and 2020. In correlation to the population growth, population density patterns have changed. **Map 6:** City of

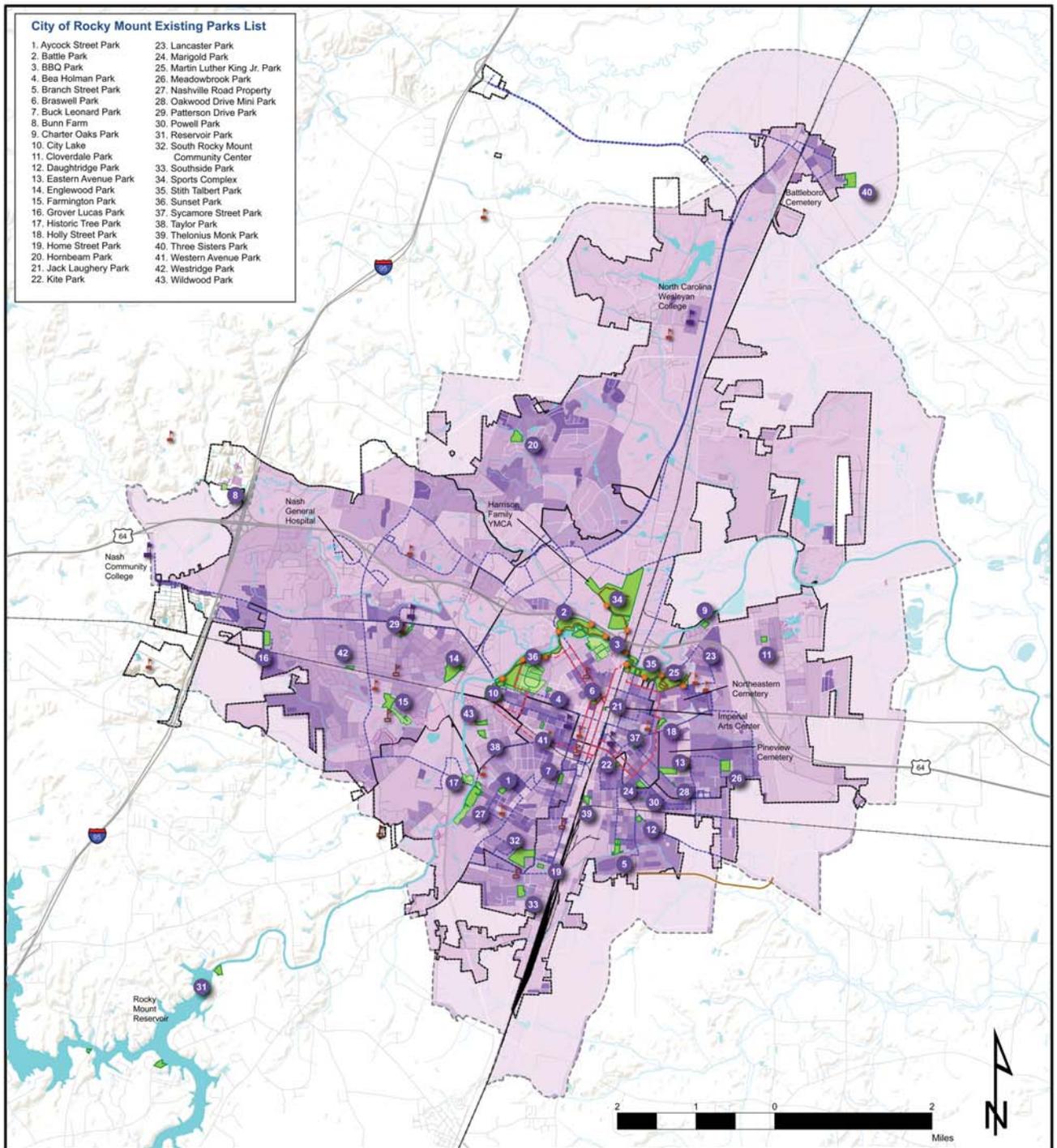
Table 1: City of Rocky Mount, Surrounding Counties and North Carolina Population Projections

Area	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population	2020 Population	2030 Population	2040 Population	1990-2040 % Increase
City of Rocky Mount	49,000	55,900	57,477	58,914	60,387	62,212	+27%
Edgecombe County	56,558	55,606	56,552	54,348	52,308	52,200	-7.7%
Nash County	76,677	87,420	95,840	99,320	102,834	104,045	+35.7%
North Carolina	6,662,473	8,049,313	10,629,051	11,712,234	11,712,234	13,500,000	+102%

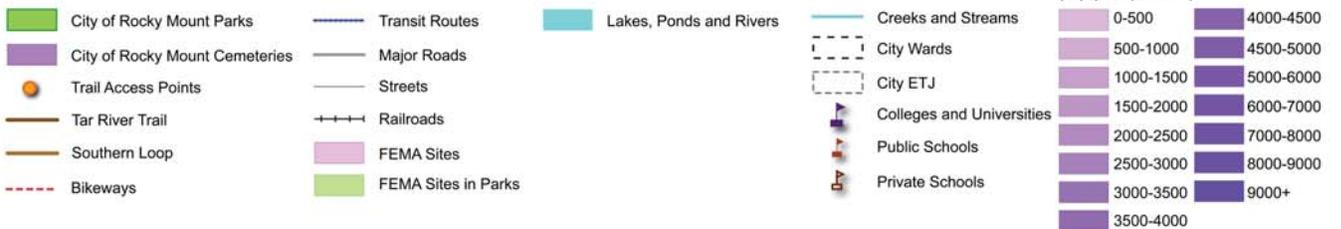
Source: Rocky Mount Urban Area MPO and US Census Bureau, 2010

# Existing Conditions Overview

Map 6: City of Rocky Mount Population Density, 2010



## Legend



# Chapter 2

Rocky Mount Population Density in 2010, shows that older areas or areas within the original city limits have some of the highest population density, while areas within Nash County near the fringe of the city limits have lower population density. This may be a result of larger residential lots and developments being spaced further apart and less walkable.

Since the period of historic growth in the 1990s, Rocky Mount has experienced a number of events which together have contributed to a slowing in population growth. These events include: the 1999 impact of Hurricane Floyd; two economic recessions, one minor recession in the early 2000s and a significant recession in the late 2000s, which continues to have lasting effects in the Rocky Mount economy; an evolving labor force; heightened crime levels or increase perception of crime; changing housing market conditions; and finite resources for development.

Through these continuing challenges, however, the City of Rocky Mount is projected to continue to grow in population. This growth will result in additional needs for parkland and recreation facilities. As the Comprehensive Plan envisioned, future growth will be targeted in planned Smart Growth areas and/or identified infill locations. This type of growth typically serves cities well as dense planned growth may include highly walkable neighborhoods and infill development typically can rely on existing infrastructure. Parks and recreation facilities near large infill sites may need to be re-envisioned to meet the needs of a new or changing population nearby. If no existing

parks are within access of infill sites, new locations may need to be identified but will typically enjoy the existing street network and utilities.

Population growth, however, has not occurred evenly. Edgecombe County experienced a slight population decrease which is projected to increase in future decades, while Nash County's growth more closely resembles that of Rocky Mount with recent historic growth but a slowing in the near future. This trend is evident in the population of Rocky Mount, which is bisected by both counties and has experienced the most physical growth in the Nash County portion over the last two decades.

## 2.2.3 Population Characteristics

While total population and growth can help to determine park and greenway trail level of service goals, population characteristics can help to define what type of facilities will serve the community best. The 2010 U.S. Census data for the City of Rocky Mount presents a snapshot of population trends. When compared to data from 2000 and from Nash and Edgecombe Counties, the data is put into a temporal and geographic context. 2010 U.S. Census data has been combined with data from the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) to get the most recent overall characteristics. This research, among other factors, will help determine needs for parks and facilities.

**Table 2: Race and Ethnicity in the City of Rocky Mount, Surrounding Counties and North Carolina 2000-2010**

Race & Ethnicity (% of pop.)	City of Rocky Mount			Edgecombe County			Nash County			North Carolina		
	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change
White	40.9%	33.5%	-7.4%	40.1%	38.8%	-1.3%	61.9%	55.9%	-6.0%	72.1%	68.5%	-3.6%
Black/ African-American	56.0%	61.3%	5.3%	57.5%	57.4%	-0.1%	33.9%	37.2%	3.3%	21.6%	21.5%	-0.1%
American Indian	0.3%	0.6%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	0.7%	0.2%	1.2%	1.3%	0.1%
Asian	0.7%	1.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.6%	0.8%	0.2%	1.4%	2.2%	0.8%
Other Race	0.9%	2.1%	1.2%	1.6%	2.3%	0.7%	2.1%	3.8%	1.7%	2.3%	4.3%	2.0%
Two or More Races	1.1%	1.6%	0.5%	0.6%	1.0%	0.4%	1.0%	1.6%	0.6%	1.3%	2.2%	0.9%
Hispanic/ Latino (any race)	1.8%	3.7%	1.9%	2.8%	3.7%	0.9%	3.4%	6.3%	2.9%	4.7%	8.4%	3.7%

Source: US Census, 2000 and 2010

# Existing Conditions Overview

**Table 3: Population by age in the City of Rocky Mount, Surrounding Counties and North Carolina 2000-2010**

Age (% of pop.)	City of Rocky Mount			Edgecombe County			Nash County			North Carolina		
	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change
Under 5	7.0%	6.7%	-0.3%	6.8%	6.6%	-0.2%	6.6%	6.1%	-0.5%	6.7%	6.6%	-0.1%
5 to 9 years	8.3%	6.6%	-1.7%	7.8%	6.7%	-1.1%	7.4%	6.5%	-0.9%	7.0%	6.7%	-0.3%
10 to 14 years	8.0%	6.7%	-1.3%	8.0%	6.7%	-1.3%	7.3%	6.9%	-0.4%	6.8%	6.6%	-0.2%
15 to 19 years	7.1%	7.5%	0.4%	7.2%	7.2%	0.0%	6.7%	7.0%	0.3%	6.7%	6.9%	0.2%
20 to 24 years	6.2%	6.4%	0.2%	5.9%	6.1%	0.2%	5.9%	5.6%	-0.3%	7.2%	6.9%	-0.3%
25 to 34 years	13.1%	11.8%	-1.3%	12.6%	11.7%	-0.9%	13.8%	11.5%	-2.3%	15.1%	13.1%	-2.0%
35 to 44 years	15.4%	12.2%	-3.2%	15.8%	12.0%	-3.8%	16.3%	13.4%	-2.9%	16.0%	13.9%	-2.1%
45 to 54 years	13.8%	14.8%	1.0%	14.3%	15.1%	0.8%	14.6%	15.5%	0.9%	13.5%	14.3%	0.8%
55 to 64 years	8.1%	13.1%	5.0%	9.1%	13.8%	4.7%	9.0%	13.6%	4.6%	9.0%	11.9%	2.9%
65 to 74 years	6.7%	7.6%	0.9%	6.9%	8.0%	1.1%	6.8%	7.8%	1.0%	6.6%	7.3%	0.7%
75 to 84 years	4.9%	4.7%	-0.2%	4.3%	4.5%	0.2%	4.4%	4.5%	0.1%	4.1%	4.0%	-0.1%
85 years or older	1.4%	1.9%	0.5%	1.3%	1.7%	0.4%	1.2%	1.7%	0.5%	1.3%	1.5%	0.2%
Median Age	35.2	40.6	5.4	36.2	39.6	3.4	36.5	39.9	3.4	35.3	37.4	2.1

Source: US Census, 2000 and 2010

## Race/Ethnicity

The City of Rocky Mount is racially diverse. Notably from 2000 to 2010, the white population declined from 40.9% to 33.5%, whereas the African-American population increased from 56.0% to 61.3% (see **Table 2**). In fact, the percentages of all minority populations have increased since 2000. Asian population increased by 0.3% to 1.0% in 2010, and people who defined themselves as “Other Race” increased from 0.9% to 2.1%. Ethnically, Rocky Mount is also becoming more diverse, with the Hispanic/Latino community growing from 1.8% in 2000 to 3.7% in 2010. The race and ethnicity trends of Rocky Mount closely parallel those of Edgecombe County. However, Nash County has a higher percentage of their overall population who are white, 22.4% higher than Rocky Mount. Overall trends include a continued growth in diversity, matching both Nash and Edgecombe and the state of North Carolina. The city is also experiencing growth in ethnicity diversity with a significant growth in persons of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, but still is lower than the percentage of population claiming that ethnicity in Nash County and in the state.

## Age

Rocky Mount residents are collectively aging faster as a city than both Edgecombe and Nash Counties and over twice the rate in North Carolina. The median age within the city has increased from 35.2 years of age in 2000 to 40.6 years of age in 2010, a 5.4 year increase, whereas the state’s

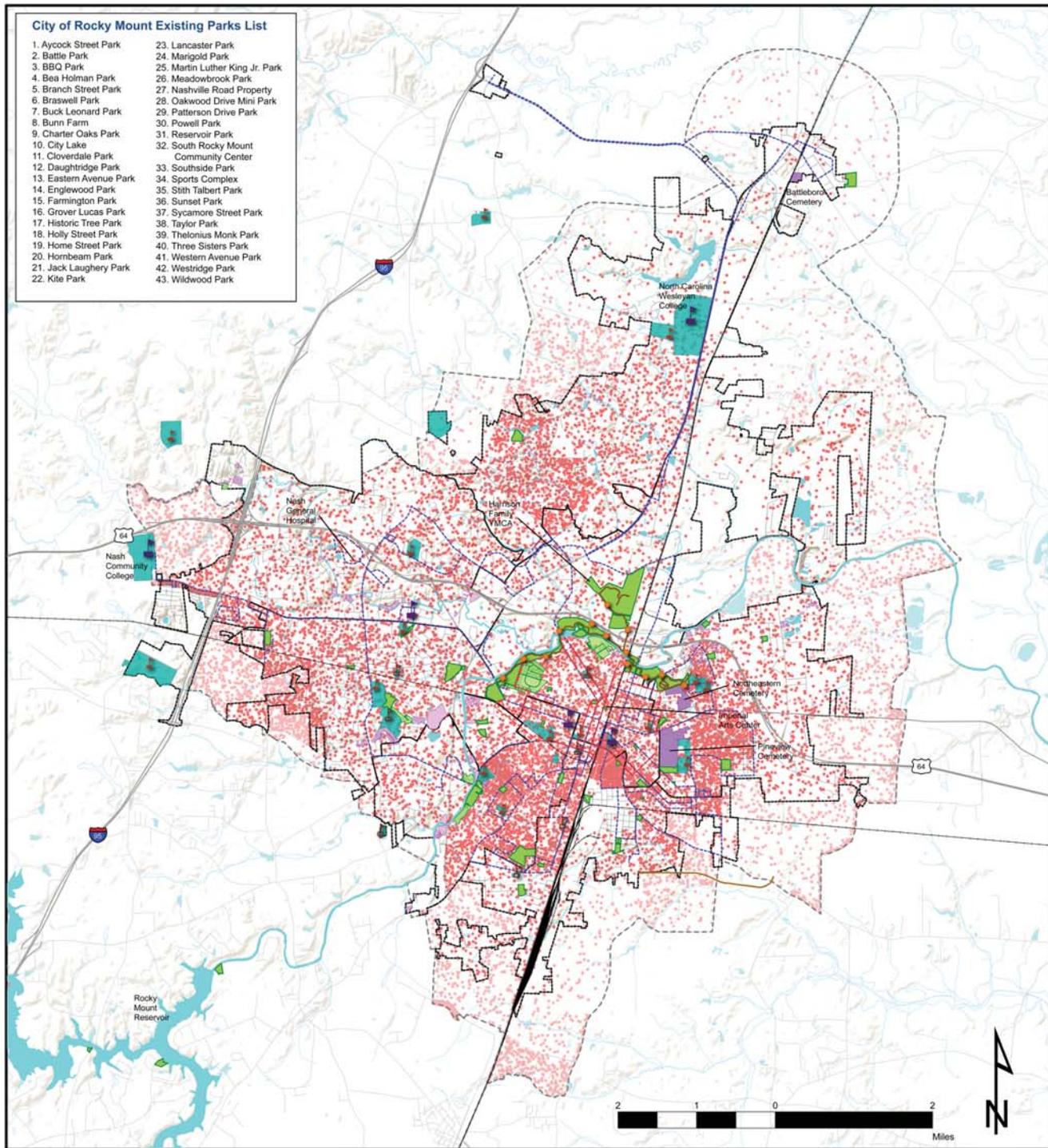
median age increased by 2.1 years over the same period of time. To better understand this increase in overall age, individual age groups have been analyzed and compared (see **Table 3**).

Total population below 14 years of age in Rocky Mount collectively dropped 3.3% since 2000. This is more than five times the decrease that the state of North Carolina experienced and roughly double that of Nash County. To better understand where school age children live, a map has been prepared to show where children are located in comparison to schools and parks (**Map 7**). Note on the map a high density level of school age children in the western side of the City with fewer park sites. An increase to 7.5% in the number of households of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity with children under the age of 10 will lead to an increase in the portion of future teenagers of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity during the span of this plan. The 55 to 64 age group experienced the highest percentage increase, 5%, and may reflect the aging Baby Boomer generation. Though the city’s changes in age reflect trends that are occurring across the state as whole, these changes are being amplified in Rocky Mount which may mean that the city will have a higher impact from an aging population.

Just as it did with changing trends in race and ethnicity, the City of Rocky Mount’s changes in age closely parallel those of Edgecombe County; however, the city’s median age increased more than Edgecombe County’s.

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Map 7: City of Rocky Mount Youth Population Distribution, 2010



## Legend

- |                                |                     |                             |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| City of Rocky Mount Parks      | Transit Routes      | Lakes, Ponds and Rivers     | Creeks and Streams        |
| City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries | Major Roads         | School Site                 | City Wards                |
| Trail Access Points            | Streets             | <b>Youth Population</b>     | City ETJ                  |
| Tar River Trail                | Railroads           | Number of Children Under 19 | Colleges and Universities |
| Southern Loop                  | FEMA Sites          | = 1 Child                   | Public Schools            |
| Bikeways                       | FEMA Sites in Parks |                             | Private Schools           |

# Existing Conditions Overview

## Gender

Typically, populations do not witness extreme changes in gender unless a major event occurs, such as the closing of a military base. In 2010, the U.S. Census indicated that 54.2% of Rocky Mount residents were women, an increase of 0.2% from 2000 (see **Table 4**). In Edgecombe County, the gender ratio also shifted slightly more in favor of women, with an increase of 0.1% for a total of 53.6%. The opposite shift occurred in Nash County, which saw a decrease in the percentage of women by 0.2%. The trend in changing gender percentages is similar to that for the state; however, the overall percentage of the population who are women is higher in Rocky Mount than both Edgecombe and Nash Counties and the state.

## Income

Rocky Mount residents have experienced an increase in median household income between 2000 and 2010, from \$32,661 to \$37,059 (see **Table 5**). This increase of \$4,398 is higher than what households experienced in Edgecombe County, but was not as much as households experienced in Nash County and across North Carolina.

Similar to trends seen across North Carolina and in Edgecombe and Nash Counties, households with incomes below \$35,000 annually decreased in Rocky Mount by 4.7%, while households with income higher than \$100,000 increased 3.3%. These trends, along with the absolute increase in total household income, may indicate a higher level of disposable income for households in the city.

When inflation, as calculated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index, is applied, the 2000 income figure of \$32,661 would equal the same buying power as \$41,358 in 2010. Although absolute income has increased, households have actually experienced a marked decrease in purchasing power. Nash County and the state fared slightly better with higher percentage increases in the top three income ranges and higher absolute income increases.

## Educational Attainment

Between 2000 and 2010 Rocky Mount residents' educational attainment levels increased slightly, with 26.1% of the population having obtained an associates degree. The proportion of residents who have not graduated high school decreased by 6.2%, as shown in **Table 6**. This trend

is similar to Edgecombe and Nash Counties: however, Edgecombe County has experienced an even sharper drop in the proportion of the residents who have not graduated high school, with a 13.6% drop to Nash County's 4.9% drop for the same education attainment level. Compared to the State of North Carolina, Rocky Mount has a lower level of educational attainment in the associates degrees, Bachelors degrees and Masters degree or higher level degrees.

## Employment

The economic downturn strongly affected the City of Rocky Mount residents' employment. Between 2000 and 2010, the City of Rocky Mount's unemployment rate increased from 5.6% to 8.6% (see **Table 7**). Likewise, unemployment in Edgecombe County increased 3.9% to 9.6% in 2010, while Nash County experienced an increase from 2.9% to 6.3%

## Mode of Commute

The type of transportation Rocky Mount residents used to travel to work changed little between 2000 and 2010 (see **Table 8**). In the city, the only notable change is that people who drove alone increased by 3.1% to 82.8%, which is higher than the state-wide rate, and those who carpooled decreased by 3.7%. Despite the increase in percentage of workers driving alone, the mean travel time to work decreased from 19.4 minutes to 18.6 minutes. The rate of commuters who walked to work dropped from 1.2% to 0.9%, which is half the statewide rate of 1.8%. Other modes saw an increase from 1.1% to 1.5%, which may include an increased amount of commuters bicycling to work.

### 2.2.3 Housing Characteristics

Demographics are usually thought of in terms of people, but an overview of the city's housing characteristics can provide additional trends and details about the population. For example, high levels of homeownership typically signify stable communities, whereas high levels of vacancy can indicate a struggling local economy. The number of new residential units not only mirror population growth, but can also provide clues as to how densely a community is growing based on residential building type and annexations.

In absolute numbers, the amount of housing in the City of

# Chapter 2

**Table 4: Gender as a Percentage of Population in the City of Rocky Mount, Surrounding Counties and North Carolina 2000-2010**

Gender (% of pop.)	City of Rocky Mount			Edgecombe County			Nash County			North Carolina		
	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change
Male	46.0%	45.8%	-0.2%	46.5%	46.4%	-0.1%	48.1%	48.3%	0.2%	49%	48.7%	-0.3%
Female	54.0%	54.2%	0.2%	53.5%	53.6%	0.1%	51.9%	51.7%	-0.2%	51.0%	51.3%	0.3%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010

**Table 5: Household Income in the City of Rocky Mount, Surrounding Counties and North Carolina 2000-2010**

Household Income (% of pop.)	City of Rocky Mount			Edgecombe County			Nash County			North Carolina		
	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change
Less than \$10,000	15.8%	13.4%	-2.4%	16.3%	14.0%	-2.3%	11.9%	9.8%	-2.1%	10.5%	8.6%	-1.9%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	7.8%	7.9%	0.1%	7.8%	11.1%	3.3%	8.0%	7.8%	-0.2%	6.4%	6.4%	0.0%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	15.4%	14.3%	-1.1%	16.9%	15.5%	-1.4%	13.6%	12.2%	-1.4%	13.8%	12.3%	-1.5%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	13.6%	12.4%	-1.2%	14.6%	11.6%	-3.0%	13.5%	11.7%	-1.8%	13.9%	12.0%	-1.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15.8%	15.4%	-0.4%	18.4%	15.1%	-3.3%	17.2%	16.3%	-0.9%	17.7%	15.4%	-2.3%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.3%	16.8%	0.5%	16.3%	16.5%	0.2%	19.3%	17.7%	-1.6%	8.4%	10.8%	2.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	7.4%	8.4%	1.0%	5.7%	9.3%	3.6%	8.4%	10.8%	2.4%	8.9%	11.1%	2.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5.1%	7.3%	2.2%	2.7%	5.6%	2.9%	2.4%	5.4%	3.0%	6.0%	9.7%	3.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1.2%	1.5%	0.3%	0.8%	0.6%	-0.2%	1.3%	2.4%	1.1%	1.6%	3.1%	1.5%
\$200,000 or more	1.6%	2.4%	0.8%	0.7%	0.6%	-0.1%	1.4%	2.2%	0.8%	1.8%	2.9%	1.1%
Median Income	\$32,661	\$37,059	+4,398	\$30,983	\$32,935	+1,952	\$37,147	\$42,499	+\$5,352	\$39,184	\$44,958	+5,774

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010

**Table 6: Educational Attainment in the City of Rocky Mount, Surrounding Counties and North Carolina 2000-2010**

Education (% of pop. 25 or older)	City of Rocky Mount			Edgecombe County			Nash County			North Carolina		
	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change
Less than 9th grade	9.6%	8.1%	-1.5%	12.6%	9.2%	-3.4%	9.5%	7.1%	-2.4%	7.8%	6.0%	-1.8%
9th-12th grade/no diploma	16.3%	11.6%	-4.7%	21.8%	11.6%	-10.2%	14.8%	12.3%	-2.5%	14.0%	9.9%	-4.1%
High school graduate	30.5%	31.0%	0.5%	36.9%	36.3%	-0.6%	33.9%	33.6%	-0.3%	28.4%	27.5%	-0.9%
Some college/no degrees	17.8%	23.1%	5.3%	15.4%	24.7%	9.3%	18.2%	21.8%	3.6%	20.5%	21.8%	1.3%
Associate degree	5.7%	7.3%	1.6%	4.8%	7.6%	2.8%	6.3%	7.3%	1.0%	6.8%	8.4%	1.6%
Bachelor's degree	14.1%	14.5%	0.4%	6.1%	8.4%	2.3%	12.4%	13.5%	1.1%	15.3%	17.6%	2.3%
Master's degree or higher	6.1%	4.3%	-1.8%	2.4%	2.1%	-0.3%	4.8%	4.4%	-0.4%	7.2%	8.7%	1.5%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010

**Table 7: Employment in the City of Rocky Mount, Surrounding Counties and North Carolina 2000-2010**

Employment (% of pop. over 16)	City of Rocky Mount			Edgecombe County			Nash County			North Carolina		
	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change
% in Labor Force	60.6%	61.0%	0.4%	59.4%	59.5%	0.1%	62.1%	64.0%	1.9%	65.7%	64.8%	-0.9%
% Unemployed	5.6%	8.6%	3.0%	5.7%	9.6%	3.9%	3.4%	6.3%	2.9%	3.4%	6.4%	3.0%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010

# Existing Conditions Overview

**Table 8: Mode of Commute in the City of Rocky Mount, Surrounding Counties and North Carolina 2000-2010**

Commute (% of workers)	City of Rocky Mount			Edgecombe County			Nash County			North Carolina		
	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change
Drove Alone	79.7%	82.8%	3.1%	77.45	81.0%	3.6%	82.5%	84.4%	1.9%	79.4%	80.9%	1.5%
Carpooled	14.8%	11.1%	-3.7%	16.5%	13.7%	-2.8%	13.4%	10.6%	-2.8%	14.0%	10.8%	-3.2%
Public Transit	1.2%	1.4%	0.2%	1.6%	0.8%	-0.8%	0.4%	0.5%	0.1%	0.9%	1.1%	0.2%
Walked	1.2%	0.9%	-0.3%	1.5%	1.4%	-0.1%	1.0%	1.4%	0.4%	1.9%	1.8%	-0.1%
Other	1.1%	1.5%	0.4%	1.1%	1.9%	0.8%	0.8%	1.2%	0.4%	1.1%	1.2%	0.1%
Worked at Home	2.0%	2.3%	0.3%	1.9%	1.3%	-0.6%	1.9%	1.8%	-0.1%	2.7%	4.1%	1.4%
Mean Travel Time (min)	19.4	18.6	-0.8	21.0	21.2	0.2	22.7	21.6	-1.1	24.0	23.4	-0.6

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010

**Table 9: Housing Occupancy in the City of Rocky Mount, Surrounding Counties and North Carolina 2000-2010**

Housing Occupancy	City of Rocky Mount			Edgecombe County			Nash County			North Carolina		
	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change
Total Housing Units	24,167	26,953	+2,786	24,002	24,838	+836	37,051	42,286	+5,235	3,523,944	4,327,528	+803,584
% Units Occupied	88.7%	85.7%	-3.0%	85.0%	87.3%	2.3%	90.8%	89.3%	-1.5%	88.9%	86.5%	-2.4%
% Vacant	11.3%	14.3%	3.0%	15.0%	12.7%	-2.3%	9.2%	10.7%	1.5%	11.1%	13.5%	2.4%
% Owner-Occupied	55.0%	52.5%	-2.5%	64.1%	62.2%	-1.9%	67.7%	64.8%	-2.9%	69.4%	66.7%	-2.7%
% Renter-Occupied	45.0%	47.5%	2.5%	35.9%	37.8%	1.9%	32.3%	35.2%	2.9%	30.6%	33.3%	2.7%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010

**Table 10: Household Types in the City of Rocky Mount, Surrounding Counties and North Carolina 2000-2010**

Household Type (% of pop.)	City of Rocky Mount			Edgecombe County			Nash County			North Carolina		
	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change
Family w/ kids under 18	32.9%	27.3%	-5.6%	32.8%	27.1%	-5.7%	32.7%	29.0%	-3.7%	31.8%	29.6%	-2.2%
Family w/o kids under 18	35.6%	36.1%	0.5%	39.8%	41.4%	1.6%	38.4%	39.2%	0.8%	37.1%	37.1%	0.0%
Non-Family	31.5%	36.6%	5.1%	27.4%	31.5%	4.1%	28.9%	31.8%	2.9%	31.1%	33.3%	2.2%
HHs w/ people under 18	38.0%	32.8%	-5.2%	39.8%	33.6%	-6.2%	36.9%	33.5%	-3.4%	35.3%	33.3%	2.0%
HHs w/ people over 65	24.4%	26.6%	2.2%	25.4%	28.2%	2.8%	23.3%	26.1%	2.8%	21.8%	23.9%	2.1%
Avg. HH size	2.55	2.42	-0.13	2.67	2.54	-0.13	2.54	2.48	-0.06	2.49	2.48	-0.01
Avg. family size	3.11	3.04	-0.07	3.16	3.08	-0.08	3.02	3.01	-0.01	2.98	3.01	0.03

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010 HH = Household

# Chapter 2

Rocky Mount grew by 2,786 units between 2000 and 2010, (as shown in **Table 9**), an increase of 11.5%. Edgecombe County experienced an increase of 3.5% while Nash County experienced a significantly higher increase of 14.2%. The rate of growth in the number of households in Rocky Mount far outpaced the growth in population between 2000 and 2010, 11.5% household growth compared to 2.8% population growth. This may indicate a decrease in the household size and/or an increase in the number of vacant properties.

Owner-occupied housing units decreased by 2.5% between 2000 and 2010 to a level that is 14.2% below the statewide rate of 66.7%. This may indicate a less stable community with a higher rate of transient households.

The most common type of household in the City of Rocky Mount is the non-family, which comprises 36.6% of all households, see **Table 10**. This type of household is typically single-person, multi-person unmarried or student housing. Family households without children under the age of 18 were a close second representing 36.1% of households. Family households with children under the age of 18 decreased by 5.6%. Total number of households with people under the age of 18 dropped 5.2%, which signified a slight increase in the number of non-family households with children under the age of 18. Overall, the absolute number of households with a person under the age of 18 has dropped 13.6% since 2000.

Households with a person over the age of 65 increased by 2.2%, which resulted in an absolute increase of 9%. The average household size dropped by 0.13 to 3.13 people, which matches that of Edgecombe County, but is a larger decrease than Nash County at 0.06 and the state-wide average at 0.01. One area of difference is that the average family size, although it is decreasing, still remains slightly above the U.S. average of 3.14 people.

## 2.2.4 Summary

With an understanding of Rocky Mount's population, the next step is to apply these findings to parks and recreation needs. What does this population growth, characteristics and housing mean for the next 10 years of parks and recreation planning?

### Population Growth

The City of Rocky Mount experienced rapid growth in population over the 1990s, but this trend has slowed between 2000 and 2010 and is projected to continue to slow over the next 10 years. The exceptional growth in the 1990s presented the city with the challenge of building new parks and facilities that are accessible by those living where the growth occurred. Many of these facilities are represented in the previous recreation master plans completed in 1999 and 2005, but most of these facilities have not been constructed.

Over the next 10 years, the city has the opportunity to 'catch up' with the remaining needs from previous growth and plan for future, slower growth. Building for prior growth and managing/ replacing aging facilities at the same time can be a difficult task for many cities at a time of slower economic growth. The next section of this chapter will look at the overall condition and appearance of parks and facilities to determine this need.

It is also important to note that the slowing of growth for the City of Rocky Mount over the next 30 years (8% projected growth) is estimated to match that of Nash County. This is essential in that the city's percentage of tax revenue from the county will remain comparatively level over the next 30 years. Depending on the quality and location of other municipalities' or county services the city may still be expected by citizens to provide regional facilities and services.

### Population Characteristics

Rocky Mount has continued to become more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. From a parks and recreation perspective, this means that the city will be increasingly called upon to serve a broader range of needs, and developing flexible parks and facilities will be key. Taken a step further, the city has an opportunity to provide

# Existing Conditions Overview

community gathering places and special events to help bring different groups together and foster a spirit of community.

Rocky Mount's age profile is significantly changing in a big way. Over the last decade the city has aged faster than nearby communities and the state as a whole. This has contributed to two shifts in age: a growing Baby Boomer generation which is primary 'aging in place' or choosing to stay in Rocky Mount through retirement; and a decreased number of children. The city will need to consider how to improve the accessibility of its parks to meet an aging population's needs; there may also be an increased demand for walking trails and community centers, while a decrease in children may lead to the need to refocus programming opportunities and consolidate amenities such as playgrounds, athletic fields and others as replacement timeframes permit. A growing number of households with children under the age of 10 are of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity. These children will mature to be the future teenagers at the completion of this plan.

Like those in most of our country, Rocky Mount residents have suffered as a result of the economic downturn, and now have significantly less purchasing power than in 2000. It is essential that parks and recreation opportunities remain affordable, and that the city provides affordable recreation and leisure alternatives. As recommendations from the City's Pedestrian Plan and Bicycle Master Plan are implemented, opportunities to incorporate multi-modal needs into parks will increase. For the time being, single-occupancy vehicles are the primary mode of transportation.

## Housing

Home ownership has decreased in Rocky Mount and a relatively high percentage of households are renters, potentially leading to a more transient population with rapidly changing neighborhood needs for parks and recreation. Where growth has occurred in the last few decades, neighborhoods lack sidewalks. Implementing the City's Pedestrian Plan and Bicycle Master Plan will help address the issue of access to facilities in these areas. Parks and open spaces contribute significantly to quality of life and can ultimately help make the city a place where people want to move to and stay. This improves the tax base, and provides stability and security to neighborhoods.

## Conclusion

The City of Rocky Mount continues to grow and diversify. Historic trends in population growth may mean the city needs to 'catch up' to its needs in areas that experienced growth. The city's changing age profile is important when considering access and renovations to existing parks and facilities as the city has an aging population and fewer children. Demands for specific facilities and services may change over the next 10 years to reflect a growing Baby Boomers age group and fewer young families with children.

# Chapter 2



# Existing Conditions Overview

## Section 2.3 | Existing Parks Matrix

### 2.3.1 Existing Parks Matrix

With a better understanding of current and future population trends within Rocky Mount, the system overview can turn towards existing parks. In order to observe systemwide successes or opportunities, the Master Plan team reviewed an analysis of all 43 parks completed in 2012 by the Parks and Recreation Department. The evaluation report included recommendations for each site. The Master Plan team reviewed this document and developed a matrix that included five measurements that could be learned through the review of the 2012 evaluation. These five areas include: serving the local population or use of the park/facility; appearance; condition; accessibility; and appropriate function.

Parks were ranked 1-5 for each area with 1 representing the lowest score and 5 representing the highest score. Overall scores are ranked as follows:

5 = Excellent
4 = Good
3 = Average
2 = Needs Improvements
1 = Needs Significant Improvements

In order to test the reliance of the information from the 2012 evaluation, the Master Plan team asked steering committee members to visit randomly selected parks and rank their observations using the same scoring indicators, **Table 11**. The intent of the test was to compare final scores and whether these scores would be similar to those gained through a review of the 2012 park evaluation report. In some cases, multiple evaluations of parks were completed by steering committee members. Scores were averaged for these parks, and the average score was used to compare. Results differ only slightly from the Master Plan team's evaluations and may be attributed to level of experience.

*Table 11: Steering Committee Park Evaluations. October, 2013*

	Services Residents/ Used	Appearance	Condition	Accessibility	Appropriate Function	Overall (Average)
<b>Battle Park</b>	2.6	3.3	3.3	2.7	3.5	<b>3.1</b>
<b>Charter Oaks Park</b>	3.2	4.5	2.9	2.8	3.7	<b>3.4</b>
<b>Cloverdale Park</b>	3.7	3.7	2.6	3.3	4.0	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Hornbeam Park</b>	2.8	3.4	2.5	2.2	3.0	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Lancaster Park</b>	3.0	3.0	3.4	3.0	3.9	<b>3.3</b>
<b>MLK Jr. Park</b>	3.2	3.9	3.9	4.8	3.8	<b>3.9</b>
<b>Sports Complex</b>	2.8	4.4	4.9	4.5	4.4	<b>4.2</b>
<b>Stith Talbot Park</b>	4.0	3.8	4.3	4.4	3.5	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Three Sisters Park</b>	3.8	4.2	4.0	2.8	3.3	<b>3.6</b>

Results from the review of the 2012 evaluation are shown in **Table 12**. Parks are organized by City Ward with averages measured for each Ward. This is done to determine if patterns of park performance are specific to City Wards. Park averages have also been mapped in order to determine if there are any performance patterns that are geographic. See **Map 8: Park Ratings**.

It is also important to note that not all of the properties managed by the Parks and Recreation Department are currently public parks. A number of properties were gained by the department as a result of the flooding from Hurricane Floyd in 1999. These properties were added through the FEMA Buyout Program. **Map 9: FEMA Buyout Program Sites**, identifies these properties in two categories: FEMA sites and FEMA sites as parks. In addition to the Parks and Recreation Department's management of FEMA sites, other city departments, notably Public Works, may oversee additional sites.

# Chapter 2

\* Barbecue Park was under construction at the time of the 2012 park review

Table 12: Park Rating Results, 2012

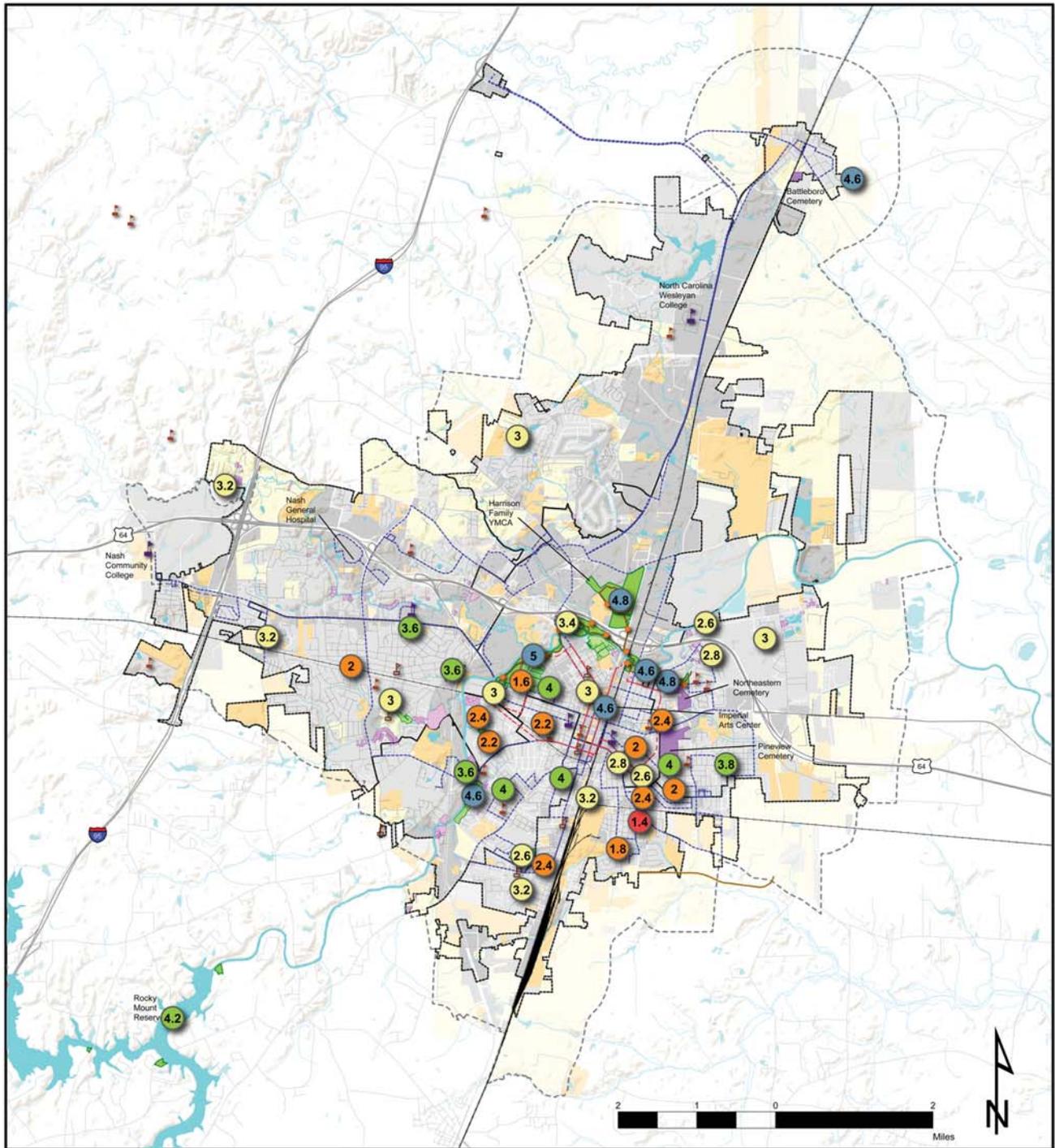
How to read the Matrix: Criteria are listed in the top row. Scores are based on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest score, and 5 representing the highest score possible. These scores are averaged to find the park or facility's overall score.	Serves Residents/ Used	Appearance	Condition	Accessibility	Appropriate Function	Overall (Average)
<b>Trails and Parks Outside City ETJ</b>						
City Trail System	4	5	4	5	4	4.4
Tar River Paddle Trail	4	5	5	4	5	4.6
Tar River Reservoir and Recreation Area	3	5	4	4	5	4.2
<b>Trails and Parks Outside City ETJ Averages</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.4</b>
<b>City Ward 1 Parks</b>						
Charter Oaks Park	1	4	4	2	2	2.6
Cloverdale Park	3	3	4	2	3	3.0
Eastern Avenue Park	5	4	4	3	4	4.0
Holly Street Park	2	3	3	2	2	2.4
Lancaster Park	3	3	3	2	3	2.8
Martin Luther King Jr Park	5	5	4	5	5	4.8
Meadowbrook Park	4	4	3	4	4	3.8
Oakwood Drive Mini Park	1	3	3	2	1	2.0
<b>City Ward 1 Averages</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>City Ward 2 Parks</b>						
Battle Park	3	3	2	5	4	3.4
Barbecue Park*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bea Holomon Park	5	4	5	1	5	4.0
Braswell Park	2	5	4	2	2	3.0
City Lake	5	4	3	4	3	3.8
Duke Circle Property	1	2	2	2	1	1.6
Jack Laughery Park	3	5	5	5	5	4.6
Marigold Park	3	3	3	1	3	2.6
Sports Complex	4	5	5	5	5	4.8
Stith Talbert Park	5	4	4	5	5	4.6
Sunset Park	5	5	5	5	5	5.0
Sycamore Street Park	1	3	3	1	2	2.0
<b>City Ward 2 Averages</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.6</b>
<b>City Ward 3 Parks</b>						
Branch Street Park	3	1	1	1	3	1.8
Daughtridge Park	1	2	2	1	1	1.4
Home Street Park	3	3	2	2	2	2.4
Kite Park	2	4	4	2	2	2.8
Powell Park	2	4	3	2	1	2.4

# Existing Conditions Overview

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #4F81BD; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Excellent</p> <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #76C73F; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Good</p> <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #F0E68C; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Average</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #FF9933; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Needs Improvement</p> <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #E31A1C; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Needs Significant Improvement</p> </div> </div>		Serves Residents/ Used	Appearance	Condition	Accessibility	Appropriate Function	Overall (Average)
<b>City Ward 3 Parks (continued)</b>							
Southside Park	3	5	3	2	3	3.2	
Thelonius Monk Park	3	4	4	1	4	3.2	
<b>City Ward 3 Averages</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.5</b>	
<b>City Ward 4 Parks</b>							
Aycock Street Park	5	3	3	4	5	4.0	
Buck Leonard Park	5	4	4	3	4	4.0	
Historic Tree Park	4	4	4	2	4	3.6	
Nashville Road Park	4	5	5	4	5	4.6	
South Rocky Mount Community Center Park	3	2	1	3	4	2.6	
Western Avenue Park	2	4	3	1	1	2.2	
<b>City Ward 4 Averages</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.5</b>	
<b>City Ward 5 Parks</b>							
Bunn Farm Park	4	3	4	2	3	3.2	
<b>City Ward 5 Averages</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.2</b>	
<b>City Ward 6 Parks</b>							
Englewood Park	4	3	4	4	3	3.6	
Farmington Park	3	4	3	2	3	3.0	
Grover Lucas Park	4	4	3	2	3	3.2	
Patterson Drive Park	3	5	5	2	3	3.6	
Taylor Park	3	3	2	2	1	2.2	
Westridge Park	1	4	2	2	1	2.0	
Wildwood Park	2	3	2	2	3	2.4	
<b>City Ward 6 Averages</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.9</b>	
<b>City Ward 7 Parks</b>							
Hornbeam Park	5	2	1	5	2	3.0	
<b>City Ward 7 Averages</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3.0</b>	
<b>City-wide Totals:</b>							
<b>City-wide Averages</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.2</b>	

# Chapter 2

Map 8: City of Rocky Mount Park Ratings, 2012



## Legend

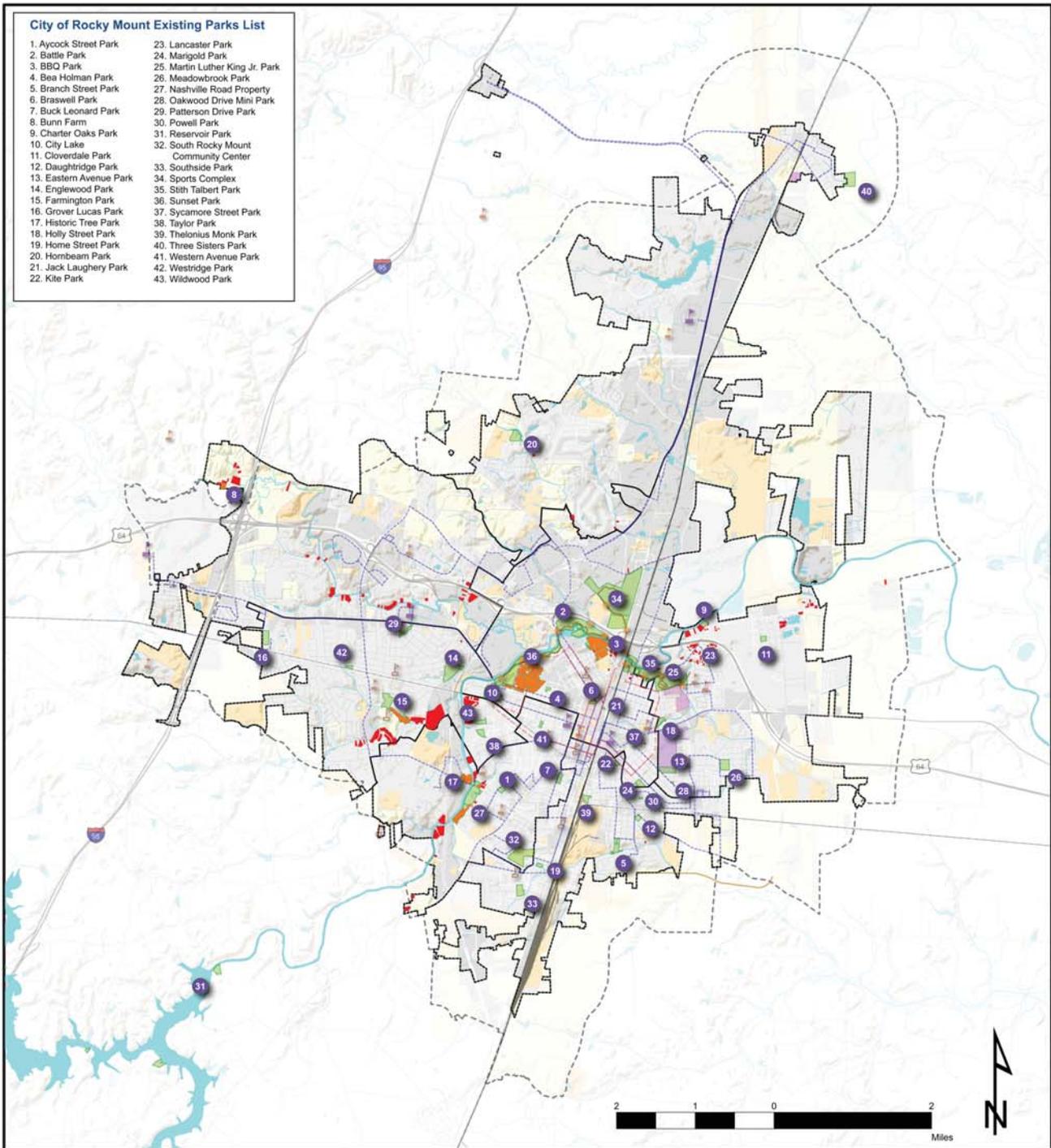
- |                                |                     |                          |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| City of Rocky Mount Parks      | Transit Routes      | Lakes, Ponds and Rivers  | Creeks and Streams        |
| City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries | Major Roads         | Residential Land Use     | City Wards                |
| Trail Access Points            | Streets             | Non-Residential Land Use | City ETJ                  |
| Tar River Trail                | Railroads           | Agricultural Land Use    | Colleges and Universities |
| Southern Loop                  | FEMA Sites          | Split Land Use           | Public Schools            |
| Bikeways                       | FEMA Sites in Parks |                          | Private Schools           |

## Park Rating

- Needs Significant Improvement
- Needs Improvement
- Average
- Good
- Excellent

# Existing Conditions Overview

Map 9: City of Rocky Mount FEMA Buyout Program Sites, 2013



## Legend

- |                                |                     |                          |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| City of Rocky Mount Parks      | Transit Routes      | Lakes, Ponds and Rivers  | Creeks and Streams        |
| City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries | Major Roads         | Residential Land Use     | City Wards                |
| Trail Access Points            | Streets             | Non-Residential Land Use | City ETJ                  |
| Tar River Trail                | Railroads           | Agricultural Land Use    | Colleges and Universities |
| Southern Loop                  | FEMA Sites          | Split Land Use           | Public Schools            |
| Bikeways                       | FEMA Sites in Parks |                          | Private Schools           |

# Chapter 2

## 2.3.2 Opportunities and Successes

Through the evaluation of all park and recreation facilities, opportunities and successes can be identified. The City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation 2012 Park Review includes a number of opportunities and successes that can be extrapolated for the entire park and recreation system. The following are examples of these opportunities and successes:

### Level of Maintenance

The majority of the parks appeared to be well maintained. While there were some incidences of litter, the landscape appeared well kept, and most of the park structures were in good or stable condition. Despite heavy or overuse of some facilities, the general condition of facilities and amenities was good. There are a few notable exceptions to this as indicated in the Park Rating Matrix (Table 12).

### Recreation Opportunities

Overall the system presents a high level of options for recreation activities. Choice in amenities goes beyond the average tiered park classifications of mini, neighborhood and community parks.

### Universal Accessibility

Accessibility can be improved systemwide, most notably in the oldest parks. Clear markings for accessible parking spaces and routes were lacking in many parks. Seating areas were often set back from accessible routes or located within turf areas. Playgrounds in many cases lacked accessible routes and either had a sand or engineered wood mulch surface that typically lacked the level of maintenance needed to provide universal access. These conditions are most evident in neighborhood parks and less so in the community parks.

### Stormwater Management:

A systemwide approach to stormwater management is needed. Several older parks throughout the system lack any kind of storage, treatment and management system for stormwater onsite. Some parks have erosion problems due to development of amenities within high sloped areas and lack vegetation adding to the issues of water quality. In general, parks should be examples within the community of good water management techniques.

## 2.3.3 Summary

The existing Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation System is highlighted by a diverse range of conditions and opportunities. As noted by a systemwide evaluation of all parks conducted in 2012, the overall system has a number of successes such as maintenance and choice in recreation options. There are also a few noted areas for improvements such as universal accessibility or ADA compliance and stormwater management.

The Park Rating Matrix (Table 12) identifies a few parks that are notable exceptions and have a number of challenges. Many of these challenges can be contributed to aging facilities, poor design solutions, changing neighborhood needs, or uneven maintenance standards. A mapping exercise indicated there was no pronounced pattern to the overall condition and performance of individual parks (see Map 7); however, when analyzed by City Ward a variation of condition and performance is evident. The Park Rating Matrix, by grouping parks and facilities by Ward, indicates that the lowest performing parks are in Ward 3, while Wards 2 and 4 have the highest performing parks. It should be noted that Ward 2, with the highest overall score of all wards, contains some of the newest citywide amenities such as the Sports Complex. Ward 3 has a number of parks that perform poorly across all indicators, specifically accessibility, functionality and meeting the needs of the surrounding neighborhood. These parks also tend to be some of the oldest in the city.

A number of non-park sites exist throughout the city that serve as open space. Map 8, identifies these sites: FEMA Buyout Program sites; and groups sites managed by the Parks and Recreation Department; and those that are managed by other city departments. These sites should be considered when evaluating existing or future needs for additional park sites. Due to limited opportunities for development as flood-prone areas, these sites can best meet the needs for open space or other natural area-based activities.

# Existing Conditions Overview

## Section 2.4 | Existing System Overview Findings

### 2.4.1 Existing System Overview Findings

#### Guiding Documents

Working in conjunction with existing or previously completed plans and studies will help recommendations developed through this master planning process move towards implementation. Adapting to meeting multiple needs with limited resources will help position the Parks and Recreation Department as a community leader while helping to make the city a better place to live, work and play. Previous Recreation Master Plans have depended on an incomplete snap shot of the community's needs, which has resulted in the identification of many community demands to acquire and/or build new parks and facilities, but little in the way of identifying the community's needs. Most of these recommendations have not been completed, most likely because the plans did not identify the needed funding sources to implement, and historic events such as hurricanes and recessions have slowed progress.

**Twin County Vision:**  
*'The Twin Counties Region is a thriving crossroads of innovation where the broad talents and experiences of our many communities foster shared opportunities for educational achievement, economic success, healthy families, and welcoming neighborhoods.'*

The recommendations from this Master Plan will leverage recommendations and/or priority projects identified in sister plans and studies such as the City Pedestrian Plan and the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan.

#### Population and Demographics

Historic trends in population growth may mean the city needs to 'catch up' to its needs in areas that experienced rapid physical growth in the 1990s. The city's changing age profile is important when considering access and renovations to existing parks and facilities as the city has an aging population and fewer children. Demands for specific

facilities and services may change over the next 10 years to reflect a growing Baby Boomers age group and more households of Hispanic/ Latino ethnicity with children.

#### Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

Existing parks and facilities serve a diverse range of opportunities and as such, are maintained in a range of conditions. Overall maintenance has been good, but there are notable exceptions with older parks that have not been renovated over the last few decades. In many neighborhoods, parks in poor condition do not meet the local residents' needs, leading many to abandon their local park.

Areas for system-wide improvements include ADA compliance, stormwater management and system-wide maintenance standards. Newer parks such as the Sport Complex and others have raised the bar in terms of design and construction. Wards 2 and 4 contain the highest performing parks, while Ward 3 contains the highest number of low performing parks. Specific notes for Ward 3 are the condition, appearance, accessibility and functionality of the parks that are of the biggest concern.

The Parks and Recreation Department also maintains a number of sites that do not serve as public parks and were provided to the department through the FEMA Buyout Program. These sites, along with other buyout sites maintained by other city departments, will be looked at during the Visioning process as potential sites to meet new or changing resident needs where there may be no existing parkland. These sites may also help to provide general open space and environmental benefits for the city and are primarily located along the Tar River and its tributaries.

# Chapter 3



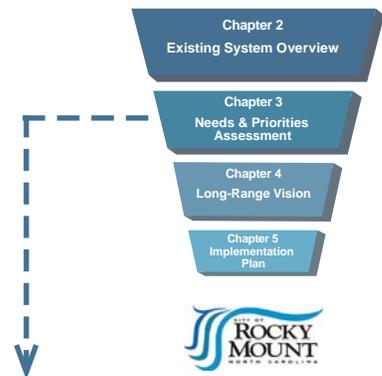
# Needs and Priorities Assessment



## Chapter 3 | Priorities and Needs Assessment

Building on the information gathered as part of the Existing System Overview, the Master Plan team utilized innovative techniques to conduct a comprehensive citywide needs and priorities assessment. Techniques used are a combination of qualitative and quantitative industry best practices that provide a system of crosschecks to determine the top needs and priorities for parks and recreation in the City of Rocky Mount. The following details summarize the findings from each technique.

City of Rocky Mount Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan Diagram



### Chapter 3 Needs and Priorities Assessment

#### 3.1 Public Participation

- |                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| 1. Community Workshops    | 3. Summary |
| 2. Stakeholder Interviews |            |

#### 3.2 Citizen Opinion and Interest Survey

- |                     |                               |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Methodology      | 3. Importance and Unmet Needs |
| 2. Survey Responses | 4. Summary                    |

#### 3.3 Online Public Opinion Survey

- |                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| 1. Methodology      | 3. Summary |
| 2. Survey Responses |            |

#### 3.4 Benchmarking

- |                |            |
|----------------|------------|
| 1. Methodology | 3. Summary |
| 2. Results     |            |

#### 3.5 Life-Style Analysis and Trends

- |                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| 1. Methodology         | 3. Summary |
| 2. Life-Style Analysis |            |

#### 3.6 Existing Level of Service Analysis

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. Methodology    | 4. Access LOS |
| 2. Acreage LOS    | 5. Summary    |
| 3. Facilities LOS |               |

#### 3.7 Summary of Needs and Priorities

# Chapter 3

## Section 3.1 | Public Participation

### 3.1.1 Methodology

Chapter Two, Existing Conditions Overview, utilizes a number of observational techniques to better understand the current condition of parks, recreation facilities/programs and greenway trails throughout the City of Rocky Mount. These techniques, though valuable to the Master Plan team, do not provide the data needed to understand how residents use, value and envision their parks, recreation facilities/programs and greenway trails. This chapter documents two additional research types: qualitative and quantitative, which allow the team to gather the needed input through public participation, community surveys and inventory analyses.

In their singular form, each technique provides only a snapshot of information, but when combined, these three research types form a mixed methods, triangulated approach that can demonstrate overall trends in needs and priorities. Ten comprehensive methods of input or data collection were utilized as part of this triangulated approach, see **Figure 2**. Though some techniques are more statistically valid than others, by utilizing a comprehensive array of 10 techniques, the Master Plan team can crosscheck results to better determine an accurate understanding of the city’s needs and priorities.



Figure 2: Mixed Methods, Triangulated Approach

### 3.1.2. Community Meetings

A total of seven community meetings were held throughout the City of Rocky Mount, in each of the city’s seven Wards at the following locations: Parker Middle School (Ward 1), The Imperial Arts Center (Ward 2), City Hall (Ward 3), South Rocky Mount Community Center (Ward 4), Gateway Convention Center (Ward 5), Winstead School (Ward 6) and Northgreen Golf Club (Ward 7). In addition, a teen workshop was held at the Boys and Girls Club in order to gain input from this valuable age segment of the Rocky Mount community. While the meetings were held in specific city wards, residents from all other wards were also encouraged to attend each meeting. Each meeting was publicly advertised in print, by flyers posted throughout the community, email blasts by the Department, website postings, and business card handouts.

Each meeting consisted of a presentation of the overall planning processes, findings from the Existing Condition Overview, interactive voting questions, a sample survey, and a review of additional public participation opportunities. Records of each meeting can be found in **Appendix D**, along with recorded comments and voting results. This report will summarize themes which emerged from each meeting.

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

## Parker Middle School, Ward 1

The second of seven community meetings was held in Ward 1, which lies on the eastern side of Rocky Mount, at Parker Middle School on October 23rd, 2013. Comments were provided by residents throughout the meeting by means of written responses to questions on flip charts, residents' written comments on display boards, survey results, and questionnaires. Primary comments summarizing all methods included:

- Schools and park partnerships
- Parks as a revitalization tool
- Awareness of parks and programs
- Safety and lighting in parks
- Maintaining what we have

### Ward #1 Survey Results:

#### A. Most Important Facilities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Greenway Trails
2. Art Centers
3. Community Gardens
4. Restrooms
5. Walking/Running Tracks
6. Small Neighborhood Parks
7. Mountain Bike Trails

#### B. Most Important Activities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Fitness and Wellness
2. History and Museums
3. Youth Summer Camps
4. Outdoor/Adventure Recreation
5. Youth Sports
6. Senior Adults
7. Family



Ward 1 Community Meeting, Parker Middle School

## Imperial Arts Center, Ward 2

The third of seven community meetings was in Ward 2 at the Imperial Arts Center on October 28th, 2013. Ward 2 contains the central portion of the city, and many of the parks, facilities and greenways trails that the city operates. Comments provided by residents throughout the meeting included:

- Greater focus on the arts
- Youth programs
- Community gardens and health related issues
- Walking and biking improvements

### Ward #2 Survey Results:

#### A. Most Important Facilities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Greenway Trails
2. Art Centers
3. Museums
4. Community Centers
5. Walking/Running Tracks
6. Community Gardens
7. Picnic Areas/ Shelters

#### B. Most Important Activities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Performing Arts
2. Special Events
3. Family
4. Visual Arts
5. Fitness and Wellness
6. Youth and Teen Programs



Ward 2 Community Meeting, Imperial Arts Center

# Chapter 3

## City Hall, Ward 3

The sixth of seven community meetings was held in Ward 3 at City Hall on November 5th, 2013. Comments provided by residents throughout the meeting included:

- Providing opportunities for youth and teens
- Safety and lighting
- Inadequate signage
- Connectivity and transportation to parks
- Health and wellness
- Equity of parks
- Overall poor quality and condition of parks
- Lack of amenities such as restrooms and accessible facilities

### Ward #3 Survey Results:

#### A. Most Important Facilities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Athletic Fields
2. Tennis Courts
3. Community Gardens
4. Playgrounds
5. Community Centers
6. Walking/Running Tracks
7. Museums

#### B. Most Important Activities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Fitness and Wellness
2. Senior Adults
3. History/Museums
4. Youth Summer Camps
5. Special Events

## South Rocky Mount Community Center, Ward 4

The fifth of seven community meetings was held in Ward 4 at South Rocky Mount Community Center on November 4th, 2013. Comments provided by residents throughout the meeting included:

- Partnerships with schools, churches and local businesses
- Safe and affordable transportation
- Parks and neighborhood revitalization
- Health issues and healthy living
- Lack of park use
- Engaging youth

### Ward #4 Survey Results:

#### A. Most Important Facilities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Gymnasium
2. Playgrounds
3. Indoor Pools
4. Restrooms
5. Small Neighborhood Parks
6. Walking/Running Tracks
7. Picnic Areas/ Shelters
8. Community Centers

#### B. Most Important Activities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Fitness and Wellness
2. Special Events
3. Nature/ Outdoor
4. Family



Ward 3 Community Meeting, City Hall



Ward 4 Community Meeting, South Rocky Mount Community Center

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

## Gateway Convention Center, Ward 5

The first of seven community meetings was held in Ward 5 at Gateway Convention Center on October 22nd, 2013. Comments provided by residents throughout the meeting included:

- Recreation connectivity and transportation
- Signage
- Equity of amenities and access
- Biking trails and trail safety
- Engaging youth and teens
- Improving tennis facilities

## Winstead School, Ward 6

The last of seven community meetings was held in Ward 6 at the Winstead School on November 7th, 2013. Comments provided by residents throughout the meeting included:

- Lack of equity in parks system
- Special events
- Partnerships with schools
- Family-oriented parks and programs and events
- Need for amphitheater
- Develop a regional attraction on vacant property along the Tar River

### Ward #5 Survey Results:

#### A. Most Important Facilities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Greenway Trails
2. Museums
3. Tennis Courts
4. Small Neighborhood Parks
5. Walking/Running Tracks

#### B. Most Important Activities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Fitness and Wellness
2. Nature/ Outdoor
3. Tennis
4. Performing Arts
5. Outdoor/ Adventure Recreation

### Ward #6 Survey Results:

#### A. Most Important Facilities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Nature Parks and Preserves
2. Art Centers
3. Museums
4. Outdoor Pools
5. Tennis Courts
6. Small Neighborhood Parks
7. Walking/Running Trails

#### B. Most Important Activities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Tennis
2. Youth Sports
3. Nature/ Outdoor
4. History/ Museums
5. Fitness and Wellness
6. Performing Arts



Ward 5 Community Meeting, Gateway Convention Center



Ward 6 Community Meeting, Winstead School

# Chapter 3

## Northgreen Golf Club, Ward 7

The fourth of seven community meetings was held in Ward 7 at Northgreen Golf Club on October 29th, 2013. Comments provided by residents throughout the meeting included:

- Increase marketing and awareness
- Addressing voids in access
- Greenway and bike connectivity
- Waterpark
- Build on success of athletic facilities
- Safety
- Partnerships

### Ward #7 Survey Results:

#### A. Most Important Facilities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Nature Parks and Preserves
2. Athletic Fields
3. Tennis Courts
4. Outdoor Pools
5. Museum/ Planetarium
6. Art Centers

#### B. Most Important Activities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Youth Sports
2. Performing Arts
3. Tennis
4. Nature/ Outdoor
5. Outdoor/ Adventure Recreation

## Teen Workshop – Boys and Girls Club

A teen workshop was held at the Boys and Girls Club on November 6th, 2013. Approximately 25 teens and parents attended the workshop, which included a presentation of park trends, voting exercises and a group park planning exercise. Comments were provided by teens throughout the meeting and included:

- Conditions of parks and facilities
- Equitable improvements to parks in different communities
- Availability and intent of programs
- Safety of park equipment
- Lighting for better safety
- Police presence in parks
- Improve/ provide more pools and skate parks



Teen Workshop, Boys and Girls Club



Ward 7 Community Meeting, Northgreen Golf Club

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

## 3.1.3 Community Meetings Summary

Information gathered from each community meeting and the teen workshop was recorded in meeting notes and coded by the Master Plan staff to identify themes for community needs and priorities for parks, recreation programs and greenway trails. Primary themes from the meetings included:

- Emphasis on improving existing parks and facilities
- Using parks as a revitalization tool
- Improving biking and walkability
- Engaging youth and teens
- Continuing to promote the arts and education
- Promoting health and wellness
- Increasing equity and access to parks and services
- Improving the overall condition and accessibility of parks
- Increasing safety and security on parks
- Utilize Tar River area more

### Most Important Facilities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Restrooms
2. Greenway Trails
3. Museums/ Planetarium
4. Art Centers
5. Community Centers
6. Tennis Courts
7. Small Neighborhood Parks
8. Playgrounds
9. Community Gardens
10. Swimming Pools

### Most Important Activities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Fitness and Wellness
2. Performing Arts
3. Family
4. Senior Adult
5. History and Museums
6. Visual Arts
7. Outdoor/ Adventure Recreation
8. Youth Summer Camp
9. Youth Sports
10. Special Events

## 3.1.4 Stakeholder Interviews

In order to better understand the priorities that the community's leaders are facing, the Master Plan team conducted a series of interviews with community stakeholders. All interviews were conducted by telephone. A total of 13 stakeholders were interviewed. Responses were recorded by the Master Plan team and coded to identify consistent themes. The following questions were asked of each participant:

1. Methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?
2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the city, both facility and programs?
3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.
4. Comparable Communities: What community(s) or city(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What community(s) or city(s) should the city emulate?
5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?

### Needs and Priorities:

#### General:

- Four of 13 interviewees noted: Brand and market ourselves using existing assets and resources, e.g. market the Imperial Centre; let people know about activities.

#### Facilities:

- Eight of 13 interviewees noted: Additional, connected paths, trails (e.g. along Battle Park, to athletic fields, to YMCA, to City Lake; complete the circle)
- Eight of 13 interviewees noted: Improve, upgrade, "groom" existing parks, playgrounds, trails,

# Chapter 3

community centers with enhanced lighting, higher level of maintenance, improved/ additional restrooms, improved aesthetics; provide equity in quality throughout City

- Five of 13 interviewees noted: A centrally located, highly visible water park, splash park, w/ lazy river, slides
- Four of 13 interviewees noted: More community recreation centers, e.g. one in each quadrant of City
- Three of 13 interviewees noted: Public park/ facility at reservoir: public access, boat ramp, canoe and kayak rentals, public beach, water sports
- Three of 13 interviewees noted: Dog park
- Three of 13 interviewees noted: Additional bathrooms at all the parks; maintain restrooms,
- Three of 13 interviewees noted: Centralized, indoor, competition swimming pool
- Three of 13 interviewees noted: Tar River Regional Waste Water Treatment Park (“the farm”); mountain bike trails, horseback riding trails, ORV trails

## Programs:

- Four of 13 interviewees noted: Teen Programs:
  - o Non-traditional, exciting programs, e.g. indoor sky diving
  - o More structured youth programs in certain areas of town, such as the south Rocky Mount area
  - o Safe places for positive social interaction (non-structured, independent activities) e.g. a “skateboard scavenger hunt”
- Three of 13 interviewees noted: More performing, visual, and creative arts programs; Imperial Centre should target more inner city kids.

## Funding/ Implementation:

- Ten of the 13 interviewees stated that voter-approved bond referendums should be considered
- Eight of the 13 interviewees stated continuing to seek and utilize grants for funding improvements and capital improvements
- Seven of the 13 interviewees stated that General Fund of Capital Improvement Program funding should be considered for implementation

- Four of the 13 interviewees stated user fees should be considered as a source for facilities improvements
- Three of the 13 interviewees stated the Parks and Recreation Department should partner with Nash Rocky Mount Public Schools for implementation

## Comparable Communities:

- Seven of 13 interviewees noted: Raleigh, NC: diversity of facilities, marketing, trails system, interaction between parks and police to work on neighborhood issues; whatever they do they do well; well-regarded in community; inclusive (including special populations); street fairs and festivals; something always going on; field of dreams
- Four of 13 interviewees noted: Greenville, NC: walkability, safety (lighting, etc.), growing college community, vibrant city, investing in base, similar size
- Three of 13 interviewees noted: Asheville, NC: quality facilities, aesthetics, level of care, strong senior base, strong cultural arts base

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

## 3.1.5 Public Participation Summary

Forming the foundation of the Master Plan's qualitative research, public participation provides a snapshot of residents', stakeholders' and elected officials' views of needs and priorities and the vision for the City of Rocky Mount's Parks and Recreation System. With the interaction of over 120 residents through face-to-face meetings, workshops and interviews, the Master Plan team gained a better understanding of the community's needs and priorities. Below is a list that summarizes the top needs for facilities and activities based on input provided during all seven community meetings and one teen workshop. Following the needs list, a list of the top priority themes is provided that summarizes input from each of the public participation events.

### Needs (Compiled from Public Participation)

#### Most Important Facilities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Greenway Trails
2. Restrooms
3. Playgrounds
4. Community Centers
5. Museums/ Planetarium
6. Art Centers
7. Swimming Pools
8. Tennis Courts
9. Small Neighborhood Parks
10. Community Gardens

#### Most Important Activities with Highest Unmet Needs

1. Fitness and Wellness
2. Performing Arts
3. Family
4. Outdoor/ Adventure Recreation
5. Youth Summer Camp
6. Senior Adult
7. History and Museums
8. Visual Arts
9. Youth Sports
10. Special Events

#### Results from Public Participation:

- Emphasize **improving existing parks and facilities**;
- Provide **better connectivity** through community via greenway trails, bike facilities and sidewalks;
- Using **parks as a revitalization** tool;
- Improve biking and walkability **safety**;
- Innovative and **engaging youth and teen** activities;
- Improve existing and provide **more community centers** throughout community;
- Continue to promote the **arts and education**;
- Promote **health and wellness**;
- Increasing **equity and access** to parks and services;
- Improving the overall **condition and accessibility** of parks;
- Improve existing and provide additional **restroom facilities** in parks and along greenway trails;
- Develop **regional attractions along the Tar River** such as an amphitheater, museums and open space;
- Increasing **safety and security** in parks;
- Partner with **schools and non-profits**;
- Provide **dog park(s)** for citizens and visitors; and
- Increase **marketing** of programs and offerings to citizens, workers and visitors.

# Chapter 3

## Section 3.2 | Citizen Opinion and Interest Survey

### 3.2.1 Methodology

The Master Plan team conducted a Citizen Opinion and Interest Survey on behalf of the City of Rocky Mount. This survey was conducted from December 2013 through January 2014. The purpose of the survey was to establish needs and priorities for the future development of parks, recreation facilities/ programs and services and greenway trails within the community. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Rocky Mount and was administered by a combination of mail, telephone and website.

The survey was developed in cooperation with Park and Recreation Department staff through a series of drafts survey instruments. A final survey was approved by the department in early November 2013. The final survey was five print pages in length and contained 18 questions. A target sample size of 400 was set for mail and telephone responses. Questions focused on park usage, park and recreation facilities usage, needs and priorities, satisfaction, communications and simple demographics, which were used to validate the survey according to the demographics of the City of Rocky Mount.

Approximately 2,000 printed surveys were mailed to randomly selected households throughout the city. Respondents were provided three means to complete the survey; by mail, by phone (in either English or Spanish); and through a website. An automatic voice message was sent to each house that had been sent a printed survey. Three weeks after the mailing of surveys, follow-up phone calls were made to households. Households that indicated they had not returned a completed survey were provided an option to complete one by phone. The survey was

completed by 420 respondents and has a level of confidence of 95%, which means results could be replicated 95 times out of 100. In addition, the survey has a margin of error of +/-4.8%. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the appendices.

### 3.2.2 Survey Responses

The Citizen Opinion and Interest Survey had a sample size of 420 respondents and was designed to match the demographic characteristics of the City of Rocky Mount. The following are select results of questions regarding parks and recreation in Rocky Mount. These questions are organized in the following categories:

- Park / Program Use
- Park / Facility Needs
- Program / Activity Needs

Results may include cross-tabulations of demographic characteristics for the above categories.

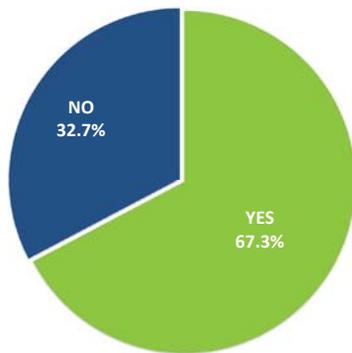
# Needs and Priorities Assessment

## Parks / Program Use

**In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household visited any of the City of Rocky Mount Parks?**

A majority of the respondents indicated that they have visited a City of Rocky Mount park, with 67.3% answering “YES”. Response to this question indicates a strong level of park use by participants.

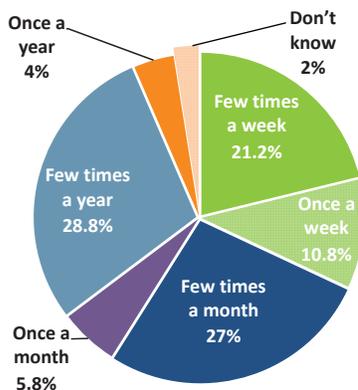
**Table 13.** Have you visited any of the City of Rocky Mount Parks?



**Approximately how often did you or members of your household visit City of Rocky Mount Parks during the past year?**

The respondents that selected “YES” in previous question, were asked a series of follow-up questions. Of these respondents, over 64% had visited a park at least once a month. However, the largest segment of residents (28.8%) visited a park a few times a year.

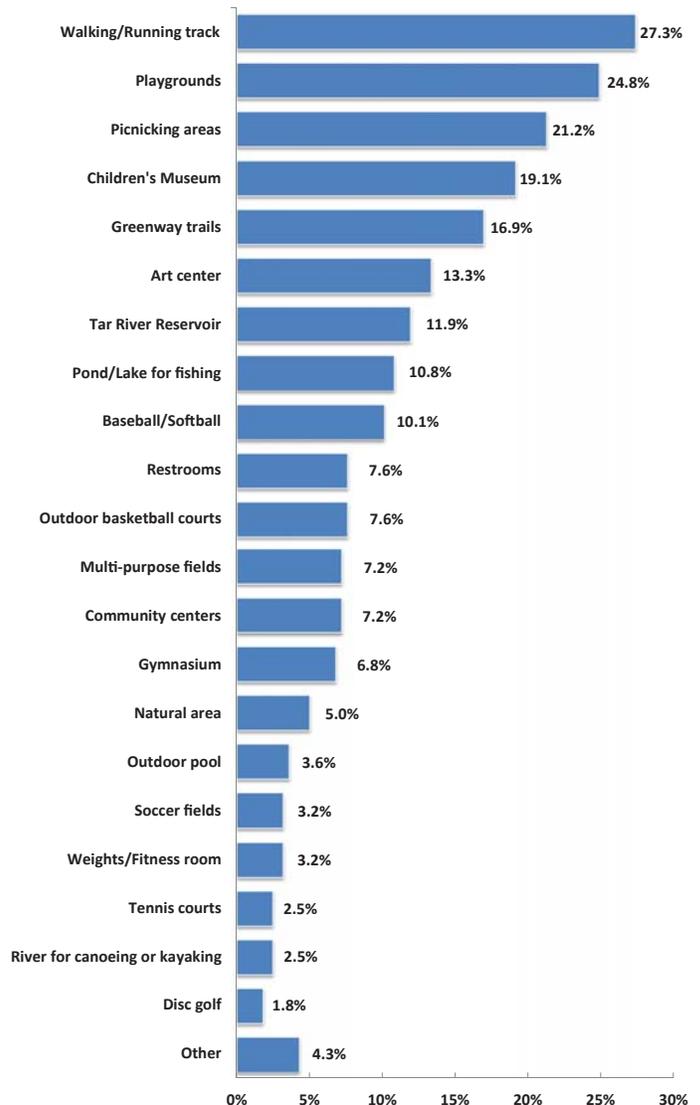
**Table 14.** How often do you visit City of Rocky Mount Parks?



**Which City of Rocky Mount recreation facilities do you and members of your household visit most often?**

The facilities that received the most responses were: walking/running facilities (27.3%); playgrounds (24.8%); picnicking areas (21.2%); Children’s Museum (19.1%); and greenway trails (16.9%). The facilities that received the least amount of responses were: disc golf (1.8%); river for canoeing of kayaking (2.5%); tennis courts (2.5%); weights/fitness room (3.2%); and soccer fields (3.3%).

**Table 15.** How often do you visit City of Rocky Mount Parks?

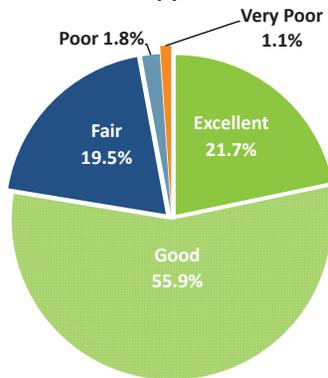


# Chapter 3

## How would you rate the condition and appearance of all the parks and recreation sites in the City of Rocky Mount Parks you've visited?

The respondents who selected "YES" for the first question were also asked to rate the condition and appearance of all the parks and recreation sites in the city they have visited. Of these respondents, over 77% selected either "Good" or "Excellent". 19.5% of respondents selected "Fair", and 2.9% choose either "Poor" or "Very Poor".

**Table 16. Condition and Appearance**

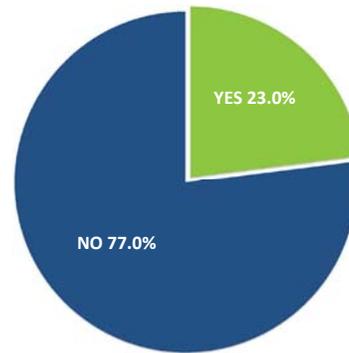


## Have you or members of your household participated in any recreation programs offered by the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department?

A majority of the respondents indicated that they have not participated in a recreation program offered by the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department in the past year, with 67.3% answering "NO". Response to this question indicates a lack of participation in scheduled recreation programs by Rocky Mount residents.

\*Note: This question did not ask residents whether they have attended a special event or festival.

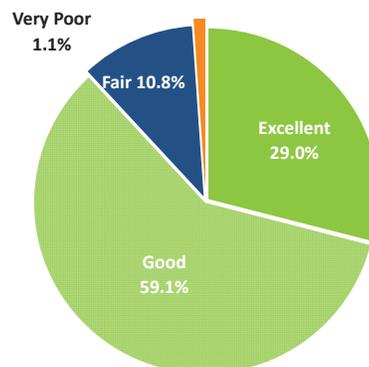
**Table 17. Recreation Program Participation**



## How would you rate the overall quality of the recreation programs your household has participated in?

The respondents who selected "YES" in the previous question were also asked to answer question 2C. Of these respondents, over 88% selected either "Good" or "Excellent". 10.8% of respondents selected "Fair", and 1.1% choose "Very Poor".

**Table 18. Overall quality of recreation programs**

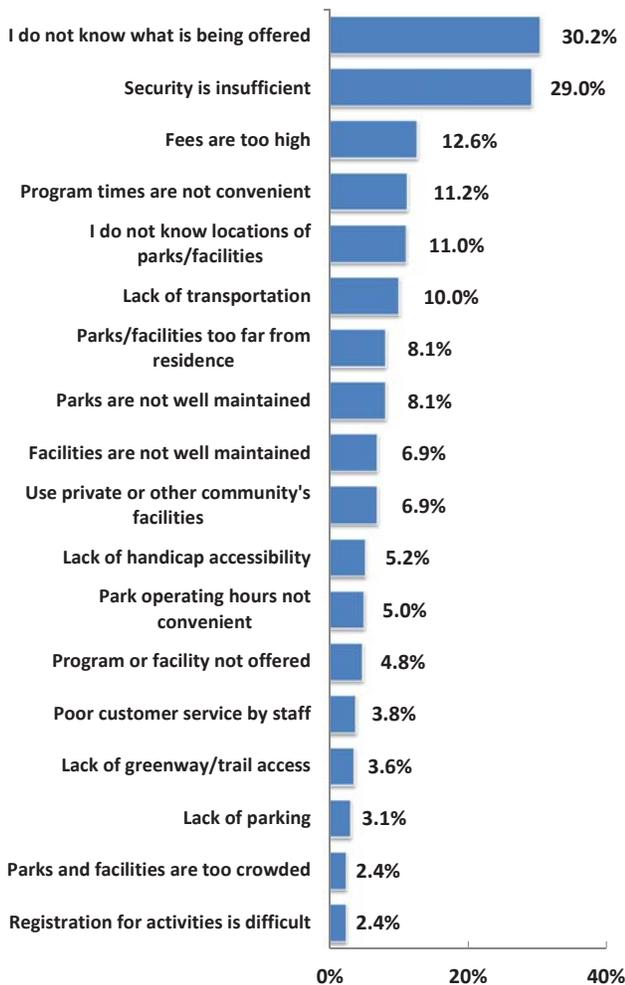


# Needs and Priorities Assessment

What are the reasons that prevent you or other members of your household from using parks, greenway trails, recreation facilities or programs of the Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department more often?

The most common reasons were: “I do not know what is being offered” (30.2%); “Security is insufficient” (29.0%); “Fees are too high” (12.6%); “Program times are not convenient” (11.2%); and “I do not know locations of parks/facilities” (11.0%). The least common selections included: “Registration for activities is difficult” (2.4%); “Parks and facilities are too crowded” (2.4%); “Lack of parking” (3.1%); “Lack of greenway/trail access” (3.6%); and “Poor customer service by staff” (3.8%).

**Table 19.** Reasons Preventing Usage and Participation (% of Households)

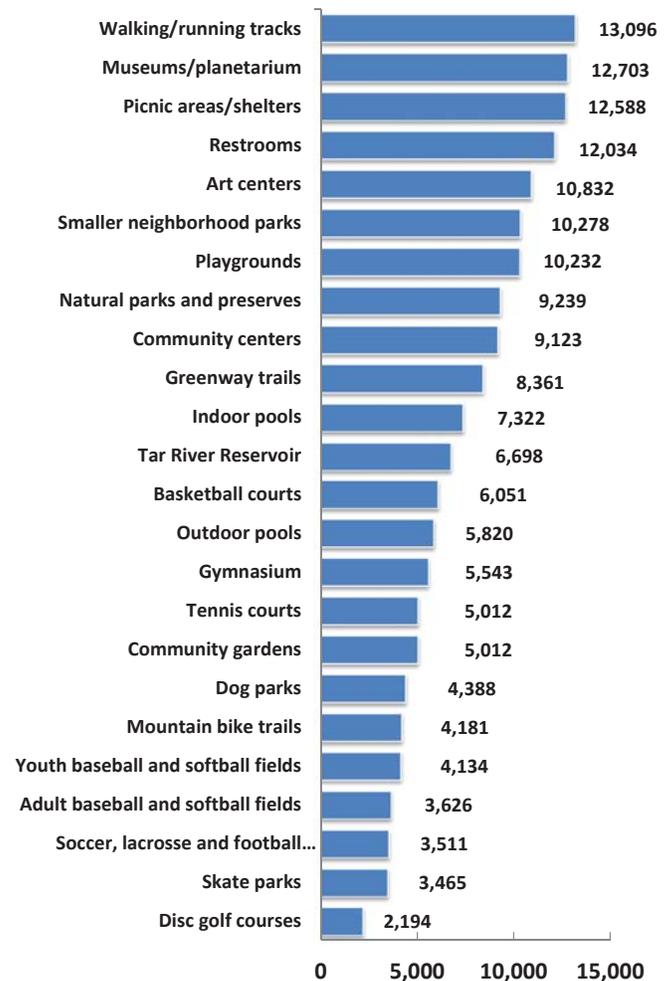


## Parks / Facility Needs

Estimated number of households in Rocky Mount that have a need for various parks and recreation facilities.

This question uses survey response percentages for each facility type and compares results to the total estimated number of households in the City of Rocky Mount to determine an estimate for the number of households that have a need for each facility. The facility types that have the most number of households with need include: walking/running tracks (13,096); museums/planetarium (12,703); picnic areas/shelters (12,588); restrooms (12,034); and art centers (10,832). The facilities least needed include: disc golf courses (2,194); skate parks (3,465); soccer, lacrosse and football size fields (3,511); adult baseball and softball fields (3,626); and youth baseball and softball fields (4,134).  
*Estimated Number of Households: 23,097*

**Table 20.** Facilities needed by households in Rocky Mount

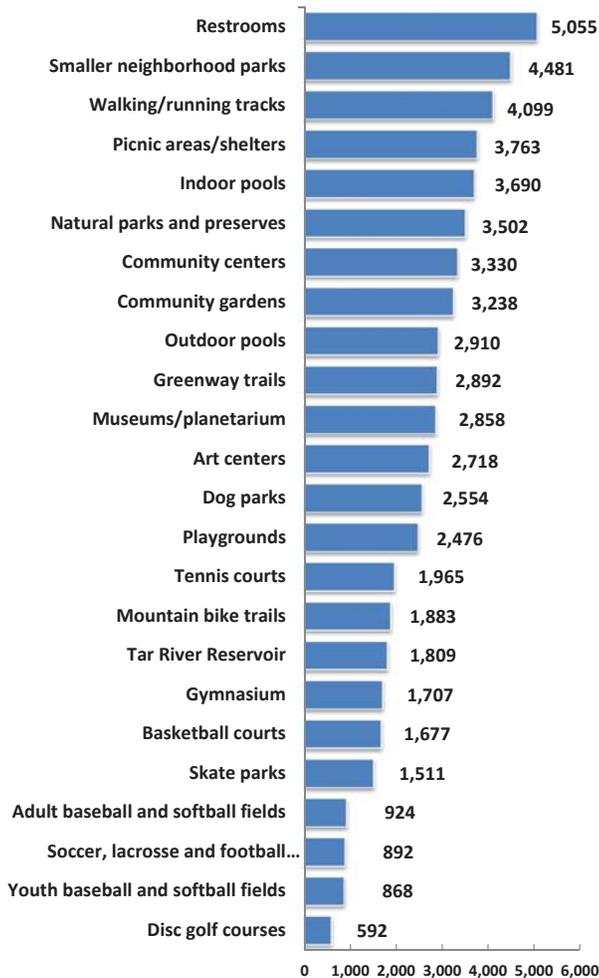


# Chapter 3

Estimated number of households in Rocky Mount whose need for parks and recreation facilities are only being 50% met or less.

Respondents who indicated a facility need in the previous question were also asked to rate how well their need for these facilities was being met. Table 46 shows the number of households whose needs are 50% met or less. The facilities needed by the most households included: restrooms (5,055); smaller neighborhood parks (4,481); walking/running tracks (4,099); picnic areas/shelters (3,763); and indoor pools (3,690). Facilities with the fewest number of households included: disc golf courses (592); youth baseball and softball fields (868); soccer, lacrosse and football size fields (892); adult baseball and softball fields (924); and skate parks (1,511). *Estimated Number of Households: 23,097*

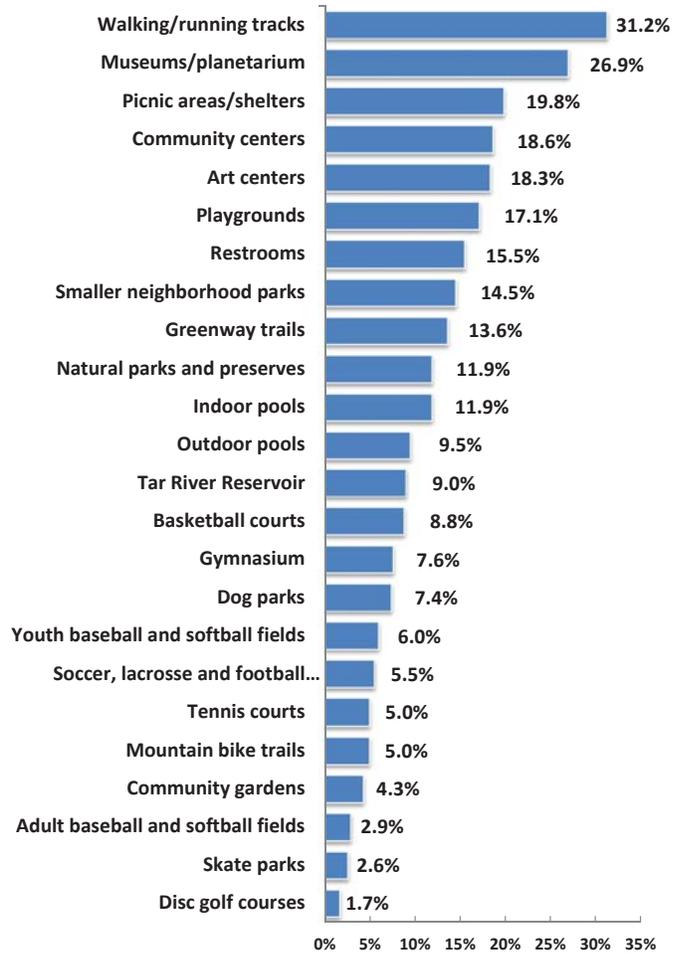
Table 21. Facilities needed by households in Rocky Mount



Which facilities are the most important for the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department to provide for your household?

The facilities considered most important included: walking/running tracks (31.2%); museums/planetarium (26.9%); picnic areas/shelters (19.8%); community centers (18.6%); and art centers (18.3%). The facilities selected the least often included: disc golf courses (1.7%); skate parks (2.6%); adult baseball and softball fields (2.9%); community gardens (4.3%); and mountain bike trails and tennis courts, both with 5.0%.

Table 22. Facilities most important to households in Rocky Mount (% of Households)

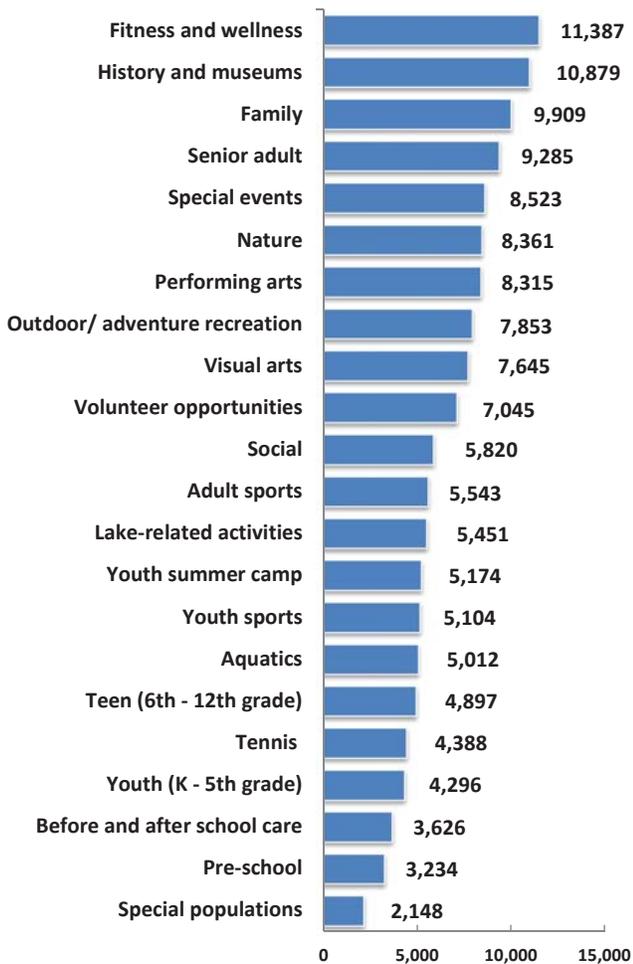


# Needs and Priorities Assessment

Estimated number of households in Rocky Mount that have a need for various recreation activities.

This question uses survey response percentages for each program type, and compares them to the total estimated number of households in the City of Rocky Mount to determine an estimate for the number of households that have a need for each program. The selections that have the highest number of households include: fitness and wellness (11,387); history and museums (10,879); family (9,909); senior adult (9,285); and special events (8,523). The program types that received the least number of households include: special populations (2,148); pre-school (3,234); before and after school care (3,626); youth (K-5th Grade) (4,296); and tennis (4,388).

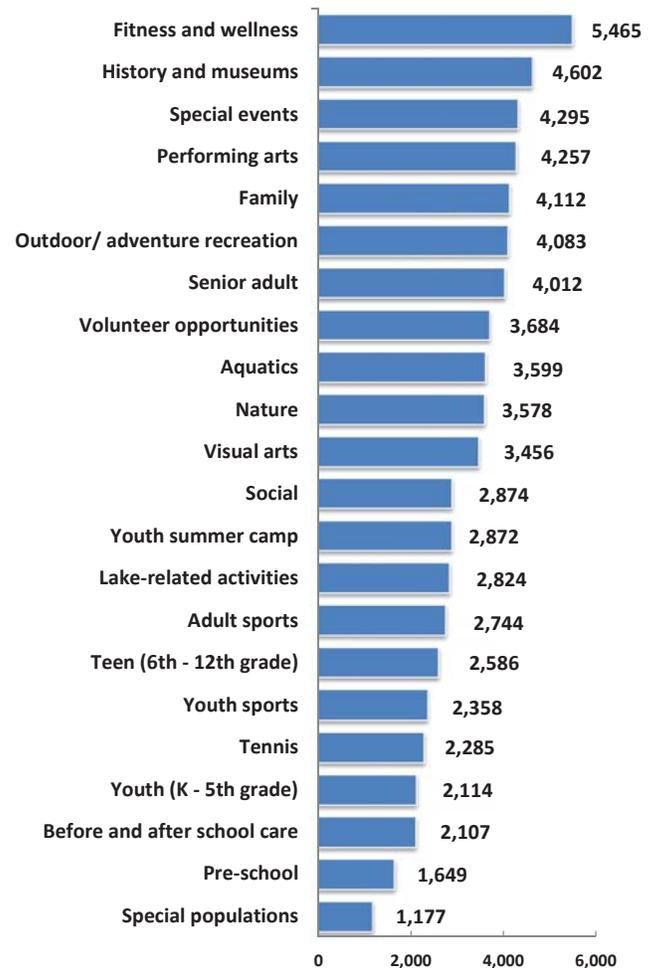
Table 23. Programs needed by households in Rocky Mount



Estimated number of households in Rocky Mount whose need for recreation programs are only being 50% met or less.

Respondents that indicated a facility need in the previous question were also asked to rate how well their need for these programs was being met. Table 24 shows the number of households whose needs are 50% met or less. The programs needed by the most households included: fitness and wellness (5,465); history and museums (4,602); special events (4,295); performing arts (4,257); and family (4,112). Programs with the least amount of households included: special populations (1,177); pre-school (1,649); before and after school care (2,107); youth (K-5th grade) (2,114); and tennis (2,285).

Table 24. Programs needed by households in Rocky Mount



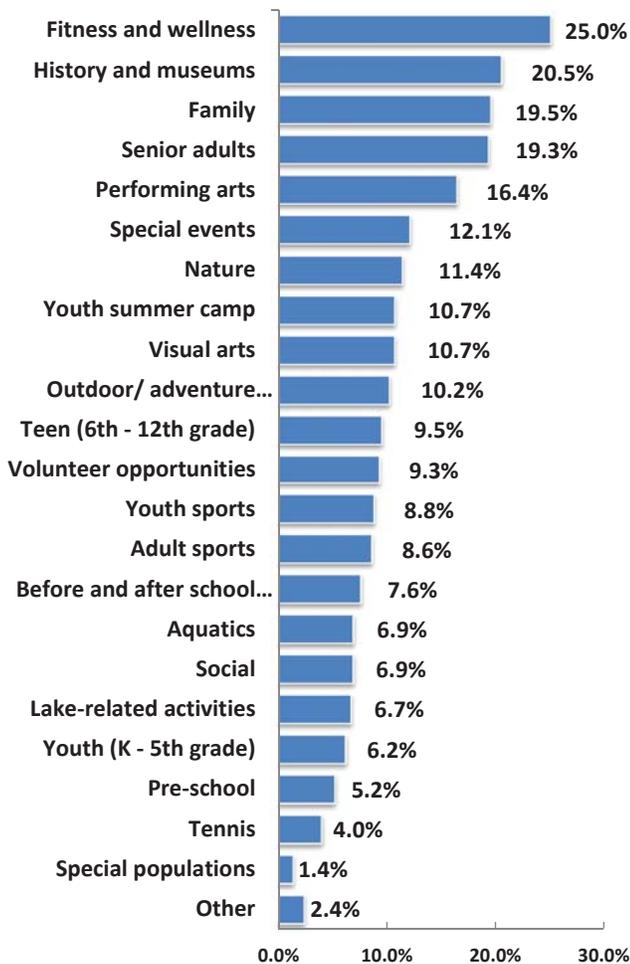
# Chapter 3

## 3.2.3 Importance/ Unmet Needs Matrices

Which programs are the most important for the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department to provide for your household?

The programs receiving the most selections included: fitness and wellness (25.0%); history and museum (20.5%); family (19.5%); senior adults (19.3%); and performing arts (16.4%). The programs receiving the least amount of selections included: special populations (1.4%); tennis (4.0%); pre-school (5.2%); youth (K-5th grade) (6.2%); and lake-related activities (6.7%).

**Table 25.** Facilities most important to households in Rocky Mount (% of Households)



The Importance-Unmet/Needs Matrix is a tool for assessing the level of priority that should be placed on parks and recreation facilities and recreation activities in the City of Rocky Mount. Each of the facilities (Table 51) and activities (Table 52) that were assessed in the survey were placed in one of the following four quadrants:

**Top Priorities - (higher unmet need and higher importance)**  
Items in this quadrant should be given the highest priority for improvement. Respondents placed a high level of importance on these items, and the unmet need rating is high. Improvements to items in this quadrant will have positive benefits for the highest number of City of Rocky Mount residents.

**Special Needs - (higher unmet need and lower importance)**  
Respondents placed a lower level of importance on these items, but the unmet need rating is relatively high. Items in this quadrant should be given secondary priority for improvement.

**Opportunities for Improvements - (lower unmet need and higher importance)**  
This quadrant shows where improvements may be needed to serve the needs of residents. Respondents placed a high level of importance on these items, but the unmet need rating is relatively low. These items need continued emphasis because the City of Rocky Mount is meeting the need of the items that the community has deemed important.

**Less Important - (lower unmet need and lower importance)**  
Items in this quadrant should receive the lowest priority for improvement. Respondents placed a lower level of importance on these items, and the unmet need rating is relatively low.

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

Table 26. Importance/ Unmet Needs Matrix for Park and Recreation Facilities

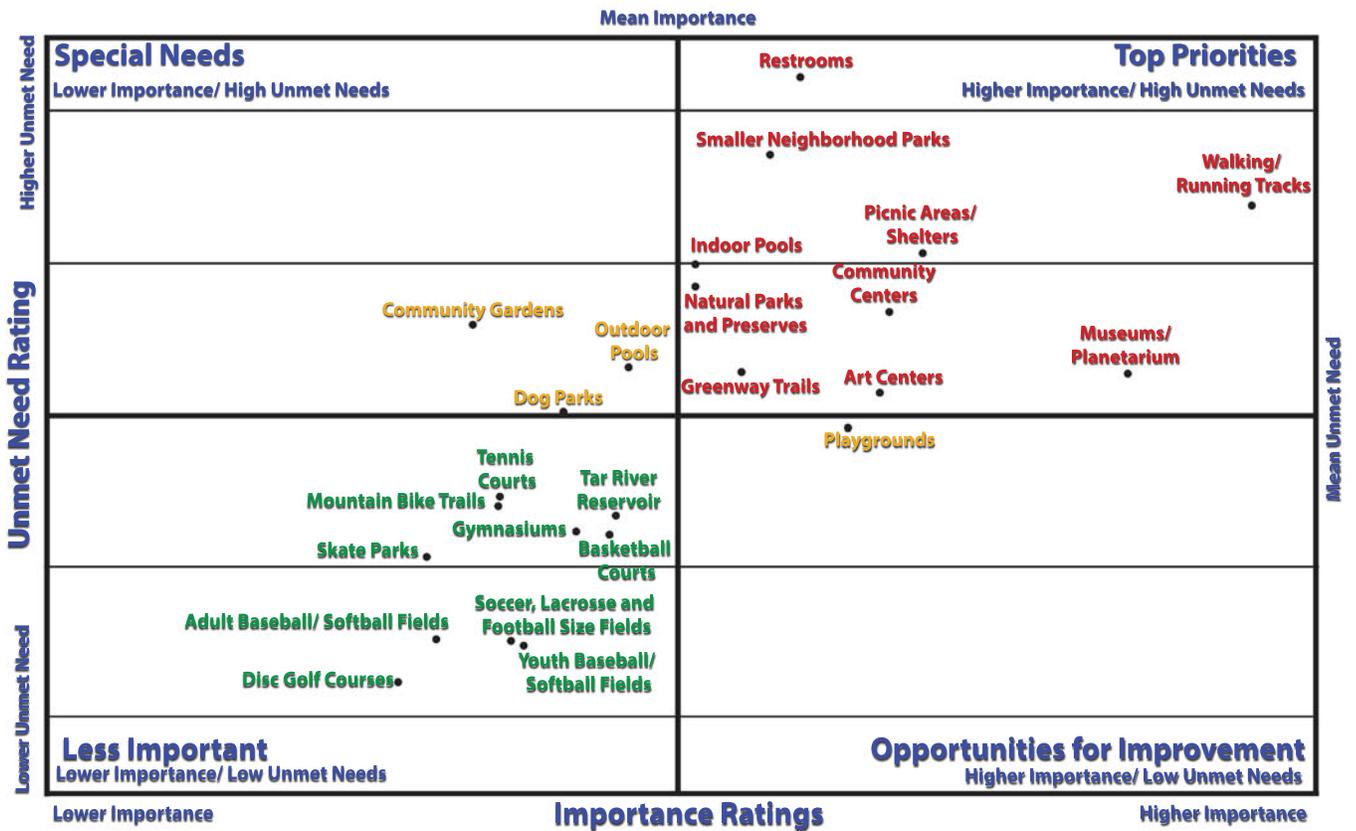
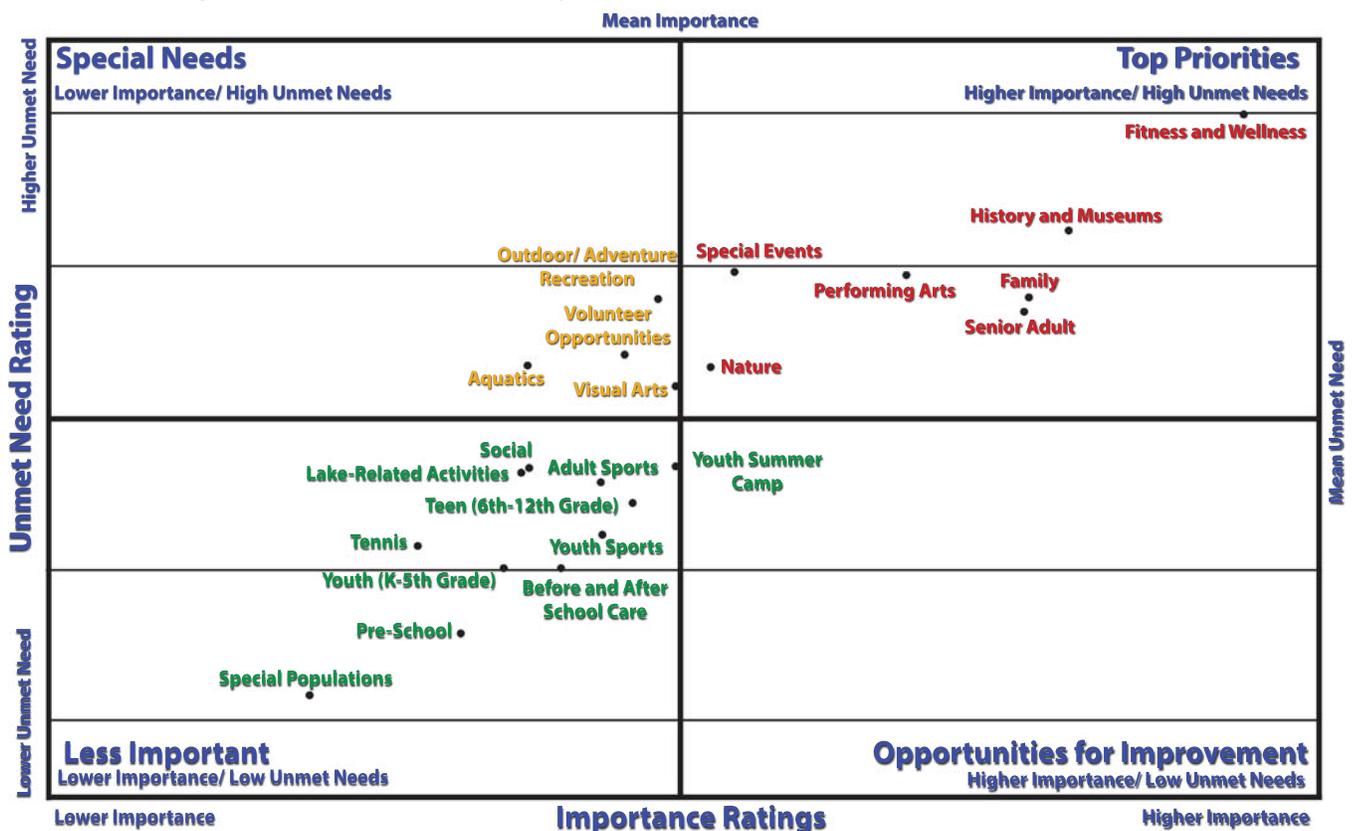


Table 27. Importance/ Unmet Needs Matrix for Park and Recreation Activities



# Chapter 3

## 3.2.4 Summary of Findings

The mail/telephone survey is the strongest, most accurate tool available to determine parks and recreation needs of the general population and will serve to crosscheck results of the Online Public Opinion Survey. Significant findings include:

- Restrooms, smaller neighborhood parks, and walking/running tracks are the top priority facilities with the highest level of unmet need;
- Fitness and wellness, history and museums, and special events are the top priorities activities with the highest level of unmet need;
- A relatively high satisfaction rating for condition and appearance of park and recreation facilities, similar to results from the online survey;
- The most significant reasons that prevented respondents from using the City of Rocky Mount park and recreation facilities were a lack of knowledge of what is being offered (30.2%) and security being insufficient (29%), which are similar to the on-line survey;
- A relatively high satisfaction rating for the quality of recreation programs, similar to results from the online survey;
- The recreation activities with the highest number of households in need are; Fitness and Wellness, History and Museums, Family, Senior Adult, and Special Events;
- The recreation facilities with the highest number of households with need are: walking/running facilities, museums/planetarium, picnic areas/shelters, restrooms, and art centers; and
- A large majority of respondents visited City of Rocky Mount parks at least once a month during the past year.

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

## Section 3.3 | Online Public Opinion Survey

### 3.3.1 Methodology

Starting on October 15, 2013 and concluding on January 15, 2014, City of Rocky Mount residents and anyone with an interest had an opportunity to participate in an online public opinion survey via Survey Monkey. The Master Plan team and City Staff developed a questionnaire that closely resembled the Citizen Opinion and Interests survey document in Section 3.2 of this report. The Online Public Opinion Survey was accessible by two means; a link was provided on the public engagement website (<http://www.rockymountnc.gov/parks/masterplan>) and a link was emailed out to contacts via email blasts from the City of Rocky Mount. At each public event, the Master Plan team and/or department staff provided business cards to attendees with a domain address and QR Code to access the public engagement website and encouraged attendees to complete the survey. In total, 260 surveys were completed over the course of three months.

While findings from online surveys are instructive, it is important to note that this survey is not considered statistically accurate and does not reflect the demographics of the City of Rocky Mount. Respondents selfselect to complete the survey, rather than being randomly contacted in a sample such as the survey used in Section 3.2. Even though the survey is not statistically valid, results are valuable to the overall analysis process specifically because 260 people responded, which reflects a large body of input from throughout the community and users of the system.

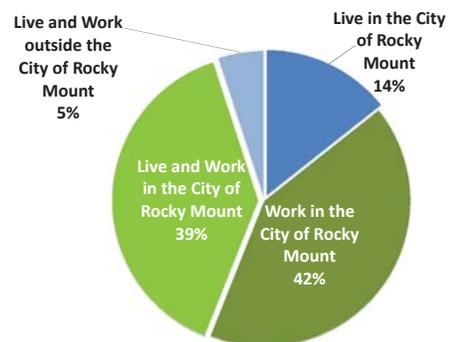
### 3.3.2 Survey Responses

The intention of the survey was to reach as many City of Rocky Mount residents and nonresidents as possible. Before completing questions regarding park and recreation facilities and activities, a series of basic demographic questions were asked to better understand the respondents. The following are select results of these demographic questions:

#### Which one of the following best describes you?

The majority of respondents either live and/or work in the City of Rocky Mount, with only 5.0% as neither option. This indicates a strong participation level by residents, workers and visitors to the City of Rocky Mount.

Table 28. Respondent's place of residence

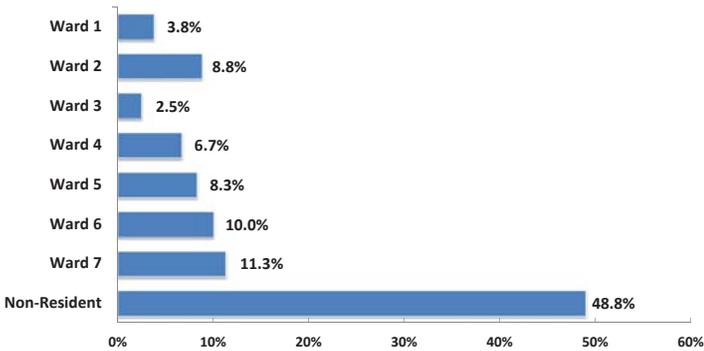


# Chapter 3

## Which City Ward do you or your family live in?

Wards 6 and 7 were the most represented of the city wards, with 10.0% and 11.3% of respondents being from these wards. Ward 3 received the lowest number of respondents, with only 2.5% of the total survey sample. 48.8% of respondents were not residents of the City of Rocky Mount.

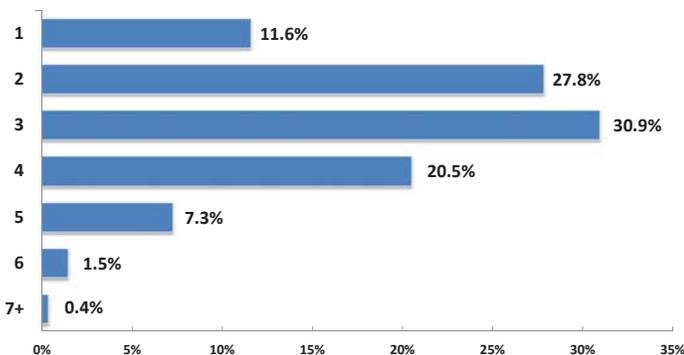
**Table 29.** Respondent's City Ward



## How many people live in your household?

79.2% of respondents have two to four people in their household, with households of three receiving 30.9% of responses. 11.6% percent of households had only one member, and families larger than five combined to equal 9.2% of the sample.

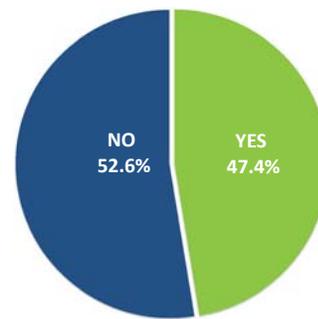
**Table 30.** Number of people in respondent's households



## Are members of your household under the age of 18?

47.4% of households had children under 18, and 52.6% did not. This is significantly higher than the U.S. Census data, which showed 27.3% of households in Rocky Mount with a child under the age of 18.

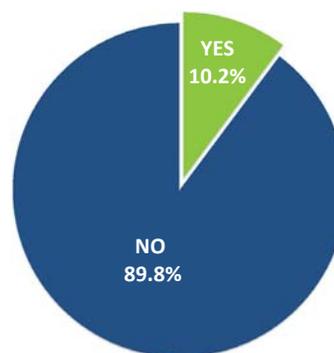
**Table 31.** Respondent's households with members under age 18.



## Are members of your household over the age of 65?

Only 10.2% of respondents were identified as having household members over age 65, less than the citywide average of 26.6%. A large majority of respondents answered "no" to this question, with 89.8% having no members of their household over the age of 65.

**Table 32.** Respondent's households with members over age 65

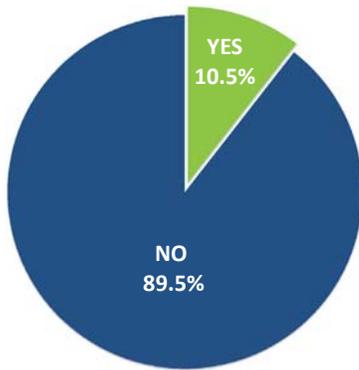


# Needs and Priorities Assessment

Are any members of your household disabled as a consequence of an impairment that may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, developmental, or some combination of these?

10.5% of respondents were identified as having household members disabled as a consequence of impairment. The large majority of respondents did not indicate a member of their household was disabled, with 89.5% answering “no”. This is slightly lower than the North Carolina average of 13% according to the American Community Survey (ACS), 2008.

**Table 33.** Respondent’s households with members disabled as a consequence of an impairment.



## 3.3.3 Individual Parks and Recreation Questions

A series of questions specific to park and recreation issues were asked of each respondent. The number of responses vary for each question. Questions are organized into five categories:

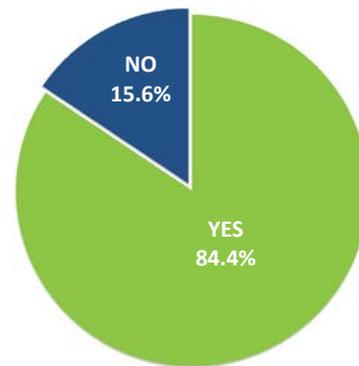
- Park and Facilities
- Recreation Program
- Satisfaction
- Priorities
- Communication

### Parks and Facilities Questions

In the past 12 months, have you or any members of your household visited any of the City of Rocky Mount parks?

A large majority of the respondents indicated that they have visited a City of Rocky Mount park, with 84.4% answering “yes”. Response to this question indicates a strong level of park use by participants. This is over 17% higher than the results from the statistically valid survey, see Section 3.3.

**Table 34.** Have you visited any of the City of Rocky Mount Parks?

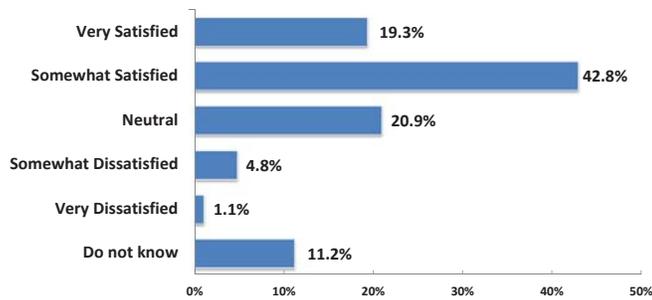


# Chapter 3

Rate your satisfaction with the overall value your household receives from the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation System.

Over 62% of respondents indicated some degree of satisfaction, with 19.3% being very satisfied with the overall value. This reflects a relatively positive view by residents, visitors and workers of the value of the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation System.

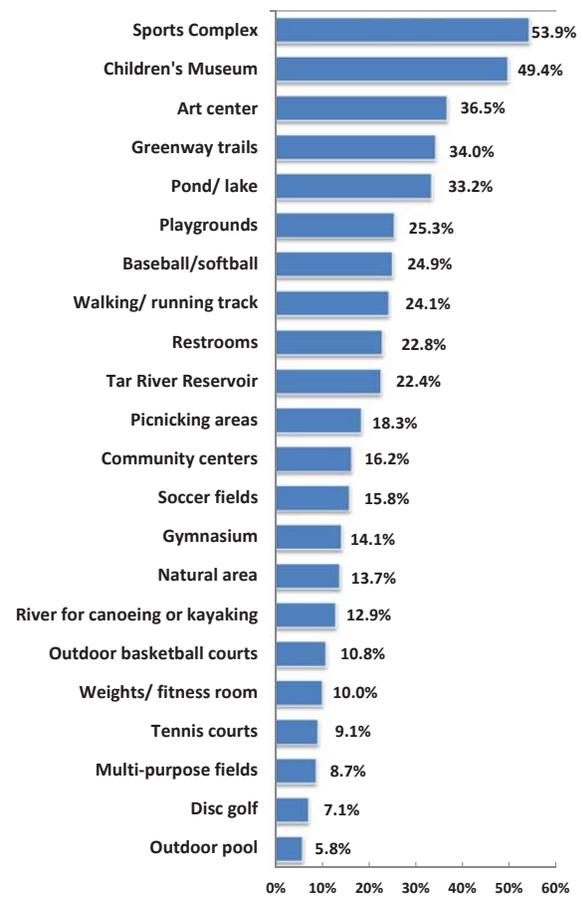
**Table 35.** Overall Satisfaction with Parks and Recreation System.



Select ALL the City of Rocky Mount recreation facilities you or members of your household use.

The most commonly selected facilities that respondents or members of their household use were the Sports Complex (53.9%) and the Children’s Museum (49.4%). Also receiving significant response numbers were the Arts Center (36.5%), Greenway Trails (34.0%), Pond/Lake (33.2%) and Playgrounds (25.3%)

**Table 36.** Top facilities used by respondents.

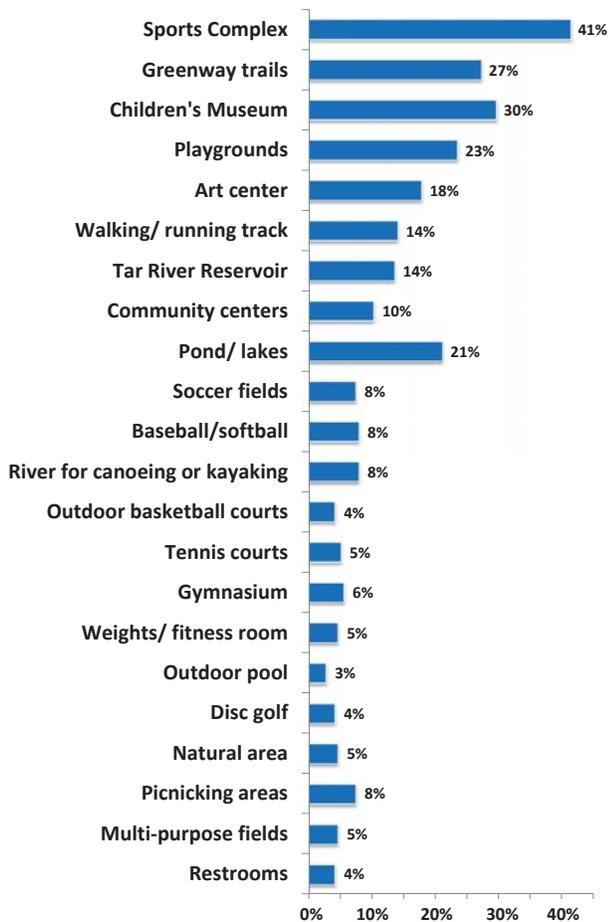


# Needs and Priorities Assessment

Which parks and recreation facilities do you and members of your household visit the most often?

The parks and recreation facilities visited most often include (in descending order); Sports Complex; greenway trails; Children’s Museum; playgrounds; and the Arts Center. The facilities which received the second most visits (in descending order) include: Sports Complex; Children’s Museum; greenway trails; pond/lake; and playgrounds. Recreation facilities receiving the highest number of thirdmost visits (in descending order) include: pond/lake; Sports Complex; playgrounds; and Children’s Museum.

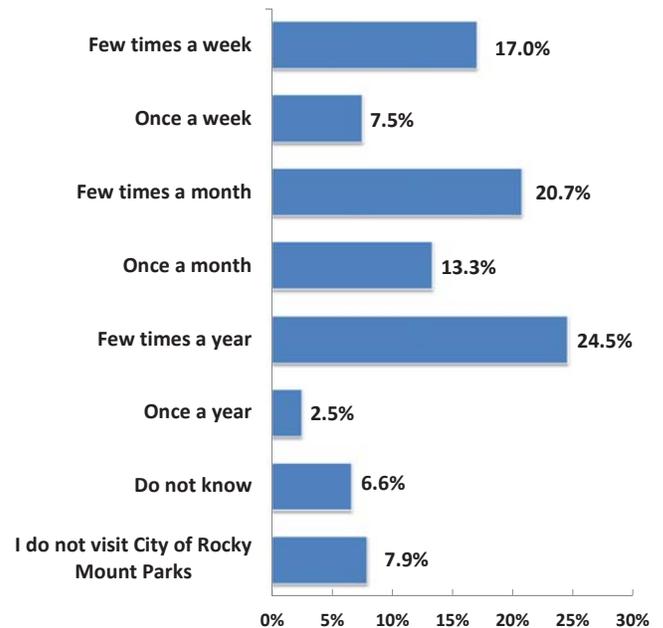
Table 37. Facilities used most often by respondents.



Approximately how often did you or members of your household visit city of Rocky Mount parks during the past year?

Almost 25% of respondents visit a City of Rocky Mount park on a weekly basis. 34% of respondents visited parks at least once a month over the last year. Almost 25% of respondents visit the parks only a few times a year. Response to the question indicate that participants are somewhat familiar with City of Rocky Mount parks by the moderate level of visitations.

Table 38. How often do you visit City of Rocky Mount Parks?

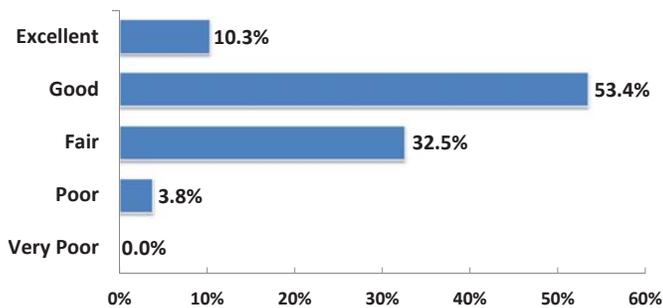


# Chapter 3

## Overall, how would you describe condition and appearance of ALL the parks and recreation sites in the City of Rocky Mount parks you have visited?

Over 96% of respondents gave a positive or fair rating to the condition and appearance of City of Rocky Mount parks with over 63% giving an excellent or good rating. This reflects a very positive view of parks in the City of Rocky Mount by residents, visitors and workers.

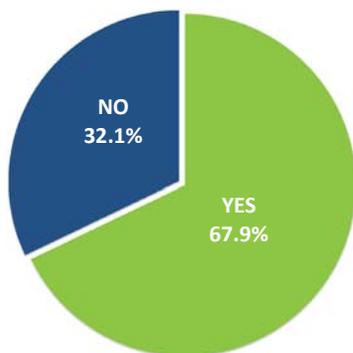
Table 39. Condition and Appearance.



## Is it important to you to have a public green space (open lawn with playground, benches, etc) within walking distance of your home and/or work place?

Two-thirds of respondents stated that they feel that it is important to have a public green space within walking distance. Only 32% of respondents do not feel that this is important.

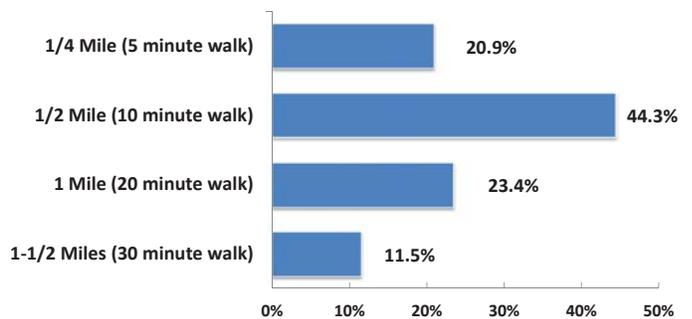
Table 40. Importance of public green space.



## How would you define walking distance?

A little over 44% of respondents indicated that a half mile or a 10-minute walk is their definition of 'walking distance,' which is consistent with most post-war, first-tier suburban and urban development patterns. The second highest number of respondents selected one mile or a 20-minute walking distance.

Table 41. Walking Distance.



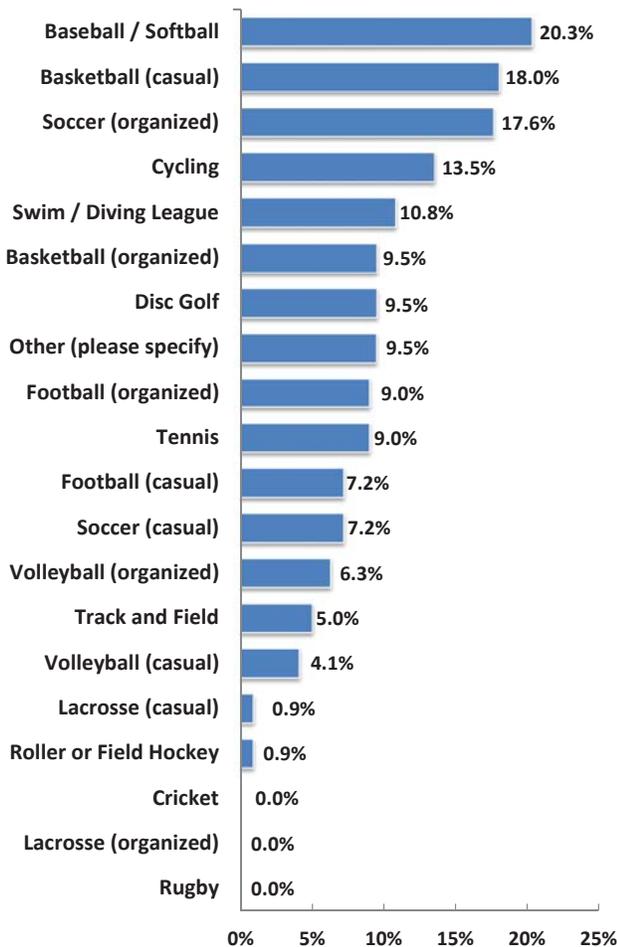
# Needs and Priorities Assessment

## Recreation Program Questions

**What recreational/team sports do you and/or your household members currently engage in?**

Over 20% of respondents currently engage in baseball/softball; 18% play basketball; 17.6% play soccer; and 13.5% engage in cycling. Over 37% of respondents do not engage in any recreation or team sports. The four recreation/team sports with the lowest level of participation include: cricket (0.0%); rugby (0.0%); lacrosse (0.0%); and roller or field hockey (0.9%).

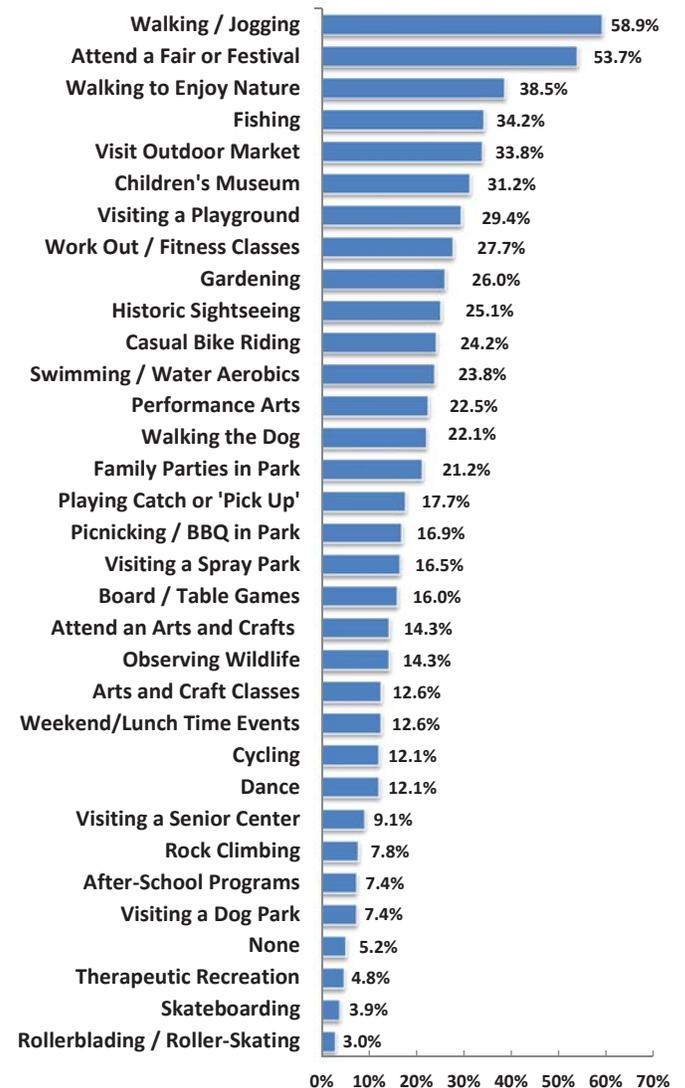
Table 42. Top Recreation/ Team Sports Engagement.



**What recreational activities or hobbies do you and/or your household members currently engage in?**

Nearly 59% of respondents currently engage in walking/jogging; 53.7% attend a fair, festival or concert; 38.5% walk to enjoy nature; and 34.2% fish. Only 5.2% of respondents do not engage in any recreation activities or hobbies. The four recreation activities or hobbies with the lowest level of participation include: roller-blading/ roller-skating (3.0%); skateboarding (3.9%); therapeutic recreation (4.8%); and visiting a dog park and after-school programs at 7.4% each.

Table 43. Top Recreational Activities Engagement

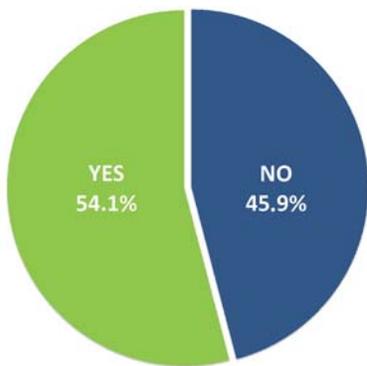


# Chapter 3

Have you or other members of your household participated in any recreation programs offered by the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department during the past 12 months?

Over 54% of respondents selected that they or members of their households have participated in a recreation program offered by the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department. This is significantly higher than the statistically valid survey result of 23% of residents having participated in a program in the last 12 months.

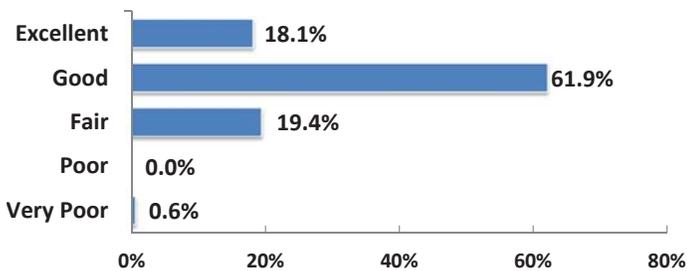
**Table 44. Recreation Program Participation**



How would you rate the overall quality of the recreation programs that you and members of your household have participated in?

Over 99% of respondents had a positive or fair rating for the overall quality of recreation programs with 80% stating an excellent or good rating. This reflects a relatively positive view by residents, visitors and workers of recreation programs offered by the City of Rocky Mount.

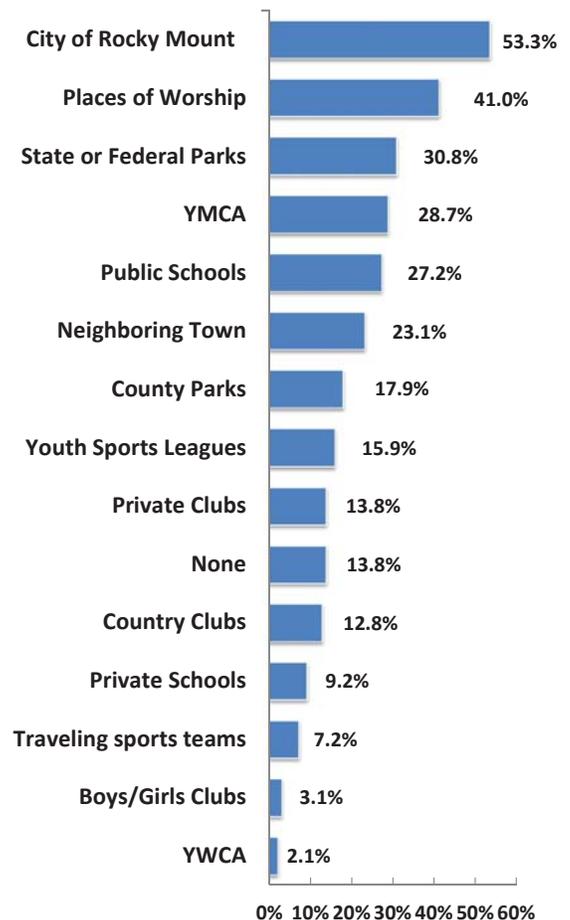
**Table 45. Quality of Recreation Programs**



Check ALL the organizations that you and members of your household use for parks and recreation programs and services.

Over 53% of the respondents selected the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department as an organization used for parks and recreation programs and services. Other selected organizations included: churches/places of worship (41.0%); state of federal parks (30.8%); YMCA (28.7%); and public schools (27.2%).

**Table 46. Parks and Recreation Programs and Services Providers.**

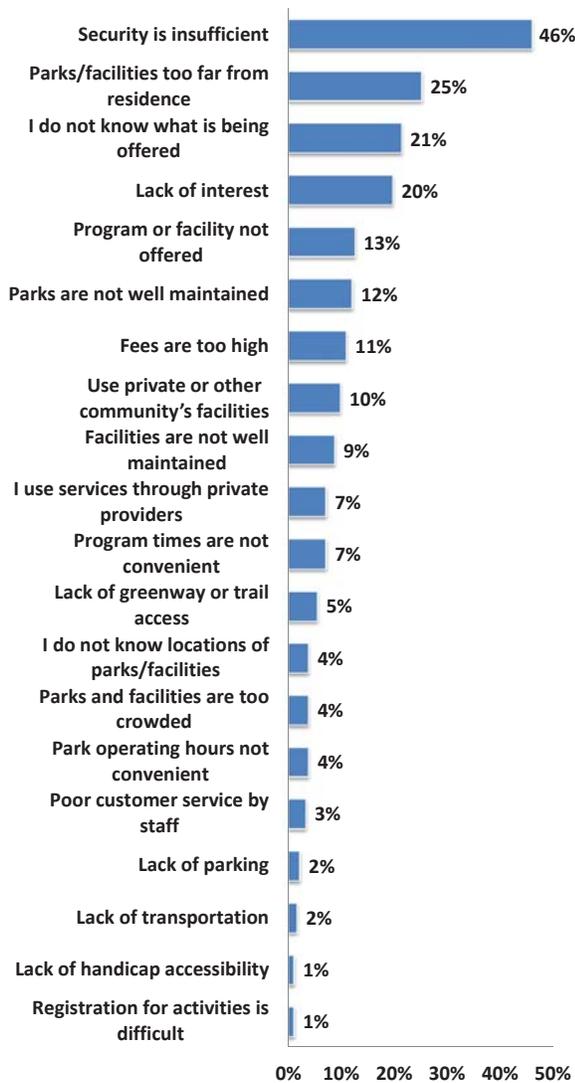


# Needs and Priorities Assessment

Select the most significant reasons that prevent you or other members of your household from using parks, greenway trails, recreation facilities or programs of the Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department more often.

The significant reasons that received the most responses include (in descending order): ‘security is insufficient;’ ‘parks/ facilities are too far from residence;’ ‘none;’ and ‘I do not know what is being offered.’

Table 47. Reasons that Prevent Usage and Participation

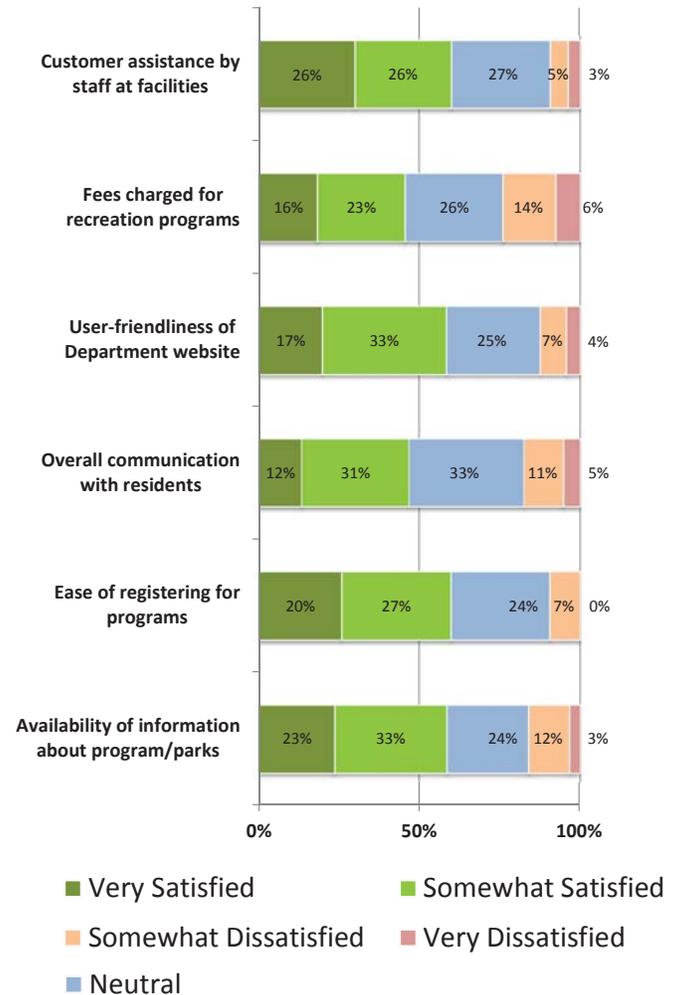


## Satisfaction Questions

Rate your satisfaction with the following parks and recreation services provided by the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department.

The categories with the highest level of satisfaction (very satisfied or somewhat satisfied) were ‘customer assistance by staff and facilities’ and ‘availability of information of programs/ parks’. The next highest ranked categories are ‘user-friendliness of department website’ and ‘ease of registering for programs’. The categories with the lowest level of satisfaction are ‘fees charged for recreation programs’ and ‘overall communication with residents’ for either somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Table 48. Satisfaction with Parks and Recreation Services

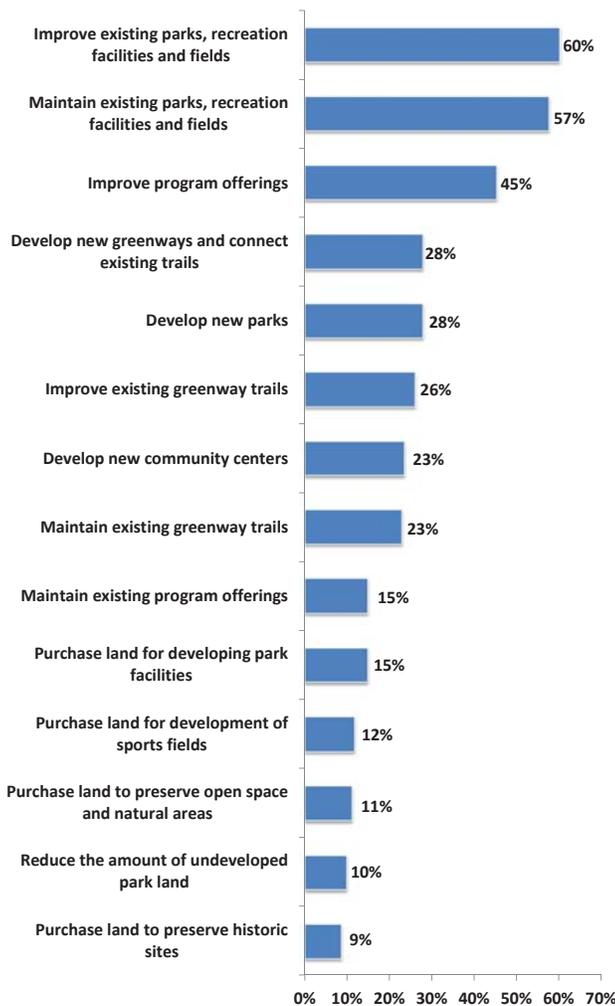


# Chapter 3

Indicate which actions you would be most willing to fund with your city tax dollars.

The actions that received the most support include (in descending order): improve existing parks, recreation facilities and fields; maintain existing parks, recreation facilities and fields; improve program offerings; and develop new greenways and connect existing trails.

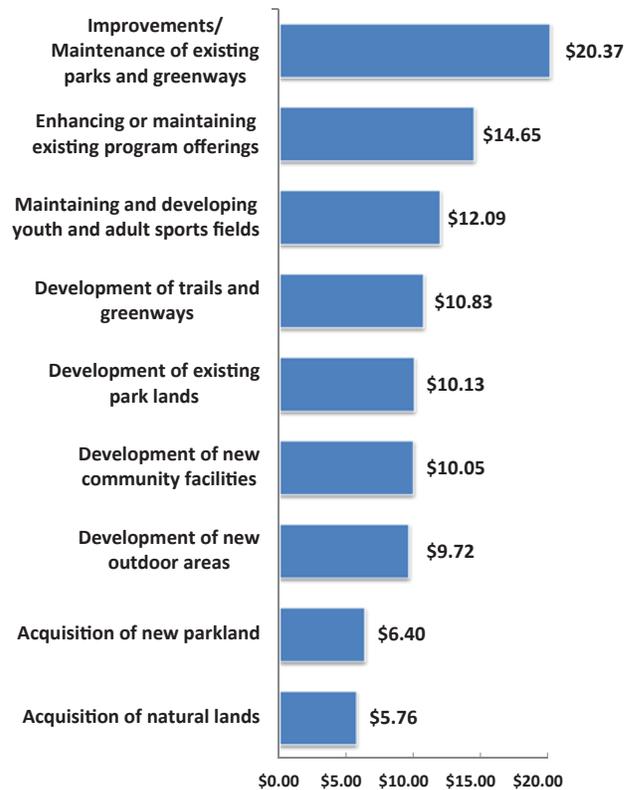
**Table 49.** Actions to Improve the Parks and Recreation System



If an additional \$100 were available for Parks and Recreation facilities in the City of Rocky Mount, how would you allocate the funds?

Respondents were asked to allocate an additional \$100 in funding for parks and recreation. The highest amount of funding (\$20.37) was allocated to ‘improvements/maintenance of existing parks and greenways,’ with the second highest allocation (\$14.65) identified for enhancing or maintaining existing program offerings. The two actions with the lowest allocation amounts both pertain to acquisition of land, either for new parkland or of natural lands.

**Table 50.** Ways to Allocate Additional Funds

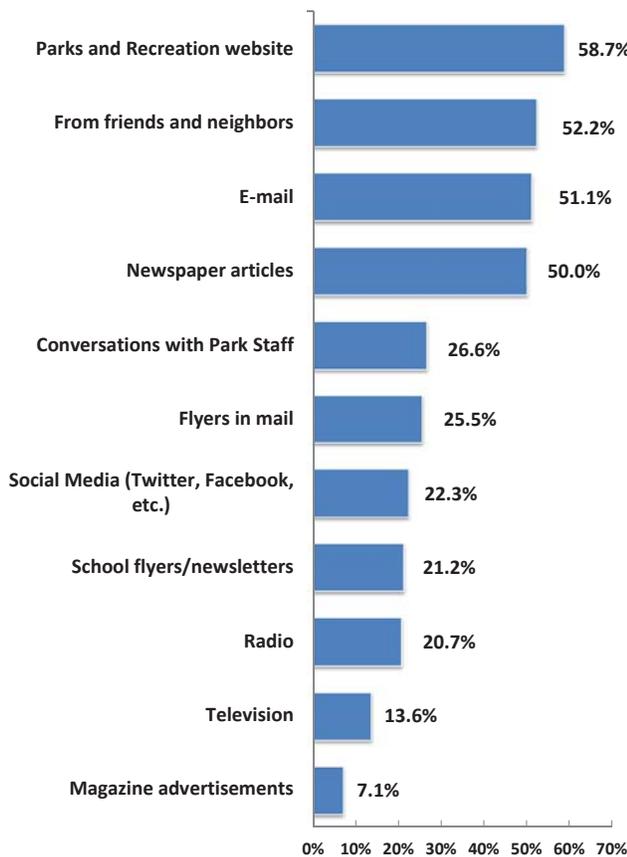


# Needs and Priorities Assessment

Check ALL the ways you learn about City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department programs and activities.

The top ways respondents learn about City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department programs and activities include (in descending order): parks and recreation website (58.7%); friends and neighbors (52.2%); email (51.1%); and newspaper articles (50.0%).

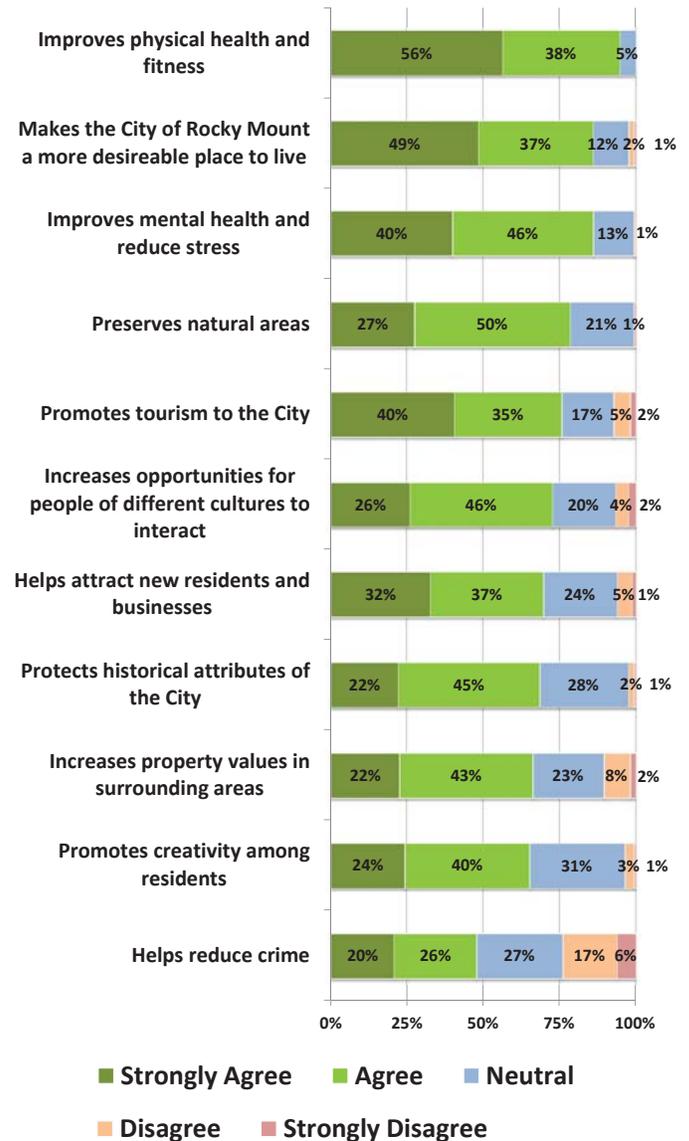
Table 51. Ways to Learn About Programs and Activities



Indicate your level of agreement with the benefits provided by parks, trails, and recreation facilities and services.

The benefits with the highest level of agreement (strongly agree or agree) was 'improve physical health and fitness' and 'make the City of Rocky Mount a more desirable place to live.' The next highest ranked benefits are 'improve mental health and reduce stress' and 'preserve natural areas.' The benefits with the lowest level of agreement are 'help reduce crime' and 'increase opportunities for people of different cultures to interact' for either disagree or strongly disagree.

Table 52. Park and Recreation Benefits



# Chapter 3

## 3.3.4 Summary of Findings

Though the Online Public Opinion Survey is not statistically valid, it did have a large number of responses and can contribute to a better understanding of how residents, workers and visitors of the City of Rocky Mount identify key issues with parks, recreation and cultural resources. Significant findings include:

- A high level of satisfaction with the condition and appearance of parks and recreation facilities in the City of Rocky Mount;
- A majority of respondents define 'walking distance' as within a half mile or a 10-minute walk;
- In addition to the City of Rocky Mount park sites, a majority of respondents use churches, state or federal parks, and public schools;
- The most significant reason that prevented respondents from using the City of Rocky Mount park and recreation facilities was insufficient security;
- A relatively high (80%) amount of respondents had either an excellent or good rating for the quality of recreation programs by the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department;
- The team sports that received the greatest participation were baseball/softball, basketball, and soccer;
- Activities or hobbies that households indicated that they engaged in were; walking/ jogging; Attend a fair, festival or concert; walking to enjoy nature; and fishing;
- Highest levels of satisfaction for services provided by the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation were for the availability of information about programs/ parks, customer assistance by staff at facilities, and user-friendliness of department website;
- Top priorities by respondents were for more emphasis on the improvement of existing parks, recreation facilities and fields; maintaining existing parks, recreation facilities and fields; and improving program offerings;
- Respondents believe the greatest benefits of parks, trails and recreation programs are; improved physical

health, making the city a more desirable place to live, work and visit, improved mental health, and promotion of tourism;

- Respondents would allocate the greatest amount of additional funding (20%) to 'improving and maintaining existing parks and greenway trails,' 15% towards enhancing program offerings, and 12% towards maintaining and developing sports fields.

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

## Section 3.4 | Benchmarking

### 3.4.1 Methodology

In order to fully analyze the needs and priorities of Rocky Mount a comparison consisting of a citizen-to-citizen benchmarking, was conducted. This benchmark relies on data provided by Master Plan team consultant ETC/Leisure Vision. Since 1998, ETC/Leisure Vision has conducted household surveys for needs assessments, feasibility studies, customer satisfaction, fees and charges comparisons, and other parks and recreation issues in more than 400 communities in over 40 states across the country. The results of these surveys have provided an unparalleled database of information to compare responses from household residents in the City of Rocky Mount to “national averages” and therefore provides a unique tool to assist the city in better decision making. Results from the City of Rocky Mount’s Citizen Opinion and Interest Survey, Section 3.3, will be compared to national averages as part of this exercise to identify trends unique to Rocky Mount.

Communities within the database include a full range of municipal and county governments from 20,000 to over one million in population. They include communities in warm weather climates and cold weather climates, mature communities and some of the fastest growing cities and counties in the country.

National averages have been developed for numerous strategically important parks and recreation planning and management issues including: user satisfaction and usage of parks and programs; reasons that prevent members of households from using parks and recreation facilities more often; priority recreation programs; and unmet needs for facilities and activities.

Results from household responses for the City of Rocky Mount were compared to national benchmarks to gain

further strategic information. Following is a summary of all tabular comparisons.

Notes:

- **Only results which deviate beyond the margin of error (+/- 4.8%) are analyzed for further review.**
- The following charts are colorcoded to increase legibility and do not display the positive or negative implications of the corresponding results. For example, numbers in brown are below national average, which is not necessarily positive or negative. Only results which deviate beyond the margin of error (+/- 4.8%) are highlighted.
- Benchmarking data contained in this report is protected intellectual property. Any reproduction of the benchmarking information in this report by persons or organizations not directly affiliated with the City of Rocky Mount is not authorized without written consent from ETC/Leisure Vision.

### 3.4.2 Results

Table 53 identifies benchmark results for a series of questions ranging from participation and visitation to quality of programs. In general, residents of the City of Rocky Mount visit parks less frequently than the national average and hold a slightly lower view of the quality of parks. Participation rates for scheduled recreation programs is also lower than national averages and of those who have participated in a program in the last twelve months, fewer rate the quality of the program by Rocky Mount as “excellent” than the national average. This is slightly offset by the fact that more participants rate the quality of programs they have participated in at Rocky Mount as “good”.

# Chapter 3

**Table 53: Visitation and Participation Rate Benchmarking**

	National Average	Rocky Mount
<b>Has your household visited any City/County/Park District parks over the past year?</b>		
Yes	74%	67%
No	26%	33%
<b>How would you rate the quality of all the parks you have visited?</b>		
Excellent	33%	22%
Good	54%	56%
Fair	11%	19%
Poor	1%	0%
<b>Has your household participated in City/County/Park District recreation programs during the past year?</b>		
Yes	32%	23%
No	68%	77%
<b>How would you rate the quality of all the recreation programs you have participated in?</b>		
Excellent	37%	29%
Good	53%	59%
Fair	10%	11%
Poor	1%	1%

-  Indicates a rate or result that is **higher** than the national benchmark rate or result in excess of the margin-of-error of +/- 4.8%
-  Indicates a rate or result that is **lower** than the national benchmark rate or result in excess of the margin-of-error of +/- 4.8%

When cross-tabulated with demographic information, households with a member who is over 65 years of age typically participate in more programs, but not at significantly higher rates than other households. Hispanic or Latino households participate in programs or visit parks less than other ethnicities.

This benchmark information provides a valuable understanding of how residents use, participate and rate the quality of their experience with City of Rocky Mount parks and recreation services. Results indicate there is room for improvement in both physical facilities and quality of programs; however, recreation programs are generally better rated than the quality of parks throughout the city.

Goals should be identified that can increase the visits and participation rates and improve the quality of programs and parks. These goals should include techniques that

can reach out to neighborhoods that do not traditionally participate or where traditional communication means are not effective in promoting the programming and facility offerings of the Park and Recreation Department.

In addition to understanding the visitation and participation rates of residents, benchmark results for reasons that prevent residents from visiting or participating have been analyzed (Table 54). When compared to national averages, several barriers or reasons are significantly higher in Rocky Mount. These include: I do not know what is being offered (9% higher than national average); security is insufficient (20% higher than national average); and lack of transportation (7% higher than national average). One barrier or reason that is significantly below national averages is program or facility is not offered (8% below national average).

Understanding the barriers or reasons that prevent residents from visiting a park or participating in a

**Table 54: Barrier Benchmarking**

	National Average	Rocky Mount
<b>Reasons preventing the use of parks and recreation facilities and programs more often</b>		
I do not know what is being offered	21%	30%
Security is insufficient	9%	29%
Fees are too high	14%	13%
Program times are not convenient	15%	11%
I do not know locations of parks/facilities	11%	11%
Lack of transportation	3%	10%
Parks/facilities too far from residence	11%	8%
Parks are not well maintained	5%	8%
Facilities are not well maintained	6%	7%
Use private or other community's facilities	10%	7%
Lack of handicap accessibility	2%	5%
Park operating hours not convenient	NA	5%
Program or facility not offered	13%	5%
Poor customer service by staff	3%	4%
Lack of greenway/trail access	NA	4%
Lack of parking	4%	3%
Parks and facilities are too crowded	NA	2%
Registration for activities is difficult	3%	2%

-  Indicates a rate or result that is **higher** than the national benchmark rate or result in excess of the margin-of-error of +/- 4.8%
-  Indicates a rate or result that is **lower** than the national benchmark rate or result in excess of the margin-of-error of +/- 4.8%

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

program is important but can vary throughout the city. Further analysis of these results by the Master Plan team will identify if there are geographical trends in these results. When cross-tabulated with demographic information, young families with children under the age of 10 have a higher percentage of respondents that indicated “I do not know what is being offered” as a barrier, while higher income households have a higher percentage of respondents that indicated “Security is insufficient” as a barrier.

Facility need and importance is another area of comparison. A list of typical recreation facilities has been compared to national averages for household needs (Table 55) and importance ratings (Table 56). Several recreation facility types are rated below national averages, and others were comparable, except for Art Centers for household need and Community Centers, Arts Centers and Basketball Courts for household importance. Though several facility

types are below national average, they may still provide important amenities for some neighborhoods.

Several facility types have below national rates for need; however, these results are consistent with the statistically valid results that rank walking and running tracks, museums, picnic areas, restrooms and art centers as facilities that are needed and important to households across the entire city.

The same comparisons can be made for recreation programs. Table 57 identifies rates of household need for recreation programs, and Table 58 identifies household importance of recreation programs. Notable differences compare with national averages include higher than average rates of need for family, senior adult, nature, performing arts, outdoor/adventure recreation and aquatic programs, and higher than average household importance of family programs. Recreation programs with

**Table 55: Recreation Facilities Need Benchmarking**

Household Need for Recreation Facilities		
Recreation Facilities:	National Average	Rocky Mount
Walking/running tracks	66%	57%
Museums/ planetarium	NA	55%
Picnic areas/shelters	52%	55%
Restrooms	57%	52%
Art centers	36%	47%
Smaller neighborhood parks	58%	45%
Playgrounds	43%	44%
Natural parks and preserves	49%	40%
Community centers	43%	40%
Greenway trails	NA	36%
Indoor pools	43%	32%
Tar River Reservoir	NA	29%
Basketball courts	23%	26%
Outdoor pools	42%	25%
Gymnasium	26%	24%
Tennis courts	28%	22%
Community gardens	33%	22%
Dog parks	26%	19%
Mountain bike trails	22%	18%
Youth baseball and softball fields	20%	18%
Adult baseball and softball fields	14%	16%
Multi-Sport athletic fields	21%	15%
Skate parks	13%	15%
Disc golf courses	13%	10%

**Table 56: Recreation Facilities Importance Benchmarking**

Most Important Recreation Facilities		
Recreation Facilities:	National Average	Rocky Mount
Walking/running tracks	37%	31%
Museums/ planetarium	NA	27%
Picnic areas/shelters	16%	20%
Community centers	14%	19%
Art centers	12%	18%
Playgrounds	19%	17%
Restrooms	14%	16%
Smaller neighborhood parks	27%	15%
Greenway trails	NA	14%
Natural parks and preserves	16%	12%
Indoor pools	17%	12%
Outdoor pools	17%	10%
Tar River Reservoir	NA	9%
Basketball courts	4%	9%
Gymnasium	6%	8%
Dog parks	12%	7%
Youth baseball and softball fields	7%	6%
Multi-Sport athletic fields	9%	6%
Tennis courts	8%	5%
Mountain bike trails	7%	5%
Community gardens	9%	4%
Adult baseball and softball fields	3%	3%
Skate parks	2%	3%
Disc golf courses	3%	2%

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**Table 57: Recreation Program Need Benchmarking**

Household Need for Recreation Programs		
Recreation Programs:	National Average	Rocky Mount
Fitness and wellness	51%	49%
History and museums	NA	47%
Family	27%	43%
Senior adult	29%	40%
Special events	39%	37%
Nature	31%	36%
Performing arts	29%	36%
Outdoor/ adventure recreation	29%	34%
Visual arts	NA	33%
Volunteer opportunities	NA	31%
Social	NA	25%
Adult sports	22%	24%
Lake-related activities	NA	24%
Youth summer camp	19%	22%
Youth sports	24%	22%
Aquatics	33%	43%
Teen (6th - 12th grade)	17%	21%
Tennis	17%	19%
Youth (K - 5th grade)	24%	19%
Before and after school care	15%	16%
Pre-school	14%	14%
Special populations	NA	9%

**Table 58: Recreation Program Importance Benchmarking**

Most Important Recreation Programs		
Recreation Programs:	National Average	Rocky Mount
Fitness and wellness	30%	25%
History and museums	NA	21%
Family	11%	20%
Senior adult	15%	19%
Performing arts	12%	16%
Special events	19%	12%
Nature	13%	12%
Youth summer camp	8%	11%
Visual arts	NA	11%
Outdoor/ adventure recreation	9%	10%
Teen (6th - 12th grade)	7%	10%
Volunteer opportunities	NA	9%
Youth sports	13%	9%
Adult sports	10%	9%
Before and after school care	7%	8%
Aquatics	12%	7%
Social	NA	7%
Lake-related activities	NA	7%
Youth (K - 5th grade)	10%	6%
Pre-school	7%	5%
Tennis	7%	4%
Special populations	NA	1%

below national average rates for household importance include fitness and wellness, special events and aquatics.

Rates for household need and importance may vary from neighborhood to neighborhood. However, there are significant citywide needs for family, senior adult and aquatic recreation programs. This is consistent with input from public participation events.

### 3.4.3 Summary of Findings

Citizen-to-citizen benchmarking allows the City of Rocky Mount to better understand how the city’s parks and recreation system compares to national averages. Significant findings include:

- Below national average for park visitations and program participation;

- Fewer residents rate parks conditions and program quality as “excellent” however, more residents rate these as “good” than the national average;
- More residents than the national average say a lack of knowing what is offered, insufficient security and lack of transportation prevent them from visiting a park or participating in a recreation program;
- Fewer residents say that the lack of programs or facilities is the reason for not visiting or participating, indicating the city is doing a good job at providing programs and facilities;
- More households indicate that art centers are needed, while more households state a higher importance for community centers, art centers and basketball courts than national averages;
- Households indicate a significantly higher need for family, senior adult and aquatic recreation programs, and a somewhat higher need for nature, outdoor/ adventure recreation, performing arts programs; and
- Households indicate a significantly higher importance rating for family programs than national averages.

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

## Section 3.5 | High Level Life-Style Analysis

### 3.5.1 Methodology

One shortcoming of a demographic analysis is the compartmentalization of information about people. In truth, it is the combination of many characteristics that drive a person's behaviors and preferences. Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri) is the leading worldwide supplier of Geographic Information System (GIS) software and services to most federal, state, local and non-profit agencies as well as all 50 U.S. State Health and Transportation Departments. One of the company's major innovations is the aggregation of demographic data into composite lifestyle groups called "Tapestry segments." Tapestry segments represent a compilation of different socioeconomic data into cohesive lifestyle profiles. Although there are 66 lifestyle profiles, these are organized into 12 broad lifestyle segments abbreviated as L1 through L12. Generally, lower L-number equals a higher economic impact.

Three levels of analysis were completed using Esri's Tapestry data to better understand the department's customer profiles. One analysis captures the City of Rocky Mount's core at a four-mile radius. This calculates to an area of approximately 25 square miles in size. A second analysis was completed that captures a larger area based on a eight-mile radius. This area is approximately 50 square miles in size, and includes the entire city Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) and the immediate surrounding areas. A third analysis was also completed at a radius of twelve-miles, and captures the surrounding rural areas and smaller municipalities. This larger analysis area begins to capture the department's customers from neighboring areas who may still use facilities and participate in programs at city parks.

Map 10 illustrates the locations of different lifestyle segments in Rocky Mount and surrounding areas. In

general, the closer to downtown, the more mixed the lifestyles are, with a dominance of traditional middle-class families, and a small presence of urban singles (L3, L4 and L10 Segments). West of the city core, lifestyle segments become more upscale suburban, with a mix of rural areas (L2 and L12). The east side of the city is dominated by rural areas and small communities (L11). The outskirts of the 12-mile radius also see pockets of middle-class to upscale communities separated by large rural areas.

### 3.5.2 Lifestyle Analysis

#### The City Core (4 Mile Radius)

Within the city's core areas, there are two dominant lifestyle groups, and a number of other prevalent groups. About one out of every six households in the core of Rocky Mount can be classified as "Family Foundations;" about one in seven are "Modest Income Homes," and small percentages are "City Commons," "Old and New Comers," and "Metro Edge City." Table 59 lists the top 10 lifestyle segments in the City's four-mile radius, and compares their proportions to the United States as a whole.

"Family Foundations" at 15.7% in Rocky Mount, is by far the most common of the Lifestyle Profiles; the full lifestyle profile follows. "Family Foundations" is part of the "Traditional Living" lifestyle group, which is characterized as hardworking, settled families with a higher median age, and convey the perception of "the real middle America"<sup>7</sup> This indicates that they are households that are family-centered, ethnically diverse, and composed of homeowners who live in single-family homes. The next largest group, "Modest Income Homes" are part of the "Metropolis" Lifestyle Group and typically occupy older suburbs of Southern urban areas.



# Needs and Priorities Assessment

**Table 59: Most Common Lifestyle Segments in four-Mile Radius**

Lifestyle Segment	Lifestyle Profile	% pop. 4 Mile	% of pop. U.S.
Family Foundations	L10	15.7%	0.8%
Modest Income Homes	L3	13.9%	0.9%
City Commons	L9	9.8%	0.8%
Old and New Comers	L4	8.9%	2.0%
Metro City Edge	L3	7.3%	0.9%
Rural Bypasses	L11	5.2%	1.5%
Milk and Cookies	L9	4.8%	2.2%
Aspiring Young Families	L7	4.2%	2.3%
Midland Crowd	L12	3.9%	3.2%
Exurbanites	L1	3.7%	2.5%
Total		77.4%	17.0%

Source: ESRI; Date: December, 2013

## Lifestyle Profile: Family Foundations

At approximately 16% of Rocky Mount’s core population, the “Family Foundations” profile merits a closer look. The following profile is provided by Esri’s Tapestry Segmentation Guide.

### Demographic

Family is the cornerstone of life in these neighborhoods that are a mix of married couples, single parents, grandparents, and young and adult children. The average family size is 3.3 people, which is slightly higher than the U.S. average of 3.14 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The median age is 39.1 years, which is nearly two years older than the U.S. median of 37.2 years old and North Carolina’s 37.4 years old (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010); and 70% of residents are age 45 or older. Diversity is relatively low’ with 84% of the population of this profile identifying themselves as African-American.

### Socioeconomic

The median household income is \$38,460, which is 15% below the median North Carolina household income of \$45,450 in 2012 (U.S. Census Bureau). More than 20% of the employed residents work for the government (local, state or federal). Approximately one-third of the households receive Social Security or public assistance. Although education attainment levels are below the U.S.

level, a slightly higher proportion of residents aged 25 or older have graduated from high school.

### Residential

These small urban communities are located in large metropolitan areas, primarily in the South and Midwest. Because residents tend to stay put, very little household growth has occurred since 2000. 68% own their homes. Most of their houses are single-family, built before 1970.

### Preferences

Family Foundations residents are active in their community by attending church; serving on church boards; helping with fund-raising projects; and participating in civic activities and events. Many individuals spend money on their families and home maintenance projects.

## Lifestyle Profile: Modest Income Homes

At approximately 14% of Rocky Mount’s core population, the “Modest Income Homes” profile also merits a closer look, as the profile appears in the larger radius analyses as well. The following profile is provided by Esri’s Tapestry Segmentation Guide.

### Demographic

83% of the residents in Modest Income Homes neighborhoods identify themselves as African American. Single-person and single-parent household types are predominant; however, a higher-than-average proportion of other family household types is also present. The median age of 36.1 years is over a year younger than the national median of 37.2 years old, and many adult children live with parents or family. More than one-fourth are aged 65 years or older and have retired. Many are caregivers for their grandchildren, demonstrating strong family ties in these neighborhoods.

### Socioeconomic

Many of the retirees in Modest Income Homes receive Social Security benefits. Slightly more residents work part-time than full-time, mainly in service and blue-collar occupations. The median household income is \$20,567, which is less than half the median household income in

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North Carolina. 13% of households receive Supplemental Security Income, and 10% receive public assistance. More than 60% of residents aged 25 years and older have graduated from high school. 8% hold a bachelor's or graduate degree while 28% have attended college. All education statistics are below state and national averages.

## Residential

Most Modest Income Homes neighborhoods are in older suburbs of Southern metropolitan areas, with a smaller concentration found in the Midwest. More than two-thirds of the housing is comprised of single-family dwellings; 15% are duplexes. Homeowners and renters are almost evenly divided. 71% of the households own at least one vehicle compared to 90.9% of households nationally (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Because demand for housing is low, home prices are very moderate.

## Preferences

Modest Income Homes residents often enjoy participating or watching physical activities such as basketball. Communication means are typically more traditional, such as word of mouth or direct mailings as internet usage remains low.

## Eight-Mile Radius Analysis

While the four-mile radius captured the city core, the eight-mile radius includes the entire Rocky Mount ETJ, and some of the surrounding neighborhoods of the city. By analyzing the city at this scale, the analysis can capture an area of adjoining jurisdictions that influence fringe areas of the city. **Table 60** contains the 10 most common lifestyle profiles in the eight-mile radius.

When compared to the four-mile radius lifestyle percentages, there are some noticeable differences. In the eight-mile radius, the percentage of "Family Foundations," "Modest Income Homes," "City Commons" "Old and New Comers" and "Metro City Edge" each decreased. On the other hand, the percentage of "Midland Crowd" increased by 8.0% and "Rural Bypass" increased by 3.2% with the expanded radius. There are also two other lifestyle profiles present in the top 10: "Southern Satellites," and "Green Acres." This result is not surprising, as these profiles represent more typical rural preferences often found in this location of the state.

**Table 60:** Most Common Lifestyle Segments in Eight-Mile Radius

Lifestyle Segment	Lifestyle Profile	% pop. 8 Mile	% of pop. U.S.
Midland Crowd	L12	11.9%	3.2%
Family Foundations	L10	10.5%	0.8%
Modest Income Homes	L3	9.3%	0.9%
Rural Bypasses	L11	8.4%	1.5%
City Commons	L9	6.5%	0.7%
Old and Newcomers	L4	6.0%	2.0%
Southern Satellites	L11	5.0%	2.6%
Metro City Edge	L3	4.9%	0.9%
Green Acres	L2	4.7%	3.1%
Exurbanites	L1	4.2%	2.5%
Total		71.4%	18.2%

Source: ESRI; Date: December, 2013

## Lifestyle Profile: Midland Crowd

At approximately 12% of the eight-mile population, the "Midland Crowd" is the largest segment in this radius. The following profile is taken directly from Esri's Tapestry Segmentation Guide.

### Demographic

A growing population of 12 million, approximately 4% of the US population, identifies Midland Crowd as Tapestry Segmentation's largest segment. Since 2000, the population has grown by 2.18% annually. The median age of 37.9 years parallels that of the US median. 62% of households are married couple families; half of them have children, while 20% of households are singles who live alone. Midland Crowd neighborhoods are typically not as diverse as other profile types associated with major urban centers.

### Socioeconomic

Median household income is \$47,544, slightly lower than the U.S. median but above the North Carolina median. Most income is earned from wages and salaries; however, self-employment ventures are slightly higher for this segment than the national average. Half of the residents

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who work hold white collar jobs. More than 45% of residents aged 25 years and older have attended college; 16% have earned a bachelor's or graduate degree.

## Residential

Midland Crowd residents typically live in housing developments in rural villages and towns throughout the United States, mainly in the South. Three-fourths of the housing was built after 1969. The home ownership rate is 80%, higher than the national rate of 64%. Two-thirds of the housing is single-family houses; 24% are mobile homes.

## Preferences

Midland Crowd residents are typically active in their community. Approximately 25% of households own three or more vehicles. Popular activities include hunting, fishing, and visual artwork such as woodworking. Many Midland Crowd households own dogs for outdoor recreation activities or household pets.

## Twelve-Mile Radius Analysis

The twelve-mile radius includes the entire Rocky Mount ETJ, and an expanded look at the neighborhoods, communities, and small municipalities that surround the city. In many ways, this radius is an indication of the populations Rocky Mount is currently serving and will likely continue to serve in the future for some services. **Table 61** contains the top 10 most common lifestyle profiles in the twelve-mile radius.

When compared to the eight-mile radius lifestyle percentages, there are some noticeable differences. In the eight-mile radius, the lifestyle segment profiles present are fairly consistent, with the exception of “Southern Satellites” increasing by 7.9%. This segment is similar to Midland Crowd and Rural Bypasses, and is typical of the rural areas that are included in the expanded radius. “Salt of the Earth” is the only new lifestyle profile in the top 10. This segment is in the same lifestyle group as “Southern Satellites”, and possesses many of the same rural preferences and demographics. Along with the eight-mile radius, this analysis helps illustrate the predominantly rural nature of the neighborhoods that exist outside of the city’s core.

**Table 61:** Most Common Lifestyle Segments in 12-Mile Radius

Lifestyle Segment	Lifestyle Profile	% pop. 12 Mile	% of pop. U.S.
Southern Satellites	L11	12.9%	2.6%
Midland Crowd	L12	10.1%	3.2%
Rural Bypasses	L11	9.5%	1.5%
Family Foundations	L10	8.0%	0.8%
Modest Income Homes	L3	7.1%	0.9%
Salt of the Earth	L11	6.4%	2.7%
Green Acres	L2	6.2%	3.1%
City Commons	L9	5.0%	0.7%
Old and Newcomers	L4	4.6%	2.0%
Metro City Edge	L3	3.8%	0.9%
Total		73.6%	18.4%

Source: ESRI; Date: December, 2013

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## 3.5.3 Summary

The Tapestry Lifestyle Segments were created primarily as a tool for businesses to understand their geographic markets. The City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department has traditionally served residents as customers, which is why this type of analysis is a useful tool in better understanding the department's customer base. From the profiles created by Esri, general parks and recreation needs can be identified by national trends for each lifestyle profile (Table 62). The top three lifestyle segments for each analyses are highlighted in green.

Table 62: Parks and Recreation Facilities Needs by Lifestyle Profiles

Lifestyle Segment	Lifestyle Profile	% pop. 4 Mile	% pop. 8 Mile	% pop. 12 Mile	Typical Parks and Recreation Facilities Needs
Family Foundations	L10	15.7%	10.5%	8.0%	Community centers, sports fields, basketball courts, neighborhood parks
Modest Income Homes	L3	13.9%	9.3%	7.1%	Basketball courts, neighborhood parks, sports fields
City Commons	L9	9.8%	6.5%	5.0%	Basketball courts, theme parks, tennis courts, sports fields, neighborhood parks
Old and New Comers	L4	8.9%	6.0%	4.6%	Walking and biking trails, swimming pools, community and senior centers, open spaces
Metro City Edge	L3	7.3%	4.9%	3.8%	Sports fields, basketball courts, neighborhood parks
Rural Bypasses	L11	5.2%	8.4%	9.5%	Fishing piers, boat launches, event venues, open spaces
Milk and Cookies	L9	4.8%	3.2%	2.4%	Theme parks, community parks, greenway trails, neighborhood parks
Aspiring Young Families	L7	4.2%	3.3%	2.5%	Youth sports, programs and facilities, basketball courts, neighborhood parks
Midland Crowd	L12	3.9%	11.9%	10.1%	Fishing piers, event venues, boat launches
Exurbanites	L1	3.7%	4.2%	3.4%	Hiking trails, disc golf, nature parks, boat launches, golf courses
Salt of the Earth	L11	1.4%	2.8%	6.4%	Fishing piers, boat launches, gymnasiums, community centers
Southern Satellites	L11	0.1%	5.0%	12.9%	Boat launches, event venues, open spaces
Green Acres	L2		4.7%	6.2%	Biking trails, boat launches, nature parks, community gardens

Source: ESRI; Date: December 2013

 Top Lifestyle Segments for Each Analysis

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

## Section 3.6 | Existing Level of Service Analysis

### 3.6.1 Methodology

The purpose of an Existing Level of Service (LOS) Analysis is to quantify how well the existing parks system is meeting the needs of residents. The National Recreation and Park Association’s (NRPA) definition of LOS is “an allocation mechanism for the delivery of park land and basic recreation facilities throughout a community. By adoption of such a standard, a community in essence says that all citizens, [...], will have an equal opportunity to share in the basic menu of services implicit in the standard and accompanying spatial distribution and allocation of policies.”

For Rocky Mount, the LOS analysis was measured based on four basic principles that will be continually refined based on public input in subsequent phases of this planning process.

- Acreage (Amount of Park Land)
- Facilities (Amount of Facilities)
- Access (Distance or Travel Time)
- Quality (Quality of Facilities/ see Section 2.3)

### 3.6.2 Acreage Level of Service Analysis

The most common way to measure LOS for existing acreage is the number of public park acres per 1,000 residents in a community. Currently, there are 683.36 acres of developed and undeveloped public park and greenway lands within the City of Rocky Mount. The estimated 2012 population of Rocky Mount is 57,136 residents, which translates into an Acreage LOS of 11.96 acres per 1,000 residents. In 2030, the population is projected to increase to 60,387 (RMMPO). If no additional park or greenway land is acquired, the acreage LOS will drop to 11.3 acres per 1,000 residents. **Table 63** shows the LOS analysis for each park type, and calculates the deficit or surplus that these currently provide, and the projected LOS for 2030.

#### Acreage LOS Findings

Based on this technique, the City of Rocky Mount is currently experiencing a deficit in acreage for neighborhood and community parks, with the neighborhood park deficit being 28% of the current acreage. The deficit for community parks is not as significant, but will increase as the population grows towards the 2030 estimate. Based on the park sizes of these three categories, it is estimated

**Table 63:** City of Rocky Existing Acreage LOS Analysis per 1,000 Population

Park Classification	Existing Acreage (Dec. 2013 dev. & undev. acreage)	Existing Number of Parks	Standard Park Size	Existing LOS (2012)* acres/1000 pop.	Projected LOS (2030)** acres/1000 pop.	Average Projected Park Size	Number of New Parks Needed by 2030
Mini Parks	28.31	14	1 ac	.49	.46	2.02 ac	1
Neighborhood Parks	107.63	15	5-10 ac	1.88	1.78	7.17 ac	1
Community Parks	173.65	6	30-50 ac	3.03	2.88	28.89 ac	1

\* Population based on U.S. Census 2012 population estimate of 57,136

\*\* Rocky Mount Urban Area MPO Projection for 2030 population of 60,387

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**Table 64:** City of Rocky Existing Acreage LOS Analysis per 1,000 Population By City Ward

	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7
Existing Park Acreage (Mini, Neighborhood and Community Parks)	101	180	24	36	2	63	10
Ward Population (2010)	7,909	7,994	8,074	7,914	8,624	8,622	8,540
Existing Acreage LOS by Ward (acres/1000 pop.)	12.77	22.51	2.97	4.55	0.23	7.31	1.17
Deficit or (Surplus) from Citywide LOS (11.96)	(0.81)	(10.55)	8.99	7.41	11.73	4.65	10.79
Avg. Park Size (Combined by Ward)	11.2 ac	20 ac	3.4 ac	9 ac	2 ac	9 ac	10 ac
Number of Parks Needed (based on average park size)	0	0	3	1	6	1	2

\* Population based on U.S. Census 2010 population data.

that the city will need 16.47 additional acres in three new parks by 2030, based on this one level of service analysis technique.

Also considered in this analysis is the distribution of park acreage in each of the seven wards of the city. While city-wide acreage findings do not indicate a serious deficit for any of the park types, the acreage per Ward analysis offers more detailed findings. **Table 64** shows the LOS analysis for each Ward, combining the acreage of mini, neighborhood and community parks and comparing each ward's LOS to the citywide figure of 11.96 acres per 1,000 residents. **Map 11** on the next page shows each ward and its relationship to the park system. The data from this table is also included, to provide a geographic image of the acreage LOS by ward.

This analysis begins to show the disparity of acreage between the different Wards, and provides insight into where additional parks may be needed. Ward 2 has an acreage LOS of 22.51 acres per 1,000 residents, which is a surplus of 84 acres compared to the citywide figure. On the other hand, Ward 5 has an acreage LOS of .23 acres per 1,000 residents, indicating a deficit of 101 acres.

While the Acreage LOS helps ensure a commitment to park land as the city develops, it has shortcomings. Comparison to other cities may be difficult as some cities operate golf courses, conservation areas, and other non-recreation facilities which are high in acreage but low in available capacity. Acreage LOS also does not consider amenities that are accessible to residents but owned and operated by entities other than the city or consolidated city/county park systems. Examples include school ball fields and playgrounds, county and state parks located

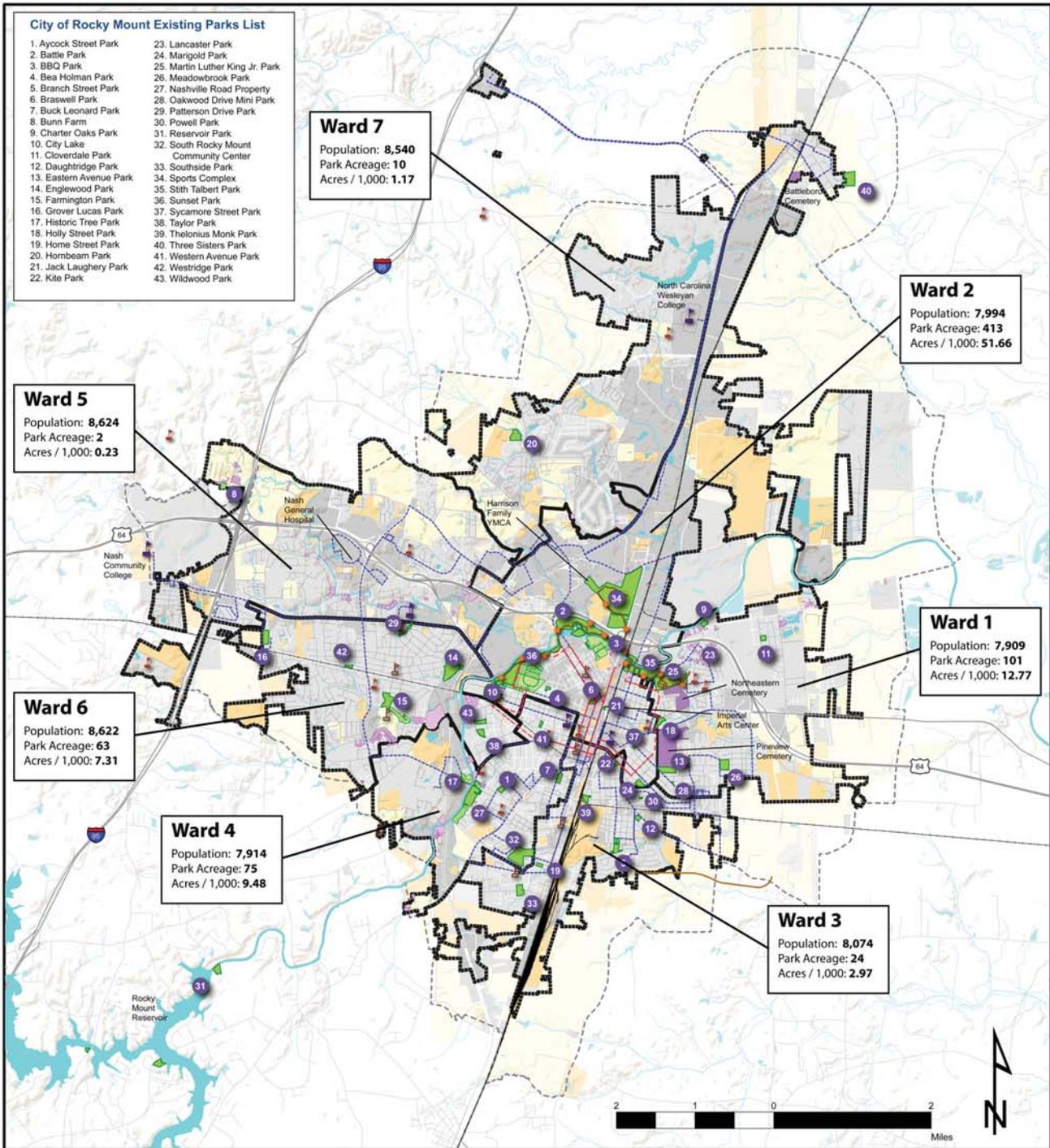
near the city border, and privately operated programs such as YMCAs, the Boys and Girls Club, church after-school programs, community meeting facilities, and non-profit senior programs.

For these reasons, **this System Plan explores additional techniques** such as Existing Facility LOS and Access LOS to better determine the extent to which parks and recreation facilities and programs are able to meet the needs of City of Rocky Mount residents. This methodology assumes the following principles:

- **Facilities (Capacity of Facilities)** – Every resident should have similar opportunities to use recreation facilities.
- **Access (Distance or Travel Time)** – Every resident should be able to access specific park facilities within similar walking, bicycling, public transit and/or driving distances.

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

Map 11: City of Rocky Mount Park Acreage by City Ward



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## 3.6.3 Facilities Level of Service Analysis

Another way to measure existing LOS is by the number of facilities per capita. Like acreage, there are no strict standards for the number of facilities that a community needs. This section will evaluate and compare the number of facilities per capita to Edgecombe and Nash Counties, as well as, statewide averages.

### Demand for Outdoor Recreation

The 2002-2007 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) is the eighth survey in a series started in 1960 by the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission and now coordinated by the U.S. Forest Service. This survey interviewed approximately 90,000 Americans aged 16 and older through random telephone samples. In North Carolina, the NRSE produced almost 3,000 survey results.

The survey identifies the top 20 most popular outdoor recreation activities with responses from North Carolina highlighted in **Table 65**. Walking for pleasure is the most popular activity, with 82% of state residents participating. Approximately 75% of the population enjoys outdoor gatherings, and almost two-thirds participate in gardening or landscaping. These numbers are helpful in determining the kind of recreational activities that citizens wish to engage in, and identifying what types of facilities can best serve these demands.

### Supply of Recreational Opportunities

Prior to 1995, the North Carolina Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) provided standards to describe the adequate quantity of public recreational acreage and facilities based on population. The move away from this system in North Carolina was supported by the National Recreation and Park Association, who stated, “these standards take a cookie-cutter approach that recommends the same services for all counties when in fact each county and community has unique characteristics and preferences”.

Current levels of recreation services by unit are not prescribed on a county-by-county basis. Instead of applying a standard, the SCORP provides information

**Table 65:** 2002-2007 Percentage of State Residents Participating in Outdoor Recreation Activities (NSRE)

Activity	Percent
Walking for Pleasure	82
Family Gathering	74.6
Gardening or Landscaping	65.4
Driving for Pleasure	58.2
View/Photo Natural Scenery	57
Visit Nature Centers	52.9
Sightseeing	52.9
Picnicking	50
Attend Sports Events	48.6
Visit a Beach	44.2
Visit Historic Sites	43.1
View/Photo Wildlife	43
View/Photo Wildflowers, Trees	41
Swimming in an Outdoor Pool	39.9
Swimming in Lakes, Streams, Etc.	39.7
Yard Games, e.g., Horseshoes, Cornhole	38.5
View/Photograph Birds	34
Bicycling	31
Boating (Any Type)	31
Freshwater Fishing	30.9

that allows each North Carolina county to be compared to each other according to current recreation resources and county population. **Table 66** and **Table 67** show the current Facility LOS for the City of Rocky Mount, Edgecombe County and Nash County. This data is evaluated based on the number of residents each unit is serving and then compared to the North Carolina state median using 2012 population estimates.

### Facility LOS Findings

Based on this technique, the City of Rocky Mount has a significant surplus of athletic fields, playgrounds and picnic shelters. The city also enjoys a surplus of basketball, tennis and volleyball courts. There is a deficiency of greenway trails when compared to statewide standards,

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**Table 66: Residents per Unit Comparison for City of Rocky Mount, Edgecombe and Nash Counties**

Facility Type	Number of Existing Facilities in City of Rocky Mount	City Residents Per Unit (2012)*	City Residents Per Unit (2030)**	Edgecombe County*** Residents Per Unit (2012)*	Nash County*** Residents Per Unit (2012)*	State Median Population Per Unit***
Baseball Fields	25	2,285	2,415	12,586	5,606	7,764
Softball Fields	7	8,162	8,627	8,391	7,331	10,870
Football Fields	1	57,136	60,387	N/A	95,306	54,349
Soccer Fields	9	6,348	6,709	25,172	23,827	13,587
Multi-Purpose Fields	4	14,284	15,096	5,594	N/A	27,174
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	30	1,905	2,013	8,391	4,765	9,058
Tennis Courts	30	1,905	2,013	5,594	2,166	5,435
Volleyball Courts	5	11,427	12,077	36,232	N/A	36,232
Picnic Shelters	35	1,632	1,725	6,293	3,530	5,435
Playgrounds	30	1,905	2,013	12,586	2,723	6,794
Indoor/Outdoor Swimming Pools	1	57,136	60,387	25,172	N/A	54,349
Trails (Miles) (includes paved and unpaved)	11	5,194	5,490	5,034	31,769	3,045

\* 2011 populations based on U.S. Census Estimates: Rocky Mount: 57,136, Edgecombe County: 55,954, Nash County: 95,708

\*\* 2030 populations based on Rocky Mount MPO (RMMPO) projections. Rocky Mount: 60,387

\*\*\* Number of units is based on information from the 2009-2013 North Carolina Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department 2012 Park Review

 Indicates a lower Facility LOS than State median       Indicates a higher Facility LOS than State median

**Table 67: City of Rocky Mount Residents per Unit Surplus/Deficiency Based on North Carolina Medians and Existing City LOS**

Facility Type	State Median Population Per Unit***	City of Rocky Mount # Units Deficit/(Surplus) Based on State Median Pop. Per Unit (2012)*	City of Rocky Mount # Units Deficit/(Surplus) Based on State Median Pop. Per Unit (2030)**	City of Rocky Mount # of Units Needed Based on 2030 Pop. to Match 2012 Pop. LOS
Baseball Fields	7,764	+18	+17	1
Softball Fields	10,870	+2	+1	0
Football Fields	54,349	0	0	0
Soccer Fields	13,587	+5	+5	1
Multi-Purpose Fields	27,174	+2	+2	0
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	9,058	+23	+23	2
Tennis Courts	5,435	+20	+19	2
Volleyball Courts	36,232	+3	+3	0
Picnic Shelters	5,435	+24	+23	2
Playgrounds	6,794	+22	+21	2
Indoor/Outdoor Swimming Pools	54,349	0	0	0
Trails (Miles) (includes paved and unpaved)	3,045	-8	-9	1

\* 2011 populations based on U.S. Census Estimates: Rocky Mount: 57,136, Edgecombe County: 55,954, Nash County: 95,708

\*\* 2030 populations based on Rocky Mount MPO (RMMPO) projections. Rocky Mount: 60,387

\*\*\* Number of units is based on information from the 2009-2013 North Carolina Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department 2012 Park Review

# Chapter 3

with the deficiency accounting of a length that is equal to 73% of the current mileage. These conditions are projected to continue as the city grows to an estimated population of 60,387 (RMMPO) by the year 2030. The city will continue to enjoy a surplus of facilities as the population increases: however, this does not account for the distribution or quality of the facilities. As the facilities age and the population grows, updates to existing facilities and equitable access will need to be considered. The greenway deficiency will also continue to grow with the population increase, and in 2030 will represent a length equal to 80% of the current mileage.

Though a Facility LOS analysis provides a snapshot condition of the outdoor recreation facility capacity, it does not capture whether facilities are accessible by all residents and conflicts with input from public participation such the number of tennis courts or indoor recreation facilities. For this analysis the Master Plan team will conduct an Access LOS analysis to identify gaps in accessibility to facilities.

## 3.6.4 Access Level of Service Analysis

A third approach explored to better determine existing LOS is analyzing the level of access that residents have to park facilities. This is typically measured as a distance, either in miles or travel time. The City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department has established four different classification types for the parks within the system. The access level of service of the parks and facilities was analyzed using distances consistent with the park classification assigned by the City of Rocky Mount in the Together Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan. These classifications and their respective level of service distance are listed below:

### Existing Park Classifications Types:

- Mini Parks - 1/4 mile (Map 12)
- Neighborhood Parks - 1/2 miles (Map 13)
- Community Parks - 3 miles (Map 14)
- Special Parks [Battle Park, etc.] - 3 miles (Map 15)

**Maps 12-15** identify gaps in accessibility for each park classification listed above.

### Access LOS Findings

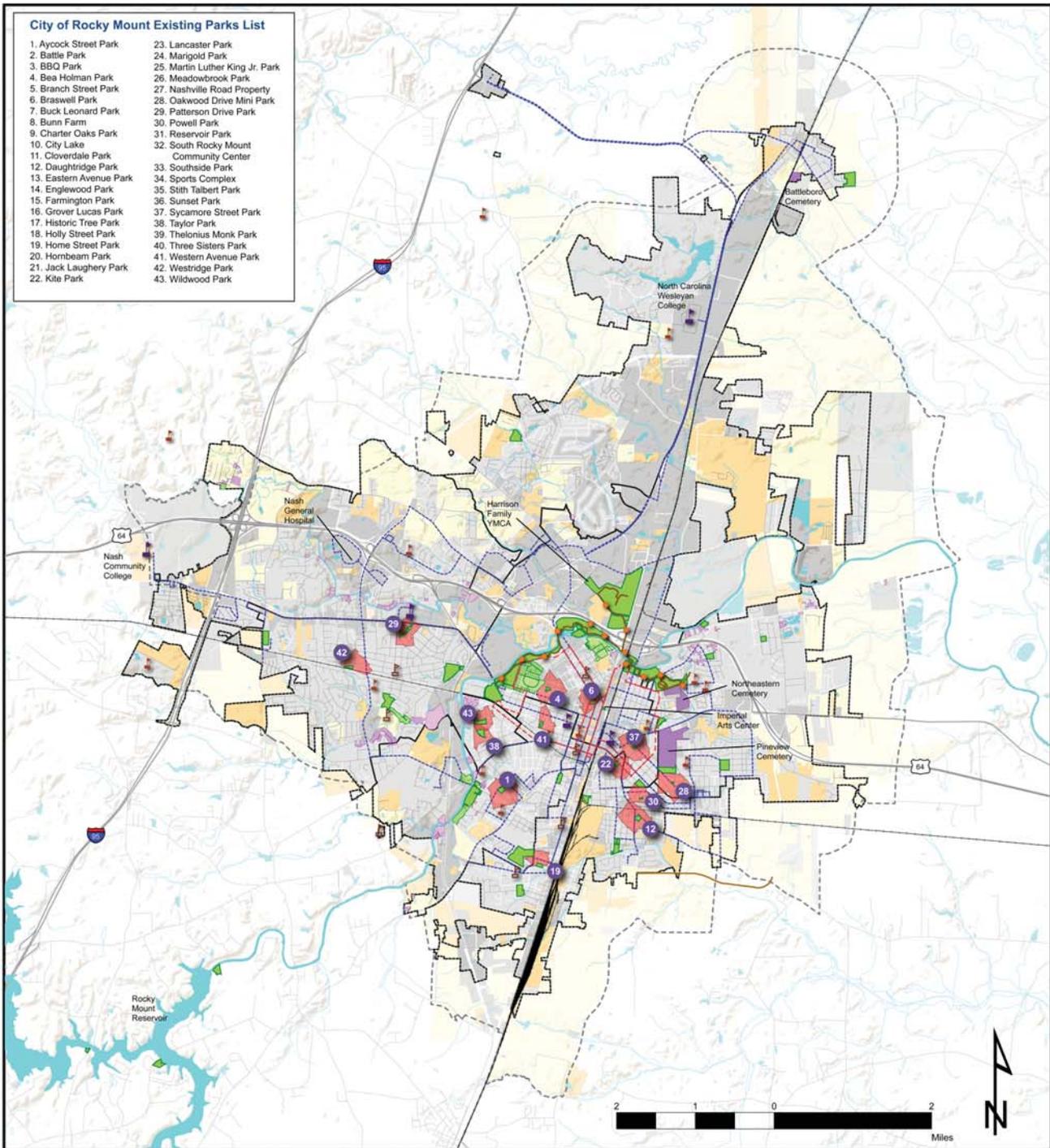
Overall, the Access LOS analysis findings were consistent with other means of identifying needs and priorities such as LOS analysis techniques, survey results and resident input from community meetings.

Mini and Neighborhood Parks were found to have significant gaps in services areas, or areas that are not within walking, biking, transit or driving range of a park or facility. These parks primarily provide access for the central and southeast portions of Rocky Mount, but leave significant gaps throughout the northern and western areas of the city. Online Survey results and public participation input indicated a willingness by respondents to travel greater distances within an individual's neighborhood to access these types of facilities. This typically ranged from half-mile to one mile in distance. An update to the Comprehensive Plan to reflect a greater distance would reduce the gap areas.

Community and Special Parks were found to have similar service areas, and provide access to a significant portion of Rocky Mount due to the larger distances used in their analysis. However, the northern half of the city represents a significant gap in service for both of these park types.

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

Map 12: City of Rocky Mount Mini Parks (1/4 Mile) Access Level of Service, 2013

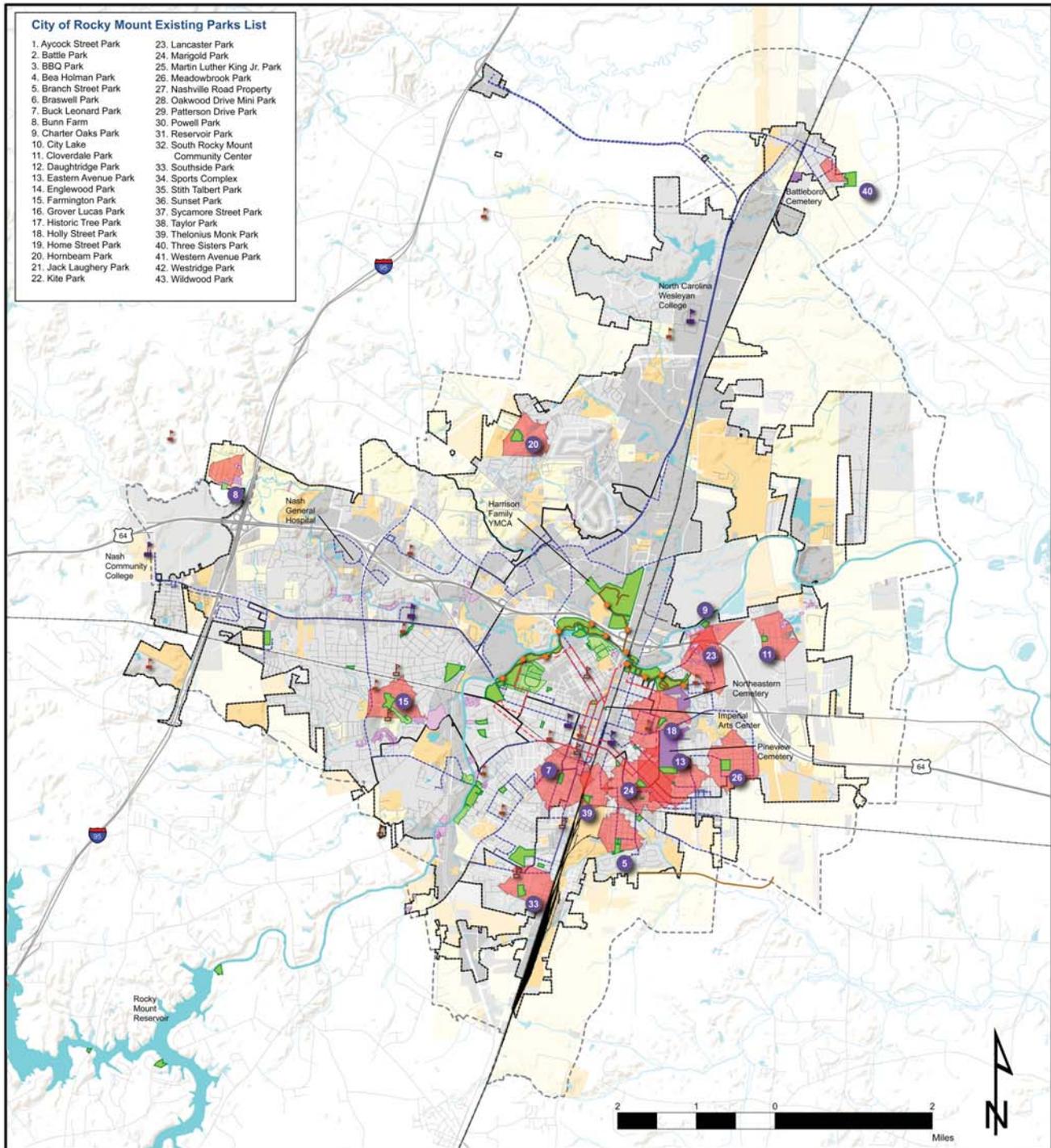


## Legend

- |                                |                     |                          |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| City of Rocky Mount Parks      | Transit Routes      | Lakes, Ponds and Rivers  | Creeks and Streams        |
| City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries | Major Roads         | Residential Land Use     | City Wards                |
| Trail Access Points            | Streets             | Non-Residential Land Use | City ETJ                  |
| Tar River Trail                | Railroads           | Agricultural Land Use    | Colleges and Universities |
| Southern Loop                  | FEMA Sites          | Split Land Use           | Public Schools            |
| Bikeways                       | FEMA Sites in Parks | Mini Park LOS 1/4 Mile   | Private Schools           |

# Chapter 3

Map 13: City of Rocky Mount Neighborhood Parks (1/2 Mile) Access Level of Service, 2013



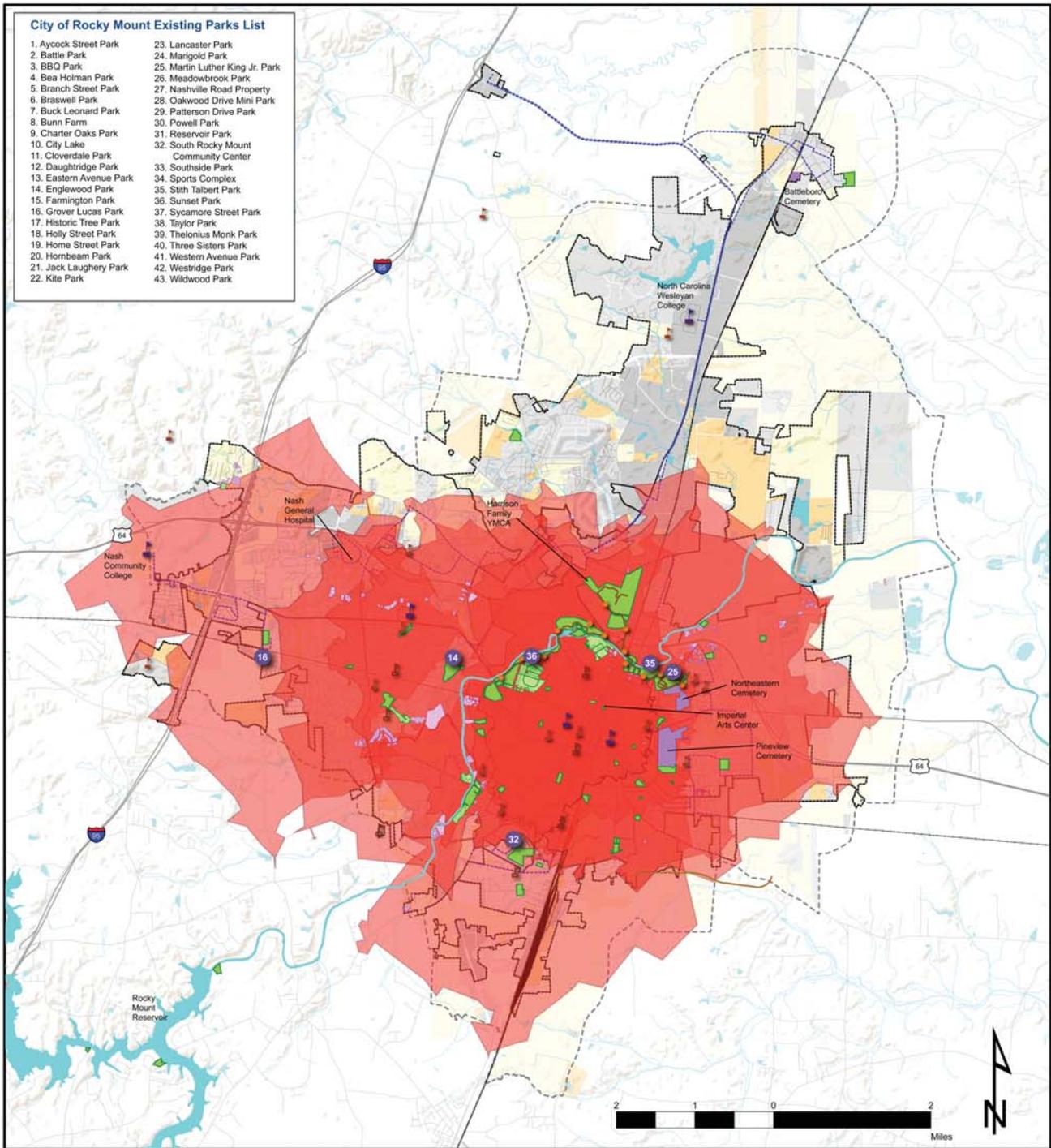
- City of Rocky Mount Existing Parks List**
- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Aycock Street Park   | 23. Lancaster Park                     |
| 2. Battle Park          | 24. Margold Park                       |
| 3. BBQ Park             | 25. Martin Luther King Jr. Park        |
| 4. Bea Holman Park      | 26. Meadowbrook Park                   |
| 5. Branch Street Park   | 27. Nashville Road Property            |
| 6. Braswell Park        | 28. Oakwood Drive Mini Park            |
| 7. Buck Leonard Park    | 29. Patterson Drive Park               |
| 8. Bunn Farm            | 30. Powell Park                        |
| 9. Charter Oaks Park    | 31. Reservoir Park                     |
| 10. City Lake           | 32. South Rocky Mount Community Center |
| 11. Cloverdale Park     | 33. Southside Park                     |
| 12. Daughtridge Park    | 34. Sports Complex                     |
| 13. Eastern Avenue Park | 35. Stith Talbert Park                 |
| 14. Englewood Park      | 36. Sunset Park                        |
| 15. Farmington Park     | 37. Sycamore Street Park               |
| 16. Grover Lucas Park   | 38. Taylor Park                        |
| 17. Historic Tree Park  | 39. Theonius Monk Park                 |
| 18. Holly Street Park   | 40. Three Sisters Park                 |
| 19. Home Street Park    | 41. Western Avenue Park                |
| 20. Hornbeam Park       | 42. Westridge Park                     |
| 21. Jack Laughery Park  | 43. Wildwood Park                      |
| 22. Kite Park           |  |

## Legend

- |                                |                     |                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| City of Rocky Mount Parks      | Transit Routes      | Lakes, Ponds and Rivers        | Creeks and Streams        |
| City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries | Major Roads         | Residential Land Use           | City Wards                |
| Trail Access Points            | Streets             | Non-Residential Land Use       | City ETJ                  |
| Tar River Trail                | Railroads           | Agricultural Land Use          | Colleges and Universities |
| Southern Loop                  | FEMA Sites          | Split Land Use                 | Public Schools            |
| Bikeways                       | FEMA Sites in Parks | Neighborhood Park LOS 1/2 Mile | Private Schools           |

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

Map 14: City of Rocky Mount Community Parks (3 Mile) Access Level of Service, 2013

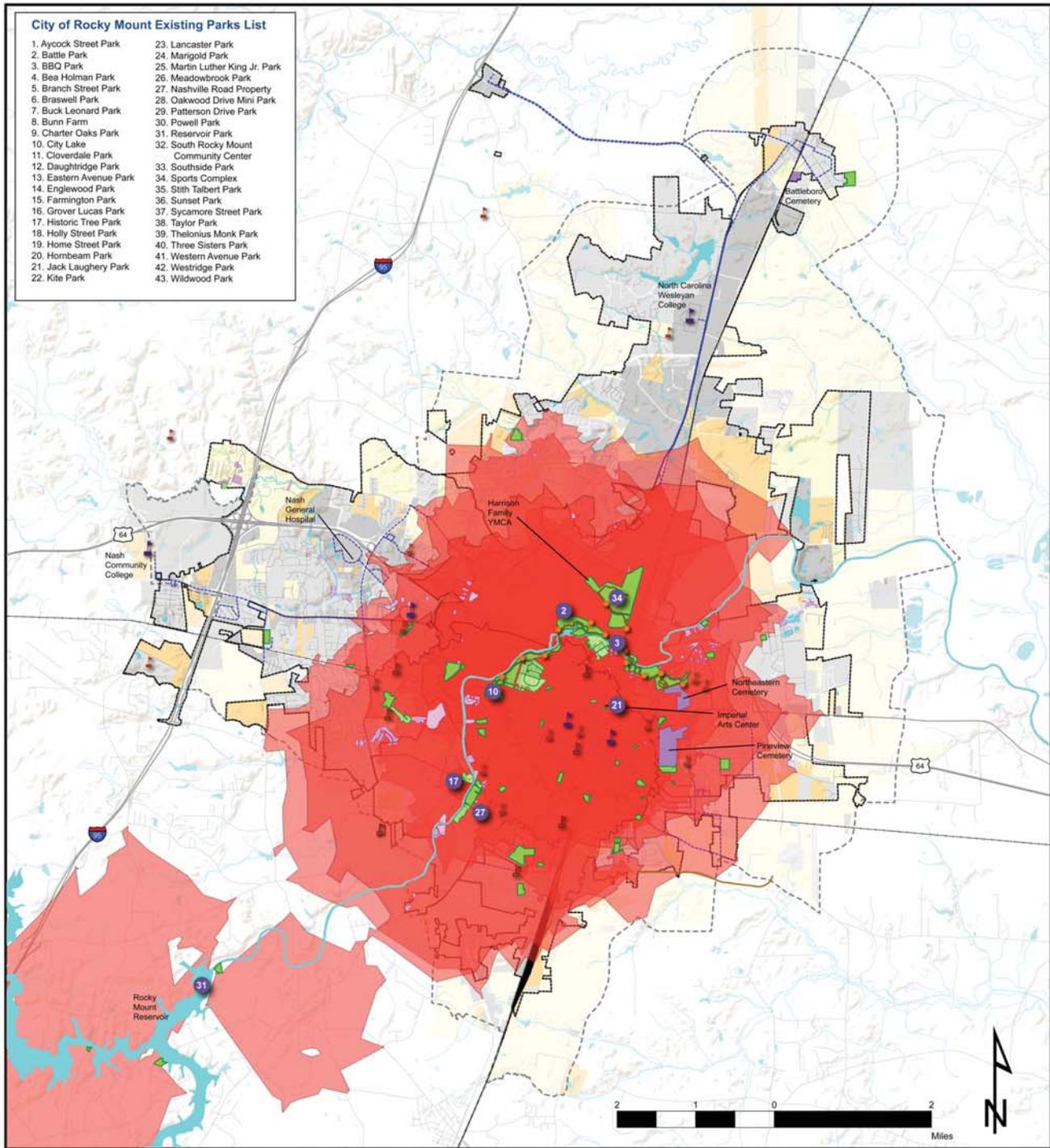


## Legend

- |                                |                     |                            |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| City of Rocky Mount Parks      | Transit Routes      | Lakes, Ponds and Rivers    | Creeks and Streams        |
| City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries | Major Roads         | Residential Land Use       | City Wards                |
| Trail Access Points            | Streets             | Non-Residential Land Use   | City ETJ                  |
| Tar River Trail                | Railroads           | Agricultural Land Use      | Colleges and Universities |
| Southern Loop                  | FEMA Sites          | Split Land Use             | Public Schools            |
| Bikeways                       | FEMA Sites in Parks | Community Park LOS 3 Miles | Private Schools           |

# Chapter 3

Map 15: City of Rocky Mount Special Parks (3 Mile) Access Level of Service, 2013



## Legend

- |                                |                     |                              |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| City of Rocky Mount Parks      | Transit Routes      | Lakes, Ponds and Rivers      | Creeks and Streams        |
| City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries | Major Roads         | Residential Land Use         | City Wards                |
| Trail Access Points            | Streets             | Non-Residential Land Use     | City ETJ                  |
| Tar River Trail                | Railroads           | Agricultural Land Use        | Colleges and Universities |
| Southern Loop                  | FEMA Sites          | Split Land Use               | Public Schools            |
| Bikeways                       | FEMA Sites in Parks | Special Use Park LOS 3 Miles | Private Schools           |

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

## 3.6.5 Summary

By utilizing a four level approach to analyze the existing level of service (LOS) for park and recreation facilities, the Master Plan team identified a number of trends that will be explored and refined further through the development of a Vision Plan and Implementation Plan. Quality LOS can be found in Section 2.3. These preliminary findings included:

### Acreage LOS

This technique identifies only a slight deficit in park acreage when looking at the system as a whole. An analysis per city ward, however, shows that while some wards enjoy a surplus of parks that will continue as the population grows, others are experiencing a significant deficit that indicates an inequitable distribution of parks throughout the city.

### Facilities LOS

This technique identifies a surplus in almost all of the city's facilities that will continue with the population projections for 2030. Despite this, the condition and distribution of these facilities is something of a concern based on the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation 2012 Park Review, community meetings, and public input. This analysis also revealed a significant deficit in greenway trails, which will continue to grow as the city population nears the 2030 estimates.

### Access LOS

Overall, the Access LOS technique confirmed many findings the Master Plan team received during community meetings. In general, the southeast area of the city is well covered by all park types, while gaps exist in Neighborhood and Mini Parks throughout a large portion of Rocky Mount. The north and west area has been identified as the area with the highest amount of services area gaps, with many areas experience little no access to any of the park types.

Though independent in approach and findings, when these techniques are combined with others documented throughout this report, a more accurate snapshot of the city's needs and priorities becomes clear.

# Chapter 3

## Section 3.7 | Needs and Priorities Assessment Summary

Through the compilation of findings from various research techniques, a number of parks and recreation needs have emerged. The table below is an overview of the findings from each analysis technique, which will be further refined based on additional public input and analysis during the Visioning Phase of the project.

Three types of research were utilized in a mixed methods, triangulated approach as part of this needs and priorities assessment process: observational, qualitative, and quantitative. Together these three types of research provided 10 techniques to cross-check

results and better determine an accurate understanding of the City of Rocky Mount residents' needs and priorities for parks and recreation facilities. Table 68 summarizes the synthesized findings of all ten methods.

The top 10 facilities and activities needs are highlighted in Table 68. These facilities and activities are ones identified through ten techniques to have the highest level of importance and largest unmet need by the community.

Table 68. Top Ten Park and Recreation Facilities and Activities Needs

		Needs Assessment Techniques									
		Existing Conditions Review	Community Meetings	Stakeholder Interviews	On-line Public Opinion Survey	Citizen Opinion and Interest Survey	Benchmarking	High Level Lifestyle Analysis	Acreage Level of Service Analysis	Facility Level of Service Analysis	Access Level of Service Analysis
Facilities	Greenway Trails	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
	Playgrounds	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●
	Community Centers	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●
	Walking and Running	●		●	●	●		●			●
	Restrooms	●	●	●	●	●					●
	Art Centers		●		●	●	●				●
	Smaller Neighborhood Parks	●	●			●		●	●		●
	Picnic Areas/ Shelters	●			●	●	●			●	●
	Museums		●		●	●	●				●
	Swimming Pools		●	●		●		●			●
Activities	Fitness and Wellness	●	●	●	●	●		●			
	Family	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			
	History and Museums	●	●		●	●	●				
	Senior Adult	●	●			●	●	●			
	Special Events	●	●		●	●		●			
	Performing Arts	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	Visual Arts	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	Nature	●			●	●	●				
	Outdoor/ Adventure Recreation	●	●	●		●	●				
	Youth Summer Camp		●	●			●				

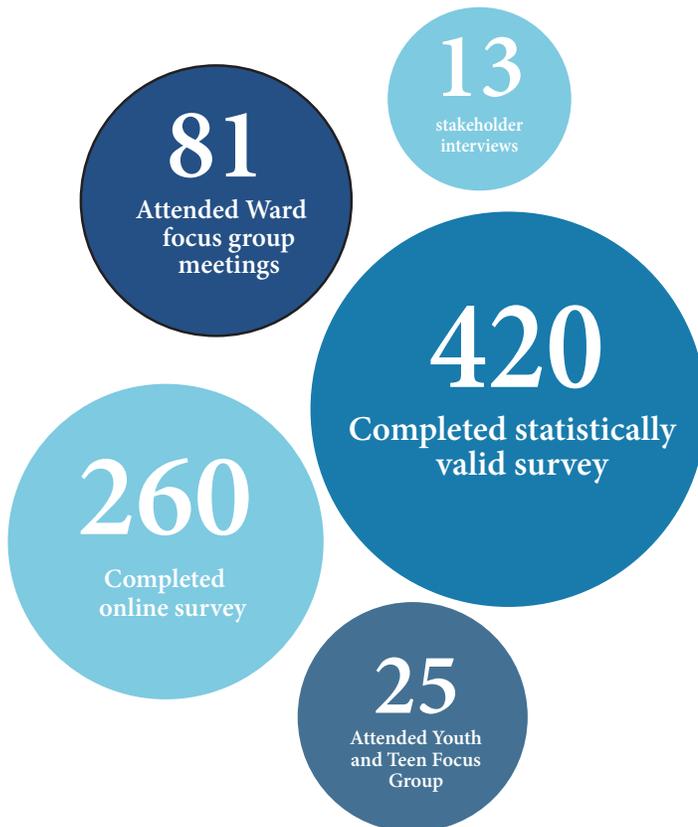
● = Indicates Highest Need  
 ● = Indicates Need

# Needs and Priorities Assessment

In addition to the identification of the top community-wide needs, community-wide priorities have emerged. Below is a summary of the top priority themes as identified by the following methods:

- Community Workshops (seven, including a teen workshop)
- Stakeholder Interviews (13)
- Online Public Opinion Survey
- Citizen Opinion and Interest Survey
- Existing Level of Service Analysis

Figure 4: Number of Participants by Type of Engagement



Priority themes include:

- Emphasize **improving existing parks and facilities**;
- Increase **safety and security** in parks;
- Provide **better connectivity** through community via greenway trails, bike facilities and sidewalks;
- Using **parks as a revitalization** tool;
- Improve biking and walkability **safety**;
- Innovative and **engaging youth and teen** activities;
- Improve existing and provide **more community centers** throughout community;
- Continue to promote the **arts and education**;
- Promote **health and wellness**;
- Increase **equity and access** to parks and services;
- Improve the overall **condition and accessibility** of parks;
- Improve existing and provide additional **restroom facilities** in parks and along greenway trails;
- Develop **regional attractions along the Tar River** such as an amphitheater, museums and open space;
- Partner with **schools and non-profits**;
- Provide **dog park(s)** for citizens and visitors; and
- Increase **marketing** of programs and offerings to citizens, workers and visitors.



Ward 1 Community Meeting, Parker Middle School

# Chapter 4

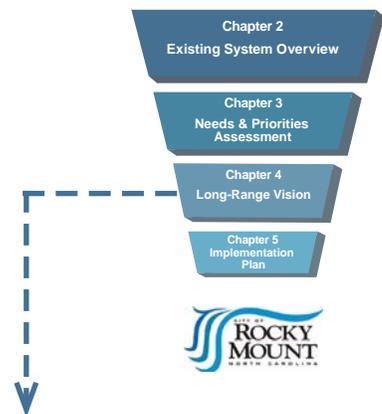




## Chapter 4 | Vision

Highlighted by extensive public input, the Parks and Recreation Department launched a two-day workshop of visioning sessions to better understand the community’s aspirations for its parks, recreation and cultural resources system. Combining the results from the workshop with previous steps allows the community to provide a comprehensive vision for the future. The following chapter describes these results.

City of Rocky Mount Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan Diagram



### Chapter 4 Long Range Vision

#### 4.1 Visioning Process

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Approach

#### 4.2 Neighborhood and Community Parks

- 1. Guiding Principles
- 2. Reinvestment in Existing Parks
- 3. Connectivity
- 4. Equity

#### 4.3 Regional Venues

- 1. Guiding Principles
- 2. Multiple Benefits and Revitalization - River Falls Parks
- 3. Other Regional Venues

#### 4.4 Greenways and Natural Lands

- 1. Guiding Principles
- 2. The Tar River Corridor and Floodplain
- 3. Nature Center System

#### 4.5 Streets, Trails and Transit

- 1. Guiding Principles
- 2. Multi-modal Recommendations
- 3. A Healthy and Safe Community through Complete Streets

#### 4.6 Arts, History, Culture and Community

- 1. Guiding Principles
- 2. Awareness
- 3. Historic and Heritage Trails

#### 4.7 Vision Synthesis

- 1. Summary

# Chapter 4

## Section 4.1 | Visioning Process

### 4.1.1 Introduction

The vision for the City of Rocky Mount's parks and recreation facilities is linked to the vision of the city as a whole. The city's system of parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, greenways, arts, and natural areas, all elements of the public realm, are woven into the fabric of what makes the City of Rocky Mount a great place to live, work and play.

### 4.1.2 Approach

The approach for developing the parks and recreation master plan vision is a three-part effort; 1) through a multi-faceted public input process (Chapter III), residents indicated their needs and priorities for parks and recreation facilities. While most residents recognized the role of the city in providing parks and recreation services, there is a strong emphasis on the need to improve existing parks and facilities, and improve connectivity throughout

the city. 2) Supplementing this public input, city staff and the consultant team completed a technical review of the existing parks system that identified continued improvements needed in order to maintain a high level of service for residents. 3) Community input was gathered during a two-day visioning workshop at the Imperial Arts Center.

As a result of the above efforts, the Vision is built upon a framework distilled from broad public input and comprehensive analysis. A unique approach was taken for the City of Rocky Mount, which established a set of sub systems that help guide the development of the parks and facilities across the system. These subsystems, shown in **Figure 4** on the next page, are:

- 4.2- Neighborhood and Community Parks
- 4.3- Regional Venues
- 4.4- Streets, Trails and Tranist
- 4.5- Arts, Historical Cultural and Community Systems
- 4.6- Greenways and Natural Lands

The guiding principles and vision recommendations for each of these subsystems are intended to guide the parks and recreation system over the next 10 years. Guiding principles have been developed to reflect the combined results of input and analysis completed in Chapter II (Existing System Overview) and Chapter III (Needs and Priorities Assessment) of this planning document. These principles and the associated vision concepts are intended to be modified as needed to ensure achievement the subsystem vision, and ensure its contribution to the



*Visioning Workshop*



*Visioning Workshop*

overall vision of the City of Rocky Mount. In the next chapter, a comprehensive implementation strategy for achieving this vision is presented within the focus of community priorities, funding strategies and defined roles. This implementation plan is intended to be updated on a regular basis by staff to reflect the changing trends, priorities and roles within the community.

Figure 5: City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Master Plan Vision Subsystems



# Chapter 4

## Section 4.2 | Neighborhood and Community Parks

### 4.2.1 Guiding Principles

Neighborhood and Community Parks serve as a major contributor to the sense of community and quality of life and provide residents and visitors an opportunity to refresh, explore and play. Parks also contribute significant economic and environmental benefits. Using community input from the Needs Assessment and Visioning Workshop, the following guiding principles were developed for neighborhood and community parks:

- **Reinvestment-** Improve and update existing parks, to meet the changing needs of surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Connectivity-** Increase safety and connections to parks.
- **Equity-** Provide access to parks and programs by adding larger community parks with community centers.

In addition to these guiding principles, the Parks and Recreation Department expressed a desire to explore maintenance and management strategies for individual parks in the system that are facing challenges. This could



*Thelonius Monk Park*

include situations where the city may divest of parks that are severely underperforming and underutilized, reallocate and reclassify parks and parkland, or acquire additional parkland for improvements.

### 4.2.2 Reinvestment in Existing Parks

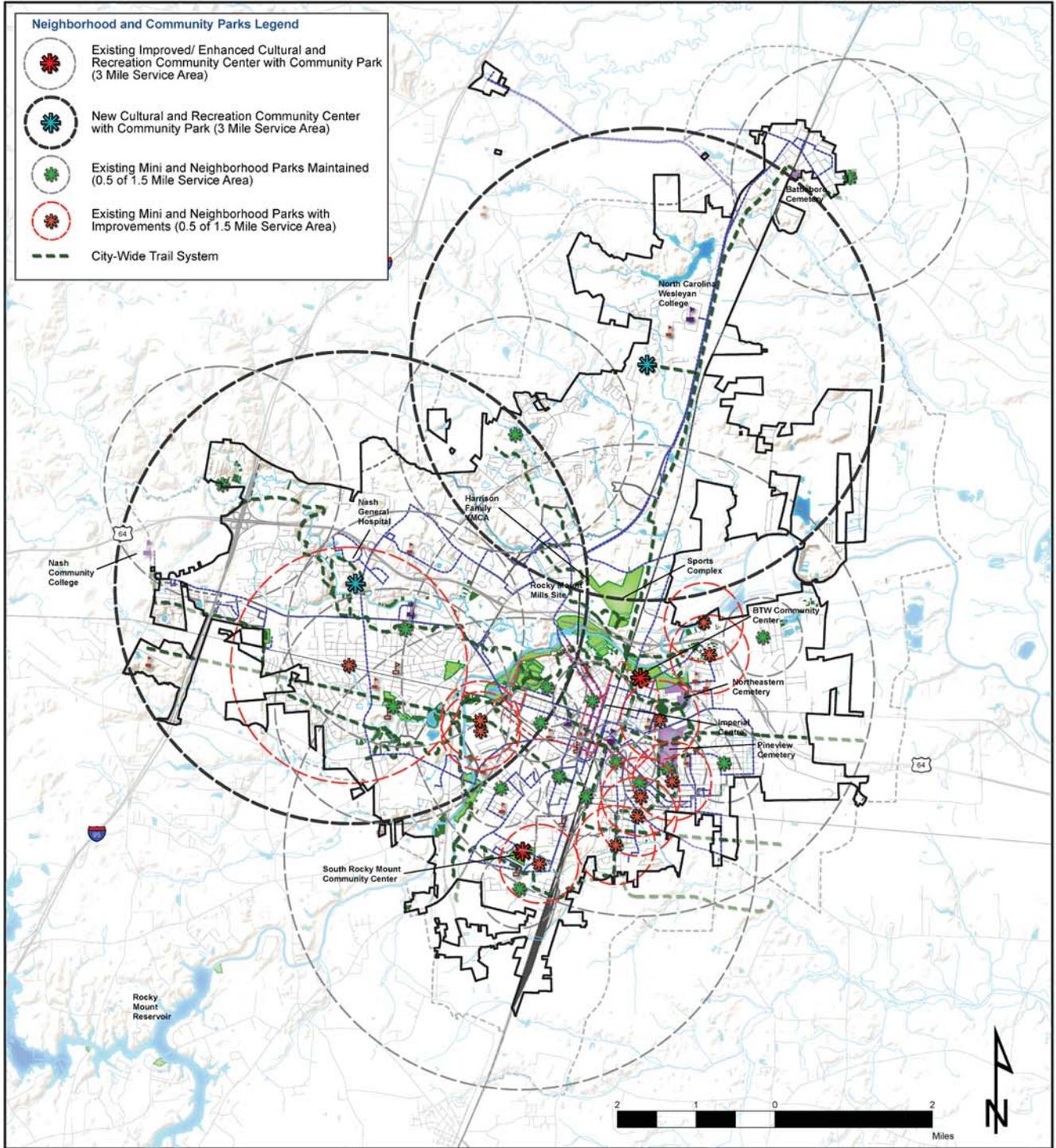
Improving and upgrading existing parks was a clear priority that came out of the Needs Assessment process. Residents acknowledge that Rocky Mount has a wealth of parks and resources, but some of these facilities are outdated and underused. Using the park ratings from the Existing Conditions Chapter of this report (Chapter II), **Map 16** shows the neighborhood and community parks that are meeting or exceeding expectations, and those parks that are below expectations. Reinvestment in parks that are below expectations will help create a more complete system that provides equitable quality of parks and facilities for residents.

In many cases, parks in need of improvement are smaller neighborhood parks that are typically “walk-to” parks with a service area of one-half mile. Many of these parks are located in more densely populated, lower income areas of the city and represent some of the older parks in the system. Improvements to these small parks can not only provide quality recreation spaces, but also support community investment and revitalization. The 2012 Park Evaluation conducted by the Parks and Recreation Department provides many improvement recommendations for these parks and serves as a guide for



*Booker T Washington, Community Center*

Map 16: Neighborhood and Community Parks Vision



## Legend

- |                                |                             |                           |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| City of Rocky Mount Parks      | Existing On-Street Bikeways | Creeks and Streams        |
| City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries | Existing Transit Routes     | City Limits               |
| FEMA Sites (Open Space)        | Major Roads                 | City ETJ                  |
| Lakes, Ponds and Rivers        | Streets                     | Colleges and Universities |
|                                | Railroads                   | Public Schools            |
|                                |                             | Private Schools           |

# Chapter 4

the future upgrades and development to the parks system. **Figure 5** shows a typical park (Marigold Park) in need of improvement and examples of upgrades that can be made to the existing conditions. In each case, improvement to existing parks should include focused public involvement to determine specific neighborhood needs to promote local support of each park.

## Parks Management Plan

The 2012 Parks and Recreation Parks Evaluation provided much of the framework for evaluating current parks and facilities. In that report, the Parks and Recreation Department provided recommendations for many of the parks in order for them to function more effectively. In most cases, improvements were focused on playground or shelter replacement, ADA access, additional parking, or overall renovation to landscape and hardscape features. However, in some cases the report suggested converting an existing park into open space, or divesting of the park entirely. Given the wide range of recommendations present in the report, a Parks Management Plan for neighborhood and community parks could help the Parks and Recreation Department manage resources more effectively, and stay ahead of future needs.

As the city seeks to fund new projects or redevelop existing parks and any parks considered for divestment will need to be closely examined with public input, especially if land acquisition is needed for other parks. The Parks Management Plan will also need to be a fluid plan, as market conditions and recreation demands may change as the city continues to develop.

## 4.2.3 Connectivity

Additional concerns that residents and city staff expressed during the visioning process was a lack of safety and connectivity in the parks system. Survey results indicated that many residents did not use parks near their communities because they felt unsafe. Reasons for this included lack of lighting, vandalized equipment, or underutilized facilities. In addition to lack of perceived safety in the parks, many residents feel that they do not have safe access routes to parks and there is an overall lack of connectivity from their communities to the park system.



**Figure 6:** Marigold Park with Improved Facilities

Many of the improvements and upgrades to the parks can also help make them safer. Upgraded lighting, emergency call boxes, and new facilities and equipment are just some of the improvements that increase the safety of the Rocky Mount parks system. The upgrades and redevelopment of parks will increase the diversity and availability of recreational activities and programs, encouraging park usage and creating a safer environment for the community. Access to the parks can also be strengthened in these improved parks, beginning with ADA accessible routes to parks and the integration of parks into the greenway and transit systems that will be covered in Section 4.4.

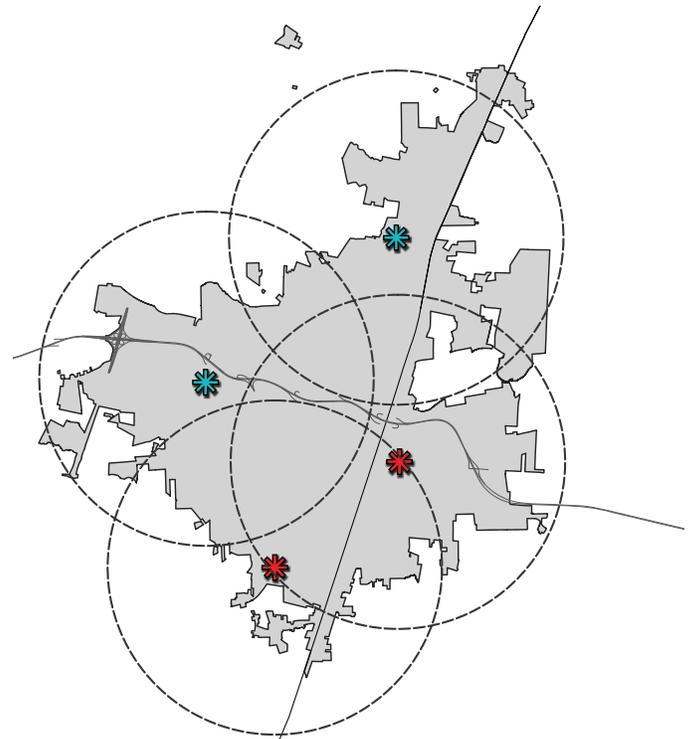
## 4.2.4 Equity

While improving neighborhood and community parks will help increase access for Rocky Mount residents, there are still gaps in services in numerous parts of the city. This is especially true with regards to the larger community parks, and community centers. The vision for the City of Rocky Mount’s community parks is to have a large community park with a community center to be available in each quadrant of the city. The city has already taken steps to improve the South Rocky Mount Community Center, but there is still a need to expand these types of facilities in order to provide citywide access to programs and services.

While the South Rocky Mount community center is currently undergoing renovations, the same kinds of facility upgrades are necessary at the Booker T. Washington Community Center. In addition, the city’s Senior Center facility is in need of renovation and significant upgrades. This would be an efficient use of resources, and will create a dynamic community facility that can offer a wide-range of programs and services to a diverse population from a centrally located facility.

Renovations to South Rocky Mount Community Center and Booker T. Washington Community Center provide access to programs and services for many of the low income households in the southern and eastern areas of Rocky Mount. While this will help usher in community improvements in these neighborhoods, these type of facilities are still absent in the north and western areas of the city. These are some of the fastest growing

communities in Rocky Mount, and the demand for larger parks with community centers is increasing. **Figure 6** shows the general location of two potential large parks with community centers. When coupled with the existing improved centers, every resident within the city limits will be within a three-mile radius of a Cultural and Recreation Community Center that offers a wide range of services for the entire community.



**Figure 7: Locations of Community Centers in Rocky Mount**  
 Red = Existing Community Center  
 Blue = Proposed Community Center  
 Circle = 5-mile Level of Service



*Sketch of Renovated South Rocky Mount Community Center, Image: Rocky Mount Telegram*

# Chapter 4

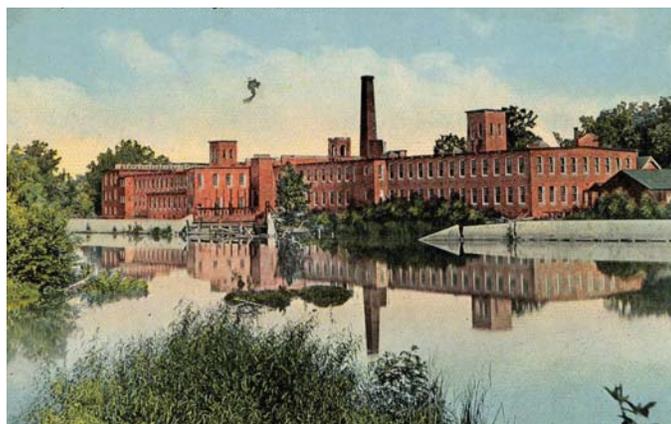
## Section 4.3 | Regional Venues

### 4.3.1 Guiding Principles

One of the more prevalent ideas that repeatedly came up during the Needs Assessment process was the desire for multi-purpose regional venues that would bring visitors to Rocky Mount. Ideas varied, but it became clear that the citizens of Rocky Mount had a strong desire for venues that would bring attention to the city and provide significant social and economic benefits (Map 17). The Needs Assessment was instrumental in laying the framework for this concept and established the following guiding principles:

- **Multiple Benefits-** Large scale projects that have significant positive benefits through social, economic and environmental change
- **Revitalization-** Opportunities to revitalize neighborhoods, attract tourists, create jobs and support economic sustainability
- **Utilize Existing Infrastructure-** By using existing features of the city, both natural and man-made

These principles were utilized during the Vision Workshop to evaluate the park system and determine possible locations for the desired regional venues. Working with Parks and Recreation Department staff, the Master Plan team was able to determine three potential locations for



Rocky Mount Mills Postcard - textilehistory.org

regional venues, with one in particular that would refresh and reshape the face of some of Rocky Mount's most valuable assets.

### 4.3.2 Multiple Benefits and Revitalization- River Falls Park

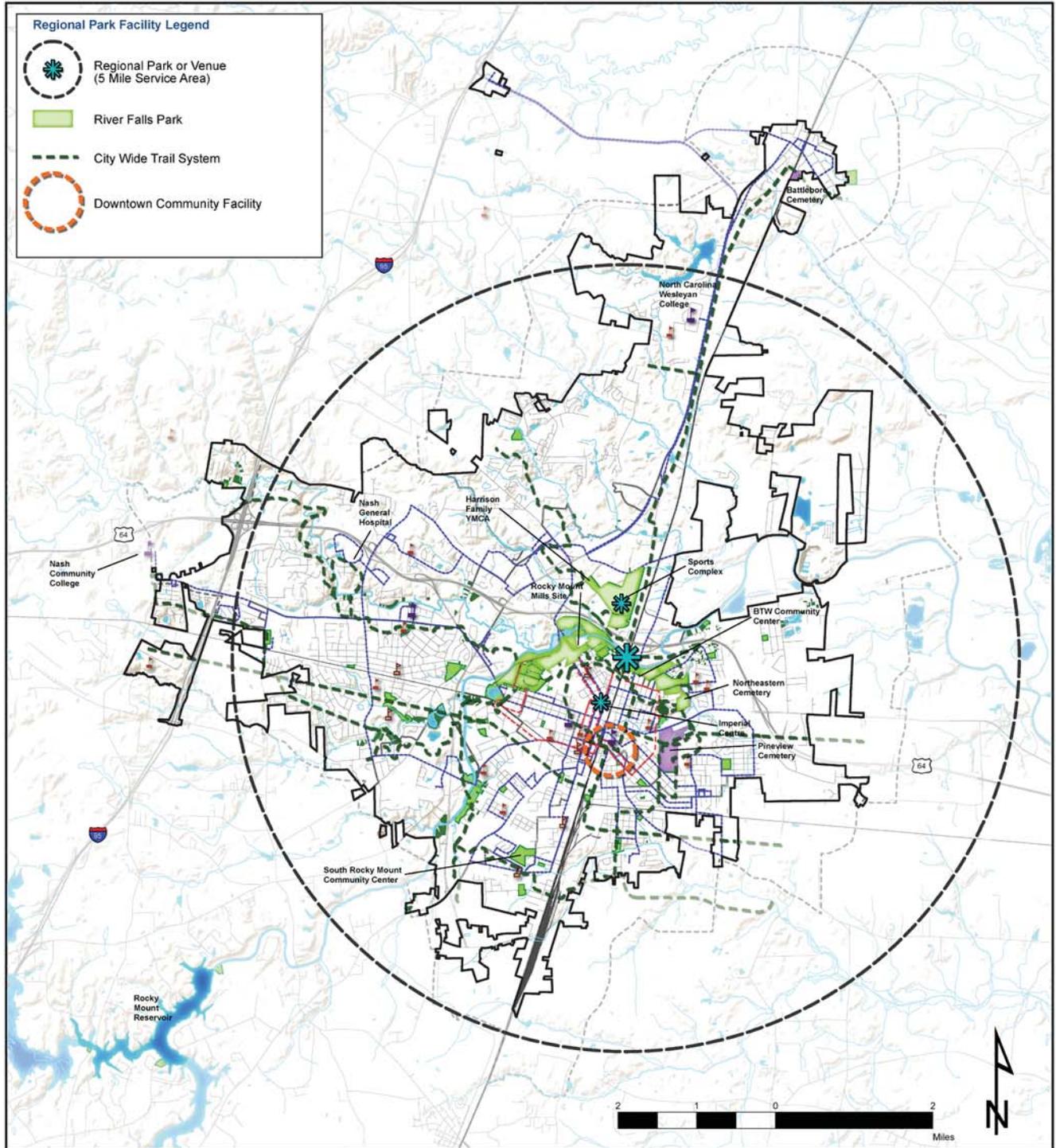
When looking at the city's inventory of park spaces, it became clear that there was a wealth of parkland and natural areas along the Tar River. Not only was there a significant amount of acreage, but these were some of the city's most prestigious and utilized park spaces. In all, there are seven current City of Rocky Mount parks in the corridor, including the highly successful Sports Complex, City Lake Park, Sunset Park, Stith Talbert Park and Martin Luther King Jr. Park. This corridor is also home to the Rocky Mount Mill site and its adjacent Historic Mill District, the Lincoln Park Historic District, and is in close proximity to the Falls Road District, Downtown Rocky Mount, and the Imperial Centre. These diverse areas are all connected by the Tar River Trail, and six arterial roads linking US-64 and downtown.

Realizing that these parks and natural lands were all city-owned properties, as well as some being city-owned FEMA Buyout Program sites, the concept of Falls River Park began to take shape. The concept leverages the variety of facilities available and establishes different venues with one large entity. The concept includes space for sports, family activities, natural exploration, festivals and events, and historic experience. In addition, proposed redevelopment of the Rocky Mount Mill site is located at the heart of River Falls Park and includes links to most



Rocky Mount Mills

Map 17: Regional Venues Vision

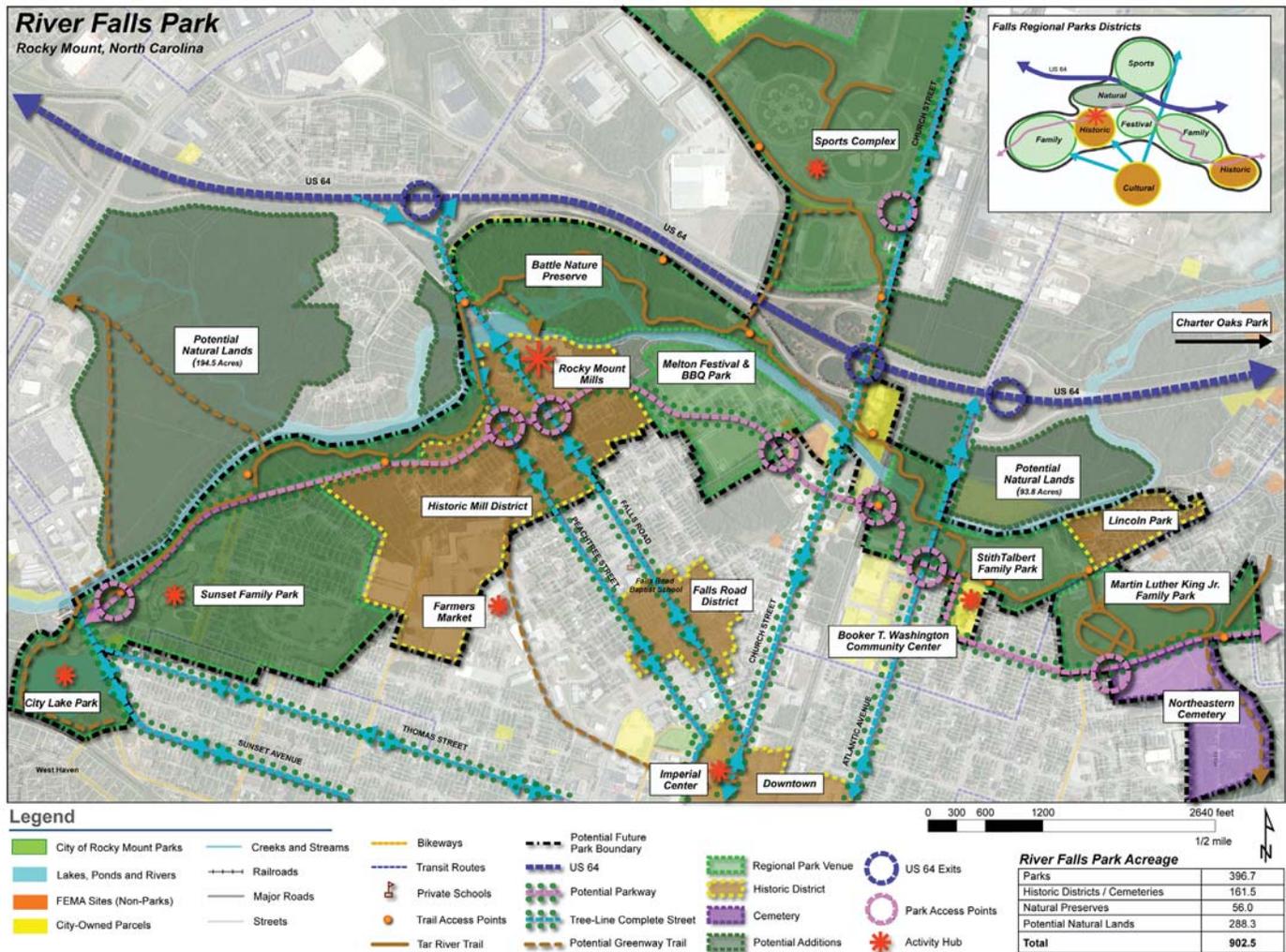


## Legend

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  City of Rocky Mount Parks      |  Existing On-Street Bikeways |  Creeks and Streams        |
|  City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries |  Existing Transit Routes     |  City Limits               |
|  FEMA Sites (Open Space)        |  Major Roads                 |  City ETJ                  |
|  Lakes, Ponds and Rivers        |  Streets                     |  Colleges and Universities |
|  |  Railroads                   |  Public Schools            |
|  |   |  Private Schools           |

# Chapter 4

Figure 8: Conceptual Plan for River Falls Park



of the city-owned assets. This redevelopment would feature both commercial and residential development, and its location on the Falls of the Tar River make it an attractive tourist destination. The River Falls Park concept (Figure 7) has potential to be not only a regional venue, but an attraction that draws residents from all over North Carolina to what would be the largest municipal park in Eastern North Carolina.

The presence of the existing parks, historic districts, natural resources and trail systems presents a unique opportunity in that there is little to no land acquisition required by the city to realize this concept. The result is the potential for almost 900 acres of parkland, historic sites, and natural lands, with a greenway system connecting these venues

to the city's neighborhoods. There is also a desire for a realignment of River Drive to become a parkway that provides vehicle access throughout the venues, creating a seamless link between City Lake and North Eastern Cemetery. This parkway, along with the application of the complete streets concept to the arterial streets feeding the downtown core improves access for both residents and visitors. If this vision for River Falls Park were to be realized, the economic impact to the City of Rocky Mount could be substantial, and could spark a revitalization that would benefit neighborhoods throughout the city.

## Case Study: Falls Park on the Reedy, Greenville, South Carolina

Founded in 1967 on the Reedy River, Falls Park was placed on 26 acres of reclaimed textile mills in the historic West End district of Greenville, South Carolina. Over the next four decades, the Carolina Foothills Garden Club, with support from the City of Greenville and Furman University, helped transform the park into a regional attraction with public gardens and access to the iconic waterfall. In 2003, a 355-foot pedestrian curved suspension bridge was added to allow dramatic views of the upper falls and the parkland below, further cementing the legacy of Falls Park.

As Greenville saw significant reinvestment in the downtown core during the 1980's and 1990's, Falls Park became an amenity that helped attract public/private partnerships and business investment that fueled the urban renewal. Today, businesses continue to move to downtown Greenville, sparking residential development and continued civic improvements. Greenville consistently ranks as one of the most desirable places to live in the U.S., with one of the most vibrant downtowns. Falls Park on the Reedy serves as a world-class downtown park that adds to the prestige of the rapidly growing city, and a model for utilizing natural and historic resources to create unforgettable public spaces.



### 4.3.3 Downtown Community Facility

The City of Rocky Mount is also currently engaged in the planning of a community-wide event center to be located in the near the Douglas Block area of Downtown. The Downtown County Facility (DCF) will serve as a catalyst for revitalization and could have a substantial economic impact for the City through the creation of new jobs and the attraction of new businesses to the surrounding neighborhoods. With the addition of the facility, the City

will be able to host large gatherings, high school graduations, concerts, shows, and other events in the community.

In addition, the DCF will play a critical role in growing the City's sports tourism industry, serving as a complimentary indoor facility for the existing Sports Complex. The facility will include space for eight indoor basketball courts, classrooms and other event space. The combination of marketing top-class outdoor and indoor sports facilities will attract larger and more specialized competitions to be hosted by the City, contributing significantly to economic growth for the area.

# Chapter 4

## Section 4.4 | Streets, Trails and Transit

### 4.5.1 Guiding Principles

The demand for connectivity between parks and communities has already been discussed in the Neighborhood and Community parks section of the vision, but connectivity is a concept that the City of Rocky Mount can apply to its overall vision. The guiding principles for connectivity through the parks and recreation system support the comprehensive vision that seeks to improve access and quality of life for residents, and stimulate economic growth throughout the city. The guiding principles for streets, trails and transit established through the Needs Assessment and Visioning workshop are:

- **Multi-modal-** Connect every neighborhood through trails, sidewalks and transit
- **Healthy Community-** Promote healthy lifestyle and active living through complete streets as well as safe routes to schools
- **Safety-** Create a pedestrian and bike friendly city with transit stops at trailheads and connections to downtown



*Downtown Rocky Mount Streetscape*

### 4.5.2 Multi-modal Recommendations

Using these guiding principles, the vision carries forward and builds upon recommendations from the 2012 Rocky Mount Pedestrian Plan for priority and proposed trails. The proposed trails network connect important areas of the city, creating a loop that links downtown and the Tar River areas to the South Rocky Mount area. The proposed trail system is shown in **Map 19**. Trailheads provide access to the network and are noted as either existing or proposed, with a one-half-mile service area to show the level of service for each trailhead.

In addition to the urban core trail network, there are also priority trails linking the rapidly growing neighborhoods on the west side of the city and the Battleboro community in the northern edge of city limits to the downtown area and urban core trail network. Other potential trails link neighborhood and community parks to the system, creating a citywide network that provides access to parks and recreation facilities for a significant portion of the residents. Trails located within the river corridor are specifically noted, as they will provide access to the natural resources discussed in Section 4.3.

While the trails proposed in the 2012 Pedestrian Plan present significant upgrades for the city, the visioning workshop produced further recommendations for increasing connectivity to key areas of the city. This includes direct connections to Nash General Hospital, South Rocky Mount Community Center and the Sports



*Rocky Mount Greenway*



# Chapter 4

Complex. These additional trails provide access to a more diverse population of Rocky Mount residents, and help create a complete trail system that is overlapped with access to transit.

## 4.5.3 A Healthy and Safe Community through Complete Streets

While a significant expansion of the citywide trail system will increase overall access to parks and recreation facilities, there are opportunities for further connectivity improvement through the integration of complete streets. At a minimum, complete streets typically feature two-way vehicle traffic, bike lanes or a bike track, wide pedestrian sidewalks, transit connectivity, parking, and street trees for shade. Streets with these characteristics, like the section in **Figure 8** below, generally promote a pedestrian and bike friendly and safe environment that can help promote economic development along the streetscape.

The City of Rocky Mount can utilize the complete street concept to help bolster economic development and multi-modal connectivity. Many of the corridors that provide access to the downtown core are one-way streets that simply move large volumes of vehicle traffic while creating a harsh pedestrian and bicycle environment. Without a pedestrian level environment, streets become corridors for moving vehicles quickly through the city, creating challenges for businesses to thrive and capture customers. With the city's recent streetscape investment, the downtown area has become an even more important economic center, as prevalent in the city's Comprehensive Plan. Expanding the downtown core and creating a walkable community will increase access to a large amount of parkland that is connected by these potential complete streets, as well as improve the ability for residents to access transit services and other amenities.

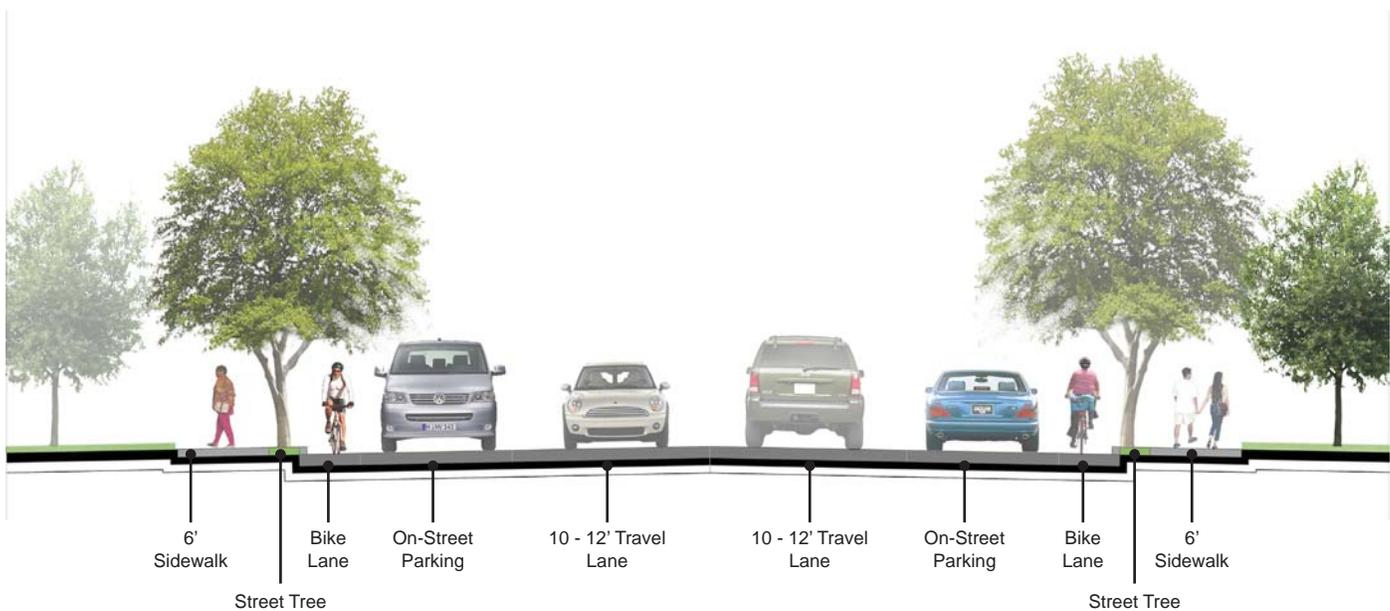


Figure 9: Typical Complete Street Section

## Section 4.5 | Arts, History, Culture and Community

### 4.6.1 Guiding Principles

The City of Rocky Mount has a rich history and culture that make it a unique community in North Carolina. The city has many historical and cultural assets that can be integrated into the parks system to strengthen the community character. Much like the Imperial Arts Center has provided a venue for community arts, historic areas can be used to provide social and economic capital for the city. During the Visioning Workshop, many residents voiced a strong desire to focus on these assets, particularly those that have been overlooked for many decades. From the workshop, the following guiding principles were established:

- **Awareness-** Increased recognition, celebration, and education
- **Accessible-** Create an accessible historical and cultural systems, with presence in community centers and throughout neighborhoods

These guiding principles helped the consultant team evaluate the existing historical and cultural resources in the City of Rocky Mount, and help realize the vision of a comprehensive system that is integrated into the parks and greenways, connecting residents to the resources that strengthen their community.



*Restored Mill House*

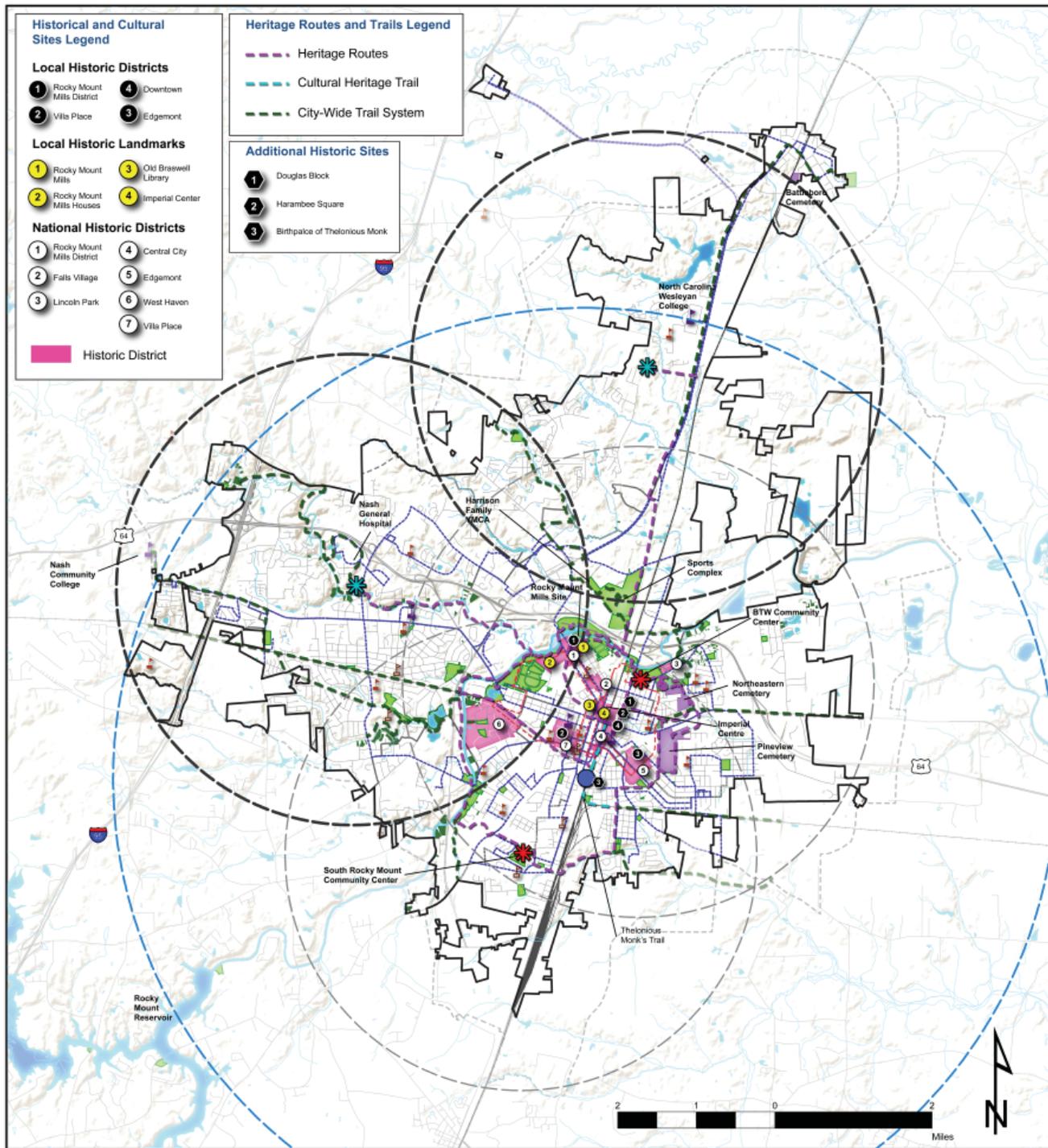
### 4.6.2 Awareness

Like much of eastern North Carolina, Rocky Mount's history is heavily tied to the textile industry. The historic Rocky Mount Mill site is an anchor for a much larger historic district that includes preserved mill housing and the iconic Falls of the Tar River. The Mill District is just one of seven National Historic Districts, many of which are also designated as Local Historic Districts and Landmarks in the city. Reinvestment in these areas will have a significant impact on the intimate character of Rocky Mount's historic core, creating a regional attraction for both residents and tourists.

In addition to the registered historic sites, there were many cultural sites that were brought to the attention of the project team during the Vision Workshop. Several residents provided input that highlighted locations in the city that had significant importance to African American history and also Rocky Mount's noteworthy place in the history of Jazz music. Residents indicated a strong desire to include Harambee Square, Douglas Block, and the birthplace of legendary jazz musician Thelonius Monk into the fabric of the Rocky Mount's historical and cultural network. These sites are seeing revitalization within the community and have a significant place in the history of Rocky Mount. The Parks and Recreation Department also operates BBQ Park, which contains the site of the oldest BBQ restaurant in North Carolina. Promoting resources such as these can help attract diverse interests to the many destinations the city has to offer. Historic districts and landmarks should be equipped with interpretative signage and kiosks, so visitors can interactively engage the sites to learn and hear about these resources. From BBQ lovers to Jazz enthusiasts, Rocky Mount has some of the more unique attractions in eastern North Carolina.

# Chapter 4

Map 19: Arts, History, Culture and Community Vision



## 4.6.3 Historic and Heritage Trails

The abundance of historic and cultural resources in the City of Rocky Mount presents ample opportunity for integration within the park system. **Map 20** shows the location of the historical and cultural sites in the city and their relationship to the parks system. All of the sites discussed in the previous section are within a one and a half-mile radius of each other, and connecting them creates an opportunity for a dense network of accessible historic attractions.

The city's existing and proposed trail system links many of these historic and cultural sites, especially the Tar River Trail and the proposed downtown loop. The abundance of resources along these trails can be emphasized by integrating cultural and historic routes into these segments of the trail system. Signage and way finding can be used to indicate significant places along a trail and provide educational information about its importance. By utilizing the trail system to tell the story of historic and cultural sites, residents will have the opportunity to access recreation amenities and resources that strengthen the fabric of their community, further increasing the quality of life in Rocky Mount.

While many of the historic and cultural sites primarily exist in the downtown core, the proposed Cultural and Recreation Community Centers provide opportunities to expand the reach of these resources to other parts of the city. The renovated Booker T. Washington Center will be part of the cultural trails network, as will the newly renovated South Rocky Mount Community Center. The trail network can be further expanded to include potential Community Centers in the western and northern areas of the city. The communities that these new centers will serve may not necessarily be historic areas, but the centers can be programmed to include education programs to promote the city's rich history and culture. This will help integrate other parts of the city into the historic and cultural network by raising awareness of these resources and assets available to the community.



*Douglass Block*



*Harambee Square*



*Interpretive Kiosk at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge  
Image: US Fish and Wildlife Service*

# Chapter 4

## Section 4.6 | Greenways and Natural Lands

### 4.4.1 Guiding Principles

Greenways and natural lands are important resources for the City of Rocky Mount. These lands and their corridors provide wildlife habitat, improve water quality, reduce storm water runoff, lower surrounding air temperatures, and provide outdoor recreation and educational opportunities (Map 18). Through the Needs Assessment and Visioning Workshop, the following guiding principles were developed for greenways and natural lands:

- **Stewardship of the Natural Environment-** Emphasizing the value of natural resources in the community
- **Sustainability-** Environmental restoration and revitalization of natural habitats
- **Education-** Outdoor learning to promote environmental awareness

### 4.4.2 The Tar River Corridor and Floodplain

The presence of the Tar River and its tributaries provides a wealth of natural resources for the City of Rocky Mount. Due to the volatile nature of this river during storm events, many areas of the floodplain are no longer suitable for development and can be converted back to natural lands. The river corridor presents unique opportunities for recreation activities, and many of the city's premier parks are located along its banks. The current trail system is located primarily in or near the Tar River, and connects many of the largest parks in the system. This system can be expanded throughout the floodplain, linking many other parks and natural areas throughout the city to create a comprehensive greenway corridor system with trails.

As more of the lands within the floodplain are converted to parkland and natural areas, the Tar River corridor will not only be a recreation resource, but also an opportunity

for environmental restoration. Greenways are effective tools for establishing and maintaining natural corridors, and can also help protect the surrounding community by mitigating rising flood waters. The establishment of a citywide greenway and natural lands system will provide Rocky Mount with a resource that will set the city apart from other communities and promote outdoor recreation as well as environmental education and sustainability.

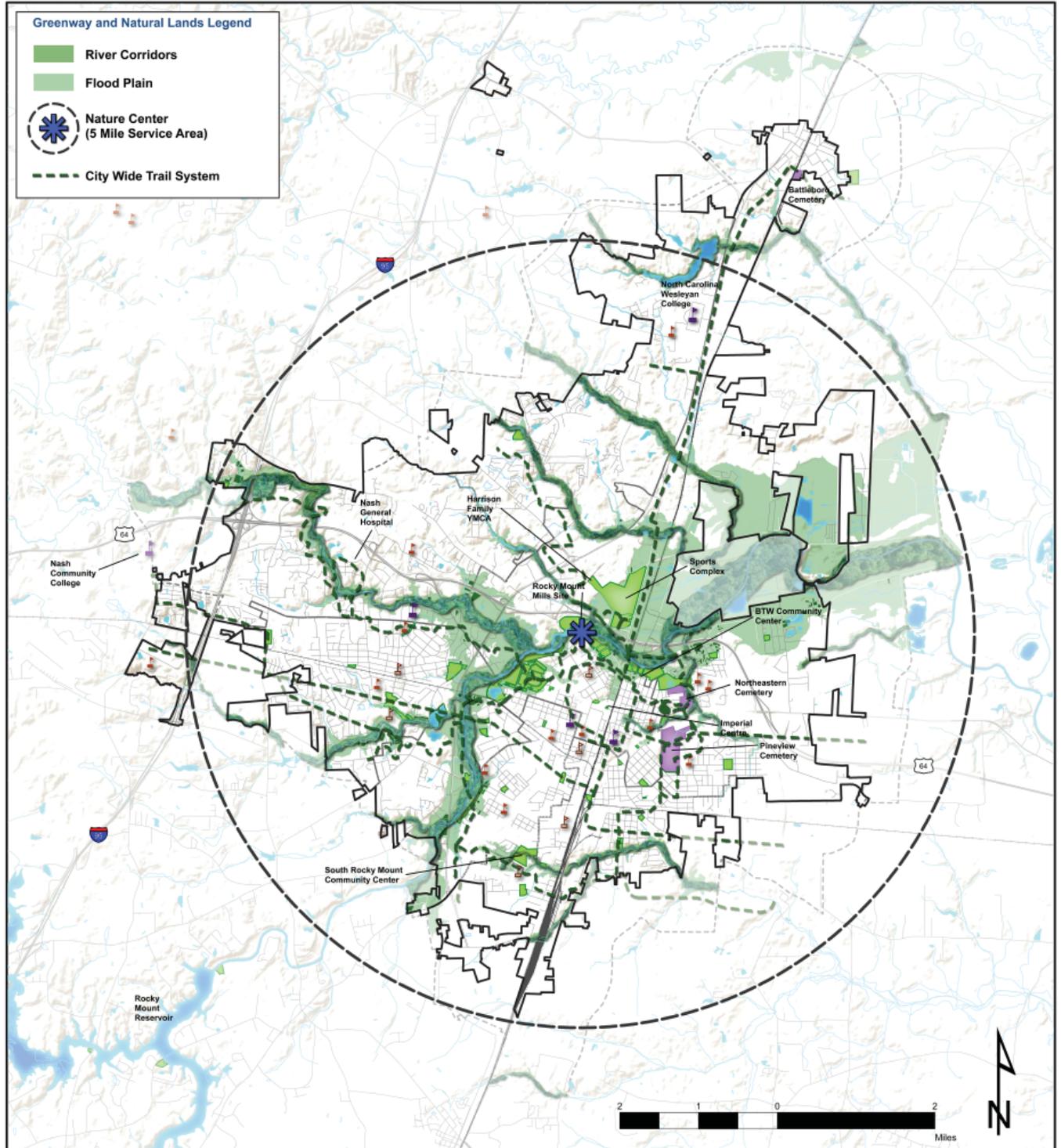
### 4.4.3 Nature Center System

Since establishing a system of greenways and natural lands is an important part of the City of Rocky Mount's Parks and Recreation vision, the incorporation of environmental education is critical to its success. The city has many parks that are centrally located along the Tar River, with all but Battle Park programmed for active recreation. Battle Park is largely a passive park with a trail loop and natural areas along the Tar River. While historically viewed as an unsafe park due to lack of activity and presence of natural surveillance, recent efforts by the City have yielded improvements in the perception of Battle Park. This vision utilizes the natural features of the park and recommends that it be rebranded as Battle Nature Preserve and upgraded to include a nature center that leverages the proximity to the Tar River and its flood plain for education opportunities. This nature center can serve as a hub for environmental education within the greenway system, and should incorporate smaller satellite centers at the proposed Cultural and Recreation Community Centers and Regional Venues throughout the city. The incorporation of community centers into the environmental education system helps promote citywide awareness of the natural resources available to the citizens of Rocky Mount and ensure that they will remain available and thriving for future generations.



Battle Park

Map 20: Greenways and Natural Lands Vision



## Legend

- |                                |                    |                           |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| City of Rocky Mount Parks      | Major Roads        | City Limits               |
| City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries | Streets            | City ETJ                  |
| FEMA Sites (Open Space)        | Railroads          | Colleges and Universities |
| Lakes, Ponds and Rivers        | Creeks and Streams | Public Schools            |
|                                |                    | Private Schools           |

# Chapter 4

## Section 4.7 | Vision Synthesis

### 4.7.1 Summary

With a new vision established for the city's parks, recreation and cultural resources system, along with the guiding principles for eight individual subsystems, advancement of the themes of the city's 2025 Comprehensive Plan and other guiding documents is ensured. As noted, the parks and recreation system will play a key role in the continued development of Rocky Mount and its communities. This vision outlines a continuation of investment in these contributing community assets and is consistent with the needs and priorities expressed through public involvement.

The five subsystems outlined in this chapter combine to form a comprehensive, systemwide vision that provides a diverse collection of resources for the citizens of Rocky Mount to enjoy. Shown in **Map 21**, the synthesis of the subsystems shows the vision for the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation system, and provides the base for the development of a community will not only attract people to Rocky Mount, but improve the lives of residents.

The following chapter provides an implementation plan that identifies phasing strategies and defines priority projects based on this vision.

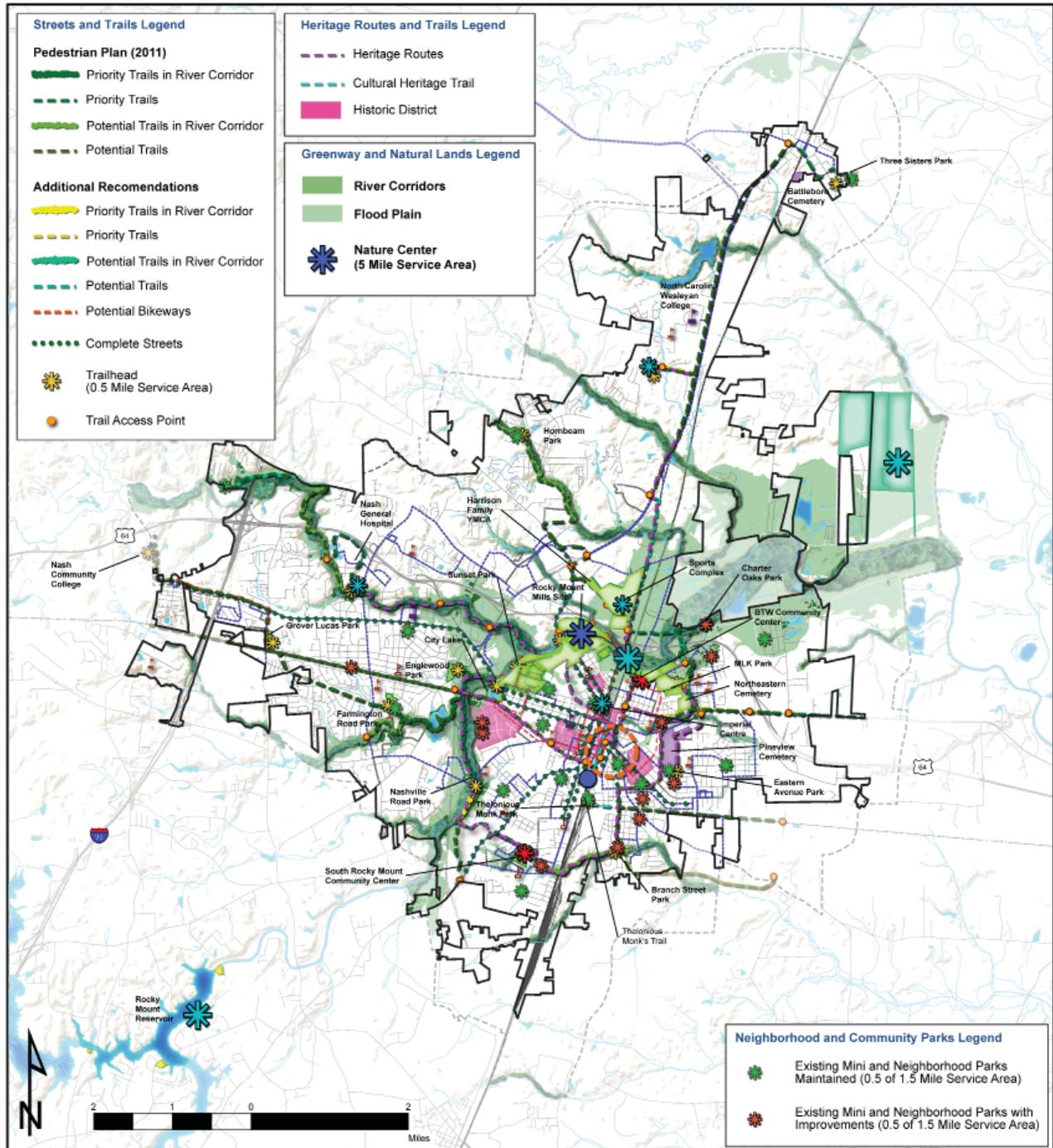


*Tar River at BBQ Park during high water.*



*MLK Park Pavilion and Restrooms*

Map 21: City of Rocky Mount Vision Synthesis



## Legend

- |                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| City of Rocky Mount Parks      | Major Roads               |
| City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries | Streets                   |
| FEMA Sites (Open Space)        | Railroads                 |
| Lakes, Ponds and Rivers        | Creeks and Streams        |
| Tar River Trail                | City Limits               |
| Southern Loop                  | City ETJ                  |
| On-Street Bikeways             | Colleges and Universities |
| Transit Routes                 | Public Schools            |
|                                | Private Schools           |

- ### Regional Park Legend
- Regional Park or Venue (5 Mile Service Area)
  - River Falls Park
  - Water Treatment Plant "The Farm"
  - Reservoir Parks
  - Downtown Community Facility

- ### Arts, Cultural and Community Centers Legend
- Existing Improved/ Enhanced Cultural and Recreation Community Center (3 Mile Service Area)
  - New Cultural and Recreation Community Center (3 Mile Service Area)
  - Senior Center (6 Mile Service Area)

# Chapter 5



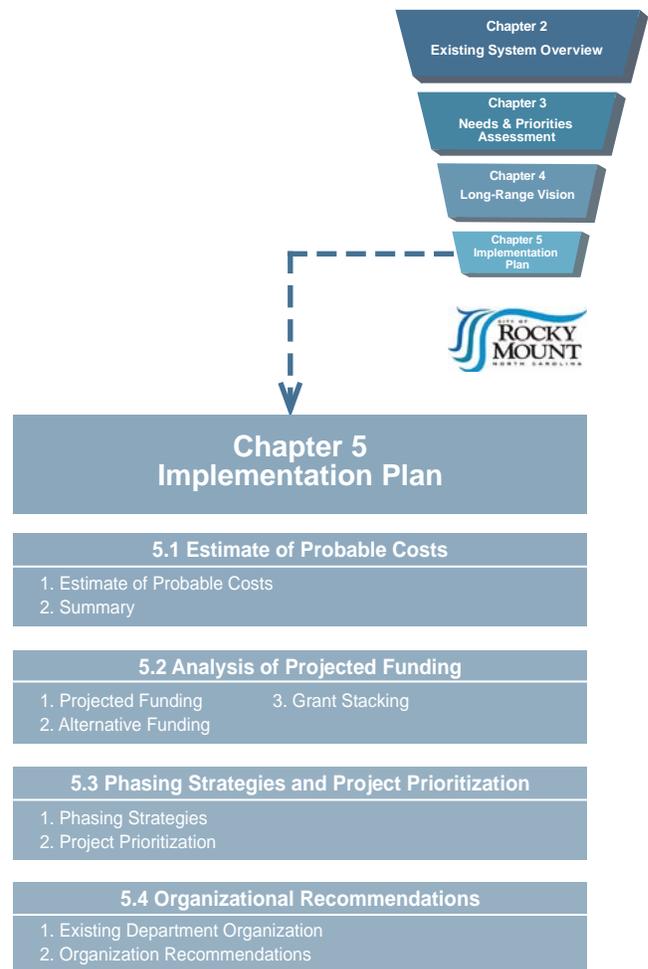
# Implementation Plan



## Chapter 5 | Implementation Plan

In order to advance the parks and recreation vision established by residents of Rocky Mount, implementation strategies must be defined and priorities established. As the final chapter of this Master Plan, the Implementation Plan includes: estimation of probable cost of the vision established in Chapter 4 by citizens; evaluation of funding sources, including alternative funding; analysis of phasing strategies; prioritization of projects; and recommendations for organizational changes to better prepare the Park and Recreation Department to implement the vision and priority projects.

City of Rocky Mount Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan Diagram



# Chapter 5

## Section 5.1 | Estimate of Probable Costs

### 5.1.1 Estimate of Probable Costs

Based on costs derived from current market trends and similar projects, the complete implementation of the vision is estimated to cost approximately \$141 million, (land acquisition is included in overall costs) and includes the following subsystem estimates:

*Table 69: 2014 Estimate of Probable Costs*

Subsystem	Estimate of Probable Costs (2014 dollars)
Neighborhood and Community Parks	\$38,910,000
Regional Parks and Venues	\$62,647,500
Trails, Streets and Transit	\$31,056,500
Art, History, Culture and Community System	\$7,237,500
Greenways and Natural Lands	\$1,812,500
Total:	\$141,664,000

2014 Estimates

The figures provided in this chapter are order-of-magnitude costs which are intended for planning purposes only. Because individual parcels were not identified for acquisition, the cost of land acquisition will need to be revised once specific parcels are identified.

It should be noted that the proposed vision may be modified over time in response to actual costs, future resident desires, unforeseen opportunities, other city-wide priorities, and available funding sources.

Additionally, it is recommended that each proposed project should undergo a detailed feasibility and costs analysis prior to physical implementation. Final actual costs could vary significantly depending on many factors including but not limited to:

- Time-frame of implementation
- Individual project scale
- Changing land acquisition costs
- Property market rise/decline
- Raw products and materials costs

### 5.1.2 Summary

The Parks and Recreation Vision is estimated to cost approximately \$141 million, including order-of-magnitude costs for land acquisition. Subsequent sections of the Implementation Chapter will outline a number of strategies that may be employed by Rocky Mount to phase and fund desired projects based on current priorities.

## Section 5.2 | Analysis of Projected Funding

### 5.2.1 Projected Funding

The following figures identify the available funding currently projected for implementation of the vision through the use of the City's General Fund's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

- \$2.091M in FY 2015 CIP funding;
- \$5.8M for the five (5) year CIP period of FY 2015–2019;
- Averages approximately \$1.1M per FY CIP;
- Potential of \$10-11M for the ten (10) year CIP period of FY 2017-2026;
- \$39.6M is budgeted in the CIP for the Downtown Community Facility (DCF) using a combination of funding sources that include New Market Tax Credits and debt financing.

In order to complete or expedite the implementation of the vision, additional sources of funding will need to play a greater role in providing capital and operational costs for the city. Sources that have traditionally been used by the Park and Recreation Department to great success are local, state and federal grants, which have contributed on average approximately \$100,000 per year. Over the last five years, many traditional grant sources have seen their overall funding reduced and remaining grants sources have become more competitive. It is estimated that currently available grants may total \$12M, with many grants available for multiple applications over a 10-year timeframe. Though it is not expected that all grants available will be secured, an increase in the frequency and scope of grant submissions will improve that funding source. A projection of \$250,000 per year or \$2.5M over the next ten-years may be appropriate. A detailed evaluation of grant sources is included in Section 5.2.2.

In addition to a greater share of funding coming from grants, Rocky Mount may consider the use of general obligation bonds which leverage future revenues such as local sales

tax revenues. It is estimated by the city that bonding may generate approximately \$15-\$20M+ over a 10 to 20-year period. With the identified funding sources available totaling approximately \$73.1M over the next 10-years, it is reasonable to state that a significant portion of improvements can be met.

### 5.2.2 Alternative Funding

Alternative funding opportunities will need to have an even larger role in providing necessary funding for priority projects. Funding was identified for a broad range of projects, including:

- Park land acquisition
- Neighborhood park improvements
- Community park development improvements
- Regional park development and improvements
- Facility development and improvements
- Natural land management
- Trail development and improvements
- Transit connectivity
- Art, history and cultural facility development

Over two dozen alternative funding sources were identified for projects proposed in the vision, with a potential total (not including any leveraging) of approximately \$12M.

Individual grants may apply to multiple projects, therefore, the projected funding totals for each project may include the use of overlapping grants for a different project. The following are summarized descriptions of project-based potential funding sources. Detailed descriptions of the individual programs, funding calendars, and additional contact information may be found in the Appendix.

The integration of stormwater and other emergency management features into projects such as a recreation center or recreation trail can significantly increase the grant funding opportunities available to Rocky Mount. Examples of design features that would introduce additional grant opportunities would include: the construction of parking areas to act as drainage and/or treatment basins for severe weather events; stormwater retention ponds that alleviate localized flooding as part of park or trail project; and the hardening of an indoor facility such as a recreation center to act as a shelter and/or public outreach center before and after a disaster.

# Chapter 5

Table 70. Neighborhood and Community Parks Funding Opportunities

Funding Program	Grant Amount	Match Requirement	Types of Eligible Elements	Anticipated Deadline
Land and Water Conservation Grant	\$250,000	100%	Land Acquisition and Development of Ballfields, Courts, Trails, Fishing, Facilities, Playground, Restrooms, Shade Structures, lighting, and landscaping	June
Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)	\$500,000	100%	Land Acquisition and Development of Ballfields, Courts, Trails, Fishing, Facilities, Playground, Restrooms, Shade Structures, lighting, and landscaping	February
American Academy of Dermatology (AAD)	\$8,000	0%	Shade Structures	November
Recreation Trail Program	\$100,000	25%	Trails, trailside, trailhead facilities	June
Urban Forestry Grant Program	\$15,000	100%	Tree plans/programs and planning	March
USTA Public Facilities Grant	\$50,000	80%	Renovation and/or construction of public tennis facilities	Rolling
Public Art Challenge	\$1,000,000	25%	Art in public spaces	December
Our Town Grant	\$200,000	100%	Innovative public art projects	December
U.S. Soccer Foundation Grants	\$50,000	100%	Field turf, lighting, irrigation and program equipment	October, February, June
Lowe's Neighborhood Grants	\$100,000	0%	Community gathering spaces including parks	May

Table 71. Regional Parks and Venues Funding Opportunities

Funding Program	Grant Amount	Match Requirement	Types of Eligible Elements	Anticipated Deadline
Land and Water Conservation Grant	\$250,000	100%	Land Acquisition and Development of Ballfields, Courts, Trails, Fishing, Facilities, Playground, Restrooms, Shade Structures, lighting, and landscaping	June
Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)	\$500,000	100%	Land Acquisition and Development of Ballfields, Courts, Trails, Fishing, Facilities, Playground, Restrooms, Shade Structures, lighting, and landscaping	February
American Academy of Dermatology (AAD)	\$8,000	0%	Shade Structures	November
Recreation Trail Program	\$100,000	25%	Trails, trailside, trailhead facilities	June
Urban Forestry Program (UFC)	\$15,000	100%	Tree plans/programs and planting	March
Public Art Challenge	\$1,000,000	25%	Art in public spaces	December
Our Town Grant	\$200,000	100%	Innovative public spaces	December
Pre-Disaster Mitigation	\$3,000,000	25%	Stormwater including open space and trails	October
Urban Waters Grant	\$60,000	5%	Signage, innovative water quality projects	January
Section 319(h) Grants	\$750,000	40%	Stormwater/water quality projects	November
USTA Public Facilities Grant	\$50,000	80%	Renovation and/or construction of public tennis facilities	Rolling
U.S. Soccer Foundation Grants	\$50,000	100%	Field turf, lighting, irrigation and program equipment	Oct. Feb., June

# Implementation Plan

Table 72. Trails, Streets and Transit Funding Opportunities

Funding Program	Grant Amount	Match Requirement	Types of Eligible Elements	Anticipated Deadline
Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)	\$1,000,000	20%	Pedestrian and bicycle trails	December
Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)	\$250,000	0%	Trails, sidewalks	May
Recreation Trails Program	TBD	20%	Land Acquisition and of Construction of trails and support facilities	August
Urban Waters Grant	\$60,000	5%	Signage, innovative water quality projects	January
Preserve America	\$200,000	100%	Signage, wayfinding	TBD
Pre-Disaster Mitigation	\$3,000,000	25%	Stormwater including open space and trails	October
Section 319(h) Grants	\$750,000	40%	Stormwater/water quality projects	November
Land and Water Conservation Grant	\$250,000	100%	Land Acquisition and Development of Trails, parking, landscaping and other support facilities	April
American Academy of Dermatology	\$8,000	0%	Shade structures	October

Table 73. Arts, History, Culture and Community Funding Opportunities

Funding Program	Grant Amount	Match Requirement	Types of Eligible Elements	Anticipated Deadline
Land and Water Conservation Grant	\$250,000	100%	Land Acquisition and Development of Historical/cultural facilities, outdoor classroom, signage, trails, restrooms, shade structures, lighting, and landscaping, parking	June
Public Art Challenge	\$1,000,000	25%	Art in public spaces	May
Our Town Grant	\$200,000	100%	Art in public spaces	December
Lowe's Neighborhood Grants	\$100,000	0%	Community gathering spaces	May
Preserve America Grant Program	\$200,000	100%	Heritage projects, interpretive signage and wayfinding	TBD

Table 74. Greenways and Natural Lands Funding Opportunities

Funding Program	Grant Amount	Match Requirement	Types of Eligible Elements	Anticipated Deadline
Environmental Education Grants	\$100,000	25%	Educational Elements	May
Urban Waters Grant	\$60,000	5%	Signage, innovative water quality projects	January
Section 319(h) Grants	\$750,000	40%	Stormwater/water quality projects	November
National Leadership Grants for Museums	\$500,000	100%	Nature centers, museums, botanical gardens, children museums	December
Land and Water Conservation Grant	\$250,000	100%	Land Acquisition and Development of Outdoor Classroom, Restrooms, Trails, Support Facilities	April
Pre-Disaster Mitigation	\$3,000,000	25%	Stormwater including open space, hardening	October
Section 319(h) Grants	\$750,000	40%	Stormwater, water quality, education projects	November
Urban Waters Grant	\$60,000	5%	Signage, public education, innovative water quality projects	January

# Chapter 5

## 5.2.3 Grant Stacking

Utilizing multiple funding sources has become the most effective way of maximizing the amount of funding a community can obtain. “Grant Stacking” allows a project to draw funding from several sources. The idea of “Grant Stacking” refers to grouping grants of varying levels (federal, state and local) to support one project. Careful selection of grants can result in one grant providing the matching funds requirement for another grant and the reciprocal as well. This process can address acquisition and development in phases to best meet a project’s intent and time schedule.

### General Notes:

- Funding plan is based on city’s eligibility to apply for the listed funding opportunities. Prior awards or current projects may affect the ability of the city to obtain listed grants.
- Grant amounts are based on maximum award possible. The cost of elements will ultimately determine the maximum amount to be obtained.
- Other funding opportunities may be available; however, those listed are stable grant programs that normally occur every year. This list does not include line item appropriations from any local, state or federal government.

### Case Study: Anchorage Park, North Palm Beach, Florida

The Village of North Palm Beach, Florida, renovated the aging Anchorage Park, a 20.65 acre park, in 2010 with an additional phase planned. Utilizing an innovative funding technique called grant stacking, the Village was able to complete Phase 1 of the project with 75% of funding coming from grants.

#### Phase 1 Grants:

- 2005 Urban and Community Forestry Grant \$45,450
- 2006 Land and Water Conservation Fund \$200,000
- 2006 Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program, Phase 1 \$200,000
- 2006 Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program, Phase 2 \$200,000
- 2007 Recreational Trails Program \$200,000
- 2007 Legislative Line Item \$400,000
- 2007 Transportation Enhancement Grant \$500,000
- 2007 Florida Inland Navigation District Grant \$200,000

Total \$1,945,450

Total Phase 1 Project Cost: \$2,560,600

Total Match Requirement \$815,150

**Grant Funding will provide more than 75% of the project costs for Phase 1.**



## Section 5.3 | Phasing Strategies and Project Prioritization

### 5.3.1 Phasing Strategies

Based on funding projections, two different models of implementation and phasing could be utilized. Both models are based on implementing the following top priority improvements identified by residents:

- Emphasize **improving existing parks and facilities**;
- Increase **safety and security** on parks;
- Provide **better connectivity** through community via greenway trails, bike facilities and sidewalks;
- Using **parks as a revitalization** tool;
- Improve biking and walkability **safety**;
- Innovative and **engaging youth and teens** activities;
- Improve existing and provide **more community centers** throughout community;
- Continue to promote the **arts and education**;
- Promote **health and wellness**;
- Increase **equity and access** to parks and services;
- Improve the overall **condition and accessibility** of parks;
- Improve existing and provide additional **restroom facilities** in parks and along greenway trails;
- Develop **regional attractions along the Tar River** such as an amphitheater, museums and open space;
- Partner with **schools and non-profits**;
- Provide **dog park(s)** for citizens and visitors; and
- Increase **marketing** of programs and offerings to citizens, workers and visitors.

Going forward, it is important to note two assumptions:

1. It is assumed that needs and priorities will change over time, so proposed improvements may change based on residents' input; the city should update the parks and recreation needs assessment and vision at least every 10 years.
2. Operations and Maintenance (O&M) costs will increase along with capital spending. According to industry "rule-of thumb" standards, O&M costs will increase annually by approximately 5% of capital costs. This equates to a gradual and eventual increase in the parks and recreation O&M budget of approximately \$7M/ year based on the anticipated \$141M in total vision improvements. Based on identified priority projects, additional O&M costs may range between \$600,000 for Option 1 (see below) to \$3.655M for Option 2. The exact amount will adjust as implementation of specific projects are realized.

#### Option 1 – Pay As You Go Model

This model allows Rocky Mount to fund only those improvements that can be paid for on the basis of incoming revenues through user fees, existing general fund support and earned income through sponsorship, donations etc. Based on past trends and future projections, the total anticipated amount available for use on an annual basis is \$1.1M. In addition, the Parks and Recreation Department has been successful at securing grants worth an average of \$100,000 annually.

Extrapolating current funding rates, a total of \$12M is projected to be available over the next 10-years. If efforts to secure additional grants are increased, as identified in Section 5.2.2., available funding may be increased. A range of funding can now be projected between \$12M and \$23M over the next 10-years. Phasing strategies may utilize this range in order to prioritize projects.

#### Option 2 - Pay As You Go plus Borrowing

This model allows Rocky Mount to fund up to +/- \$73.1M in capital projects for the Parks and Recreation Vision over the next +/- 10 years . In addition to the +/- \$12M-\$23M in projected CIP funding and grants, the city would also borrow approximately \$15M-\$20M through bonds or a special assessment.

# Chapter 5

Table 75. Sub-System Project Prioritization

City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Master Plan Vision - Order of Magnitude Estimate of Probable Capital Improvement Costs (2014)									
					Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Subtotal	
<b>1. Neighborhood and Community Parks</b>									
<b>A. Community Parks and Centers</b>									
Priority Projects	Renovations of Existing Community Parks:								
	Grover Lucas Park (ADA compliant, field replacement)					ls	1	\$250,000	\$250,000
	Englewood Park (Restrooms, renovate fields/courts)					ls	1	\$260,000	\$260,000
	Stith-Talbert Park (Playground replacement, Tree Plan)					ls	1	\$75,000	\$75,000
	South Rocky Mt. Com. Center Park (Soccer, ADA, pavement)					ls	1	\$450,000	\$450,000
	Sunset Park (Park enhancements)					ls	1	\$750,000	\$750,000
Renovation of Existing Booker T. Washington Community Center					sf	27,000	\$125	\$3,375,000	
								\$5,160,000	
Long-term Projects	Acquisition of Community Parkland:								
	West Rocky Mount location (Nash County)					ac.	40	\$35,000	\$1,400,000
	Northeast Rocky Mount location (Edgecombe County)					ac.	40	\$35,000	\$1,400,000
	Construction of New Community Centers:								
	West Rocky Mount location (Nash County)					sf	25,000	\$225	\$5,625,000
Northeast Rocky Mount location (Edgecombe County)					sf	25,000	\$225	\$5,625,000	
								\$14,050,000	
Vision	Development of Community Parks:								
	West Rocky Mount location (Nash County)					ac.	35	\$200,000	\$7,000,000
	Northeast Rocky Mount location (Edgecombe County)					ac.	35	\$200,000	\$7,000,000
	Expansion of existing South Rocky Mount Community Center					sf	10,000	\$225	\$2,250,000
								\$16,250,000	
<b>B. Neighborhood Parks</b>									
Priority Projects	Renovations of Existing Neighborhood Parks:								
	Branch Street Park (Athletic field, trailhead, paths)					ls	1	\$150,000	\$150,000
	Charter Oaks Park (Playground, athletic field, shelters)					ls	1	\$150,000	\$150,000
	Hornbeam Park (Playground, ADA access, amenities)					ls	1	\$125,000	\$125,000
	Buck Leonard Park (ADA access, site improvements, MP)					ls	1	\$165,000	\$165,000
	Marigold Park (Cleanup, ADA access, splash-pad, basketball)					ls	1	\$265,000	\$265,000
Lancaster Park (Playground, ADA access, paths)					ls	1	\$140,000	\$140,000	
								\$995,000	
Long-term Projects	Bunn Farm Park (ADA access, site amenities)					ls	1	\$40,000	\$40,000
	Cloverdale Park (Playground, new b-ball courts, ADA access)					ls	1	\$105,000	\$105,000
	Denton Street Pool (Equipment replacement, pool liner)					ls	1	\$750,000	\$750,000
	Eastern Avenue Park (ADA access, site amenities, paths)					ls	1	\$75,000	\$75,000
	Farmington Park (Master Plan, paths, ADA access)					ls	1	\$225,000	\$225,000
	Meadowbrook Park (court conversion to b-ball, playground)					ls	1	\$105,000	\$105,000
	Southside Park (Cleanup, ADA access, playground, tennis)					ls	1	\$170,000	\$170,000
	Thelonious Monk Park (Playground, ADA access)					ls	1	\$65,000	\$65,000
	Three Sisters Park (Soccer field, trails)					ls	1	\$230,000	\$230,000
								\$1,765,000	

# Implementation Plan

C. Mini Parks					
Priority Projects	Renovations of Existing Mini Parks				
	Daughtridge Park (ADA access, garden, shelter, event hookups)	ls	1	\$85,000	\$85,000
	Home Street Park (Convert to natural space, cleanup [reclassify])	ls	1	\$50,000	\$50,000
	Kite Park (Convert to natural space, cleanup [reclassify])	ls	1	\$10,000	\$10,000
	Oakwood Drive Park (Convert to natural space, cleanup [reclassify])	ls	1	\$10,000	\$10,000
	Powell Park (Convert to natural space, cleanup [reclassify])	ls	1	\$10,000	\$10,000
	Sycamore Street Park (Convert to natural space, cleanup [reclassify])	ls	1	\$10,000	\$10,000
	Taylor Park (Convert to natural space, cleanup [reclassify])	ls	1	\$10,000	\$10,000
	Westridge Park (Convert to natural space, cleanup [reclassify])	ls	1	\$10,000	\$10,000
Wildwood Park (Playground, half-court, shelter, outdoor classroom)	ls	1	\$100,000	\$100,000	
				\$295,000	
Long-term Projects	Aycock Street Park (Playground, cleanup, ADA access)	ls	1	\$90,000	\$90,000
	Bea Holman Park (ADA access, courts)	ls	1	\$105,000	\$105,000
	Braswell Park (Group shelters, ADA access)	ls	1	\$75,000	\$75,000
	Patternson Drive Park (Outdoor classroom, trails [reclassify])	ls	1	\$105,000	\$105,000
	Western Avenue Park (Convert to natural space, garden [reclassify])	ls	1	\$20,000	\$20,000
				\$395,000	
Neighborhood and Community Parks Total:					\$38,910,000
Priority Projects Subtotal:					\$6,450,000
Long-term Projects Subtotal:					\$16,210,000
Vision Subtotal:					\$16,250,000



Booker T. Washington Community Center

# Chapter 5

				Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Subtotal	
<b>2. Regional Parks and Venues</b>								
<b>A. Downtown Community Facility</b>								
	Downtown Community Facility							
		Development of a 175,000sf facility		ls	1	\$39,600,000*	\$39,600,000	
							\$39,600,000	
<b>B. River Falls Park</b>								
Priority	Planning and Design:							
		Feasibility Study		ls	1	\$75,000	\$75,000	
		Master Plan Development		ls	1	\$150,000	\$150,000	
		Design and Permitting		ls	1	\$875,000	\$875,000	
							\$1,100,000	
Long-term	Site Preparations:							
		Removal of Existing Roadways		lf	5,500	\$100	\$550,000	
		Acquisition of non-city owned parcels		ea.	5	\$100,000	\$500,000	
		Clear Vegetation at Falls		ac.	5	\$10,000	\$50,000	
								\$1,100,000
		Development:						
	River Falls Park (roadways, festival spaces, amphitheater, athletic fields, shelters		ls	1	\$12,500,000	\$12,500,000		
							\$12,500,000	
<b>C. Regional Parks</b>								
Priority	Sports Complex Stadium:							
		SCS (Replace locker room building, training room, offices, eq. rm.		sf	10,000	\$225	\$2,250,000	
		SCS (Two restrooms buildings, north and south sides)		sf	2,400	\$275	\$660,000	
		SCS (Concessions, northside)		sf	1,000	\$200	\$200,000	
		SCS (Press box, northside, video scoreboard)		ls	1	\$450,000	\$450,000	
		SCS (Equipment/maintenance, single building)		sf	2,500	\$175	\$437,500	
		SCS (Turf field - NCAA min. 210x345')		ls	1	\$750,000	\$750,000	
		SCS (Parking lot, ADA parking and access)		ls	1	\$200,000	\$200,000	
	SCS (IAFF standard oval track 120.735', grading, base, surface, edges)		ls	1	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000		
	SCS (Field and track components, AAU min. requirements)		ls	1	\$175,000	\$175,000		
							\$6,322,500	
	City Lake (Tree Plan, restrooms, repairs to walks, vegetation)		ls	1	\$250,000	\$250,000		
	Battle Park (Management Plan, mountain bike trails, hiking)		ls	1	\$175,000	\$175,000		
	Nashville Road Park (Management Plan, trails)		ls	1	\$100,000	\$100,000		
	Sports Complex							
	Soccer/Baseball (turf fields, concessions repairs)		ls	1	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000		
							\$2,025,000	
Regional Parks and Venues Total:							\$62,647,500	
Priority Projects Subtotal:							\$46,072,500	
Long-term Projects Subtotal:							\$16,575,000	

\* Cost from City of Rocky Mount FY 2016 Adopted Budget CIP-Community Reinvestment

Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Subtotal
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# Implementation Plan

				Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Subtotal
<b>3. Trails, Streets and Transit</b>							
<b>A. Trails</b>							
Pedestrian Plan:							
	Priority Trails	lf	32,696*	\$100*		\$3,009,000	
	Priority Trails (Phase 2)	lf	25,924*	\$100*		\$2,588,000	
	Potential Trails	lf	150,325	\$100		\$15,032,500	
							\$20,629,500
Recommended Trails:							
	Priority Trails	lf	13,470	\$100		\$1,347,000	
	Potential Trails	lf	44,350	\$100		\$4,435,000	
							\$5,782,000
Trailheads							
	Priority Trailheads	ea.	6	\$25,000		\$150,000	
	Potential Trailheads	ea.	15	\$25,000		\$375,000	
	Access Points (Signage)	ea.	30	\$5,000		\$150,000	
							\$675,000
<b>B. Complete Streets</b>							
	Street Trees	mi	21	\$55,000		\$1,155,000	
	Sidewalks/ Bikelanes	mi	21	\$125,000		\$2,625,000	
							\$3,770,000
<b>C. Transit</b>							
	Shelters	ea.	10	\$15,000		\$150,000	
	Signage	ls	1	\$50,000		\$50,000	
							\$200,000
Trail, Streets and Transit Total:							\$31,056,500
Priority Projects Subtotal:							\$3,884,000
Long-term Projects Subtotal:							\$7,705,000
Vision Subtotal:							\$19,467,500

\* Quantity and Unit Cost Base from City of Rocky Mount Pedestrian Plan- 2012

# Chapter 5

				Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Subtotal
<b>4. Arts, History, Culture and Community System</b>							
<b>A. Senior Center</b>							
	Senior Center Design and Engineering	ls	1	\$300,000		\$300,000	
	Senior Center (Phase 1- 1st Floor; abatement, renovation and structural repairs to building; relocation of RM Wilson Athletics)	sf	12,500	\$270		\$3,375,000	
	Senior Center (Renovation/Abatement, Phase 2 - 2nd Floor)	sf	10,000	\$225		\$2,250,000	
	Senior Satellite Program (Vehicles, equipment)	ls	1	\$100,000		\$100,000	
							\$6,025,000
<b>B. Cultural and Recreation Community Centers</b>							
	Imperial Centre Facility Upgrades	ls	1	\$250,000		\$250,000	
	Event Equipment Replacement (bleachers, signage, etc.)	ls	1	\$100,000		\$100,000	
	Mobile Cultral Exhibits	ls	2	\$50,000		\$100,000	
	Exhibits at Community Centers	ls	4	\$50,000		\$200,000	
							\$650,000
<b>C. Heritage Trails</b>							
	Cultural Heritage Trail (signage, art)	ls	1	\$150,000		\$150,000	
	Heritage Routes (Signage)	ls	3	\$75,000		\$225,000	
	Local and National Historic Landmarks and Districts (Signage, art)	ea.	15	\$12,500		\$187,500	
							\$562,500
Arts, History, Cultural and Community Total:							\$7,237,500
Priority Projects Subtotal:							\$4,237,500
Long-term Projects Subtotal:							\$650,000
Vision Subtotal:							\$2,350,000

				Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Subtotal
<b>5. Greenways and Natural Lands</b>							
<b>Greenways and Natural Lands:</b>							
	Natural Lands Management Plan	ls	1	\$125,000		\$125,000	
	Nature Center	sf	7,500	\$225		\$1,687,500	
							\$1,812,500
Greenways and Natural Lands Total:							\$1,812,500
Priority Projects Subtotal:							\$125,000
Long-term Projects Subtotal:							\$1,687,500

# Implementation Plan

Unlike Option 1, where the key challenge is prioritizing the improvements, the challenge for Option 2 is managing the approval, planning, design, permitting and construction of a \$73.1M Capital Improvements Program over a relatively short (10+ year) period of time. It is anticipated that the Program would be implemented in phases as outlined in **Table 75**: Sub-System Prioritized Projects with the focus on work addressing priority projects first, then long-term projects and finally vision projects. If the city chooses to pursue Option 2 or elements of Option 2, the first year of the plan should be spent staffing, planning and preparing to implement the Capital Improvements Program, and beginning implementation on some of the high priority projects.

## 5.3.2 Project Prioritization

In order for the Park and Recreation Department to be able to prioritize projects, a criteria is needed that responds to community-wide needs and goals for Rocky Mount. See **Table 76**. The following criteria can be used as a test for each opportunity or project in order to determine its level of priority in comparison to other projects. This will promote the maximum efficiency of limited resources for the department.

In addition to the Project Prioritization Criteria it is important to note that the siting of park and recreation facilities can be catalysts for development and/or redevelopment of neighborhoods. As such, the primary benefits of new park and recreation facilities should be

**Table 76: Project Prioritization Criteria**

Project Name:	
Prioritization Criteria Element	Points (0-5)
Equity	
Economic Development	
Safety	
Stabilization	
Revenue Generation	
Leverage	
Public Demand	
Funding Match	
Advance City Goals	
Total Points:	

Use a 0-5 point scale; 0 = Lowest, None; 5 = Highest, Yes

maximized for city residents. Two levels of priority service areas should be realized by each project as follows:

1. Primary Service Area = City limits
2. Secondary Service Area = Areas within the ETJ and in close proximity of the city limits

Furthermore, facilities expected to be sited, constructed and operated near the city limits or outside the city limits should be undertaken only through explicit inter-jurisdictional agreements with the adjacent city/town/county. When the prioritization criteria is applied to the Park and Recreation Master Plan Vision list of projects, the following are the highest scoring in descending order by two categories; new parks or facilities (**Table 77**), and enhanced existing parks and facilities (**Table 78**):

**Table 77: New Facilities/ Sites Project Prioritization List**

Rank	Top Project Priorities for New Facilities or Sites	Cost Estimate
<b>1.</b>	<b>Community Park Acquisition</b>	
	West Community Park Acq.	\$1,400,000
<b>2.</b>	<b>Downtown Community Facility</b>	
	Downtown Community Facility	\$39,600,000
<b>3.</b>	<b>Community Center Development</b>	
	West Community Center	\$5,625,000
<b>4.</b>	<b>Community Park Acquisition</b>	
	North Community Park Acq.	\$1,400,000
<b>5.</b>	<b>Develop Priority Trails (Pedestrian Plan)</b>	
	Holly Street Park Connector	\$370,000
	Sunset to Englewood Connector	\$580,000
	South Rocky Mt. Comm Center	\$1,690,000
	BBQ Park Trail	\$369,000
<b>6.</b>	<b>Regional Park Development (River Falls Park)</b>	
	Feasibility Study	\$75,000
	Master Plan Development	\$150,000
	Design and Permitting	\$875,000
<b>7.</b>	<b>Community Park Development</b>	
	West Community Park	\$7,000,000
<b>8.</b>	<b>Develop Priority Trails (Pedestrian Plan) - Phase 2</b>	
	Hospital Area Connector	\$1,584,000
	MLK Jr. Park to Leggett Rd.	\$159,000
	Farmington Park Trail	\$845,000
<b>9.</b>	<b>Community Park Development</b>	
	North Community Park	\$7,000,000
<b>10.</b>	<b>Nature Center at Battle Park</b>	
	Design and Construction	\$1,687,500

2014 Estimates

# Chapter 5

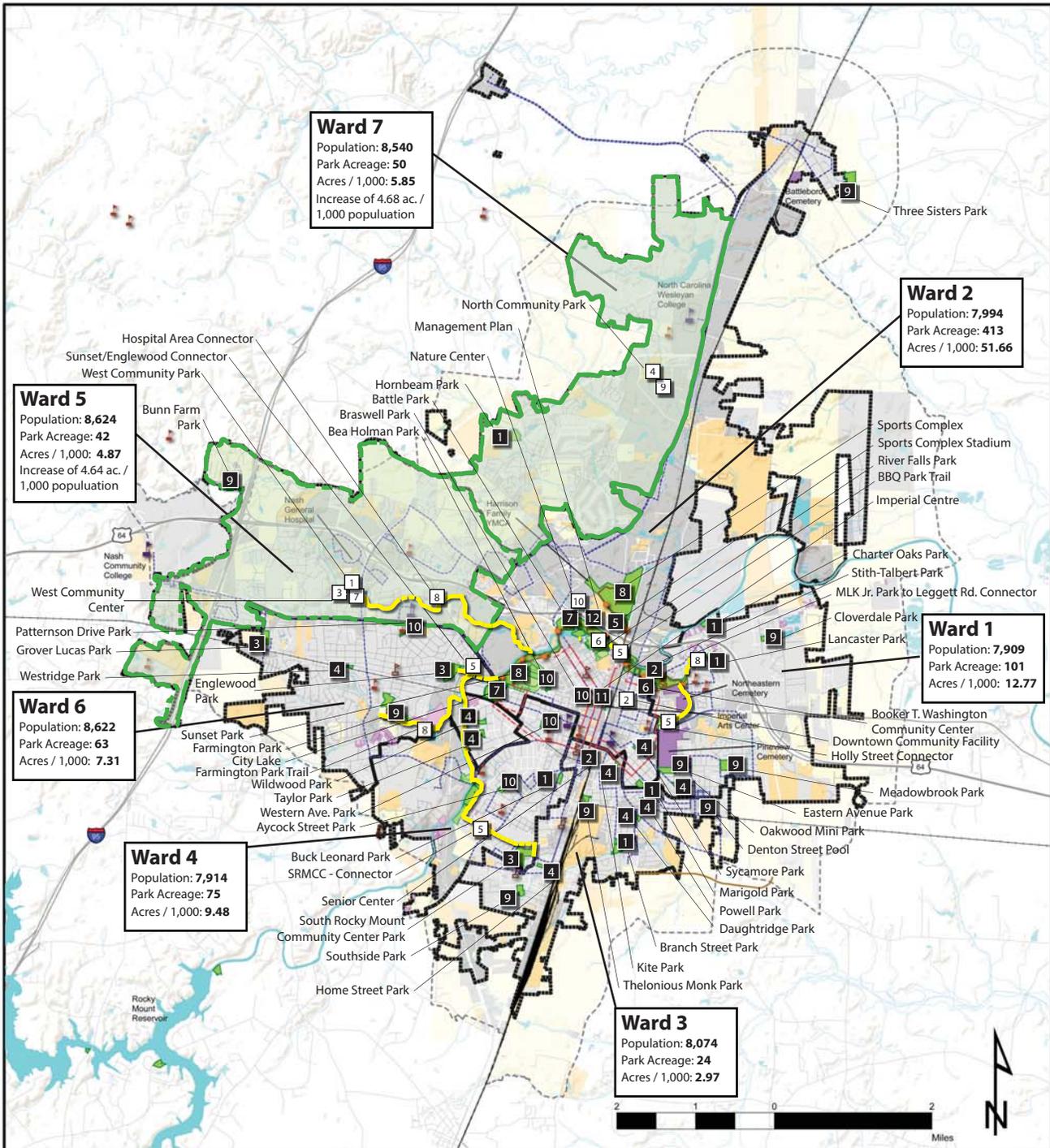
**Table 78: Enhancing Existing Facilities/ Sites Project Prioritization List**

Rank	Top Project Priorities to Enhance Existing Facilities or Sites	Cost Estimate
<b>1.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Neighborhood Parks</b>	
	Priority Neighborhood Parks	\$995,000
<b>2.</b>	<b>Senior Center Renovation/Abatement</b>	
	Feasibility/Bus. Plan & Design	\$300,000
	Phase 1 Reno./Abatement	\$3,375,000
<b>3.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Community Parks</b>	
	Priority Community Parks	\$1,035,000
<b>4.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Mini Parks</b>	
	Priority Mini Parks	\$295,000
<b>5.</b>	<b>Sports Complex Stadium</b>	
	Locker Rm, Training Rm. Office	\$2,250,000
	Restrooms (two)	\$660,000
	Concessions	\$200,000
	Press Box, Scoreboard	\$450,000
	Eq./Maint. Building	\$437,500
	Turf Field (NCAA)	\$750,000
	Parking/ADA Access	\$200,000
<b>6.</b>	<b>Renovation of Booker T. Washington Com. Center</b>	
	Renovation of BTWCC	\$3,375,000
<b>7.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Regional Parks and Facilities</b>	
	Priority Regional Parks	\$425,000
<b>8.</b>	<b>Renovation of Sunset Park and Sports Complex</b>	
	Sunset Park / Sports Com.	\$2,250,000
<b>9.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Neighborhood Parks</b>	
	Long-Term Neighborhood Parks	\$1,765,000
<b>10.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Mini Parks</b>	
	Long-Term Mini Parks	\$395,000
<b>11.</b>	<b>Cultural / Trails / Transit</b>	
	Cultural Heritage Trails	\$562,500
	Priority Trailheads and Transit Shelters/ Signage	\$300,000
	Imperial Center Improvements	\$250,000
<b>12.</b>	<b>Natural Lands Management Plan</b>	
	Management Plan Development	\$125,000

2014 Estimates

# Implementation Plan

Map 21: City of Rocky Mount Park Acreage by City Ward and Project Locations



## Legend

- |                                |                         |                          |                           |   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| City of Rocky Mount Parks      | Existing Transit Routes | Lakes, Ponds and Rivers  | Creeks and Streams        | Existing Park/Facility Project Priority Ranking |
| City of Rocky Mount Cemeteries | Major Roads             | Residential Land Use     | City Wards                | New Park/Facility Project Priority Ranking      |
| Trail Access Points            | Streets                 | Non-Residential Land Use | City ETJ                  | New Greenway Project                            |
| Tar River Trail                | Railroads               | Agricultural Land Use    | Colleges and Universities | Ward with Park Acreage Increase                 |
| Southern Loop                  | FEMA Sites              | Split Land Use           | Public Schools            |   |
| Existing Bikeways              | FEMA Sites in Parks     |                          | Private Schools           |   |

# Chapter 5

**Table 79: Top Project Priorities for New Facilities or Sites Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP)**

Rank	Top Project Priorities for New Facilities or Sites	Cost Estimate	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
<b>1.</b>	<b>Community Park Acquisition</b>					
	West Community Park Acquisition	\$1,400,000		\$1,400,000 Acquisition		
<b>2.</b>	<b>Downtown Community Facility</b>					
	Downtown Community Facility Development	\$39,600,000	\$39,600,000 Construction			
<b>3.</b>	<b>Community Center Development</b>					
	West Community Center Development	\$5,625,000				\$562,500 Design/ Engineering
<b>4.</b>	<b>Community Park Acquisition</b>					
	North Community Park Acquisition	\$1,400,000				
<b>5.</b>	<b>Develop Priority Trails (Pedestrian Plan)</b>					
	Development of Pedestrian Plan Priority Trails (Phase 1)	\$3,009,000	\$370,000 Holly Street Park Connector Design/ Construction			\$580,000 Sunset to Englewood Connector Design/ Construction
<b>6.</b>	<b>Regional Park Development (River Falls Park)</b>					
	Feasibility Study, Master Plan Development, and Design and Permitting	\$1,100,000		\$75,000 Feasibility Study		\$150,000 Master Plan
<b>7.</b>	<b>Community Park Development</b>					
	West Community Park Development	\$7,000,000				
<b>8.</b>	<b>Develop Priority Trails (Pedestrian Plan) - Phase 2</b>					
	Development of Pedestrian Plan Priority Trails (Phase 2)	\$2,588,000			\$158,000 Hospital Area Connector Design/ Engineering	\$1,426,000 Hospital Area Connector Construction
<b>9.</b>	<b>Community Park Development</b>					
	North Community Park Development	\$7,000,000				
<b>10.</b>	<b>Nature Center at Battle Park</b>					
	Development of 7,500 sf Nature Center	\$1,687,500				
<b>Sub Totals:</b>			<b>\$39,970,000</b>	<b>\$1,475,000</b>	<b>\$158,000</b>	<b>\$2,718,500</b>

2014 Estimates; Cost estimate for the Downtown Community Facility was provided by the City of Rocky Mount

# Implementation Plan

FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	+ 10-YR
\$5,062,500 Construction						
	\$1,400,000 Acquisition					
		\$169,000 South Rocky Mt. Comm Center Connector Design/ Engineering	\$1,521,000 South Rocky Mt. Comm Center Connector Construction	\$369,000 BBQ Park Trail Design/ Construction		
				\$400,000 Design/ Engineering	\$475,000 Design/ Engineering	
\$700,000 Design/ Engineering	\$3,300,000 Construction	\$3,000,000 Construction				
\$159,000 MLK Jr. Park to Leggett Rd. Design/ Construction	\$85,000 Farmington Park Trail Design/ Engineering	\$760,000 Farmington Park Trail Construction				
					\$700,000 Design/ Engineering	\$6,300,000 Construction
						\$1,687,500 Design/ Construction
<b>\$5,921,500</b>	<b>\$4,785,000</b>	<b>\$3,929,000</b>	<b>\$1,521,000</b>	<b>\$769,000</b>	<b>\$1,175,000</b>	<b>\$7,987,500</b>

# Chapter 5

**Table 80:** Top Project Priorities to Enhance Existing Facilities or Sites Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Rank	Top Project Priorities to Enhance Existing Facilities or Sites	Cost Estimate (2014)	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
<b>1.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Neighborhood Parks</b>					
	Priority Neighborhood Parks	\$995,000	\$125,000 Hornbeam Park	\$305,000 Buck Leonard Park, Lancaster Park	\$415,000 Branch Street Park, Marigold Park	\$150,000 Charter Oaks Park
<b>2.</b>	<b>Senior Center Renovation/Abatement</b>					
	Design, Abatement and Phase 1 Renovation of 15,000 sf	\$3,675,000		\$300,000 Design/ Engineering	\$3,375,000 Abatement and Construction	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Community Parks</b>					
	Priority Community Parks	\$1,035,000		\$450,000 South Rocky Mt. Com. Center Park	\$250,000 Grover Lucas Park	\$335,000 Englewood Park, Stith-Talbert Park
<b>4.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Mini Parks</b>					
	Priority Mini Parks	\$295,000	\$85,000 Daughtridge Park	\$110,000 Home Street, Kite, Oakwood, Powell, Sycamore, Taylor, Westridge Parks		\$100,000 Wildwood Park
<b>5.</b>	<b>Sports Complex Stadium (Priority Elements)</b>					
	Renovation and expansion of Sports Complex Stadium	\$4,947,500	\$494,750 Design/ Engineering	\$4,452,750 Construction		
<b>6.</b>	<b>Renovation of Booker T. Washington Com. Center</b>					
	Renovation of BTWCC	\$3,375,000			\$405,000 BTWCC Design	\$2,970,000 BTWCC Renovations
<b>7.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Regional Parks and Facilities</b>					
	Priority Regional Parks and Facilities	\$425,000				
<b>8.</b>	<b>Renovation of Sunset Park and Sports Complex</b>					
	Sunset Park/ Sports Complex	\$2,250,000			\$800,000 Sports Complex	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Neighborhood Parks</b>					
	Long-Term Neighborhood Parks	\$1,765,000				
<b>10.</b>	<b>Renovation of Existing Mini Parks</b>					
	Long-Term Mini Parks	\$395,000				
<b>11.</b>	<b>Cultural / Trails / Transit</b>					
	Cultural Heritage Trails, Priority Trailheads and Transit Shelters / Signage	\$1,112,500			\$150,000 Priority Trailheads \$100,000 Imperial Center	\$150,000 Transit Shelters +Signage
<b>12.</b>	<b>Natural Lands Management</b>					
	Management Plan Dev.	\$125,000		\$125,000		
<b>Sub Totals:</b>			<b>\$704,750</b>	<b>\$5,742,750</b>	<b>\$5,495,000</b>	<b>\$3,705,000</b>

2014 Estimates



# Chapter 5



*Tar River Greenway*

## Section 5.4 | Organizational Recommendations

### 5.4.1 Existing Department Organization

When conducting an operational audit of recreation facilities or departments one of the critical ratios is that of percentage of total budget consumed by staffing. In most cases the total cost of staffing should not exceed 60% of the total operating budget. The City of Rocky Mount is well below that number (48.5%). If you take the information one step further and remove Debt Service from the total equation you realize the following percentages:

- In FY2014 Adopted budget salaries and employee Benefits comprised 61.5% of the total operating budget.
- In FY2015 Proposed budget salaries and employee benefits are expected to comprise 59.9% of the total operating budget.

Without debt Service included in the formula the department is operating right at the 60% threshold for staffing. It will be important to keep this equation in mind as the department moves forward with implementation of the Master Plan and subsequently the addition of staff.

A final piece of information that should be considered is the total number of full-time staff who fall within the Parks & Recreation Department, **Table 81**. One of the goals of the staffing plan for the department is to streamline operations. Therefore, the most important component when reviewing the chart is the total number of employees. That number has been consistent the past three budget cycles, but will change as the department begins to evolve and implement the Master Plan. A snapshot of the current department organization is shown in **Figure 9**.

It is important to understand that the future staffing plan has been based upon two key ideas:

1. That the City of Rocky Mount will continue to invest in the Parks & Recreation Department, thus providing appropriate levels of financial support.
2. That the current level of service provided by the Parks and Recreation Department will be maintained, if not increased in the future, to keep pace with the citizens and industry standards.

These two key ideas are important when reviewing the staffing plan and determining whether or not the various portions of the plan should be implemented.

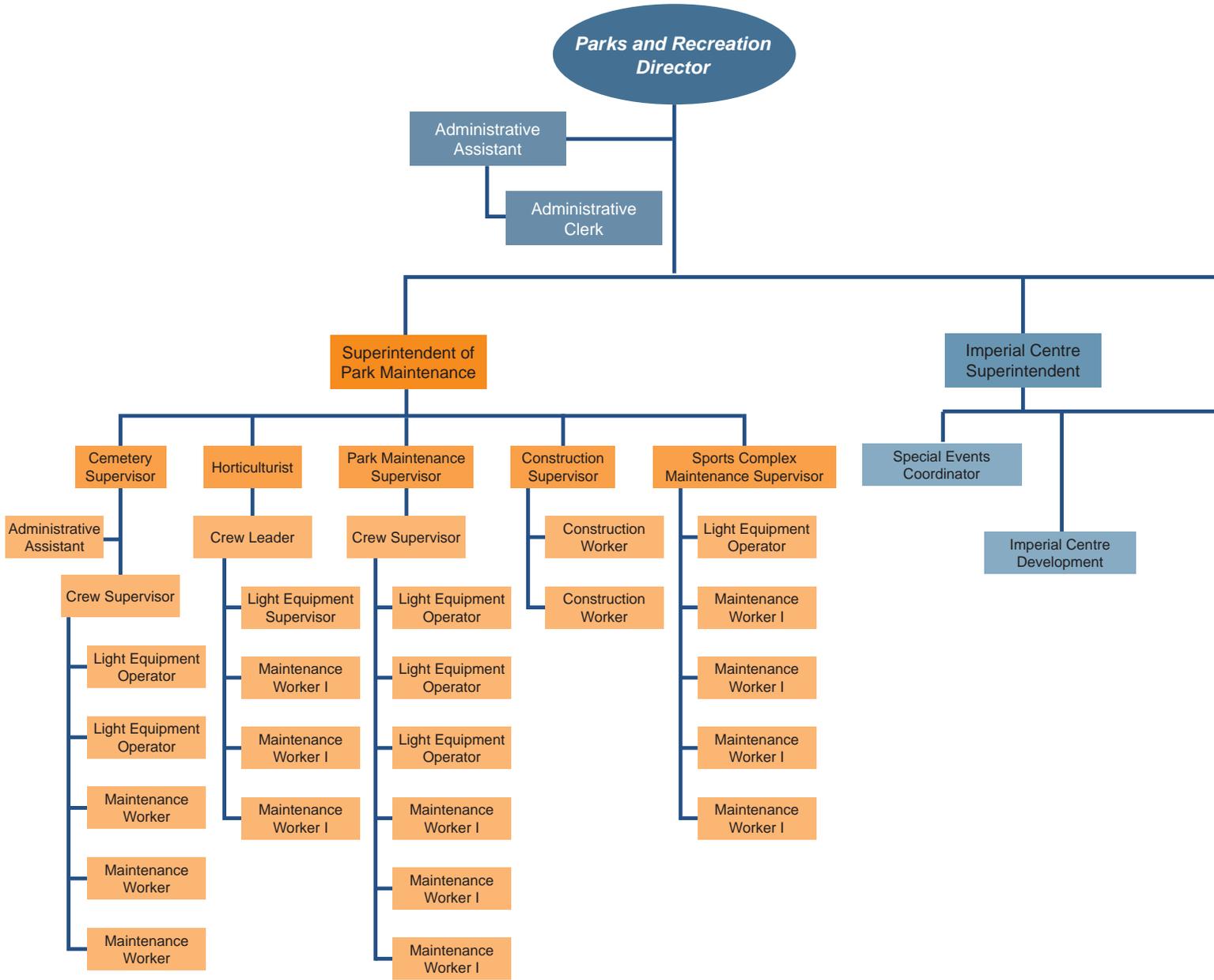
**Table 81:** 2014 Park and Recreation Department Employee Positions by Division

Division of Park and Recreation Department	2015 Employee Count
Parks and Recreation Administration	5
Athletics	4
Special Programs	1
Neighborhood Programs	5
Seniors Programs	3
Cemetery	8
Outdoor Programs	1
Parks Maintenance	26
Museum	6
Cultural Arts	7
Sports Complex	1
Imperial Centre	2
<b>Total Number of Employees:</b>	<b>69</b>

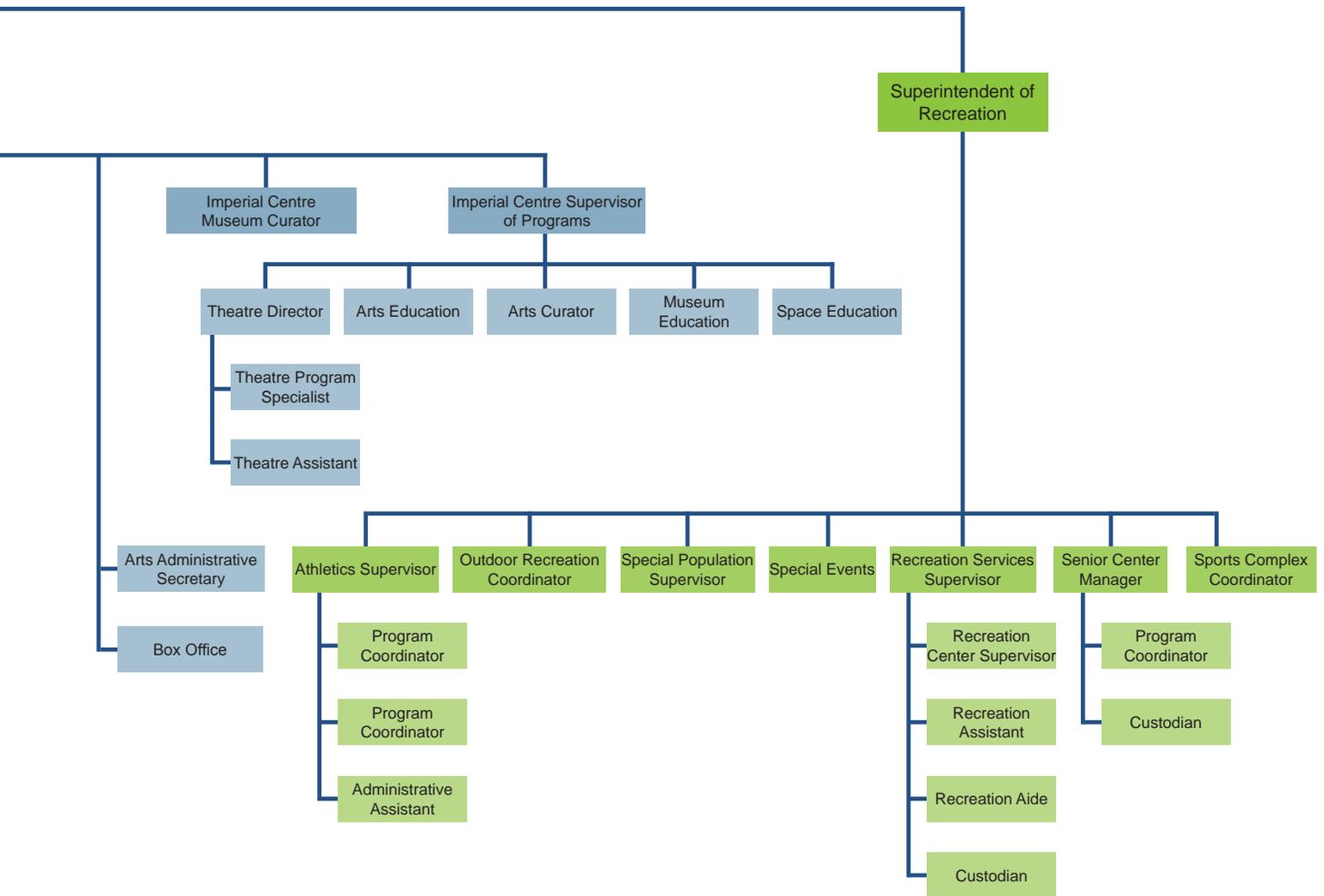
June, 2014 figures. At time of review, two positions were frozen; one in Museum and one in the Imperial Centre division.

# Chapter 5

Figure 10: City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation **Current** Staffing Plan (as of June 2014)



# Implementation Plan



# Chapter 5

## 5.4.2 Organization Recommendations

### Senior Administration

The following are recommended changes at the senior administration level of the Department; addition of Assistant Director; and one Superintendent. It is consistent with industry standards for a department of this size to have three superintendent level positions with a proposed fourth to be added at a later date.

It is important for the purposes of the Master Plan to note that until calendar year 2014 the Department was only operating with two superintendent positions. The third position was created as the Imperial Centre Superintendent position which combined previous positions focused on the museum and cultural arts administration.

The Superintendent position recommended at the senior administration level is that of a Business Superintendent. It is increasingly common of organizations the size of Rocky Mount Park and Recreation Department to have a position like this in place. This position not only functions to ensure that the “business” of Parks and Recreation is being conducted up to city and industry expectations, but it also functions as a liaison between the Parks and Recreation Department and the Human Resources Department for the City proper.

It is recommended that when the Department begins to develop additional community centers within the total inventory that the Business Superintendent position is implemented. With the implementation of the community centers there will be a significant increase in the number of full-time and part-time staff. In addition there will be a significant increase in the total number of programs offered, which also translates to cash handling and potentially membership. These are key areas that the business superintendent and subsequent staff will be able to assist with and develop appropriate policy and procedures.

### Business Office

The development of a dedicated business office would be a completely new venture for the Parks and Recreation

Department. While new to the City of Rocky Mount, it would not be a new practice in the industry. Development of an in-house business office for organizations this size and/or future size is not uncommon. It is even considered industry standard by organizations that have separate taxing authority within a municipal government like a park district.

When the business office is fully staffed it would be comprised of seven full-time staff positions. As was indicated in the senior administration position, it is recommended to not implement the Business superintendent position immediately. The same milestones of development of community centers should be used in establishing the following new recommended positions; property/risk manager, accountant and administrative assistant. These positions will play key roles in assisting those facilities to run smoothly and within industry standards.

In addition, the following positions should be implemented as soon as funding is available from the city; payroll coordinator/HR specialist, senior planner and planner (grant writer).

- **Payroll Coordinator/HR Specialist:** Current departmental organization creates significant challenges in the hiring of part-time staff and managing the process. While this is not an uncommon problem to have within a government agency, it is important that for the department to be able to operate in a business-like fashion this position will be needed to assist in the hiring and payroll administrative process. Dedicated staff for the department will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the department, however, another options is for a separate entity to fulfill this need outside of the city operations.
- **Senior Planner:** This position will be a key position to put in place because the role will be to work closely with the director on implementation of the Master Plan. While the Director will be involved with the implementation as well that position is accountable for how the Department is operating. The senior planner position can work with others in the Department to implement the Master Plan and assist with those associated processes. Additionally, this position will assist with the continued long-range plans of the Department, beyond the Master Plan.
- **Planner (Grant Writer):** The Department has a long

history of applying for and being awarded grants for programs, equipment and facility improvements. An even larger emphasis will now be placed on securing grants in order to implement priority projects. This role was previously held by the current superintendent of the Imperial Centre. Now that position is focused on the overall operation of the Imperial Centre, creating a gap in grant writing. It is recommended that this position be planned for and added as soon as possible.

## Imperial Centre

The City of Rocky Mount along with the Parks and Recreation Department has a strong focus on cultural arts and special events within the community. The development of the Imperial Centre combined with the programs and amenities it contains only emphasizes that point. With the addition of a third superintendent level position to the department in calendar year 2014, there has been a significant restructuring of the Imperial Centre.

It is recommended that one additional dedicated position within the Imperial Centre structure be created and that is of a recreation program supervisor focused on Imperial Centre and Community Events.

- **Rental Supervisor:** (Imperial Centre & Community Events): The department already hosts a wide variety of events for the community at large. While the number of events has fluctuated based upon year and the individual responsible, it is a continued focus of the department. Those events, combined with programs and special events that take place within the Imperial Centre, makes the creation of a dedicated rental supervisor position within the Imperial Centre logical.

## Park Maintenance

The City of Rocky Mount has significant acreage dedicated to parks, trails, sports complexes, greenways and natural areas. A unique characteristic of parks maintenance is the operation, to include maintenance and upkeep of the cemetery.

Though the Parks and Recreation Vision established by residents looks to expand the number of parks and facilities, it is recommended that additional staff remain minimal. Significant changes, however, to the overall

organizational structure are recommended.

- **Cemetery Operations:** There are no significant changes recommended to the cemetery operations at this time. It may be appropriate to look at expanding the reach of the cemetery crew to include small local parks that are in close proximity to the cemetery to maximize efficiencies. The cemetery operations are significant to the Department and it is important to ensure that the organization is using all of their resources to the maximum.

Within the overall Parks Maintenance Division, two additional senior level positions are recommended. The addition of these positions is recommended within the upcoming calendar year.

- **Assistant Superintendent of Parks:** This position would be a senior level position within Parks maintenance and would report directly to the superintendent of parks. This position would have three direct reports; crew supervisor, park maintenance supervisor, and horticulturist. This position would be responsible for the overall maintenance, preventative maintenance and capital improvement planning taking place in the park system on a day-to-day basis.
- **Construction Manager** Given the size and scope of the park system within Rocky Mount, it is within industry standards to have a position of this variety on staff. This position would provide oversight to the implementation and development of current and new park properties. This position would work closely with the Assistant Superintendent of parks to determine project load and what could be accomplished in-house or what may need to be contracted. This position would also work with the superintendent of park maintenance in bid development and solicitation for park projects. The position would also interface closely with the senior planner in the business office. Depending upon the number of projects that the department looks to implement and timing an additional recommendation would be to move the crew supervisor and construction worker so that these positions report directly to the construction manager.

While the previous two positions were recommended to be added in the next two years (2016-2017), the following two positions should be added as the department acquires more property and develops current spaces. Both of these

# Chapter 5

positions will be integral components in maintaining spaces and keeping the level of service within the parks that the community demands.

- **Maintenance Worker 1:** This position would report to the park maintenance supervisor.
- **Light Equipment Operation:** This position would report to the horticulturist.

The most noticeable and impactful changes that are recommended within the Park Maintenance area is that the Sports Complex maintenance supervisor and the position's direct reports move under the superintendent of recreation. The Sports Complex is one of the most active parks within the Rocky Mount inventory and requires specialized equipment and training. It is important because of the revenue-generating model that has been adopted for the Sports Complex that those staff members interface constantly with the recreation staff.

It is recommended that the Sports Complex staff not only work within the Sports Complex, but depending upon proximity to other park locations, work load/time of the year and special projects, the staff from the Sports Complex could be requested by the superintendent of park maintenance. This level of communication currently exists between the Sports Complex staff and the recreation superintendent; however, it is recommended that a change in the reporting structure be completed, along with maintaining and enhancing the level of communication.

A major challenge of the park maintenance division is the lack of upward mobility. While this plan does add two senior level positions to the overall structure, it does not take significant measures to address the upward mobility opportunity for staff. The following recommendations are not reflected in the staffing plan, however they may be steps that the department looks to implement further into the implementation of the Master Plan.

- Enhancement of the maintenance worker 1 position. By taking this position and creating a tiered system of maintenance worker 1, 2, 3 positions, there is opportunity for upward mobility within that level.
- Enhancement of the construction manager position. This has already been referenced by having the crew supervisor and construction worker report directly to this position.

- Currently the division interfaces with fleet maintenance for the majority of maintenance on their fleet vehicles. The area may look to develop a full-service shop that services all of their vehicles and equipment.
- Enhance the horticulturist position. Create another separate crew that reports to this position and the development of a nursery and staff specific to that property and job functions.

## Recreation Staffing Plan

The City of Rocky Mount has significant recreation programs and facilities for the general population, seniors and other special populations. As the Master Plan is implemented, it will look to maintain the level of programming, while expanding market penetration. At the same time it will look to develop community centers in each quadrant of the community. Another focus of the Master Plan will be addressing special populations, in particular seniors and the future of the senior center, along with aquatics.

As was already mentioned in the staffing plan for park maintenance it is recommended that the Sports Complex maintenance supervisor and staff move over to the recreation division of the operation. It is recognized that this group's responsibilities span beyond the Sports Complex and that should continue.

Some of the most significant recommendations for this area are the development of three assistant superintendent positions with focus on; sports and competition, community centers, and special populations.

- **Assistant Superintendent of Sports and Competition:** One of the main focuses of this position will be to oversee the operation of the Sports Complex to include current/expanded staff and Sports Complex Maintenance. This portion of the operation is scheduled to grow and enhance with the implementation of the Master Plan. Because of that growth, the revenue generated from this portion of the operation and the positive economic impact upon the community, it requires significant oversight and communication. Most agencies with a significant focus on athletics and tournaments have a position similar to this. It is recommended that this

# Implementation Plan

position be implemented in the next two to three years.

- **Assistant Superintendent of Community Centers:** Currently the City or Rocky Mount operates two community centers with plans to develop one in each quadrant of the community. With a total of four full-service community centers planned, it is appropriate to put a position in place to oversee their operation. This position should be implemented as additional community centers are added to the inventory.
- **Assistant Superintendent of Special Populations:** This position would provide oversight to three coordinator level positions; outdoor recreation, special populations (seniors) and aquatics. All three of those areas are of significant focus to the city and require oversight for operation within industry standards. Because it is recommended to add an aquatics coordinator in the upcoming calendar year it would also be recommended to first hire this position, and then hire the full-time aquatics position.

The following positions would be under the associated assistant superintendent of recreation position.

## Sports & Competition:

- **Maintenance Worker 1:** This position would report to the Sports Complex Maintenance Supervisor and be responsible for the daily upkeep of the Sports Complex. It is recommended that this position be added when the Sports Complex is expanded or if further enhancement is made at close proximity park locations where Sports Complex staff are responsible .
- **Program Coordinator (two positions):** Both of these positions would report to the Sports Complex coordinator. With the complexity of the Sports Complex and its daily operation, it is important to break down the operation into community use and outside use. The recommended coordinator positions would have a similar focus on programs and events that are offered/coordinated through local groups and programs and events that are solicited to come to Rocky Mount for use of the facility. It is important to note that both of these positions will have a direct impact upon positive revenue generation and positive economic impact upon the community. As the Sports Complex is a current operation, it is recommended adding this position as a priority position.

## Community Centers:

In addition to the aforementioned assistant superintendent of community centers, the following are additional positions are recommended for the community centers:

- **HVAC Technician:** Given the number of facilities that are already operational within recreation, it is recommended to add an HVAC technician to the department staff. Currently it may be possible to borrow skilled staff members from other portions of the city operation; however, at the point when the department is operating the Imperial Centre, four community centers and a senior center, having these capabilities in house is necessary.
- **Recreation Program Coordinator:** Currently there is a recreation program coordinator in each of the existing community centers. As each new facility comes online there should be a program coordinator added who functions as the coordinator of each community center. This level of oversight and passive supervision is consistent with industry standard.
- **Program Supervisor:** There are already two program supervisors on staff and as each new community center comes online they should all have, at minimum, one program supervisor. The program supervisor will report directly to the program coordinator for the community center, and together the two positions will be responsible for the operation and program of their respective community center. Additionally, these program supervisors in all four community centers should coordinate programming and pricing structure for consistency across the department.
- **Maintenance Worker 1:** There should be an additional maintenance worker 1 position added as the second community center is renovated. Between the two positions, they should coordinate maintenance and custodial work across the community centers.
- **Maintenance Worker 2:** As the third and fourth community centers come online, there should be two maintenance worker 2 positions added. At this point with all four community centers online, there should be a maintenance worker of some variety at each location to assist with routine maintenance and custodial work. Industry standards for custodial work is that one custodian be responsible for 20,000-25,000

# Chapter 5

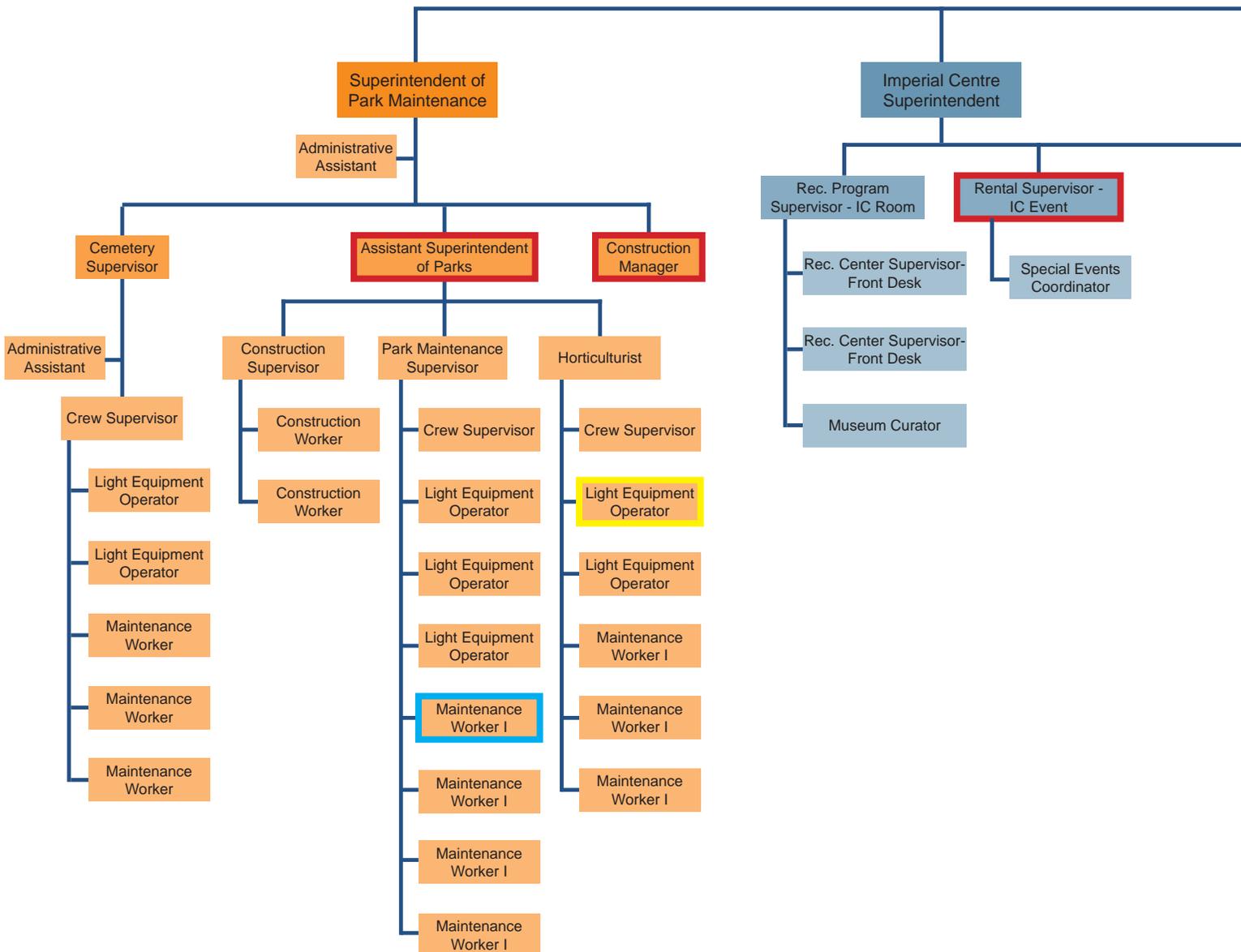
square feet. As such there may need to be some job sharing amongst the positions. If the department moves to larger, more regionally focused community centers, they may need to add positions.

## Special Populations:

In addition to the aforementioned assistant Superintendent of special populations, the following position is

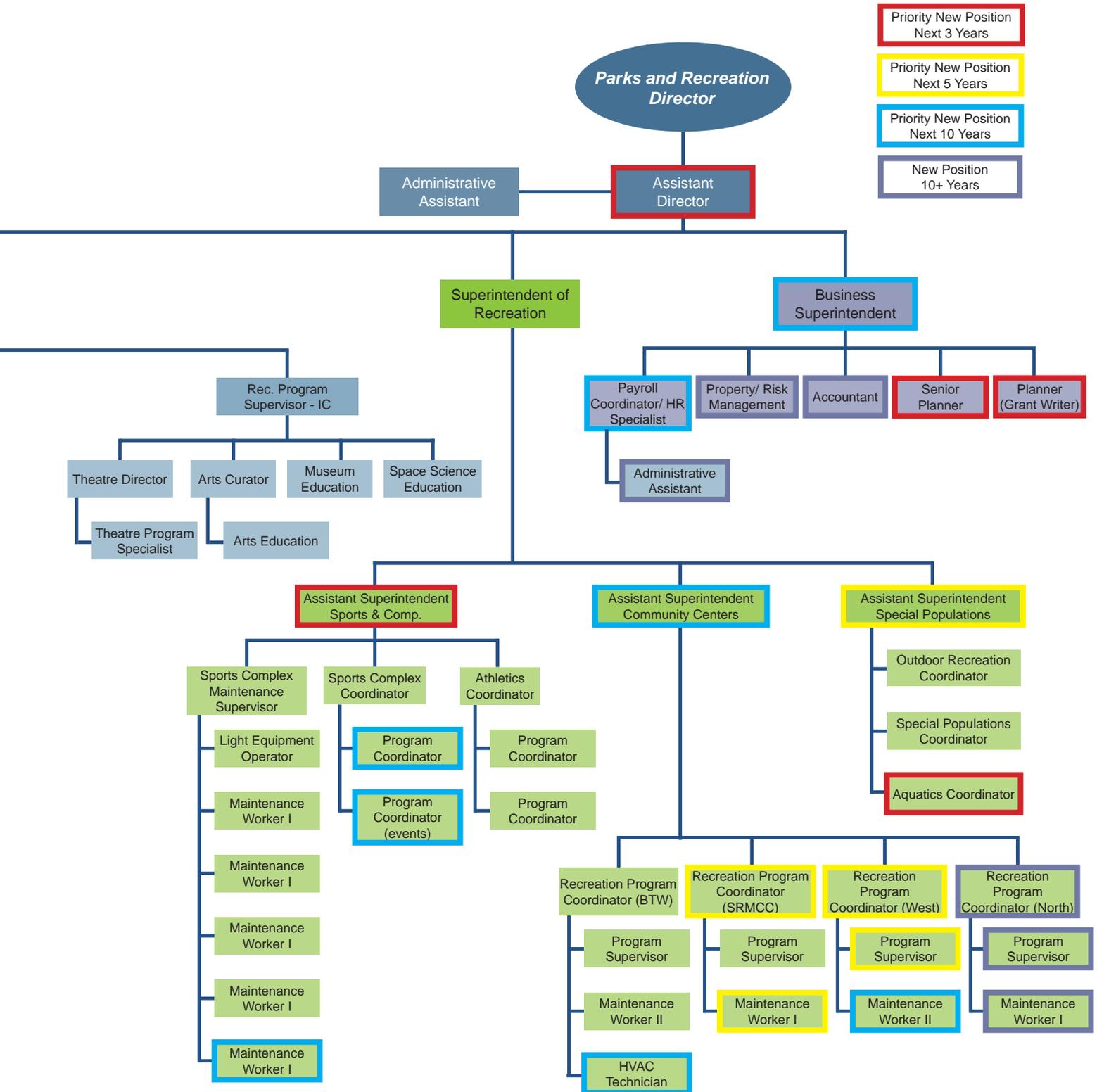
recommended to be added:

- Aquatics Coordinator:** The department should look to add an aquatics coordinator position in the next three years. The addition of a position like this when there is currently an indoor pool at the senior center and seasonal outdoor pool would fall within industry standards. This position would interface with the property/risk manager position in the business office on a regular basis and may provide some additional expertise department wide.



# Implementation Plan

Figure 11: City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation **Proposed** Staffing Plan w/ Full Implementation of Master Plan



# Appendix

*Imperial Centre for the Arts - Image courtesy of Lyric Montgomery Kinard*





## Appendix

Appendix item 6.1 includes meeting notes recorded for all public meetings and events throughout the development of the Master Plan. All notes are provided in chronological order.

Appendix item 6.2 includes the Citizen Opinion and Interests Survey results. In addition, a copy of the survey form is included at the end of Section 6.2.

Appendix item 6.3 includes a summary of interview notes recorded for all stakeholder interviews. All notes are provided in numerical order, beginning with a summary. In addition, a copy of the interview questions and interview schedule are included at the beginning of section 6.3.

Appendix 6.4 includes a list of acronyms and definitions that appear in the Master Plan report.



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## Meeting Notes

Subject	Rock Mount System Plan - Kick-off Meeting
Date	September 26, 2013
Time	9:00 am
Location	Rocky Mount
Attendees	City Staff
Prepared	September 3, 2013
Prepared by	Drew Crumpton

**Purpose:** A Kick-off meeting was conducted with the Project Team (City Staff) to review and discuss project scope and schedule, roles and expectations, needs, priorities, opportunities and implementation, website materials, final document format and presentation of Public Participation Plan. The following is a list of the staff's expectations and desired outcomes of the process.

### Things We Want Out of the Process:

- Use the document to get grants
- Needs of cultural resources in the city
- Strategic Plan
- Service levels of maintenance including cemeteries
- Public's perception of each of the 50+ parcels
- Reorganizations of staff
- CIP- Funding/Phasing Strategy
- Lighted soccer facilities
- Work together w/ partners, other providers (schools, Boys and Girls Club, counties)
- Reclassification, restructuring, salaries, etc.
- City vs. non-city residents equity
- How do we compare to other cities: services, employees, etc.
- Use of technology
- Assessment of programs for special populations-regional provider
- Core services (responsible for special events, downtown, etc.)
- Participation in policy decisions
- Demonstrate economic value of Parks and Recreation services
- Best R.O.I. on cemeteries
- Streamlining operations
- Communications



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## Meeting Notes

Subject	Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation System Plan- Steering Committee Kick-off
Date	September 24, 2013
Time	11:30 am
Location	Booker T. Theater, Downtown Rocky Mount
Attendees	See sign-in sheets
Prepared	September 24, 2013
Prepared by	Drew Crumpton

**Purpose:** A kick-off meeting was held with the steering committee members for the Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation System Plan. The following is a list of the questions and concerns raised by the steering committee members.

### Questions and Concerns

- Are there plans to develop teams of citizens to go out and tour the parks and provide input?
  - The Parks and Recreation Department will handle this in-house
- Safety: many of the parks are nice, but we do not feel safe in them.
- Is there a possibility of opening school facilities to the public?
- Will this process be segmented by age?
- Will cemetery management be a priority?
- Consider needs beyond what is currently offered
- Are we continuously evaluating citizen input to ensure an accurate reflection of views?
- Concerns over the time frame for the survey data collection?
  - Are focus groups and community meetings occurring during this process?
  - Process explained by PM in detail
- Are we encouraging non-residents to participate in this process?
- Were there specific items or concerns that prompted the need for the system plan?
- General concerns over segments for age, special needs
- How do we advertise what we have to offer in order to attract young talent to the area?
- Need to show progression; City is looking to improve the overall quality of life
- Great communities use parks and rec to sell the quality of life.
- Cities to Emulate
  - High Point
  - Hickory
  - Winston Salem
  - Wilmington
  - Should be looking at cities we want to be more like



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## Meeting Notes

Subject	Rocky Mount Park System Master Plan - Ward 1 Workshop
Date	October 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2013
Time	6:00 pm
Location	Parker Middle School
Attendees	See sign-in sheets
Prepared	October 25, 2013
Prepared by	Drew Crumpton

**Purpose:** A public workshop was held for the citizens of Ward 1 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Those in attendance were given an overview of the system plan, and I introduced to the public involvement phase of the project. The following comments were recorded:

### Why Are You Here?

- Schools and parks to attract people to community
- Parks system and community need be revitalized (Holly Street)
  - Lighting, safety, conditions
- Concerns with condition of skate park
- Building awareness of popularity of skate park

### Questions / Concerns

- Greenway safety
  - Lighting
  - Call boxes
- Lack of clarity for bikable areas
- Improving and expanding existing parks and facilities

### Summary and Common Themes

- Common Themes
  - Schools and park partnerships
  - Parks as a revitalization tool
  - Awareness of parks and programs
  - Safety and lighting in parks
  - Maintaining what we have



- Facilities
  - Greenway trails
  - Art centers
  - Community gardens
  - Restrooms
  - Walking/running tracks
  - Small neighborhood parks
  - Mountain bike trails
  - Museums
- Activities
  - Fitness and wellness
  - History and museums
  - Youth summer camps
  - Outdoor/adventure recreation
  - Youth sports
  - Senior adult
  - Family
- Funding Opportunities
  - Grants
  - General Fund/CIP
  - User Fees
  - Revenue bonds
  - Partnerships with schools and churches
- Comparable communities
  - Raleigh
  - Charlotte



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## Meeting Notes

Subject	Rocky Mount Park System Master Plan - Ward 2 Workshop
Date	October 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2013
Time	6:00 pm
Location	Imperial Arts Center
Attendees	See sign-in sheets
Prepared	October 31, 2013
Prepared by	Drew Crumpton

**Purpose:** A public workshop was held for the citizens of Ward 2 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Those in attendance were given an overview of the system plan, and I introduced to the public involvement phase of the project. The following comments were recorded:

### Why Are You Here?

- Parks are athletic heavy/ Want to focus more on theater and performing arts
- Continue work in education
  - Arts education programs
- Open space picnic areas
- Water access opportunities
- Bicycle paths

### Questions / Concerns

- Expand youth programs to include teens and young adults
- Caps and limits on programs
- What are we trying to accomplish?
- Considering demographics and walkability

### Summary and Common Themes

- Common Themes
  - Focusing more on the arts
  - Youth programs
  - Community gardens and health related issues
  - Walking and biking improvements



- Facilities
  - Greenways
  - Art Centers
  - Museums
  - Restrooms
  - Community Centers
  - Walking/running tracks
  - Community gardens
  - Picnic areas/ shelters
- Activities
  - Performing arts
  - Special events
  - Family
  - Visual arts
  - Fitness and wellness
  - Youth and teen programs
- Funding Opportunities
  - Partnerships with schools, churches and businesses
  - Grants
  - User fees
  - Impact fees
- Comparable communities
  - Raleigh
  - NYC parks and programs



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## Meeting Notes

Subject	Rocky Mount Park System Master Plan - Ward 3 Workshop
Date	November 4th, 2013
Time	6:00 pm
Location	City Hall
Attendees	See sign-in sheets
Prepared	November 12, 2013
Prepared by	Drew Crumpton

**Purpose:** A public workshop was held for the citizens of Ward 3 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Those in attendance were given an overview of the system plan, and I introduced to the public involvement phase of the project. The following comments were recorded:

### Why Are You Here?

- Live in a community that provides few opportunities for kids
  - Edgecombe side of R.M.
  - Parks and facilities in poor condition
- More awareness of youth/teen workshop
- Community transformation grant (NCDH)
- River is under-utilized
  - Perception that it is not safe
- Here to learn about the process
- Parks in ward 3 are designed with more outdoor activities, and it has become difficult to involve children in these activities
  - How can we encourage the utilization of our parks system?
  - Reprogram parks to bring people together for a purpose
  - Incorporate parks into the transportation system
  - Relating parks to health and wellness issues
- Buck Leonard Park
  - Lighting/ outlets
  - Tennis Courts
  - Restrooms

### Questions/ Concerns/ Ideas

- Tobacco free parks
- Concerns over equity of new parks and plans to improve existing parks
- Will cemeteries be included in the process



- Numbering systems
- Park beautifications/improvements
- Theolonius Monk Park
  - Basketball courts need paving
  - Need more light in park
  - No sidewalk to the park
  - No handicapped parking
  - No handicapped facilities
  - No buffer zone around the track for protection
  - Need updated water fountain
  - No children rides
  - Baseball fields not marked
  - Need a tennis court
  - No parking spaces
  - Entrance to park in neighborhood driveway
  - Need another shelter
  - Lights needed around baseball field
  - No signage for park from the street
  - No light under the shelter
  - Apartment houses new park not safe
  - Signage in park outdated
  - Fence around the park needs to be replaced
  - Why is Marigold park so lacking
  - Marigold kids park surrounded by kids, but no park
- Other Issues
  - Safety Issues
  - Special needs
  - Does everyone know that the Imperial Arts Center and Children's Museum are part of the parks system?

## Summary and Common Themes

- Common Themes
  - Few opportunities for you and teens
  - Safety and lighting
  - Inadequate signage
  - Connectivity and transportation to parks
  - Health and wellness
  - Equity of parks
  - Overall poor quality and condition of parks
  - Lack of amenities such as restrooms and accessible facilities
- Facilities
  - Athletic fields

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- Tennis courts
- Greenways
- Community gardens
- Playgrounds
- Community centers
- Walking/ running tracks
- Museums
- Activities
  - Fitness and wellness
  - Senior adult
  - History/museums
  - Youth summer camps
  - Special events
- Funding opportunities
  - Partnerships with churches
  - General fund/ CIP
  - Grants
- Comparable Communities
  - Raleigh
  - Wilson
  - Atlanta
  - San Antonio





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## Meeting Notes

Subject	Rocky Mount Park System Master Plan - Ward 4 Workshop
Date	November 4th, 2013
Time	6:00 pm
Location	South Rocky Mount Community Center
Attendees	See sign-in sheets
Prepared	November 12, 2013
Prepared by	Drew Crumpton

**Purpose:** A public workshop was held for the citizens of Ward 4 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Those in attendance were given an overview of the system plan, and I introduced to the public involvement phase of the project. The following comments were recorded:

### Why Are You Here?

- To be engaged with the process
- How the process will be reflected in my neighborhood
- Better Understanding of local partnerships
  - Schools
  - Churches
  - Businesses

### Thoughts on South Rocky Mount Community Center

- Need upgrades to facility to improve accessibility and quality
- Ensure that resources are dispersed equitably
- How can we use Parks and Recreation to address other community issues?
  - Parks and Rec as an asset
  - Using this process to help with neighborhood revitalization
  - Addressing health issues
  - Promoting healthy living
- Provide virtual tours of comparable cities
- Safety and security for transportation to parks and facilities
- Affordability

### Questions/ Concerns/ Ideas

- How can the food economy be part of the plan?
- Is there an overall plan for improving educational opportunities
- Need to consider usage of parks and facilities



- Reasons for lack of use

### **Summary and Common Themes**

- Common Themes
  - Partnerships with schools, churches and local businesses
  - Safe and affordable transportation
  - Parks for neighborhood revitalization
  - Health issues and healthy living
  - Lack of park use
  - Engaging youth
- Facilities
  - Gymnasium
  - Playgrounds
  - Indoor pools
  - Restrooms
  - Small neighborhood parks
  - Walking/ running tracks
  - Picnic areas/ shelters
  - Community centers
- Activities
  - Fitness and wellness
  - Special events
  - Nature/outdoor
  - Family
- Funding
  - General Fund/CIP
  - Sales tax
  - Grants
  - Partnerships with schools, churches, business and developers



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## Meeting Notes

Subject	Rocky Mount Park System Master Plan - Ward 5 Workshop
Date	October 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2013
Time	6:00 pm
Location	Gateway Convention Center
Attendees	See sign-in sheets
Prepared	October 25, 2013
Prepared by	Drew Crumpton

**Purpose:** A public workshop was held for the citizens of Ward 5 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Those in attendance were given an overview of the system plan, and I introduced to the public involvement phase of the project. The following comments were recorded:

### Why Are You Here?

- Cemetery division
  - Potential ideas
- Recreational paths for transportation
- Identification and signage for trails
- Connectivity to trails and greenways
- Location and equity of recreation amenities and access
- Mountain bike trails
- Access to biking trails
- Bike Safety
- Areas with open streets
- Engaging youth and teens

### Summary and Common Themes

- Common Themes
  - Recreation connectivity and transportation
  - Signage
  - Equity of amenities and access



- Biking trails and trail safety
  - Engaging youth and teens
  - Improving tennis facilities
- Facilities
  - Greenway trails
  - Museums
  - Tennis courts
  - Small neighborhood parks
  - Walk/running tracks
- Activities
  - Fitness and wellness
  - Nature/outdoor
  - Tennis
  - Performing arts
  - Outdoor/ adventure recreation
- Funding
  - Grants
  - General Fund/ CIP
  - Partnerships with schools, churches, business, developers and community leaders
- Comparable communities
  - Raleigh
  - Greenville
  - Atlanta
  - Wilson
  - Tarboro
  - Carrboro
  - San Antonio
  -



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## Meeting Notes

Subject	Rocky Mount Park System Master Plan - Ward 6 Workshop
Date	November 7, 2013
Time	6:00 pm
Location	Winstead School
Attendees	See sign-in sheets
Prepared	November 12, 2013
Prepared by	Drew Crumpton

**Purpose:** A public workshop was held for the citizens of Ward 6 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Those in attendance were given an overview of the system plan, and I introduced to the public involvement phase of the project. The following comments were recorded:

### Why Are You Here?

- Lack of recreation facilities in the western part of the city
  - Community centers
  - Parks
  - Pools
- Want to continue growth and improvements in recreation facilities
- BBQ Park0 historic spring
  - Not in good condition
  - Litter
- Use athletic complex for informal games
- Restoration of historic buildings
- Live music venues, new development
- Reasons for people to spend time in Rocky Mount
- Family-oriented venues
- Informal music gatherings
  - Possibly at Farmer's Market / parks
- Ability to feed animals in parks
- Bigger push for arts exposures, especially in children
- Battle Park
  - Solicitation
  - Graffiti
- Is the best being done?
  - Swim lessons
  - Water aerobics
- Partnerships with school systems
- Integration of parks and schools



- Track and field

### Summary and Common Themes

- Common Themes
  - Lack of equity in parks system
  - Special events
  - Partnerships with schools
  - Family oriented parks and programs
- Facilities
  - Natural parks and preserves
  - Art Centers
  - Museums
  - Outdoor pools
  - Tennis courts
  - Small neighborhood parks
  - Walking/ running trails
- Activities
  - Tennis
  - Youth sports
  - Nature/ outdoor
  - History/ museums
  - Fitness and wellness
  - Performing arts
- Funding
  - Grants
  - User Fees
  - Partnerships with schools, churches, businesses and developers
- Comparable Communities
  - Raleigh
  - Cary
  - Charlotte
  -



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## Meeting Notes

Subject	Rocky Mount Park System Master Plan - Ward 7 Workshop
Date	October 29 <sup>nd</sup> , 2013
Time	6:00 pm
Location	Northgreen Golf Club
Attendees	See sign-in sheets
Prepared	November 1, 2013
Prepared by	Drew Crumpton

**Purpose:** A public workshop was held for the citizens of Ward 7 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Those in attendance were given an overview of the system plan, and I introduced to the public involvement phase of the project. The following comments were recorded:

### Why Are You Here?

- Improving quality of life, as well as awareness of the city amenities
- Build on positive experiences with athletic facilities
- Increase awareness of parks and programs
- Improve availability of marketing materials
- Information display boards for programs and events
- Voids in the area; lack of trail and greenway access
- Broader demographics considered in promotions

### Questions/Concerns/Ideas

- Planning for natural disasters
- Plans to use vacant buildings
- Competition over funding
- Water park
- Gambling revenues?
- Emergency and safety response
- Senior sports (softball)
- Partnerships – Northgreen C.C.
- Senior center use and accreditation
- Consider the times facilities are used and how vacant times can be filled



## Summary and Common Themes

- Common Themes
  - Increase marketing and awareness
  - Addressing voids in access
  - Greenway and bike connectivity
  - Waterpark
  - Build on success of athletic facilities
  - Safety
  - Partnerships
- Facilities
  - Natural parks and preserves
  - Athletic fields
  - Tennis courts
  - Outdoor pools
  - Museum/ planetarium
  - Art centers
- Activities
  - Youth sports
  - Performing arts
  - Tennis
  - Natural/ outdoor
  - Outdoor/ adventure recreation
- Funding
  - Grants
  - General Fund/ CIP
  - User Fees
  - General Obligation Bonds
  - Revenue Bonds
  - Partnership with schools, churches, businesses and developers



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## Meeting Notes

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Subject	City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Master Plan – City Council Project Update
Date	March 27, 2014
Time	3:00 pm – 5:30 pm
Location	<b>Durham Convention Center</b>

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**Purpose:** A project update presentation was provided to the City of Rocky Mount City Council during their annual retreat in Durham, NC. The presentation updated Council members on the Master Plan process, public participation, and needs and priorities assessment results. The following were general comments made by City Council members.

### Rocky Mount City Council Meeting Notes:

- 1) Introduction by Kelvin Yarrell, Director of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation, including department overview and updates
- 2) Master Plan Update Presentation given by Nick Kuhn (AECOM)
  - Comments on needs and priorities
    - Equity of parks in new areas of town – increased demand
    - Inner-city programming for youth; summer camps
    - Update park facilities, play areas
    - Better maintenance of existing parks
    - Expansion of Tar River Trail
      - Inclusion of Cemetery
    - Neighborhood based events in parks
    - Outdoor theater performances
    - Mitigating inappropriate use of parks
    - Lighting or lack of lighting
    - Vegetation that can be places to hide
  - Council comment to analysis the geocoded results for 'Security is insufficient' and meet with Police Department to see if there are corresponding areas with documented crime
  - Preliminary Visioning Topics
    - People want neighborhood events in parks, but the costs are more than people are willing to pay
- 3) Meeting concluded with Nick Kuhn and Kelvin Yarrell thanking the council and notifying them of upcoming visioning events.





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## Meeting Notes

Subject	City of Rocky Mount Visioning Workshop
Date	April 16 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2014
Time	Varies
Location	Imperial Center

**Purpose:** City of Rocky Mount held a two-day visioning workshop to discuss ideas about the future of the Rocky Parks and Recreation system. The workshop was attended by city staff and members of the community. The following is a summary of the ideas and concepts that were presented and discussed during this session.

### City of Rocky Mount Potential Subsystems:

1. Neighborhood and Community Parks
2. Community Centers and Aquatic Facilities
3. Streets, Trails and Transit
4. Regional Park, Reservoir Park, and other large venues
5. Arts, Culture and Museums
6. Greenways and Natural Areas

### Notes on Subsystems and Concepts:

1. Neighborhood and Community Parks
  - Improve/change
    - Updating equipment
    - Raise standards
    - Adding equipment
  - Safety
    - Collaboration with police
  - Structured activities in flexible open space
  - Re-evaluate park locations
    - 10 parks (Sycamore, Boone St., Marigold, Meadowbrook)
    - 1-2 Regional parks in less dense areas
  - Maintenance plan
    - How to reallocate land?
    - How to manage with current staff?
  - Look at non-traditional parks and population growth
  - Amenity placements at parks and use (amphitheater)
  - Citizen stakeholders
    - Adopt a park: citizens to take interest in your community parks
  - **Comments on parks:**
    - Pilot senior parks, with more accessible parks
    - Larger, drive to parks instead of smaller neighborhood parks
    - Make streets more walkable, bike friendly
      - Complete streets
      - 2-way streets



## Community Centers / Aquatics

- Existing Centers: South Rocky Mount, Booker T. Washington, Senior Center
- Strategic location of 5-7 community centers
- Connected by trails
- Pools connected to 3 community centers
- Strong focus on education, health, fitness
- Partnerships (Hospital, Nash, Community College, Red Cross, AARP)
- Adequately staff
- Community Gardens at schools to promote healthy living
- Spray parks/lots
- LEED certified/ Environmental
- Completely wired/technology
- Cameras, well lit, utilization of PALS program to maintain safe environment
- Community group/adopt-a-center involved/invested in center
- Programs target youth, adult, seniors at all sites
- Fitness rooms/gyms/open space
- Utilize for summer camps, afterschool daycare
- Joint use agreement with schools

## Multi-purpose, Regional Events Venues

- Ideal location on I-64 and I-95
- Open to different ages and a culturally diverse population
- Water park
- Cultural festivals
- Multipurpose event center
- Park catering to large events, i.e. family reunions
- Attractive to game fishing, etc.
- Underserved communities should be considered to continue gold medal status
- Regional park system
  - Tar river paddle trail
  - Walking trail
  - Connecting parks

## River Falls Park (Regional Idea)

- Existing/proposed venues:
  - Imperial Arts Center
  - R.M. Sports Complex
  - Mill Historic Village
  - Tar River Trail
  - The Cotton Mill
  - City Lake
  - Birthplace of BBQ
  - Sunset Family Park

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- MLK Family Park
- Battle Nature Preserve
- River Research Center
- Hotel and Conference Center
- Adventure Park and Playground

### **Trails/Streets/Transit**

- Paved city-wide trail program that connects every major neighborhood
- Trail program promoting healthy lifestyle and active living
- Providing scenic views of our natural resources
- Youth conservation corp. that helps maintain system
- Safe routes to schools/shopping
- Bicycling routes/running routes for races
- Branded signature event
- Use utility corridors and railroad easements
- Utilizing ROW of railroads to expand for trails
- Development of park ranger program
- Repave parts of the greenway
- Sustainable strategy for paving greenways
- Bird or natural safety
- Provide public transit stops at Greenway trail heads
- Bicycle rental or checkout
- Neighborhood revitalization
- Connect downtown (Rails to Trails)
- Walker program on trail
- Connect to NC thread trail (East of 95)
- More towards bike-friendly city

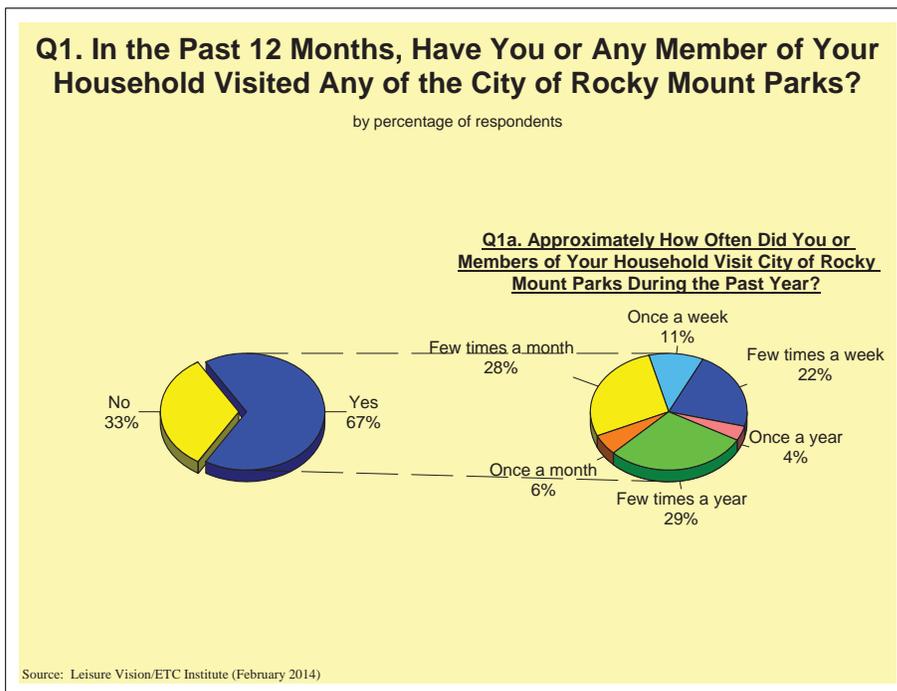
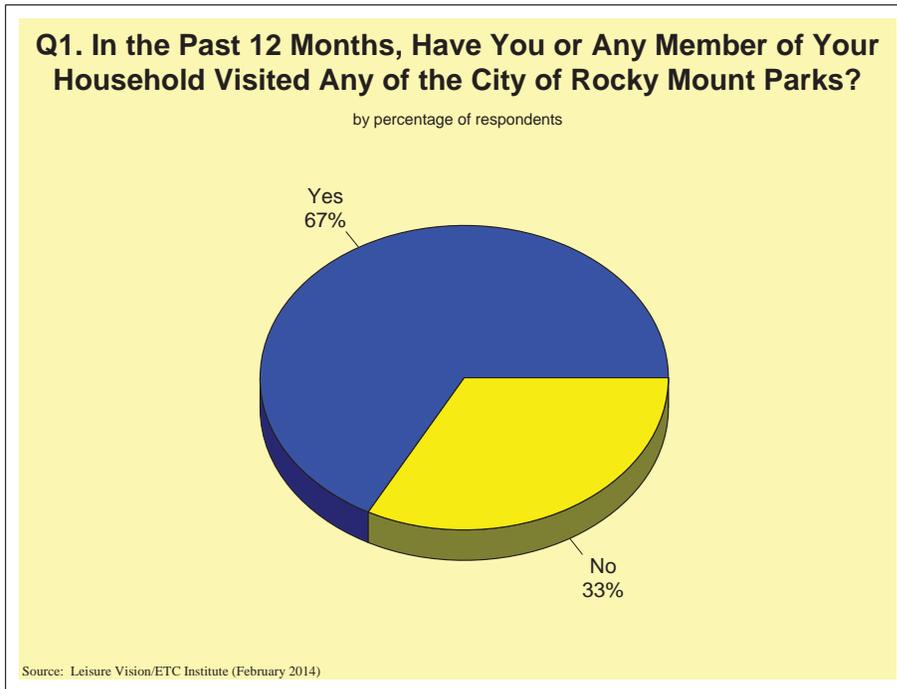
### **Cultural Resources**

- More representation?
  - Recognition
  - Marketing
  - Create a culture
- Created a system of ease of use/accessibility
- Satellite sites
  - Pop ups/trucks
  - Park
- Online/social media
- Presence in new community centers and facilities
- Education of public
  - How to participate
  - Growth
  - School programs

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- Partner
- Field Trip
- Collaborative Classes (Partnership)
- Complete original design for I.C.
- Full Funding (Operation budget)
- Debt paid off
- Empowered staff
- Tools to provide excellence
- Fully invested community
- Full integration of technology, systems and processes

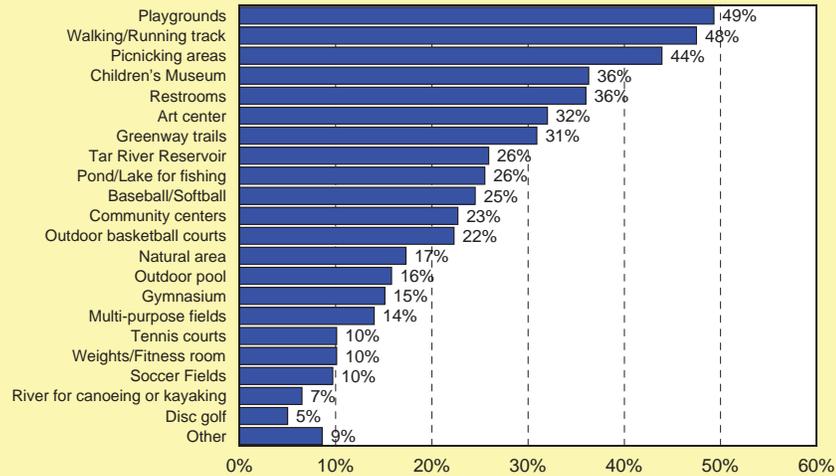
## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey



## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

### Q1b. City of Rocky Mount Recreation Facilities That Households Have Used or Visited in City of Rocky Mount Parks Over the Past 12 Months

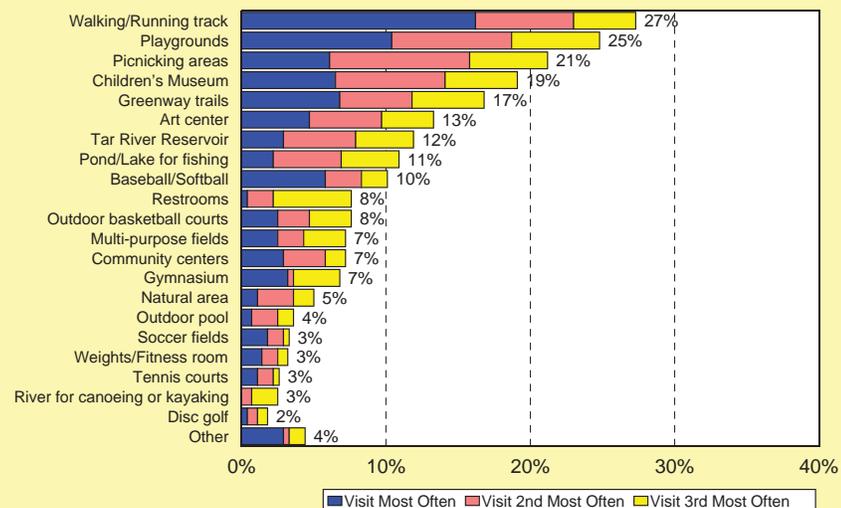
by percentage of households that have visited City of Rocky Mount parks in the past 12 months (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (February 2014)

### Q1c. City of Rocky Mount Recreation Facilities That Households Visit Most Often

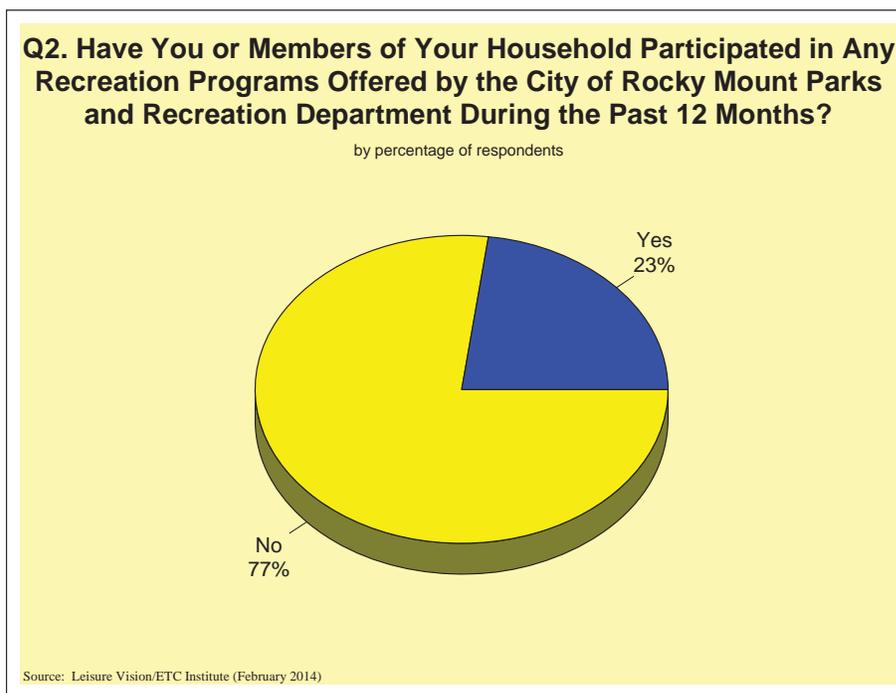
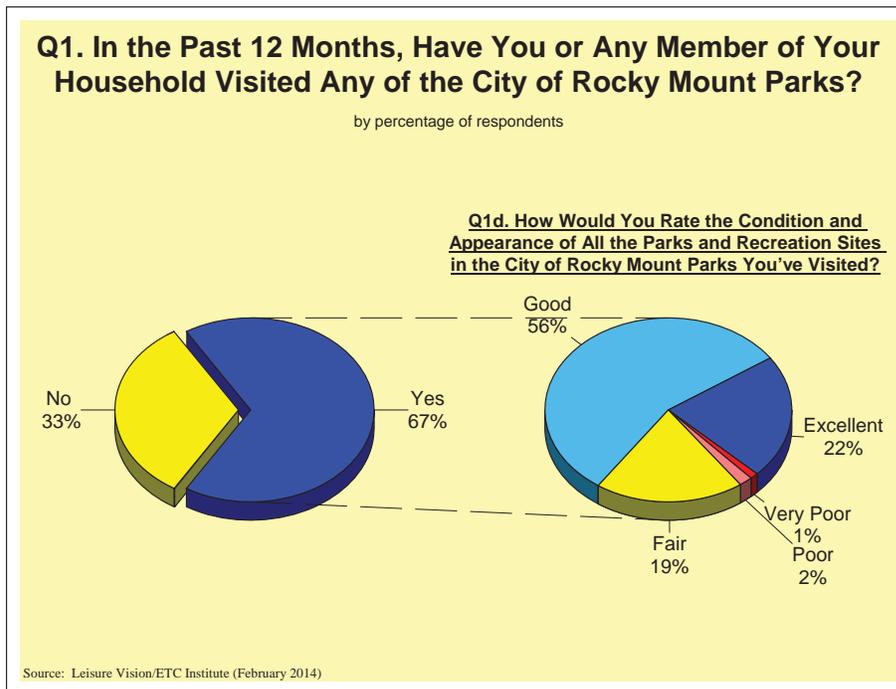
by percentage of households that have visited City of Rocky Mount parks in the past 12 months (sum of top 3 choices)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (February 2014)

# Appendix

## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

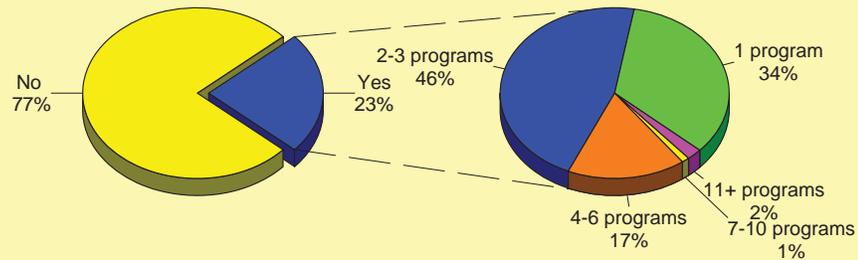


## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

### Q2. Have You or Members of Your Household Participated in Any Recreation Programs Offered by the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department During the Past 12 Months?

by percentage of respondents

#### Q2a. How Many Different Recreation Programs Offered by the Rocky Mount Parks & Recreation Dept. Has Your Household Participated in Over the Past 12 Months?



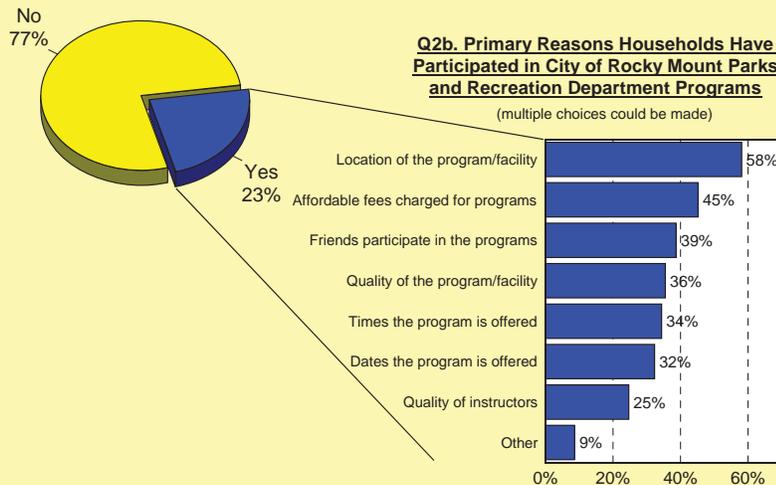
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (February 2014)

### Q2. Have You or Members of Your Household Participated in Any Recreation Programs Offered by the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department During the Past 12 Months?

by percentage of respondents

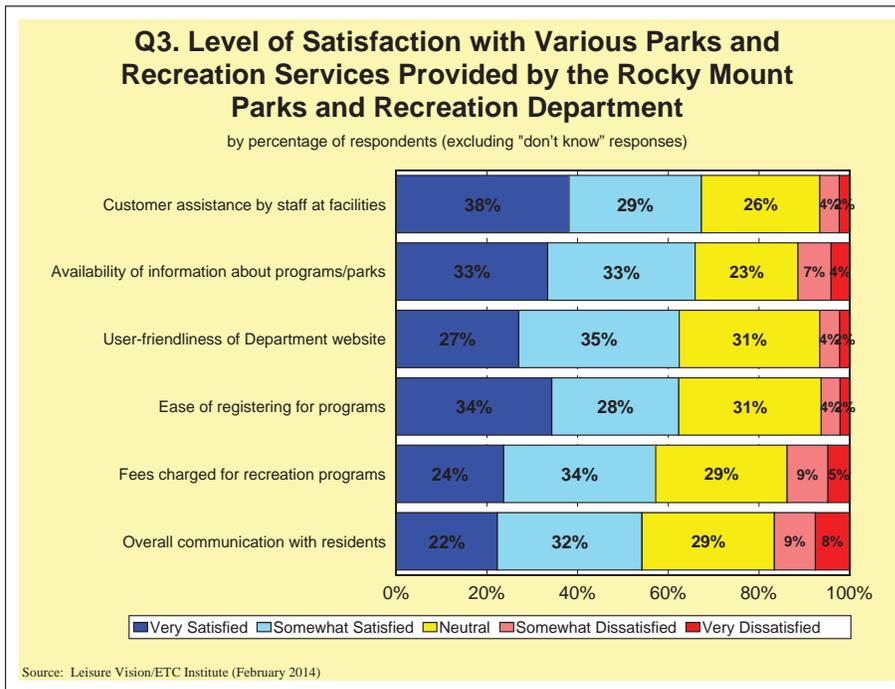
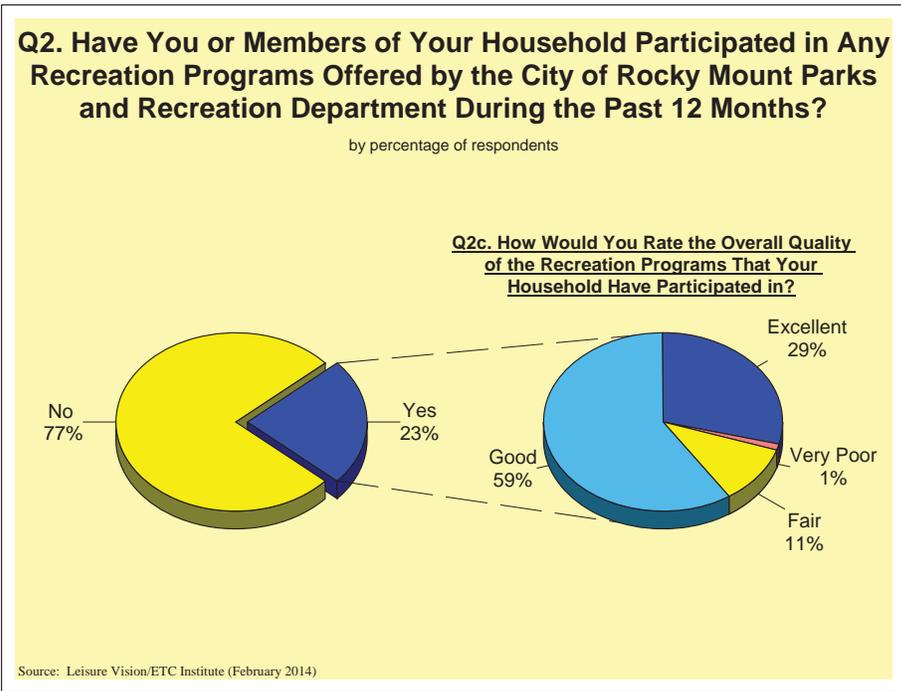
#### Q2b. Primary Reasons Households Have Participated in City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department Programs

(multiple choices could be made)

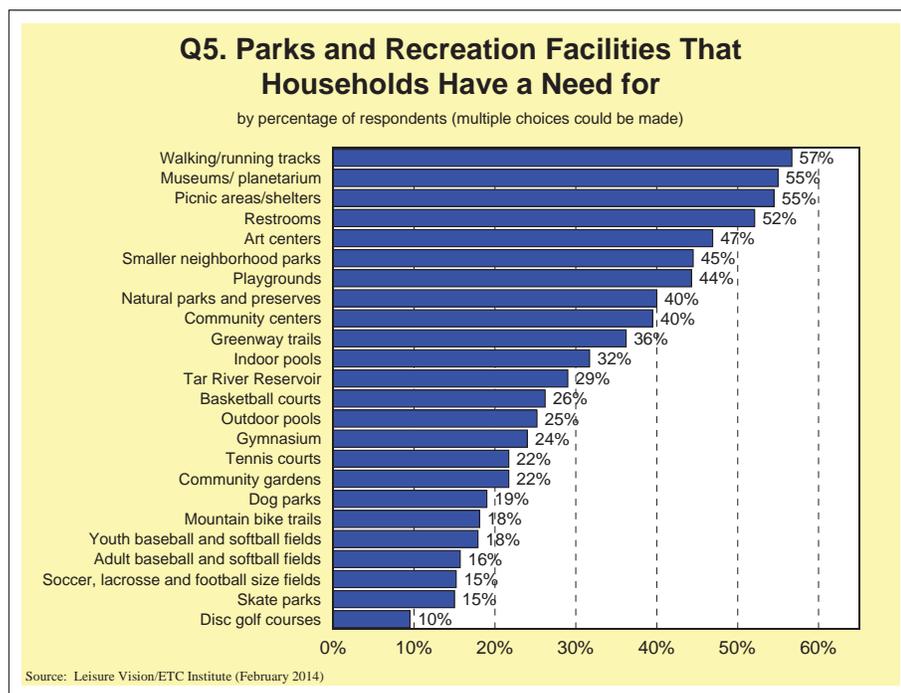
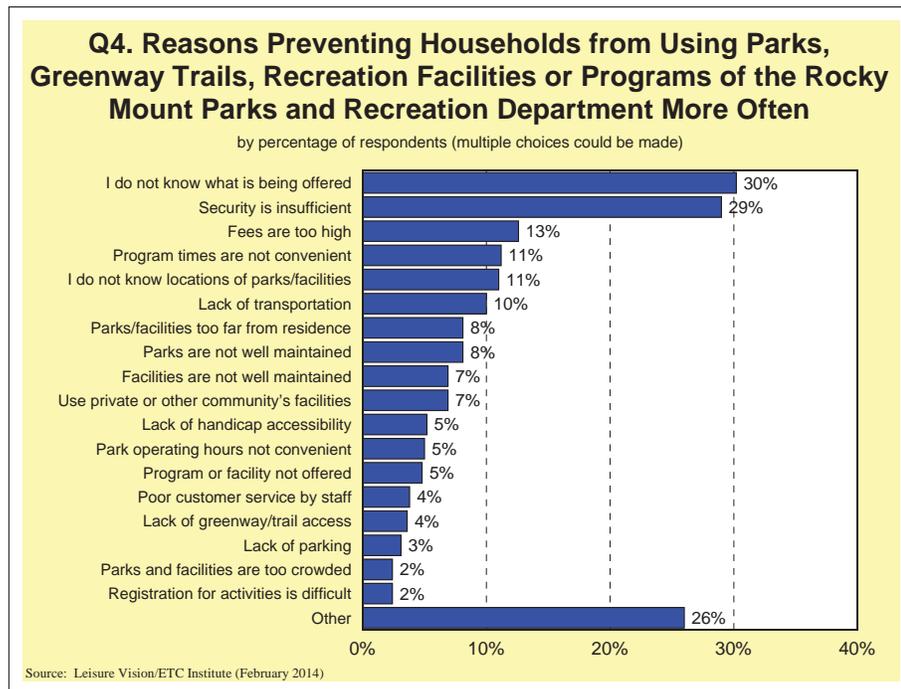


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (February 2014)

## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

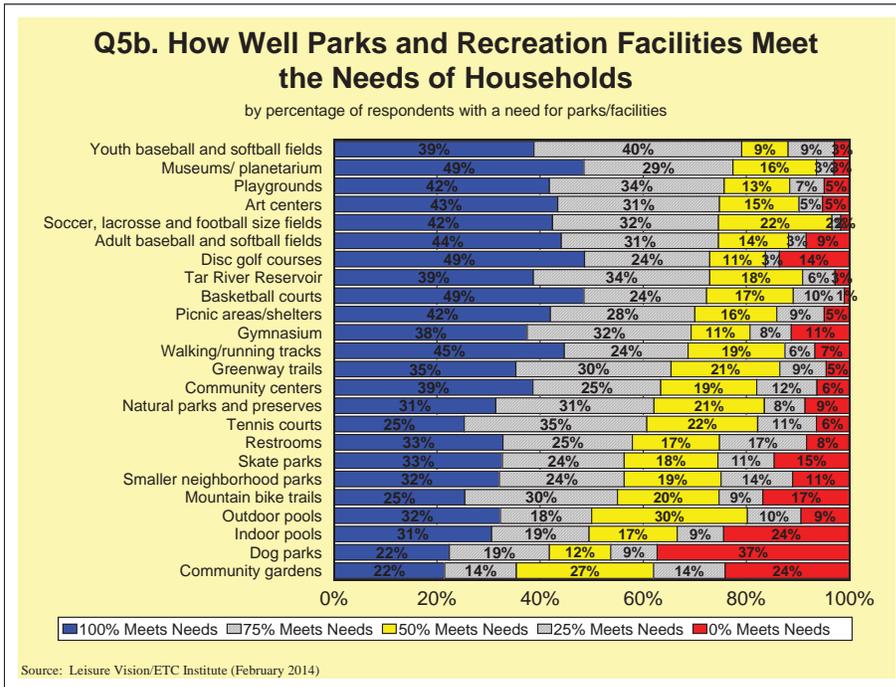
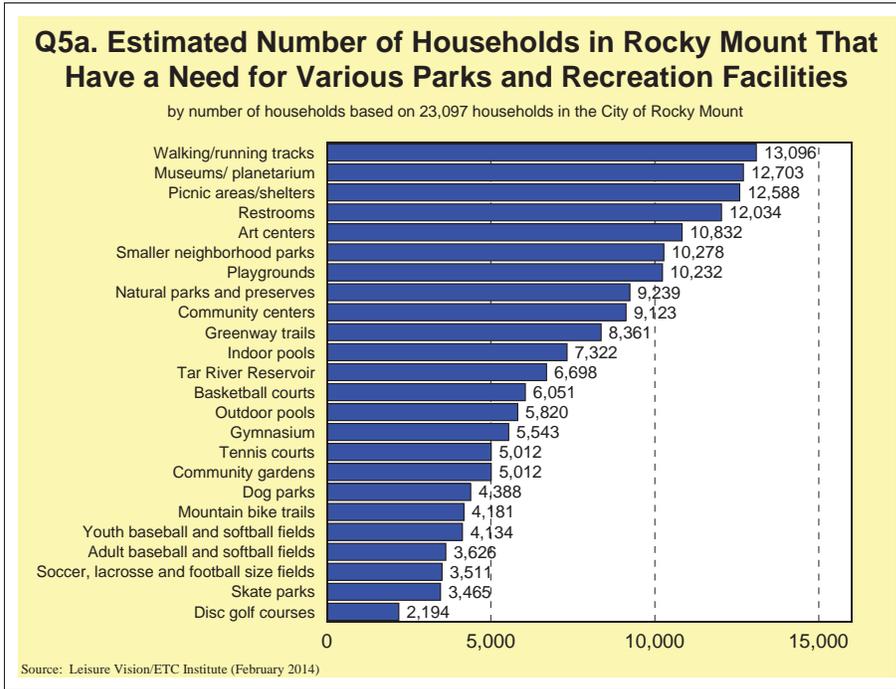


## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey



# Appendix

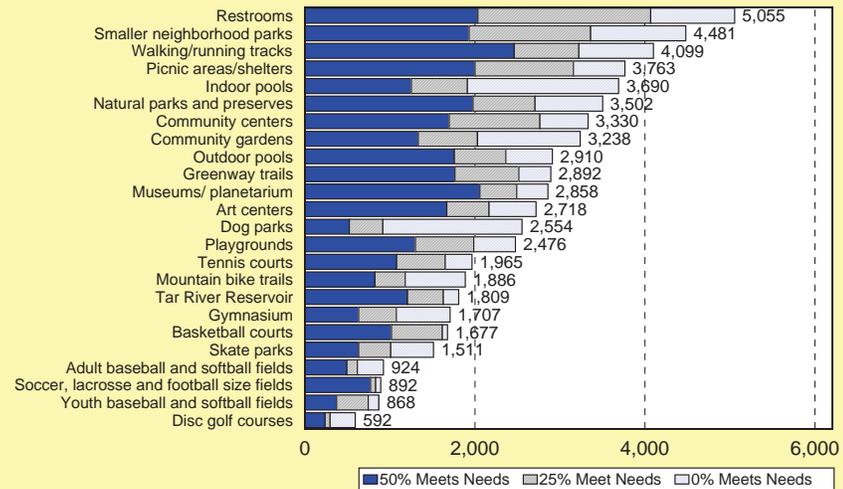
## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey



## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

### Q5c. Estimated Number of Households in Rocky Mount Whose Needs for Parks and Recreation Facilities Are Only Being 50% Met or Less

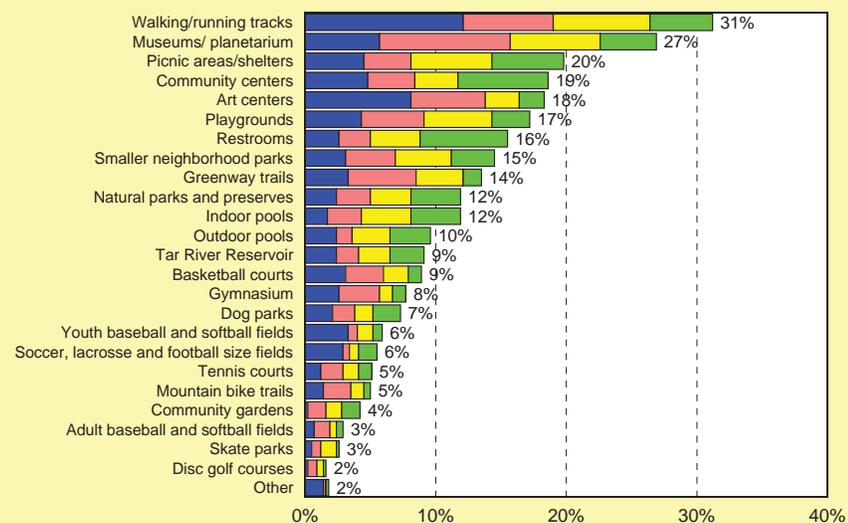
by number of households based on 23,097 households in the City of Rocky Mount



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (February 2014)

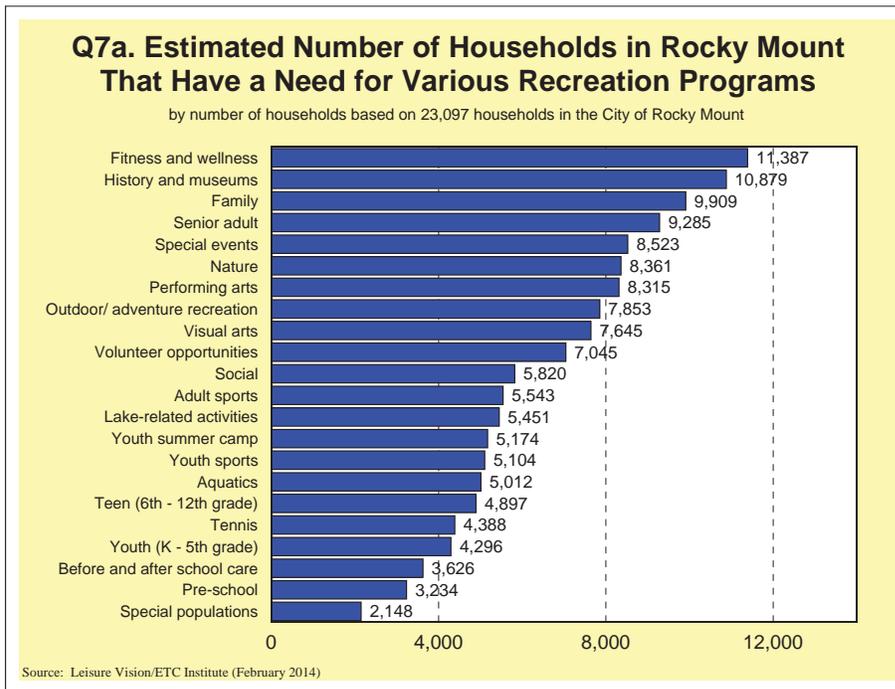
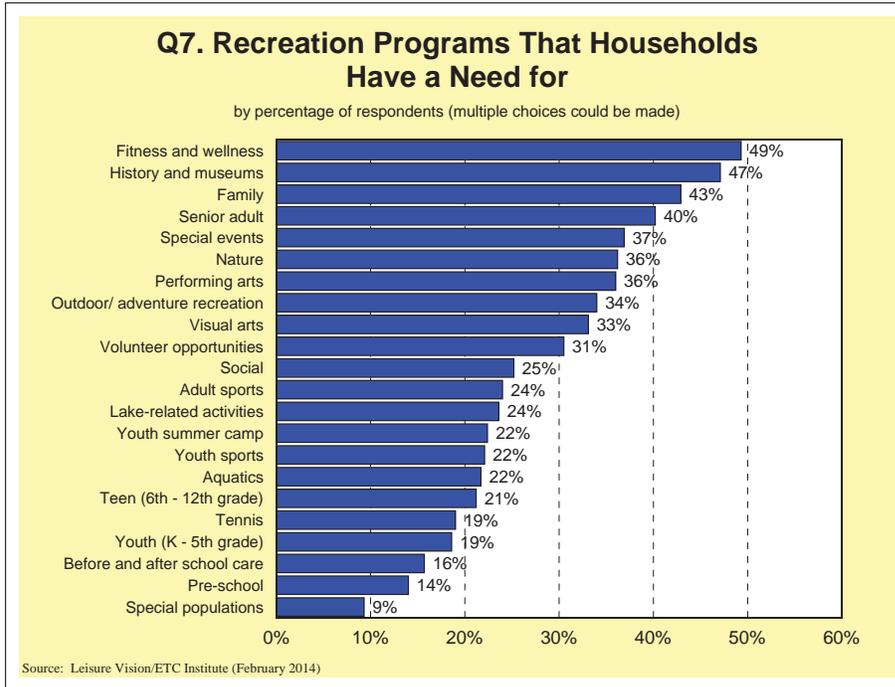
### Q6. Parks and Facilities That Are Most Important to Households

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices

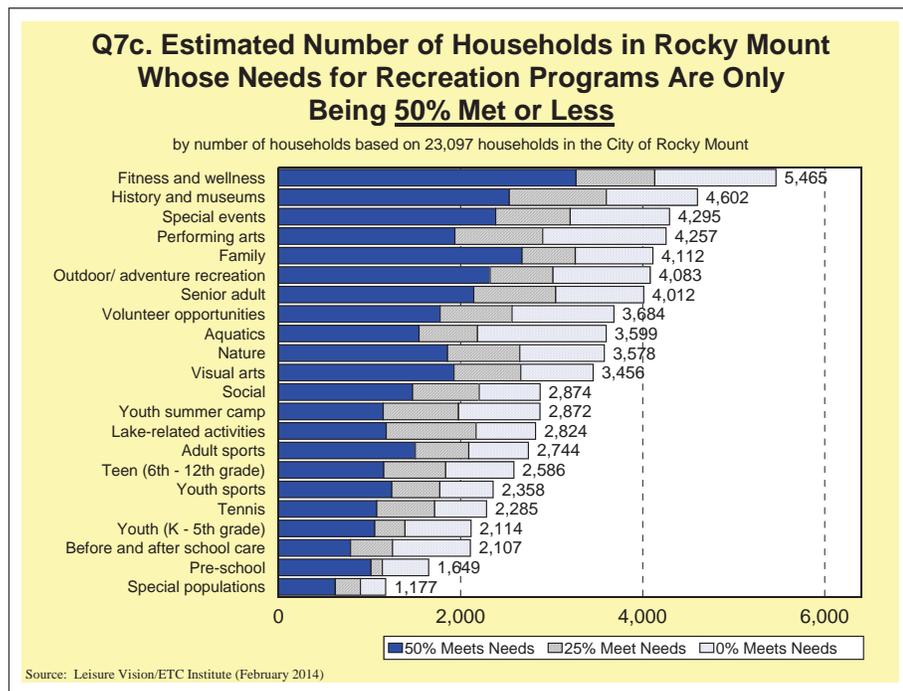
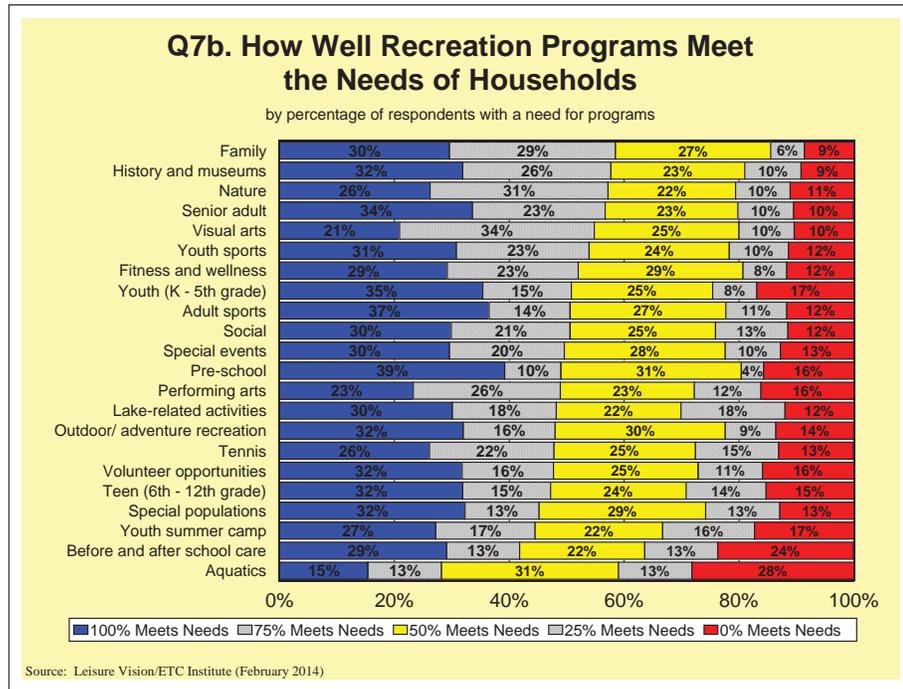


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (February 2014)

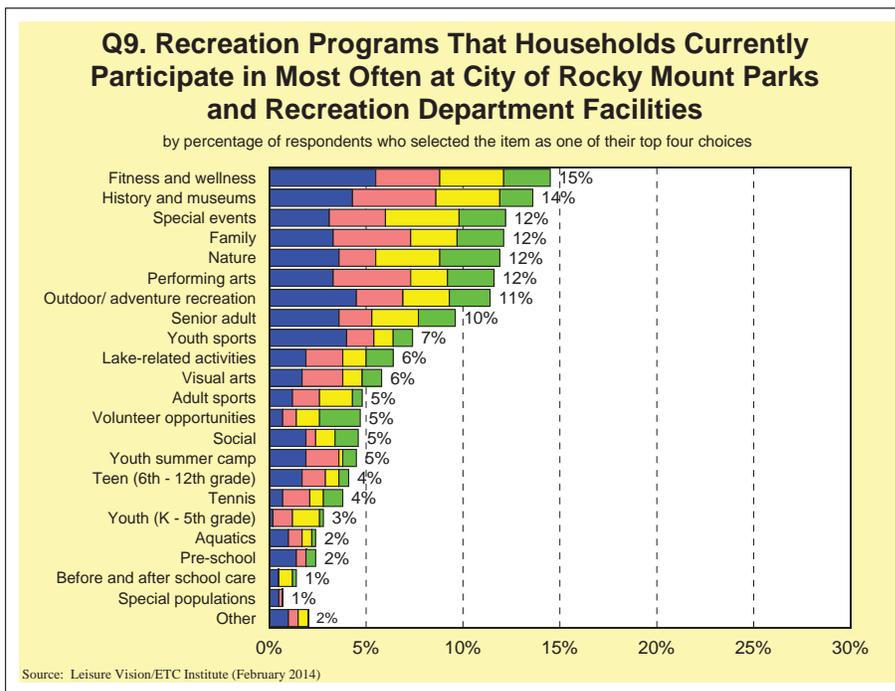
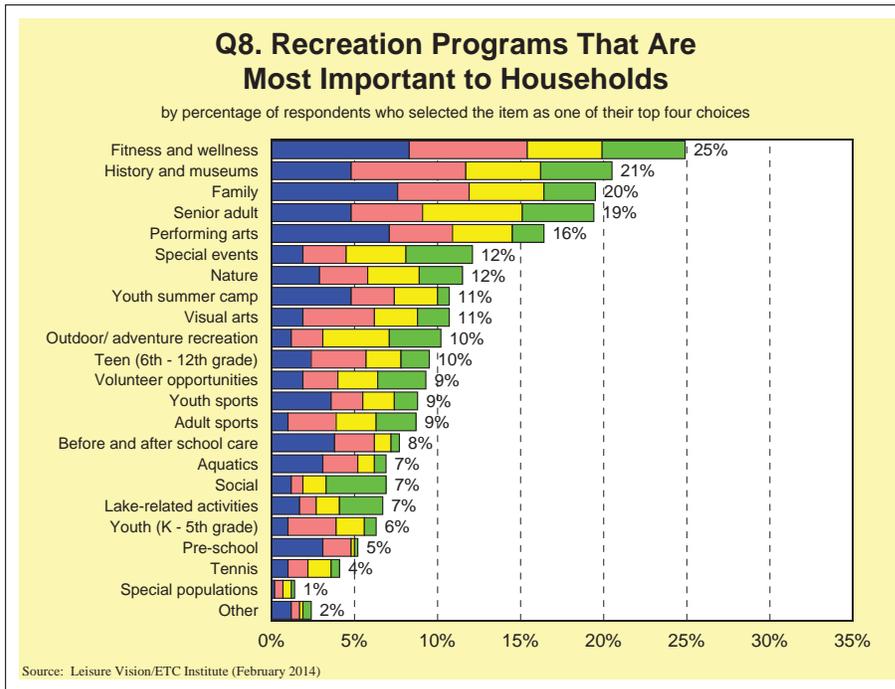
## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey



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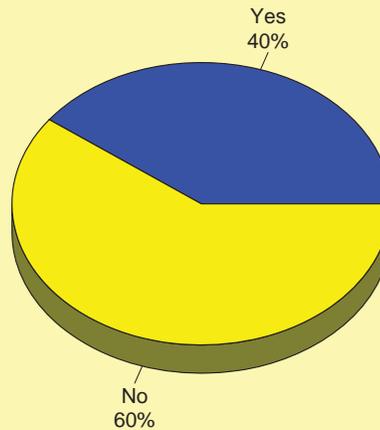
## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey



## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

### Q10. Have You or Members of Your Household Visited the Children's Museum During the Past Year?

by percentage of respondents

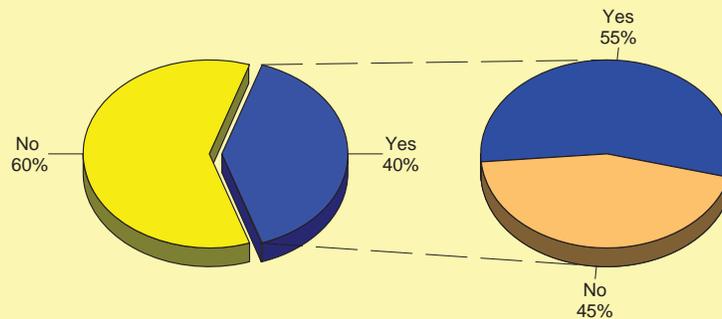


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (February 2014)

### Q10. Have You or Members of Your Household Visited the Children's Museum During the Past Year?

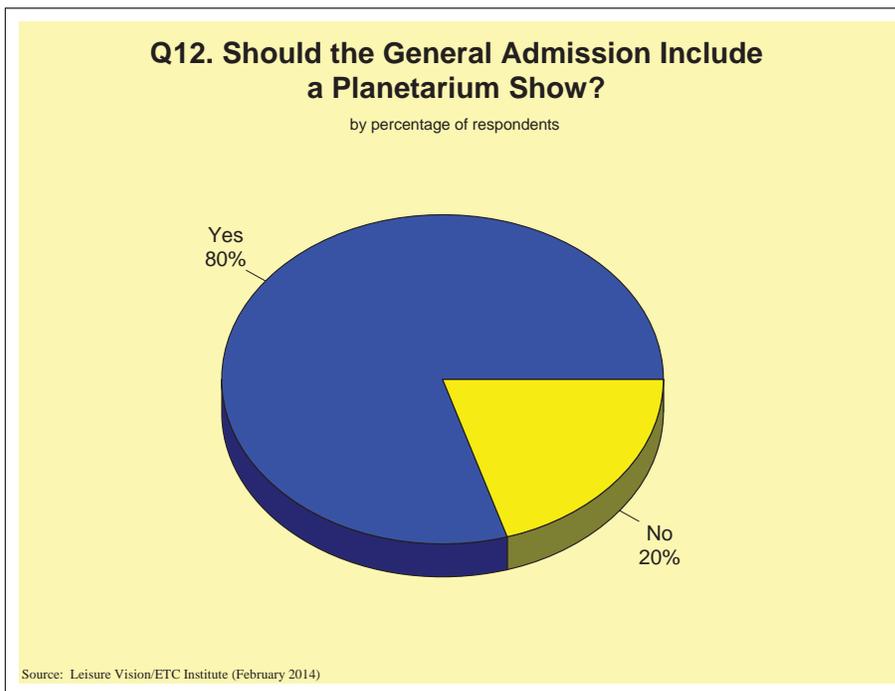
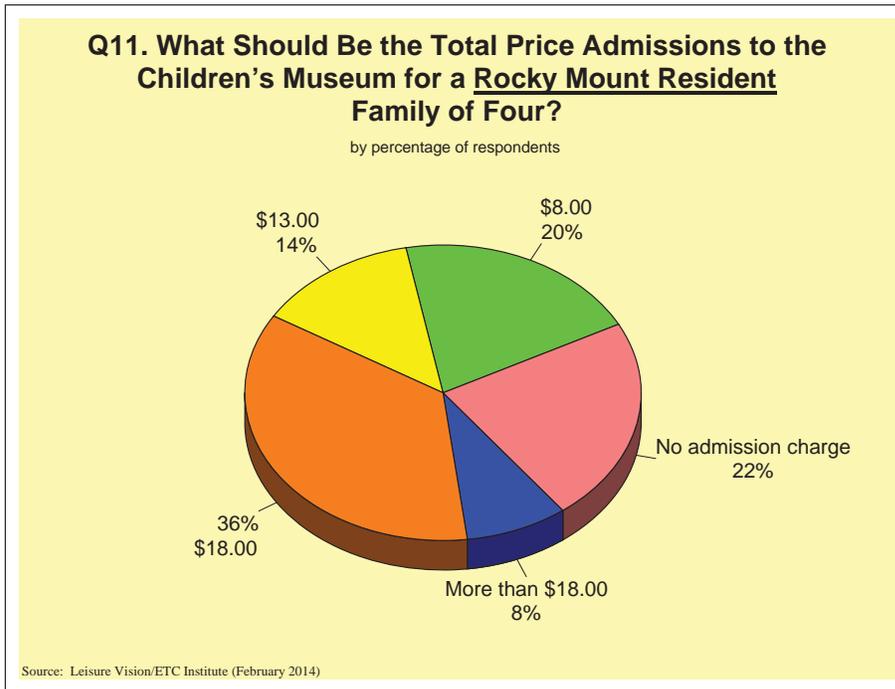
by percentage of respondents

#### Q10a. Did You or Members of Your Household Go to the Planetarium Show on Any of Your Visits?



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (February 2014)

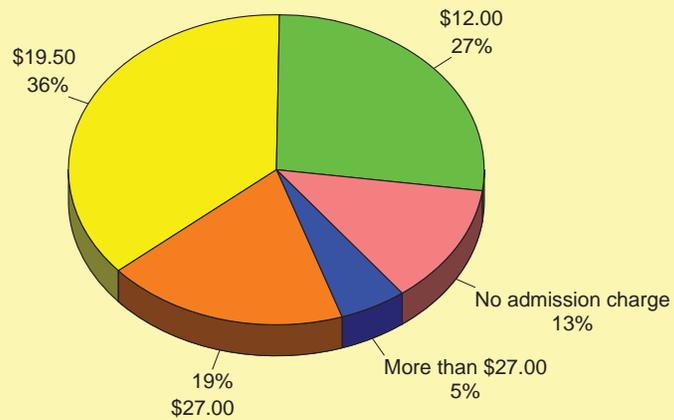
## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey



## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

### Q13. What Should Be the Total Price of Admission to the Children's Museum for a Non-Resident Family of Four?

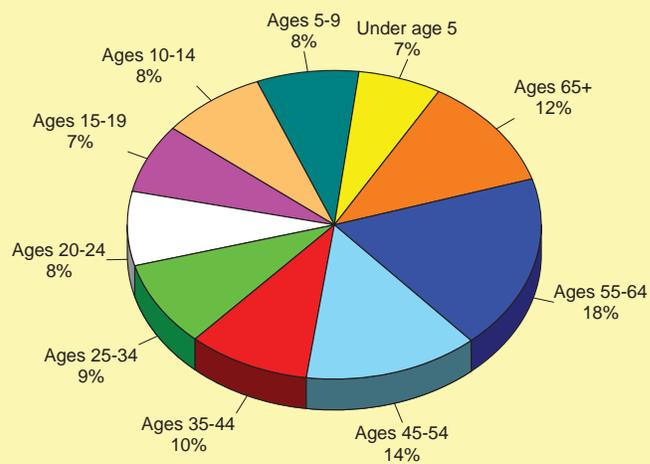
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (February 2014)

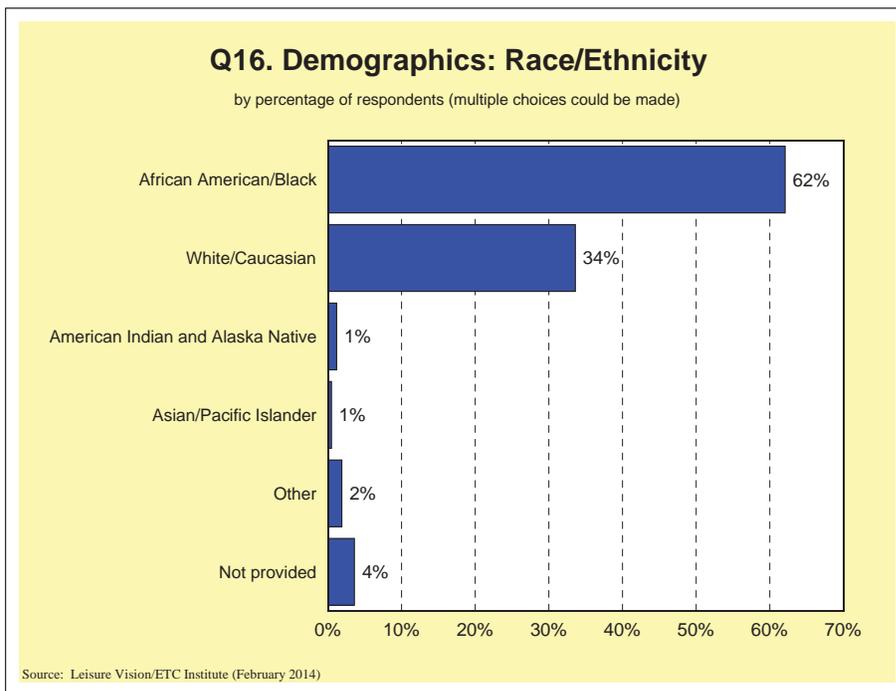
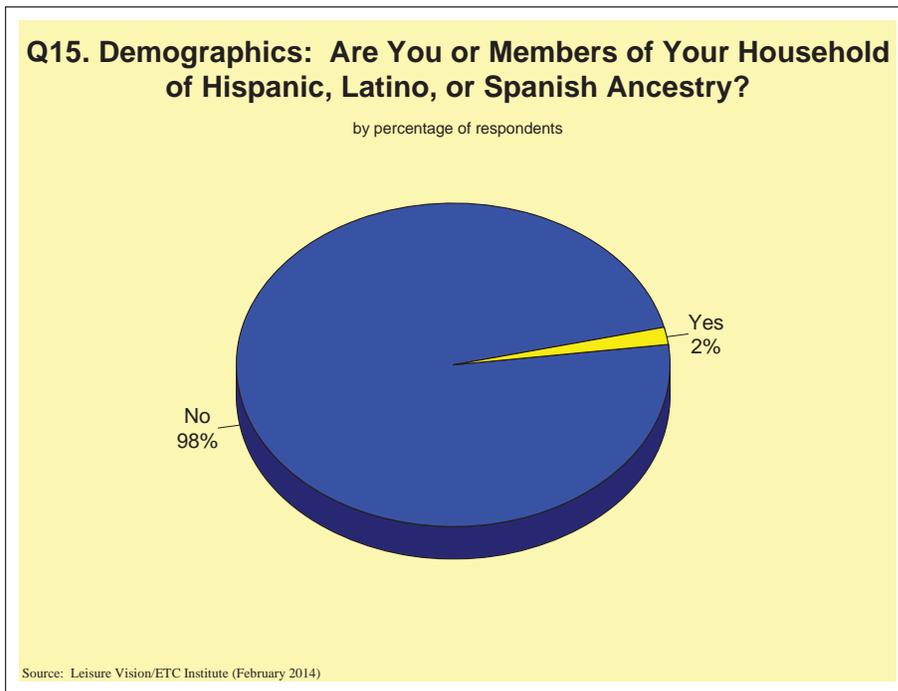
### Q14. Demographics: Ages of People in Household

by percentage of household occupants

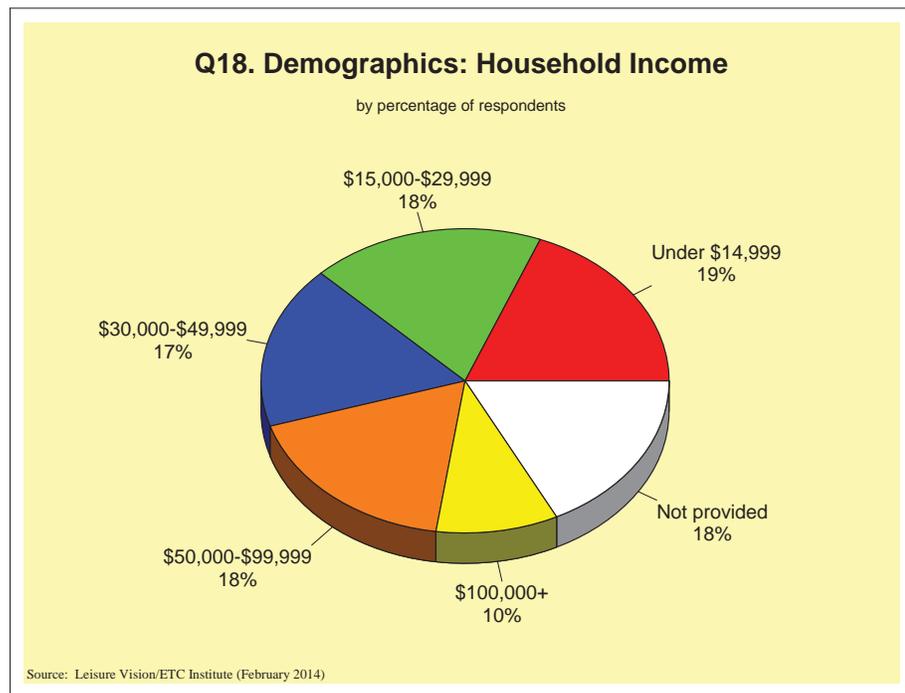
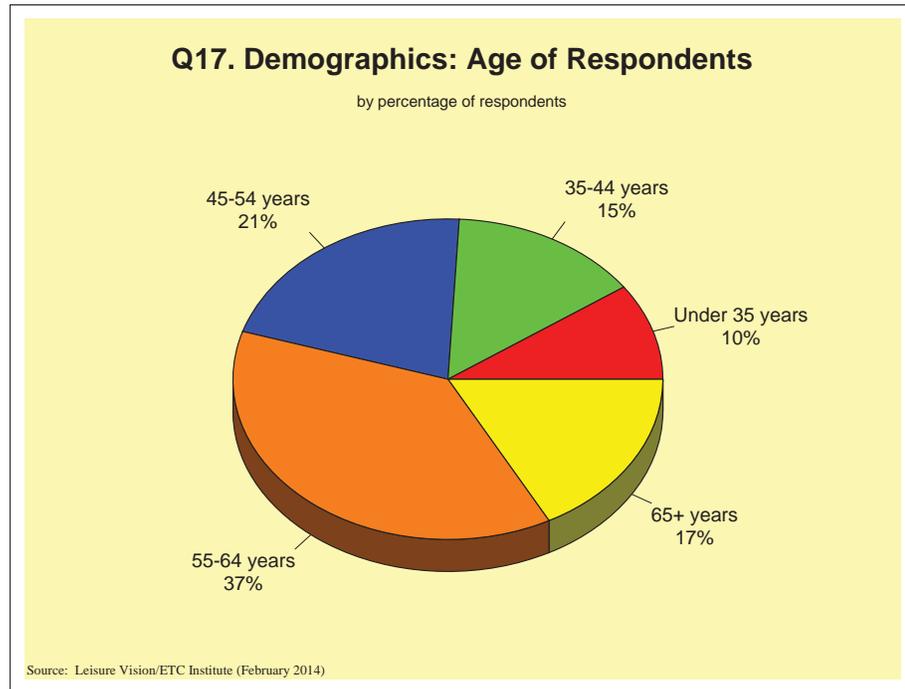


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (February 2014)

## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey



## City of Rocky Mount 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey



# Appendix



*A Few Minutes of Your Time Will Help Make the City of Rocky Mount a Better Place to Live, Work and Play!*

Dear City of Rocky Mount Resident:

***Your response to the enclosed survey is extremely important...***

The City of Rocky Mount is conducting a Community Interest and Opinion Survey as part of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that will help establish priorities for the future development and delivery of parks, trails, recreation facilities, programs and services within the community. Your household was one of a limited number selected at random to receive this survey, therefore, it is very important that you participate.

***We appreciate your time...***

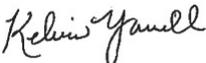
We realize that this survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete, but each question is important. The time you invest in completing this survey will aid the City of Rocky Mount in taking a resident-driven approach to making decisions that will enrich the future of our community and positively affect the lives of its residents. To find out more about the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Master Plan or opportunities to participate visit [www.rockymountnc.gov/parks](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/parks).

***Please complete and return your survey within the next two weeks...***

We have selected Leisure Vision/ETC Institute, an independent consulting company, as our partner to administer this survey. They will compile the data received and present the results to the City and public. **Your responses will remain confidential.** Please return your completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope addressed to ETC Institute, 725 W. Frontier Circle, Olathe, KS 66061.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kelvin Yarrell, Director for the City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department at [kelvin.yarrell@rockymountnc.gov](mailto:kelvin.yarrell@rockymountnc.gov). The Community Interest and Opinion Survey is a tool that will benefit all City of Rocky Mount residents. Please take this opportunity to let your voice be heard!

Sincerely,

  
Kelvin Yarrell, Director  
City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department

Si usted tiene preguntas or no habla ingles, por favor llame al 1-888-801-5368 y habla con Terry. Gracias.

**Community Interest and Opinion Survey: *Let your voice be heard today!***

The City of Rocky Mount would like your input to help determine parks, greenways, trails, open space and recreation priorities for our community. **This survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete.** When you are finished, please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid, return-reply envelope. We greatly appreciate your time and efforts to improve the quality of life in the City of Rocky Mount.

**1. In the past 12 months, have you or any members of your household visited any of the City of Rocky Mount Parks?**

- \_\_\_(1) Yes (please answer Questions #1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d)
- \_\_\_(2) No (please skip to Question #2)

**1a. Approximately how often did you or members of your household visit City of Rocky Mount parks during the past year?**

- \_\_\_(1) Few times a week
- \_\_\_(2) Once a week
- \_\_\_(3) Few times a month
- \_\_\_(4) Once a month
- \_\_\_(5) Few times a year
- \_\_\_(6) Once a year
- \_\_\_(9) Don't know

**1b. From the following list, please check ALL the City of Rocky Mount recreation facilities you or members of your household have used or visited in City of Rocky Mount parks over the past 12 months.**

- \_\_\_(01) Gymnasium
- \_\_\_(02) Children's Museum
- \_\_\_(03) Baseball/softball
- \_\_\_(04) Greenway trails
- \_\_\_(05) Art center
- \_\_\_(06) Tennis courts
- \_\_\_(07) Outdoor basketball courts
- \_\_\_(08) Walking/ running track
- \_\_\_(09) Outdoor pool
- \_\_\_(10) Multi-purpose fields
- \_\_\_(11) Picnicking areas
- \_\_\_(12) Playgrounds
- \_\_\_(13) Tar River Reservoir
- \_\_\_(14) Soccer Fields
- \_\_\_(15) Restrooms
- \_\_\_(16) Community centers
- \_\_\_(17) Weights/ Fitness room
- \_\_\_(18) Pond/ Lake for fishing
- \_\_\_(19) Natural area
- \_\_\_(20) River for canoeing or kayaking
- \_\_\_(21) Disc golf
- \_\_\_(22) Other:\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_(23) None - we do not use any recreation facilities

**1c. Which THREE of the parks and recreation facilities listed in Question #1b do you and members of your household visit the most often?** [Please write in the numbers below for your 1st, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices using the numbers in Question #1b above, or circle 'NONE'.]

_____ Most Often	_____ 2 <sup>nd</sup> Most Often	_____ 3 <sup>rd</sup> Most Often	NONE
------------------------	--	--	------

**1d. Overall, how would you rate the condition and appearance of ALL the parks and recreation sites in the City of Rocky Mount parks you have visited?**

- \_\_\_(1) Excellent
- \_\_\_(2) Good
- \_\_\_(3) Fair
- \_\_\_(4) Poor
- \_\_\_(5) Very Poor



5. Please indicate if **YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD** has a need for each of the parks and recreation facilities listed below by circling the YES or NO next to the park/facility.

If YES, please rate ALL the following parks and recreation FACILITIES of this type in the City of Rocky Mount on a scale of 5 to 1, where 5 means “100% Meets Needs” and 1 means “Does Not Meet Needs” of your household.

Type of Facility	Do You Have a Need for this Facility?		If YES You Have a Need, How Well Are Your Needs Being Met?				
	Yes	No	100% Met	75% Met	50% Met	25% Met	0% Met
A. Soccer, lacrosse and football size fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
B. Youth baseball and softball fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
C. Adult baseball and softball fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
D. Mountain bike trails	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
E. Tennis courts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
F. Greenway trails	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
G. Dog parks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
H. Outdoor pools	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
I. Gymnasium	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
J. Basketball courts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
K. Community gardens	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
L. Skate parks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
M. Art centers	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
N. Museums/ planetarium	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
O. Natural parks and preserves	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
P. Disc golf courses	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
Q. Walking/running tracks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
R. Smaller neighborhood parks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
S. Picnic areas/shelters	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
T. Playgrounds	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
U. Indoor pools	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
V. Community centers	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
W. Restrooms	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
X. Tar River Reservoir	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
Y. Other: _____	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1

6. Which **FOUR** of the facilities from the list in Question #5 are **MOST IMPORTANT** for the Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department to provide for your household? [Using the letters in the left hand column of Question #5 above, please write in the letters below for your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> choices, or circle ‘NONE’.]

1<sup>st</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 4<sup>th</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ NONE

# Appendix

7. Please indicate if **YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD** has a need for each of the recreation programs listed below by circling the YES or NO next to the recreation program.

If YES, please rate the following recreation **ACTIVITIES** on a scale of 5 to 1, where 5 means “100% Meets Needs” and 1 means “Does Not Meet Needs” of your household.

Type of Activity	Do You Have a Need for this Activity?		If YES You Have a Need, How Well Are Your Needs Being Met?				
	Yes	No	100% Met	75% Met	50% Met	25% Met	0% Met
A. Aquatics	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
B. Pre-school	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
C. Before and after school care	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
D. Youth summer camp	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
E. Youth sports	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
F. Performing arts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
G. Visual arts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
H. History and museums	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
I. Youth (K – 5 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
J. Teen (6 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
K. Nature	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
L. Tennis	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
M. Family	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
N. Fitness and wellness	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
O. Senior adult	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
P. Adult sports	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
Q. Special populations	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
R. Special events	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
S. Volunteer opportunities	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
T. Lake-related activities	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
U. Outdoor/ adventure recreation	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
V. Social	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
W. Other: _____	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1

8. Which **FOUR** of the activities from the list in Question #7 are **MOST IMPORTANT** to your household, irrespective of where you participate in that program? [Using the letters in Question #7 above, please write in the letters below for your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> choices, or circle ‘NONE’.]

1<sup>st</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 4<sup>th</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ NONE

9. Which **FOUR** of the activities from the list in Question #7 do you currently participate in **MOST OFTEN** at City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department facilities? [Using the letters in Question #7 above, please write in the letters below for your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> choices, or circle ‘NONE’.]

1<sup>st</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 4<sup>th</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ NONE

**10. Have you or members of your household visited the Children’s Museum during the past year?**

- (1) Yes [Please answer Q10a.]  
 (2) No [Please go to Q11]

**10a. Did you or members of your household go to the planetarium show on any of your visits?**

- (1) Yes  (2) No

**11. Currently there is an admission fee of up to \$18 for a family of four to the Children’s Museum. The cost for operating the Children’s Museum for a household of 4 members is estimated to be \$18. Knowing this, what is do you feel should be the total price of admissions to the Children’s Museum for a Rocky Mount RESIDENT family of four? [Please check ONE]**

- (1) No admissions charge  (3) \$13  (5) More than \$18  
 (2) \$8  (4) \$18

**12. Should the general admission include a planetarium show?**

- (1) Yes  (2) No

**13. What should be the total price of admissions to the Children’s Museum for a NON-RESIDENT family of four?**

- (1) No admissions charge  (3) \$19.50  (5) More than \$27  
 (2) \$12  (4) \$27

**14. Counting yourself, how many people in your household are?**

- |               |                          |               |                          |               |                          |           |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Under 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | 15 - 19 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | 35 - 44 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | 65+ years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 - 9 years   | <input type="checkbox"/> | 20 - 24 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | 45 - 54 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |                          |
| 10 - 14 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | 25 - 34 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | 55 - 64 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |           |                          |

**15. Are you or other members of your household of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish ancestry?**

- (1) Yes  (2) No

**16. Which of the following best describes your race? (Check all that apply)**

- (1) African American/Black  (4) White/Caucasian  
 (2) American Indian and Alaska Native  (5) Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3) Asian/Pacific Islander

**17. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_**

**18. What is your household income?**

- (1) Under \$14,999  (4) \$50,000-\$99,999  
 (2) \$15,000-\$29,999  (5) \$100,000 or more  
 (3) \$30,000-\$49,999

## Stakeholder



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ City Ward: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Questions regarding methodology:** Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?
2. **Needs and Priorities:** Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)
3. **Vision:** Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.
4. **Comparable Communities:** What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?
5. **Funding/ Implementation Opportunities:** Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?

Pay As You Go:

- General Fund/ CIP
- Sales Tax
- Park Impact Fees
- Grants
- User Fees
- Special Assessments
- Others (specify)

Borrowing:

- General Obligation Bonds
- Revenue Bonds
- Others (specify)

Partnerships:

- Schools
- Churches
- Businesses
- Developers
- Other (specify)



## FACILITIES

- Outdoor swimming pools
- Indoor swimming pools/aquatics facilities
- Splash Pads
- Boat Ramps
- Kayak/ Canoe Launches
- Fishing Piers
- Fishing Piers with Bait, Tackle Concessions
- Community Gardens
- Open/ Green Space
- Nature/ Environmental Centers
- Smaller Walk-to Parks
- Larger Drive-to Parks
- Walking Trails
- Art Centers
- Picnic Areas and Shelters
- Restrooms
- Playgrounds
- Community Centers
- Recreation Centers
- Fitness and Exercise Facilities
- Walking and Running Tracks (indoor)
- Soccer Fields
- Baseball Fields
- Greenway Trails
- Football Fields
- Lacrosse Fields
- Volleyball Courts
- Basketball Courts
- Tennis Courts
- Golf Courses/ Driving Ranges
- Meeting Rooms
- Roller-Hockey rinks
- Skate Parks
- Mountain Bike Trails
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROGRAMS

- Specialized Recreation
- Pre-school
- Before and After School Care
- Youth Summer Camp
- Youth Sports
- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts
- History and Museums
- Youth Programs (K-5<sup>th</sup> Grade)
- Teen Programs (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade)
- Nature
- Tennis
- Family
- Fitness and Wellness
- Senior Adult
- Adult Sports
- English as a Second Language
- Special Events
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Lake-Related Activities
- Social
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix

## MASTER PLAN STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW WITH AECOM (DAVID BARTH)

NAME	INTERVIEW DATE	TIME	PHONE NUMBER	NOTES	CONFIRMED
Bridget Garbrandt	Monday, November 11, 2013	9:00am	252-813-3633	Business	Yes
Henrietta Zalkland	Monday, November 11, 2013	11:00am	252-985-4300	Non-Profit	
Alex Eboneck	Tuesday, November 12, 2013	9:00am	252-972-5080	Travel & Tourism	Yes
Neil Nelson	Tuesday, November 12, 2013	10:00am	252-343-3052	Business	Yes
Ron Green	Tuesday, November 12, 2013	11:00am	252-955-6227	Non-Profit	
City Manager Office	Wednesday, November 13, 2013	10:00am	252-972-1548	City Management	Yes
Pete Armstrong	Wednesday, November 13, 2013	11:30am	252-903-5179	Parks Professional	Yes
Kelvin Yarrell, Director	Thursday, November 14, 2013	9:00am	252-972-1154	Staff	Yes
Steve Warren, Parks Superintendent	Thursday, November 14, 2013	10:00am	252-467-4927	Staff	Yes
Joel Dunn, Recreation Superintendent	Thursday, November 14, 2013	11:00am	252-972-1153	Staff	Yes
David Griffin, Imperial Centre Superintendent	Thursday, November 14, 2013	12:00pm	252-972-1441	Staff	Yes
David Joyner	Thursday, November 14, 2013	1:00 pm	252-544-3336	Business	Yes
Mae Parker	Thursday, November 14, 2013	2:00pm	252-442-1924	Citizen	Yes

David, Joel and Steve (with Parks Department) have all been part of the selection of the our team and heavily involved in the public workshops Drew and I just completed. Their input will most likely reflect a lot of what they heard from the public over the last few weeks.

Henrietta is on our Steering Committee and represents the Down East Partnership for Children and recently testified before Congress as an early childhood advocate (national leader in this field)

Bridget Garbrandt is on our Steering Committee, can't recall what she represents in the Business community.

Pete Armstrong is the former Parks Director from Rocky Mount. He's outspoken about getting more parks/community centers that are equitably distributed throughout town.

City Manager attended the Steering Committee kick-off I conducted and is probably still somewhat familiar with the project.

Mae Parker is a City Ward 2 resident and is on our Steering Committee

Neil Nelson is on our Steering Committee and represents the business community

Ron Green represents the Boys and Girls Club and was the host of our Youth/Teen Workshop. Good supporter

David Joyner represents Gateways Hotels/ Business community on our Steering Committee



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 Suite 475  
 Raleigh, NC 27607  
 www.aecom.com

919.854.6200 tel  
 919.854.6259 fax

## Meeting Notes

Subject	City of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Master Plan Interviews
Date	November – December, 2013
Time	n/a
Location	n/a
Attendees	Stakeholders
Prepared	December 16, 2013
Prepared by	David Barth

**I. PURPOSE:** To help determine the priority parks and recreation needs in the community.

**II. FORMAT:** All interviews were conducted by telephone. A total of 13 stakeholders were interviewed (two stakeholders participated in the same interview). The following questions were asked of each participant:

1. Methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?
2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs?
3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.
4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?
5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?

### III. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

#### 1. Methodology:

- Include recommendations for improvements to attract visitors, businesses, and residents; how do you keep people here?
- Contact members of Travel and Tourism Council, TDA, Chamber of Commerce, Women’s Professional Networking Group
- Reach segment of community that doesn’t normally participate, e.g. low income, inner city. Need to distribute surveys to Housing Authority, Head Start, schools, churches (flyer in church bulletins?), booth at Christmas Parade, Neighborhood Presidents Association
- Would like to see more involvement from west side of town



- Teen summit was a Boys and Girls Club function; may not have been representative of community
- Need to reach out to a broader audience via e-mail networks, PTOs
- Invite more people to meetings, workshops

## 2. Needs and Priorities:

(items listed are in order of priority, based on the number of interviewees who mentioned the item as a need as indicated in parentheses; top priorities are highlighted)

### General:

- Brand and market ourselves using existing assets and resources, e.g. market the Imperial Center; let people know about activities (IIII)
- Anything that we can do to set Rocky Mount apart, give us a competitive edge, make people want to live here and give us a high quality of life (I)
- Want the community to be nice; we can have some of the same amenities here that they have in Raleigh (I)
- Need to create community pride; have invested in downtown, made strides, train station, Imperial Center, etc.; people are skeptical about investing in downtown (I)
- Different experience (I)

### Facilities:

- Additional, connected paths, trails (e.g. along Battle Park, to athletic fields, to YMCA, to City Lake; complete the circle) (IIII III)
- Improve, upgrade, “groom” existing parks, playgrounds, trails, community centers with enhanced lighting, higher level of maintenance, improved/ additional restrooms, improved aesthetics; provide equity in quality throughout City (IIII III)
- A centrally located, highly visible water park, splash park, w/ lazy river, slides (IIII)
- More community recreation centers, e.g. one in each quadrant of City (IIII)

### “2<sup>nd</sup> Tier”:

- Public park/ facility at reservoir: public access, boat ramp, canoe and kayak rentals, public beach, water sports (III)
- Dog park (III)
- Additional bathrooms at all the parks; maintain restrooms (III)
- Centralized, indoor, competition swimming pool (III)
- Tar River Regional WW Treatment Park (“the farm”); mountain bike trails, horseback riding trails, ORV trails (III)
- Downtown “common area”, e.g. central park, focal point, identified with Rocky Mount (I)
- Museum, archive history of the City (II)
- Additional parks, including large community park for west area of City (land available at Halifax Road and Bethlehem Road), smaller walk-to parks (II)
- Complete Sports Complex as designed; add campground (II)



- Improved transportation, bike- friendly streets, routes, complete streets to make a statement, slow down traffic (II)
- City-run golf course, e.g. purchase and upgrade North Green Country Club (II)
- Playgrounds, including a “Super” playground (II)
- Signature park: something for families, kids, adults, teens (I)
- Place for kids to run around (I)
- Kinds of facilities that attract workers (I)
- More ballfields for tournament play (I)
- Emergency call system at parks; make parks feel safer (I)
- More tennis courts (I)
- Green design, including water conservation (I)
- Improve existing tennis courts (I)
- Boat ramps and fishing piers (I)
- Open green space (I)

Programs:

- Teen Programs (III):
  - Non-traditional, exciting programs, e.g. indoor sky diving
  - More structured youth programs in certain areas of town, such as the south Rocky Mount area
  - Safe places for positive social interaction (non-structured, independent activities) e.g. a “skateboard scavenger hunt”
- More performing, visual, and creative arts programs; Imperial Center should target more inner City kids (III)
- Family programs (I)
- Additional tennis lessons for youth and adults (I)
- Recreation, social sports such as kickball, corn-hole; particularly for young adults (I)
- Job training (high unemployment) (I)
- Health programs (obesity, STDs) (I)
- More events to get people downtown, e.g. ‘Downtown Live’(I)
- Lake-based activities (I)
- Nature programs (I)
- Adult learning programs, continuing education (I)

Amenities and Enhancements:

- Trail signage, markers (II)
- Offer ‘real food’ concessions at Sports Complex on weekends, evenings, e.g. hot dogs, barbecue sandwiches, fruit, bottled water, etc. Wouldn’t have to go home and make dinner! Could contract with local restaurants, e.g. hot dogs, Chick Fil-A, pizza, etc. (I)
- More things to do in the park geared to teenagers; more user-friendly, e.g. Wi-Fi in the parks, “cool” lounging areas, moveable furniture (I)
- Improved equipment (I)
- Connect to other community health initiatives and recreation programs (I)

## AECOM

### Staffing:

- Stronger partnership with Boys and Girls Club, other organizations (e.g. south Rocky Mount area for youth development programs) (II)
- Need to reduce time spent on free services, setting up tables and chairs, events that have nothing to do with our priorities OR collect fees, get more resources: serviced over 110 community events last year (II)
- Someone to come in and administer programs; need consistency (I)
- Parks planner (I)
- Need to look at organizational structure; have added a lot of services, need additional support (I)

### 3. Vision:

#### Rocky Mount's Parks and Recreation System will:

- Be safe and comfortable for all users
- Increase a sense of community wellness, engagement, commitment, happiness, and pride
- Increase engagement, higher level of communication and networking, locals getting more involved in tournaments, visitors more engaged in community activities and destinations
- Have had a common brand
- Help define Rocky Mount, put the City on the map in a positive way
- Have a world class, signature park that satisfies the needs, wants and desires of all ages
- Have events that rotate from park to park every year to bring attention to the parks system
- Have centrally located or equitably distributed places that teenagers can access by foot, bike, or skateboard; are safe, fun, cool, and clean; and allow them to be creative
- Accommodate all types of teenagers, including athletes, skateboarders, and "loungers" (hang out and talk, video games, texting)
- Help the City to get off the list(s) of "most dangerous places to live"
- Help with developing our youth; economic development; increased quality of life; decreased crime rate; improved educational system; increasing test scores
- Ensure that every child in the Nash/ Rocky Mount school system will visit the Imperial Center once/ year
- Have a little bit of something for everyone, including creative needs, physical activity needs, new opportunities, organized sports
- Will serve everyone including families from all the neighborhoods, wealthy to low income, single mothers and grandmothers, traditional families, seniors, youth, those that want a safe place to visit, play a game of bridge, go to Italy, play on a team
- Reflect an overall caring attitude about the community
- Provide equal opportunities to be involved
- Reach out to the community to let everyone know what's available
- Be affordable
- Provide good access/ transportation
- Be both centralized (significant key facilities and structures that offer more opportunities) and decentralized (parks, trail, classes, mobile programs, etc.)
- Be all inclusive, comprehensive



- Respect and reflect the history of the community
- Be well maintained and take care of what we have
- Provide opportunities for local residents as well as visitors
- Encourage partnerships, regionalism, things we can do with other communities
- Be aligned with City Council/ manager goals and objective
- Be the major player in parks and recreation, focusing on quality of life and being leaders in parks and recreation in the region
- Evolve from a good department to great department
- Be upgraded , ADA accessible
- Have improved equipment, beautification, higher standard of quality
- Make each community proud of their parks
- Focus on core services
- Expand to the western area of City
- Collaborate with the County to share resources, remove County/ City silos (Nash County has a fledgling parks department; Edgecombe County does not)
- Control our own destiny, have a say in the types of services and programs we deliver
- Would be trusted by residents
- Be right-sized based on the community's needs
- Keep up with new development, provide equitable distribution of facilities and services
- Bank land for future development
- Offer recreation facilities and programs based on current demand, not past actions
- Extend the greenway system, and add trailheads at each neighborhood
- Provide wonderful, exciting parks for residents and their children, provide places for exercise and play
- Provide beautiful, well- kept parks from one end of town to the other
- Treat every park like it is your living room
- Groom every park to show that the City cares, fix up Sunset and City Lake Parks
- Encourage neighborhoods to volunteer
- Raise funds for improvements and maintenance
- Benefit from being bedroom community; can attract people from Raleigh who want less hustle and bustle, lower cost; parks system is center of quality of life
- Be more transparent
- Be part of community infrastructure
- Connect parks and recreation to economic development, health, livability, walkability, active living by design
- Have something always going on
- Have fabulous parks

#### 4. Comparable Communities:

- Raleigh, NC: diversity of facilities, marketing, trails system, interaction between parks and police to work on neighborhood issues (e.g. Austin has parks and rec liaisons); whatever they do they do well; well-regarded in community; inclusive (including special populations); street fairs and festivals; something always going on; field of dreams (IIII II)

## AECOM

- Greenville, NC: walkability, safety (lighting, etc.), growing college community, vibrant city, investing in base, similar size (IIII)
- Asheville, NC: quality facilities, aesthetics, level of care, strong senior base, strong cultural arts base (III)
- Wilmington, NC: walkable, connected downtown.
- Kinston, NC: water park (splash park)
- Tupelo, Mississippi: doing more with their facilities, e.g. soccer and baseball tournaments; using astro-turf at high school; festivals
- Durham, NC: trails, yoga class on the lawn
- Burlington, NC: greenway system, facilities, playgrounds, marketing
- Gastonia, NC: athletic facilities
- Greenville, SC
- Austin, TX
- Charleston SC; benchmark for the nation, generate revenues, forward-thinking
- Richmond, VA; use of the river w/ overlooks, festivals, etc.
- Want others to say they want their parks to look like Rocky Mount!

### 5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities:

#### Pay As You Go:

- Grants (IIIII III)
- General Fund/ CIP (IIIII II)
- User Fees (IIII)
- Sales Tax (II)
- Park Impact Fees (I)
- Special Assessments (I)
- Restaurant Tax (I)
- Occupancy Tax (I)
- Enterprise Funds (I)

#### Borrowing:

- General Obligation Bonds (IIIII IIIII)
- Revenue Bonds (I)

#### Partnerships:

- Schools (III)
- Churches (I)
- Businesses (I)
- Parks and Recreation Foundation (I)
- Strategic Twin Counties Education Partnership (STEP) (I)
- Neighborhood Associations (I)
- General (I)



## IV. INTERVIEW NOTES:

### Interview #1:

1. Questions regarding methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?

Dynamics regarding the plan; is there a focus on particular parks re: attractiveness, tourism, e.g. downtown and sports complex? Recommendations or improvements to attract visitors, businesses, and residents. Some people would prefer to commute from Raleigh, Cary rather than move to RM. It's difficult to hire people to come to RM: not enough to do, not safe. Need to focus on improvements, growth. How do you keep people here?

2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)

- Campground for Sports Complex
- Place for kids to run around
- Different experience
- Publicity: letting people know about activities
- Kinds of facilities that attract workers

3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.

Change of perception; communications; dedication to change; improvements to layouts, safety; need to feel comfortable with pre-teens, teens going on hikes, trails, etc. e.g. would not let kids go to Battle Park, doesn't feel safe (even though has much to offer).

4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?

Nothing around Imperial Center, not walkable, not connected to downtown like other cities, e.g. ice cream shops, diners, etc. are scattered. Wilmington is an example of a walkable, connected downtown.

5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?

- Bonds (ad valorem taxes) – wouldn't hurt people as much
- Don't want to increase fees (for same reason); want to increase volume of participation, not create elite, 'silo' programs

## AECOM

### Interview #2:

1. Questions regarding methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?

- Connect with members of Travel and Tourism Council, TDA; Alex forwarded survey to them. Sports Complex and Imperial Center are funded in part through occupancy tax. Members are also connected to community
- Also Chamber of Commerce, Women's Professional Networking Group

2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)

- Is forwarding list to Kelvin
- Downtown is the most walkable area of the City, but has the worse reputation or crime
- Facilities:
  - Larger community/ competition pool
  - More ball fields for tournament play
  - Improve existing facilities with enhanced lighting, including sports complex, City Lake, other active and passive facilities
  - Emergency call system at parks; make parks feel safer
  - More tennis courts
  - Splash park
  - Additional bathrooms at all the parks
  - Green design, including water conservation
- Programming:
  - Additional tennis lessons for youth and adults
  - More performing and creative arts programs

3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.

- Local: increase sense of wellness, engagement; enhanced or renewed sense of commitment and happiness with the community; sense of pride
- Non-local: increased engagement, higher level of communication and networking, locals getting more involved in tournaments, visitors more engaged in community activities and destinations
- Have had a lot of branding programs, plans thrown at the community; are there existing taglines, plans (e.g. ask me why I love Rocky Mount) that still have 'legs'? (planning fatigue)
- Trails map is on website

4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?

- Greenville, NC: walkability, safety (lighting, etc.)
- Asheville, NC: aesthetics, level of care
- Raleigh, NC: diversity of facilities, marketing
- Kinston, NC: water park (splash park)



5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?

- More republican, conservative community
- Partially pay as you go + borrowing (50% general fund, 50% borrowing)
- Sports Complex will be paid off in a couple of years; 1% should be used for new facilities
- User fees would be OK
- Grants

**Interview #3:**

1. Questions regarding methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?

- Excited about growing Parks and Recreation Dept.; one of our bright spots

2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)

- A lot of people will be pushing for things in specific areas of community; sports complex is a tremendous benefit, centrally located, available to everybody
- Anything that we can do to set Rocky Mount apart, give us a competitive edge, make people want to live here and give us a high quality of life
- A centrally located, highly visible water park would give people something to do, attract people from the outside
- Continue to connect paths, trails, along Battle Park, to athletic fields, to YMCA, to City Lake; complete the circle
- Need bike friendly streets, routes; complete streets. Makes a statement, slow down traffic
- Wonderful that City soccer program merged with other; great to see soccer, little league, etc. right in Rocky Mount. Need to offer 'real food' concessions on weekends, evenings, e.g. hot dogs, barbecue sandwiches, fruit, bottled water, etc. Wouldn't have to go home and make dinner! Could contract with local restaurants, e.g. hot dogs, Chick Fil-A, pizza, etc.
- City-run golf course, e.g. purchase and upgrade North Green Country Club; would be an attraction, improve quality of life
- Brand and market ourselves using existing assets and resources

3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.

- A part of what defines Rocky Mount; puts Rocky Mount on the map "in a positive way"

4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?

- Raleigh, NC; always have stuff going on
- Greenville, NC?

## AECOM

5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?

- Would prefer 'pay as you go' first, such as grants; don't want to raise taxes, want to be competitive tax-wise, but want to differentiate ourselves. Use grants, general fund, existing sales tax
- Sponsorships, naming rights; not many large philanthropic organizations in Rocky Mount

### Interview #4:

1. Questions regarding methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?

- Was at the meeting, familiar with the process
- Want to make sure that the input is taken into consideration for future plans, improvements; not as a justification for a pre-conceived plan

2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)

- Hear more than anything, something for young people to do: e.g. indoor sky diving, more exciting things to do in addition to basketball, baseball
- More youth programs in certain areas of town, such as the south Rocky Mount area; more structured programs. A lot of kids don't feel safe there
- Want the community to be nice; we can have some of the same amenities here that they have in Raleigh
- Top priority is higher level of maintenance and upkeep of existing parks; currently doing just the minimum.
- Need to make the parks more attractive, make it nice enough so people don't think they can do anything
- Need to maintain restrooms
- Need more things to do in the park geared to teenagers; more user-friendly. For example, Wi-Fi in the parks, "cool" lounging areas, moveable furniture
- Programming may work, but need to pay someone to come in and administer program; need consistency
- Trade-off between structure and freedom
- Need a signature park: something for families, kids, adults, teens
- Stronger partnership with Boys and Girls Club, e.g. south Rocky Mount area, for youth development programs

3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.

- A world class, signature park here in Rocky Mount that satisfies the needs, wants and desires of all ages
- Events that rotate from park to park every year to bring attention to the parks
- Places where teenagers can come that are accessible by foot, bike, or skateboard; safe; fun; cool; clean; allows them to be creative. Either centrally located, or distributed throughout the community. Teenagers include athletes; skateboarders; and loungers (hang out and talk, video games, texting).



- Using parks system to get off the list(s) of “most dangerous places to live”
  - Parks can help with developing our youth; economic development, quality of life; decrease crime rate; improve educational system, increasing test scores
4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?
- Tupelo, Mississippi: doing more with their facilities, e.g. soccer and baseball tournaments; using astro-turf at high school; festivals
5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?
- Would have to borrow; need facilities, improvements in the near future, not when kids are grown; sense of urgency
  - State of the City; we don’t have time to see how things play out, we need to act now
  - Can’t do it ourselves; who do we partner with?
  - Can’t rely solely on ‘pay as you go’ until we make Rocky Mount the kind of place that people want to live in

**Interview # 5:**

1. Questions regarding methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?
- Want to make sure that we reach segment of community that doesn’t normally participate, e.g. low income, inner city:
    - o Take paper copies of survey to Housing Authority, Head Start, schools, churches
    - o Develop a flyer to go into church bulletins
    - o Booth at Christmas Parade?
    - o Neighborhood Presidents Association; ask them to pass out at meetings
2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)
- Dog park
  - People are using the trail from Sunset to Battle Park, want more; concerns about safety, too dark
  - Signage, markers on trail; also lighting
  - Facilities need to be remodeled; equipment needs to be well-maintained, upgraded
  - Kayak and canoe launches are hidden gem
  - More programmed community recreation centers
  - Recreation, social sports such as kickball, corn-hole; particularly for young adults
  - Question: standards for aesthetics, maintenance?
  - Programs for teens; hard population to grab onto; organized, safe places for positive social interaction (non-structured, independent activities) (e.g. a skateboard scavenger hunt?)
3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.

## AECOM

- Every child in the Nash/ Rocky Mount school system will visit the Imperial Center once/ year
  - A little bit of something for everyone: creative needs, physical activity needs, new opportunities, organized sports; families from all he neighborhoods, wealthy to low income, single mothers and grandmothers, traditional families, seniors, youth, those that want a safe place to visit, play a game of bridge, go to Italy, play on a team
  - An overall caring about the community
  - People are quick to think of the negatives, not focus on the positive; may be changing
  - Broad disparity between 'have' and 'have not's'; you should have same opportunity to be involved
  - Outreach to let everyone know what's available; cost may be an issue (do we overcharge?).
  - Access/ transportation is not an issue; we have a good transit system
  - System is both centralized (significant key facilities and structures that offer more opportunities) and decentralized (parks, trail, classes, mobile programs, etc.)
4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?
- Trails System at Rocky Mount, City Lake; similar to Raleigh's Johnson Lake
  - Trail in Durham, yoga class on the lawn
  - Raleigh: interaction between parks and police to work on neighborhood issues (e.g. Austin has parks and rec liaisons) (Human Relations staff doing this in Rocky Mount)
  - Parks and rec staff to attend Neighborhood Presidents Association
5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?
- Pay as you go, including grants, user fees, general fund, etc.
  - General obligation bond is a possibility; City needs to be aggressive, needs a G.O. Bond to do it
  - Need partnerships, e.g. schools, to do it; superintendent is community-minded. Overall goal is to develop an educated population in community, is willing to look beyond classroom
  - STEP (Strategic Twin counties Education Partnership)
  - Heavy public involvement will help pass G.O. bond

### Interview #6:

1. Questions regarding methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?
- No questions, improvements
  - Administer parks and recreation trust fund
  - Some of the meetings have not been well attended; consider reaching out to church congregations, have additional meetings
2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)



- Some areas have no parks, trails, or sidewalks; false assumption that golf course provides access
  - Dog park (e.g. at Sunset Park); source funding? (FEMA land at Sunset Park)
  - Water park w/ lazy river, slides, etc.
  - Swimming pool closer to City residents; including indoor pool. High school takes up pool time at YMCA
  - Trails – use sewer easements, as well as downtown connector
  - Super playground, tremendous draw for people
  - Public park/ facility at reservoir: public access, boat ramp, canoe and kayak rentals, public beach (?)
  - Golf course: used to host ACC championships
  - Market the Imperial Center
  - Signage and wayfinding
  - Improve existing tennis courts
  - Tar River Regional WW Treatment Park (“the farm”); mountain bike trails, horseback riding trails, ORV trails
3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.
- All inclusive, comprehensive
  - Next big thing after sports complex?
  - Respect the history
  - Maintain, take care of what we have
  - Opportunities for local residents as well as visitors
  - Partnerships, regionalism, things we could do with other communities
4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?
- Raleigh, Cary: whatever they do they do well; well-regarded in community; inclusive (including special populations); street fairs and festivals; something always going on; field of dreams; do one really neat thing, that’s what you’re known for
  - Burlington: greenway system, facilities, playgrounds, marketing
  - Gastonia: athletic facilities
  - Imperial Center is better than others
5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?
- Restaurant tax
  - Existing occupancy tax
  - Bonds
  - Enterprise funding
  - Partnerships
  - Grants (e.g. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund)
  - Schools, businesses



## Interview #7:

1. Questions regarding methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?
2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)
  - Facilities:
    - o Community centers; haven't built a new one since the 1970s; when Kelvin was growing up, kids went to CC after school (propose breaking City into quadrants, 1 CC in each quadrant; currently have senior center 25,000; BTW is 20,000; S Rock Mount 15 – 18000; lie within 4 miles of each other, heavily used but not at capacity; pop. 57,000)
    - o Park upgrades; blown away about the calls regarding parks, including 26 playgrounds; need to upgrade, need playground replacement program
    - o Have high-end facilities because of the flood; but also have old low end facilities; has helped create racial tension
    - o Deferred maintenance needs (50 parks, 26 with playgrounds; gym floors, AC; do rule of thumb calculations)
    - o Have CIP funds, but no parks planner
    - o Transportation is a big issue, as well as socio-economic conditions; important to have good distribution of facilities
  - Structure:
    - o Need to look at organizational structure
    - o Have added a lot of services, need additional support
  - Programs:
    - o Focused on youth, after school
    - o Need to focus on job training; high unemployment
    - o Can be greater players
    - o High unemployment, obesity, STDs
    - o Partnering with Boys and Girls Club, other organizations
    - o Serviced over 110 community events; overtime for community service (seen as free service)
3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.
  - Make sure we're aligned with City Council/ manager goals and objective
  - The major player in parks and recreation, focusing on quality of life and being leaders in parks and rec in region
  - From good department to great department
4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?
  - Ashville: strong senior base, strong cultural arts base
  - Greenville: growing college community, vibrant city, investing in base, similar size
  - Raleigh: can benefit from being bedroom community; can attract people from Raleigh who want less hustle and bustle, lower cost; parks system is center of quality of life



5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?

- Deferred maintenance: bond referendum, so far behind; will never catch up with \$650k/year in general fund
- Focus on revenue generation
- Pay as you go, including fair charges
- Imperial Center charges are high
- Expand partnerships, including over 300 churches
- Need stronger partnership with school system; need to develop a use agreement
- Need a Parks and Recreation Foundation that will allow us to provide services to low income residents; “every single citizen is welcome to participate in our community, we will find the funds”
- People know what we do; how we do it; and what we can do better

**Interview #8:**

1. Questions regarding methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?

- Have been here for 29 years, have seen evolution of master plan, have been impressed with scope and methodology; like the fact that we’re not just collecting data from one point
- Ward meetings have been conducted well

2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)

- Community is fairly passive, don’t hear a lot of major requests
- People may not be passionate about community, apathetic, work out of silos
- Need to create community pride; have invested in downtown, made strides, train station, Imperial Center, etc.; people are skeptical about investing in downtown
- Edgcombe/ Nash divide; social economic issues
- Need a downtown “common area”, e.g. central park, focal point, identified with Rocky Mount, draw everyone
- Colorado Springs did a water feature
- Upgrade community center
- Community center, swimming pool, other facilities in the western part
- Expansion of greenway trails, make a walkable City; meets fitness and wellness objectives, as well as improve community relations
- Mountain bike trail, 500 acres at WW treatment plant; also at Battle Park
- Dog park
- Water Park, e.g. Kinston
- Museum, archive history of the City; included in event center?
- Reservoir is untapped resource: water sports, fishing, beach, swimming, etc.; collaborate with County?
- Lack of pride; racial divide; people work in silos; Edgcombe/ Nash split; have great people, City has more things going for it than most people realize; great location

## AECOM

3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System
  - Have 50 parks, 12 acres per capita; need to upgrade, make ADA accessible, improve equipment, beautify and improve the standard of quality; should be proud of parks, each community proud of their park
  - Spending a lot of time away from core services such as maintenance, spend a lot of time supporting special events
  - Expand to western area of City
  - Collaborate with County to share resources, remove County/ City silos (Nash County has a fledgling parks department; Edgecombe County does not)
4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?
  - Hard time coming up with one that matches RM; no one town sticks out
  - Greenville SC, Austin, Raleigh are nice systems
  - Thomasville, Salisbury, Burlington, Shelby have renovated downtowns
5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?
  - Bond referendums have worked well for Raleigh; think there will be support; City doesn't have much debt
  - My Rocky Mount publication features parks and recreation programs and facilities
  - Not accredited; a lot of policies are not in writing, keep us from focusing on core services
  - Have done well with grants, may be more challenging in the future
  - Sales tax would not be popular; not much support for user fees

### Interview #9:

1. Questions regarding methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?
  - We've done a good effort to reach as many people as we can
  - Would like to see more involvement from west side of town
  - Teen summit was a Boys and Girls Club function; may not have been representative
2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)

Facilities:

  - Community centers: have two (not incl. senior center), are old and lacking; 2 or 3 short
  - Some park should be closed, not meeting needs of community
  - Need to upgrade existing parks, from playgrounds to picnic shelters
  - Need a water park; could be successful, e.g. Kinston
  - Expand greenway trails
  - Safe, walkable, travelable trails; tie to parks



Programs:

- Spend too many resources doing free services, setting up tables and chairs, events that have nothing to do with our priorities
  - Improve teen programs
  - More events to get people downtown, e.g. 'Downtown Live'
  - Athletics and Seniors Programs are strong
  - Imperial Center should target more inner City kids for culture and arts
3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.
- Control our own destiny; at mercy of others, dedicate a lot of resources serving non-core needs
  - Would like to be able to have a say in the types of services and programs we deliver
  - Would like for people to trust us that we have right direction for City and residents
4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?
- Charleston SC; benchmark for the nation, generate revenues, forward-thinking
  - Hard to keep up with Raleigh, Charlotte; more progressive
  - We have resources that are comparable or better than others, but we need to be more progressive
5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?
- Fine with both pay as you go and borrowing techniques; don't know if bond referendum will pass; no other way to get ahead
  - Tricky to work with school system, principal by principal basis
  - Partnerships would be a last case scenario; in the past we have been taken advantage of, give more than we get; would prefer to own and control our system

**Interview #10:**

1. Questions regarding methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?
- No questions think AECOM is doing a fabulous job
2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)

Facilities:

- Complete Sports Complex as designed; one stop shop for recreation, economic benefits, public image; central, shared
- Resource –based recreation, e.g. water sports at reservoir
- Large community park for west area of City; huge square of land with no parks. Land available at Halifax Road and Bethlehem Road
- Westridge Park is not a park

## AECOM

- Boat ramps and fishing piers
- Open green space
- Smaller walk-to parks, larger drive to parks north of the river
- Playgrounds
- Walking trails and greenways
- Mountain biking trails: Battle Park, WWT Plant

### Programs:

- Performing arts, visual arts, history museums
- Lake-based activities
- Nature programs

### 3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.

- Park land calculation is really 873 acres, including cemetery and land around rec centers; how do we 'right size' department. Lower level of management? E.g. try to keep weeds out of Southside park, which isn't used
- Vast majority of parks are south of Tar River; inequity north of the river. New development has not kept up with investment
- How do we land bank for future development?
- Offer recreation facilities and programs based on current demand, not past actions; make residents aware of opportunities
- Extend greenway system, add trailheads at each neighborhood

### 4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?

- Asheville, NC: quality of facilities
- Richmond, VA; use of the river w/ overlooks, festivals, etc.

### 5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?

- Have typically gone with general fund/ CIP, grants
- Bonds would be a great idea if Council approves

### Interview #11:

#### 1. Questions regarding methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?

- No questions, good process; wish we could have gotten more people

#### 2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)

- Grooming existing parks
- Upgrade existing bathrooms, make sure that they're sanitary and kept that way

#### 3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.



- Every time there is a park, you know that it's a wonderful, exciting place for you and your children. These are the parks that you could go and exercise, children can play
- People will go from one end of town to the other. Could stop anywhere. Beautiful, well kept
- Every park is like your living room
- Grooming, look like we care, fix up Sunset and City Lake, encourage neighborhoods to volunteer, raise funds e.g. Durham neighborhood park with ABC program

4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?

- Don't see others that Rocky Mount needs to look like; need to upgrade what we have; neat, pretty, groomed
- All kinds of equipment isn't necessary; could sit on the benches, read, make them inviting, read a book, meet your friends, have lunch
- Want others to say they want their parks to look like Rocky Mount

5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?

- People in communities should fix up neighborhood parks; raise funds, create a sense of pride
- However project like Sunset Park should be spruced up with City funds
- Would be willing to borrow money for City-wide parks such as Sunset Park, City Lake Park

#### Interview #12:

1. Questions regarding methodology: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology? Are there any additional meetings, workshops, presentations or other outreach efforts that we should consider for your community?

- Attended the initial meeting, made some suggestions.
- City should broadcast surveys to a broader audience, do e-mail blast. Also send to PTOs, schools; playgrounds are in really bad shape.
- Invite more people to meetings, workshops

2. Needs and Priorities: Based on what you know, see and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs? (refer to list on back page)

- Having fewer, more connected parks. Highlight and connect jewels in the crown. Don't feel safe, parks and activities are disconnected. Need park partners. Regular family activities that are well-publicized, people can walk to. Connect park plan to pedestrian plan, schools.
- Battle Park is a great place to run, people don't feel safe there
- Resources should be used on parks; let others go natural
- Marketing; tie parks to quality of life
- Have a lot of the components, need to connect to other health initiatives, recreation programs
- Bike trails, walking trails

## AECOM

- Family programs
- Adult learning programs, continuing education

3. Vision: Describe your long-range vision for the Parks and Recreation System.

Make the parks system much more transparent, part of infrastructure, connecting parks and recreation to economic development, health promotion, livability, walkability; active living by design; want people to think of fabulous parks. Recreation and greenways system, something is always going on, becomes a signature piece of economic development

4. Comparable Communities: What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for Rocky Mount? What Community(s) or City(s) should the city emulate?

Rocky Mount is competing with Raleigh, Greenville,NC; have wonderful housing stock in Rocky Mount, people commuting to Raleigh; cities with streetscapes, walkability. Much cheaper to live in RM, quality of life is improving

5. Funding/ Implementation Opportunities: Assuming that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?

General fund, CIP; grants; bonds (after 1st phase, if transparent, once people see how great it can be); partnerships (want people to think of system as not just what City owns and operates)



# Appendix

## List of Acronyms

The following is a list of acronyms found in the City of Rocky Mount Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The acronyms are listed in the order that they appear in the document, along with the page that contains the first appearance of each acronym.

<b>IDEA</b>	Innovative, Dynamic, Engaged, Aware	19
<b>VMTs</b>	Vehicle Miles Traveled	26
<b>MTC</b>	Multi-modal Transportation Committee	27
<b>NCDOT</b>	North Carolina Department of Transportation	27
<b>RMMPO</b>	Rocky Mount Metropolitan Planning Organization	27
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency	32
<b>NRPA</b>	National Recreation and Parks Association	33
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act	33
<b>Esri</b>	Environmental Research Institute	89
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System	89
<b>ETJ</b>	Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction	89
<b>LOS</b>	Level of Service	95
<b>NSRE</b>	National Survey on Recreation and the Environment	98
<b>SCORP</b>	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan	98
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal Year	133
<b>PARTF</b>	Parks and Recreation Trust Fund	134
<b>AAD</b>	American Academy of Dermatology	134
<b>UFP</b>	Urban Forestry Program	134
<b>USTA</b>	US Tennis Association	134
<b>TEP</b>	Transportation Enhancement Program	135
<b>SRTS</b>	Safe Routes to Schools	135
<b>O&amp;M</b>	Operations and Maintenance	137
<b>SCS</b>	Sports Complex Stadium	140
<b>NCAA</b>	National Collegiate Athletic Association	140
<b>IAAF</b>	International Association of Athletic Federations	140
<b>AAU</b>	Amateur Athletic Union	140
<b>BTWCC</b>	Booker T. Washington Community Center	146
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources	154
<b>HVAC</b>	Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning	157

## Definitions

The following is a list of definitions of terms found in the City of Rocky Mount Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The definitions below are listed in alphabetical order.

<b>Benchmarking</b>	Evaluations and analysis based on certain accepted standards or comparable data from similar communities.
<b>Community Park</b>	Park providing a wide variety of recreation opportunities, including a mix of active and passive recreation facilities. Typically 10-50 acres in size with a service area of 3 miles.
<b>Greenway</b>	Corridor of natural areas or undeveloped land that can be utilized for public recreation uses or environmental protection.
<b>Greenway Trail</b>	Recreation path or trail, typically accommodating bicycle and pedestrian use, that provides access through a corridor of natural areas or undeveloped land.
<b>Mini Park</b>	Small area for recreation, open space, informal park or natural area. Activities are predominantly passive, with limited active recreation facilities. Typically less than 4 acres with a service area of 1/4 mile.
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	Park providing active or passive recreation activities such as an open field, court games or a playground. Typically 4 - 20 acres in size with a service area of 1/2 mile.
<b>Special Park</b>	Park offering intensive, active recreation activities, historic or culturally significant venues, or large natural environment areas. Opportunities are unique attractions that may draw users from multiple communities. Size ranges from small areas of 1 acre to complexes of over 150 acres. Typical service area is not defined.
<b>Subsystem</b>	Critical components of an overall system of parks, public spaces and resources with similar characteristics that function in an interconnected relation and provide parallel benefits.





