



CHAPTER EIGHT

Recreation, Parks, & Culture

VISION

All people in Carrboro, of all races and backgrounds, will have safe and equitable access to recreational and cultural opportunities, including a connected network of parks, green space, and trails. The Carrboro community comes together year-round through creative programming and events that celebrate the Town's history, unique spirit, and diverse range of cultures with high-quality festivals, music, and the arts.

Town of Carrboro Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Resources Mission Statement

To enrich the leisure needs and quality of life for citizens by providing accessible facilities, creative and diverse recreation opportunities and a safe public park system.

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Only 27% of Carrboro residents live within a half-mile (roughly a 10-minute walk) of a Town park, and higher-income residents have better physical access to parks (31% live within a 10-minute walk).** (Source: Trust for Public Land, 2021) Improving this statistic and enhancing equitable access to / participation in recreation, parks, and cultural resources is important to the community and continues to be a goal for the Town. "Access" should be thought of in terms of both physical access—how easily people can get to and spend time in parks/at events—and perceived access—a broader question of understanding whether community members feel their needs and interests are being met.

SIDEBAR FEATURE: What is “perceived access?” of the Town’s recreational and cultural resources?

Do members of the BIPOC community, women, and other segments of society feel welcomed in all places? Are programs and activities appealing, safe, and, available to a wide range of groups, or do they only serve some populations? The Town is actively pursuing these questions through initiatives like the new Racial Equity Commission, the Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE) Trainings, the Neighborhood Liaisons Program, neighborhood information center boards, and other community engagement efforts focused on expanding equity across Carrboro.

To work towards equity in recreation, parks, and cultural resources, both of these questions of physical and perceived access should be considered in planning and decision-making. The Town is actively pursuing these questions through initiatives like using a racial equity tool to evaluate policies, practices and procedures, collecting and compiling data, the new Racial Equity Commission, racial equity training of staff and board and commissions, enhanced marketing efforts such as the Neighborhood Liaisons Program, neighborhood information center boards, and other community engagement efforts focused on expanding equity across Carrboro.



Town Information Centers like this one are being installed around Town to reach residents who may not use the Internet frequently. These provide information about programs, services, and upcoming events to engage community members from all over Carrboro.

2. Carrboro residents are very satisfied with the RPCR Department’s programs and services (and received “A” grades across all categories in both the 2016 and 2018 Carrboro Citizen Surveys) but there is a strong desire for the following new amenities: an interactive water feature (swimming pool or splash pad/park), an indoor community center, more greenways and trails, and additional multi-purpose fields for soccer and other sports. These were commonly expressed throughout engagement for Carrboro Connects as well as in specific questions asked as part of the 2018 Biennial Carrboro Citizen Survey. The Town has limited resources and available land, making it difficult to plan for expansion or development of new programming and parks facilities.

	Under 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	Carrboro RPCR (Y/N)
Themed special events	80%	90%	Y
Team sports	84%	93%	Y
Social recreation events	78%	91%	Y
Fitness enhancement	70%	86%	Y
Health and wellness education	68%	83%	Y
Individual sports	65%	78%	Y
Safety training	63%	70%	Y
Aquatics	59%	69%	N
Racquet sports	58%	65%	Y
Performing arts	47%	65%	Y
Trips and tours	47%	65%	Y
Cultural crafts	46%	58%	Y
Martial arts	43%	63%	N
Visual arts	41%	55%	Y
Natural and cultural history	37%	51%	Y
Golf	25%	46%	N
Running/cycling races	27%	32%	Y/N*

Source: 2020 NRPA standards and Carrboro RPCR Fall 2020 Brochure

Note: This table only accounts for programming offered by Carrboro RPCR. While other local organizations may offer the programming mentioned here, they were not factored into this assessment.

Prevalence of Programming Offered by Park & Recreation Agencies based on Jurisdictional Population (Carrboro's Population is approx. 21,000)

Carrboro's RPCR Department offers extensive programming for a community of its size, providing 13 of the 17 National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) possible programs. Carrboro also offers additional programs not listed in this chart of commonly provided recreational offerings. This table is intended to communicate that Carrboro, when compared with communities of similar size, does an excellent job of providing a range and diversity of programming.



Disc golf is an example of a recreational program not listed in the commonly provided NRPA program, but an increasingly popular sport facility that Carrboro's RPCR Department provides at Anderson Park.

- 3. It is important to celebrate the Carrboro story and promote a shared sense of place through cultural programming, historic preservation, and public art.** Participants in the engagement process made clear the importance of the Town's community identity, composed of a variety of perspectives and a rich tapestry of diverse cultures.

RACE AND EQUITY AND CLIMATE ACTION

Race and Equity

Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Resources strategies and projects have been designed to advance race and equity in the town through:

- Expanding recreational facilities and opportunities for more people in Carrboro, with an emphasis on providing free or affordable programs (i.e. outdoor exercise equipment in parks, online recreational programs) and accessible parks and trails for people with different abilities.
- Prioritizing access for immigrant, BIPOC, and other underserved communities when planning for new RPCR facilities or attempting to make private recreational spaces more open to the public.
- Focusing outreach towards those without Internet access or those for whom English is a second language.
- Celebrating the diversity in Carrboro through new cultural events, programming, artwork, and stories that residents and visitors can engage with to learn more about Carrboro's residents and local culture and traditions.

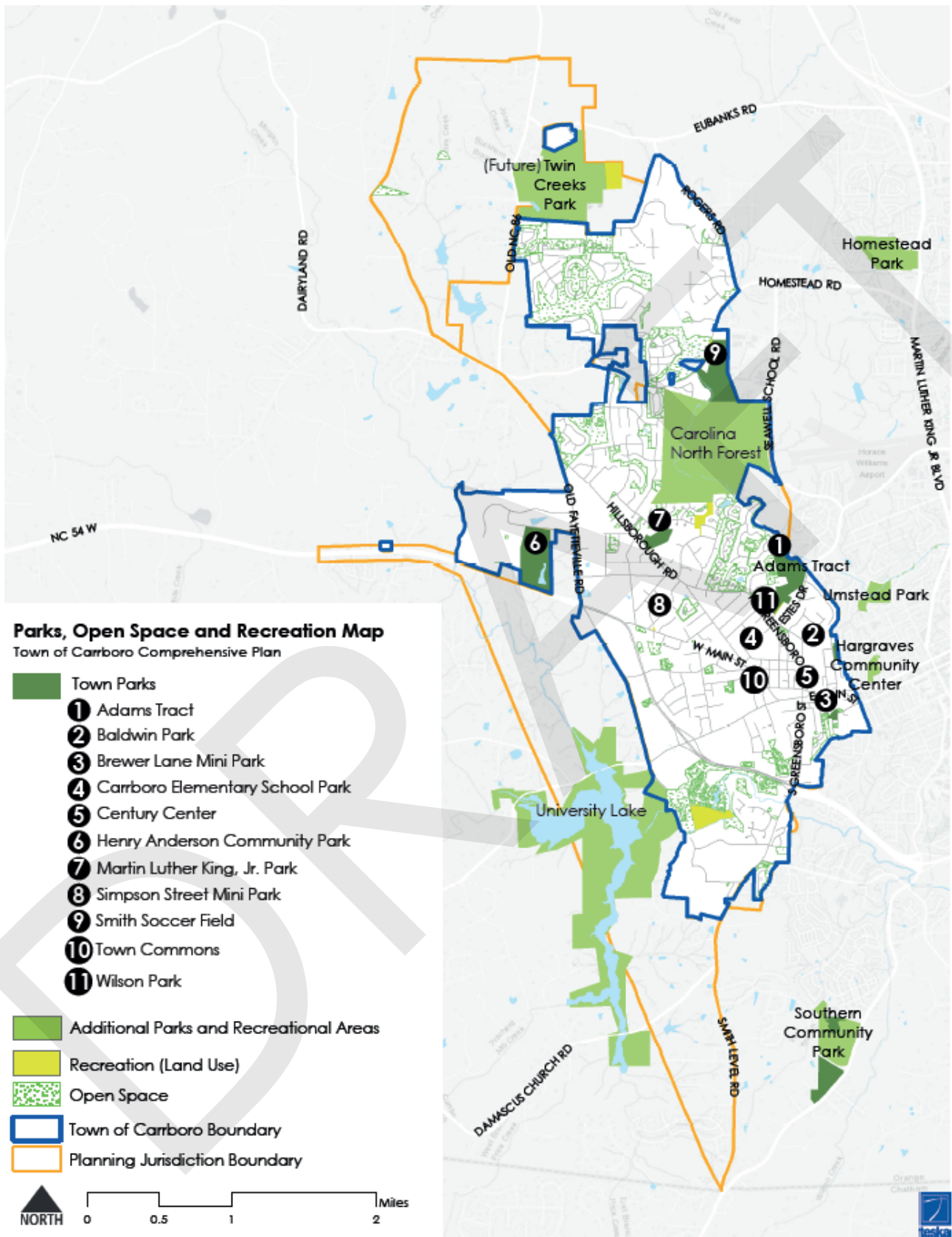
Climate Action

Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Resources strategies and projects aim to advance the Town's Climate Action Plan and Energy and Climate Action Plan through:

- Encouraging the development of a connected network of greenways, parks, open spaces, and trails that facilitate transportation by foot and bike, thereby reducing local carbon emissions.
- Ensuring that recreation and park facilities are using environmental best management practices and showcasing these through educational components for park users.
- Protecting ecologically sensitive sites and preserving land that could be used for sustainable purposes.

DRAFT METRICS

1. Increase in the number of residents who live within a 10-minute walk of a park or programmed activities
2. Increase in the number of BIPOC participants in RPCR programming
3. Increase in the number of all people participating in RPCR programming
4. Increase in the number of BIPOC-led programs
5. Increase in the number of new programs and events in Carrboro
6. Increase in the number of new equitable and accessible recreational amenities (such as outdoor exercise equipment)



Parks, Open Space and Recreation Map

Goal 1: Promote recreational programming and cultural resources across all ages, genders, races, and abilities with affordable opportunities.

Strategy 1.1: Evaluate recreational programming through the new racial equity lens to identify any gaps in activities for all interests, age groups, ability, and affordability levels. (Source: Interviews)

- a) Periodically survey the public and conduct needs assessments on recreation services to identify new opportunities, changing priorities, and barriers (e.g. affordability) to improve communication and foster community trust. (Source: Best Practice) Surveys may also reveal efficiencies and deficiencies in service provision or new ideas for programming that better aligns with community interests.
- b) Conduct a feasibility study and/or needs assessment for an indoor recreation center/swimming pool in Town. (Source: Interviews and Engagement) As documented in the 2006 Parks Master Plan and heard again throughout engagement for Carrboro Connects, there has been continued interest in a public pool and more indoor recreational facilities and gyms in Carrboro. This new rec center could also include flexible spaces for after school programming and attempt to fill other programming and facility gaps that are not met with the new 203 Project and ArtsCenter.
- c) Install additional outdoor exercise amenities in more parks and along trails for affordable and easy access. (Source: Interviews and Engagement) Monitor and assess usage and maintenance requirements of exercise features at Dr. MLK, Jr. Park, as this model may be of interest and may be applicable elsewhere.
- d) Consider a communications campaign that focuses on targeted outreach in communities that are not currently utilizing RPCR programs. (Source: Best Practice)
- e) Enhance the promotion of the Financial Assistance Program (FAP). (Source: Recreation and Parks Commission) This Town program is available for families and individuals who live in Orange County and wish to participate, but are unable to pay fees for classes and activities offered by the Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Resources Department.
- f) Provide activities and spaces geared towards teenagers with passive and active gathering spaces and programs that would appeal to their age level. (Source: Interviews) Teenagers are a difficult age group to reach, as their programming interests may be different from youth and older adults. The Town can survey the teenage population to better understand their needs and then use survey findings to partner with the forthcoming Teen Center (part of the 203 Project) to adapt or plan for new programming opportunities and gathering spaces.
- g) Continue, promote, and expand offerings for virtual recreational programming. (Source: Town Staff) The RPCR Department has a dedicated "Virtual Programming" webpage on www.carrbororec.org, which includes extensive online offerings such as summer camp activities and crafts, athletic instruction, health and wellness education, and links to other virtual resources and learning opportunities. These online programs are an example of an equitable recreational amenity, as they are free and allow anyone with internet access to engage from home, school, or other

extracurriculars without needing RPCR space or facilities. RPCR should continue these and expand these offerings.

"I love the little workout space at Collins Crossing! It's especially great because it has a variety of equipment in one space (rather than spread out around a longer trail, like the Pumpkin Loop--which is still cool). Could we add more of these around town? Perhaps at the new MLK park, Simpson, Anderson, Wilson, etc." –Website comment



Outdoor exercise equipment, pictured above, provides a free opportunity for people of varying abilities to work out individually or in a group. Pull-up bars in particular are becoming popular and have been specifically requested in the community engagement process.



Carrboro's parks offer many well-used sports facilities like these courts pictured here at Anderson Park. Through engagement, many expressed desire to see more multi-purpose fields for soccer and other sports.

Strategy 1.2: Identify and promote opportunities for both passive and active recreation for young and old populations using the racial equity review process. (Source: Interviews)

- a) Dedicate funding and identify sites for a splash pad (or similar interactive water feature) that can serve all ages and ability levels to play, gather, and cool down during Carrboro's warm weather. (Source: Engagement) Ideally this amenity would be located somewhere that is bikeable and walkable for nearby neighbors, such as in the Rogers Road - Eubanks neighborhood or in a central location near downtown.
- b) Add at least one multigenerational wellness opportunity each year to an existing town wide event. (Source: Best Practice) To encourage all-ages participation and community-building, RPCR and its partners can set a goal of hosting at least one program or event each year that will attract a range of people and introduce new wellness opportunities. Examples may include a community-wide walk around Town, pickleball, or yoga/meditation.
- c) Continue to encourage and expand neighbor-organized community gardens in public parks. (Source: Interviews) Community gardens provide grounds for community building, mental and physical health, and education. RPCR can evaluate areas in parks that could be suitable as new community garden spaces.
- d) Improve park and trail accessibility for people with different abilities. (Source: Best Practice) Long-term, the Town should aspire to go beyond the minimum ADA standards and work towards achieving near universal access for all individuals.
- e) Consider adding programs that offer health education, physical training, and nutrition. (Source: Best Practice) These types of programs can cater to all ages and ability levels and promote health and wellness.

“Let’s look to UNC’s successful edible garden program which has little gardens spread around campus! Would love to see that near affordable housing or across from Twin Creeks Parks. I hope there can be opportunities for small scale farming in the Northern Transition Area.” –Task Force comment

“A water play feature, a water pad, a spray ground...None in Carrboro or Chapel Hill yet. It would improve the town a lot. It’s accessible to everyone and a place to meet and connect and cool down during the hot summer months.” – Website comment

“The Twin Creeks Park current pathway is accessible for those on foot, bikes, wheelchairs, and walkers. Any future build out and amenities should focus on accessibility. This coupled with the current CH Transit bus stop at MGEElementary (and possible future transit stops) will provide people of all abilities and ages a truly safe natural space with no barriers to physical access and enjoyment.” –Feedback from Northern Transition Area Advisory Committee



Splash pads and water fountains are fun-filled gathering spaces and play areas for children, teens, and families. During engagement for Carrboro Connects, many expressed that they would like to see this kind of amenity in Carrboro. A splash pad may also satisfy some of the near-term demand for a public pool as the Town determines the feasibility of such.

Strategy 1.3: Continue to adapt and expand cultural resources and programming to align with community needs. (Source: Interviews)

- a) Capitalize on the 203 Project and the new ArtsCenter to plan for arts and cultural programming that reaches underserved populations. (Source: Town Staff) These new facilities provide tremendous opportunities for RPCR and related organizations (i.e. local schools and their theater programs, religious institutions, etc.) to revamp

existing programs and capture new users and develop new programming to serve populations and interests that are not currently served.

- b) Identify partnerships and opportunities for cross-pollination with other organizations providing programming. (Source: Task Force) Where public agencies cannot fill in the gaps, RPCR should consider establishing formal partnerships and supportive relationships with nonprofit organizations that already offer or can expand their programs to ensure community needs are met. For example, the Art Therapy Institute collaborates with the Refugee Community Partnership for programming.

Goal 2: Ensure all people in Carrboro have safe, equitable, and connected access to parks, open space, and recreational facilities.

“Every resident should be within a half mile of a park. This will become especially needed if the Town moves to higher density with townhomes that are typically developed without recreational space.” –Website comment

Strategy 2.1: Strive for a park, play field, or other green space within walking distance (e.g. half-mile or 10-minute walk) and physically accessible to all residents in Carrboro. (Source: Vision 2020)

- a) Prioritize access for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, and other underserved communities in siting new park and recreation facilities or improving access to existing parks and facilities, including the number of entrances, access points, and safe pathways to existing facilities, allowing more residents to be able to walk to a park. (Source: Task Force) See Park Access Map for more details.
- b) Pursue opportunities for new, expanded, or shared multi-purpose fields that can accommodate a range of activities and users. (Source: Engagement)
- c) Consider ways that the Town of Carrboro can coordinate with and encourage Orange County to implement plans for Twin Creeks Park. (Source: Task Force and Engagement) A master plan for this park has been approved and is currently seeking funding. Implementation of Twin Creeks would have a major impact and achieve cross-cutting goals of increasing park access and connectivity between greenways and bike routes, and amenities such as a spray park, especially for those living in the Rogers Road neighborhood and the Transition Areas.
- d) Explore or consider partnerships with homeowners' associations (HOAs) and other landowners for joint use agreements that increase public access to open space and recreation facilities. (Source: Interviews) There are existing green spaces and recreational facilities that are not open to the public but could potentially open up for designated times or programming. For example, there could be an agreement with Perry Place affordable housing community, CASA, and the Towns of Carrboro and Chapel Hill to facilitate shared use with other neighbors in the Merritt Mill Road neighborhood. In the near term, temporary installations can offer a less expensive option to “pilot” an idea or program.

- e) Adopt siting and service criteria for evaluating potential land acquisition for recreation and park facilities in cooperation with other regional park providers and in relation to siting facilities in underserved areas and exploring sites for pocket parks (less than 2 acres) or button parks (1 acre or less). (Source: Best Practice)
- f) Consider locations for a new dog park in a central location in Town to provide an amenity for dog owners and another opportunity for additional social and gathering spaces for residents. (Source: Engagement)

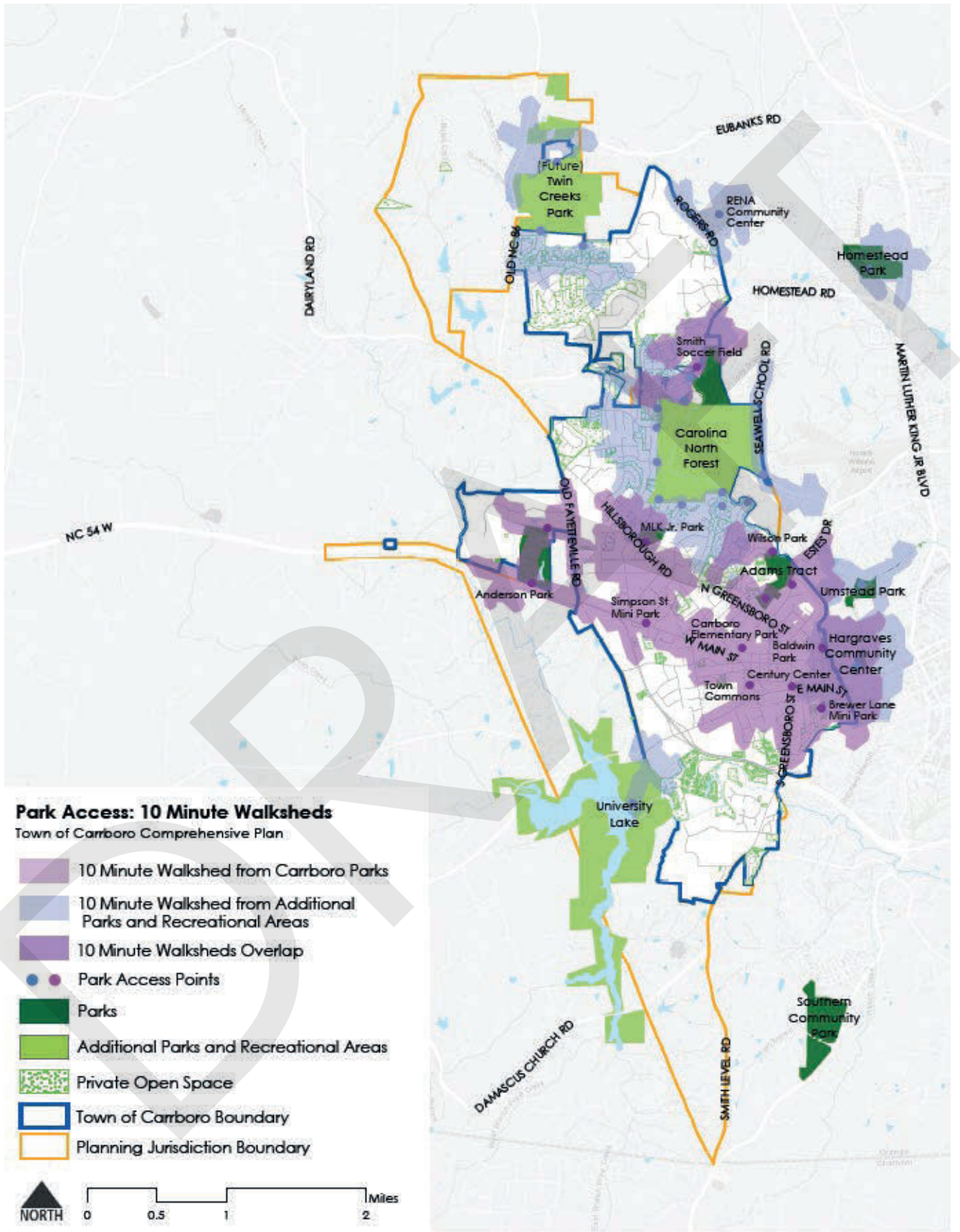
SIDEBAR FEATURE: Criteria for parkland acquisition and capital improvements:

- Land/project is well-suited for additional recreational and cultural opportunities that have been identified through outreach as priorities for the Town.
- Land/project would provide greater access to traditionally underserved communities such as low-income households, BIPOC households, immigrants, and refugees.
- Land/project would enhance climate action goals through environmentally sound best practices such as alleviating localized flooding through stormwater green infrastructure.
Land/project would enhance connectivity to bike facilities, sidewalks, greenways, and/or transit.
Land/project would provide greater access to households that are currently more than a 10-minute walk from a park.

SIDEBAR FEATURE: The Park Access Map illustrates the 10-minute walking distance (the “walkshed”) from different park access points. It is important to note that the analysis simply accounts for streets that can get someone from point A to point B in a 10-minute walk and does not factor in the walkability or pedestrian experience and comfort or safety of that walk. It also does not include any privately owned/HOA open space or facilities including pools in apartment complexes or private neighborhoods.

“Carrboro parks” includes all Town-owned and managed parks, while “additional parks and recreational areas” includes those areas that are not maintained by the Town but still located nearby and able to be used by Carrboro residents (i.e. Chapel Hill or Orange County facilities, Carolina North, University Lake). While these are outside of RPCR’s jurisdiction, they are still local assets that contribute to the overall network of parks and recreation for many people.

Based on this analysis, the far northern (including the Transition Areas) and southern sections (including the ETJ) of Carrboro are underserved by park access. The area just west of downtown (including the Fidelity-Davie neighborhood) is also underserved. **Note:** through Carrboro Connects engagement there have been calls for converting the green space adjoining Westwood Cemetery into a park, and others who wish to respect the historic legacy of the cemetery and allow the cemetery use to expand. This is an ongoing community issue to be explored further.



Park Access: 10 Minute Walksheds Map

Strategy 2.2: Continue to maintain and pursue new opportunities for coordination and shared-use agreements with Orange County, Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, and other recreation providers to connect park and greenway systems. (Source: Interviews)

- a) Expand existing parks partnerships and consider the need for any new agreements that can improve access across different park systems. (Source: Interviews) The Town of Carrboro already has a strong partnership and existing shared use agreements with the Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools, which allows RPCR to extend sports programming using school-owned facilities, such as gyms and playing fields. New and expanded partnerships can allow the Department to further extend its programming reach. As part of future needs assessments, RPCR should identify possible new partners—such as neighborhood HOAs, private organizations, and nonprofit or religious/institutional groups—and design mutually beneficial arrangements to help fill in any programming or service gaps.
- b) Encourage and participate in a regional Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan to guide future parks planning and help leverage outside funding. (Source: Orange County Parks and Recreation Master Plan)

Strategy 2.3: Preserve, enhance, and promote access to additional parks and open spaces through partnerships with other agencies and organizations. (Source: Interviews)

- a) Continue to work with other agencies such as the County, UNC, OWASA, and the Town of Chapel Hill to maintain and expand opportunities in Carolina North Forest and University Lake. (Source: Engagement) During engagement, many residents stated their great appreciation for Carolina North and University Lake as significant community assets that they use and enjoy. Carrboro's RPCR can continue to build on these assets by supporting new linkages, programs, and outreach/education that enhances access for even more Carrboro residents.
- b) Consider new sites for recreational opportunities as part of future development in the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). (Source: Town Staff) Future improvements in the ETJ may spur the need/opportunity for new facilities and/or RPCR land acquisition. RPCR should coordinate with the Planning Department to stay abreast of plans in that area to coordinate and budget accordingly to take advantage of prospects for open space preservation/activation.
- c) Continue to promote and spread awareness of nearby park facilities, especially those that closely border Carrboro and provide amenities and programming that Carrboro lacks. (Source: Town Staff) For example, Carrboro residents can access facilities in Chapel Hill and Orange County such as the Homestead Aquatic Center or the Chapel Hill Community Center which has a pool, indoor basketball courts, indoor rock climbing and can be easily accessed by the paved portion of the Bolin Creek Trail near Umstead Park. Other examples include Homestead Park, Hargraves Community Center, and Southern Community Park. By letting Carrboro residents know about Chapel Hill and Orange County's offerings (and vice versa), these agencies can share resources and decrease the need to provide redundant programs and services.

Strategy 2.4: Focus on community outreach and education about parks and recreation opportunities, especially to those without access to the Internet or for whom English is a second language. (Source: Best Practice)

- a) Connect with community ambassadors / neighborhood liaisons to help with translation and outreach. (Source: Town Staff) While it may not be feasible to translate all RPCR materials into the many languages that are spoken in Carrboro, the Department can identify and employ the use of liaisons from different groups who can assist with community outreach and language interpretation. A key first step to engaging people who are not currently taking advantage of RPCR programs and services is by reaching these communities via neighbors and friends they already know and trust.
- b) Collaborate with school districts, community organizations, and businesses to promote park resources and programs. (Source: Task Force) This might include partnering with schools, nonprofits, churches, and grocery stores, etc. to print and distribute physical copies of the recreation and parks program guide for those without reliable internet access. These places are also often in tune with community needs and can serve as ambassadors for the RPCR Department.
- c) Add multilingual park signage that also uses pictures and icons. (Source: Best Practice) To increase accessibility and continue to foster a welcoming environment at RPCR facilities, future signage improvements can include multiple languages as well as imagery and icons to communicate important information to more users.
- d) Engage new and existing parks users through events that serve multiple purposes (i.e. food distribution and programming for children). (Source: Task Force) Families with multiple demands on their time may not be able to take advantage of RPCR programs as often as they would like. By planning recreational and cultural events/programs in tandem with other community services, the Department may be able to reach more users and educate them about what RPCR has to offer.



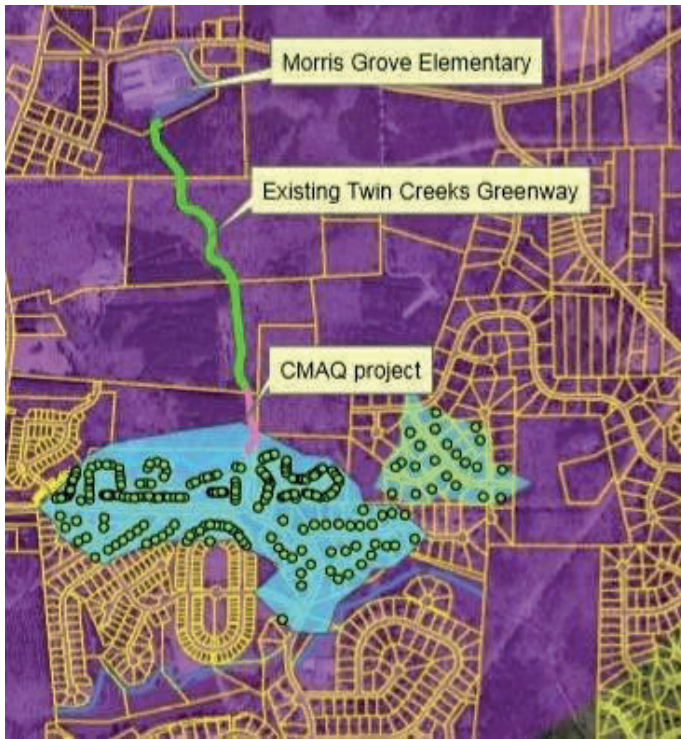
Signage in Carrboro's parks is often posted in both English and Spanish

Strategy 2.5: Encourage and support the development of greenways and trails for public use, creating a complete network of connected greenways connecting parks, open spaces and conservation areas for biking, walking, and wildlife corridors. (Source: Vision 2020)

- a) Continue to collaborate across the RPCR Department, Public Works, and other Town departments and government agencies to implement planned greenway improvements strategically and efficiently in conjunction with planned park and neighborhood linkages. (Source: Interviews and Engagement) This work is already occurring at the regional level through the Town's participation with the Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization. Throughout the engagement process, there was a common vision for a comprehensive greenway system with connected paths and greenways to facilitate car-free access to parks and natural areas in the Carrboro area.

“Explore any opportunities to connect Twin Creeks Park, Morris Grove Elementary, and the future middle school -via greenways and accessible pathways- to the Greene Tract and Eubanks Park & Ride. This will provide children safe options for riding bikes to/from MGEElementary and the future middle school.” -Feedback from Northern Transition Area Advisory Committee

SIDEBAR FEATURE: Through the engagement process there has been expressed interest in moving forward with the planning process for the Bolin Creek Greenway. Phase 1 is complete and the 2009 Conceptual Master Plan included alternative alignments for Phases 3 and 4. The Town Council will identify a facilitated process for the next steps, likely in 2022.



SIDEBAR FEATURE: The Jones Creek Greenway is currently under design. Once completed, this will be a 10-ft. or wider shared use path for bicyclists and pedestrians that adds another segment to the Town's greenway network north of Homestead Rd. along Jones Creek, connecting with the Twin Creeks Greenway. The project will provide walking and cycling options for the Lake Hogan Farms, Legends, Ballentine, and Fox Meadow neighborhoods to destinations such as Morris Grove Elementary and Twin Creeks Park. Find other planned and active construction projects online via the Town's "Current Projects" webmap.



Existing trails at Wilson Park

Goal 3: Ensure that recreation and park facilities and programming are environmentally responsible and help further climate change related goals. (Source: Orange County Parks and Recreation Master Plan)

Strategy 3.1: Implement Best Management Practices in maintenance and future upgrades to Carrboro's park facilities. (Source: Task Force)

- a) Treat recreation and park facilities as functional and exemplary landscapes that can employ green stormwater infrastructure, include native vegetation, flood mitigation, and other resiliency measures. (Source: Best Practice) In partnership with Public Works, RPCR may consider developing specific standards or rating systems to evaluate and improve existing and new facilities to ensure they are using best practices in energy efficiency, stormwater management, and water conservation.
- b) Install educational components in park facilities to share information with the public about stormwater management, sustainable practices, and nature preservation. (Source: Interviews) Various Carrboro facilities already include information displays to educate users and the public, but RPCR may identify where there are additional opportunities to showcase sustainability-related information. To the extent possible, these displays should be interactive and informative for all ages.



Example of educational signage in Baldwin Park that informs visitors about rain gardens

Strategy 3.2: Enhance public access to parks and natural areas while balancing environmental protection and locating active facilities away from ecologically sensitive sites. (Source: Engagement)

- a) Continue to explore options for “nature play” areas like the ones at Dr. MLK Jr. Park. (Source: Best Practice) These outdoor play environments incorporate the surrounding

- landscape and vegetation to expose children to nature early on. These spaces can be low-impact and incorporate educational components, instilling appreciation for interacting with nature in a responsible way.
- b) Encourage strategies for farming to be viable in Carrboro using open space in subdivisions or other underutilized land. (Source: Recreation and Parks Commission) Orange County has a present use value taxation program and other farming programs which Carrboro residents can take advantage of to make farming more financially feasible. This can advance climate change goals by increasing the amount of food grown and consumed locally. Property owners could have nontraditional crops or host farm-based activities uses (i.e. pick-your-own berries, apples, etc.) and community-supported agriculture (community gardening, wholesale nurseries, commercial stables, etc.).

Goal 4: Strengthen a sense of community and inclusion through the arts, events, and cultural programming that celebrates the diversity in Carrboro.

Strategy 4.1: Continue activation and flexible programming of public spaces in partnership with businesses or other private entities. (Source: Best Practice)

- a) Increase opportunities for flexible events and informal activities that enhance the use of public spaces for things like exercise classes, music lessons, dining, outdoor meeting spaces and gatherings, pop-up events, etc. (also see Economic Sustainability) (Source: Interviews)

Strategy 4.2: Continue to celebrate the diversity of the Town's residents through events, festivals, and programming that honors the variety of cultural backgrounds and traditions in Carrboro. (Source: Vision 2020)

- a) Conduct outreach with different segments of the population to identify new opportunities for town wide events that honor and share a variety of cultural traditions. (Source: Town Staff) While the Town already has a full calendar of year-round events, there may be opportunities to expand existing events, such as the community dinner, or partner with local groups and individuals on new cultural programming, led by representatives from each cultural tradition. RPCR can lead outreach to recruit these partners and issue small grants to allow new voices to lead and put on the programs.

Strategy 4.3: Continue to support, fund, and install public artwork by local artists in strategic locations throughout Town to celebrate the history and story of Carrboro. (Source: Vision 2020)

- a) Seek ideas and funding for interactive and culturally representative public artwork to be installed in parks and along greenways. (Source: Task Force) Public art can serve multiple purposes, activating and enlivening spaces while also telling the Carrboro story and showcasing the diverse talents of residents. The Carrboro Arts Committee can work with RPCR to identify new locations along greenways and in park facilities. The Arts Committee can lead the pursuit of funding such as public-private

- partnerships or grant opportunities, and recruit local artists to implement new public art installations.
- b) Consider the development of an Arts Plan to be led by the Arts Committee. (Source: Task Force) An Arts Plan could identify strategic locations in both public and private spaces—such as near parks, inside and around affordable housing, on buses and at bus stops, etc.—for additional artwork and arts initiatives around Carrboro.
 - c) Pursue more opportunities for people to organically express themselves and come together through art in the parks via temporary installations, using chalk art or portable paint boards. (Source: Town Staff) Partner with local organizations (e.g. NAACP) that can organize the activity or event and potentially showcase the artwork afterwards.



This mural in Town depicts Elizabeth "Libba" Cotton, who was a blues and folk musician from Carrboro. Public art like this contributes to a vibrant sense of place while also celebrating the people who have contributed to the Carrboro story.

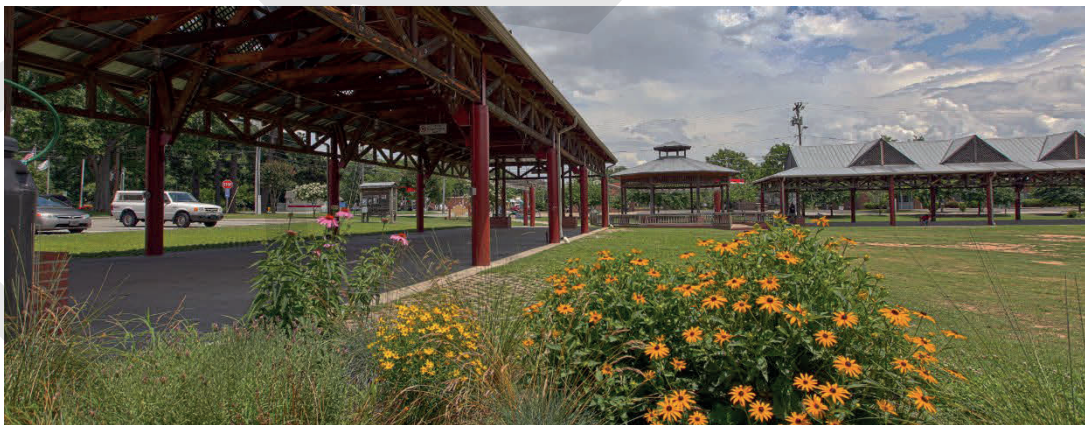
Strategy 4.4: Encourage expanded compatible uses of the Town Commons to include year-round programming such as a crafts and artisan markets. (Source: Engagement)

- a. Recruit new and emerging vendors and entrepreneurs selling a range of goods. (Source: Engagement) The Carrboro Farmers Market can broaden its reach and become even more inclusive and diverse by encouraging and assisting new types of vendors to sell goods. A year-round use of the space to include crafts and artisan markets may attract more vendors from immigrant and BIPOC communities, or groups traditionally not involved with the farmers market.

"Better use of the Town Commons/Farmers Market area, like affordable outdoor classes from the recreation department or classes from local businesses. Why not have the yearly ArtsCenter Elf Market in winter here? It would give small businesses a financial push before the holidays. The Town of Carrboro could lend tents to small businesses and NGOs." – Website comment

Strategy 4.5: Support placemaking projects that promote the Carrboro story and brand. (Source: Interviews and Engagement)

- a. Pursue installations that promote Carrboro as a creative community to attract arts-related tourism and economic development. (Source: Creative Carrboro 2014) The creative culture of Carrboro is a major element of the Town's character, and it is important to keep that authentic. Still, showcasing this creativity through public artwork and placemaking projects can communicate the spirit of Carrboro and attract new people to visit and spend money in Town to support local businesses. The Town, RPCR, and the Arts Committee should consider interactive installations that employ local artists and share the Carrboro story with visitors, inviting them to participate.
- b. Incorporate historical elements and context to share the Town story. (Source: Interviews and Task Force) Just as it is important to reveal and condemn racist truths about the Town's namesake and founding through the Truth Plaque initiative, it is also important to celebrate and elevate the positive stories of Carrboro's history. The Town has already done this through naming projects after notable Carrboro residents—such as the Libba Cotten bikeway—and can partner with the Arts Committee and other boards, commissions and the community, to explore new ways of celebrating historical figures and stories through public installations and placemaking projects.
- c. Continue the Truth Plaque Project. (Source: Interviews) In 2017, the Carrboro Truth Plaque Community Task Force was established to recognize Carrboro's history while uplifting the truth and acknowledging an unjust past. The first plaque, installed in 2019 at Carrboro Town Hall, explains Julian Carr's ties to racial segregation. A second plaque was unveiled in August 2021 for the Freedman School. The project should continue with the addition of more plaques around Town and opportunities for individuals or organizations to sponsor the installation of plaques.



Town Commons

Economic Sustainability

- Leverage greenways and trails as tools for economic development and business promotion and tourism attraction. Local businesses and tourism groups in Carrboro can promote greenways as transportation options or attractions for visitors who may patronize restaurants and shops as part of a greenway outing

Transportation & Mobility

- Identify specific needed improvements for sidewalks, bike paths, and transit routes to enhance multi-modal access to parks, including proximity and enhanced connections to recreation and park facilities as a criteria for evaluating and prioritizing transportation projects. Higher priority may be given to projects which are most needed due to existing safety and vulnerability, and those which increase connections and fill existing gaps in the network.

APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF PARK MASTER PLAN COMPONENTS

CARRBORO RESIDENT RECREATIONAL PREFERENCES

Please see a full summary in the [Results from RPCR questions on the 2018 Carrboro Biennial Survey](#).

CITIZEN SATISFACTION

The Carrboro RPCR Department manages ten total parks and operates a variety of programs. In both the 2016 and 2018 Carrboro Citizen Surveys, the Town's parks and recreation and cultural programs received "A" grades across all categories. Twenty percent of survey respondents indicated someone in their household had participated in a program in the past two years, with the following named most often: youth/various sports, basketball, Christmas events, July 4th, camps, events/festivals/concerts, children's events, Open Streets, Music Festival, baseball/softball, tennis, and Spanish classes.

Citizen Survey Results – Parks & Recreation

Category	2016 Grade	2018 Grade
Cost or Amount of Fee	A	A+
Overall Experience	A	A
Ease of Registration	A	A
Instructor Quality	A-	A
Facility Quality	A	A-
Program Quality	A	A-

Source: Carrboro 2018 Biennial Survey Report

INVENTORY OF EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND PARKLAND

Please see the [RPCR Issues and Opportunities Report](#) for a full inventory of existing recreational facilities and parkland.

ESTIMATE OF PARKLAND AND FACILITIES TO BE ACQUIRED

METRICS

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) compiles data and insights for recreation and park agencies across the United States. Their 2020 NRPA Agency Performance Review report highlights 24 essential metrics, several of which are highlighted in the below tables. With a 2019 population estimate of 21,190, Carrboro just barely falls into the 20,000 to 49,999 agency category based on its jurisdiction population. Therefore, two metric categories are used in the following comparison tables: jurisdictions with under 20,000 people and those with 20,000 to 49,999 people.

Based on the NRPA comparisons, the Town of Carrboro has more than sufficient **parkland** per 1,00 residents, but would need to **add approximately 80 additional acres to its inventory of town parks** to meet the NRPA metric for at least 9.6 acres of Town Parks per 1,000 residents. When considering with the total parkland (which encompasses over 1,000 acres), the Town may not need to fill this entire 80 acre gap in order to sufficiently meet resident needs as there are additional recreation and park areas available to the public. However, the Park Access Map described in this chapter depicts specific areas in which residents may be underserved by parks within a 10-minute walk.

General Park Facilities Comparisons

	Under 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	Carrboro
Acres of Town Parks* per 1,000 Residents	12.0	9.6	5.3
Acres of Total Parkland** per 1,000 Residents	12.0	9.6	57.2
Residents per park	1,300	1,963	2,119
Miles of Trail (maintained by Carrboro)	3.0	8.5	6.5
Miles of Trail (within Carrboro Planning Jurisdiction)	3.0	8.5	19.37
Notes:			
*Town Parks includes the ten parks managed by RPCR.			
**Total Parkland includes the following Additional Parks and Recreational Areas: Carolina North (UNC), University Lake (UNC), Homestead Park (Chapel Hill), Southern Community Park (Chapel Hill), Umstead Park, and Hargraves Community Park (Chapel Hill), Twin Creeks Future Park (Orange County)			
Source: 2020 NRPA standards			

Outdoor Park & Recreation Facilities - Population per Facility

	Under 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	Carrboro RPCR
Playgrounds	2,523	3,157	3,027
Tot lot	6,998	10,900	21,190
Basketball courts	4,090	7,067	4,238
Outdoor tennis courts	2,922	4,347	3,532
Baseball field - youth	3,396	5,132	10,595
Baseball field – adult	7,804	17,185	5,298
Multi-purpose field	4,683	7,297	10,595
Dog park	10,000	28,132	21,190
Outdoor swimming pool	8,023	25,107	N/A
Community gardens	7,914	22,562	7,063
Soccer field – youth	3,294	4,833	21,190
Soccer field - adult	7,665	10,576	10,595
Skate park	10,118	29,421	N/A
Football field	7,500	16,971	21,190
Source: 2020 NRPA standards			
Note: While Carrboro RPCR does share facilities with local schools for certain programming, those shared facilities are not included in these metrics.			

Indoor Park and Recreation Facilities - Population per Facility

	Under 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	Carrboro RPCR
Community center*	9,601	26,280	10,595
Senior center	12,209	32,639	N/A
Performance amphitheater	10,812	30,577	21,190
Nature center	10,816	35,854	N/A
Teen center*	13,622	28,400	21,190
Notes:			
*Forthcoming as part of the 203 Project.			
Source: 2020 NRPA standards			

Programming Offered by Park & Recreation Agencies

	Under 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	Carrboro RPCR (Y/N)
Themed special events	80%	90%	Y
Team sports	84%	93%	Y
Social recreation events	78%	91%	Y
Fitness enhancement	70%	86%	Y
Health and wellness education	68%	83%	Y
Individual sports	65%	78%	Y
Safety training	63%	70%	Y
Aquatics	59%	69%	N
Racquet sports	58%	65%	Y
Performing arts	47%	65%	Y
Trips and tours	47%	65%	Y
Cultural crafts	46%	58%	Y
Martial arts	43%	63%	N
Visual arts	41%	55%	Y
Natural and cultural history	37%	51%	Y
Golf	25%	46%	N
Running/cycling races	27%	32%	N

Source: 2020 NRPA standards and Carrboro RPCR Fall 2020 Brochure

Note: This table only accounts for programming offered by Carrboro RPCR. While other local organizations may offer the programming mentioned here, they were not factored into this assessment.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

The Community Engagement Chapter details the extensive engagement efforts conducted over the course of the planning process. A specific focus on recreation and parks was a consistent theme and engagement area across all activities – in every meeting and as part of every outreach activity, participants were asked for their ideas and feedback on park and recreation improvements and recommendations. Over 1,300 people were engaged in the process, representing members from nearly every demographic group across Carrboro. Over 75 comments specific to recreation and parks were collected and incorporated in this document.