



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 essence, and diverse range of cultures through 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. People in Carrboro deeply value and appreciate their parks and open spaces, and it is important to expand opportunities for all residents to have the ease and ability to enjoy parklands. The Park Access Map in this chapter takes a closer look at walking distance to parks, as well as a discussion on other important considerations such as facility quality, type, and amenities; hours; accommodations for person with disabilities; proximity and access to private open space, etc.

Improving park access and enhancing equitable access to and 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.

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.

What is “perceived access?”

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 to better understand and expand “perceived access” of all residents through initiatives like the One Orange Countywide Racial Equity Framework, the Racial Equity Commission, the Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE) Trainings, 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.

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.

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

Source: 2020 NRPA Standards; Carrboro RPCR Fall 2020 Brochure

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

Key Findings (continued)

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 & 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.

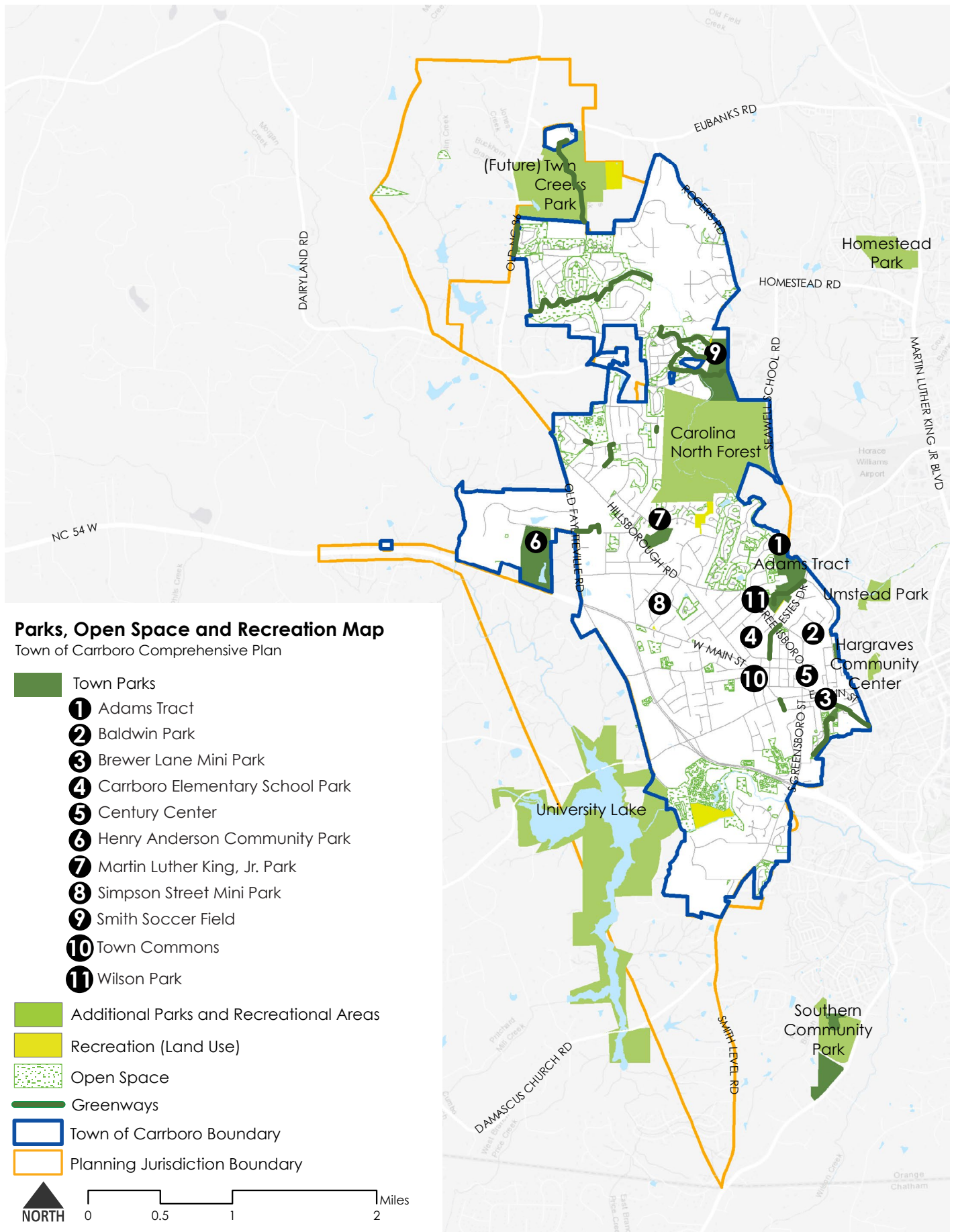
Climate Action

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.

What We Will Measure

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



Goals, Strategies, and Projects

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 adopted One Orange Racial Equity Framework to identify any gaps in activities for all interests, age groups, ability, and affordability levels.

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. 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. 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. 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 Develop a communications campaign that focuses on targeted outreach in communities that are not currently utilizing RPCR programs.

E Enhance the promotion of the Financial Assistance Program (FAP). 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. 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. 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.



▲ 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.



▲ 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.

"I love the little workout space at Collins Crossing! It's especially great because it has a variety of equipment in one space... Could we add more of these around town? Perhaps at the new MLK park, Simpson, Anderson, Wilson, etc." –Website comment

"A water play feature, a water pad, a spray ground 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

Strategy 1.2: Identify and promote opportunities for both passive and active recreation for young and old populations.

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. 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. 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. 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. Long-term, the Town should aspire to go beyond the minimum ADA standards and work towards achieving near universal access for all individuals.

E Add programs that offer health education, physical training, and nutrition. These types of programs can cater to all ages and ability levels and promote health and wellness.

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

A Capitalize on the 203 Project and the new ArtsCenter to plan for arts and cultural programming that reaches underserved populations. 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. Where public agencies cannot fill in the gaps, RPCR should establish 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.

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. ▼



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

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.

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. 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.

C Find ways that the Town of Carrboro can coordinate with and encourage Orange County to implement plans for Twin Creeks Park. 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 partnerships with homeowners' associations (HOAs) and other landowners for joint use agreements that increase public access to open space and recreation facilities. 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.

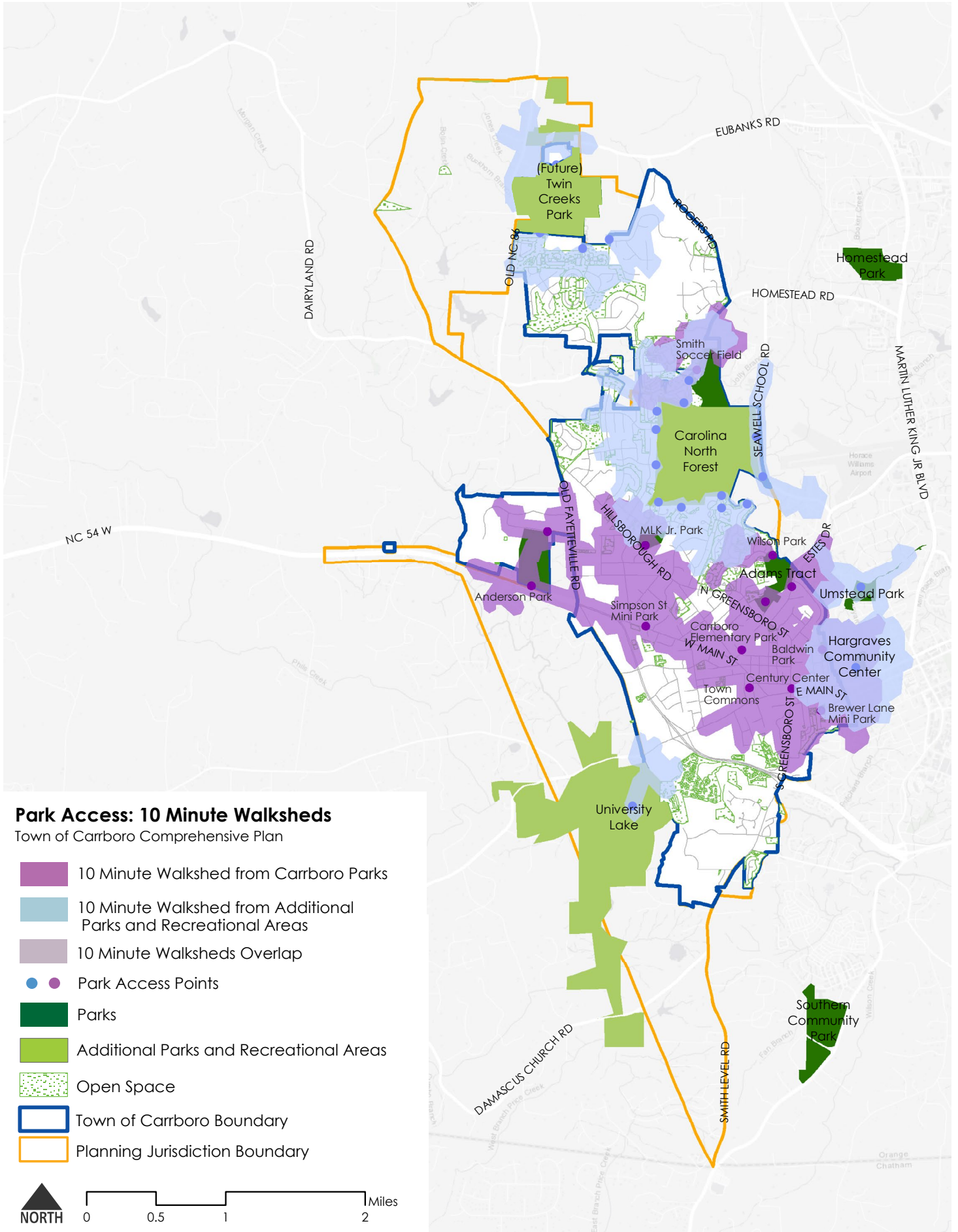
E Adopt siting and service criteria for evaluating potential land acquisition for recreation and park facilities in cooperation with other regional park providers and in relation to siting facilities in underserved areas and exploring sites for pocket parks (less than 2 acres) or button parks (1 acre or less).

F Identify 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.

Criteria for Future Parks Planning

The below criteria for parkland acquisition and capital improvements should be used when planning for future parks and recreation opportunities. These are to all be considered alongside factors unique to specific areas, such as proximity to existing facilities (or lack thereof), neighborhood needs, and equity considerations:

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



Park Access

The Park Access Map illustrates the 10-minute walking distance (i.e. the “walkshed”) from different park access points. It is important to note that this analysis only includes streets that can get someone from point A to point B within a 10-minute walk and does not factor in off-road facilities such as greenways, nor does it consider the 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. These are limitations of this map, and a more detailed park access analysis could be completed as part of plan implementation.

Based on the walkshed analysis, the far northern (including the Transition Areas) and southern sections (including the ETJ) of Carrboro are underserved, as well as the area just west of downtown (including the Fidelity-Davie neighborhood). Other factors should also be considered part of park access, such as: facility quality, type, and amenities; hours; accommodations for person with disabilities; proximity and access to private open space, etc.

The “Carrboro parks” category 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 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.

Note: through the Carrboro Connects engagement process there have been calls for converting the undeveloped portion of Westwood Cemetery into a park, while others wish to respect the historic legacy of the cemetery and allow its use as a cemetery to expand. This is an ongoing community issue to be explored further.

“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 2.2: 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.

A Expand existing parks partnerships and identify the need for any new agreements that can improve access across different park systems. 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.

Signage in Carrboro’s parks is often posted in both English and Spanish. ▼



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

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. 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 Identify new sites for recreational opportunities as part of future development in the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). 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. 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.

A Connect with community ambassadors / neighborhood liaisons to help with translation and outreach. 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. 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. 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). 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.

Jones Creek Greenway

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.



Bolin Creek Greenway

Carrboro adopted a Greenways Master Plan in 2006, that first identified the Bolin Creek Corridor as a potential alignment for greenway development. This is a multi-phase project of which sections 1A and 1B have been completed. Phase 2 as identified in that plan should still be considered for potential bicycle transportation projects. Consideration of other alignments in that plan were not discussed as part of this planning process, because as of April 2022, direction has yet to be determined by the Carrboro Town Council.

“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 MG Elementary and the future middle school.”

Feedback from Northern Transition Area Advisory Committee

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.

Throughout the Carrboro Connects 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. Greenways serving as connectors achieves multiple goals of this plan and reserving land for such connections should be considered in land use planning processes.

A With efforts led by the Planning Department, continue to collaborate with Planning, RPCR, Public Works, other Town departments, government agencies, and Advisory Boards and Commissions (i.e. Greenways Commission) to implement planned greenway improvements strategically and efficiently in conjunction with planned park and neighborhood linkages. This work is already occurring at the regional level through the Town's participation with the Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Goal 3: Ensure that recreation and park facilities and programming are environmentally responsible and help further climate change related goals.

Strategy 3.1: Implement Best Management Practices in maintenance and future upgrades to Carrboro's park facilities.

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. In partnership with Public Works, RPCR could develop 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. 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.

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

A Continue to explore options for “nature play” areas like the ones at Dr. MLK Jr. Park. 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. 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.).

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



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.

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)

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.

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. 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.

A Seek ideas and funding for interactive and culturally representative public artwork to be installed in parks and along greenways. 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 Explore the development of an Arts Plan to be led by the Arts Committee. 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. 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" Cotten, 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.

A Recruit new and emerging vendors and entrepreneurs selling a range of goods. 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.

Strategy 4.5: Support placemaking projects that promote the Carrboro story and brand.

A Pursue installations that promote Carrboro as a creative community to attract arts-related tourism and economic development. 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. 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. 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.



“Better use of the Town Commons 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

▲ Event held at Town Commons

Related Strategies & Projects in Other Chapters

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.



▲ Libba Cotten Bikeway (rail with trail)

Summary of Park Master Plan Components

Carrboro Residential 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.

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.

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		

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 total parkland per 1,000 residents, but would need to add approximately 80 additional acres to the inventory of Town-owned parks to meet the NRPA metric for at least 9.6 acres of Town Parks per 1,000 residents. When considering 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 (by Jurisdiction Population)			
	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
Note: While Carrboro RPCR does share facilities with local schools for certain programming, those shared facilities are not included in these metrics.			
Source: 2020 NRPA standards			

Indoor Park & 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
Note: * 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
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.			
Source: 2020 NRPA standards and Carrboro RPCR Fall 2020 Brochure			

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 1,500 people were engaged in the process, representing members from nearly every demographic group across Carrboro. Over 75 ideas specific to recreation and parks were collected and incorporated in this document.

