



HAYWOOD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

February 2022



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Haywood County Board of Commissioners

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parks and recreation is an integral piece of any community. It provides people with high quality of life standards that includes health and wellness benefits, the opportunity for leisure, and the ability to connect with other people and the surrounding natural resources. It is commonly accepted that physical activity through recreation activities and park use improves one's overall mental and physical health. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) states that, "The nation's public parks and recreation are leaders in improving the overall health and wellness of the nation. They are essential partners in combating some of the most complicated challenges our country faces — poor nutrition, hunger, obesity, and physical inactivity. Park and recreation agencies effectively improve health outcomes and thus should be supported through national and community level funding and policies that enable them to continue to expand their efforts in making a positive change in the health and wellness of our nation." ("Role of Parks and Recreation on Health and Wellness: Position Statement: National Recreation and Park Association." Role of Parks and Recreation on Health and Wellness | Position Statement | National Recreation and Park Association, <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/role-of-parks-and-recreation-on-health-and-wellness/>.)

Haywood County provides public recreation to its citizens as a means of supporting a high quality of life. Studies have shown that well-being is very important to residents and visitors. Extensive research also demonstrates the positive economic impact of recreation, parks, and tourism on local economies. Lively programs and events also have a major impact on community economic development and a sense of unity within a community. Haywood County has the potential to attract new residents and businesses eager to experience the quality of life the County provides.

As the Covid-19 Pandemic affected the population on a global basis, parks and recreation became a critical outlet for many people. It provided for the necessary physical, mental, and social well-being for individuals. This trend has been a positive influence for communities as a whole, however the negative impact on a parks and recreation system is the increased need for maintenance due to high usage. According to the NRPA 2020 National Report, 1 in 5 parks and recreation agencies are reducing operations spending by at least 33% with 66% of agencies facing a median reduction of 10–19%. The County will need to evaluate their budget and determine what efficiencies may need to be incorporated.



*"THERE IS NOT A SINGLE SET OF
STANDARDS FOR PARKS AND
RECREATION BECAUSE DIFFERENT
AGENCIES SERVE DIFFERENT
COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE UNIQUE
NEEDS, DESIRES, AND CHALLENGES."*

- 2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review

The County recognizes the importance of *planning* as a means of improving recreation opportunities for all its residents and visitors. As a result, Haywood County hired McGill Associates, PA (McGill) to assist with the creation of a ten-year Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan.

Haywood County's Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan 2022–2032 provides the framework for guiding Haywood County's board and staff. The framework for this Master Plan is based upon conducting an inventory of the existing park system, recording site observations, discussing needs from County staff, and evaluating public comments made through community input. In addition, state and national standards were used as a guide to support the recommendations made for the County recreation facilities. The assessment of existing park facilities, or lack thereof, will identify the immediate needs in the community and predict future needs.

Another purpose of the Master Plan is to analyze and recommend the addition or renovation of parks, programs, and recreational facilities. It also prioritizes certain projects, such as recommended park upgrades or possible expansion, by taking into consideration the identification of user population and the development of recreation standards. The Master Plan is action oriented and will provide Haywood County with a practical guide for the enhancement of its facilities and programs for the next ten years. It is intended to maintain the type of location that fosters community spirit, activism, and bonding between local citizens.

The Haywood County Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan is divided into five sections. A brief summary of the findings provides the County with a snapshot of what the future of parks and recreation in Haywood County can be.



Section 1 gives a synopsis of the local history, provides insight into the community, looks at the people that make up Haywood County, and addresses population trends and projections.

Section 2 provides a detailed inventory of the recreational facilities in Haywood County provided by both public and private entities.

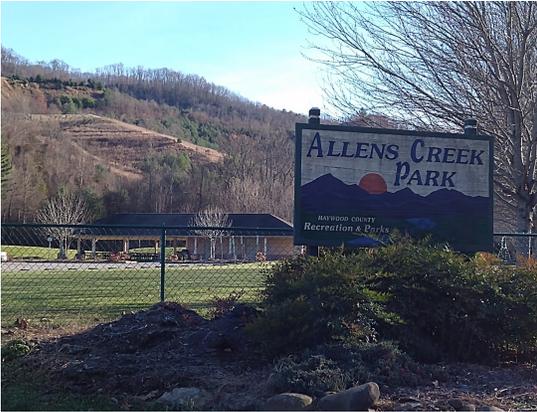
Section 3 looks at the needs of the County through public input gathered by the community, state and national guidelines for recreation, and evaluation of the facilities, programs, and staff.

Section 4 provides goals and recommendations to improve upon the current parks and recreational offerings within Haywood County.

Section 5 provides the County with actionable items to implement improvements as well as offer insight into funding opportunities.

EXISTING PARK FACILITIES

Haywood County currently owns, operates, and maintains two parks. Each of these facilities provide both active and passive recreational opportunities for residents who live in the County as well as tourists who come to experience all that Haywood County has to offer.



ALLENS CREEK PARK — 7.5 ACRES

Allens Creek Park is the County's first developed park and provides the community both active and passive recreation opportunities surrounded by beautiful mountains. This jewel near the Town of Waynesville promotes health and wellness with a walking path and multiuse fields. The surrounding woods provide a natural setting for this great facility.



GLANCE STREET PARK — 2 ACRES

Glance Street Park is a small passive area near the center of Clyde. At one time it was an annex site for Haywood Community College, however flooding destroyed the buildings and the County acquired it to provide a passive green space for the community. A paved walking path surrounds an open lawn and a pollinator garden that provides beauty for the community of Clyde.

POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

The people that make up a community play an integral role in how to plan and prepare for the future of a sustainable parks and recreation system. A study of the demographic profile of County residents is a key factor in making specific and accurate recommendations. The Data USA showed that the County's overall population estimate in 2019 is 61,053 with the average age of residents within the County being 48 years old.

Along with demographics, understanding population trends and projections is an integral part of proposals. The North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (NC OSBM) projects that by the year 2030, 1 in 5 North Carolinians will be 65 years old or older. NC OSBM also projects that the County will have an increase of around 12% in their population by the year 2031.

Another population of people to consider for Haywood County are the tourists that flock to the mountain region and all that it has to offer. Determining how the seasonal population impacts the County can be difficult due to the range of factors that must be considered in estimating the peak population. While the permanent residents of Haywood County are the key members to plan for, it is also important to understand that the seasonal population plays a big role in how the park facilities are used and any necessary recommendations must account for this large group of people.

PUBLIC INPUT

In preparing the Master Plan, the County guided McGill's team in the development of the public survey, plan goals, and recommendations. A key objective in the development of this Master Plan was the solicitation of community input, thereby identifying additional needs for County residents and visitors, such as renovation, construction, property acquisition, development, and operational policies, for both now and in the future. Community input, along with the comparison to state and national standards, are the initial steps in the process.



In addition to a public survey that was made available, there were multiple public meetings that provided important knowledge that aided in the process towards making recommendations for the Haywood County Parks and Recreation Department.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Master Plan emphasizes practical and more desirable improvements to the existing recreation system, including parks and recreational facilities. It is not designed to be exclusive but rather to enhance recreational opportunities in the community.

The Master Plan focuses on providing Haywood County with an accurate, usable guide for decision making as the County begins to implement projects, such as:

- Renovating existing facilities currently owned by Haywood County
- Exploring the possibilities for developing new facilities within Haywood County
- Developing facilities and programming for future greenways that will promote walking and cycling
- Updating policy and ordinances to meet community needs and desires

The anticipated opinion of costs for the projects proposed in this plan is \$5,805,000, not including potential affects due to inflation or notable shifts in the construction market.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The County can leverage its many natural, historic, and recreational resources, as well as develop its visitor tourism, by improving public spaces, park facilities, programming, and events. Developers and community leaders recognize the importance of greenways and trails, open spaces, water-based recreation amenities, athletic facilities, and cultural programs. Recommendations provided in this Comprehensive Master Plan provide achievable actions that support Haywood County's goals and ability to serve its residents.

VISION

MISSION

Haywood County Parks and Recreation strives to provide the community a range of quality facilities and programs that will bolster the economy, promote health and wellness, and provide recreational programs that enrich the quality of life for all our citizens and visitors.

GOALS

Ensure adequate parks and recreation opportunities for the community and visitors by maintaining and renovating existing County-owned facilities, exploring possibilities for developing new facilities and programs, and seek funding opportunities and partnerships.

PROCESS

DISCOVERY + DATA COLLECTION

Understanding the community requires looking at current demographics as well inventorying County owned recreation facilities and programs. Inventory and analysis of this information is used to improve the current parks and recreation system. Who the County is serving correlates directly to what improvements may be appropriate.

ASSESSMENT

The future of Haywood County's parks and recreation is determined by listening and understanding to what has worked in the past and what can be improved upon. After discovering who the community is and what facilities and programs exist, the needs of County residents and staff are considered. Through analysis of open conversations with residents, public survey input, staff input, and looking at typical standards, a picture of how to move forward with improvements and future expansion of County recreation facilities and services develops.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Resident and staff input identified through the discovery phase and needs assessment are evaluated and analyzed to identify actions that will benefit the County in the future. Recommendations for improvements are made based on community needs and desires as well as departmental and consulting team experience. These recommendations are presented and prioritized based on immediate needs (0–5 years), short-term needs (5–10 years), and long-term future needs (10 years and beyond).

PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS + ACTION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN + STAFF COMMITMENT



GETTING TO KNOW THE COMMUNITY







GETTING TO KNOW THE COMMUNITY

Haywood County is located in western North Carolina with the border of Tennessee to the north. The mountainous region of the County lends itself to beautiful terrain, amazing vistas, and provides an abundant variety of ecosystems. Haywood County also provides a variety of opportunities for outdoor recreation, including rivers, streams, and forests in addition to miles of various trail types for hiking, running, and cycling.

As of the 2019 United States Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimate, Haywood County is home to 61,053 permanent residents. With the outdoor recreation opportunities provided by the surrounding environment, Haywood County also has a large tourism industry. Haywood County is located approximately 30 miles west of Asheville, North Carolina and 80 miles southeast of Knoxville, Tennessee. The County seat is Waynesville, North Carolina and other communities of note are Maggie Valley, Clyde, and Canton. Whatever the recreational activity, Haywood County delivers a plethora of opportunities for both residents and visitors.

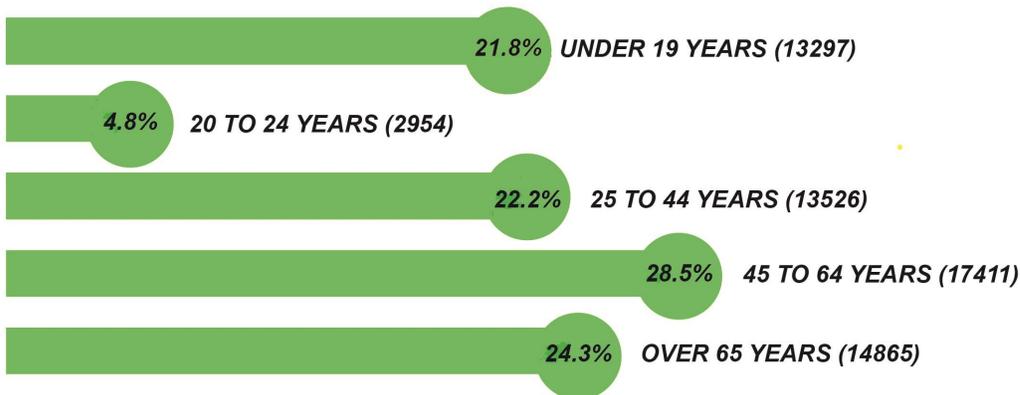
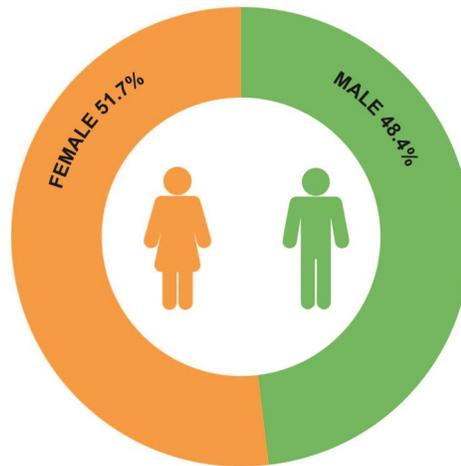
COUNTY HISTORY

Haywood County was originally part of Buncombe County to the east, but in 1808, it separated with over three hundred families to stand on its own. Many of these families were ancestors of Revolutionary War soldiers who settled in the area after the war due to the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains.

The County seat of Waynesville was established when Thomas Love, the man who put forth the bill to separate from Buncombe County, and seven others were deciding where to build public government buildings. The men were determined to have the building centrally located in the County and seventeen acres of land were provided by Robert Love to establish the County seat.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

A review of the demographic information for Haywood County has been evaluated to better understand the characteristics of the community. It also serves as a tool to identify future trends and projections that may influence recreation and park planning. Information concerning age and gender are important factors in determining the needs for recreation in the community. The general demographic characteristics for full-time residents of Haywood County, has been obtained by the 2019 United States Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) and the 2020 United States Census Bureau Decennial Census.



RACE	POPULATION	PERCENT
White	56,827	93.1%
Black or African American	663	1.1%
Hispanic	2,829	4.6%
Asian	370	0.6%
American Indian/Alaskan	363	0.6%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0.002%
Total:	61,053	100%

Demographics from 2019 US Census Bureau ACS 5-year Estimates and 2020 Decennial Census

Over the years, there has been an increase in population — a trend that is likely to continue as more individuals are attracted to the mountain lifestyle and the opportunities that it provides. When planning recreation, it is important to consider the impact of vacationers, visitors, and temporary residents visiting the community on a seasonal basis. Typically, the seasonal population has the greatest impact on services and resources from the end of May to the beginning of November.

Populations in mountain regions can vary throughout a given year. Determining how the seasonal population impacts the County can be difficult due to the range of factors that must be considered in estimating the peak population. In addition, year-round population figures established by the North Carolina State Demographer and the United States Census Bureau do not account for the seasonal population. While the permanent residents of Haywood County are the key members to plan for, it is also important to understand that the seasonal population plays a big role in how the park facilities are used and any necessary recommendations must account for this large group of people.

POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS



According to the North Carolina Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2020–2025, senior citizens comprise the fastest growing age group. The senior population is expected to have significant impacts throughout society because of income levels, population, and unique needs. NC OSBM projects that by the year 2030, 1 in 5 North Carolinians will be 65 years old or older.

This growing segment of the society is a significant user of recreational programming and facilities. The parks and recreation department will have to increase the number and type of activities and facilities to effectively serve this population, both now and in the future.



To meet the demands of residents and visitors, the County's parks and recreation department will have to continually evaluate its recreation and ancillary facilities, as well as offer more types of recreational programs as the population changes.

Much like seasonal and peak population estimates, population projections can vary widely due to intervening factors such as the strength of the economy, availability of jobs, and housing prices. Population projections identify potential challenges and needs that may confront the community in the future.

NC OSBM also provide projections for County populations across the state. The state demographer's population growth estimate for Haywood County indicates population increase will mostly occur from migration into the County, while natural growth from births will have a minor change in the County's population. According to NC OSBM, in 2030 the permanent population of Haywood County is projected to be 67,931 people. This is an increase of about 6,878 people or 11.2%.



PARKS AND RECREATION INVENTORY





PARKS AND RECREATION INVENTORY

Recreation is a necessary part of any community that can provide places to play, opportunities to improve health and wellness, and conserve and protect natural resources. This section will look at the typical parks and recreation facilities that can be offered to a community. An inventory of all the facilities offered by the County is also provided to fully understand the recreational advantages that Haywood County has access to. These recreational facilities are derived from many different sources, including the following:

- County-owned parks and other recreational facilities
- Publicly owned facilities (national, state, and local municipalities)
- Schools
- Privately owned facilities

Local municipalities such as Canton, Clyde, Lake Junaluska, Maggie Valley, Waynesville, and West Canton successfully provide a wide mix of traditional recreation facilities and programs to residents of Haywood County. As well as providing parks and recreation services to those not living within local municipal areas, and supporting recreation programming throughout the County, the department has a unique opportunity to compliment traditional recreation by promoting the natural environment and provide recreation enrichment though less traditional programs aimed to take advantage of the County's environmental assets, cultural heritage, and support trending outdoor activities.

This section will provide a brief analysis of Haywood County's recreation facilities has been performed noting any visible improvements needed for each County owned facility. This method of study served as a guide for Haywood County in its efforts to develop a plan for present and future needs.



TYPES OF PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

A comprehensive park system is made up of a variety of park types ranging from small neighborhood playgrounds to larger parks with athletic fields, playgrounds, community centers, trails, greenways, and open space. The type of park reflects the differing recreational preferences of diverse users. Park models are used as guidelines for fulfilling the future recreational needs of communities. Not all of these types of parks are the responsibility of the County government; several agencies (federal, state, county, and other local municipalities) play roles in providing recreational opportunities as well. To further understand the County's role in providing recreation services to its citizens, it is necessary to understand the elements of a comprehensive park system. These types of parks and recreation facilities may or may not be included in comprehensive park systems and are delineated in the following pages of this section.

REGIONAL PARKS

DISTRICT PARKS

COMMUNITY PARKS

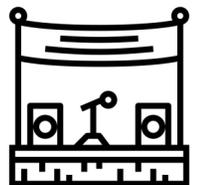
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

MINI PARKS

LINEAR PARKS / GREENWAYS



SPECIAL-USE FACILITIES



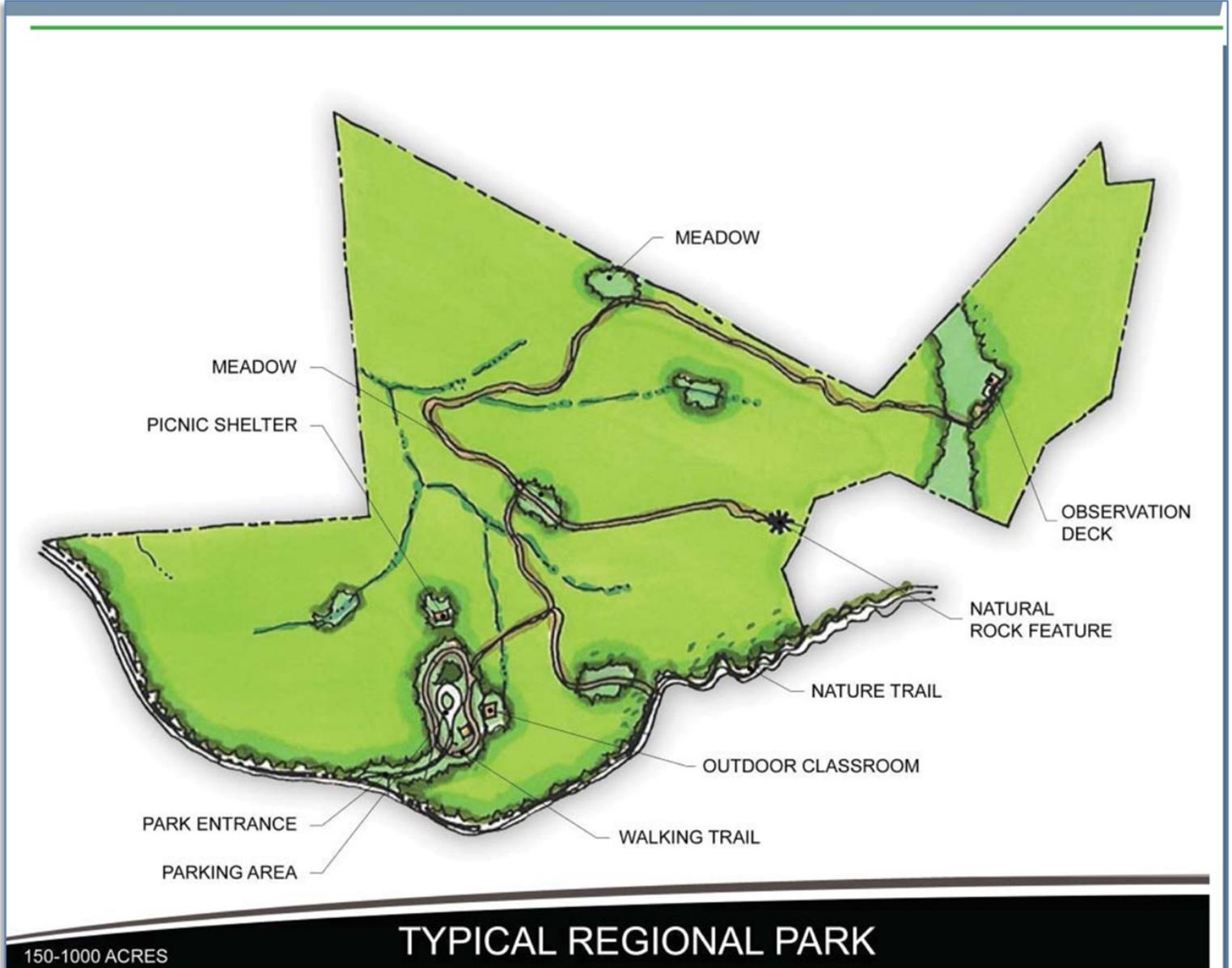
OPEN SPACE



Regional Parks

Regional parks are typically very large sites. On these sites, the unique qualities that exemplify the natural features found there, such as diverse land formation, vegetation, and wildlife, are preserved. Most regional park facilities contain environmental centers, campsites, nature trails, observation decks, and picnic areas. In addition, open fields for non-structured activities, such as frisbee throwing or kite flying, are also generally found there.

When land is acquired for the development of regional parks (or the expansion of existing sites), the land should be comprised of the previously mentioned characteristics and, whenever possible, accompanied by natural water features such as lakes, rivers, or creeks. The majority of the site should be reserved for passive recreation, with the remaining acreage used for active recreation. Both the acquisition and the development of regional parks are typically undertaken by a federal or state agency.



Specific standards / criteria for developing regional parks are as follows:

Service Area:

10 acres per 1,000 persons

Acreage / Population Ratio:

Region wide

Minimum Size:

150–1,000 acres minimum with sufficient area to encompass the resources to be preserved and managed (10% of the site may be developed with facilities found in community parks.)

Typical Facilities:

Environmental center
Equestrian center
Group camping
Nature trails
Picnic shelters and grills
Boating
Parking
Fishing piers / boat docks

Caretaker's house
Primitive camping
Recreational vehicle camping
Observation deck
Picnic tables with grills (not under shelter)
Swimming
Restrooms / vending

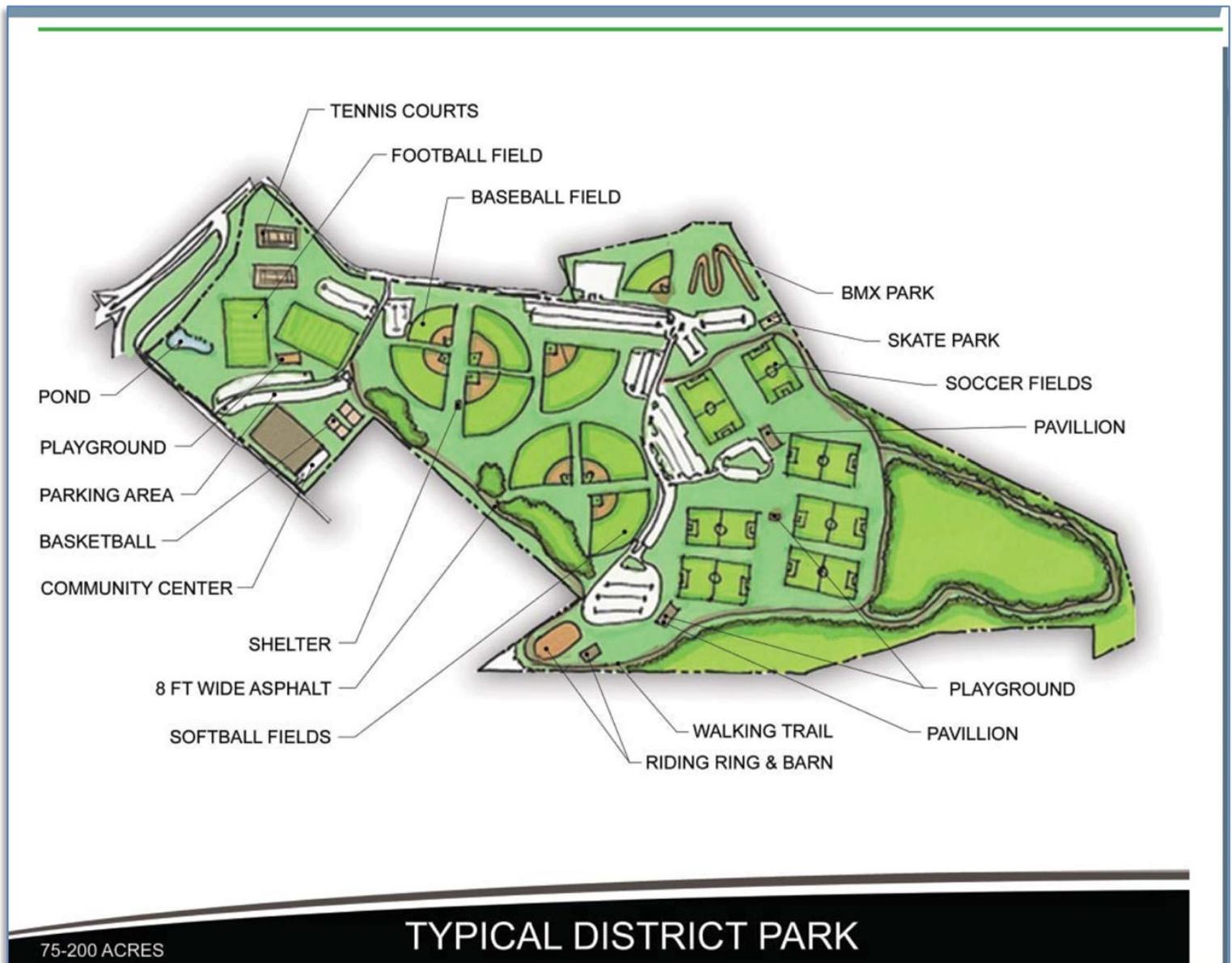


Great Smoky Mountains National Park, located partially in Haywood County, is a regional park that provides recreational opportunities to citizens within the County and draws tourists to the area that benefit the local region economically. Great Smoky Mountains National Park also is a natural jewel within the County that protects the natural environment and is a protected area for wildlife.

District Parks

A district park functions as the major source of active recreation for several neighborhoods within a community. District parks are intensely developed, offering a multitude of facilities in order to serve their intended geographic user area. Activities are balanced between active and passive recreation. District parks are typically developed to accommodate athletic league sporting events and tournament competition. Passive recreation opportunities, such as walking for pleasure, wildlife observation, and picnicking, are found in the undisturbed areas, preferably within surrounding buffers. District parks present great opportunities for nontraditional types of recreation.

Sites for district parks should be relatively level to alleviate excessive grading for the active facilities. When possible, there should be an equal balance of wooded and cleared areas. If a natural water feature is present, the adjoining land should be developed primarily as passive recreation. Accessibility to neighborhoods should be an important consideration when choosing sites. The development of district parks is typically the responsibility of county or municipal agencies.



Specific standards / criteria for developing district parks are as follows:

Service Area:

1 to 2 ½ mile radius

Acreage / Population Ratio:

5 acres per 1,000 persons

Desirable Range:

75–200 acres

Desirable Size:

+100 acres

Typical Facilities:

Playgrounds
Volleyball courts
Soccer / football field
Nature trail
Restrooms / concessions
Parking / service yard
Tennis courts (lighted)

Full- or half-size basketball courts
Baseball / softball / multipurpose field
Soccer practice field (movable goals)
Picnic tables with grill (with or without shelter)
Benches or bench swings
50% of site remains undeveloped

***Alternate Facilities:**

Tennis center
Observation decks
Recreation center

Amphitheatre
Fishing piers / boating / boat dock



Vance Street Park in Waynesville provides amenities that are typical of a district park. The park offers the members of the community and visitors the ability to play, relax, and enjoy the outdoors. It also helps boost the economy by providing a destination for tourists from outside the County.

Community Parks

Community parks focus on meeting community-based recreational needs as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. Compared to district parks, community parks have a smaller range of recreation facilities. They may host athletic league sports events and provide passive recreation. Fifty percent of the community park property should be developed for only passive recreation, with these relatively undisturbed areas serving as buffers around the park and / or acting as buffers between active facilities.

Community park sites should have varying topography and vegetation. A number of different tree species should also be present in forested areas. Community parks should contain cleared areas for the purpose of locating active recreational facilities. At least one natural water feature (lake, river, or creek) is desirable in community parks. The land acquired for use as a community park should be contiguous in nature and strategically located in order to serve all users within the designated community. The development of community parks typically falls within the realm of municipal responsibilities.



Specific standards / criteria for developing community parks are as follows:

Service Area:

1 to 2-mile radius

Acreage / Population Ratio:

2-5 acres per 1,000 persons

Desirable Range:

15–50 acres

Desirable Size:

25 acres

Typical Facilities:

Playgrounds
Swimming pool
Nature trails
Restrooms / concessions
Baseball / softball fields
Parking

Full-size or half-size basketball courts
Tennis / volleyball courts
50% of site to remain undeveloped
Soccer / multipurpose fields
Benches or bench swings
Picnic tables / shelter with or without grills

***Alternate Facilities:**

Recreation center
Disc golf
Observation decks

Natural water features
Amphitheatre



Haywood County’s Allens Creek Park provides the surrounding community a place to enjoy the outdoors with both passive and active recreation. This great community park is nestled amongst woods and mountains and provides visitors access to a variety of recreational resources.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks offer the public a convenient source of recreation while serving as the social focus point of neighborhoods. Usually located within walking distance of the area serviced, neighborhood parks provide both active and passive recreation opportunities that are of interest to all age groups. The smaller size of neighborhood parks, as compared to those previously mentioned, requires intense development with 50% of each site remaining undisturbed to serve as a buffer between the park and adjacent property owners.



Specific standards / criteria for developing neighborhood parks are as follows:

Service area:

¾ to 1-mile radius to serve walking

Acres / Population Ratio:

2 acres per 1,000 persons

Desirable Size:

7–15 acres

Typical Facilities:

softball or baseball field
Half basketball courts
Picnic shelter with grill
Benches or bench swings

Multipurpose field
50% of site to remain undeveloped
Picnic tables with grills (not under shelter)
Playground

***Alternate Facilities:**

Nature trails

Tennis courts

* Alternate facilities may be added or substituted.



East Street Park, located in the heart of a residential district to the east of downtown Waynesville, is an example of a neighborhood park that offers a variety of recreational facilities for visitors to the park. It provides a space for neighbors to gather to enjoy the outdoors.

Mini Parks

The function of a mini park is to provide very limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs. Mini parks are the smallest classification of parks. They are often provided by school and church playgrounds. These parks are located within walking distance of the area served and they provide limited recreational activities. Their very small size requires intense development and there is little or no buffer between mini parks and adjacent property owners.



Specific standards / criteria for developing mini parks are as follows:

Service Area:

¼ to ½ mile radius to serve walking

Acreage / Population Ratio:

0.5 acres per 1,000 persons

Desirable Size:

±1 acre

Typical Facilities:

- Half basketball courts
- Picnic tables with grills (not under shelter)
- Benches or bench swings
- Open play area playground

***Alternate Facilities:**

Nature trails

Tennis courts

* Alternate facilities may be added or substituted.



Mini parks are small places typically located in urban areas or associated with residential or institutional developments. These facilities can serve to bring communities together with events, promote local history, or deliver beauty to both residents and visitors.

Linear Parks / Greenways

A linear park is an area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel, such as hiking, biking, and driving. Linear parks are developed for several reasons:

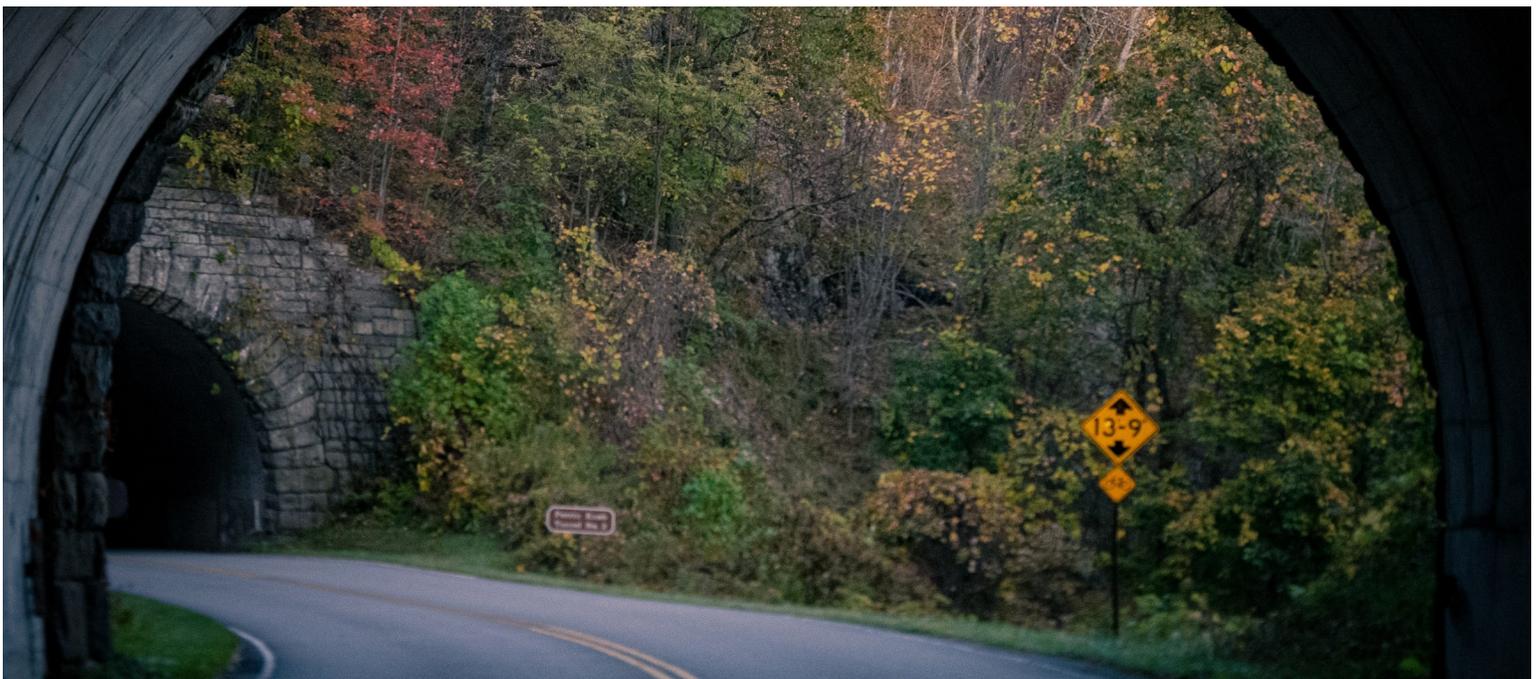
- To connect existing recreational facilities
- To facilitate public rights-of-way
- To connect destination points
- For scenic views and leisure touring

This plan encourages the continued development of a County-wide Greenway Master Plan and the thoughtful creation of trails and greenways throughout the County. Pedestrian connectivity from where people live and work to where they recreate, contemplate and gather are critically important to the quality of life for all Haywood residents.

The length and size of linear parks and greenways vary considerably, depending on their intended use, terrain of the park land and the distance between entities to be connected — such as parks, schools, cultural / historical resources, residential areas, and businesses. Often, these linear parks are developed within a large land area designated for protection and management of the natural environment, with recreation opportunities as a secondary objective.

Unique or Special-Use Facilities

The unique or special use facilities are park types that exist for the sole purpose of enhancing or utilizing a special man-made or natural feature. They can include beaches, parkways, historical sites, sites of archeological significance, swimming pools, conservation easements, and floodplains. Minimum standards relating to acreage or population have not been established by the park and recreation industry for this category of park. A size that is sufficient to protect and interpret the resource, while providing optimum use, is considered desirable.



Open Space

While it is realistic and appropriate to adopt population-based standards for park land and facilities, it is not realistic to establish open space standards. The more reasonable method of establishing appropriate standards for open space is to determine the criteria necessary for the protection of significant natural areas contained therein.

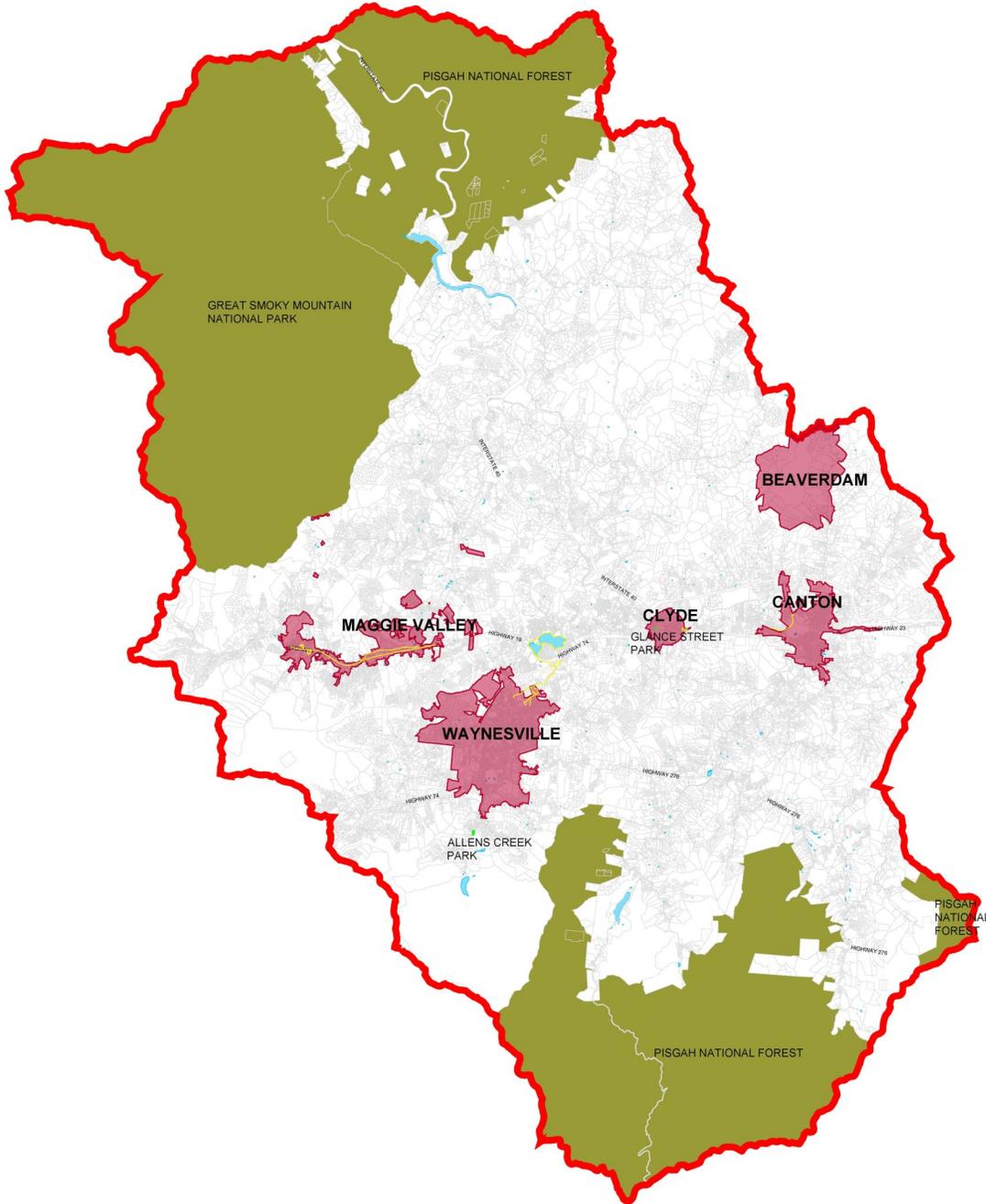
Public open space is defined as any land acquired for the purpose of keeping it in a primarily undeveloped state. The functions of open space include:

- Preservation of drainage areas for water supplies (watersheds)
- Protection of areas which are particularly well suited for growing crops (farmland preservation)
- Protection of communities to prevent urban sprawl (greenbelts)
- Protection of wildlife habitat (sanctuaries)
- Protection of approach and take-off areas near airports (clear zones)
- Protection of undevelopable land (landfills)
- Protection of areas aesthetically pleasing for a corridor (viewshed)

While these areas are some of the more common open spaces, many others exist. Haywood County' park system has two parks that offer a wide variety of amenities and open spaces. Haywood County Park is predominantly an open space facility. This facility allows visitors to enjoy beautiful views of the surrounding mountains while providing a mix of other amenities such as picnicking, disc golf, playground, trails, fishing, along with more active type facilities such as two softball fields, a youth baseball / softball field, two tennis courts, a skate park, and an outdoor basketball court. Family Central is more of an active recreation facility but offers large open space playing fields with outstanding views of the surrounding mountains and natural landscape.



HAYWOOD COUNTY RECREATION FACILITY OFFERINGS



LEGEND

-  County Recreation Site
-  Federal Managed Land
-  Trails and Greenways
-  Water Body / Creek
-  Municipal Boundary
-  County Boundary
-  Parcel

Map 2.1 Haywood County existing conditions (See Appendix A for 11"x17")



Allens Creek Park

Description:

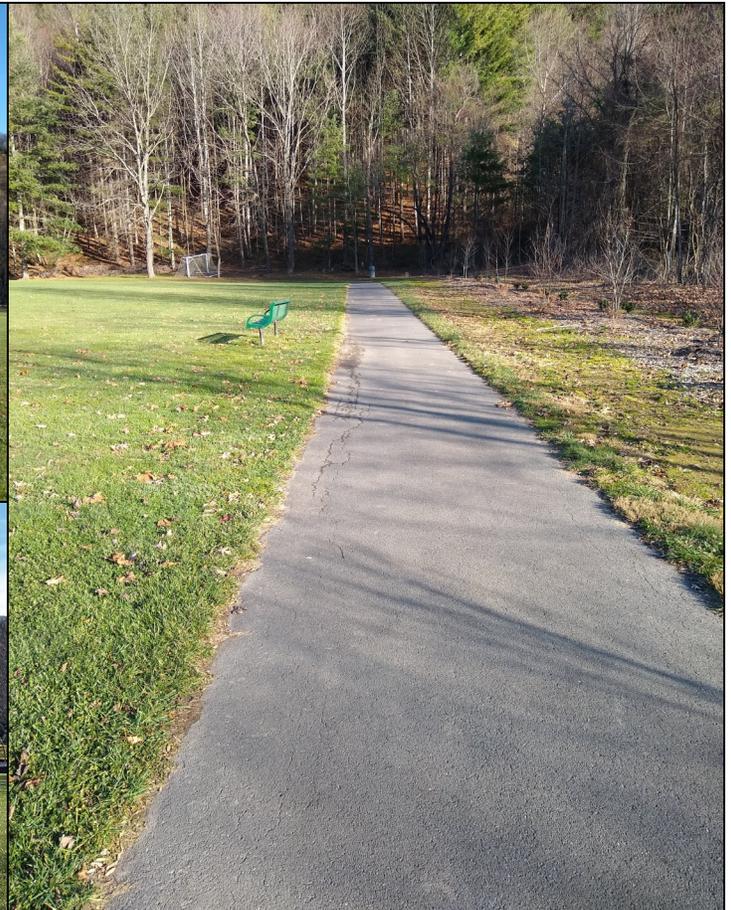
Allens Creek Park is the County's first developed park and provides the community both active and passive recreation opportunities surrounded by beautiful mountains. This jewel near the Town of Waynesville promotes health and wellness with a walking path and multiuse fields. The surrounding woods provide a natural setting for this great facility.

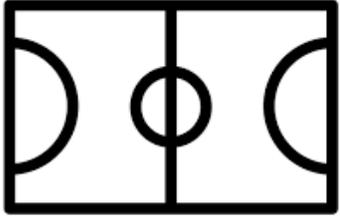
Amenities include:

- (4) Multipurpose fields
- 1/2-mile paved walking path
- Picnic pavilion
- Concession / restroom facility
- Playground

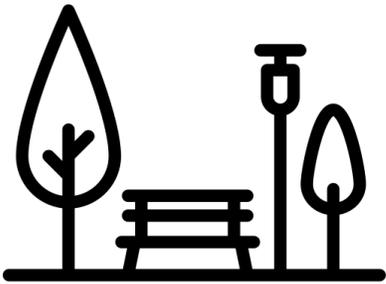
Challenges and Issues:

- Playground in need of repairs or to be updated

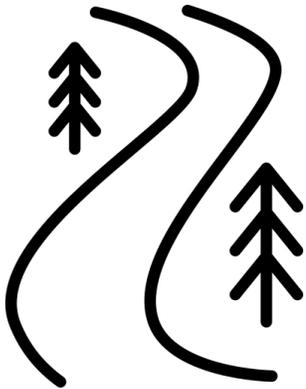




ACTIVE RECREATION



PASSIVE RECREATION



WALKING TRAILS



NATURE OBSERVATION

Glance Street Park

Description:

Glance Street Park is a small passive area near the center of Clyde. At one time, it was an annex site for Haywood Community College; however, flooding destroyed the buildings and the County acquired it to provide a passive green space for the community. A paved walking path surrounds an open lawn and a pollinator garden that provides beauty for the community of Clyde.

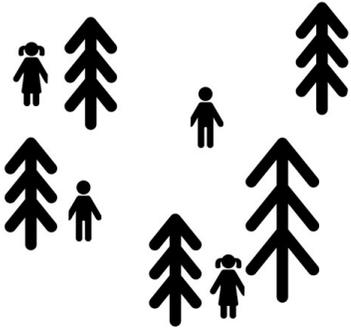
Amenities include:

- 1/4-mile paved walking path
- Open space
- Pollinator garden

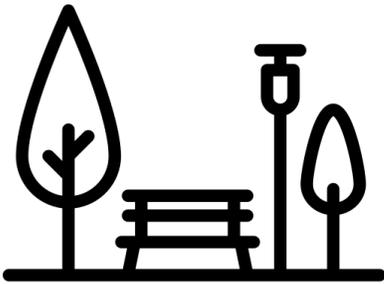
Challenges and Issues:

- Sidewalk in need of repairs
- Lack of shade
- Park in need of master planning for development

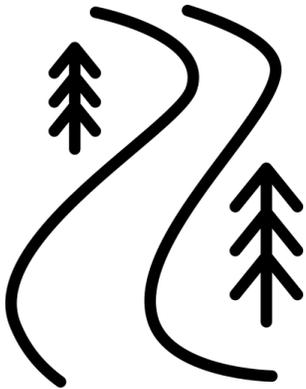




OPEN SPACE



PASSIVE RECREATION



WALKING PATHS



NATURAL HABITAT

HAYWOOD COUNTY RECREATION PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Recreational programs offered by the County are an integral part of a parks and recreation system. Programs can be special classes, regular classes, summer camps, and special events that celebrate holidays or important community celebrations. Each of these elements can create a feeling of unity and pride within a community. An inventory of the programs offered by Haywood County was completed to gain an understanding of the offerings made available to the public.

Athletic Programming

- Indoor pickup soccer
- Outdoor pickup soccer
- Recreation basketball program

Outdoor Skills and Classes

- Guided bird watching trips
- Beginner fly fishing class
- Intermediate fly fishing class
- Fly fishing expeditions
- Fly tying class
- Guided hiking trips
- Mountain bike club
- Navigation course

Special Events

- Haywood County Senior Games and SilverArts





PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITY OFFERINGS

Public lands located within Haywood County play an active role in providing recreation opportunities to residents and visitor within the County. These public spaces are made available through multiple public land managers, such as local municipalities, the State of North Carolina, and National Land Management Agencies.

Local Municipalities

Town of Waynesville

Recreation Park

- Tennis courts
- Playgrounds
- Softball field
- T-ball field
- Skate park
- Dog park
- Soccer field
- Greenway
- Picnic shelters

Old Armory Recreation Center

- Pickleball
- Billiards
- Cornhole
- Pottery
- Bridge
- Basketball
- Square dancing

Vance Street Park

- Recreation center
- Indoor fitness facility
- Indoor pool
- Indoor water play park
- Indoor basketball
- Indoor track
- Multipurpose room
- Softball field
- Soccer field
- Picnic shelters
- Sand volleyball
- Green space
- Walking trail
- Fishing pier

Sulphur Springs Park

- Historical context
- Gazebo
- Open space

East Street Park

- Picnic shelter
- Basketball court
- Playground

Haywood Greenways Coalition

- 4.9-mile greenway connecting Waynesville Recreation Center, to the Waynesville Fire Department, to Lake Junaluska School, to Industrial Park and Lake Junaluska.

Hazelwood Park

- Softball field
- Open space
- Picnic shelter

Chestnut Park

- Playground
- Picnic shelter

Obama-King Park

- Playground
- Horseshoe pits
- Grills
- Picnic shelter

Town of Maggie Valley

Elevated Creek Park

- Picnic shelter
- Walking trails
- Educational signage
- Cornhole
- Creek access

Jonathan Valley Elementary Creek Entrance

- Outdoor classroom
- Creek access

Todd & Ruth Henry Park and Greenway

- Greenway
- Community garden

Mountain View Creek Park

- Greenway
- Picnicking
- Educational signage
- Nature observation

Mary Rathbone Rich Park

- Picnic shelter
- Walking trail
- Educational signage
- Nature observation
- Rain garden

McCracken Corner Park

- Picnicking
- Open space
- Walking path access

Parham Park

- Picnic shelter
- Fishing pier
- Walking trail
- Nature observation

Town Hall Park

- Picnic shelter
- Walking path
- Playground
- Basketball court
- Horseshoe pits

Town of Canton
Canton Recreation Park

- Playground
- Horseshoe pits
- Basketball courts
- Sand volleyball
- Shuffleboard
- Picnic shelters
- Performance stage

Canton Armory

- Rentable space
- Kitchen space
- Indoor stage

The Colonial Theatre

- Indoor performance venue
- Rentable space
- Kitchen space

International Paper Sports Complex

- Baseball fields
- Walking trails
- Concession stand
- Indoor batting cages
- Tournaments

Chestnut Mountain Park (Future)

- Multi-use trails
- Conservation areas
- Environmental education signage
- Picnic & day use activities
- Performance stage/ event area

Town of Clyde
River's Edge Park

- Picnic shelters
- Playgrounds
- Open space
- Horseshoe pits
- Walking path
- Educational signage
- River access
- Nature observation

State Recreation Facilities
Wayne E. Smith Cold Mountain Shooting Range (North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission)

- 100-yard rifle range with 5 shooting lanes
- 50-yard pistol range with 5 shooting lanes

Haywood County Public School System

Public school recreation facilities are made available for use by the community. The Haywood County Public School System operates 15 public schools that have recreation facilities typical of most schools: playgrounds, baseball / softball fields, gymnasiums, etc. This includes eight elementary schools, three middle school, three high schools, and one early college.

The North Carolina Community Schools Act (G.S. 115C Art. 13) was passed to allow “greater community use of public-school facilities.” Since school facilities represent an investment of the citizenry for the education of students and for the general benefit of the community and its citizens, their proper use and enjoyment shall be encouraged and permitted when such does not interfere with school activities.

Elementary Schools

- Bethel Elementary
- Clyde Elementary
- Hazelwood Elementary
- Jonathan Valley Elementary
- Junaluska Elementary
- Meadowbrook Elementary
- North Canton Elementary
- Riverbend Elementary

Middle Schools

- Bethel Middle
- Canton Middle
- Waynesville Middle

High Schools / Early College

- Central Haywood High
- Pisgah High
- Tuscola High
- Haywood Early College


**Haywood
County
Schools**

Federal Public Land

The United States manages millions of acres of public lands through four agencies: United States Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and United States Fish and Wildlife Service. This public land is made available to provide recreational opportunities as well as protect and conserve the natural heritage of our nation.

Almost half of Haywood County is managed by two federal public land agencies. The northern portion of the County is part of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, managed by the National Park Service. Also along the northeastern boundary of Haywood County is Harmon Den Wildlife Management Area, managed by the United States Forest Service. The southern portion of the County is part of Pisgah National Forest, with the Shining Rock Wilderness Area located within the national forest. This wilderness area is the largest designated wilderness area in North Carolina, encompassing over 18,000 acres.

National Park Service

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

- Auto touring
- Bicycling
- Historical sites
- Camping
- Nature observation
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Picnicking

Blue Ridge Parkway

- Auto touring
- Bicycling
- Historical sites
- Camping
- Nature observation
- Hiking
- Picnicking

United States

Forest Service Pisgah National Forest

- Auto touring
- Bicycling
- Historical sites
- Camping
- Nature observation
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Picnicking

Harmon Den Wildlife Management Area

- Camping
- Cabins
- Nature observation
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Picnicking
- Hunting

Shining Rock Wilderness

- Camping
- Cabins
- Nature observation
- Hiking
- Horseback riding





PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITY OFFERINGS

Private recreation providers, non-profit organizations, and developers are an important component for the County by providing resources and opportunities for the County's recreation system. Private developers can assist Haywood County by the dedication, construction, and / or reservation of future park sites, open space, and / or greenway corridors during the overall development process.

Private Organizations

Haywood Regional Health & Fitness Center — This private health center is associated with the local hospital and provides users access to group fitness classes, personal training, indoor pool, massage therapy, and an indoor workout area for strength training and aerobic exercises.

2311 Community Fitness — This indoor fitness center provides users group fitness classes, personal training, at-home workout programs, and an indoor workout area for strength training and aerobic exercises.

Mountain Range — This is a private shooting range that offers safety classes, firearms sales, and an indoor shooting range.

Lake Junaluska — This private development surrounding Lake Junaluska provides access to an indoor fitness center, tennis courts, mini golf, shuffleboard, hiking and walking trails, fishing, lake access, and nature observation.

Smoky Mountain Sk8way and Fun Zone — This private family entertainment center provides visitors access to an indoor roller-skating rink, obstacle course, mini golf, arcade area, and pool tables.

Adventures Access — This is an adventure-based outfitter and guide service that provides camps, programs, and guided tours.

Fox Mountain Guides — This is a guide service that teaches rock climbing and mountaineering skills, provides guided trips, and offers professional training.

Waynesville Yoga Center — This private yoga studio offers visitors classes, workshops, events, massages, and training for yoga instructors.

LIFESPAN Creative Campus — This non-profit organization offers recreational and cultural services and classes to people with developmental and intellectual disabilities, substance use, and mental health disorders.

Golf Courses

Laurel Ridge Country Club
788 Eagles Nest Road
Waynesville, NC 28786

Lake Junaluska Golf Course
756 Golf Course Road
Waynesville, NC 28786

First Tee Mountain Golf
730 Peak Avenue
Waynesville, NC 28786

Waynesville & Golf Club
176 Country Club Drive
Waynesville, NC 28786

Springdale
200 Golfwatch Road
Canton, NC 28716

Sequoyah National Golf Club
1819 Country Club Drive
Maggie Valley, NC 28751



Private Campgrounds

Lake Junaluska Campground — This private campground provides full hook-up RV sites, tent sites, access to swimming pool, and elements offered by Lake Junaluska.

Wingray Campground — This private campground provides full hook-up RV sites, tent sites, and borders Jonathan Creek.

Appalachian Pond Campground — This small private campground offers three different camping experiences: a cabin, a glamping trailer, and tent sites

Creekwood Farm RV Park — This private campground provides full hook-up RV sites, fully-furnished cabins, tent sites, a recreation hall, and a picnic pavilion.

Stonebridge RV Resort and Campgrounds — This private campground provides full hook-up RV sites, tent sites, cabins, cottages, a community center, a game room, an outdoor pavilion, basketball and volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, a swimming pool, and borders Jonathan Creek.

Riverside Campground — This private campground provides full hook-up RV sites, tent sites, laundromat, and has programming for holidays and special events.

Mountain Shadows Campground — This private campground provides full hook-up RV sites and tent sites.

Pride RV Resort and Family Campground — This private campground provides full hook-up RV sites, tent sites, cabins, shuffleboard, clubhouse, picnic pavilion, swimming pool, hot tub, fenced dog park, playground, mini golf, basketball court, trails, and fishing opportunities.

RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT





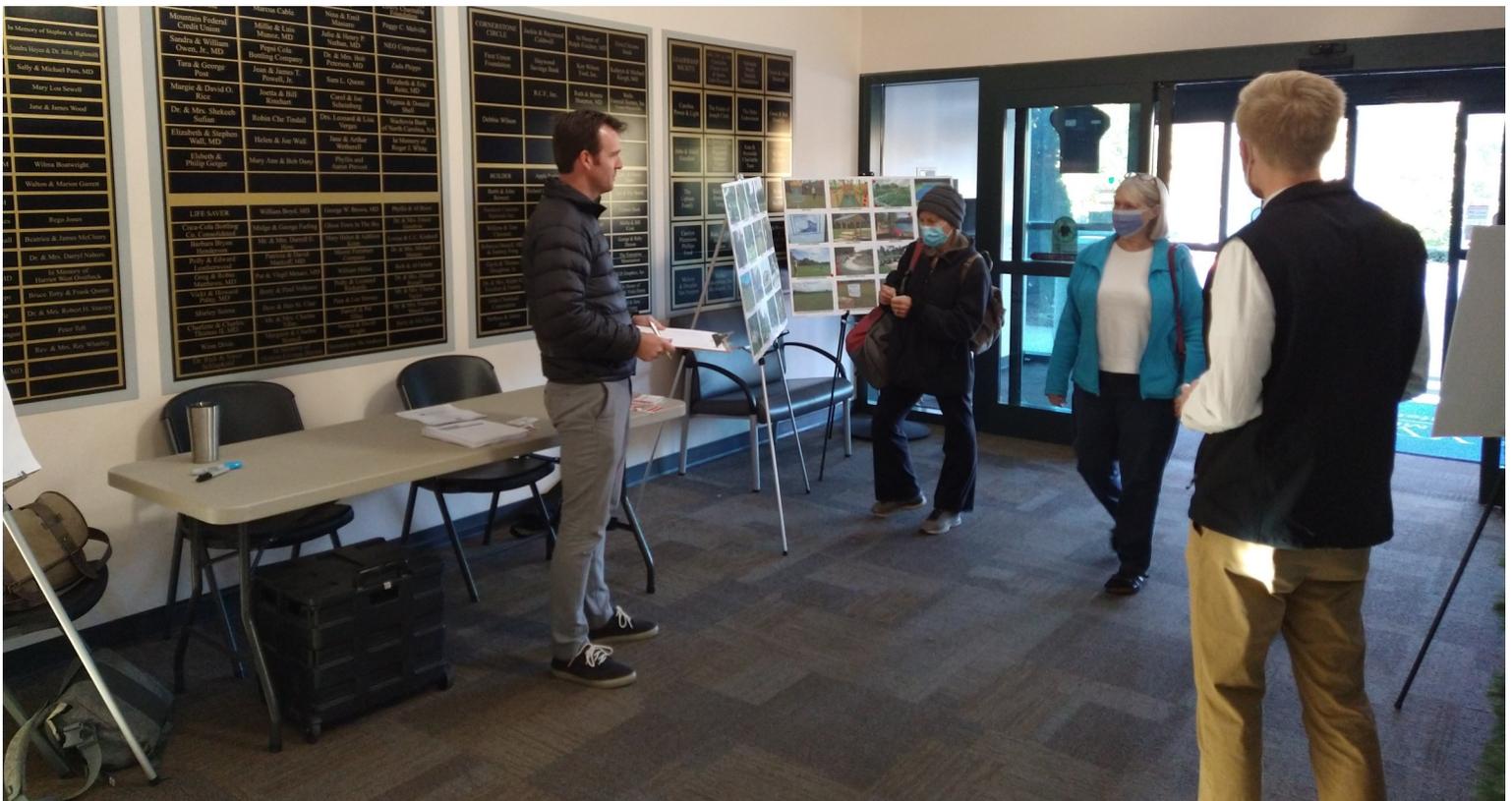
RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The degree of need for parks, recreation, and open space is most directly influenced by the expectations of Haywood County residents, relating strictly to the quality of life to which they aspire. This Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan addresses, as its first priority, the parks and recreation facility needs envisioned by the residents and visitors of Haywood County.

This Master Plan inventories Haywood County’s existing park facilities as well as listing the recreation facilities available at local schools, local municipalities, and other recreation facilities either within the County or easily accessible by residents within the County. This detailed inventory includes the facilities which are available within each park to create a better understanding of the existing recreation opportunities within the County. The recreational trends also provide information needed to understand the expected growth of Haywood County in the future. This Master Plan will be used as a guide for improving recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Community input and recreation standards were used as the primary method in determining the adequate types and number of park facilities needed for Haywood County. This Master Plan compares standards developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), an independent, non-profit professional organization for parks and recreation departments nationwide. In 1996, NRPA published a manual entitled *Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines*, which is a widely accepted reference standard for communities.

Standards are guidelines, not requirements, for use by communities in estimating the demand for recreation in their given geographic areas. To ensure that the Haywood County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan contains distinctiveness yet versatility, input was sought from its integral components: Haywood County staff, County board of commissioners, and citizen representatives.



PUBLIC INPUT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The methodology used in establishing a comprehensive recreation master plan should always include citizen input. In order to ensure a successful study, it is vital that the public users of recreational facilities be able to share their issues, needs, and desires.

To facilitate community input, four public meetings were conducted during the Master Plan process. The public meetings were held in accordance with Center for Disease Control (CDC) and state recommendations for social distancing required to mitigate COVID-19 spread.

The public meetings were drop-in for 2 hours each on **November 23rd, 2021**. Locations included **Haywood Regional Fitness Center, Starbucks in Waynesville, Orchard Coffee in Waynesville, and Waynesville Recreation Center**. This provided the opportunity for a variety of information from many groups of people. Garnering information from multiple generations and people provides invaluable insight into the needs of the community.

The public meetings, along with the community survey, were advertised by the County on their main website, social media pages, and via flyers throughout the County. Approximately **61 participants** attended the meetings and provided much needed feedback.

The community meetings included a visual preference exercise as well as open dialog and question / answer opportunities. The meetings encouraged attendees to discuss their experiences with the Haywood County recreation system in an open setting that promoted opportunities to share comments, see amenity examples, and ask questions. This is a crucial step to ensure that all who want to contribute are heard as they voice their concerns and receive clarification.

Public Meetings

Participants engaged in open conversation related to their opinions on the state of the existing recreation system, including facilities and programs as well as their concerns and questions. Written notes were used to record participant comments and opinions. A visual preference survey of various park amenities gave participants the opportunity to place stickers next to the amenities they felt would be good additions to the County park system. Each participant was limited to 2 stickers to place on 1 of 32 typical amenity type images. (See Appendix B for 11"x17")

Participants were also asked to provide insight into where potential new recreation facilities might be located. This exercise gave everyone an opportunity to share their opinions and thoughts to create a list of desired changes to the existing recreation system.



PICNIC PAVILION

4



NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

31



FITNESS STATIONS

5



AMPHITHEATER

7



CLIMBING WALL

9



NON-PROGRAMMED OPEN SPACE

3



GYMNASIUM

2



INDOOR FITNESS AREA

2



ACTIVITIES/EVENTS LAWN

2



TOT LOT

6



COMMUNITY CENTER

1



ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

7



OUTDOOR GAMES

4



TRADITIONAL GAMES

2



BASKETBALL

3



PAVED MULTI-PURPOSE TRAILS

14

Top Ten Visual Preference Results



Natural Surface Trails

31



Pickleball

18



Paved Trails

14



Camping Sites

11



Bicycle Pump Track

11



Community Garden

10



Climbing Wall

9



Accessible Playground

8



Amphitheater

7



Adventure Activities

7



DISC GOLF

2



ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND

8



COMMUNITY GARDEN

10



PICKLEBALL

18



EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE

3



PICNIC STATIONS

1



CAMPING SITES

11



MULTI-SPORTS COMPLEX

4



MULTI-PURPOSE ATHLETIC FIELDS

2



BICYCLE PUMP TRACK

11



OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

3



FREE FORM PLAYGROUND

4



PASSIVE/NON-PROGRAMMED OPEN SPACE

1



WALKING PATH DISTANCE SIGNAGE

2



DOG PARK

6



FISHING OPPORTUNITIES

6

Community Survey

The active participation of residents in Haywood County was crucial in developing a plan that reflects the true needs of the County. With this in mind, community input was solicited throughout the entire planning process. A survey was created as a tool to gather information from the general public concerning the existing and future needs of the County's park system. A project marketing card was developed to encourage awareness of the project and provide both a web address to the community survey as well as a QR code that interested individuals could use with mobile devices to reach the online survey and provide their input.

To gather further public input and reach the broadest cross section of County residents, a printed version of the Master Plan survey was also made available at the County meetings. The following summarizes the results of the community survey (See Appendix C for survey results).

The County had **877** household surveys accessed and received a total of **877** completed household surveys representing about **1,660** individuals for the recreation planning data collection effort. These results included both the survey handouts and the online survey results. The survey data collected was a representative cross section of Haywood County in terms of age, household size, and geographic distribution.

The surveys were designed to elicit answers on resident's needs and desires for recreation opportunities. It included a section where respondents rated their use of existing facilities both within the County limits and outside the County limits. The survey instructed respondents to rank the programs and facilities in order of importance to their household and to list the facilities they would like to see added to the park and recreation system.



Help shape the future of recreation Take the survey

Haywood County's Recreation Master Plan is being updated and your input is needed. Public input helps us define our short and long term goals for programs, activities, classes and facilities. Go to haywoodcountync.gov, County Spotlights for more info and to take the survey.



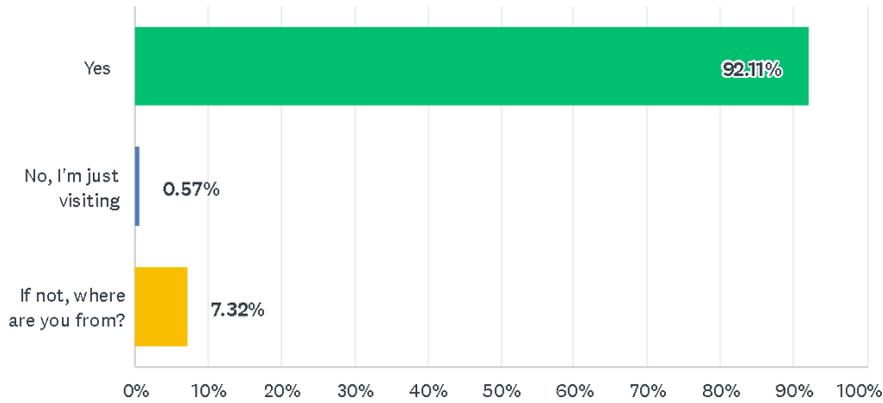
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HaywoodCoRecSurvey>



HAYWOOD COUNTY
RECREATION & PARKS

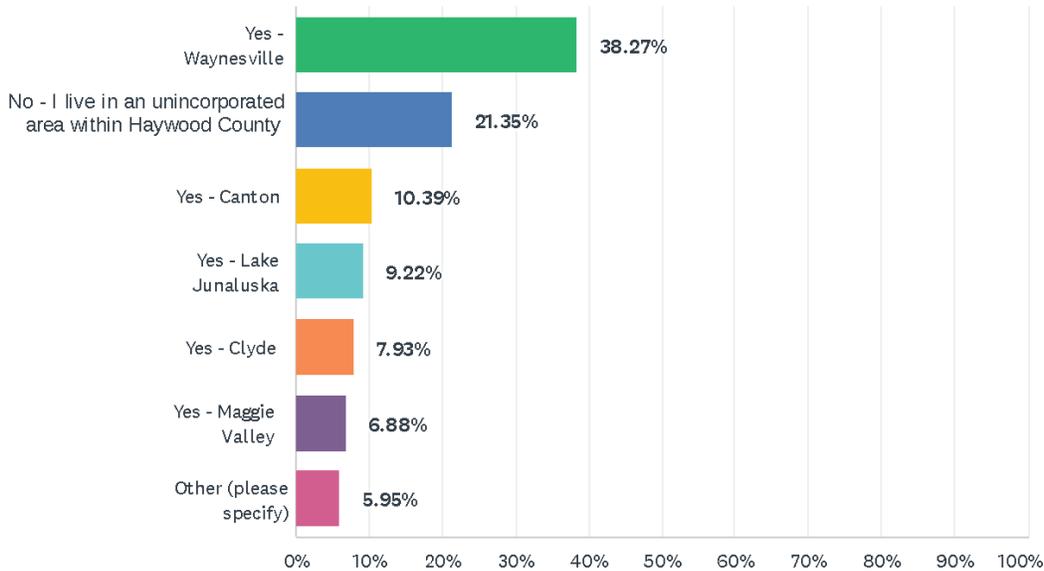
Q1 Are you are Resident of Haywood County:

Answered: 874 Skipped: 3



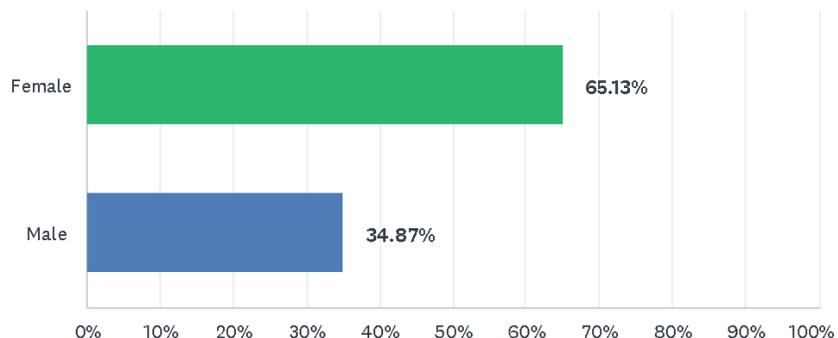
Q2 Are you a resident of an incorporated area within Haywood County? If so, where?

Answered: 857 Skipped: 20



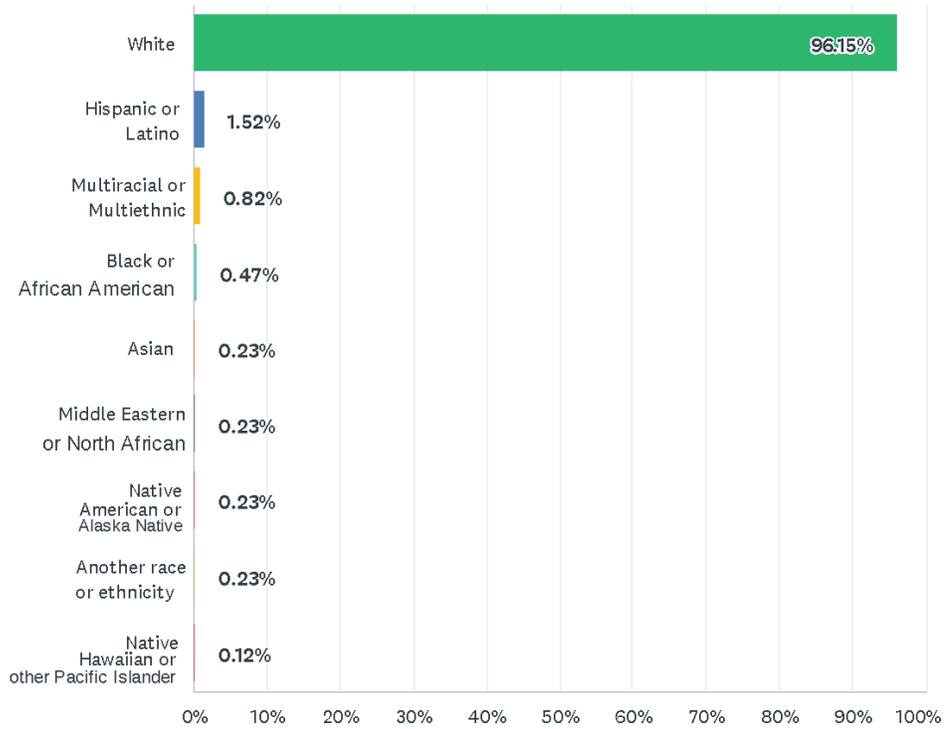
Q3 What is your gender?

Answered: 869 Skipped: 8



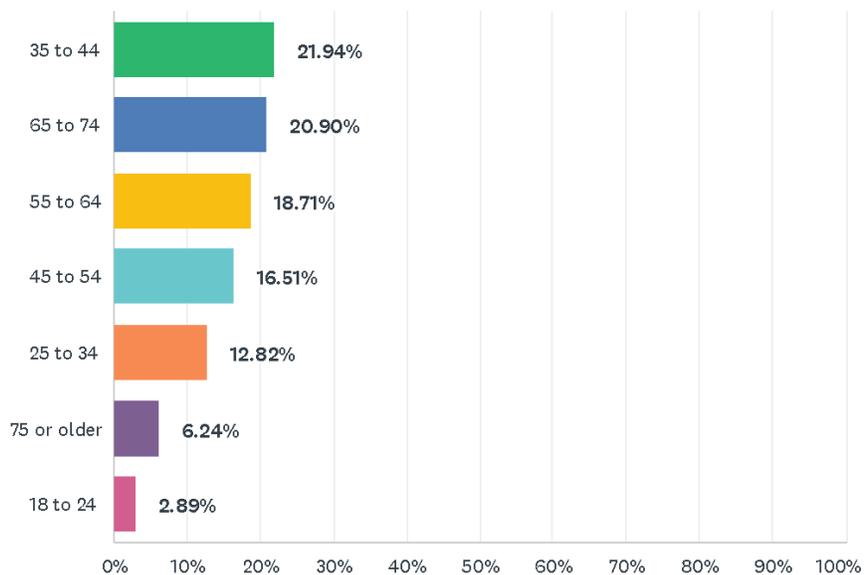
Q4 What is your race or ethnicity?

Answered: 858 Skipped: 19



Q5 What is your age?

Answered: 866 Skipped: 11



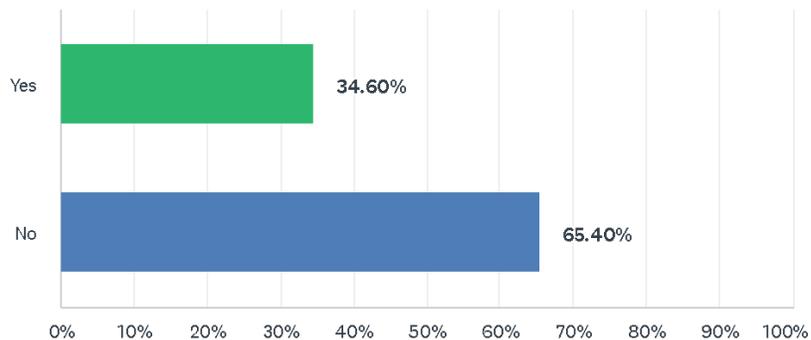
Q6 List the number of persons in your household, including yourself, who are in the age brackets below:

Answered: 858 Skipped: 19

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
0-5 years old	59.06% 88	28.19% 42	4.70% 7	5.37% 8	3.36% 5	1.34% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	149
6-8 years old	89.81% 97	6.48% 7	2.78% 3	0.00% 0	0.93% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	108
9-12 years old	82.54% 104	15.87% 20	1.59% 2	0.00% 0	126						
13-15 years old	81.08% 60	17.57% 13	2.70% 2	0.00% 0	74						
16-18 years old	83.33% 60	15.28% 11	1.39% 1	0.00% 0	72						
19-21 years old	80.36% 45	8.93% 5	8.93% 5	3.57% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	56
22-29 years old	64.52% 60	33.33% 31	1.08% 1	0.00% 0	1.08% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	93
30-39 years old	52.15% 109	46.41% 97	2.39% 5	0.48% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	209
40-49 years old	56.82% 125	42.73% 94	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.45% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	220
50-59 years old	59.78% 110	39.67% 73	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.54% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	184
60+ years old	41.46% 153	60.43% 223	0.81% 3	0.00% 0	369						

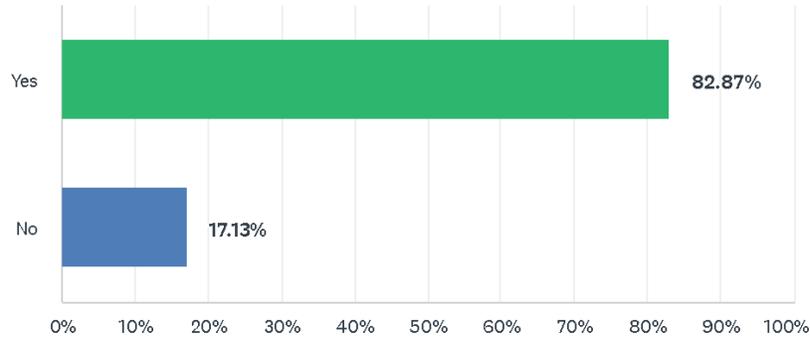
Q7 Do you live within a ten minute walk to a public park or leisure facility?

Answered: 844 Skipped: 33



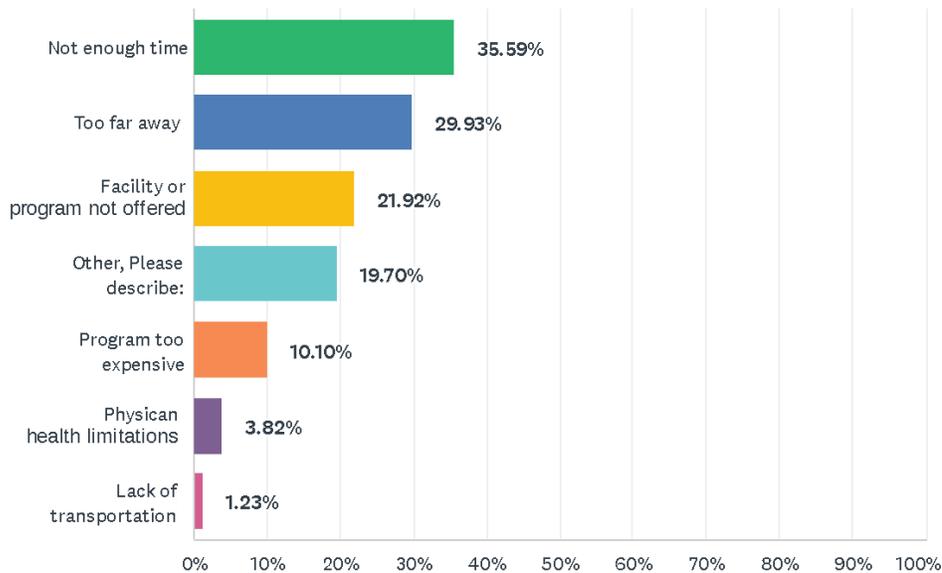
Q8 Would you use a park or recreation facility more if it were closer to your home or work?

Answered: 829 Skipped: 48



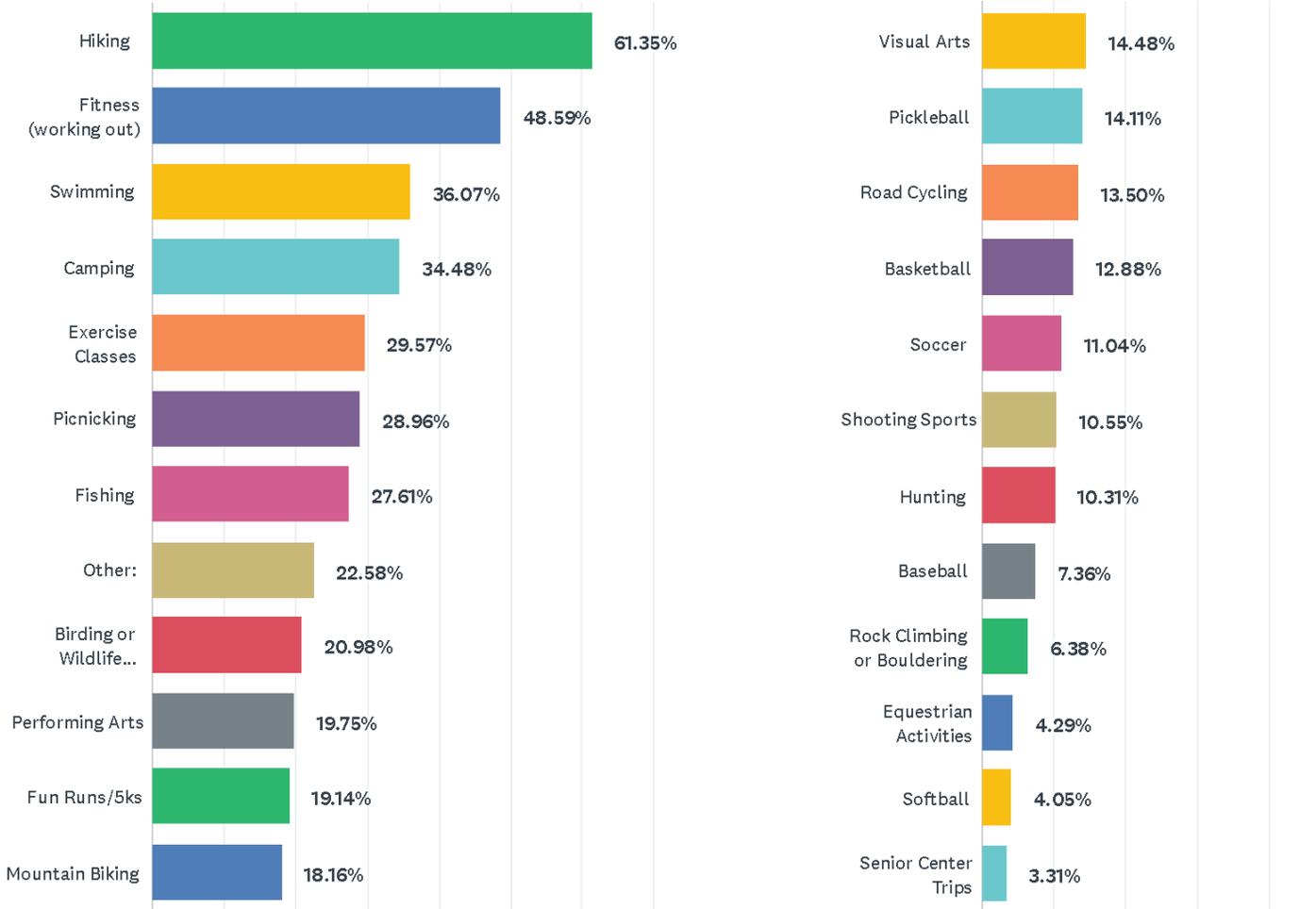
Q9 What is the greatest barrier to your household's more regular use of parks or recreational facilities?

Answered: 812 Skipped: 65



Q10 In which of the following recreational activities and/or special events do you or others in your household participate regularly? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 815 Skipped: 62





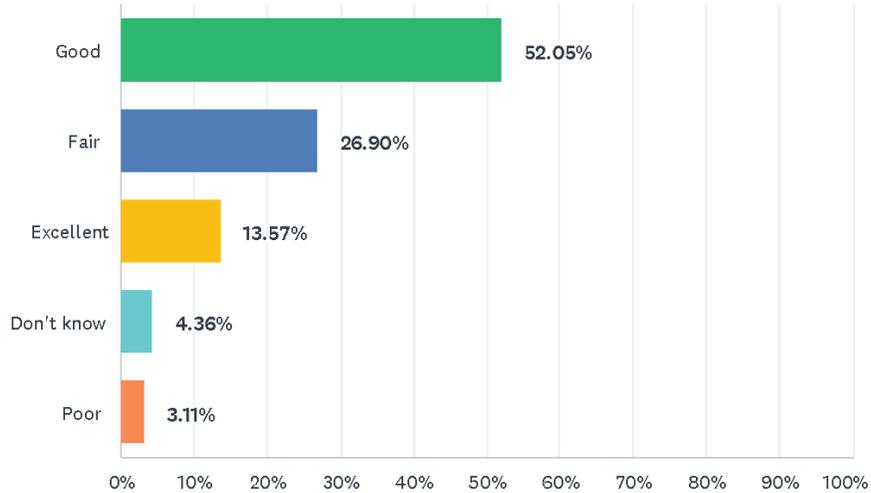
Q11 Check below how frequently you or others in your household have visited the following recreation facilities in the past year.

Answered: 808 Skipped: 69

	REGULARLY	OCCASSIONLY	RARELY	NEVER	TOTAL
Lake Junaluska Walking Path	51.06% 387	29.16% 221	11.08% 84	8.71% 66	758
Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Federal)	30.12% 225	45.65% 341	13.65% 102	10.58% 79	747
Pisgah National Forest Lands (Federal)	26.56% 191	36.30% 261	14.33% 103	22.81% 164	719
Recreation Park (Waynesville)	23.99% 178	36.52% 271	19.95% 148	19.54% 145	742
Junaluska Dam Park (Lake Junaluska)	16.92% 123	30.40% 221	24.07% 175	28.61% 208	727
Waynesville Rec. Center	15.81% 117	33.11% 245	23.92% 177	27.16% 201	740
Haywood Regional Health and Fitness Center (Clyde)	15.47% 110	15.33% 109	19.69% 140	49.51% 352	711
Vance Street Park (Waynesville)	14.92% 107	23.29% 167	16.04% 115	45.75% 328	717
Waynesville Greenway Park	11.33% 80	20.54% 145	18.70% 132	49.43% 349	706
Canton Recreation Park (Canton)	11.00% 78	19.04% 135	12.27% 87	57.69% 409	709
Old Armory Rec. Center	6.65% 47	7.50% 53	13.15% 93	72.70% 514	707
Waynesville Dog Park	5.29% 38	17.25% 124	18.08% 130	59.39% 427	719
Waynesville Skate Park	5.07% 35	7.81% 54	7.67% 53	79.45% 549	691
Allens Creek Park (County Park in Waynesville)	4.20% 30	20.28% 145	22.66% 162	52.87% 378	715
Waynesville Disc Golf Course	3.86% 27	9.16% 64	10.01% 70	76.97% 538	699
Sorrells Street Park (Canton)	2.76% 19	8.42% 58	10.89% 75	77.94% 537	689
Town Hall Park (Maggie Valley)	2.75% 19	5.93% 41	7.96% 55	83.36% 576	691
Waynesville Middle School Track (County)	2.77% 19	4.23% 29	7.43% 51	85.57% 587	686
Clyde Park (Clyde)	1.60% 11	7.14% 49	10.20% 70	81.05% 556	686
East Street park (Waynesville)	1.46% 10	4.25% 29	7.47% 51	86.82% 593	683
Todd and Ruth Henry Park/Greenway (Maggie Valley)	1.46% 10	4.82% 33	5.84% 40	87.88% 602	685
Pisgah High School Track (County)	1.46% 10	3.37% 23	5.42% 37	89.75% 613	683
Elevated Creek Park (Maggie Valley)	1.31% 9	5.67% 39	7.99% 55	85.03% 585	688
Mary Rathbone Rich Park (Maggie Valley)	1.32% 9	3.37% 23	4.39% 30	90.92% 621	683
Parham Park (Mggie Valley)	1.32% 9	2.93% 20	4.69% 32	91.06% 621	682
Mountain View Creek Park (Maggie Valley)	1.34% 9	2.39% 16	5.52% 37	90.75% 608	670
Hazelwood Park (Waynesville)	1.17% 8	4.23% 29	9.04% 62	85.57% 587	686
IP Sports Complex (Canton)	1.20% 8	6.30% 42	8.10% 54	84.41% 563	667
Tuscola High School Track (County)	1.03% 7	3.52% 24	4.69% 32	90.76% 619	682
Sulphur Springs Park (Waynesville)	0.87% 6	3.34% 23	8.43% 58	87.35% 601	688
McCracken Corner Park (Maggie Valley)	0.59% 4	2.80% 19	3.98% 27	92.64% 629	679
Obama-King Park (Waynesville)	0.44% 3	3.41% 23	2.67% 18	93.48% 631	675
Lynn's Park (Clyde)	0.44% 3	3.23% 22	4.84% 33	91.50% 624	682

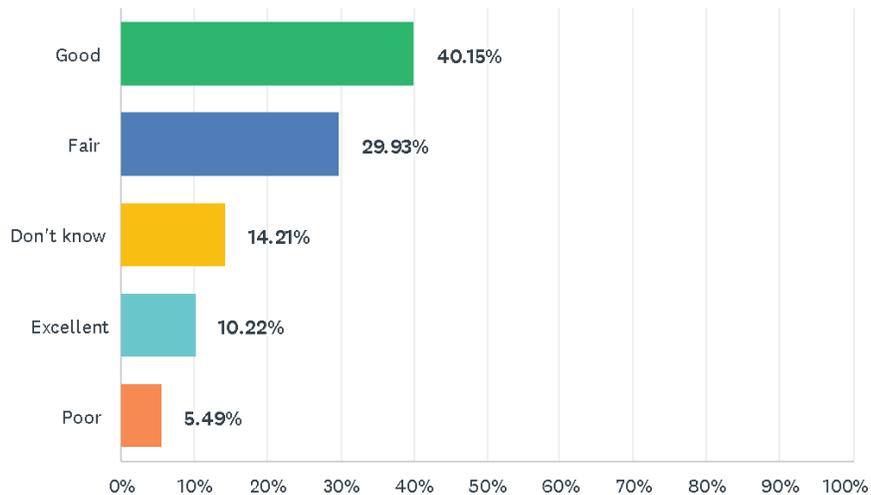
Q12 Overall, how would you rate the existing County parks and recreational facilities in Haywood County?

Answered: 803 Skipped: 74



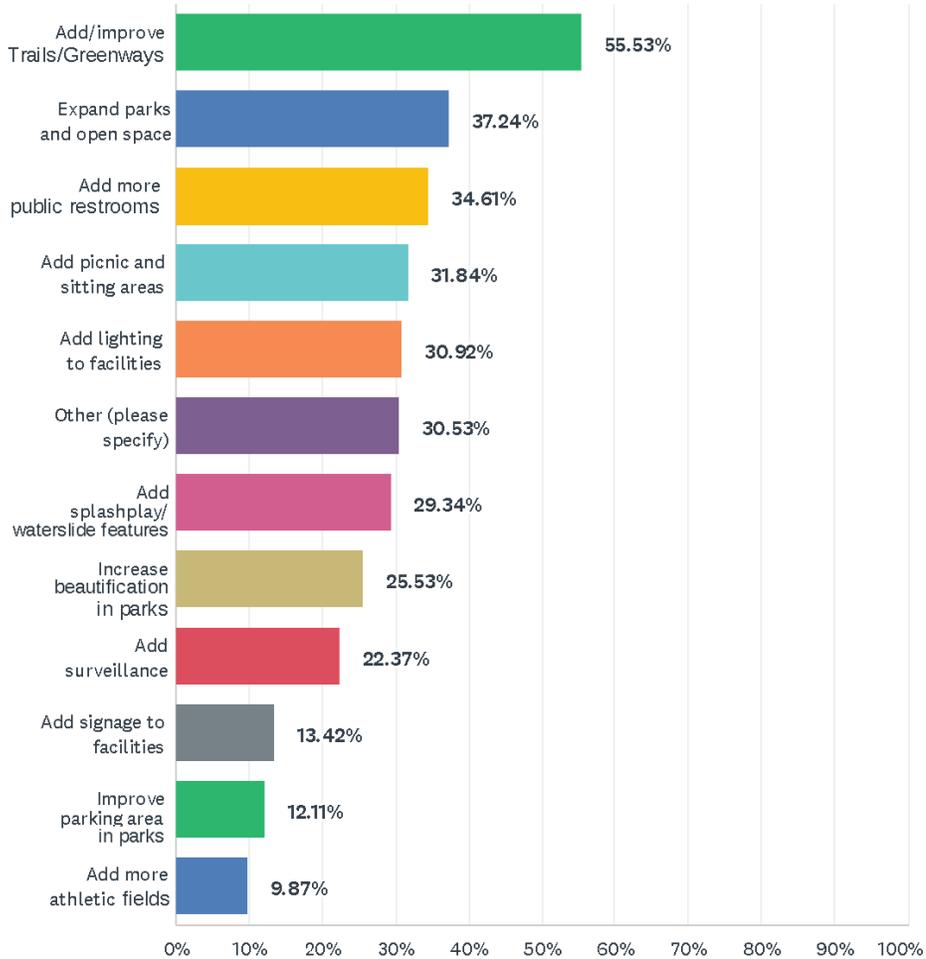
Q13 Overall, how would you rate the recreational programs offered in Haywood County?

Answered: 802 Skipped: 75



Q14 Check below improvements that could be made to EXISTING County park facilities:

Answered: 760 Skipped: 117



Q15 Rank in order of importance the top five facilities that could be developed or improved in Haywood County. (1 being your highest priority, 5 being your lowest) Please consider other members of your household as well.

Answered: 751 Skipped: 126

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL RESPONDENT
Jogging/Walking Trails (including greenway trails)	48.63% 284	21.92% 128	15.07% 88	5.99% 35	8.56% 50	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	58
Hiking Trails	42.86% 237	22.42% 124	17.00% 94	7.59% 42	10.31% 57	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	55
Bicycle Trails	38.81% 196	14.06% 71	17.23% 87	10.10% 51	20.40% 103	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50
Greenway Trails	49.30% 247	14.37% 72	13.77% 69	10.18% 51	12.77% 64	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50
Open Space/Natural Areas	37.07% 172	18.97% 88	17.03% 79	12.93% 60	14.66% 68	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46
Nature Based Recreation Opportunities	31.49% 137	22.76% 99	18.39% 80	8.51% 37	19.08% 83	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	43
Eco-Adventure Activities (Ziplines, Obstacle Course, etc.)	31.16% 134	18.60% 80	16.28% 70	10.70% 46	23.26% 100	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	43
Amphitheater/ Performing Arts Stage	21.99% 93	18.20% 77	17.73% 75	14.89% 63	27.19% 115	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	42
Picnic Areas	27.96% 118	25.59% 108	21.33% 90	10.90% 46	14.45% 61	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	42
Pickleball	23.98% 100	10.31% 43	14.63% 61	11.27% 47	40.53% 169	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	41
Indoor Swimming Pool	28.02% 116	17.39% 72	20.29% 84	12.56% 52	22.71% 94	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	41
Dog Park	19.12% 78	16.91% 69	21.57% 88	12.75% 52	30.15% 123	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40
Playgrounds	29.21% 118	22.77% 92	18.56% 75	8.42% 34	21.29% 86	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40
Un-programmed Area/ Meditation Garden	17.90% 70	16.88% 66	23.79% 93	13.81% 54	27.88% 109	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	39
Environmental Education Center	19.59% 76	20.62% 80	28.35% 110	13.92% 54	17.53% 68	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	38
Camping Facilities	25.00% 97	19.07% 74	17.53% 68	11.08% 43	27.58% 107	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	38

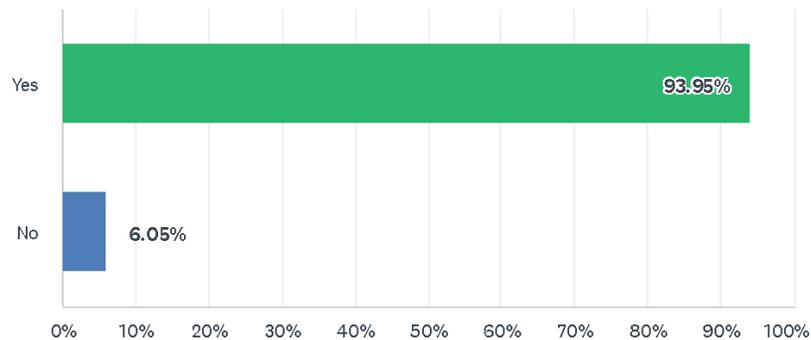
Fishing	19.12% 74	19.12% 74	26.61% 103	12.92% 50	22.74% 88	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	38
Multi-Sports Complex	20.21% 78	13.99% 54	22.54% 87	15.28% 59	28.76% 111	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	38
Shooting Range	20.63% 79	10.70% 41	15.93% 61	7.57% 29	45.43% 174	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	38
Special Aquatic features (Spray-ground)	25.72% 98	17.06% 65	18.90% 72	11.81% 45	27.03% 103	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	38
Gymnasium	17.96% 67	17.16% 64	19.84% 74	16.09% 60	29.49% 110	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	37
Outdoor Basketball Courts	11.83% 44	12.90% 48	25.27% 94	15.05% 56	34.95% 130	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	37
Disc Golf	12.26% 45	8.17% 30	13.62% 50	15.26% 56	50.68% 186	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	36
Outdoor Tennis Courts	16.34% 59	13.30% 48	20.78% 75	13.30% 48	36.84% 133	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	36
Soccer Fields	14.72% 53	13.33% 48	20.00% 72	15.00% 54	37.22% 134	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	36
Teen Center	16.20% 58	15.36% 55	27.65% 99	10.34% 37	31.56% 113	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	35
In-Line Skating (2-3 Miles)	11.27% 40	13.52% 48	15.77% 56	12.39% 44	48.17% 171	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	35
Baseball/Softball Fields	10.14% 36	10.99% 39	21.69% 77	17.46% 62	40.56% 144	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	35
Skateboard Park	11.90% 42	12.18% 43	16.43% 58	13.03% 46	46.74% 165	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	35
Football Fields	10.17% 35	9.01% 31	15.12% 52	15.12% 52	51.16% 176	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	34
Sand Volleyball Courts	10.17% 35	9.01% 31	22.09% 76	13.66% 47	45.35% 156	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	34
Others:	23.85% 26	6.42% 7	15.60% 17	2.75% 3	51.38% 56	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10

Q16 Please list below, any recreation facilities, programs or special events that you would like to see offered in Haywood County:

available people shooting range gymnastics Haywood County especially yoga fitness
place safe town things recreation teach community Interested splash pad work
love see Music use Outdoor swimming pool play Disc golf tournaments facility
bike paths pickleball courts baseball lighting restroom kids fishing running
playground offered court activities see walking sports events
children county disc golf outdoor teams trails Bike
greenways teens parks indoor programs
skatepark area Biking lanes classes group Waynesville
Youth hiking center biking trails soccer
outdoor pickleball courts around great public Canton dedicated
concerts mountain biking dog park guided hikes etc outdoor pool Waynesville
connect pickle ball courts adults actually Better fun walking trails variety
Mountain bike trails club nature na tournaments Turf outside swimming
opportunities league type water hiking trails path camping love

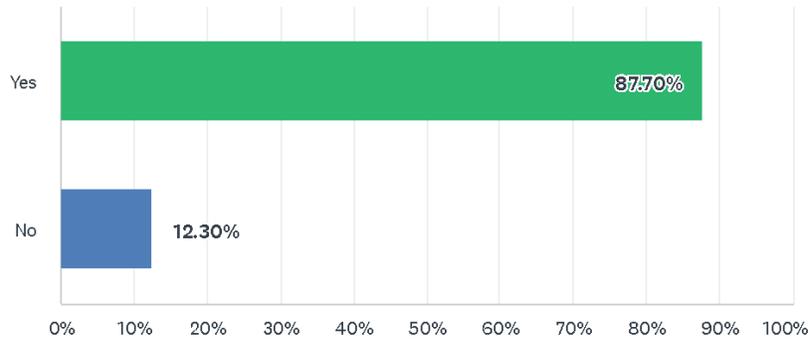
Q17 Would you support additional Greenways/Trails that would connect to destination areas within and without the County?

Answered: 744 Skipped: 133



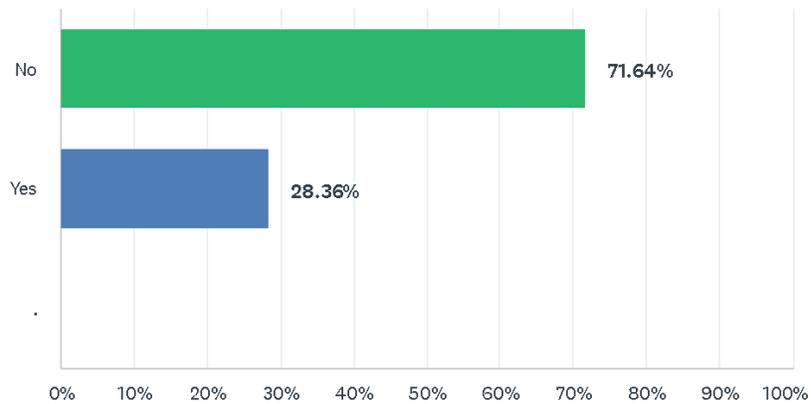
Q18 Would you be willing to pay a nominal fee to attend an event or use a special facility?

Answered: 748 Skipped: 129



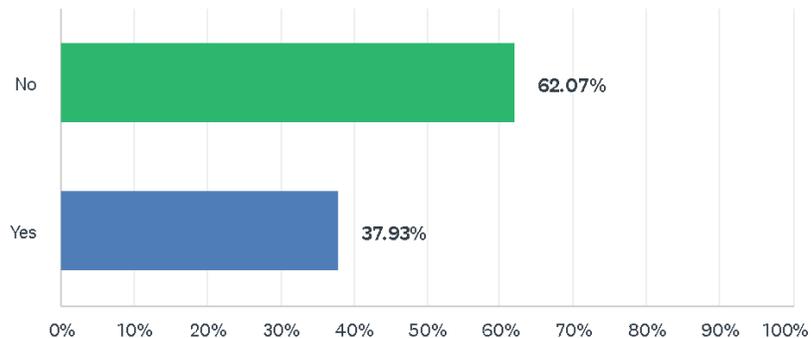
Q19 Do you use any school or private facilities for recreation or leisure activities? (Example YMCA)

Answered: 744 Skipped: 133



Q20 Do you travel out of the County to use a recreation facility?

Answered: 754 Skipped: 123

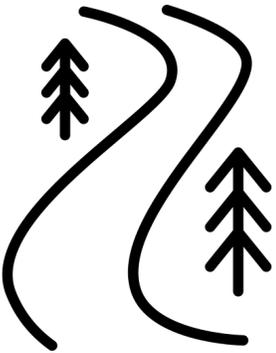


Survey Conclusions

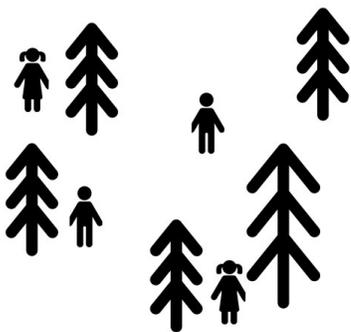
An analysis of the survey response data and open-ended comments provided by survey participants indicate the desires and preferences of users of the Haywood County Parks and Recreation facilities and programs. This analysis reveals that a broad range of participants from all over the County have a positive opinion of the existing county recreation facilities and staff. However, there is a clear desire for more trails, greenways, and nature-based recreation. The majority of survey participants would like to see the existing County recreation system expanded including additional open spaces.



HIKING TRAILS



GREENWAYS



OPEN GREEN SPACE



NATURE-BASED RECREATION



STATE AND NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Surveys that were designed to determine the demand for outdoor recreation and facilities have been conducted on both the federal and state levels by private, non-profit, and governmental agencies. This information is important as it sets a precedent for what popular activities may be expected by typical park users.

The top 5 most popular outdoor recreational activities nationwide based on the 2021 Outdoor Participation Trends Report generated by the Outdoor Foundation are:

1. Running, jogging, and trail running
2. Hiking
3. Freshwater, saltwater, and fly fishing
4. Road biking, mountain biking, and BMX
5. Car, backyard, backpacking, and RV camping

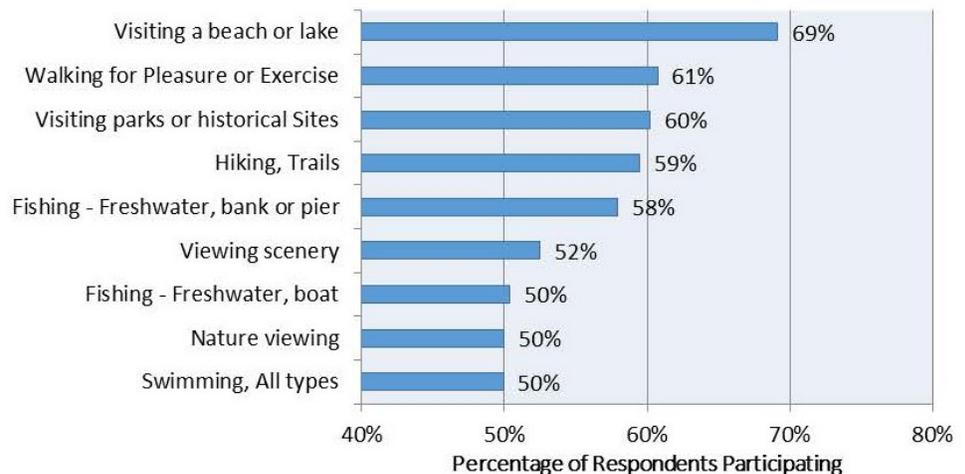
MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES BY PARTICIPATION RATE

1 RUNNING, JOGGING AND TRAIL RUNNING	21.0% of Americans	63.8 million participants
2 HIKING	19.0% of Americans	57.8 million participants
3 FRESHWATER, SALTWATER AND FLY FISHING	18.0% of Americans	54.7 million participants
4 ROAD BIKING, MOUNTAIN BIKING AND BMX	17.3% of Americans	52.7 million participants
5 CAR, BACKYARD, BACKPACKING AND RV CAMPING	15.8% of Americans	47.9 million participants

Outdoor Foundation 2021 Outdoor Participation Trends Report

The top 9 most popular outdoor activities in North Carolina based on the North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Plan for 2020–2025 (SCORP) produced by the Division of Parks and Recreation are:

1. Visiting a beach or lake
2. Walking for pleasure or exercise
3. Visiting parks or historical sites
4. Hiking, trails
5. Freshwater fishing from a bank or pier
6. Viewing scenery
7. Fishing from a boat
8. Nature viewing
9. Swimming, all types



2020–2025 NC SCORP

Local governments (cities, towns, and counties) provide 39% of the public recreational opportunities in the United States. However, due to their proximity to the population density, they provide key access to public recreational opportunities.

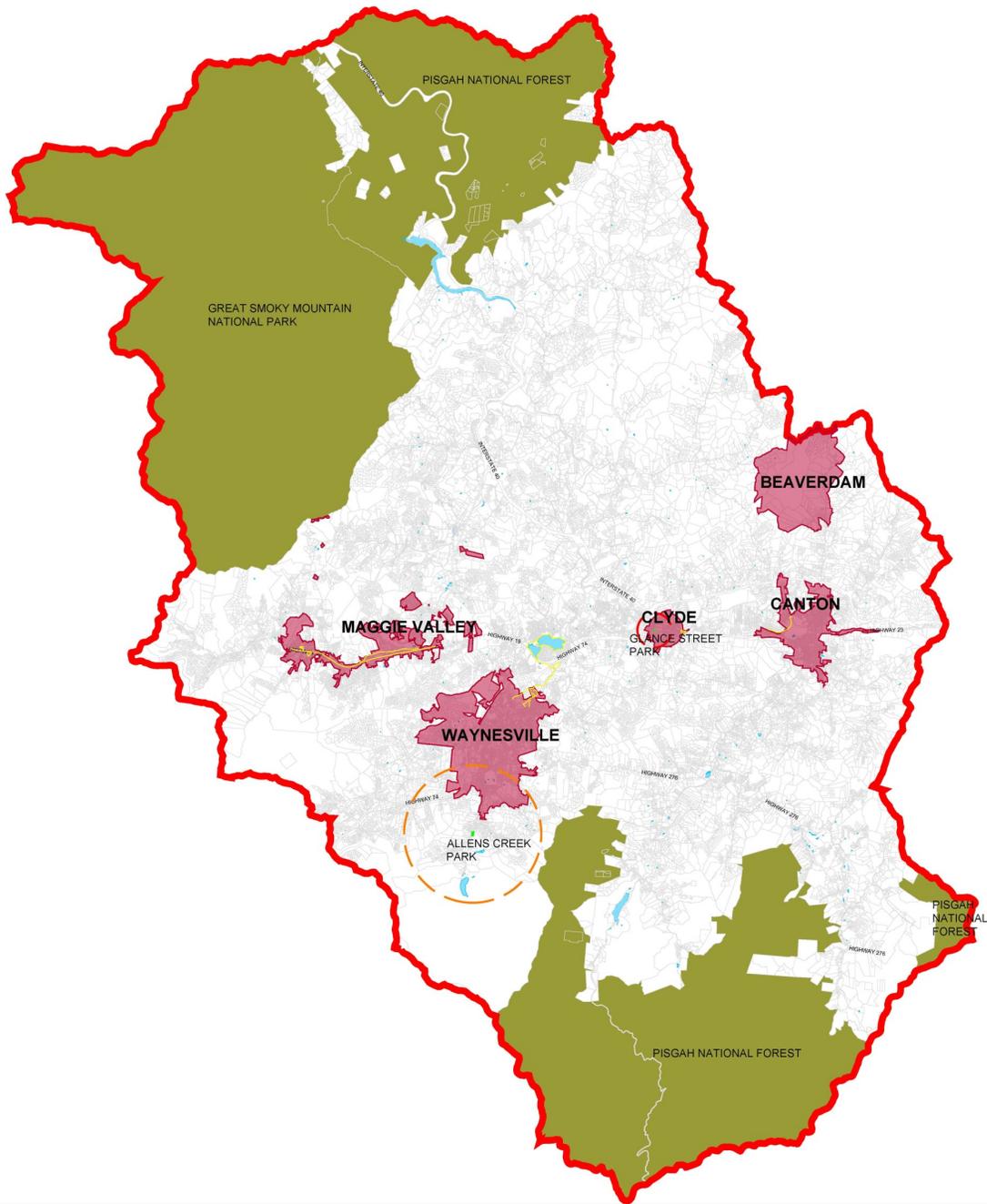
EVALUATION OF PARK LAND NEEDS

To better understand what recreation resources a community has and how accessible those facilities and programs may be to the general population, this study looked at typical service areas. Map 3.1 illustrates what portions of the community lie within or near the typical recreation service areas. The outcome of this exercise reveals that portions of the community live far enough from recreational facilities that they cannot easily access them. Populations typically affected include children and seniors that do not drive. Both user groups generally have greater leisure time and can directly benefit from access to parks and recreation facilities.

Solutions to improving recreation in Haywood County include providing facilities and amenities that residents desire and need. It also considers where such facilities and amenities should be located. Existing recreation service areas illustrated indicate that the areas outside of the core of municipalities have the least access to parks. Planning for a future parks and recreation system expansion should consider developing facilities outside of the County's core. As new residential and large commercial developments are planned, the County should take an active role in working with developers on what types of recreation amenities should be provided per County's planning department requirements.

Haywood County's Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan considers community workshops, recreation survey findings, projected demand, service area analysis, and County staff input as the primary guides in prescribing the current and future recommendations for Haywood County parks and recreation development.





LEGEND

-  County Recreation Site
-  Federal Managed Land
-  Trails and Greenways
-  Water Body / Creek
-  Municipal Boundary
-  County Boundary
-  Parcel

TYPICAL SERVICE AREAS

-  2.0 Mile
(Existing Community Park)
-  0.5 Mile
(Existing Mini Park)

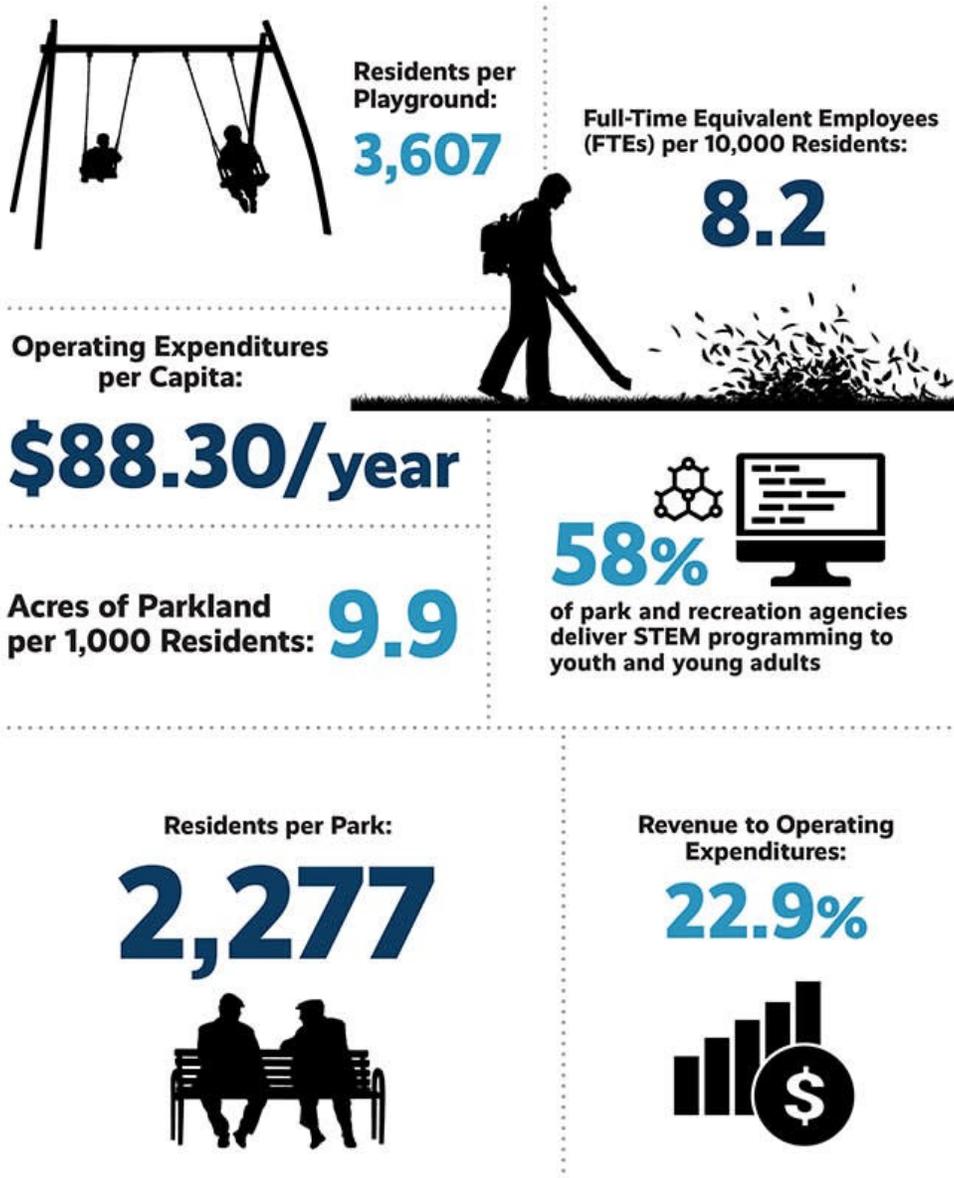
Map 3.1 Haywood County existing service area (See Appendix A for 11"x17")



When comparing a park system to national standards, one method is to examine the total acreage of the park system. The NRPA park land guidelines (in acres) for the total service population of Haywood County are provided in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. Population figures in this analysis, estimated at 61,053, include the estimated population of residents in the County as of 2021. The acreage requirement is based on the population ratio method (acres of park land per population of 1,000) pre-established for each classification of park.



2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review Key Findings



The 2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review provides benchmarks from recreation departments across the country

Table 3.1 Haywood County existing park acreage by classification

TYPE OF PARK	Existing Haywood County Acreage	Recommended for 2022 Population 61,053	Recommended for 2032 Population 67,931	(Surplus) / Deficit for 2022 Population
REGIONAL PARK (NPS & NC) 1,000 acres or 10 acres / 1,000 persons	NA	NA	NA	NA
DISTRICT PARK 200 acres or 5 acres / 1,500 persons	0 acres	203 acres	226 acres	203 acres
COMMUNITY PARK 2.5 acres / 4,000 persons	7.5 acres	38 acres	42 acres	30.5 acres
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 2 acres / 4,000 persons	0 acres	31 acres	34 acres	31 acres
MINI PARK 0.5 acres / 4,000 persons	2 Acre	8 acres	8.5 acres	6 acres

Table 3.2 Haywood County existing park acreage

HAYWOOD COUNTY EXISTING PARKS	
Allens Creek Park (Community)	7.5 acres
Glance Street Park (Mini)	2 acres
HAYWOOD COUNTY PARK ACREAGE	9.5 acres

Based on the information contained in Table 3.1, Haywood County does not meet the national standard guidelines for any of the park acreage needs. However, due to the rural nature of the County and the amenities provided by the local municipalities and federal land managers in the County, the acreage listed above is not required for immediate implementation. The community workshops and the recreation survey will be used as the primary guides in prescribing the specific recommendations for Haywood County parks and recreation development, for both now and the future.

EVALUATION OF AMENITY NEEDS

Standards were established based upon information gathered from NRPA and historical evidence from past projects. An inventory of the existing amenities is shown in Table 3.3. Recommendations for what is needed can be found in Section 4 under the subtitle, “Amenity Proposals and Recommendations,” in Table 4.1.

In the 2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review, a list of outdoor park and recreation amenities was given with the median number of residents per amenity. This data is one more way to see how Haywood County is meeting the needs of the community. The public meetings and the recreation survey will be used as the primary guides in prescribing the specific needs for County parks and recreation development, both now and for the future.

**FIGURE 3: OUTDOOR PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES – POPULATION PER FACILITY
(BY PREVALENCE AND POPULATION PER FACILITY)**

Type of Facilities		Median Number of Residents per Facility					
		Population of Jurisdiction					
	Percent of Agencies	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Playgrounds	94.4%	3,607	2,132	2,961	3,672	4,804	8,271
Basketball courts	87.4	7,187	4,051	7,000	8,790	8,477	11,632
Tennis courts (outdoor only)	81.4	5,089	2,748	4,819	5,726	5,818	9,997
Diamond fields: baseball – youth	78.0	6,763	3,000	5,099	7,560	12,914	23,619
Rectangular fields: multipurpose	66.4	8,750	3,895	7,400	11,212	10,792	22,538
Diamond fields: softball – adult	65.5	13,510	5,663	11,184	16,250	28,081	35,875
Dog parks	64.9	46,000	11,148	27,528	58,926	76,610	129,506
Diamond fields: softball – youth	59.3	11,287	5,447	9,891	11,884	26,073	43,670
Swimming pools (outdoor only)	51.5	37,569	8,591	25,402	43,100	67,004	93,534
Diamond fields: baseball – adult	51.3	20,159	7,989	20,522	22,366	38,899	48,657
Rectangular fields: soccer – youth	48.9	7,192	3,433	5,833	8,291	12,646	32,649
Community gardens	48.3	31,175	9,001	25,480	51,197	72,238	96,322
Tot lots	45.1	11,000	6,194	8,974	13,701	19,122	22,163
Multiuse courts: basketball, volleyball	44.6	20,000	6,200	18,850	24,644	36,979	70,287
Rectangular fields: soccer – adult	43.6	12,943	7,541	11,161	12,800	20,000	30,092
Skate parks	39.3	49,750	11,000	31,248	66,672	109,798	247,664
Rectangular fields: football	36.5	25,977	7,917	16,584	31,972	51,719	78,656
Multipurpose synthetic fields	21.0	38,328	13,200	22,041	40,305	53,550	112,707
Ice rinks (outdoor only)	17.9	16,664	10,000	13,049	29,386	112,000	472,688
Rectangular fields: cricket	12.1	128,393	ISD*	29,404	62,958	110,936	370,119
Rectangular fields: lacrosse	11.2	29,000	7,051	13,333	33,437	63,250	174,861
Overlay fields	8.7	15,385	4,385	8,935	10,724	42,139	87,438
Rectangular fields: field hockey	3.5	23,270	ISD*	15,007	ISD*	110,558	ISD*

*ISD = Insufficient Data

2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review: Median population per recreation amenity provided by parks and recreation agencies across the nation

Table 3.3 Haywood County existing amenities and recommendations

Amenity	McGill Recommended Standards	Existing Amenities Currently Provided by Haywood County
Haywood County Amenities		
Adult Baseball Field (>300')	1/22,000	0
Adult Softball Field (250'-300')	1/15,000	0
Youth Baseball Field (200'-250')	1/7,500	0
Youth Softball Field (<200')	1/12,000	0
Multipurpose Athletic Field	1/10,000	3
Indoor / Outdoor Basketball Court	1/10,000	0
Tennis Court	1/10,000	0
Pickleball Court	1/15,000	0
Volleyball Court	1/20,000	0
Lawn Games	1/20,000	0
Picnic Shelter	1/7,500	1
Picnic Station (unsheltered)	1/7,500	0
Playground	1/7,500	1
Walking / Running Trails	0.25 mi./1,000	0.75 mi.
Dog Park	1/15,000	0
Community Center	1/30,000	0
Indoor Performance Stage	1/65,000	0
Outdoor Amphitheater	1/65,000	0
Swimming Pool	1/65,000	0
Splash Pad	1/40,000	0
Disc Golf Course	1/40,000	0
Water Access	1/40,000	0
Fishing Access	1/40,000	0

EVALUATION OF STAFFING NEEDS



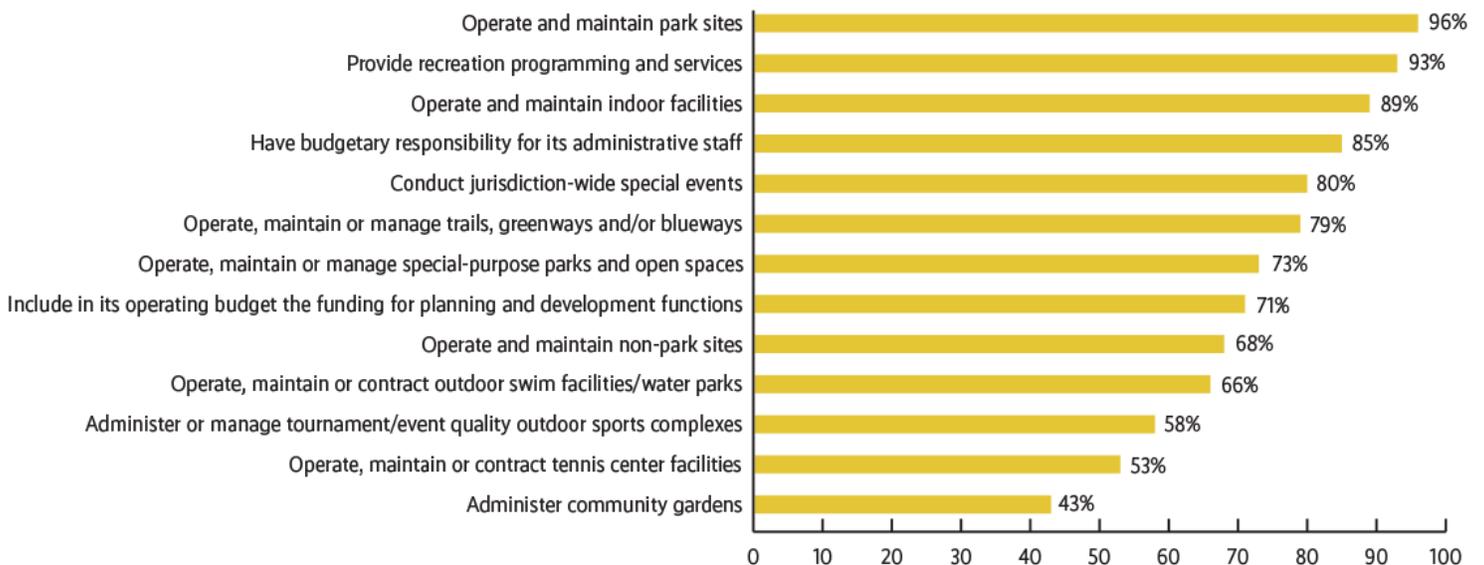
The people that make up a parks and recreation department are what makes a successful agency. Everyone from the parks and recreation director, to athletic specialists, to maintenance staff work together to provide quality offerings to the community and visitors to the area.

Haywood County has two full-time employees that work to create the quality of life environment for users of the parks system. Haywood County’s estimated population is 61,053 and the current staffing levels are well below average of typical agencies serving similar population sizes. Based on the 2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review, the median full-time staff equivalent (FTE) for parks and recreation departments across the country is 9 per 10,000 residents. The County should provide, at a minimum, 31.1 FTE to match the lower quartile of agencies serving populations between 50,000 and 99,999.

Haywood County Parks and Recreation Staffing

- Recreation and Parks Director (1)
- Recreation Officer (1)
- Permanent Part-Time (1)
- Regular Part-Time (20)
- Seasonal Employees (as needed)

**FIGURE 8: KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES
(PERCENT OF AGENCIES)**



2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review: The key responsibilities of park and recreation agencies across the country

31.13 FTE

The minimum number of full-time staff equivalent is 5.1 per 10,000 residents based on the NRPA staffing guidelines for Haywood County's current population of 61,053.

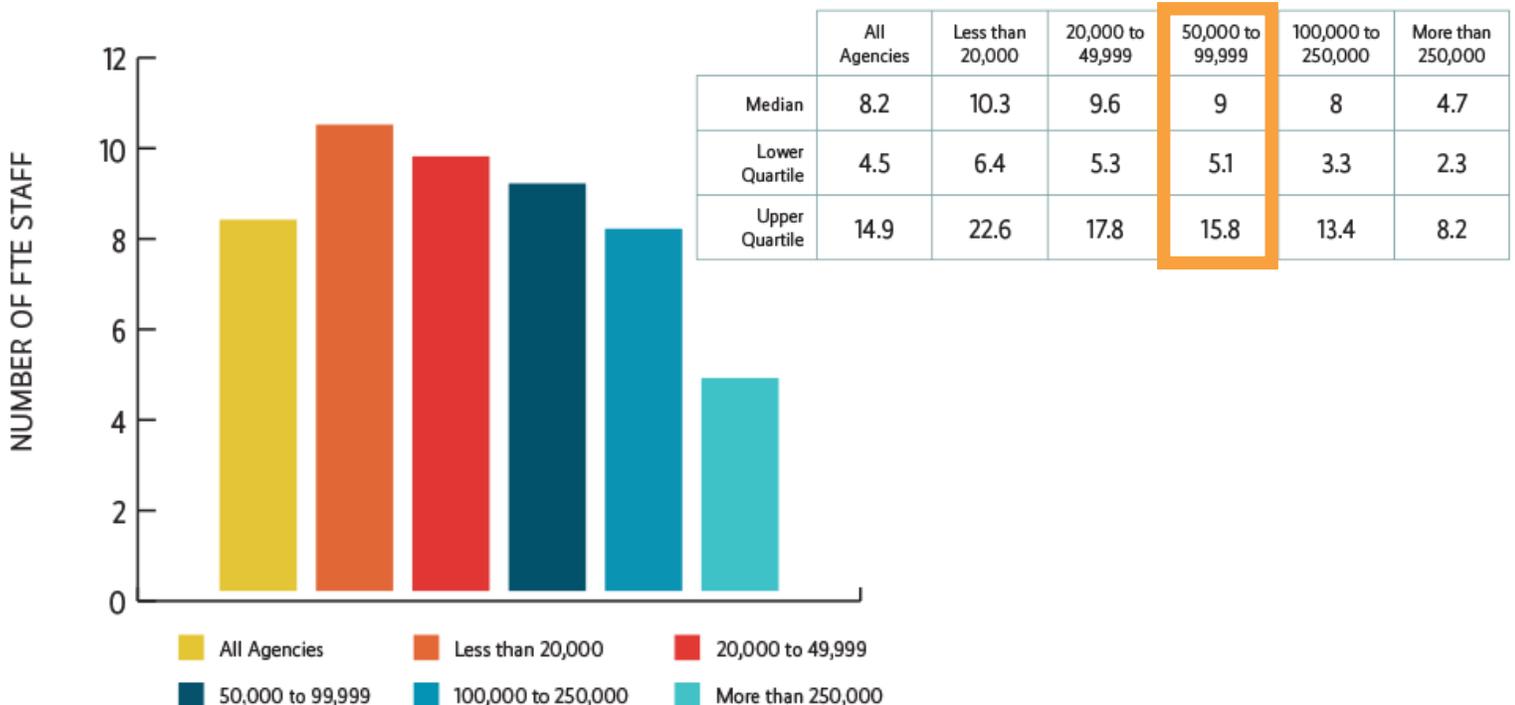
22 FTE

The current number of full-time staff equivalents provided by Haywood County to support the recreational needs for the present population of 61,053.



Finding qualified maintenance staff is critical to providing quality services

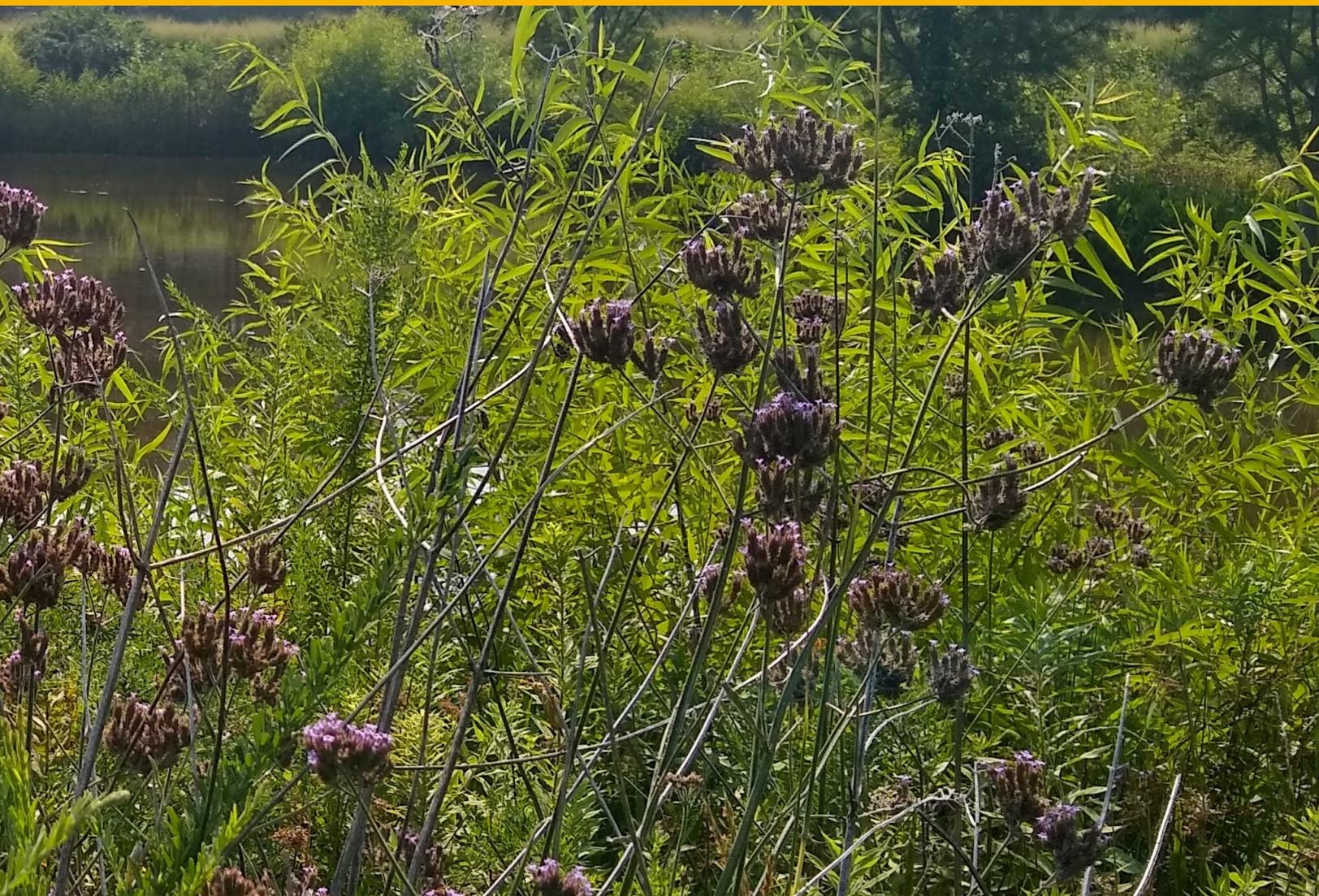
**FIGURE 11: PARK AND RECREATION FTEs
PER 10,000 RESIDENTS
(BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**



The 2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review: FTEs for parks and recreation departments across the country

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS





OBJECTIVES

The Haywood County Parks and Recreation Department provides recreational opportunities, both through facilities and programming, for residents and visitors to the County. As identified in the inventory portion of this report, there are two existing recreational facilities owned and operated by Haywood County that make every effort to offer active and passive recreational opportunities to the community.

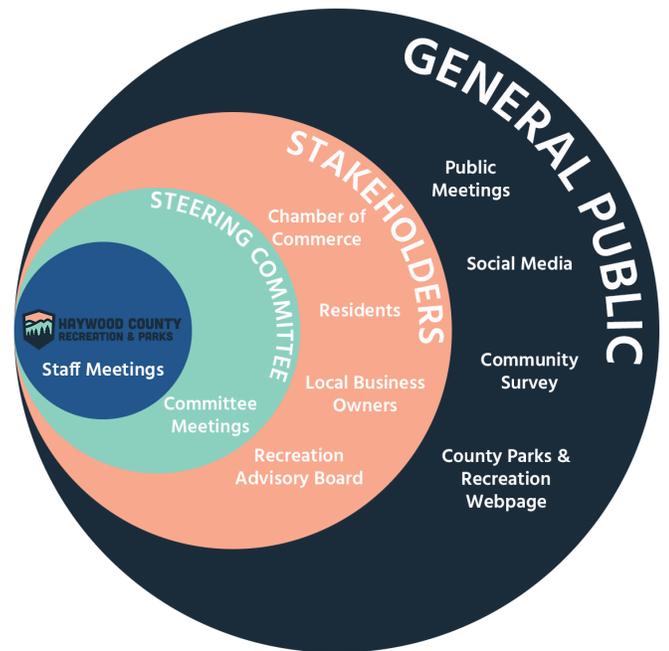
Understanding the needs and desires of the residents and County leaders is essential before making recommendations to the existing park system and expansion possibilities. Public meetings, County staff discussions, and the recreation survey were integral in helping identify the primary interests and concerns of County residents.

Haywood County Parks and Recreation should strive to provide the community with a range of quality facilities and programs that will bolster the economy, promote health and wellness, and provide recreational programs that enrich the quality of life for all our citizens and visitors. The recreation needs assessment was an important component of gathering information.

An analysis of input from Haywood County staff, Haywood County Board of Commissioners, citizen representatives, and state and national guidelines aided the process in providing recommendations. Objectives derived from these methods of input include the following:

- Ensure the parks and recreation department is incorporating measures across the County that will meet the health, safety, and well-being of the citizens and visitors
- Provide appropriate recreation improvements and expansion of existing recreation facilities
- Provide additional recreation land in the form of district, community, and neighborhood parks which are convenient and accessible to all residents
- Gauge the recreation needs of the community and provide the necessary amenities to fulfill them
- Provide the community with creative and inclusive recreation, leisure, and cultural programs that are accessible and affordable to all citizens
- Ensure adequate staffing for park facility maintenance and recreation programming commiserate to the needs of the County
- Solicit creative funding strategies and apply for state and local grants for recreation, leisure, and cultural arts facilities and programs
- Strengthen and build partnerships that will aid in providing recreational facilities and programs for the community

This Master Plan serves as a map for the future development of existing recreation facilities for Haywood County. The plan provides recommendations to accomplish plan objectives. To effectively implement the 2022 Haywood County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the County should annually evaluate



Input from both the County and the public were invaluable in guiding the objectives and recommendations for the 2022 Haywood County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

population growth and recreation demand and regularly assess the topics related to successfully meeting department objectives. Increased recreation department staffing, funding for facility improvements, and well-planned system-wide expansion. Strong partnerships with private, non-profit, and other public recreation providers will be integral in meeting the recommendations provided for this master plan.

TOPIC

OBJECTIVE

General Recommendations and Best Practices

- Ensure the parks and recreation department is incorporating measures across the County that will meet the health, safety, and well-being of the citizens and visitors

Existing Facilities

- Provide appropriate recreation improvements and expansion of existing recreation facilities

Future Facilities

- Provide additional recreation land in the form of district, community, and neighborhood parks which are convenient and accessible to all residents

Existing Amenities

- Gauge the recreation needs of the community and provide the necessary amenities to fulfill them

Programming

- Provide the community with creative and inclusive recreation, leisure, and cultural programs that are accessible and affordable to all citizens

Staffing

- Ensure adequate staffing for park facility maintenance and recreation programming commiserate to the needs of the County

Funding

- Solicit creative funding strategies and apply for state and local grants for recreation, leisure, and cultural arts programs

Partnerships

- Strengthen and build partnerships that will aid in providing recreational facilities and programs for the community

Communication

- Develop a department marketing plan to inform the public of County recreation facilities, programs, and seasonal events

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

General recommendations are based on professional experience and review of national and state recreational best practices. They are intended to provide guidance for the operations, administration, and growth of Haywood County Parks and Recreation. They provide advice on elements ranging from policy, safety, maintenance, and other general issues. These general recommendations are intended to inform future decision making. Many of these recommendations depend upon collaboration between County departments and other recreation partners. They are not specific to any single facility or program initiative.

Recommendation #1: Facility and Program Accessibility

Every parks and recreation facility Haywood County operates should respect and provide the needs of the disabled population through design and programming. All new facilities should be designed to meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Currently, the County meets compliance with these regulations at all of the existing facilities. As new facilities are acquired or developed, priority should be given to the continual upgrading of existing facilities that, perhaps, become non-compliant.

Recommendation #2: Design and Daily Maintenance

The facilities owned and operated by Haywood County should appeal to residents of the County and visitors to the area. Priority should be given to improving the design of facilities so that they are architecturally, functionally, and ecologically progressive. Daily maintenance practices should be implemented to improve the cleanliness and longevity of all facilities.



Master planning should always be completed for park improvements or new facilities prior to final budgeting and / or design; thereby, making the phasing / development more transitional and of higher quality. Design (and redesign) of all facilities should embrace ecologically responsible elements and methods, such as the use of native plants for landscaping, the incorporation of wildlife habitats, the use of permeable surfaces to reduce stormwater runoff, where possible, and green building practices for structures.

Recommendation #3: Walkable Communities

Haywood County should promote land uses and site designs that make walking and bicycling convenient and enjoyable. They should also encourage the inclusion of public greenways or trails in private developments and the establishment of connectivity to and / or between both current and future public schools, parks, and other public destinations.

Recommendation #4: 10-Minute Walk Movement

NRPA, the Trust for Public Land (TPL), and the Urban Land Institute (ULI) have partnered together to promote safe, equitable park access for United States citizens. The goal is to provide 100% of people access to a quality park or green space within a 10-minute walk of their homes by 2050. Haywood County should encourage municipalities within the County to pledge their support to the 10-Minute Walk Mission. For more information, visit 10minutewalk.org.

10-MINUTE WALK

Recommendation #5: Greenways / Multiuse Trails

Based on state and national studies, walking and biking are highly desired activities, which are increasing by bounds. North Carolina's 2020–2025 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) found that 67% of survey participants reported that linear parks are the most needed facility within their park systems. The SCORP also found that 61% of respondents viewed walking for pleasure to be a common outdoor recreational activity.

Haywood County should encourage the coordination and planning for future utility easements with greenway facilities. The easements should be established to allow for the inclusion of recreation facilities, where possible. Where new development occurs, the County should work with the developer to provide rights-of-way or easements for proposed and future greenway facilities.

Recommendation #6: Greenway Funding

Haywood County should consider including language in a development ordinance for fee in-lieu of sidewalk to fund greenway land acquisition and construction where the need for pedestrian connections cannot rely on the timing of private property development.

Recommendation #7: Bicycle Facilities

Given the high cost of fuel for vehicular transportation, air quality concerns, and the need to increase the health and fitness of the population, a planned network of bike trails, bike lanes, and shared roadways should be developed to support alternative transportation to recreation facilities and travel within Haywood County. Future roadway construction within the County should include provisions to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle travel. This network should connect both existing parks as well as future park facilities and greenways. In addition, bike racks (sheltered at schools and other potential high-use areas) should be installed at all publicly owned facilities within the County. The County should work with NCDOT to ensure that bicycle and pedestrian facilities are provided as much as possible to promote alternative modes of transportation.

**Recommendation #8: Entrance and Wayfinding Signage**

To provide uniformity throughout the park system Haywood County should consider providing signage that is uniform and consistent to promote parks and recreation facilities. Entrance signage is the face of parks and, therefore, the face of the County's parks and recreation. To provide visitors with ease of navigation throughout the park system, wayfinding signage should also be installed to elevate the parks and provide consistency throughout the parks system.

Recommendation #9: Interpretive Signage

Haywood County should consider placing signage that would identify any historic and natural landmarks along pedestrian corridors. This type of signage would not only enhance the pedestrian experience but also provide educational and cultural information to greenway users.

Recommendation #10: Intergovernmental Cooperation

Haywood County should seek to coordinate planning efforts with the Haywood County School System, local municipalities, County planning department, and federal land managers to provide greenway and park facilities. Representatives of the County and of these agencies should meet periodically to discuss development and recreation projects that are planned or are underway within the area. The purpose of these

meetings is to discuss upcoming project opportunities and development trends in demographics and growth, newly identified citizen needs in recreation and open space, and recreation master plan updates for local municipalities and adjacent counties. This will also ensure that redundancy in services is prevented and that all opportunities for partnerships and connectivity are being utilized.

Recommendation #11: Developers

The County should require new developments in Haywood County to incorporate open space into their development plans. The inclusion of public greenways, trails, and bike lanes in private developments should also be encouraged. If no suitable land for park or greenway development is available, the County should consider allowing developers to pay into a fee-in-lieu of parkland dedication.

Recommendation #12: Partnership Agreement

It is recommended that the County staff meet with existing and potential partners, such as local hospitals, not-for-profit organizations, local churches, and athletic associations to determine needs and possible partnership opportunities. The County should begin this process by developing an approach to each potential partner to establish an understanding of each entity's needs and ultimately result in a partnership agreement. The process will require periodic progress meetings with each partner to facilitate the partnerships goals and objectives. This may entail presentations to the partner's board or committee.

Recommendation #13: Educational and Stewardship Programming

Haywood County should develop a consistent environmental education program and interpretative facilities at park locations and along future greenway corridors as opportunities arise for future park development. These programs should include stewardship and community volunteer programs geared to the management of natural areas and wildlife habitats.

Recommendation #14: Green Building

It is recommended that the County implement green building components into the existing and future parks facilities. Green building techniques consist of building materials and construction practices which reduce environmental impacts (greenhouse gases, water pollution, and air pollution) and promote energy efficient building materials and methods. These efforts will improve environmental stewardship for park facilities and also educate park users.

Recommendation #15: Contiguous Property Acquisition

When property that is contiguous to existing parks becomes available, all reasonable efforts should be made to acquire the property. Large acreage parks offer recreation amenities that can only be achieved on large sites. The acquisition of contiguous property next to County parks should be of high priority to Haywood County. Efforts should be made immediately to seek the first option on all contiguous properties. At the time these options are sought, other possibilities should be presented to the property owner as well. Some property owners may be receptive to conservation easements while retaining the title to the property. Conservation easements will allow the County the opportunity to use properties for recreation while providing the immediate benefits of preservation. Numerous grant sources can be used for land acquisition. Extreme care should be exercised in choosing the correct process(es) and timing for acquisition to meet the full potential afforded by grants.



Recommendation #16: Acceptance of Fee Simple Land Donation

If land is offered to Haywood County as donation by fee simple title with no restrictions, the property should be surveyed for natural heritage significance and relationship to existing plans and parks. If the land contains no environmental hazards, restrictive covenants, or restrictive easements it can be useful and beneficial for the County to assume ownership. Not all donated land has to be developed into a park to be useful. Any land donation to the County serves a great public need even if it is banked for the future because the development and public needs of the distant future (over 50 years) is unknown. If donated property is properly managed, the revenue and future significance of the property would far exceed its current contribution to the tax base. If the County chooses not to accept land donation of a particular property, efforts should be made to assist the property owner with contacting an agency that accepts land donations or conservation easements. Land donations (which the County has no interest in owning) could be donated to the local parks foundation.

Recommendation #17: Natural and Cultural Heritage Inventory

Haywood County should refer to the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program’s Natural Area Inventory of Haywood County, North Carolina. The intent of this study is to identify areas deemed to be significant natural resources, which should be evaluated for consideration of preservation and future use as recreational resources.

Recommendation #18: Technology Access

As the culture continues to move towards information accessibility, providing access to wi-fi connectivity within the parks is an amenity that can elevate the usership of park facilities. Haywood County should identify the locations within their park facilities to install the necessary equipment that will provide users the ability to access wi-fi connectivity.



Recommendation #19: Programs and Classes

To expand recreation programming, the County should continue to provide recreation classes and programs in appropriate County parks and facilities. The County should assess the need to contract future programming offerings out to concessionaires. This could extend the programs offered by non-profits and private recreation providers into future County-owned facilities, which may be more accessible to residents who are not currently served. It also would strive to increase programming options by starting new contract programs and activities in the following service areas: health and fitness, swim safety classes, environmental education, nature-based outdoor recreation, non-sports interest classes, and fine / cultural arts programs.

Recommendation #20: Facility Marketing Campaign

Parks and recreation facilities are an invaluable asset to any community. The need to provide public awareness of recreation opportunities is just as important as providing the necessary facilities. To improve awareness of County-owned facilities and programs, Haywood County should launch a parks and recreation programs marketing campaign. The County should consider options to raise awareness through social media, special events at lesser-known facilities, and signage throughout the County directing visitors to the parks. As growth continues to occur throughout the region, Haywood County should partner with local chambers of commerce and real estate groups to provide pamphlets to people who relocate to the County.

Recommendation #21: Mitigation of Asset Obsolescence

All County facilities, equipment, and items needed to provide the public with safe and adequate recreation services should be evaluated annually to ensure they meet appropriate standards of service. Assets should be replaced at the end of their useful life.

HAYWOOD COUNTY FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Allens Creek Park

Description:

Allens Creek Park is the County's first developed park and provides the community both active and passive recreation opportunities surrounded by beautiful mountains. This jewel near the Town of Waynesville promotes health and wellness with a walking path and multiuse fields. The surrounding woods provide a natural setting for this great facility.

Challenges and Issues:

- Playground in need of repairs or to be updated

Recommendations

- Update playground equipment
- Install fitness stations near existing playground
- Install rock climbing boulder near existing playground
- Install pickleball courts in open space between parking lot and walking path



Glance Street Park

Description:

Glance Street Park is a small passive area near the center of Clyde. At one time, it was an annex site for Haywood Community College; however, flooding destroyed the buildings and the County acquired it to provide a passive green space for the community. A paved walking path surrounds an open lawn and a pollinator garden that provides beauty for the community of Clyde.

Challenges and Issues:

- Sidewalk in need of repairs
- Lack of shade
- Park in need of master planning for development

Recommendations

- Repair sidewalk
- Prepare a park master plan to include the following:
 - Community garden
 - Picnic shelter
 - Improved landscaping



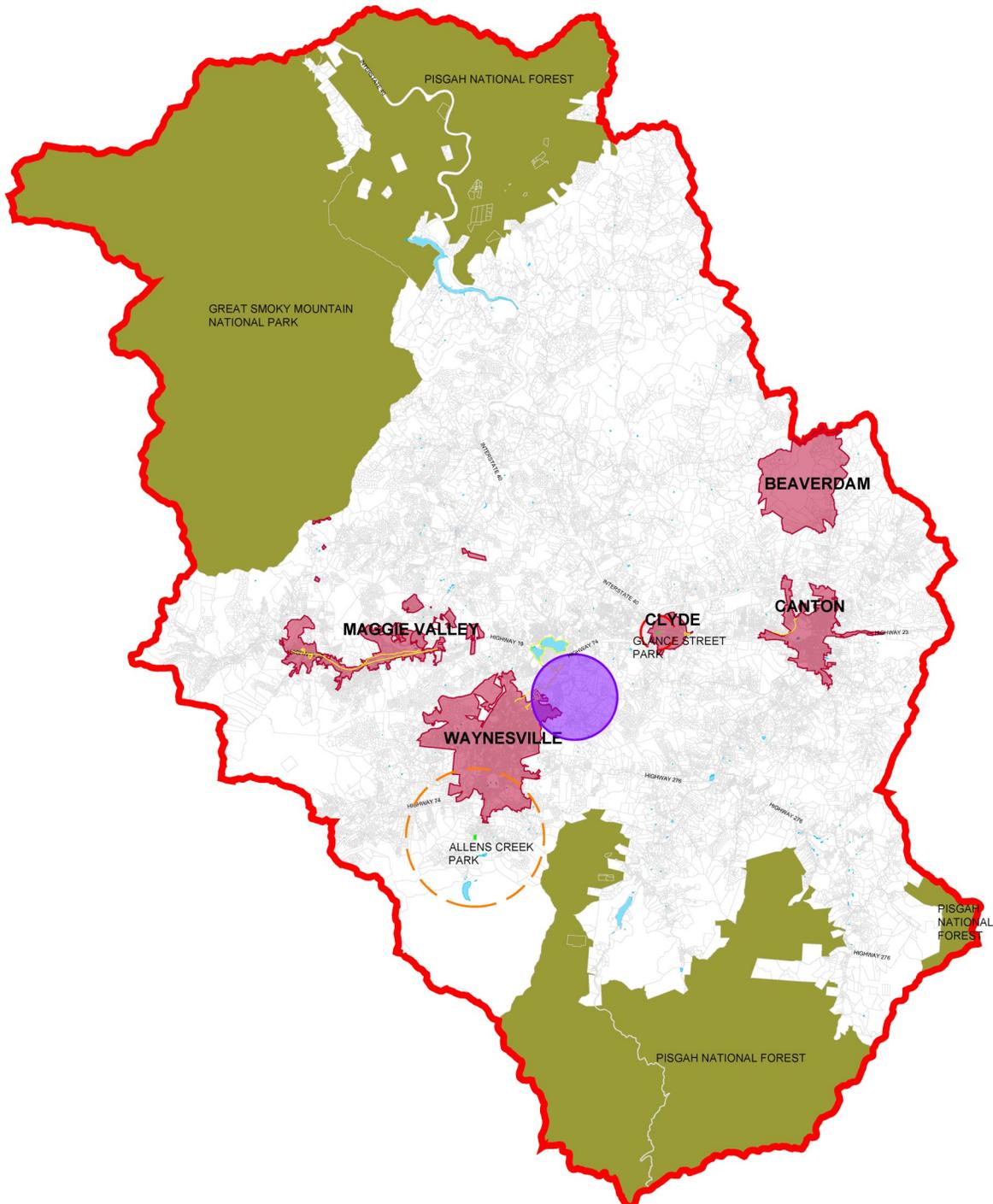
FUTURE FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Geographic equity of park access is an important consideration to provide short distance access and service to all Haywood County residents. An analysis of recreation service areas can be used to make land acquisition recommendations for both current and future needs. Future park site acquisitions should be balanced and proportional to service populations in all areas of the County.

The existing service area map, Map 3.1 in the preceding section, clearly demonstrates where park inequities are occurring. In addition, the existing conditions map, Map 2.1 in the inventory section of this plan, also demonstrates the scarcity of existing County-owned land for park purposes. Haywood County has opportunities it should pursue via future land acquisition and park development.

Map 4.1 shows possible park projects aimed at meeting future recreation demand. This plan proposes one new district park to expand the current Haywood County park system. This new recreation facility will better serve the community and provide additional, needed recreation opportunities for the current and future Haywood County population. This future district park would help the County in achieving a broader service area aimed at improving geographic equity to County parks programming. The County should investigate the area near the former Francis Farm Road landfill as a potential area for the future county district park.

Potential programming for the future district park should provide an appropriately scaled community building with leasable space and classrooms to further promote county recreation programs and classes. As growth continues to occur, this community center can become a local gathering space that could promote health and wellness. The recommended park should also promote outdoor recreation based on community desire, by providing walking and biking trails, picnic areas, and an adventure play area. As part of the adventure play area, a bike pump course and mountain bike skills area should be considered. The park should also be a space to preserve the natural environment, promote environmental awareness, and provide habitat for local flora and fauna.



LEGEND

- County Recreation Site
- Federal Managed Land
- Trails and Greenways
- Water Body / Creek
- Municipal Boundary
- County Boundary
- Parcel

TYPICAL SERVICE AREAS

- 2.0 Mile
(Existing Community Park)
- 0.5 Mile
(Existing Mini Park)

PROPOSED SERVICE AREAS

- 2.5 Mile
(Proposed District Park)

Map 4.1 Haywood County proposed service area (See Appendix A for 11"x17")

AMENITY PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Amenity	McGill Standards	Existing Amenity	2022 Recommended per Population	Needed for 2022	2032 Recommended per Population	Needed for 2032
Haywood County Amenities			Population: 61,053		Projected Population: 67,931	
Adult Baseball Field	1/22,000	0	3	3	3	0
Adult Softball Field	1/15,000	0	4	4	5	1
Youth Baseball Field	1/7,500	0	8	8	9	1
Youth Softball Field	1/12,000	0	5	5	6	1
Multipurpose Athletic Field	1/10,000	3	6	3	7	1
Basketball Court	1/10,000	0	6	6	7	1
Tennis Court	1/15,000	0	4	4	5	1
Pickleball Court	1/10,000	0	6	6	7	1
Volleyball Court	1/20,000	0	3	3	3	0
Lawn Games	1/20,000	0	3	3	3	0
Picnic Shelter	1/7,500	1	8	7	9	1
Picnic Station (unsheltered)	1/7,500	0	8	8	9	1
Playground	1/7,500	1	8	7	9	1
Walking / Running Trails	.25 mi./1,000	.75 mi.	15.25 mi.	14.5 mi.	17 mi.	2.5 mi.
Dog Park	1/15,000	0	4	4	5	1
Community Center	1/30,000	0	2	2	2	0
Outdoor Amphitheater	1/65,000	0	1	1	1	0
Swimming Pool	1/65,000	0	1	1	1	0
Splash Pad	1/40,000	0	2	2	2	0
Disc Golf Course	1/40,000	0	2	2	2	0
Water Access	1/40,000	0	2	2	2	0
Fishing Access	1/40,000	0	2	2	2	0

Table 4.1 Haywood County existing amenities and recommendations

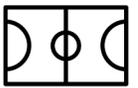
Based on the information contained in Table 4.1, the County does not meet the recommended Haywood County recreation service standards for many of the typical recreational facilities for their permanent population. As recreation trends and public needs vary over time, recommended amenities may not be necessary for immediate implementation. The recommendations are intended to meet the anticipated recreation service needs over a ten-year period, but implementation of specific projects may depend on available funding, land acquisition, and periodic reevaluation of recreation needs. It is important to note that County residents' recreational needs are also being provided by local municipalities, federal public lands, and other private recreational facilities as well as through shared use agreements with County schools. The community workshops and the recreation survey will be used as the primary guides in prescribing the specific needs for Haywood County parks and recreation development, both now and for the future.



**7 NEW / 1 FUTURE ADULT
BASEBALL / SOFTBALL**



**13 NEW / 2 FUTURE YOUTH
BASEBALL / SOFTBALL**



**3 NEW / 1 FUTURE
MULTIPURPOSE**



6 NEW / 1 FUTURE BASKETBALL



4 NEW / 1 FUTURE TENNIS



6 NEW / 1 FUTURE PICKLEBALL



3 NEW / 0 FUTURE VOLLEYBALL



3 NEW / 0 FUTURE LAWN GAMES



**7 NEW / 1 FUTURE PICNIC
SHELTER**



**8 NEW / 1 FUTURE PICNIC
STATIONS**



7 NEW / 1 FUTURE PLAYGROUND



**14.5 NEW / 2.5 FUTURE TRAIL
MILES**



4 NEW / 1 FUTURE DOG PARK



**2 NEW / 0 FUTURE COMMUNITY
CENTER**



**1 NEW / 0 FUTURE
AMPHITHEATER**



**1 NEW / 0 FUTURE SWIMMING
POOL**



2 NEW / 1 FUTURE SPLASH PAD



2 NEW / 0 FUTURE DISC GOLF



**2 NEW / 0 FUTURE WATER
ACCESS**



**2 NEW / 0 FUTURE FISHING
ACCESS**

STAFFING RECOMMENDATIONS



This Master Plan covers a planning period of 10 years. The facilities to be implemented during that time as part of the recommendations may require some level of additional staffing and additional funding for facility operation and maintenance. Consideration of these budgetary impacts should be made prior to facility implementation.

Multiple factors may come to influence what the future staffing needs of Haywood County Parks and Recreation Department will encompass. Those may include population growth, available tax dollars, capital improvement plans, and development of tourism efforts. Staff compensation should be fair and based on market precedents. Maintaining adequate staffing for parks and recreation facilities and programs will be necessary to foster a good quality of life for County residents and prospective businesses that may seek to relocate to Haywood County.

Haywood County should strive to provide a higher level of maintenance service to meet the current and future demands anticipated at county operated recreation facilities. The County's population is growing, and parks and facilities will continue to see increased use. Haywood County must provide adequate programming and maintenance to continue providing safe and enjoyable recreation services.

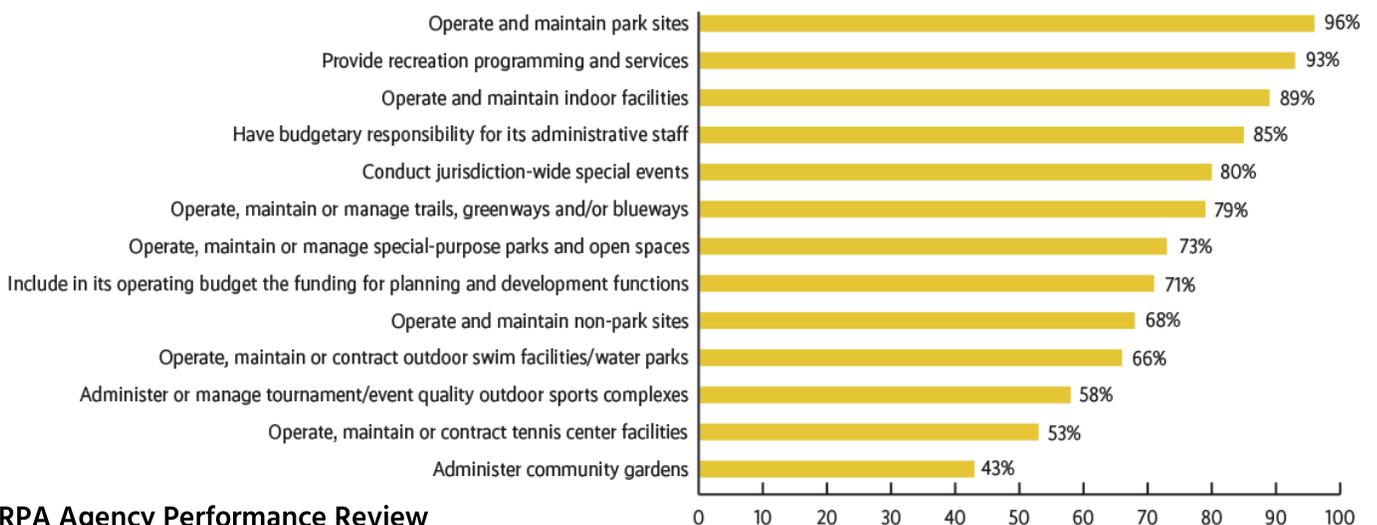
Current Staffing Positions

- Recreation and Parks Director (1)
- Recreation Officer (1)
- Permanent Part-time (1)
- Regular Part-time (20)

Additional Proposed Positions

- Recreation Officer (1)
- Maintenance Technician (1)
- Contractual Part-Time (as needed based on programming growth)

**FIGURE 8: KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES
(PERCENT OF AGENCIES)**



54.9 FTE

Median number of FTE is 9 per 10,000 residents based on the NRPA staffing guidelines for Haywood County's current population of 61,053



STAFFING FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (BASED ON 2021 NRPA REPORT)	Recommended for 2022 Population 61,053	Deficit for 2022 Population (based on current 22 FTE)	Recommended for 2032 Population 67,931	Deficit for 2032 Population (based on current 22 FTE)
LOWER QUARTILE (5.1 per 10,000 residents)	31.3 FTE	8.7 FTE	34.64 FTE	14.8 FTE
MEDIAN (9 per 10,000 residents)	54.94 FTE	32.2 FTE	61.14 FTE	42.9 FTE
UPPER QUARTILE (15.8 per 10,000 residents)	96.46 FTE	73.1 FTE	107.33 FTE	92 FTE

PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The park system for Haywood County should continue to grow and respond to changes in County demographics. Future planned facilities should be implemented incrementally to provide for these changes. The following factors guided the prioritization of individual segments of this Master Plan and were derived from input and desires specified by the residents of Haywood County:

- Needed improvements to existing Haywood County owned facilities
- Development of planned facilities to meet the *current* needs of recreation for County residents
- Development of planned facilities to meet the *future* needs of recreation for County residents

The park facility prioritization is an essential tool that provides Haywood County's Parks and Recreation Department with a breakdown of the priority for each capital improvement. Given the magnitude of the budgets for improvements to existing parks and for new park and greenway facilities, prioritization of these needs is important.



2022–2026

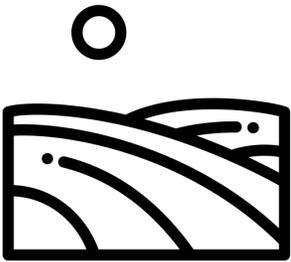
- Update the playground equipment at Allens Creek Park
- Install fitness stations at Allens Creek Park
- Install a rock climbing boulder at Allens Creek Park
- Install pickleball courts in the open space between the parking lot and walking path at Allens Creek Park
- Prepare a Park Master Plan for Glance Street Park
- Repair the sidewalk at Glance Street Park
- Acquire land and prepare a Park Master Plan for the proposed district park
- Develop new recreation programming involving arts, crafts, and theater
- Assess current staffing levels

2027–2032

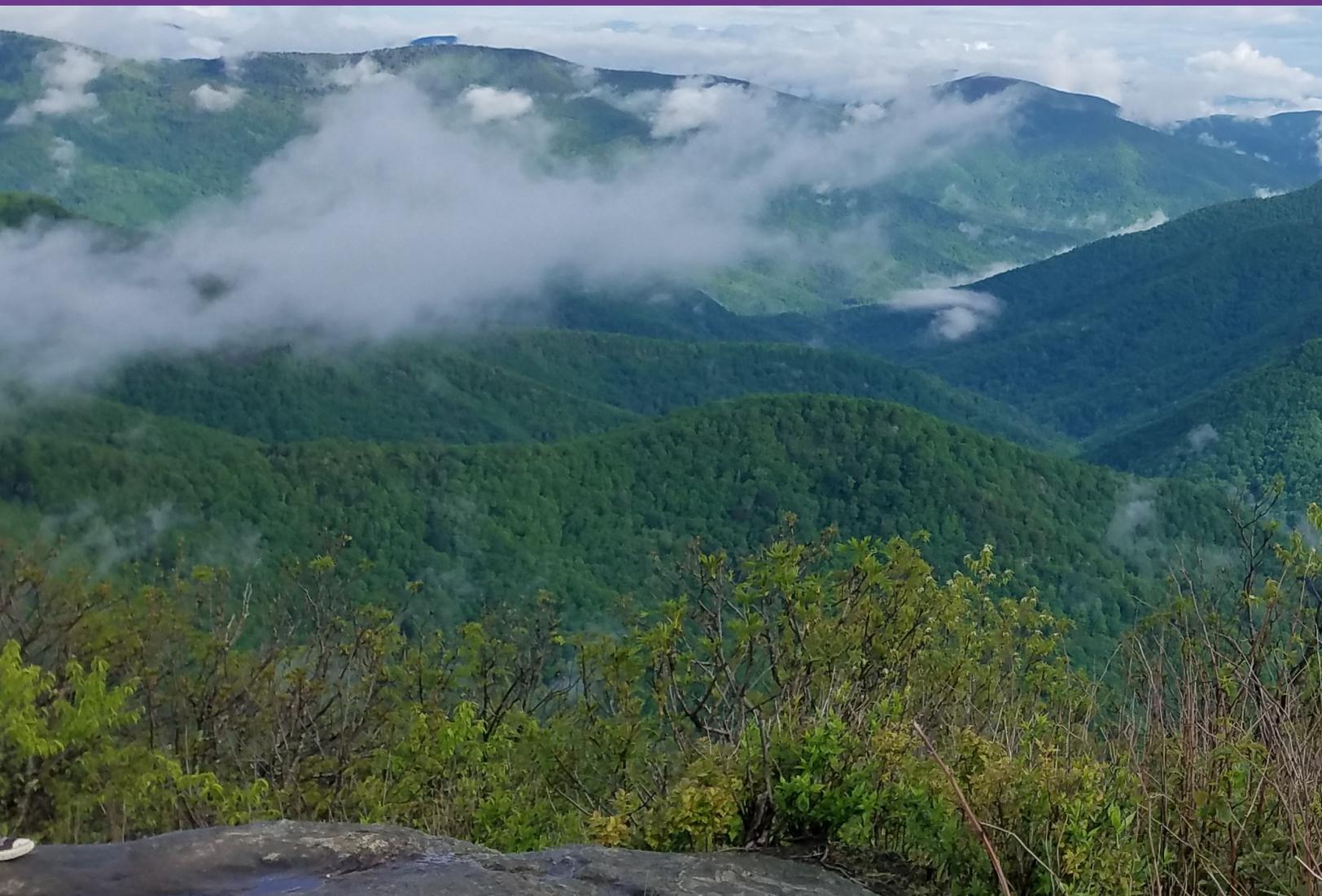
- Develop and construct the Glance Street Park Master Plan
- Develop and construct the proposed district park
- Continue to develop programming offerings
- Assess current staffing levels

Future (Beyond 2032)

- Update County bicycle and pedestrian plans to improve connectivity to County-owned recreation facilities



ACTION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN





ACTION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This section describes how Haywood County can implement a safe, convenient, and usable park and recreation system through the execution of its established goals in this Master Plan. The strategy for achieving goals involves the recommended park and recreation facilities and programs and this section exhibits strategies and opportunities, key implementation steps and policies, necessary staffing, and methods for developing the facilities. Together, these sections form the implementation program.

The results of the Haywood County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan are based on the following discovery methods: (1) a review of the study area that is within the County limits, (2) an analysis of the existing parks and facilities, (3) community input, (4) recreation standards that have been generically developed for municipalities and County governments. The Master Plan is designed to be action oriented and serve as a tool in the improvement and enhancement of the park system for Haywood County.

REVIEW THE STUDY AREA

ANALYZE THE EXISTING FACILITIES

GATHER PUBLIC INPUT

REVIEW RECREATION STANDARDS

Implementing the recommendations of this Comprehensive Master Plan will require a combination of funding sources that include local, state, federal, and private money. This section provides a listing of the most commonly used funds for park and greenway facility projects in North Carolina. Fortunately, the benefits of protected greenways and parks are many and varied. This allows programs in Haywood County to access money earmarked for a variety of purposes, including water quality, hazard mitigation, recreation, air quality, alternative transportation, wildlife protection, community health, and economic development. Competition is always stiff for state and federal funds. It becomes imperative that local governments work together to create multi-jurisdictional partnerships and to develop their own local sources of funding. These sources can then be used to leverage outside assistance. The long-term success of this plan will almost certainly depend on the dedication of local revenue stream for park and greenway projects.

It is important that Haywood County fully evaluate its available options and develop a funding strategy that can meet community needs, maximize local resources, improve quality of life, and leverage outside funding. Financing will be needed to administer the continued planning and implementation process, acquire parcels or easements, and manage and maintain facilities. Further research into these programs is recommended to determine requirements for specific grants. McGill advises Haywood County to pursue a variety of funding options.

ANTICIPATED FUTURE RECREATIONAL PROJECT LIST

A recreation capital improvement program for the development of park facilities is designed to encompass, at a minimum, a ten-year period of the Haywood County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan. To assist the County in determining those needs, this study provides a list of anticipated recreation projects based on plan recommendations. The proposed recreational project list provides costs based on recent (2020–2021) material and labor costs. The provided opinion of probable costs includes assumed general expenditures, such as site preparation, building structures, access, site utilities, parking, and specific recreation improvements. The list provided also includes estimates for planning or design fees.

The proposed anticipated future recreational project list would cover a 10-year period and would serve to set recreation expenses for each fiscal year for implementation of specific projects. The opinions of cost are preliminary in nature and are for planning purposes only. As the time approaches to consider the recommended improvements, it will be necessary to receive up to date opinions of cost.

This total anticipated future recreational project cost of **\$5,605,000** represents the proposed, cumulative figure to be spent for park and recreation development, improvements, and renovations by the year 2032. The total figure does not consider an inflation rate over the ten-year period through the year 2032 (See Appendix E for anticipated future recreational project list).



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

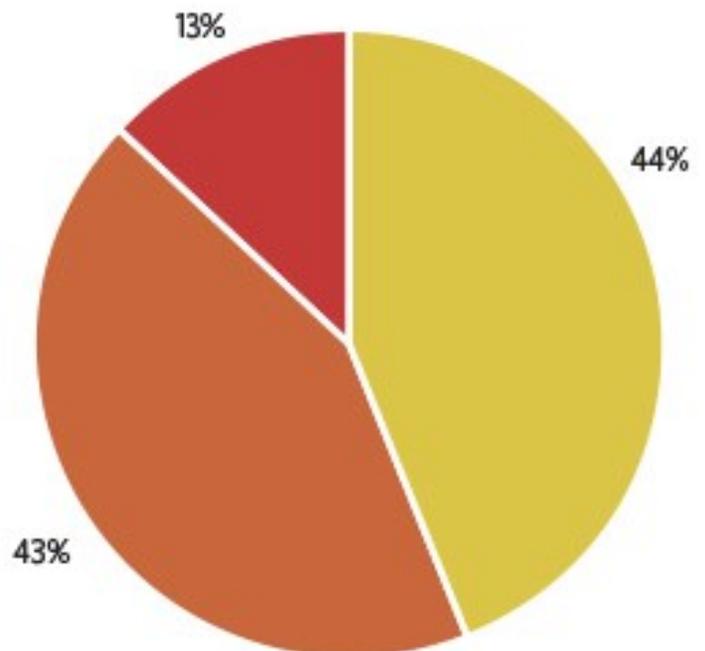
Identification of sufficient funding is a crucial element that is required to implement this Master Plan. The North Carolina Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is a guide by which funding sources for park and recreation facilities may be identified. Funding for future projects will be a key issue that will need to be addressed in the upcoming years if governments continue to provide basic minimum services.

To meet the existing and future needs of Haywood County, the goals and objectives that are identified in this Master Plan, must be seriously considered for implementation. The County will need to update their annual budget for the parks and recreation department based on projected capital improvement costs, staffing needs, and operations and maintenance costs.



**FIGURE 18: OPERATING EXPENDITURES
DEDICATED TO PARKS OR RECREATION
(AVERAGE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF
OPERATING EXPENDITURES)**

44%	Parks
43%	Recreation
13%	Other



Park and Recreation Capital Expenditures

The latest reliable recreation expense data per population (2018) has been used. The population estimates used in this report were certified county and municipal estimates on April 18, 2019, by Raleigh News & Observer - *US Census data for County and Metropolitan Area Estimates*. The budget figures were provided by NC OSBM facts and figures [Log Into North Carolina (LINC) data system] for cultural and recreation expenses.

Table 5.1 North Carolina counties with populations between 58,500 and 68,500

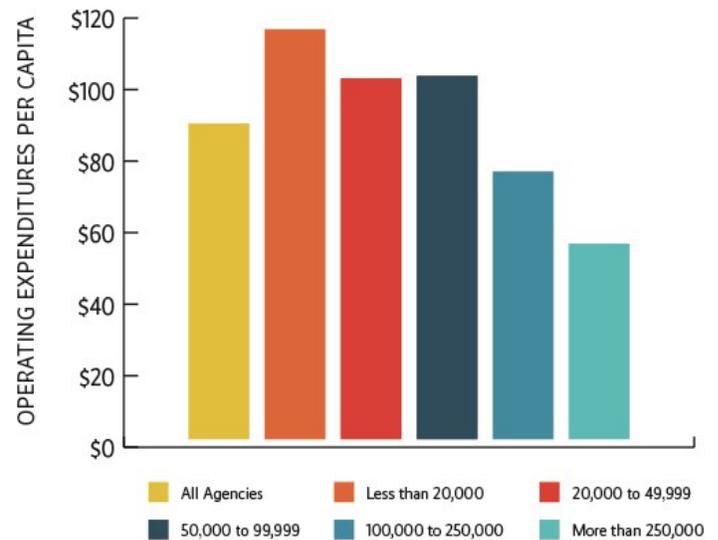
Counties with Populations Similar to Haywood County	Population Estimate 2018	Per Capita Expenditures 2018
Wilkes County	68,469	\$14.13
Rutherford County	66,599	\$117.61
Franklin County	66,362	\$8.96
Haywood County	61,053	\$43.85
Lee County	60,481	\$13.34
Granville County	59,238	\$14.28
Duplin County	58,967	\$21.14

According to the NRPA 2021 Agency Performance Review, recreation department operating expenditures per capita for populations from 50,000 to 99,999 were between \$58.77 and \$166.17 with a median of \$101.65 per capita.

There is a wide range of recreation departments with a diverse mix of facilities, programs, and other services. For this reason, we recommend the comparison analysis of other similar sized North Carolina counties (Table 5.1).

2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review

FIGURE 14: OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)



	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Median	\$88.30	\$114.62	\$100.93	\$101.65	\$74.87	\$54.68
Lower Quartile	\$48.84	\$64.02	\$60.04	\$58.77	\$45.39	\$21.77
Upper Quartile	\$159.07	\$222.94	\$195.81	\$166.17	\$154.56	\$85.33

Economic Development Initiative

Studies have shown that economies are impacted positively where bicycle and pedestrian tourism is fostered, promoted, and where investments are made in bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The number of people who feel comfortable walking or riding bicycles is a measure of the quality of life in that area.

Parks

Research has substantiated the direct proportion between economic growth and the existence of parks and open space in communities and municipalities around the country. This growth includes increased property values in residential, urban, and industrial communities, as well as the increased revenue from tourists.



Multiuse Trails

Multiuse trails are extremely popular amenities for vacationing bicyclists and pedestrians. Tourists and visitors to the area often return to communities that provide places which are safely removed from busy roads for walking and bicycling. Multiuse trails offer scenic recreation, which is suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities. Many times, lodging is in close proximity to popular trails, thereby increasing occupancy for the owner. For residents in these locales, investments in trails and greenways can increase property values and improve the overall livability of a community as well as attracting, retaining, and expanding tourism and the associated revenues.



Investing dollars in multiuse trails yields substantial community-wide returns. These returns are in the form of increased property values, business attraction, recreation revenue, and reduced water treatment and flooding costs. Not only are tourists attracted to these areas, but business leaders are selecting sites for the relocation and expansion of industries and corporations where the quality of life is high and recreation opportunities are abundant. Increasingly, corporations are recognizing the benefits of convenient fitness and recreation for their employees and are seeking these greenway amenities for potential locations.

Multiuse trails having vegetated buffers located adjacent to waterways act as filters to clean the water, trapping nonpoint source pollutants. These pollutants, including sediment, pesticides, fertilizers, oil, gas, and other chemicals, are transported into streams, rivers, and / or lakes by stormwater when rain or snow events occur.

Trail Development

The ongoing construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities is proving to be a wise economic investment for the communities through which they pass. Haywood County's parks and recreation department should annually assess and include funding towards the maintenance of popular County trails to preserve the value that they contribute to the community. Trails and pathways have a positive effect on nearby property values with homebuyers and business owners realizing the effect that such facilities bring to a community. According to research by the Rails to Trails Conservancy, there are vast amounts of people who are using rail trails. It is easy to understand how communities can profit economically by meeting the needs of trail users. Entrepreneurs who invest in restaurants, convenience stores, bicycle and other merchandise shops, campgrounds, and alternate lodging attribute the location of a nearby trail to at least a portion of their success. Realtors and homebuyers alike are recognizing the benefits of properties located near trails. Both locally and nationally, the construction of trails has proven to be a cost-effective use of public funds. Multiuse trails allow more visitors and residents to replace automobile trips with non-motorized trips, thereby moving the citizenry closer to achieving public health objectives, including increased opportunities for physical exercise.

Increased Property Value

The real estate market consistently demonstrates that residents throughout the country are willing to invest larger amounts of money in properties that are located close to parks and open space areas than they would for homes that do not offer these types of amenities. The higher values of these homes produce higher property taxes in the affected area. In some instances, additional property taxes are sufficient to recoup the annual debt charges on bonds, which were originally used to finance park acquisition and development.

Studies have shown that property values typically increase when parks or outdoor facilities, such as outdoor festivals, movies, and restaurants, are in the immediate locale. Studies indicate that commercial asking rents near park property exceed rents in surrounding submarkets.

Revitalization of Businesses

In recent years, there has been a trend to revitalize inner-County and urban areas to improve their quality of life. The success of this revitalization has included the addition of parks and recreational activity in County areas. Generally speaking, people do not want to live or work in an environment where they have no refuge from County buildings without having any place to go for a stroll, walk the dog, or just enjoy the outdoors. In studies of County revitalizations, the top recommendations include the dramatic expansion of parks and open spaces.

Tourism

A park often becomes the signature attraction for a community and it is often used as a marketing tool to attract residents, tourists, conventions, and businesses. Parks often shape the identity of the area and give residents a sense of pride.

Organized events held in public parks, such as art festivals, athletic events, food festivals, concerts, and plays, often bring substantial positive economic impacts to their communities by filling hotel rooms and restaurants and bringing customers to other local business enterprises.

Dedicated Source of Local Funding

In order to leverage and provide matching funds for many of the programs listed, Haywood County should evaluate the existing departmental budget and funding for capital improvements.

Property / Sales Tax Revenues

General tax revenues traditionally provide sources for general operations and maintenance of park systems for local governments. Parks and recreation development is scheduled along with health, public safety, utilities, et cetera. in regular budgets established by the County. Assessed valuation of real and personal property tax and sales tax provides the framework for the major portion of the tax base for the County.



Traditionally ad valorem tax revenue has been the primary source of funding for the park and recreation enhancement of properties/facilities owned by local governments. Recreational opportunities are considered a public service and often are a standard line item on general fund budgets. Creative financial opportunities are possible; however, ad valorem taxes will continue to be the major revenue source to support the system. As such, communities often vote to raise their local tax rate temporarily in support of their park and recreation systems.

General Obligation Bonds

Many communities issue bonds, which are typically approved by the shareholders, to finance site development and land acquisition costs. The State of North Carolina grants local governments the authority to borrow funds for parks and recreation through the issuance of bonds. The amount is not to exceed the cost of acquisition or improvement of park and recreation facilities. Total bond capacities for local governments are limited for parks and recreation to a maximum percentage of assessed property valuation. Since the issuance of bonds relies on the support of the voting population, the implementation of awareness programs is absolutely essential prior to a referendum vote.



General obligation bonds are the preferred financing approach of the North Carolina Local Government Commission and the general securities market because these instruments are backed by the full faith and credit of the issuer. That simply means that the bonds represent an encumbrance against the property tax base of the issuing jurisdiction and therefore offer the best available security to the bond holder. The State of North Carolina gives the issuance of bonds not to exceed the total cost of improvements (including land acquisition). In view of the recommended capital improvements suggested in this plan, the County may consider continuing to use general obligation bonds to develop new facilities. Total bonding capacities for

local government is limited for parks and recreation to a maximum percentage of assessed property valuation.

The following are key factors to consider before using this financing instrument:

- In North Carolina, the issuance of general obligation bonds requires a referendum of the voters within the issuing jurisdiction
- The term of the debt may be extended to 20–30 years
- The debt is publicly sold, so there are costs associated with the sale. These costs generally total 3% to 5% of the total bond principal. The issuance costs offset the lower interest rate and, therefore, this instrument becomes more attractive as the size of the issuance increases and the issuance costs are spread over the larger debt. It has been found that this financing option becomes financially superior as the debt principal exceeds \$10–\$12 million
- Generally, prepayment of the debt cannot be accomplished until reaching a call date. This usually is around 75% of debt retirement



Failure of the general obligation bond to be ratified by referendum could mean that the County could not go forward with an alternative approach to financing without substantially changing the scope of the project.

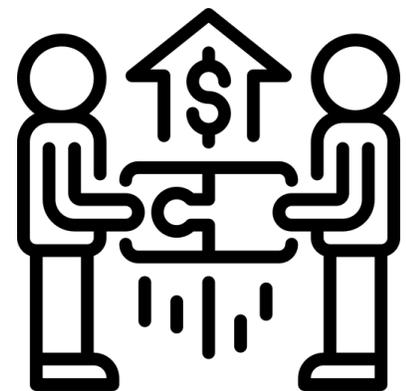
Fee In-Lieu of Contributions

The County should consider providing developers with an option to pay a fee in-lieu of rather than to dedicate land for open space or recreation within conventional subdivisions. This program has proven to be successful for many local governments in providing a dedicated source of revenue earmarked for park development.



User Fees / Registration Fees

Communities throughout the nation employ a wide variety of user fees for public recreational programs and services within their recreation departments. The amount of the fee is usually determined by a portion of the recreation costs needed for improvements and operations. These user fees are typically levied for special facilities, such as water parks and golf courses; however, they can also be charged for the use of trails and ball fields. Haywood County should continue to generate revenue by charging user fees for use of facilities, such as picnic shelters, in order to cover operations and administrative costs. In addition, the County should continue to have a separate fee rate structure for residents and non-residents. As the park system continues to develop, the County should examine their fee structure to identify opportunities and additional revenue. The current user fees appear to be fair and reasonable for a majority of the County residents and non-residents. Elected officials should determine the fees and changes based on departmental input; the fees should not be so high that persons of modest income would ultimately be denied the use of park facilities.



Grants

State and federal agencies offer numerous grants to assist municipalities in the financing of their parks and recreation projects. This source of funding should definitely be investigated and pursued by Haywood County for present and future park and recreation improvements.



The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) was established for local governments and the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation in 1994 as a funding source for the development and / or improvement of parks and recreation facilities and for the purpose of land acquisition. A state-funded program, PARTF matches monies spent by municipalities on parks and recreation, with each sharing 50% of the cost. The maximum matching fund amount provided by PARTF is \$500,000.

north carolina state parks

NC TRAILS

The Recreation Trails Program (RTP) is a \$1.5-million federal grant program designed to help states provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use. The program is administered by the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration.

RTP is a reimbursement grant program. Funds must be spent and then reimbursed upon completion of deliverables. Eligible applicants must be a state, federal, or local government agency or qualified non-profit organization. All applications are reviewed by the North Carolina Trails Committee and recommendations are made to the Secretary of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The secretary makes the final determination on grant awards.



Federal Aid Construction Funds are included in the National Highway System (NHS), Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG), and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ). The funds provide for the construction of pedestrian and bicycle transportation facilities. The primary source of funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects is STBG Enhancement Funding.



The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a federally funded program that was established for local and state governments in 1965 as a funding source for outdoor recreational development and land acquisition. LWCF monies are derived from the sale or lease of nonrenewable resources, primarily offshore oil and gas leases, and surplus federal land sales. Acquisition and development grants may be used for a wide variety of outdoor projects, such as parks, tennis courts, bike trails, outdoor swimming pools, and support facilities (roads, water supply, et cetera.) Facility design must be rather basic rather than elaborate and must remain accessible to the general public. No more than 50% of the project cost may be federally funded by LWCF, although all or part of the project sponsor's matching share may be obtained from certain other federal assistance programs.

SafeRoutes

DC Safe Routes to School Program



The Safe Routes to Schools Program is a federal aid program of the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The program is a sub-program of the Transportation Alternatives Program, falling under the Surface Transportation Program. Under TAP the SRTS Program is combined with RTP to provide financial assistance to projects that fall under alternative transportation. Communities must come up with 20% of a project cost while the remaining 80% is funded through grant competitions. All TAP projects are administered by state departments of transportation. The federal program provides funds to the states to improve the ability of primary and middle school students to walk and bicycle to school safely. The purposes of the Safe Routes to Schools program are outlined below:

- To enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school
- To make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age
- To facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity (approximately 2 miles) of primary and middle schools (grades K-8)

For more information on North Carolina's Safe Routes to School Program, visit <https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/BikePed/pages/safe-routes-to-school.aspx>.

EEG

The Environmental Enhancement Grant Program (EEG) is used to fund projects that address environmental needs of North Carolina, specifically to protect water quality as well as conserve natural areas. To be eligible applicants must be non-profit organizations or government entities for projects in North Carolina, with preference for programs focused on the eastern part of the state. The types of grants included are land acquisitions and easements, construction, remediation, restoration, and research, planning, education. The maximum award available is \$500,000 to be completed in 3 years from date of fully executed memorandum of understanding.

From agreement: “obtain environmental easements, construct, or maintain wetlands, and other such environmental purposes, as the Attorney General deems appropriate.”



The North Carolina Land and Water Fund (NCLWF) was created in 1996 by the North Carolina General Assembly and previously referred to as the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF), grants monies to local governments, state agencies, and not-for-profit conservation groups. The money is to help finance projects that specifically address water pollution issues. NCLWF will fund projects that contribute toward a network of riparian buffers and greenways for environmental, educational, and recreational benefits.



The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) assists state and local governments in their operation and maintenance of watersheds whose areas are less than 250,000 square acres. The NRCS provides both financial and technical assistance to eligible projects for the improvement of watershed protection, flood prevention, sedimentation control, public water-based fish and wildlife enhancements, and recreation planning. The NRCS requires a 50% local match for public recreation and fish / wildlife projects.



State construction funds (not including the Highway Trust Fund for Urban Loops and Interchanges) may be used for the construction of sidewalks and bicycle accommodations that are a part of roadway improvement projects.



Contributions

The solicitation of contributions is an acceptable method of fundraising for recreation departments. These donations, typically in the form of land, cash, labor, and materials, could be solicited to assist Haywood County with its enhancement program. Corporations, civic organizations, individuals, and other groups generally donate to a specific park project; however, donations may also be solicited for multiple project improvements or additions. NRPA recommends the use of private, not-for-profit, and tax-exempt foundations as a means of accepting and administering private gifts to a public park system.

Park Foundations

Foundations are another source of financing by making direct contributions within communities, states, or the nation. These types of funds are usually described as special program foundations, general purpose foundations, or corporate foundations. Foundations can provide the needed resources to support park projects. Foundations generally have very few restrictions and / or limitations and are typically received from local entities. A list of appropriate foundations can be found at <http://foundationcenter.org>.



Partnerships

To implement the recommendations contained in the Comprehensive Master Plan, Haywood County should expand their partnership agreements with other public agencies and private sector organizations. There are many different types of partnerships that can be formed to achieve the goals established by the County. Many local governments throughout the nation are utilizing partnerships with public and private sector interests to accomplish community goals.

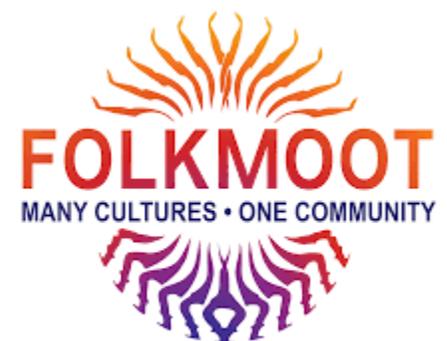


Listed below are the various types of partnerships that the County should consider in its efforts for the improvement and addition of parks and recreational facilities:

- Programming partnerships to co-sponsor events and facilities or to allow qualified outside agencies to conduct activities on properties which are municipally owned
- Operational partnerships to share the responsibility for providing public access and use of facilities
- Development partnerships to purchase land and / or build facilities
- Management partnerships to maintain properties and / or facilities

Haywood County is currently participating in partnerships with Waynesville Parks and Recreation, Haywood Regional Fitness Center, Lake Junaluska, Haywood County Schools, Outdoor Mission Community, Folkmoot, and the Tourism Development Authority. The County should evaluate and update their current partnerships to ensure they are providing the best opportunities for the community. The County should also evaluate forming additional partnerships which address the needs of a comprehensive park system. Direct requests should be made to meet potential partners, inviting them to evaluate the possible benefits of partnering. This step should be made to generate interest and agreement prior to solidifying any responsibilities for each participating party.

Private sector partnerships can be beneficial. Developers can use private funds to develop facilities on municipal property and lease it to the County long term. Over a period of time, the developer returns a portion of the revenue to the County and at the end of the lease, the facility is turned over to public ownership. This type of arrangement would typically be a large capital investment for a special-use facility.



**Haywood
County
Schools**



LAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

The solicitation of contributions is an acceptable method of fundraising for recreation departments. These donations, typically in the form of land, cash, labor, and materials, could be solicited to assist Haywood County with its enhancement program. Corporations, civic organizations, individuals, and other groups generally donate to a specific park project; however, donations may also be solicited for multiple project improvements or additions. NRPA recommends the use of private, not-for-profit, tax-exempt foundations as a means of accepting and administering private gifts to a public park system.

Life Estate

A life estate is a gift whereby a donor retains the land during his/her lifetime and relinquishes title of the property after his / her death. In return, the owner (or family) is relieved of property tax for the given land.



Local Gifts

Donations of land, money, labor and construction can have significant impact on the acquisition and development of park property. The solicitation of local gifts is highly recommended and should be organized thoroughly, with the utilization of very specific strategic methods. This often untapped source of obtaining funds requires the contacting of potential donors such as individuals, institutions, foundations, and service clubs.

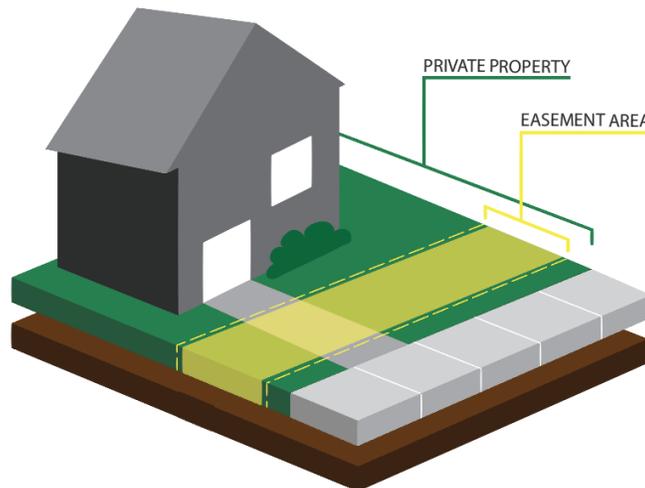


Long-Term Option

Long-term options allow municipalities to purchase property over a long period of time. This method is particularly useful because it enables the County to consider a particular piece of land that may have future value though it is not currently desired or affordable. Advantages to this method of property acquisition are that the County can protect the future of the land without purchasing it upfront, the purchase price of the land will not increase, and the County will have the right to exercise its option. The disadvantage to the County is that all privileges relinquished by the landowner require compensation in the form of securing the option.

Easement

An easement is the most common type of less-than-fee interest in land. An easement seeks to compensate the property owner for the right to use his / her land in some way or to compensate for the loss of his/her privileges to use the land. Generally, the landowner may still use the land and therefore continues to generate property tax revenue for the County.



Fee Simple Purchase

Fee simple purchase is the most common method used to acquire municipal property for park facilities. Although it has the advantage of simplifying justification to the general public, fee simple purchase is the most difficult method to pursue due to limited monetary resources.

Fee Simple with Lease-Back or Resale

This method allows local governments to acquire land by fee simple purchase yet allows them to either sell or lease the property to prospective users with restrictions that will preserve the land from future development. The fee simple with lease-back or resale method of development commonly results from situations in which landowners, who have lost considerable monetary amounts in property value, determine that it is more economical to sell the land to the County (with a lease-back option) than to keep it.



PLAN ADOPTION

The first step in the implementation of the Haywood County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan is adoption of the plan by Haywood County. By adopting the Recreation Master Plan, the community is able to help shape larger regional decisions so that they fit within the goals of the plan. The County also gives itself greater authority in shaping local land use decisions so that they achieve the goals and vision of this plan. In addition, the adoption of this Master Plan is essential in order to maximize available grant opportunities.

Among the opportunities available to promote the recommendations contained in the Master Plan is the ability to build upon an already committed and active base of residents, visitors, and enthusiasts in the area. Through their organizations, institutions, publications, and networks Haywood County can promote both the improved and new parks and greenway facilities and programs.

Second among the opportunities is the availability of the existing park facilities, such as amenities, programs, and existing trails. Though some changes are being suggested in the short-term and an expanded network is suggested for the long-term, the presence of an existing network provides a strong foundation from which to build. Many County residents are already accustomed to using the existing park facilities and should become used to seeing new park amenities, programs, signage, and other improvements. Building on their existing awareness of what is available is much easier than building on no awareness.

Action Steps

Upon adoption of this plan, implementation of specific recommendations can begin. Many of these will occur simultaneously and include policy and facility improvement changes. The key steps are:

1. Secure a dedicated source of revenue to address the 10-year and beyond anticipated future recreational project list and address the goals of the Master Plan
2. Provide staffing necessary to support and oversee the implementation of this plan and the proper maintenance and operation of the facilities that are proposed
3. Develop and implement educational and awareness programs, such as public events and promotion of parks awareness by civic and environmental advocacy groups. These programs can be used to announce new park facilities and upcoming projects
4. Begin working on the recommendations that are listed in the 10-year and beyond anticipated future recreational project list. From these opportunities come the framework for an initial implementation strategy. These recommendations include:
 - Aggressively begin to establish potential funding mechanisms for future park expansions. This high priority goal is essential for realizing the proposed recommendations for the future growth and development of Haywood County's parks and recreation facilities
 - Use the nucleus of park patrons to expand the awareness of the amenities and programming of Haywood County parks and recreation system
 - Expand and modify the existing park system into a comprehensive, multiuse system, distributed so that it better meets the needs of the community, provides opportunities to all, and enhances the current park system
 - Continue making the critical pedestrian and bicycle connections between destination points that will allow for preservation of open space and offer an alternative mode of transportation



These steps represent the core of the implementation strategy. As the individual policy recommendations and physical recommendations are addressed, they should each fit within one of these four primary strategies.

The County needs to ensure that facility planning is integrated with other regional planning efforts at the state and local levels and with long-range and current land use, economic development, parks, environmental, and community planning. The following are mechanisms to achieve this action step:

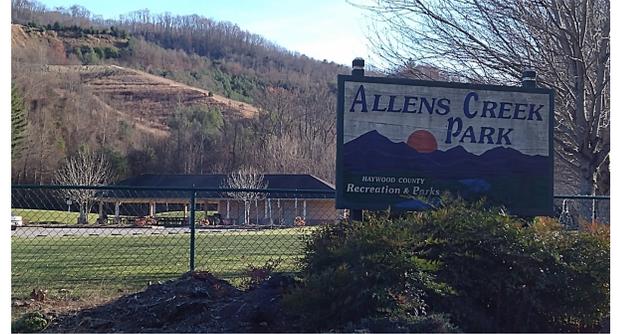
1. Expand local capital improvements program for yearly appropriation for greenway and park development
2. Set aside money for future land acquisition, construction, and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities
3. Pursue and request pedestrian / bicycle projects to be added to NCDOT TIP
4. Pursue development and expansion of existing and new partnerships
5. Apply for PARTF grants and other related recreation grants for future parks and recreation projects
6. Seek other sources of revenue funding for parks and greenway improvements, such as including local assessment districts and developer exactions
7. Pursue funding from other sources listed in this section



MOVING FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE

“The mission of Haywood County Parks and Recreation is to provide a range of quality wellness and recreational programs that enrich the quality of life for all our citizens and visitors. The department will strive to design programs that create tourism and encourage long-term economic stability and growth for the community.”

In order to continue to fulfill this mission, Haywood County has pursued planning as a way to improve the parks and recreation system throughout the County. This Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan has laid out a set of strategies for expanding and developing a safe, convenient, and usable park system. The plan has assessed the study area, analyzed the existing facilities, received and analyzed community input, reviewed recreation standards, developed recommendations, and provided strategies for implementing the plan. The Haywood County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a comprehensive guide to be used in the improvement and enhancement of the park system for Haywood County.



QUALITY OF LIFE



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

healthy living



COMMUNITY

