



2015 - 2025 COUNTYWIDE PARKS, PASSIVE PARKS (OPEN SPACE) AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

GUILFORD COUNTY, NC

November, 2014



Guilford
County Schools



GUILFORD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

<p>Bill Bencini – bbencini@aol.com 1412 Trafalgar Drive High Point, NC 27262 Home: (336) 885-9420 Office: (336) 859-2052</p>	<p>2014 Board Chair District – 2 Term – 4 years Expires – 2014 R</p>
<p>Hank Henning – Hankhenning06@gmail.com 3811 Wildwood Court High Point, NC 27265 Cellular: (336)708-9522</p>	<p>2014 Vice Chair District – 6 Term – 4 years Expires – 2016 R</p>
<p>Alan Branson – abranso@co.guilford.nc.us 3731 Old Julian Road Julian, NC 27283 Cellular: (336) 451-7169 Office: (336) 674-2660</p>	<p>District – 4 Term – 4 years Expires – 2016 R</p>
<p>Kay Cashion – kcashio@co.guilford.nc.us 103 West Greenway Drive, North Greensboro, NC 27403 Office: (336) 273-2820 Home: (336) 274-6272</p>	<p>At Large Term – 4 years Expires – 2014 D</p>
<p>Carolyn Q. Coleman – ccolema@co.guilford.nc.us 5513 Stonebridge Road Pleasant Garden, NC 27313 Office: (336) 641-7670 Home: (336) 674-4699</p>	<p>District – 7 Term – 4 years Expires – 2014 D</p>
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<p>Jeff Phillips – jphilli1@co.guilford.nc.us 6108 Mountain Brook Road Greensboro, NC 27455 Cellular: (336) 337-2955</p>	<p>District – 5 Term – 4 years Expires – 2016 R</p>
<p>Linda O. Shaw – imlshaw@aol.com PO Box 8618 Greensboro, NC 27419 Office: (336) 641-3383 Home: (336) 855-7533</p>	<p>District – 3 Term – 4 years Expires – 2014 R</p>
<p>Ray Trapp – rtrapp@co.guilford.nc.us 1016 W. Meadowview Road Greensboro, NC 27406 Cellular: (336) 314-3891</p>	<p>District – 8 Term – 4 years Expires – 2016 D</p>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission Statement

Introduction

The 1991 Master Plan was developed shortly after Guilford County passed two bond issues, one to buy land for watershed protection and one to buy land for regional parks and greenways. Since then several other bond issues have passed and allowed these programs to grow and mature. Over time we have identified values that resonate with many residents and guide the activities of the Parks, Passive Parks (Open Space) and Trails program.

Values

- 1) Parks have value for recreation, health, quality of life and enhancement of property values, and offer substantial economic benefits to the County. Large parks often have areas that function as open space as well.
- 2) Passive Parks (Open Space) have direct benefits to citizens including connecting people with nature, offering environmental education and providing passive recreational opportunities. Arguably more important are the indirect benefits to the county, including improving air and water quality, recharging ground and surface water, reducing flood damage, providing visual and noise buffers, sustaining local food production, providing scenic corridors, enhancing sound economic growth, and preserving wildlife habitat.
- 3) Trails have value for recreation, health, quality of life, transportation and community connectivity.

Goals

- 1) Acquire open space properties for passive parks strategically according to the following principles:
 - Use the “corridors and bubbles” strategy, evaluation criteria for ranking properties, and approval process to ensure cost-effective acquisitions which protect the most significant lands for taxpayers.
 - Use grants when practicable and seek “bargain sales” from landowners to extend the acquisition bond funds to their full potential.
 - Develop master plans for each property that will enhance its natural characteristics.
- 2) Strive to implement the recommendations of the Master Plan:
 - Maintain and enhance the county’s seven district parks in cost-effective ways that provide high-quality service to park visitors.
 - Coordinate with other providers to fill gaps in service and avoid overlaps.
- 3) Maintain and enhance the county’s trail and greenway systems using the following principles:
 - Connectivity - coordinate and link sidewalks, trails and greenways so that they are seamless and connected using physical paths and/or way-finding signage.
 - Availability - strive to have a trail or greenway within biking or walking distance of 90% of the population.
 - Variety – allow residents to walk, jog, bike, ride a horse, or push a stroller, depending on user preference.

- Quality – ensure that trails have appropriate features for the intended users and are maintained at a level satisfactory to the public.
- Safety – ensure that users feel safe on trails during normal operating hours and experience few emergency incidents.
- Mission Statement: Guilford County Facilities and Parks department strives to provide exceptional parks, facilities, programs, services and properties to allow patrons a source of outstanding natural, scenic, cultural, historic, educational and recreational opportunities for Guilford County and surrounding areas.
- Passive Recreation: Recreation on County Property where activity includes low impact trails, possibly restrooms, benches, water fountain, campsites, biking, horseback riding, environmental education, greenways etc. This is mostly unorganized, mostly unstructured and non-competitive activity or activities.

Plan Summary

The most efficient way to review a community's parks and recreation resources is to treat them as a "system", regardless of who provides them, and compare those resources to generally accepted standards. This approach makes intuitive sense – a park user looks for opportunities to do whatever he or she wants to do, and is usually not concerned about who does the maintenance.

In addition, it is useful to ask the community residents about their recreation habits and about improvements that they would like to see. While Greensboro and High Point had used this approach as early as the 1950s, Guilford County, representing all its residents, did not go through this exercise until 1991.

The 1991 Parks and Recreation Master Plan divided the county into four quadrants and systematically determined what facilities were available, who the providers were, and how these compared to National Recreation and Parks (NRPA) standards. Although the providers (Greensboro, High Point, Jamestown, Gibsonville and various private organizations) did not coordinate their efforts, the "system" generally functioned pretty well.

At the time, Guilford County voters had recently approved a bond issue to acquire land for five district parks and a paved greenway from Greensboro to High Point. The Plan determined that once these improvements were completed, the recreational needs of the county would be adequately provided for.

The 2014 Plan Update takes a fresh look at the County, since the County has taken the place of some of these providers in running these parks, and now that the recommendations of the 1991 Plan have been implemented. Points of interest include:

- The County has grown much more rapidly than expected. We have 101,000 more residents today than were forecast for 2010 by the 1991 Plan.

- Youth sports have grown dramatically, generating a huge need for playfields that will accommodate soccer, lacrosse, football, rugby and ultimate Frisbee. The demand for baseball/softball fields has largely been satisfied.
- Opportunities to swim have not grown with the population. While much of the demand for pools continues to be provided by private swim clubs and the YMCA, Guilford County has built two pools during this time period; however they are still often at capacity during swim season. Guilford County is currently in the process of constructing a third aquatic center. In August 2011 Greensboro opened an aquatic center at the Greensboro Coliseum.
- The resident surveys done for the Plan Update, and other recent surveys, show a large increase in demand for hiking, biking and nature trails. This is consistent with a county population that, on average, is older than in 1991.
- Ten of the twelve incorporated municipalities have parks and recreational facilities for their communities. Some even run their own Parks and Recreation divisions, which have been very important additions to the system.

The recommendations for Guilford County over the next 10 years are designed to accomplish three things: First is to fill gaps in the system where concentrations of residents live without convenient access to “neighborhood” and “community” parks (Please refer to the 2015-2025 Master Plan map). Examples include new community parks for the Whitsett/Sedalia, Stoney Creek area (Guilford and municipal responsibility), and a new community park in southwest High Point (High Point responsibility). Some have been funded and some will need to be funded through grants, bond issues or general revenues.

Second is to map out a system of regional trails and greenways that will be the “vision” for all communities in the county. Regional trails and greenways involve numerous partnerships as the trail passes from one jurisdiction to the next. The vision will promote those partnerships and allow work to be done simultaneously on different sections of the same trail. Guilford County has recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements with other communities to work on the Haw River Trail, the Mountains-to-Sea Trail and the A & Y Greenway. The County has worked less formally for several years on the Piedmont Greenway (Greensboro to Winston-Salem), the Deep River trail (High Point to Triad Park) and the Reedy Fork trail from Bryan Park to Northeast Park.

Third is to add to the inventory of park property, and strive for the “target” of 100 acres of protected property for every 1,000 residents in the county (NRPA recommended standards).

In general, Guilford County is in good shape going into the second decade of the century. Moderate levels of funding for new parks and greenways should allow providers to keep pace with increases in population. Perhaps more challenging is adequate funding for maintenance. Communities across the country are facing deteriorating roads, water lines, sewer systems, public buildings and public spaces. These systems, collectively referred to as “infrastructure” are what keep residents healthy and safe, and what keeps communities economically viable. Parks are part of this infrastructure. Among the county’s parks, Bur-Mil and Hagan Stone need upgrades in order to maintain adequate service levels. The others are fairly new and should

require only routine maintenance for the next 10 years. Additionally, Bryan Park at Guilford County is currently developing a Master Plan and hopes to secure funding for development.

GUILFORD COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN

Introduction

In July, 1991 Guilford County published its first countywide Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This Plan was prepared, over the course of a year, in response to passage of the County's first Parks and Recreation bond issue in November, 1988.

Historically, Guilford County government had not offered any park or recreational resources to its citizens. Instead, the county relied upon the cities of High Point and Greensboro and the towns of Jamestown and Gibsonville to provide these services. The bond issue, which proposed a series of district parks and greenways, passed easily and put the County in the position to become a provider. In 2012 the decision was made by the County Commissioners to dissolve the original management agreements with the municipalities, with the exception of The City of Burlington (Mackintosh Park) and Forsyth County (Triad Park) to be the service providers for the parks making Guilford County the sole facilitator and provider of its parks. The change-over was implemented in January 2013 and since then Guilford County has been operating and maintaining these parks and facilities.

The 1991 plan divided the county into four quadrants. An inventory of existing facilities was completed for each area, and then recommendations were made for improvements to be made in the periods 1991-2000, 2000-2010, and 2010+. We have now reached 2014 and it is appropriate to review the original plan and the progress that has been made in achieving those recommendations. The following update is organized in the same manner as the original plan.

Section 1 – Purpose Statement, Goals and Objectives

The Plan listed the benefits of parks, recreation and open space as:

- Promotes social interaction among individuals and groups.
- Provides physical and psychological well being.
- Enhances the opportunity to attract new business, thereby expanding the tax base.
- Provides a way to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- Promotes civic pride and sense of unity.

The Objectives of the Plan were:

- 1) To involve the public throughout the planning and implementation process by soliciting input.
- 2) To ensure consistency of the Master Plan with other county comprehensive plans and ordinances
- 3) To ensure the Plan is responsive to the county's projected population characteristics and growth.

- 4) To identify opportunities to protect environmentally sensitive areas and conserve the natural resources of the county.
- 5) To assess the existing and proposed parks and recreation facilities and programs to establish a reasonable schedule for acquisition, development, maintenance and funding.
- 6) To develop a Plans that provides a structure for orderly and consistent policy development and decision-making as related to park, recreation, and open space issues.
- 7) To develop a Plan that can be utilized as a management tool for administrating resources, programs and facilities.
- 8) To identify options for supplementing the operating budgets of the county's rural non-profit community centers.
- 9) To identify mechanisms for the funding and administration of existing and proposed recreational facilities and programs.
- 10) To ensure the Plan recommendations are developed to protect and enhance the quality of life for present and future residents of Guilford County by acquiring open space.

As we will show in the "conclusions" section, all of the objectives have been achieved, with the exception of additional funding for rural non-profit recreation associations. These organizations continue to provide valuable programming services, but have been supported by new county facilities rather than operational subsidies.

Section 2 – Current and Projected Factors Pertinent to Guilford County

This section covered existing and future land use, transportation, economy, population trends, physiographic features, water resources, unique natural areas, and population projections. Today, the descriptions from 1991 remain accurate with two notable exceptions:

- 1) Economy – In 1991 the Guilford County economy was still dominated by textiles, furniture and tobacco manufacturing but today, none of these can be considered the major manufacturers they once were. However, Guilford County has done well attracting major corporations, and has made strides in the service, banking, and construction industries. Parks and open space are an important factor for this. This shift from a manufacturing base to a diversified base has had a profound effect on the economy and on the recreational needs of the population. Today, adult league play, often associated with blue collar employers, is down. Organized youth sports have grown exponentially, and the desire for environment-based recreation, such as biking, hiking, paddling and jogging now dominates needs assessment surveys.
- 2) Population Growth – The population projections for Guilford County displayed in the 1991 Plan are shown below, with actual figures and new projections noted.

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>
1991 Plan	317,154	347,420	369,000	387,000	(no projection)
2014 Update	317,154	347,420	421,044	488,406	546,162 (projected)
			+73,624	+140,986	

As these figures show, in 2014 Guilford County has 140,000 more people to serve than were projected in the 1991 Plan. Or looked at another way, we have 28% more people living in the county than was the case in 1991, meaning that our inventory needed to grow by that amount even if no improvements were made to the existing facilities network. Fortunately, as we will show, the county, municipalities and the state have all contributed substantial park and open space acreage and facilities to the inventory during the last 20 years.

Demographics

“The proportion of Guilford County’s population that was minority in 1991 was 28%. Now, that figure is 47%. The county has seen an overall growth rate of about 40% since 1990, but the growth rate of non-minority residents has been less than 10% while the growth rate of minorities has been over 100%. In particular, the growth rate of the Hispanic/Latino population has been almost 1000% since 1990. Currently, 57% of Guilford County residents are Caucasian, 31% are Black or African American, 6.5% are Hispanic or Latino, 3% are Asian, and 2.5% are some other race or multi-racial.

The growth of minorities has also affected the age demographics of Guilford County. The median age for the population overall is 37, up from 34 in 1990. The median age for non-minority residents is 43, while the median age for minority residents is 32. The county has more residents under the age of 18 than it did in 1991, but those residents are more likely to be minorities. There are also substantially more 45-64 year olds in the County, but those residents are much more likely to be Caucasian. The proportion of 25-44 year olds has declined from 33% to 28% since 1990.” *Anne Edwards, demographer, Piedmont Triad Council of Governments*

Today’s 45-64 year old cohort contains the famous “baby boom” generation that was born during the period between 1946 and 1964 to parents who formed families immediately after World War II. This cohort is so large that it has affected many aspects of society for over 50 years. In 1990 the baby boomers were aged 26-44 and were inclined to participate in active sports such as adult softball, basketball and tennis. Today these same people are more likely to ride bikes, walk, and enjoy nature hikes. The younger adult cohorts are smaller and seem to have diversified interests, making it difficult to assess demand for recreational facilities. In fact, in needs assessment surveys, the list of potential activities that people can choose from is much larger than it was 20 years ago.

In the 1980s there was an “echo” boom as the baby boom generation began having children. The completed family size was much smaller (1-3 children) than in the 1950s and 1960s, but the number of families was large and produced a bulge in school-age children beginning about 1990. This bulge, in turn, fueled a demand for organized youth sports, such as soccer, t-ball, baseball and lacrosse that continues today. The demand also reflects changes in societal norms that emphasize organized sports for children instead of free play or self-organized games common in earlier decades. These demographic and social changes have had a profound effect on demand for facilities.

Section 3 – Inventory of Parks and Park Facilities

The 1991 Plan contains a detailed inventory of facilities, including those provided by municipalities, schools, private non-profit organizations and quasi-public agencies such as the YMCA. The 2014 inventory includes an updated list of publically-owned parks and facilities for the entire county, as shown below:

Inventory of Guilford County Parks

PARK NAME	PARK OWNER	ACRES	MAP LABEL
Regional Parks			
Bryan Park Complex	City of Greensboro	980	R-1
Country Park - Jaycee Park	City of Greensboro	228	R-2
Guilford Courthouse National Military Park	National Park Service	192	R-3
Haw River State Park	State of North Carolina	1300	R-4
Oak Hollow Park	City of High Point	232	R-5
District Parks			
A.J Simeon Athletic Complex	City of High Point	55	D-1
Barber Park	City of Greensboro	114	D-2
Bryan Park At Guilford County	Guilford County	530	D-3
Bur-Mil Park	Guilford County	250	D-24
City Lake Park	City of High Point	45	D-5
Gibson Park	Guilford County	183	D-6
Guilford-Mackintosh Park	Guilford County & City of Burlington	55	D-7
Hagan-Stone Park	Guilford County	409	D-8
Hester, Oka T Park	City of Greensboro	104	D-9
Jamestown Park & Golf Course	Town of Jamestown	184	D-10
Johnson Street Athletic Complex	City of High Point	26	D-11
Northeast Park	Guilford County	374	D-12
Southwest Park	Guilford County	123	D-13
Springwood	City of Burlington	77	D-14
Triad Park	Guilford & Forsyth County	424	D-15
Community Parks			
Allen Jay Park	City of High Point	22	C-1
Armstrong Park	City of High Point	10	C-2
Blair Park Golf Course	City of High Point	151	C-3
Brentwood Athletic Fields	City of High Point	7	C-4
Brown Center Park	City of Greensboro	21	C-5
Carolyn Allen Park	City of Greensboro	59	C-6
Center City Park	Privately Held	2	C-7
Craft Center Park	City of Greensboro	4	C-8
Deep River Park	City of High Point	22	C-9
Dorothy Brown Park	City of Greensboro	3	C-10
Future Keeley Park	City of Greensboro	131	C-11-U

Future Short Farm Rd Park	City of Greensboro	35	C-12-U
Future Hilltop Park	City of Greensboro	30	C-13-U
Future Squire Davis Park	City of High Point	0	C-14-U
Gillespie Golf Course	City of Greensboro	104	C-15
Glenwood Center Park	City of Greensboro	6	C-16
Harvell Park	City of High Point	21	C-17
Johnson Street Park	City of High Point	22	C-18
Lake Daniel Complex	City of Greensboro	86	C-19
Latham Park	City of Greensboro	57	C-20
Leonard Center Park	City of Greensboro	29	C-21
Lewis Center Park	City of Greensboro	8	C-22
Lindley Park	City of Greensboro	23	C-23
Market St Park	City of Greensboro	18	C-24
Moricle Recreation Complex	Town of Gibsonville	30	C-25
Murrell Park	Town of Gibsonville	6	C-26
Nocho Park	City of Greensboro	8	C-27
Oak Ridge Town Park	Town of Oak Ridge	75	C-28
Peeler Center Park	City of Greensboro	5	C-29
Pisgah Church Rd Park	City of Greensboro	18	C-30
Pleasant Garden Community Center	P G CENTER INC	68	C-31
Pomona Park	City of Greensboro	4	C-32
Price Park	City of Greensboro	85	C-33
Rolling Roads Park	City of Greensboro	29	C-34
Smith Center Park	City of Greensboro	5	C-35
Stokesdale Community Park	Stokesdale Parks & Rec., Inc.	23	C-36
Stokesdale Town Park	Town of Stokesdale	22	C-45
Summerfield Athletic Park	Town of Summerfield	28	C-37
Summerfield Community Park	Town of Summerfield	48	C-38
University Park	City of High Point	25	C-39
Warnersville Center Park	City of Greensboro	8	C-40
Washington Terrace Park	City of High Point	26	C-41
West End Park	City of High Point	19	C-42

Neighborhood Parks

Ardmore Park	City of Greensboro	4	N-1
Autumn	City of Greensboro	9	N-2
Benbow Park	City of Greensboro	5	N-3
Bingham Park	City of Greensboro	13	N-4
Blair Park	City of High Point	5	N-5
Bluford Park	City of Greensboro	8	N-6
Bradshaw Park	City of High Point	1	N-7
Brightwood	City of Greensboro	8	N-8
British Woods Park	City of Greensboro	6	N-9
Brockett St. Park	City of High Point	0	N-10
Brown Bark Park	City of Greensboro	12	N-11
Bywood Park	City of Greensboro	49	N-12
Carriage Hills Park	City of Greensboro	5	N-13

Cedrow Park	City of High Point	9	N-14
Council Street Park	City of High Point	3	N-15
Cumberland Park	City of Greensboro	4	N-16
Dillon Road Park	City of High Point	9	N-17
Douglas Park	City of Greensboro	5	N-18
Eastside Park	City of Greensboro	3	N-19
Eastwood Park	City of High Point	2	N-20
Fisher Park	City of Greensboro	14	N-21
Five Points Park	City of High Point	1	N-22
Forest Valley Park	City of Greensboro	7	N-23
Friendly Acres South Park	City of Greensboro	7	N-24
Future Garden Creek	City of Greensboro	3	N-25-U
Goldston Park	City of High Point	3	N-26
Greenfield Park	City of Greensboro	4	N-27
Greenhaven Park	City of Greensboro	6	N-28
Greentree Park	City of Greensboro	11	N-29
Greenway Park	City of Greensboro	7	N-30
Hamilton Lakes Park	City of Greensboro	46	N-31
Hampton Park	City of Greensboro	12	N-32
Hannaford Park	City of Greensboro	2	N-33
Heath Park	City of Greensboro	13	N-34
Hedgecock Park	City of High Point	6	N-35
Henry Street Park	City of Greensboro	10	N-36
Hillsdale Park	City of Greensboro	30	N-37
Hines Street Park	City of High Point	1	N-38
Howard Place Park	City of High Point	0	N-39
Hunter Hills Park	City of Greensboro	12	N-40
Joe Davis Park	City of Greensboro	9	N-41
King's Forest Park	City of Greensboro	20	N-42
Kirkwood Park	City of Greensboro	5	N-43
Lake Daniel Reservoir	City of Greensboro	13	N-44
Luper Park	City of Greensboro	7	N-45
Macedonia Park	City of High Point	5	N-46
Mayer Park	City of Greensboro	2	N-47
Mccain Park	City of High Point	7	N-48
Meredith Street Park	City of High Point	0	N-49
Mitchell Park	City of Greensboro	13	N-50
Mohawk Park	City of High Point	1	N-51
Oaks West	City of Greensboro	2	N-52
O'hendry Oaks Park	City of Greensboro	7	N-53
Parkside Park	City of High Point	2	N-54
Pershing St. Park	City of High Point	1	N-55
Random Woods Park	City of Greensboro	6	N-56
Revolution Park	City of Greensboro	8	N-57
Rosewood Park	City of Greensboro	2	N-58
Shannon Hills Park	City of Greensboro	14	N-59

Shannon Woods Park	City of Greensboro	29	N-60
Southmont Park	City of Greensboro	4	N-61
Spring Valley Park	City of Greensboro	8	N-62
Steelman Park	City of Greensboro	4	N-63
Sussman Street Park	City of Greensboro	10	N-64
Three Meadows Park	City of Greensboro	5	N-65
Triangle Park	City of High Point	1	N-66
Vernon Street Park	City of High Point	0	N-67
Walnut Street Park	City of High Point	0	N-68
Westbury Park	City of Greensboro	5	N-69
Windley Street Park	City of High Point	0	N-70
Woodlea Acres Park	City of Greensboro	11	N-71
Woodmere Park	City of Greensboro	14	N-72

Mini Parks

Apache Street Park	City of Greensboro	3	M-1
Arlington Park	City of Greensboro	2	M-2
Brevard Park	City of Greensboro	1	M-3
Caldcleugh Center Park	City of Greensboro	3	M-4
Carolina Laurel Park	City of Greensboro	2	M-5
Cascade Park	City of Greensboro	3	M-6
College Park	City of Greensboro	2	M-7
Coronado Park	City of Greensboro	4	M-8
Eastside Park Rr Lease	City of Greensboro	1	M-9
Elmwood Park	City of Greensboro	1	M-10
Fairview Homes Park	City of Greensboro	2	M-11
Foushee Park	City of Greensboro	2	M-12
Friendswood Park	City of Greensboro	2	M-13
Gracewood Park	City of Greensboro	9	M-14
Guilford Hills Park	City of Greensboro	17	M-15
Highland Park	City of Greensboro	1	M-16
Johnson Park	City of Greensboro	3	M-17
Mcculloch St Tot Lot	City of Greensboro	0	M-18
Merryweather Park	City of Greensboro	1	M-19
Morris Farlow Park	City of Greensboro	2	M-20
Murchie Park	City of Greensboro	2	M-21
Nealtown Park	City of Greensboro	1	M-22
Old Asheboro Park	City of Greensboro	1	M-23
Pear Street Park	City of Greensboro	1	M-24
Perkins St Tot Lot	City of Greensboro	0	M-25
Richardson Park	City of Greensboro	1	M-26
Rotherwood Park	City of Greensboro	3	M-27
Southside Town Square	City of Greensboro	0	M-28
Springdale Park	City of Greensboro	0	M-29
Sternberger Park	Guilford County	2	M-30
Terrell-Keck Park	City of Greensboro	1	M-31
Textile Drive Park	City of Greensboro	3	M-32

Tuscaloosa St Tot Lot	City of Greensboro	1	M-33
Twin Lakes Park	City of Greensboro	5	M-34
Youth Park Plaza	City of Greensboro	1	M-35
Zoe Barbee Park	City of Greensboro	1	M-36

Recreation Centers

Allen Jay Recreation Center	Guilford County BOE	18	RC-1
Brown Center/Park	City of Greensboro	21.4	RC-2
Craft Center/Park	City of Greensboro	3.6	RC-3
East White Oak Center	Privately owned	0	RC-4
Glenwood Center/Park	City of Greensboro	5.9	RC-6
Leonard Center/Park	City of Greensboro	28.9	RC-7
Lewis Center/Park	City of Greensboro	8.0	RC-8
Lindley Center/Park	City of Greensboro	23.4	RC-9
Morehead Recreation Center	City of High Point	10	RC-10
Oakview Recreation Center	City of High Point	11	RC-11
Peeler Center/Park	City of Greensboro	5.1	RC-12
Smith Center/Park	City of Greensboro	5.0	
Southside Recreation Facility	City of High Point	10	RC-14
Trotter Center	City of Greensboro	0	RC-15
Warnersville Center	City of Greensboro	0	RC-16
Windsor Center/Park	City of Greensboro	4.2	RC-17
Future Hilltop Center	City of Greensboro	20	RC-18

Special Facilities

Calcleugh Multi-cultural Center	City of Greensboro	0	S-1
Curb Market	City of Greensboro	4	S-2
Cultural Arts Center	City of Greensboro	3	S-3
Greensboro Sportsplex	City of Greensboro	10	S-4
Memorial Stadium Complex	City of Greensboro	14	S-5
Old Peck School	Guilford County	6	S-6
Folk Center	City of Greensboro	0	RC-5
Smith Senior Center	City of Greensboro	0	RC-13

Inventory of Guilford County Park Facilities

PARK FACILITIES (COUNTYWIDE)		SCHOOL FACILITIES	
Fields		Fields	
Play Fields (soccer, football, etc.)	82	Play Fields (soccer, football, etc.)	90
Baseball/softball fields	112	Baseball/softball fields	79
Courts		Courts	
Tennis courts	157	Tennis courts	82
Volleyball courts	38	Tracks	17
Basketball courts	42	Basketball courts	37
Outdoor Areas		Outdoor Areas	
Playgrounds	161	Playgrounds	125
Picnic shelters	135		
Trails (miles)		Special Facilities	
Hike/bike	51	Swimming pools	2
Nature (hiking only)	33		
Paved (multiuse)	48		
Equestrian	5		
Special Facilities			
Swimming pools	7		
Golf course/mini golf	8		
Rec./senior center/meeting facility	24		
Marinas	8		
Boat/canoe/kayak rentals	8		
Fishing	20		
Campgrounds	2		
Disc golf	3		
Driving range	4		
Amphitheater	2		
Environmental center	2		
Tracks	4		
Veterans Memorial	2		

There are several trends that should be noted. First is an increase in the number of incorporated towns in the county. In 1991, Guilford contained only Jamestown, Gibsonville and Stokesdale. Jamestown and Gibsonville were parks and recreation providers, but Stokesdale was not. Since then, we have added the towns of Summerfield, Oak Ridge, Pleasant Garden, Whitsett and Sedalia. Stokesdale has developed a town park, as have Summerfield, Oak Ridge and Pleasant Garden. This has benefited the residents of these towns immensely by providing nearby opportunities to walk, play sports and picnic.

The second trend is an increased utilization of facilities on school grounds. Beginning in 1995 the school district began building and expanding schools, a program that continues today. In

many cases, soccer and baseball fields were incorporated into the plans (using funds supplied by Guilford County) that became “shared use” fields that are programmed for public use outside of school hours. The schools have also systematically upgraded their playground equipment, providing places for children to play during and after school hours.

A third trend has been the expansion of facilities offered by private and quasi-public providers. The YMCA has built several large new centers with both indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. The Greensboro Soccer Association, which partners with the city of Greensboro, has built a very large soccer complex. Triad Youth Lacrosse Association (TYLA) has introduced this sport to Guilford County and created a large following, generally using fields on school grounds. These are only a few examples of the growth in youth sports and the demand it has created for fields.

The last trend, experienced in many parts of North Carolina, is the growth of the Hispanic population. According to Ann Edwards, a demographer at the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments, much of the unexpected growth during the 1990s (see table above) was fueled by immigration, particularly from Latin America and Asia. These new populations have distinct recreational needs, most notably for soccer fields for adult league play. Families also appear to take advantage of parks for picnics and informal play.

Section 4 – Open Space Property

There have been a number of attempts to quantify the open space property currently protected in Guilford County. These properties range from small areas along streams that have a “Drainage-way and Open Space” easement over them, to the 480-acre Hines Chapel Preserve recently purchased by the county using 2004 bond funds. Open Space property may contain trails or other forms of passive recreation. The property is left undeveloped or minimally developed to meet the need for passive recreation in that particular area. Our best estimate is that there are 5,000 acres of land being managed as passive parks/open space, with the largest being watershed buffers around the Greensboro, High Point, Burlington and Piedmont Triad Water Authority lakes. Other notable examples are the Piedmont Environmental Center North Preserve and land purchased in the last ten years through the Open Space bond funds.

NRPA does not publish a separate standard for open space, and the need is very community-specific. Some communities have purchased the hills surrounding their towns so as to preserve the views. In Guilford County, most efforts have focused on stream corridors leading to drinking water supply reservoirs, since we rely on precipitation that falls directly on the county to fill these reservoirs. Other criteria for open space acquisition are outlined in the Open Space report.

Section 5 – Standards and Community Needs Assessment

Master Plans traditionally quoted “NRPA Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines” to determine how much acreage and how many facilities a community “should” have. These standards are coupled with needs assessment surveys to develop an existing conditions picture and direction for the future. The 1991 Plan offered the following standards

with the caveat that communities need to tailor standards to what their residents want and can afford to maintain.

Regional Park

“A park of at least 1,000 acres that draws users from a 30-mile radius.” This type of park should be no more than 20% developed, with 80% reserved for conservation and passive recreational uses. The standard listed is 10 acres per 1,000. In 1991 Guilford County had two parks meeting the regional park standard – Greensboro’s Bryan Park and High Point’s Oak Hollow Park. Fortunately, today we have the Haw River State Park and Mayo River State Park. Haw River State Park straddles the Guilford/Rockingham County line and is currently 1,300 acres and may grow to 2,000 acres or more in the future. Mayo River State Park in Rockingham County, which is within the 30-mile radius, currently contains about 2,200 acres. Likewise, the North Carolina Zoological Park is located near Asheboro, 30 miles south of Greensboro. It has just over 2,000 acres, making it the largest zoo, in terms of area, in the U.S.

Hanging Rock State Park, which contains almost 7,000 acres, is about 45 miles from downtown Greensboro. While outside the 30-mile radius, it has been a favorite among Triad residents since it was established in the 1930s.

The Guilford Courthouse National Military Park consists of 220 acres and is located in the city limits of Greensboro. It was established by Congress in 1917 to commemorate the largest battle of the second Southern Campaign in the Revolutionary War. While the park area is relatively small it attracts visitors from throughout the state and nation. It is contiguous to Greensboro’s Country Park and Natural Science Center, creating an effective park area of 500 acres. The Natural Science Center also attracts visitors from throughout the state. We therefore classify this complex as “regional”. Please refer to the “Battleground Parks District” in the Action Plan section for details.

In reviewing the regional park resources available to Guilford County residents, all best efforts have been made to meet the national standard, and we are fortunate to have a number of parks that offer a wide variety of activities for visitors.

District Park

The 1991 plan stated that “a district park provides more diverse recreational opportunities than a regional park, only on a much smaller scale.” The plan went on to state that the park should be at least 400 acres in size and include an indoor recreation building or interpretive center, plus active play areas, hard surface courts, playing fields, picnic facilities and various types of trails. The acreage standard is 10 acres per 1,000 population served.

In Guilford County, “District” parks are often referred to as “Regional” parks. This nomenclature does not change their classification. There are 15 district parks, totaling 6,000 acres, plus several thousand more acres of water at some of the parks that is available for recreation. Guilford County, therefore, currently meets the acreage standard.

Community Park

Community parks should be 50 acres in size, but some are smaller, particularly when located in urban areas. The acreage standard is five acres per 1,000 population served. “The community park serves several neighborhoods and has a service radius of two miles.” Both Greensboro and High Point have well-developed systems of community parks that serve the urban areas. As mentioned earlier, most all of the smaller municipalities have built community parks in the past ten years. Jamestown and Gibsonville have been incorporated for well over one hundred years and have traditionally provided their residents with parks and recreation facilities.

Since 1991 Guilford County has constructed six district parks in areas that were originally outside municipalities (one has been annexed since then). These parks, in addition to their district park functions, also serve as community parks for nearby neighborhoods. This is because the rural residential areas in which the new parks are located historically had never had recreational facilities nearby.

Neighborhood Parks and Mini Parks

“Neighborhood parks are 5-15 acres in size and serve specific residential communities in urban areas.” They are often designed as walk/bike-to facilities with very limited parking. The acreage standard is three acres per 1,000 served. Since these are distinctly urban facilities, Guilford County has not developed any neighborhood parks.

Greensboro and High Point have a sub-category of neighborhood parks variously called mini parks or pocket parks. They are very small and may contain a playground or picnic tables, but rarely have any other recreation facilities.

Linear Parks and Greenways

Linear parks, greenways and stream corridor open spaces serve as an interconnected system of greenways and parks that allows the public to safely travel from one destination to another, as well as serve recreational purposes. Latham Park in Greensboro was donated to the city in the 1920s and has been a signature feature ever since. In the 1970s the city built its first greenway (paved multi-use trail) within the linear park. Since that time Guilford County, Greensboro and High Point have built miles of greenways in various locations. The Greensboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has developed a comprehensive bike, pedestrian and greenway plan, adopted by Guilford County. Both High Point and Jamestown have completed greenway master plans. While these plans focus on construction of the paved trails themselves, the trails are often located in stream corridors that are owned by the public and designated as open space.

Special Facilities

The table below lists several types of special facilities frequently provided by parks and recreation departments, including swimming pools, golf courses and recreation centers. In Guilford County, as in many other communities, there are far more private than public pools and golf courses. Nevertheless, having a public option is important for those residents who do not belong to a private swim club or country club.

Recreation centers have been important facilities in Greensboro and High Point for many years. They offer programs for neighborhood children and adults, plus specialty programming such as

dog training, yoga, boxing and many other activities. In rural areas, private non-profit “community centers” help fulfill these functions, offering non-denominational places for neighbors to socialize.

Passive Parks (Open Space)

“Land in a predominantly undeveloped condition, including forests, wetlands, stream corridors, managed meadows, and agricultural areas. These properties are for the purpose of protecting native wildlife and plant habitat; water quality protection; natural resource preservation; passive recreation; trails for non-motorized vehicles; ecologically sustainable agricultural activities; and scientific or educational uses.” Protection of open space property is a trend that has spread across the country in recent years. Nationally, 78% of the local open space property funding initiatives that went before the voters was approved.

In Guilford County, open space property protection has been recognized and funded since 1988 when the board of commissioners approved a bond issue that provided funds to purchase land for watershed protection. Guilford County has had an Open Space Sub-Committee since 1999. In 2000 the Sub-Committee prepared its first plan, which was adopted by the Guilford County Parks and Recreation Board and Board of Commissioners. In 2004 the voters approved a bond issue that provided \$20 million to pay capital costs and the acquisition of real property for parks and recreation. The Guilford County Board of Commissioners voted to utilize \$10 million of those funds for the acquisition of property for the purpose of passive recreation. While working to preserve properties with this funding, the Sub-Committee prepared a 2009 updated Open Space Report that was adopted by the Board of Commissioners in April, 2009.

The plan contains a strategy for protecting land called “corridors and bubbles”, including an ambitious goal of protecting 100 acres of open space property per 1,000 people living in the county.

The cities of Greensboro, High Point, Burlington, and the Piedmont Triad Regional Water Authority have all purchased land to build drinking water supply reservoirs. Each of these reservoirs is surrounded by buffer areas ranging from 100’ to 750’ that is maintained in an undeveloped, natural state. This acreage, combined with Open Space property purchases, land protected by the Piedmont Land Conservancy and land purchased by the State gives Guilford County a total of 25,500 acres that have been protected. This is 52% of the adopted goal, based on the county’s current population.

Facility Standards

We have updated the “Standards for Public Facilities” table and “Public Facilities Need Analysis” table from the 1991 Plan. The most obvious change is in the number of soccer/football fields. In 1991 there were 65 fields, with a projected need for 2010 of only 27 fields, meaning it looked like we had a surplus. Today there are over 170 fields, and demand outstrips the supply almost year-round. Other standards that have been tailored to Guilford County are those related to trails. Guilford has many miles of hiking, mountain biking and multi-use paved trails. The prevalence of trails appears to have enhanced the demand for more, so trails routinely appear on surveys as something the public wants.

Table 4-1
Standards for Public Recreation Facilities

<u>Facility</u>	Current NRPA Standard	1991 GC Standard	2015
GC Standard	<u>/1,000 pop.</u>	<u>/1,000 pop.</u>	<u>/1,000 pop.</u>
Fields			
Adult Baseball	1/20,000	1/12,000	1/20,000
Softball/Youth Baseball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000
Play Field (football, soccer, lacrosse, ultimate, etc.)	1/4000	1/5,000	1/2,500
Courts			
Basketball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000
Tennis	1/2,000	1/2,000	1/2,000
Volleyball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000
Outdoor Areas			
Picnic Shelters	1/2,000	NA	1/2,000
Playgrounds	1/1,000	1/1,000	1/1,000
Trails (miles)			
Hike/Mountain Bike (unpaved)	1/4,000	1/2,500	1/2,500
Nature (no bikes or horses)	1/2,500	1/5,000	1/5,000
Greenway (multi-use) (paved or gravel surface, typically long, regional trails)	1/7,500	NA	1/7,500
Equestrian	1/6,250	1/2,500	1/10,000
Special Facilities			
Swimming Pool	1/20,000	1/25,000	1/25,000
Golf Course	1/25,000	1/25,000	1/25,000
Recreation Center	1/25,000	NA	1/25,000

Needs Assessment Survey Results

The Needs Assessment Survey was placed on the front page of the Guilford County web site. In addition it was placed on the web sites of jurisdictions within the county, including Gibsonville, Jamestown and Greensboro. Summary results are as follows:

Recent Participation by Respondent or Family Member (top 10 of 25 choices offered)

Hiking	57.2%
Picnic Shelters	46.5%
Playgrounds	40.7%
Bike Trails	36.5%
Walking Track	33.1%
Swimming Pool	23.1%
Boating and Fishing	19.7%
Pond Fishing	17.8%
Multipurpose Fields	17.1%
Golf	14.7%

How Would You Rate Programs and Services at County Parks

Excellent	34.9%
Good	56.3%
Fair	8.2%
Poor	0.5%

What Programs or Services Should be Expanded at County Parks (top 10 of 48 choices offered)

Hiking	40.7%
Walking	36.9%
Nature Study	29.4%
Canoeing	28.9%
Biking	28.1%
Dog Walking	26.8%
Kayaking	26.0%
Disc Golf	25.8%
Camping	25.8%
Gardening	23.2%

What Special Events Would You Like to See at County Parks (top 10 of 31 choices offered)

Bluegrass/Folk Festival	50.4%
Fourth of July Fireworks	43.3%
Hot Air Balloon Rides	31.4%
5k Run/Walk	29.5%
Working Farm Field Trips	28.3%
Fourth of July Picnic	27.2%
Chili Cook-Off	24.1%
Health Fair	21.8%
Fair/Carnival	21.5%
Scavenger Hunt	21.0%

What Day Camps Would You Like to See at County Parks (top 10 of 19 choices offered)

Nature	46.9%
Wildlife	45.4%
Living History Farm	34.7%
High ROPES/adventure	28.5%
Arts and Crafts	27.9%
Swimming	24.5%
Disc Golf	23.9%
Fishing	23.3%
Tennis	20.9%
Sports	18.7%

What Facilities Would You Like to See Added or Expanded at County Parks (top 10 of 35)

Walking Trails	49.6%
Nature Trails	47.8%
Greenways/multi-use trails	46.8%
Hiking Trails	44.2%
Nature Center	36.6%
Picnic Areas	29.9%
Zip Line	29.4%
Fitness Trail	28.6%
Playgrounds	28.6%
Campgrounds	28.1%

Do You Believe Guilford County Should Purchase More Open Space Land

Yes	85.3%
No	14.7%

In What Geographic Areas Should Open Space be Purchased

Northeast	36.8%
Southeast	45.8%
Northwest	43.9%
Southwest	27.4%
Urban Areas	41.0%

A quick analysis of the results indicates that the majority of the respondents are interested in trails and nature-based activities. This is not surprising, given the changes in demographics that have occurred in the past 20 years (aging population), and the strong emphasis that has been placed on youth sports during the same period. Most of the survey respondents were adults and were reflecting what they like to do, rather than what their children are involved in.

The Town of Jamestown completed a Needs Assessment Survey in 2007. Jamestown is located in the southwest quadrant of the county, and we reviewed the results of that survey to see how it compared to the county-wide survey. Highlights of the Jamestown Needs Assessment are as follows:

Interest in New Facilities or Services (% respondents in favor)

Greenway hiking trails	83.0%
Deep River Greenway	82.9%
Pedestrian bridge on East Fork Road	79.9%
Additional open space/park land	74.6%
Benches along sidewalks	69.8%
Walkway to YMCA from center of town	62.7%
Smaller community park areas	65.2%
Additional playground equipment	57.8%
Dog park	49.0%
New/replacement tennis courts	39.3%

The Jamestown results were a mirror of the countywide survey, with most respondents being interested in hiking and trails.

Public Meetings Results

November 30, 2009 – Brown Wesleyan Church

Staff presented an overview of parks and recreations facilities in Guilford County. Since Brown Wesleyan is in the Northeast quadrant, special emphasis was placed on what is being planned for that part of the county. The largest parks in the Northeast are Bryan Park, Haw River State Park and Northeast Park and most of the attendees use Northeast Park on a regular basis.

Ten members of the public attended the meeting and expressed their opinions. New facilities that people would like to see include:

- *Disc golf
- *Carousel
- *Open Air Gym
- *Amphitheater
- *ROPES course
- *Pedestrian bridge across Reedy Fork Creek (Northeast Park)
- *Tennis courts
- *Nature Center
- *Splash Pad
- *Miniature train
- *Bike trails

December 1, 2009 – Oak Ridge Town Hall

Staff presented an overview of parks and recreation facilities in Guilford County. Since Oak Ridge is in the Northwest quadrant, special emphasis was placed on what is currently in place and being planned for that part of the county. Oak Ridge, Summerfield and Stokesdale, all

towns in the Northwest, have completed community parks since 1991, so there is a high level of interest in parks and recreation.

Fourteen members of the public attended the meeting and expressed their opinions. New facilities that were mentioned include:

- *Swimming pools (existing pools are always crowded)
- *Disc golf course
- *Tennis courts
- *Splash Pad
- *Skate park
- *BMX track
- *Basketball courts (outdoor)
- *Bicycle rental
- *Archery range

December 3 – Hagan Stone Park

Staff presented an overview of parks and recreation facilities in Guilford County. Since Hagan Stone Park is located in the southeast quadrant of the county, special emphasis was placed on what is available in that area. Twenty-two members of the public attended the meeting and expressed their opinions. New facilities that were mentioned include:

- *Update camping facilities at Hagan Stone Park
- *Complete Fun for All Playground (this is H/C accessible playground for which citizens have raised over \$100,000)
- *Construct clay and indoor tennis courts
- *Fitness Center
- *Aquatic Center for southeast area
- *Expand Fall Fest at Hagan Stone Park
- *Support geo-caching throughout county parks
- *Add softball fields that are irrigated and lighted and have bleachers and dugouts

December 14 – Jamestown Town Hall

Staff presented an overview of parks and recreation facilities in Guilford County. Seventeen members of the public attended the meeting and expressed their opinions. New facilities that were mentioned include:

- *Pedestrian bridge needed at E. Fork Road for safety and to connect to Jamestown sidewalks (this comment relates to the existing Bicentennial Greenway)
- *Prevent parking on E. Fork Road at Bicentennial Greenway crossing
- *Pedestrian bridge needed at Penny Road (also to make greenway connection)
- *Create partnership between High Point and Guilford County to build another park
- *Expand greenway system to connect to Greensboro and Mountains-to-Sea Trail
- *Increase amount of open space for people to enjoy
- *Build Deep River Greenway from High Point to Triad Park

*High Point should connect High Point Greenway to Bicentennial Greenway at the Environmental Center

*Develop Deep River Paddle trail in partnership with Jamestown, the county and High Point

Section 6 – 1991 Master Plan Review

As mentioned previously, the 1991 Plan divided the county into four quadrants and made recommendations for three time periods – 1990-2000, 2000-2010 and 2010+. Since it is now 2014, we have combined all of the recommendations and noted the current status.

Northwest Guilford County			
Park Type	Proposal	Provider	Status
District	Expand facilities at Bur-Mil Park	Guilford County	Complete
	Acquire land and develop Triad Park	Guilford/Forsyth counties	Seven of 8 phases completed
	Join Jaycee and Country Park and operate as one	Greensboro	Complete
Community	Acquire and develop Community park	Town of Stokesdale	Complete. Note that Summerfield and Oak Ridge have also built Community parks
Neighborhood	Expand area and facilities at Summerfield Community Center	Town of Summerfield	Complete. Area and facilities are large enough to be a “community” park
	Expand area and facilities at Oak Ridge Town Park	Town of Oak Ridge	Complete. Area and facilities are large enough to be a “community” park
	Expand area and facilities in Colfax community	Colfax/Guilford	Complete. Shared use facilities at Colfax Elementary
Greenways	Bicentennial Greenway from Greensboro to High Point	Guilford/High Point	Nearly complete Construction to end in early 2015

Greenway from Bur-Mil to the northwest	Guilford	In progress
Greenway linkages to Municipalities	Guilford/Greensboro/High Point	In progress
Greenway from Bur-Mil to Triad Park and Forsyth County	Guilford/Kernersville/Winston-Salem	Feasibility Study. Now called Piedmont Greenway
Greenway along Haw River	Guilford/Rockingham	In progress. Now Haw River Trail with both land and paddle components
Greenway from Oak Hollow Lake to Triad Park	Guilford/High Point	In progress
Mountains-to-Sea Trail	Guilford/State	In progress

Northeast Guilford County

Park Type	Proposal	Provider	Status
Regional	Construct maintenance Building, Safety Town, and Community building at Barber Park	Greensboro	In progress
District	Operate Bryan Park at Guilford County	Guilford	Developing Master Plan
	Expand Bryan Park Soccer Complex	Greensboro	In progress
	Develop Prison Farm as a Passive Park	Guilford	Planning Stage
	Develop Northeast Park	Guilford	Complete
	Keeley Park Connector	Greensboro	Planning stage
Community	Develop fields at Moricle Park	Gibsonville ¹	In progress

	Construction set for 2015 for LeBauer Park and is scheduled to open 2016	Greensboro	Planning
	Develop Recreation Center	Gibsonville ¹	In progress
	Acquire additional Park land	Gibsonville ¹	Planning stage
Neighborhood	Expand McLeansville Community Center	Guilford/McLeansville	Incomplete
	Expand Whitsett Community Center	Guilford/Whitsett	Complete
	Monticello Community Center	Guilford/Monticello - Brown Summit	Planning Stage
	Establish Sedalia park	Guilford/Sedalia	Incomplete
	Master Plans adopted Heath, Sussman, and Steelman parks	Greensboro	Improvements on-going
Greenway	Greenway from Bryan Park to Northeast Park along Reedy Fork Creek	Guilford/Greensboro	In progress
	Greenway from Northeast Park to Hagan Stone Park	Guilford	Planning stage
	Greenway from Northeast Park to Bur-Mil	Guilford	Part of MST/Reedy Fork/Haw River trail In progress
Garden	Future phases for the enhancement of the Gateway Gardens	Greensboro	On-going
Center	Smith Center facility Improvements begin 2015	Greensboro	In progress
Sports Facility	Improvements made to Gillespie Golf Course	Greensboro	On-going

¹ Due to increased numbers of participants, the Town of Gibsonville will need to acquire additional land in order to accommodate current and future growth. The acquired property will be used to construct a large multi-purpose field, lights, parking and restrooms. Additional uses will be determined based on future trends as well as public input. If possible, property adjacent to The William F. Moricle Recreational Complex or Edward G. Murrell Park should be a top priority. Other properties that may be considered are part of the Town's Land Development Plan.

Southeast Guilford County

Park Type	Proposal	Provider	Status
Regional	Develop park at Lake Mackintosh	Guilford/Burlington	Completed as District Park
District	Operate Hagan Stone Park	Guilford	Complete
	Develop Alamance Park Along Alamance Creek	Guilford	Incomplete
Community	Operate Pleasant Garden Community Center	Greensboro	Pleasant Garden incorporated and the Community Center continues to operate independently.
Neighborhood	Expand Mount Hope Community Center	Mount Hope Community	On-going
	Expand Southeast Community Center	Southeast Community	On-going
Greenway	Develop greenway from Mackintosh Park to Hagan Stone Park	Guilford	Planning stage

Southwest Guilford County

Park Type	Proposal	Provider	Status
Regional	Operate Oak Hollow as Regional park	High Point	Complete
	Develop master plan in 2015 For future development of	Greensboro	Planning

Hester Park

District	Expand facilities at Piedmont Environmental Center	High Point	Complete
	Develop Gibson Park	Guilford	On-going
	Operate Jamestown Park and Golf Course	Jamestown	On-going
	Operate City Lake Park	High Point	On-going
	Develop Southwest Park (formerly Randleman Park)	Guilford	Complete
Neighborhood	Expand facilities at Sumner Community Center	Guilford/ Sumner Community	Incomplete
Center	Develop Griffin Community Recreation Center, trails, spray-ground, fields, shelters, dog park, restrooms	Greensboro	On-going
	Repair and renovate War Memorial Stadium with Historic preservation guidelines	Greensboro	On-going
Greenway	Develop Bicentennial Greenway from Piedmont Environment Center to Greensboro	Guilford	In progress

Master Plan Maps (attach)

1. Existing Public Facilities Map
2. Trails Map (existing and proposed)
3. Proposal 2015-2025

Section 7 – 2010 Action Plan

The preceding review of the 1991 Master Plan reveals a number of positives, and a few deficiencies. On the plus side, with the exception of Alamance Creek, Guilford County and its partners have developed all the district parks proposed in 1991. As well, Guilford County has also acquired property for an additional park in the Brown Summit area. This coincides with the Parks Departments' responsibility to be flexible in its decision to buy and sell real property depending on how the philosophy and goals change for the citizens of Guilford County. During the most recent Board of Commissioners retreat in January 2014, the Board made a clear decision to actively begin opening the Passive Parks.

Small towns across the county have provided recreation facilities for their residents, and built new parks in Oak Ridge, Summerfield, Stokesdale and Pleasant Garden. These have been very successful, and function as central gathering/recreating points for their residents.

The following recommendations are arranged by county quadrant, and cover the period from 2015 to 2025. By 2025 we will know if the county's population is still growing rapidly, or if growth has slowed. We are currently on track to have adequate park acreage and facilities by the end of the planning period, but rapid population growth could alter that picture.

Note that all of the greenways in the Action Plan are part of the adopted Greensboro Urban Area Bike, Pedestrian & Greenway Master Plan, the adopted High Point Greenway Plan, or the Jamestown Bike, Pedestrian & Greenway Plan.

Northwest Guilford County

Regional

1) Develop a Master Plan that incorporates the contiguous Tannenbaum Park, Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, Country Park, Jaycee Park, the Natural Science Center and Forest Lawn Cemetery and markets the area as a "super" park with multiple offerings (currently referred to as the Battleground Parks District). Tannenbaum and the Military Park are operated by the National Park Service, while Country Park, Jaycee Park and Forest Lawn are operated by Greensboro Parks and Recreation. The Natural Science Center is on property owned by Greensboro, but is operated by a non-profit organization. The total area is over 500 acres, and the public facilities and programs are broad. Leaders from the three Providers (federal, city and non-profit) have initiated a plan to market the whole area as a multi-day "destination".

In 2008, Parks and Recreation began to collaborate with National Park Service, Guilford County and the Greensboro Science Center to develop a multi-park plan referred to as the Battleground Parks District. This project is a collection of public facilities in a 400+ acre area, which includes the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, Country Park, the Greensboro Science Center, Jaycee Park, Forest Lawn Cemetery and the Atlantic and Yadkin Greenway. Representatives from each organization helped to develop the master plan to create a destination location that would not only offer historic, educational, natural and recreation opportunities for residents and visitors, but also provide an economic impact for the City. Below are additional projects that are located within the Battleground Parks District

Spencer Love Tennis Expansion - The proposed project, developed in conjunction with Triad Tennis Management Co., will include the addition of up to 18 tennis courts, parking, and a new tennis facility, to include a pressroom, meeting space and locker/restrooms.

Guilford Courthouse National Military Park - The National Park Service is negotiating the purchase of additional properties to expand the park site and restore the battlefield. Future development includes the introduction of a tram service to connect facilities within the Battleground Parks District, signage improvements, construction and dedication of a British Monument on new parkland, renovation of exhibits and reopening of the Colonial Heritage Center.

Greensboro Science Center Expansion - The three-phase, seven year Master Plan, which will be funded through a 2009 voter approved \$32 million bond referendum, will move science based tourism to the forefront of Greensboro's economic and cultural future. Phase I, which was completed in 2013, included the construction of the Carolina SciQuarium and new adventure theatres, entrance lobby/ticketing areas, café, gift shop, bathrooms, and parking. Phase II, which will be completed in 2015, will include SkyWild, Prehistoric Passages, the Anne Preston-Worth Kids Alley Expansion and Animal Discovery Down Under. The final phase, Sanctuary Station – Endangered Species Village, will include new animals and exhibits, a conservation pond, children's pond deck, sanctuary café, new bathrooms and a new nature trail.

The planning process is complete. During the next two-three years the Providers should acquire funds for common signage, regional/national marketing and internal circulation improvements. (NW 1)

District

- 1) Continue phased development of Triad Park by the Guilford/Forsyth County partnership. (NW 2)
- 2) Development of Bur-Mil Park Master Plan is in progress. The potential capital improvements include renovation of the existing tennis facilities, upgrades to existing pool facility (install waterslide), install canoe/kayak launch, purchase canoes, kayaks, and storage facility, and construct permanent bocce ball or cornhole courts. (NW 8)

Community

- 1) Continue development of Oak Ridge Town Park, incorporating a broader range of facility offerings including: Projects Currently Underway; Installation of amphitheatre and

performance stage at Oak Ridge Town Park (ORTP), Additional restroom facility at ORTP, Additional paved walking paths at ORTP, Landscaping enhancements along existing walking path at ORTP, Signage enhancements to existing mountain bike trail (MBT) at ORTP, Eagle Scout Project (MBT bridge). Proposed Projects (1-3 years); Continued refurbishment of Union Cemetery, Trail enhancements as needed at Cascades Property, Targeted beautification projects at ORTP, Installation of community garden at ORTP, Installation of second playground at ORTP, Installation of sand volleyball courts at ORTP, Installation of fitness equipment along walking trail at ORTP, Installation of bicycle rack at new restroom, Installation of a freestanding “My Little Library” structure, Installation of Wi-Fi at ORTP. Proposed Projects (1-7 years); Installation of second parking lot at ORTP, Addition of suspension bridge at ORTP, Installation of spray park at ORTP, Installation of standalone spray station along walking path at ORTP, Installation of paved tennis courts at ORTP, Installation of additional picnic shelter at ORTP, Installation of fishing dock at irrigation pond. Proposed Projects (1-10 years); Purchase of additional acreage adjacent to ORTP, should it become available, Installation of video security cameras at ORTP

- 2) Continue development of Summerfield athletic complex including adding additional athletic fields and parking lots, develop a “new athletic park entrance” to coincide with the Hwy 220 widening project, renovate and restore the Gordon Hardware Building for the town’s community meeting center/offices, Plan and construct the A&Y Greenway trail (Mountain to Sea Trails), Build new picnic shelters for the town’s parks, Plan and design a community dog park
- 3) Town of Stokesdale is currently looking into the potential development of Mountains to Sea Trail (MST).
- 4) Plan a new community park serving recently-annexed areas west of Piedmont Triad International Airport (Greensboro). (NW 6)

Neighborhood

- 1) Plan a new neighborhood park in the Lake Jeanette area (Greensboro). (NW 7)

Greenways

- 1) Continue development of the Bicentennial Greenway (Greensboro). (NW-G1)
- 2) Extend the Atlantic and Yadkin (A & Y) greenway, which is also part of the planned Mountains-to-Sea Trail route, through Summerfield and Stokesdale (Guilford, Summerfield, Stokesdale). (NW-G2)
- 3) Extend the A & Y greenway south into downtown Greensboro where it will connect with a loop greenway being developed by Action Greensboro, a private non-profit organization dedicated to making public improvements in and around downtown (Greensboro). (NW-G3)
- 4) Begin development of Piedmont Greenway from Greensboro/Summerfield to Triad Park (Guilford, Greensboro, Kernersville, Summerfield, Oak Ridge). (NW-G4)
- 5) Plan development of Deep River greenway from High Point north to Triad Park (Guilford, High Point). (NW-G5)

Passive Parks (Open Space)

- 1) Acquire land from the Richardson-Taylor tract to the Haw River State Park to be a part of the MST.
- 2) Protect land along the A & Y Greenway which will provide a “bubble” of open space property for trail hikers to enjoy (Guilford).
- 3) Complete development of hiking trails and open Cascades Preserve up to the public.
- 4) Continue to protect the land along the Mears-Fork corridor. (Guilford)

Northeast Guilford County

Regional

- 1) Develop and expand Haw River State Park (State). (NE 1)
- 2) The second phase of the Barber Park Master Plan, which was updated in 2009, includes construction of a maintenance building to be shared between Barber Park and Gateway Gardens staff, the City’s second Safety Town, and a community building. The community building, which features meeting rooms and a resource library, will also include a Memorial to the Women of Greensboro.

District

- 1) Develop Bryan Park Guilford County with trails, campground, soccer/lacrosse fields and other facilities (Guilford County). This 530-acre site adjoins Bryan Park and is currently undeveloped. A Master Plan for the property is being prepared. (NE 2)
- 2) Bryan Park Soccer Complex Master Plan Update, completed in 2013, features three phases for the renovation and expansion of the soccer complex and field areas. The Master Plan includes the expansion of fields and parking, renovation and addition of restrooms, concessions, and office areas, new playground equipment, improvement of the existing entrance, renovation and expansion of the stadium including the addition of a field house and press box, and an expanded maintenance facility. In 2012, renovation of the Greensboro United Soccer Association headquarter began, which includes restroom improvements, a new meeting room and façade. A timeline for completion of the improvements recommended in the master plan has not been established.
- 3) The Keeley Park Master Plan is a result of multiple public meetings and site analysis held throughout 2006 and 2007. Phase I of the 138-acre park project was completed in 2012 and features a picnic shelter, a spray-ground, playgrounds, a greenhouse and community garden, restored ponds/dams with fishing docks, a maintenance building, and trails. Future phases will feature athletic fields (softball/baseball), multi-purpose fields, restrooms/concessions/press box, additional picnic shelters, a dog park, volleyball courts, a ropes course, cross country courses, mountain bike trails and open play areas. Construction of Phase II will commence pending availability of future funding.

Community

- 1) Plan one community park that serves Whitsett, Sedalia and the Stony Creek neighborhood. (Whitsett, Sedalia, Guilford). (NE 5)
- 2) Plan a park serving the Hicone Road/Reedy Fork Ranch area. This park could be a site for a recreation center (Greensboro). (NE 7)

- 3) Plan a park serving the Mount Hope Church Road area (Greensboro). (NE 8)
- 4) In 2012, Carolyn Weill LeBauer bequeathed \$10 million to the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro for the development of an “outstanding public park” to be named the Carolyn and Maurice LeBauer Park. The 3.7 acre park will be located in downtown Greensboro, on North Davie Street, and will include the existing Festival Park and former YWCA building site. The park will provide exceptional recreation equipment and activities, education opportunities, public art and a variety of landscaping to allow for a wide range of programs, activities and attractions throughout the year. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2015 with completion and opening of the park scheduled for spring 2016.
- 5) Since early 2000’s, a variety of studies and plans have been developed to aid in the renovation of the World War Memorial Stadium. Since 2011, the City has collaborated with North Carolina A&T State University, the Historic Aycock community, the Farmer’s Curb Market and other stakeholders to determine the highest and greatest use for the future development of the stadium and to develop plan to renovate the facility while maintaining its National Register historic designation. In 2013, an updated structural assessment and conceptual model for redevelopment of the stadium and surrounding areas was completed. This plan, as well as a subsequent Historic Rehabilitation Plan completed in 2014, includes recommendations for repair and renovation of selected components of the stadium, as well as recommendations for redevelopment of the area consistent with the historic preservation guidelines and the long-range, strategic plans of the University, the Farmer’s Curb Market and the Historic Aycock community.
- 6) Beginning construction in 2015, improvements to the Smith Senior Center will improve aesthetics as well as accessibility to and within areas of the facility. These improvements include paving and striping of the existing gravel parking lot, construction of a new accessible building entrance and upgrades to the existing restroom and changing areas.
- 7) In 2010, the City, in conjunction with the First Tree of the Triad and the Bryan Foundation, completed driving range and practice area improvements to grow youth golf and attract more adult golfers to Gillespie. In 2014, a new restroom facility on the greens was completed. Continued improvements to the facility include new signage, renovation to the patio and clubhouse, improvements to the practice facility and gift shop

Neighborhood

- 1) Consider development of a neighborhood park in McLeansville community (Guilford). (NE 6)
- 2) Planning for the garden began in 1999 when the City provided an 11-acre site at the corner of East Lee and Florida Street as part of the area enhancement. The master plan, approved in 2002, and development of the first two phases of the gardens was made possible through collaboration between the City of Greensboro and Greensboro Beautiful, Inc. The first phase, completed in 2011, includes a rain garden, Michel Family Children’s Garden, the Greensboro Heritage Garden, an icon fountain, and a variety of public artwork. The second phase, completed in 2014, includes the Visitor’s Center. Future phases, which will be completed as funding becomes available will include additional enhancement of the Visitor’s Center, a Japanese Garden, Wedding Garden and White Oak Forest.

- 3) Neighborhood park redevelopment projects were funded through a 2008 Bond Referendum and specifically called for funding various improvements and renovations to Heath, Steelman, and Sussman Parks. These individual facilities were identified as a result of community input and strong neighborhood support, age and deteriorating conditions of amenities, and the potential for outside funding and/or collaboration with other Departments and non-City sources to provide assistance with recommended enhancements and upgrades. After several community meetings in 2012-2013, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved and adopted the master plans for Heath and Sussman Parks in March 2013 and Steelman Park in April 2013. Each of these plans recommends a variety of improvements to be made at these parks including but not limited to new walking trails, site furnishings and park features, play equipment, signage, and improved landscaping.

Greenways

- 1) Planning is in progress to develop a section of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail from Greensboro's watershed trails north through the Richardson-Taylor tract and on to Haw River State Park (Guilford). (NE-G1)
- 2) Develop a greenway along Reedy Fork Creek from Reedy Fork Ranch to Northeast Park (Guilford). (NE-G2)
- 3) Plan Rock Creek Greenway from Northeast Park to Stony Creek area (Guilford). (NE-G3)
- 4) Plan Buffalo Creek Greenway from Barber Park in Greensboro to Northeast Park (Greensboro/Guilford). (NE-G4)
- 5) Develop Downtown Loop Greenway (Action Greensboro/Greensboro). Three segments have been completed. (NE-G5)
- 6) Develop Piedmont Greenway from Winston Salem to Greensboro. (Guilford, Greensboro, Winston Salem, Forsyth County, Kernersville)
- 7) Acquire land from the Bold Moon tract to Northeast Park along the Reedy Fork Creek to be a part of the MST and complete development of property.
- 8) Complete development of the Hines Chapel Preserve property.

Passive Parks (Open Space)

- 1) Acquire land along Reedy Fork Creek between Bryan Park and Northeast Park (Guilford).
- 2) Continue to develop Bold Moon Preserve and search for potential partnerships.
- 3) Continue to plan various uses for the Hines Chapel Preserve, as well as open it up to the public and search for potential partnerships.
- 4) Assist the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources with land acquisition efforts for Haw River State Park (Guilford).
- 5) Develop prison farm as passive a park and potential incubator farm. (Guilford)

Southeast Guilford County

District

- 1) Improve facilities at Hagan Stone Park to make them handicap-accessible and complete Master Plan for the park that recommends long-range improvements (Guilford). (SE 1)
- 2) Complete improvements and continue operation of Barber Park (Greensboro). (SE 2)

Community

- 1) A master plan was completed for the Pleasant Garden Town Hall Complex and Volunteer Park by the Town Council. The initial phase of development is complete and has been well received by the community. A restroom / concession building is now in planning and schedule for construction in 2014. The Town prepared and submitted a Park and Recreation Trust Fund Grant application in January 2014. The scope of work for the grant application included the following: Ten Station Fit Trail Exercise System, a Dog Park, a Disc Golf Course, Court Games with concrete walk, Playground at Picnic Shelter (age 5-12), Playground at multi-purpose fields (age 2-5) Clear Understory, Resurface multi-purpose fields.
- 2) Consider development of a Forest Oaks area community park (Guilford/Southeast Community Association). (SE 4)

Greenway

- 1) Plan to link Pleasant Garden and Forest Oaks to Hagan Stone Park with bike lanes, sidewalks and greenways, including benches (Guilford/Pleasant Garden/Southeast Community Association). (SE-G1)
- 2) Plan Big Alamance Greenway from Hagan Stone Park to Guilford Mackintosh Park (Guilford). (SE-G2)
- 3) Investigate feasibility of a greenway along the utility corridor that runs from Hagan Stone Park to High Point (Guilford). (SE-G3)
- 4) Plan a greenway along Little Alamance Creek to Guilford Mackintosh Park (Guilford). (SE-G4)
- 5) Plan a greenway from Climax along old rail line to Ramseur, connecting with the Deep River Paddle Trail (Guilford). (SE-G5)

Passive Parks (Open Space)

- 1) Complete development and trails on the Company Mill property and open to the public.
- 2) Complete development of Benbow Preserve property and open to the public.

Southwest Guilford County

Regional

- 1) A master plan for the redevelopment of Hester Park is scheduled to begin in spring 2015. As a result of age, overuse and deterioration of existing park infrastructure and amenities, including athletic fields, roadways and tennis courts, a formal master plan is recommended. This plan will help to provide a vision, guide and framework for future development and amenities at Hester Park.

District

- 1) Construct new athletic complex on the eastern side of city (High Point). (SW 2)
- 2) Develop and implement a master plan for Gibson Park that recommends long-range improvements.

Community

- 1) Consider improvements to Sumner Community Center playing fields (Sumner Community/Guilford). (SW 3)
- 2) Develop Hilltop Road Park and Recreation Center (Greensboro). (SW 4)
- 3) Plan a community park in southwestern part of city (High Point). (SW 5)
- 4) Plan a community park in northeastern part of city (High Point). (SW 6)
- 5) Develop “downtown” community park across from Town Hall (Jamestown). This park is under construction. (SW 7)
- 6) Originally completed in 2006 and updated in 2010, the master plan for Griffin Park (formerly known as Southwest Park) features the development of a community recreation center and park on 48 acres in the Southwest area of Greensboro. In 2014, the construction of a 15,000SF recreation center and Declan’s playground completed the first Phase of development. Future development at the site will include construction of trails, a spray-ground, multi-purpose fields, a dog park, shelters, concessions/restrooms and additional parking as funding becomes available.

Greenway

- 1) Link High Point Greenway to Bicentennial Greenway at Piedmont Environmental Center (High Point). (SW-G1)
- 2) Develop Deep River State Paddle Trail from Jamestown to Guilford County line (Jamestown, High Point, Guilford County, state). (SW-G2)
- 3) Connect existing Jamestown sidewalk system to Bicentennial Greenway via new pedestrian bridge over City Lake at East Fork Road and Penny Road (Jamestown). (SW-G3)
- 4) Extend High Point Greenway south to Kivett Drive (High Point). (SW-G4)
- 5) Consider development of a new greenway from the Baker Road area east towards Southwest Park (High Point). (SW-G5)

Passive Parks (Open Space)

- 1) Complete development of urban orchard on the Thomas Built Bus property in Southwest High Point and open it up to the public.
- 2) Develop and implement a master plan for the Rich Fork Creek Preserve in High Point. Continue to work with the YMCA to develop an easement or other land usage along the property line.
- 3) Complete development of the Saferight Preserve property.
- 4) Complete development of the McCandless Woods Preserve property.
- 5) Complete development of the Deep River Preserve property.

Section 8 - Priorities

The Action Plan includes several types of recommendations:

“Complete Development” indicates a new project or new phase of an ongoing project that will be active during the plan period. These parks and greenways are being funded and are identified in red on the map.

“Consider Development” or “Plan” indicates projects that are needed, but may or may not be funded during the plan period. These parks and greenways are identified in blue on the map.

Greenway routes are high priority in Guilford County and are being developed through communication and planning with the individual municipalities.

Open space property acquisition is coming to a close, with most of the 2004 bond funds either spent or allocated toward specific pending projects. Future priorities are to use the remaining funds to add some land to one or two of the existing nature preserves and to make the capital improvements necessary to prepare the property for public use.

Section 9 – Funding

There are a total of 6 municipalities within the County, as well as 6 other shared jurisdictional municipalities along the County borders, that currently operate parks and recreation facilities in Guilford County. Another two, Sedalia and Whitsett, are recommended in the Action Plan to develop a joint park and fund its operation. Operation and maintenance funding comes from property taxes, sales taxes, franchise taxes and user fees. It is not anticipated that these funding sources will change during the plan period. In recent years, particularly during the current recession, local funding resources have been strained. It is anticipated that park and recreation service levels may be reduced and user fees increased to cover budget shortfalls.

Land acquisition and construction funding have traditionally come from the General Fund, bond funds and grant funds. All of the larger jurisdictions (Greensboro, High Point and Guilford County) have sold voter-approved bonds for many years. Grant funds have also become an important resource that can determine a project’s feasibility. Some of the larger grant programs are as follows:

- Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF): Grants up to \$500,000 that must be matched at least 50% by the jurisdiction. This program is funded by a tax on land transfers and is administered by the state. Guilford County has received three PARTF grants; Triad Park, Northeast Park and Hagan-Stone Park. Other jurisdictions in the county have also received grants.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): Grants up to \$500,000 that must be matched at least 50% by the jurisdiction. Guilford County received one of the last LWCF grants in North Carolina in 2002 to help fund the Aquatic Center at Bur-Mil Park. LWCF is a federal program, administered by the state, which has not been funded by Congress in recent years.
- North Carolina Department of Transportation Grant (NCDOT): This grant was procured through the American Recovery Act. \$450,000 was awarded with a 25% match.
- Enhancement grants: Grants up to \$1 million that require a 20% local match. These funds were originally established by the federal legislation that supports highways and transit. Guilford County received one of last Enhancement grants, in the amount of \$947,000, in 2003 for construction of a section of Bicentennial Greenway.

- Recreational Trails Program (RTP): Grants up to \$75,000 that require a 25% local match. These are federal funds that pass through the state. Guilford has received several RTP grants in the past.
- ARRA Stimulus funds: These are one-time federal dollars designed to stimulate the economy and keep people working. Guilford County was approved for \$900,000 in stimulus funds for two greenway projects that have been completed. It is unlikely that ARRA funds will be available in the future. Transportation funds, however, continue to be available for sidewalk and greenway improvements.
- Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF): Past grants up to \$1 million for open space land acquisition projects, requiring a local match. The State of NC administers the Fund, with an annual appropriation of up to \$100 million that is used for improving water quality in North Carolina. Guilford has received \$100,000 in grant funds from CWMTF for open space acquisition, but no land acquisition money is currently available.
- AmeriCorps Grant: Guilford County was awarded and received three and half weeks worth of free labor from a team of 8 AmeriCorps volunteers which was used to complete a 2.5 mile trail on the Company Mill Preserve property.

The trend in grants has been down in the last several years, with both state and federal governments having a difficult time financially. During the plan period we do not anticipate being able to do as much construction with grant funds, given these budget conditions. Jurisdictions may, therefore, have to fund more work using bond proceeds.

Cities and the county have levels of bond indebtedness which vary over time as bonds are sold and paid off. Each bond issue requires voter approval, and the proceeds must be used for specific projects that are identified prior to the election. Currently, Guilford County has a high debt load caused by school and jail bond projects. Greensboro has a number of projects that have been voter-approved but have been delayed to avoid bond-debt repayment costs. Smaller municipalities generally do not issue bonds because of the complexities involved in being rated on the bond market. It is hoped that by the middle of the plan period Guilford County will be able to consider another parks bond issue. Until that point, projects in the action plan will be completed using remaining 2004 bond funds, grant funds, donations, and volunteer efforts.

Conclusions

The past 20 years have seen many improvements in the county's network of parks, trails and Passive Parks (Open Space) system. Providers within the county coordinate their activities, cooperate with each other to promote and host events, and attract league players from a wide area, not just their individual jurisdictions. Significantly, the green spaces and recreation facilities are frequently named as recruiting tools for new businesses and as reasons why we attract new residents.

In spite of the large population growth between 1990 and 2013, the park acreage, trail mileage and recreation facility offerings have more than kept pace. If the Action Plan recommendations

are carried out during the next 10 years, Guilford County will continue to have a first-rate system that provides for all of its residents.