

2013-2022 PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN



August 20, 2013

City of Lexington
Recreation and Parks Department

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Lexington residents at Grimes Park

Executive Summary

Lexington offers residents and visitors a wonderful combination of small town charm, southern hospitality and a community with great opportunity. The City's parks and recreation facilities are an important aspect of that desirable quality of life.

This Parks and Recreation Facility Development Master Plan will help ensure that the elected officials, Recreation and parks staff, and citizen leaders have a road map to guide decision-making and actions as the community recovers from the recent economic downturn. It will provide a ten year vision (2013-2022) for the Department. This guide was carefully crafted by staff, the public, volunteers, and with the help of outside experts to ensure that future generations will have adequate parks, trails, and open space.

The Plan starts with a description of the City's existing facilities. Section One is a detailed description of current park land and facilities. Section Two describes the service population - The People of Lexington. Section Three covers accepted recreation standards, both past and present. Section Four describes proposed improvements to facilities and parks. Finally, the Plan makes recommendations about a way forward in hard economic times. The Plan is comprehensive, and our best thinking in 2013 about how to proceed over the next 10 years.

GETTING STARTED: PUBLIC INPUT

Recreation and parks staff retained Site Solutions to help collect and analyze data and craft a plan for future parks and recreation facility development. The most important aspect of the planning study was identifying the public's desire for parks and recreation facilities and programs. The public was offered the opportunity to participate through:

- Two public workshops
- A city-wide survey sent to 3,000 households through a random sampling process
- One-on-one interviews with community stakeholders
- Access to an online survey (Survey Monkey)
- Working closely with the Recreation and Parks Department staff to understand needs already expressed

Findings from these public outreach efforts, as well as a summary of the methodology, can be found in Section Two: The People of Lexington.

GROWTH AND POPULATION

In addition to gathering public input, a critical step in developing this plan is understanding the demographic and population changes that are occurring in the community. The 2010 census data provides very good information on population and demographics for use in this planning study.

An important decision in the park and recreation planning process is identifying the agency's service population. The service population for the Department for this planning study is defined as citizens living within the city limits. The City's 2010 census population was 18,931. For purpose of this planning effort we have used 19,000 as the City's service population.

The State of North Carolina's Office of State Budget and Management reflects a population loss for the City from 2010 - 2011. While currently there is much optimism with regard to the economic future of the City, major growth is not anticipated during the 10 year planning period for this master plan. Based on current economic projections, this master plan study has assumed minimal population growth from 2013 - 2022. The 2022 service population has been "rounded up" to 20,000.

See Section Two: The People of Lexington for additional information on the demographic characteristics of the City's citizens.

PARK AND RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS

As described in Section Three: Recreation Standards and Needs Assessment, a community's park system is typically comprised of eight park types. These park types include:

- Mini Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Sport Complexes and District Parks
- Regional Parks
- Greenways
- School Parks
- Special Use Facilities

Typically, each of these park types provide recreation opportunities that meet citizens' recreational needs. A number of public and private agencies/entities provide leisure services in the community. Municipal agencies typically focus on mini parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, greenways, school parks, and special use facilities. County and state agencies often address larger park facilities (district and regional parks). Schools, universities, churches, and private entities usually provide additional recreation facilities. This comprehensive plan addresses all recreation providers in the community with particular emphasis on the City's role.

PARK NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In the next ten years, the City should focus its park and recreation efforts in the following areas:

Mini Parks

Lexington currently has seven mini parks (Cecil Street, East 3rd Avenue, Fourth Street, Hillcrest Circle, Holt Street, Smith Avenue, and Tussey Street).

Most all of these parks were constructed in the 60's and 70's. While they have served the community well for many decades, improvements are needed to several parks. **There are opportunities to expand facilities in several of the parks and each of the parks should have an ADA assessment to make sure all facilities comply with current ADA standards.**

Changes in neighborhood make up has resulted in several of the parks being underutilized. **Cecil Street and East 3rd Avenue Parks should be assessed to determine if there is adequate demand for these parks.**

Likewise, there are several neighborhoods that are not currently being served by small “walk-to” parks. As part of the City's community development efforts, there may be opportunities to develop small “mini parks” in some of these underserved areas.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks play an important role in providing both active and passive recreation opportunities in municipal settings. Currently the City offers its citizens eleven neighborhood parks (Charles England Park, Childers, Erlanger, Green Needles, Grimes, Jaycee, Myers, Pickett School Park, Radcliffe, Robbins, and Washington) on approximate 65 acres of park land.

These parks provide a very good foundation for the City's park system. They are distributed throughout the City and provide reasonably good coverage to most neighborhoods. As noted in the section on Mini Parks, most of these parks were completed

in the 60's and 70's with improvements made in 1998 as part of the City's Park Improvement Bond initiative. In an effort to enhance neighborhoods, the City is currently building neighborhood parks in the Green Needles area and the Erlanger neighborhood.

The City's eleven neighborhood parks are meeting the need for this park type, but several of the existing parks would benefit with minor improvements. Likewise each of the neighborhood parks should receive a detailed ADA assessment to determine any accessibility needs.

Community Parks

Lexington's most visible and heavily used park is Finch Park. It provides a wide variety of active recreation (ball fields, playgrounds, etc.), family and low impact recreation (trails, playground, etc.), and open space. Finch Park meets the City's need for a community park.



Ducks flock to Finch Park as well

Finch Park has the potential to provide additional recreation experiences. Improvements to existing facilities, as well as development of new facilities could greatly expand recreational opportunities. **The City should develop a master plan specifically for Finch Park.** Through a detailed assessment of the park's natural and man made features and a community based design process, a plan can be developed for Finch Park that will preserve its natural features while maximizing its recreational value to the community.

District Parks and Sports Complexes

District parks are one of the largest park types. They are usually provided by county or large municipal agencies. Often they provide athletic facilities that meet both local program needs and provide a venue for tournament play; attracting visitors/tourists to the area.

Lexington does not have a park facility that provides this type of recreational play. There was considerable discussion in the stakeholder interviews and in the public workshop supporting this type of tournament facility. Two options discussed were expanding facilities at Finch Park or utilizing land adjacent to the City's Water Treatment Facility. The City should explore opportunities for developing additional multi-purpose fields that could be utilized for tournament events.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are large (200 to 1,000 acres) tracts of land that provide environmental protection, education, and passive recreation opportunities. While a few large municipal agencies provide regional parks, most regional parks are provided by county or state agencies. As the name implies, these parks have regional service areas and are typically "drive to" facilities. The citizens of Lexington have access to several regional park facilities including Morrow Mountain State Park and Mayo River State Park. In addition, Old City Lake Park serves as a regional park for passive recreation and fishing.

Through these large parks, the citizens of Lexington have adequate access to regional parks. The City should not focus its financial resources on the development of a regional park.

FACILITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

We examined facilities within parks and special use facilities (such as ball fields and playgrounds)

to determine if there is adequate recreation facilities to meet current and future demand. This assessment begins with establishing standards for facility development. Based on public input and staff/planning consultant review of the 1987 standards, several changes have been made. These changes are discussed in Section Three and listed in Table 3A-Facilities (FAC), Recreation Facility Standards.

As shown below, several recreation activities have at least some facility needs.

The "Existing Facilities" column indicates the number of existing recreation facilities the City currently provides. The "2022 Need" column identifies the total number of additional facilities needed by 2022 (ten year need). The "Current Need" column further refines the City's recreation facility needs by identifying the number of new facilities currently needed (this number is included in the "2022 Need" column).

| | Existing Facilities | Current Need | 2022 Need |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Adult Baseball Fields | 1 | - | - |
| Youth Baseball Fields | 2 | - | - |
| Softball Fields | 2 | - | - |
| Football Fields | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Soccer Fields | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Basketball Courts | 17 | - | - |
| Tennis Courts | 15 | - | - |
| Volleyball Courts | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Horseshoe | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Shuffleboard Courts | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Playgrounds | 19 | - | 1 |
| Picnic Shelters | 17 | - | - |
| Miles of Hiking/ Jogging Trails | 2.46 | 5.2 | 5.54 |
| Amphitheater | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Community Garden | 1 | - | - |
| Swimming Pool | 2 | - | - |
| Recreation Center w/Gym | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Recreation Center w/o Gym | 1 | - | - |
| Dog Park | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Skateboard Park | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Disc Golf | 0 | 1 | 1 |

The majority of these facility needs can be met in the improvements to existing parks, and the development of several mini parks as identified in the Park Needs Assessment.

SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

The list of facility needs identified in the previous section contains a wide range of facilities. Some of the recreational facility needs are relatively small and will require only limited space and/or capital investment. Picnic shelters, horseshoe courts, and playgrounds fall into this category of park improvements.

The needs assessment also includes a number of facilities that will require significant investment of the City's resources. The development of these facilities will have significant impact on the City's recreation programming and delivery of services. These facilities include:

Community Center with Gymnasium

Currently the City does not offer its citizens a community center with a gymnasium. The only indoor programming that can be offered is at Robbins Center or through programs associated with the YMCA. The need for a public indoor recreation center with gymnasium has been discussed in the community for decades. This need was identified in the City's 1966 and 1987 Recreation and Park Master Plans and in a planning study conducted in 2005.

Support for an indoor recreation facility with gymnasium was listed as one of the highest priorities in both the community wide survey and at the public workshops. A benchmark assessment of North Carolina communities of similar (and often smaller) size of Lexington indicates almost every municipality with $\pm 20,000$ residents has a public recreation center with gymnasium.

Based on the findings of this study and the input provided by the public, one of the City's highest priorities should be constructing an indoor recreation facility with gymnasium.

Detailed planning or design of such a facility is beyond the scope of this planning effort, but one of the most important recommendations of this master plan is to further investigate options for providing the citizens of Lexington with an indoor recreation facility that includes a gymnasium. Based on discussions held as part of this planning effort, several alternatives for providing this facility emerged. Alternative solutions include:

- Expand Robbins Center by constructing a gymnasium and additional program space.
- Work with other community stakeholders to explore opportunities for developing an indoor recreation facility to meet the needs of all citizens.
- Renovate one of the City's existing industrial or mill buildings; converting a vacant building into a community asset.
- Revisit the plans developed in 2005 for the Youth Recreation Center.



Recreation centers provide additional recreation activities for teens

Each of these alternatives provide opportunities and challenges. Likewise, each alternative carries a different construction and operational cost.

The City should review these development options in greater detail and begin planning for this important need.

Swimming Pools

The City currently operates two outdoor swimming pools; one located at Washington Park and one located at Radcliffe Park. Construction and operation of swimming pools is one of the most expensive recreational activities offered

by recreation departments. Both of the City's swimming pools are old. While the swimming pool at Radcliffe Park seems to be in good operational condition, structural issues in the pump room of the Washington Park pool will require significant capital expenditure if the pool is to remain operational.

As noted in Section Three: Recreation Standards & Needs Assessment, many communities with a $\pm 20,000$ population are served with only one pool. **Lexington residents have been very fortunate to have two functional swimming pools over the past several decades, but with the anticipated cost of updating the Washington Park pool pump house it may be time to eliminate this pool and replace it with a sprayground.**



Spraygrounds are very popular throughout North Carolina

As noted in Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations, spraygrounds are one of the most popular trends in recreation facilities. These unique water play facilities offer children a wonderful play opportunity and allow them to escape the summer heat. Without a pool of water, the sprayground eliminates lifeguard cost and greatly reduces filtration and circulation issues.

Skate Park

Interest in a skate park was expressed in the survey, at the first public workshop and during stakeholder

interviews. A skate park facility could provide an outlet for youth activities and provide a regional draw; bringing people to Lexington. Several people mentioned locating a skate park facility in the uptown area; attracting people to the center of the city. **The City should consider development of a skate park in the future.**

Greenways

The demand for walking trails, and passive recreation was expressed in the survey and both public workshops. One of the most popular trends in park development is the creation of greenways.

These linear parks typically follow creeks and other drainage features. In addition to providing a wonderful opportunity for walking, jogging, and biking, they preserve open space and protect environmentally sensitive drainage areas.

Davidson County's Parks and Recreation and Tourism Development Master Plan recommends a countywide greenway that connects Lake Thom-A-Lex with Finch Park and the uptown area. This greenway ultimately makes its way to the Yadkin River. **The City should explore opportunities to partner with the County on the development of this greenway.**

Outdoor Performance Space

The desire for an outdoor performance area was expressed in all of the public input venues. Many of those expressing interest in such a facility felt it would best serve the community if it were located in the uptown area.

RENOVATIONS TO EXISTING PARKS

An important component of this comprehensive planning effort was an assessment of the City's existing facilities. **Many of the existing parks are over 40 years old and need repairs.** Section One: Inventory describe improvements needed at each park. The order of magnitude cost estimate developed with the facilities assessment identifies \pm \$2.7 million in needed improvements/renovations.

Most parks need only minor renovations. However, **there is an opportunity to improve Finch Park to greatly expand recreational opportunity. The City should consider developing a master plan for this park.** A detailed planning study, with appropriate public involvement will result in the most economical and effective renovations to this valuable community asset.

OPERATIONAL NEEDS

The expansion of park facilities described above will greatly improve the City's park and recreation offerings, but will come with a cost. **In addition to the capital cost noted in the previous section, expanding parks and adding a new recreation building will increase operational and maintenance costs. The City should consider the operational cost as it budgets for any capital improvement.** Section Five: Action Plan Implementation provides some general guidelines on anticipated staff needs, as well as program and maintenance costs.

JOINT USE OPPORTUNITIES

The public is best served when government agencies work together. There are a number of public agencies operating in the Lexington area that have facilities and programs that potentially serve the public's need for parks and recreation. The City should explore working with other agencies to provide services and attain common goals.

The following agencies have missions that may be in alignment with the City's Recreation and Parks Department:

- Davidson County Parks and Recreation
- Lexington City Schools
- Lexington Memorial Hospital
- YMCA

The City is already working cooperatively with most of these organizations. They should continue these efforts and seek new areas of collaboration.

Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations provides greater detail on the roles of these agencies in the community and avenues for partnerships.

CAPITAL NEEDS

The development of a new indoor recreation facility, a new greenway, several mini parks, and park renovation will require a significant financial commitment from the City over the next 10-15 years. These new improvements, along with $\pm\$2.7$ million in park renovations, would require a capital improvement program of $\pm\$8$ million if fully implemented.

Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations and Section Five: Action Plan Implementation provide greater detail on improvements included in the capital improvements budget. Likewise, these sections provide strategies for funding the recommendations made as part of the comprehensive plan.

IMPACT OF CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The City of Lexington has experienced difficult economical conditions for almost two decades. Many manufacturing jobs left the community in the late 90's.

The local economy has been further impacted over the past four years as our country has experienced the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression. Unemployment rates over the past several years have been higher than those experienced since the 1930s. The housing bubble burst, resulting in millions of foreclosures and falling home prices. The failing economy has resulted in significant reductions in government funds. Budget cuts in Washington and Raleigh have placed even greater stress on municipal and county agencies.

Lexington, like communities across the country, is faced with difficult decisions. Lower home values

mean a smaller tax base, and a smaller tax base means making harder decisions about community services. Parks and recreation services are an important component of community life. Studies show that recreation resources add to the quality of life in communities that support parks. Even with this understanding, elected officials must carefully consider how to allocate funds for day to day operation and facility expansion.

The park and recreation needs identified in this planning document are significant, and it is understood that not all recommendations will be acted upon in the next ten years. Instead, it is the intent of this plan to identify a vision for the City's park system and provide recommendations for reaching that vision. Recreation and parks staff, working with community leaders and elected officials, will implement the recommendations as financial conditions allow.

Table 5-1
CITY OF LEXINGTON
PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

| Capital Improvement and Land Acquisition | 10 Year Total | 2013-2016 | 2017-2022 |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Existing Parks Renovation/Improvements | | | |
| Specific Renovations to Existing Parks | | | |
| Finch Park | \$1,750,000 | \$1,750,000 | |
| Multi-Purpose Fields | \$1,000,000 | | |
| Restroom/Concession Building | \$250,000 | | |
| Water Access (fishing docks) | \$150,000 | | |
| Infrastructure/ADA | \$150,000 | | |
| Playground | \$50,000 | | |
| Trail Improvements | \$150,000 | | |
| Neighborhood Park Improvements | \$500,000 | | \$500,000 |
| Mini Park Improvements | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |
| Planning & Design (10%) | \$250,000 | \$175,000 | \$75,000 |
| Renovation Total | \$2,750,000 | \$1,925,000 | \$825,000 |
| Land Acquisition | | | |
| Mini Park (1 acre at \$25,000) | \$25,000 | \$25,000 | |
| Mini Park (1 acre at \$25,000) | \$25,000 | \$25,000 | |
| Land Acquisition Total | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | \$0 |
| Park Development | | | |
| Mini Park | | | |
| Mini Park | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |
| Mini Park | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |
| Planning and Design (10%) | \$50,000 | \$0 | \$50,000 |
| Park Development Total | \$550,000 | \$0 | \$550,000 |
| Special Use Facilities | | | |
| Indoor Recreation Facility/Gymnasium | \$2,500,000 | \$2,500,000 | |
| Sprayground | \$500,000 | \$500,000 | |
| Greenway Trail/with Davidson County | \$1,000,000 | | \$1,000,000 |
| Skateboard Park | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |
| Planning & Design (10%) | \$425,000 | \$300,000 | \$125,000 |
| Special Use Facilities Total | \$4,675,000 | \$3,300,000 | \$1,375,000 |
| Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost | \$8,025,000 | \$5,275,000 | \$2,750,000 |



Grimes Park is one of Lexington's oldest and most used parks

Section One

Inventory

INTRODUCTION

The first step in deciding where you plan to go is to determine where you are. The initial step in the planning process included an inventory and assessment of the City's existing facilities. The City of Lexington's Recreation and Parks Department offers its citizens a system of parks that includes over twenty parks and recreation facilities on over 400 acres of parkland. Many of the City's parks are smaller parks (mini parks and neighborhood parks) with activities focused on playgrounds, basketball courts, and picnic facilities. Finch Park is the City's largest multi-use recreation facility, while Old City Lake Park serves as its largest passive park.

Most of the City's parks were built in the 60s and 70s; making them 50 years old. In 1998 the City passed a bond for park improvements that funded improvements at seven existing parks and constructed school parks. Major park improvement projects have been limited since the 1998 park bond package. The economic downturn has reduced budgets for park improvements. As a result of these limited resources, the Recreation and Parks Department has had to do more with less.

Overall, the condition of existing parks and facilities is adequate, but deferred maintenance has taken a toll on facilities. Improvements to existing facilities will be needed if the City is to maintain its current level of service.

A detailed ADA and safety assessment of all existing facilities was beyond the scope of this Master Plan. The City should conduct a more thorough assessment of all its parks and recreation facilities to determine any deficiencies in these two areas.

REGIONAL PARKS

Old City Lake Park **198 acres**

Old City Lake Park is a regional park located at the old City reservoir. This park is not located within city limits, but is located several miles northeast of the City. Park amenities include two shelters, two grills, picnic tables, a swing set, slide, and parallel bars. Old City Lake Park is a popular fishing spot for both county and city residents. Shore fishing is very popular although boats with trolling motors are allowed on the lake. Park shelters receive some use on the weekends during summer months for family picnics and birthday parties. Most of the park use comes from county residents.

The shelters need cosmetic work. The parking lot needs to be improved. A small bridge over a creek in the park needs to be rebuilt.

Old City Lake Park is a wonderful natural resource for water access, fishing, nature trails, picnicking and family recreation. In order for this facility to meet its potential, improvements are needed. Based on the heavy use from county residents, the County should participate in any improvements made to this park.

Existing Facilities

Playground

Picnic shelters (2)

Water access



COMMUNITY PARKS

Finch Park

135 acres

Park amenities include five shelters with tables, two softball fields, little league baseball field, amphitheater, large playground shelter, two swing sets, basketball court, smaller play structure, fishing pond, multipurpose field, and .25 mile trail. There is also a mountain bike trail that winds throughout the wooded areas surrounding the park.

Finch Park is the most heavily used park in the city. Shelters are rented consistently. The softball and little league fields host games during the week and also on the weekends. The basketball court and large playground structure are heavily used. Nearly everyday, someone is fishing at the pond. The walking trail also receives heavy use throughout the week. The park is home to two large festivals; the Multicultural Festival (held annually on the first Saturday in May) and the July 4th Festival.

The playground structures are beginning to show signs of age and need maintenance. Two of the shelters need to be repainted. The bank of the pond needs reinforcement to prevent erosion during heavy rain. The development of a fishing dock would help alleviate bank erosion.

Much of the park is undeveloped and may offer some opportunity for facility expansion; however, most of the undeveloped acreage is in low lying areas or has extremely steep slopes. Development of these areas may be prohibited for environmental or construction cost reasons.

Existing Facilities

- Youth baseball field
- Men's softball fields (2)
- Soccer field
- Basketball court
- Playgrounds (2)
- Picnic shelters (5)
- Trail (.25 miles)
- Mountain bike trails
- Fishing pond with pier
- Amphitheater
- Restroom/concession
- Pergola



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Charles England Park 9.9 acres

Charles England Park is a former school park facility located at the site of the original Charles England School. Park amenities include a shelter with tables, a large playground structure, two tennis courts, a multi-purpose field, and a 1/5th mile trail. Charles England School was rebuilt on another site several years ago. The original school (including the park property) was sold to the Charlotte Diocese of the Catholic Church. The former school building is currently being leased to a community organization. The City currently has a 5 year lease on the park property. Park use declined with the relocation of the school to a new site. The park is primarily used for soccer and for the walking trail.

Any improvements or expansion of park facilities would be contingent on reaching a long term lease with the church.

Existing Facilities

- Multipurpose field
- Tennis courts (2)
- Playground
- Picnic shelter
- Trails (.2 miles)



Childers Park

5.01 acres

Park amenities include a shelter with tables, a grill, swing set, small handicap play structure, basketball goal, and a sand volleyball court. Childers Park receives limited use throughout the week. The park is located in a secluded area that may limit use.

The play equipment is relatively unused. The shelter and tables are used periodically for family picnics and the sand volleyball court is used by a group on warm, weekend days. The playground area needs to be rebuilt or removed. The equipment is old and outdated and the surfacing is not adequate to meet requirements. The basketball goal is in good shape. The volleyball court is periodically refurbished with new sand.

One expansion opportunity that has been discussed is the development of a dog park. The rear of the property is a large, relatively flat grassed area with large shade trees. It is secluded from other properties by dense woodland and an elevated highway. This area may be well suited for development of a dog park.

Existing Facilities

- Basketball court
- Volleyball court
- Playground
- Picnic shelter



Erlanger Park Circle 8.06 acres

Erlanger Park Circle is a new park located in the Historic Erlanger Mill district near Parkdale Mills. Park amenities include a seesaw, jungle gym, and swing set. A walking trail and shelter with tables was recently completed. Erlanger Park receives limited use. The swing set receives the most use in the park. New additions of a shelter and walking trail will increase use of the park. All amenities are relatively new and in good shape.

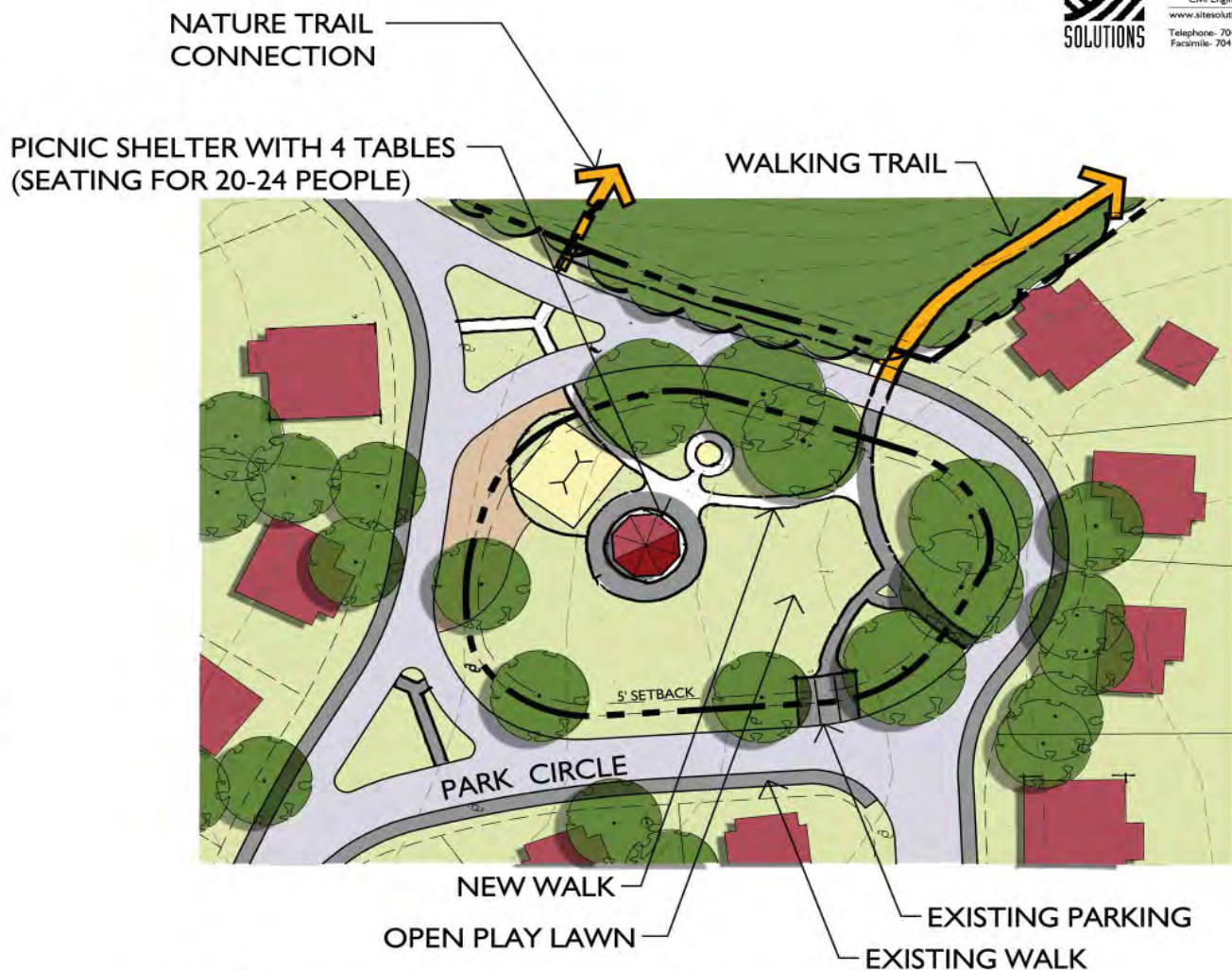


Existing Facilities

Playground

Walking trail (under construction)

Picnic shelter (under construction)



Enlargement - Picnic Shelter Area

Scale 1"=30'-0"

Green Needles Park **1.85 acres**

Green Needles Park is Lexington's newest neighborhood park. The park was recently completed. This park will provide much needed recreation opportunities to people in the western area of the city.

Proposed Facilities

- Basketball court
- Playground
- Picnic shelter
- Open play areas



Grimes Park

8.55 acres

Grimes Park is a large neighborhood park. Park amenities include a gazebo, picnic tables, a playground structure, tennis court, swing set, a multi-purpose field, both a .5 mile and .33 mile trail, and exercise stations. Grimes Park receives heavy use on most days with above average temperatures.

The YMCA periodically uses the park as part of their after-school and fitness programs. Though predominately used for the walking/jogging trail, the park playground structure is also heavily used. The multi-use field receives heavy use by many groups and organizations during warmer months. The tennis court is used sparingly, mostly by a single family that lives in the area surrounding the park.

The trails are compacted rock dust. Park trails were refurbished recently. The playground structure is in good shape. The swing set, fitness stations, and tennis court have recently been repainted. The tennis court will need resurfacing in the near future. The open space multi-purpose field provides a number of expansion opportunities depending on input from the community.

Existing Facilities

Multipurpose field

Tennis court

Playground

Picnic shelter

Trails (.83 miles)

Fitness stations (6)



Jaycee Park

6.03 acres

Jaycee Park is a neighborhood park. Park amenities include a shelter with tables, a grill, playground structure, swing set, basketball goal, slide, whirl, and a .25 mile walking trail. Overall the equipment in the park is in good condition. The playground structure is showing signs of age with some components needing replacement in the near future.

There are many potential expansion opportunities throughout the park. There is a large open space in the park that would allow the placement of new equipment. The park is in a low-lying area that is located parallel to a creek that floods during heavy rain. Plans for park improvements or expansion should consider this potential for flooding.

Existing Facilities

Basketball court

Playground

Picnic shelter

Trail (.25 miles)



Myers Park

3.2 acres

Myers Park is a neighborhood park located at the corner of Fairview Drive and Talbert Boulevard. Park amenities include a .33 mile walking trail, 3 benches, a slide, and a 2-bay swing set. The trails are compacted rock dust that are periodically refurbished. The slide and swing set were recently installed and are in excellent condition. The park receives more use as facilities have been added, especially during lunch time hours or directly after work.

There is a large open space in the park that could be utilized for additional playground structures, although users may prefer the park be predominately open space. There are high-tension power lines running through the park, with one tower actually located in the park.



Existing Facilities

Playground

Trail (.33 miles)

Pickett School Park **10.1 acres**

Pickett School Park is a school park located directly behind Pickett School. Park amenities include a shelter with tables, a large playground structure, swing set, two tennis courts, a .25 mile walking trail, and a multi-purpose field. Pickett School Park is a heavily used school park. Used by school children during and after school, the park also receives use from the general public.

The tennis courts are used for non-programmed play and also used for unauthorized recreational activities (soccer and skateboarding). The trail receives some use by a group of walkers. A local soccer organization reserves the multipurpose field and plays league games on the weekends. The shelter is often used as a gathering place for neighborhood teenagers. The Recreation and Parks Department is responsible for the park only and has no access to the school.

All of the amenities are in fairly good shape. The tennis courts were recently repainted. There are many opportunities for expansion of the park. There is an open area adjacent to the shelter that would allow for the placement of additional play structures.

Existing Facilities

- Multipurpose field
- Tennis courts (2)
- Playground
- Picnic shelter
- Trail (.25 miles)



Radcliffe Park

5.76 acres

Radcliffe is a neighborhood park located behind the Armory on West Ninth Avenue. Park amenities include a basketball court, playground structure, a swing set, and a pool that operates June-August. The swing set and basketball goals need painting. The structure is in decent shape but has begun to show signs of wear and tear.

Radcliffe Park is most heavily used in the warmer months of the year, especially during summer when pool operation begins. For most of the year, the play structures receive only occasional use. After pool operation begins, the park becomes one of the more heavily used parks in the city.

The park has potential for expansion opportunities. Options include a splash pad at the pool and additional play structures throughout the park. A majority of the open area in the park is low-lying so drainage is an issue.

Existing Facilities

Basketball court

Playground

Swimming pool



Radcliffe Pool

The pool is a 135,000 gallon pool with a maximum depth of 4 feet. The pool also includes a bathhouse with male/female bathrooms, multiple storage rooms, and a centrally located office. The poolhouse and restrooms are only open during pool operation hours and not available to park users throughout the year.



Robbins Center Park **3.03 acres**

Robbins Center Park is a neighborhood park that contains the City's only indoor recreation center: Robbins Recreation Center. Park amenities include a baseball field, playground structure, slide, swing set, a community garden, and a basketball goal. The park is used in some capacity almost everyday. The basketball goal, swing set, and baseball field are heavily used. The playground structure receives limited use. The baseball field is used mostly for soccer by the neighborhood children.

The playground structure and other equipment are in good shape. The community garden is well kept and will be an asset for the neighborhood. A large parking lot that is rarely filled presents the opportunity for expansion and addition of facilities. Possible additions include a gymnasium and fitness center, which would meet the needs of the surrounding community.

Existing Facilities

- Youth baseball field
- Basketball court
- Playground
- Community garden
- Restrooms



Washington Park **3.44 acres**

Washington Park is a neighborhood park located on Old Linwood Road. Park amenities include two swing sets, jungle gym, slide, grill, picnic table, two bouncy animals, two basketball goals, and a pool which operates June-August.

Washington Park is not heavily used until the warmer months of the year, especially during summer when the pool begins operation. After pool operation begins, the park becomes one of the more heavily used in the city. Aside from the pool, the basketball courts receive the heaviest use throughout the year.

A cement pad located in the center of the playground area receives frequent use from a group for soccer. Equipment and court renovations are needed. Due to the slope throughout the majority of the park, the opportunity for expansion, or placement of new equipment, is limited. The concrete pad could be repurposed if needed as it is a flat surface in the middle of the park.

Existing Facilities

Basketball courts (2)

Playground

Swimming Pool

Washington Park Pool

The pool is a 119,000 gallon tank with a maximum depth of 7 feet. The pool area includes a bathhouse with male/female bathrooms, multiple storage rooms, and a centrally located office. The poolhouse and restrooms are only open during pool operation hours and not available to regular park users throughout the year.

In December of 2012 the City initiated a structural investigation of the pool's pump room. This investigation determined that structural improvements are needed in the pump room. A short term resolution costing \$20,000 was recommended. This would be a 7-10 year resolution. A long term solution to the structural problem will cost a minimum of \$160,000.



MINI PARKS

Cecil Street Park

.46 acres

Park amenities include a basketball court, two bouncy animals, and a swing set. Cecil Street Park receives very limited use. The basketball court receives the most use in the park with other structures left relatively unused. The bouncy animals need to be removed. The swing set has recently been painted and is in good shape. The topography of the site limits use of the park. A steep slope runs throughout the park. This elevation change limits mobility and recreational use of this park. The topography also prevents the addition of new structures and other expansion opportunities.

Existing Facilities

Basketball court

Playground



East 3rd Avenue Park **.31 acres**

East Third Avenue Park is a neighborhood park located behind the City Sanitation Department. Park amenities include a basketball court and slide. The park is entirely used for the basketball court. Users gather at the park to play pickup basketball games. In the past, this park was a big draw for basketball. Some of the best local players came to these courts to play. The basketball court and goals need repairs. The only play equipment is a small slide. The benches have recently been painted and are in good shape. There are no expansion opportunities for this park as it is bound by private property on three sides and a road on the other.



Existing Facilities

Basketball court
Playground

Fourth Street Park **1.75 acres**

Park amenities include a shelter with tables, a large playground structure, two basketball courts, and a swing set. Fourth Street Park is heavily used, especially during warm weather months. The two basketball courts are heavily used for pickup games. The playground structure and shelter receive limited use. Ezekiel AME Zion Church, located directly beside the park, periodically holds small functions at this location.

The basketball courts are in great shape. The playground structure is showing signs of age. The swing set has recently been painted and is in good shape. There is a small amount of open space in the park where additional structures could be placed. There is a building on site that is operated by Ezekiel AME Zion Church.



Existing Facilities

Basketball courts (2)
Playground
Picnic shelter

Hillcrest Circle Park .38 acres

Hillcrest Circle Park is a mini park used for relaxation. The park contains two sitting areas. One sitting area is located near the entrance of the park. This area has two benches under a pergola. A second sitting area is located near the back of the park. It has one bench and a small meditation area. The park is used mainly by residents within walking distance of the park looking for a place to read or sit quietly. The park is only a year old so all amenities are in pristine condition. The park is bordered on three side by private properties and a street on the other. Expansion opportunities are limited.



Existing Facilities

Pergola
Benches
Garden

Holt Street .43 acres

Holt Street Park is a mini park. Park amenities include a basketball goal, slide, swing set, whirl and a park bench. Playground equipment is old and will need repaired. The park receives limited use. Occasionally, people can be found using the basketball goal or playing on the whirl and swing set.



Existing Facilities

Basketball court
Playground

Smith Avenue Park .25 acres

Park amenities include a basketball court with three goals and two park benches. Smith Avenue Park, like East Third Avenue, is entirely used for the basketball courts. It is heavily used, especially in the summer months. Users gather at the park to play pickup games. The basketball court is cracked in some places and will need renovations in the near future. The goals will also need replacing. There is no room for park expansion, with private property on two sides and streets on the other two sides.

This property is located close to Charles England Park. If the City is unable to secure a long term lease for Charles England Park, Smith Avenue Park could become the only park serving this neighborhood.

Existing Facilities

Basketball courts (2)



Tussey Street Park .62 acres

Park amenities include a shelter with tables, basketball court, playground structure, and 2 swing sets. Tussey Street Park did not receive heavy use until the park renovation two years ago. A new swing set was installed and the play structure area was improved. Park activity has increased since the renovation. The basketball court is heavily used. The shelter is also used for family picnics with residents often bringing their own grill to the park. The 2 swing sets are relatively new and in good shape. The playground structures show wear in some places but otherwise are in good shape. The basketball court will need to be resurfaced in the near future.

Existing Facilities

Basketball court

Playgrounds (2)

Picnic shelter



SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

Bingham Tennis Center **2.71 acres**

Bingham Tennis Center serves the Recreation and Parks Department, Lexington City Schools, and the surrounding community. This facility is owned by Lexington City Schools. It is staffed part-time by a tennis pro who teaches lessons, classes, and holds clinics. The facility includes 8 lighted courts set to timers and a tennis pro shop that has office space, storage space, a lobby, and men's/women's bathrooms. There is also bleacher seating for spectators. The courts were rebuilt during the past five years. Yearly maintenance will be needed to maintain quality play. No major expansion opportunities exist for this facility unless the Recreation and Parks Department purchases adjacent property from the School Board.

Existing Facilities

Tennis courts (8) lighted

Pro Shop



Holt-Moffitt Ball Field

Holt-Moffitt Field is used by the Lexington Senior High School and the local American Legion team. The Recreation and Parks Department is responsible for the management and maintenance of the facility. The facility is currently undergoing renovations. Dugouts were recently rebuilt. Dugouts, lighting, scoreboard and backstop improvements have been made in the last few years. The City plans to make improvements to the locker room and grandstands.

Existing Facilities

- Adult baseball field
- Restrooms/locker rooms
- Storage room
- Concession



Lexington Golf Club

The City offers citizens of Lexington and the region an outstanding 18 hole golf course. The golf course is not operated by the Recreation and Parks Department, but is still a recreational amenity offered by the City.

The course was built in 1938 and underwent significant renovations in 2003.

The course offers a rolling terrain with a back drop of towering pines.



Municipal Club Tennis Courts

The Municipal Club Tennis Courts are used by the surrounding neighborhood for informal tennis play. Play varies according to weather and season but use, although not heavy, is steady. The courts were recently repainted by park staff and are in good condition. There is no land for expansion of facilities at this park.

Existing Facilities

- Tennis courts (2)
- Picnic shelter
- Hitting board



Robbins Recreation Center

The Robbins Recreation Center is the main office of the Recreation and Parks Department. The center is used for many of the departmental programs, including cheerleading practice, art classes, ballet, fitness programs, and many others. The facility is staffed from 8:00 am-5:00 p.m. The facility is small and inadequate compared to departments of similar size. The building is approximately 4,360 sq. ft., but approximately one third of the building is used as the administrative offices of the Recreation and Parks Department. The remainder of the building is used for recreational programming. The majority of the recreational use of the building occurs in a large multi-purpose room (\pm 1,650 sq. ft.) at one end of the building. A smaller room (\pm 800 sq. ft.) is located on the opposite end of the building. This room is used primarily for arts and crafts.



There is no gymnasium or fitness center, which significantly limits the department's programming opportunities. The space inside the center is limited. The lack of adequate programming space forces the department to be reliant on other organizations throughout the community for indoor recreation activities.

Existing Facilities

Meeting rooms (4)

Fire kiln

Restrooms

Kitchen

Storage rooms (3)

JOINT USE FACILITIES

Lake Thom-A-Lex Park

Lake Thom-A-Lex Park reservoir is owned by the cities of Lexington and Thomasville. The park is operated by the Davidson County Parks and Recreation Department.

The park provides a playground and four picnic shelters. A boat ramp, three fishing piers and boat access provide area fisherman with a number of fishing opportunities.

While not located in the City of Lexington, this regional or county park provides fishing and passive recreation opportunities to the citizens of Lexington.

Existing Facilities

- 4 picnic shelters
- playground
- 3 floating docks
- walking trails
- boat launch



PROGRAMS OFFERED BY THE CITY OF LEXINGTON

INDOOR PROGRAMS

The city currently offers a variety of youth and adult programs at the Robbins Center. These programs include:

Youth Programs and Activities

- Zumbatomic (ages 4 – 12)
- Ballet Fundamentals (ages 4 – 12)
- Recreation Youth Advisory Council (Middle School/High School)
- Hip Hop Dance
- African Dance
- Summer Day Camp (ages 6 – 13) (indoor and outdoor)
- Junior Camp Counselors (13 – 16)
- Liturgical Dance (ages 4-19)
- Pickett Fitness Pals (K-5)
- Youth Choir (ages 4-19)
- Mime Team (ages 13-19)
- Multicultural Festival Butterfly Arts Initiative (pre-K - 12)

Adult Programs

- Zumba Gold
- Line Dancing
- Art
- Friendship Club
- Shape Up-N-Get Fit
- Multicultural Festival 5K
- Walking Warriors
- Faux Finishing
- Shag Dancing
- Texas Two Step Dance
- Bridal Boot Camp
- Southside Senior Citizen Club

OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

- Community Garden
- Paws 2 Pavement

ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

Youth Athletics

- Football
 - Flag (ages 5 – 7)
 - Pee Wee Jackets (ages 6 – 10)
 - Junior Jackets (ages 10 – 12)
- Basketball (ages 5 – 12)
- Baseball/Softball
 - T Ball (ages 5 – 6)
 - C Ball (ages 7 – 8)
 - Little League (ages 9 – 12)
 - Girls Softball (ages 9 – 12)
- Cheerleading
 - Bumble Bee (ages 5 – 7)
 - Pee Wee (ages 8 – 10)
 - Little League (ages 10 – 12)
- Quick Start Tennis (ages 5 – 10)

Adult Athletics

- Men's Open Softball League
- Youth Athletic Coaches
- Parks Easter Memorial Tennis Tournament
- Barbecue Festival Tennis Tournament
- Booster Club Golf Tournament
- Exercise Classes

Recreation Booster Club

The Lexington Recreation Booster Club consists of parents, grandparents, guardians, and other supporters of youth athletes that participate in city sports leagues. Members volunteer to help with various fund raising projects. Funds raised through the Recreation Booster Club are used for uniforms, equipment, and other needs for the program.

| Type | Name | Size | Adult Baseball Fields | Youth Baseball Fields | Men's Softball Fields | Women's Softball Fields | Soccer Fields | Football Fields | Multi-purpose Fields | Basketball Courts | Tennis Courts | Volleyball Courts | Shuffleboard Courts | Horseshoe Pits | Bocce Ball Courts | Playgrounds | Picnic Shelters | Trail/Greenway (Miles) | Mountain Bike Trail (Miles) | Water Access | Amphitheatre | Community Garden | Camp Sites | Swimming Pool/Splash Pad | Dog Park | Skate Park | Grass Area/Open Space | Restroom/Concession Building | Picnic Area | Gardens/Passive Areas | Golf Course | Disc Golf Course | In-line Hockey Court | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|------------|--------------------------|----------|------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|----------------------|---|
| Regional Parks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Old City Lake Park | 198 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Regional Parks Totals | | | 198 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Parks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Finch Park | 135 | | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 2 | 5 | 0.25 | v | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Community Parks Totals | | | 135 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0.25 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Neighborhood Parks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Charles England School Park | 9.9 | | | | | | | 1 | | 2 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 0.2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Childers Park | 5.01 | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Erlanger Park Circle | 8.06 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 0.35 | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| | Green Needles Park | 1.85 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| | Grimes Park | 8.55 | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 0.83 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| | Jaycee Park | 6.03 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 0.25 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Myers Park | 3.2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 0.33 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Pickett School Park | 10.1 | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 0.25 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Radcliffe Park | 5.76 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Robbins Center Park | 3.03 | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 4 | | | | | | |
| | Washington Park | 3.44 | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Neighborhood Parks Totals | | | 64.93 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 7 | 2.21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mini Parks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cecil Street Park | 0.46 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | East 3rd Avenue Park | 0.31 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Fourth Street Park | 1.75 | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Hillcrest Circle Park | 0.38 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| | Holt Street Park | 0.43 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Smith Avenue Park | 0.25 | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Tussey Street Park | 0.62 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mini Parks Totals | | | 4.2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Special Use Facilities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Bingham Tennis Center | 2.71 | | | | | | | | | 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Holt-Moffitt Ball field | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| | Municipal Club | 0.28 | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Robbins Recreation Center | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Special Use Facilities Totals | | | 2.99 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Joint Use Sites | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Lake Thom-A-Lex Park | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Joint Use Sites Totals | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grand Totals | | | 400.92 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 17 | 15 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 17 | 2.46 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |



The citizens of Lexington, and visitors from across the region, enjoy the annual barbecue festival

Section Two

The People of Lexington

INTRODUCTION

An important step in understanding the park and recreational needs of the City is to develop an understanding of the people that make up the community. Section Two includes an assessment of the City's population and demographics and looks at changes that are occurring in the community.

Many changes have occurred in Lexington since the City's initial Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Evaluation Assessment in 1996. While population growth has been minimal, changes in the City's socioeconomic make up have been significant. The City's population has become more diverse and economic times have become harder. These factors are explored in greater detail in this section.

In addition to reviewing the projected growth and demographic changes, this planning process has included several exercises to engage the public to better understand public demand/expectations for future parks. When developing a needs analysis, it is not enough to simply review changes in population, it is also important to understand the community's desire for parks and recreation activities. This planning effort incorporated several initiatives to assist the planning team in better understanding community preferences. These initiatives included:

- Community Surveys
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Public Workshops
- Staff Interviews

Through these efforts, considerable insight was gained regarding the public's desire for parks and recreation programs and facilities. This section discusses the information gathered in preparation of this Facility Development Master Plan.

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

History

The City of Lexington was incorporated in 1878. It was named in honor of Lexington, Massachusetts where the first skirmish of the Revolutionary War took place. Located in the heart of Davidson County, Lexington became a hub of textile and furniture manufacturers during the twentieth century. In the late 1990's, many of the City's local manufacturers moved production to Asian and Mexican markets. This shift in manufacturing has caused a strain on the local economy.

Today the City has refocused its efforts to meet the needs of today's economy and attract new business development to the community. In 2011, Site Selection Magazine ranked the Lexington-Thomasville micropolitan area 4th in the nation in economic development success in 2010. Located along the I-85 development corridor with easy access to the Piedmont Triad Metropolitan Area, Lexington offers a perfect location for businesses dependent on transportation corridors and in need of skilled labor.

The area's mild climate, friendly people, and easy access to both the mountains and the coast make it an ideal place to live. Unique local points of interest (including Richard Childress Vineyards and Bob Timberlake Gallery) and special community events (Barbecue Festival, July 4th Festival, etc.) make it a wonderful place to visit.

The People of Lexington

The 2010 census lists the City's population as 18,931 living in 7,376 households. The 2010 census represented a $\pm 5\%$ reduction in population from the 2000 census.

Based on the 2010 census, approximately 15% of the City's populations was over 65 years of age and approximately one fourth of the population was under the age of 18. As with most North Carolina communities, the majority of its citizens are women (51.9% versus 48.1% male). The majority of Lexington citizens are Caucasian (54.7%), but over one fourth (28.4%) of the population was African American. Latino's comprise 16.3 % of the City's population.

In 2010, over 4,500 of the 7,376 Lexington households were considered family households. Approximately half (2,067) of these family households included children under the age of 18.

The occupancy rate for the City's 8,938 housing units was only 82.5%. The majority of the occupied housing units were renter occupied (52.4 % versus 47.6% ownership occupied). This home ownership rate is significantly less than the homeownership rate of North Carolina (67.8%). Likewise the median value of an owner occupied housing unit in Lexington is significantly lower (\$107,600 versus \$152,700) than the median value of North Carolina.

The discrepancy in housing ownership and value is further reflected in the median household income. While the median household income for North Carolina was \$46,291, Lexington's median household income was \$29,522.

The review of the City's population and demographics reflects a community that has experienced an economic downturn that goes beyond the current national/state downturn. Lexington is a community that has experienced a significant loss of businesses and jobs and is currently redefining itself to attract new industry. With its strategic location along the I-85 corridor

and close proximity to the Piedmont Triad Metropolitan Area, prospects are high for a return to more positive economic times. Local leaders recognize the importance that public parks and recreation facilities play in attracting people and business to a community. This understanding lead elected officials to undertake this park planning initiative.

The review of the community's demographics reveals that Lexington has an aging population that benefits from facilities and programs provided by the department. Likewise, there are a large number of young people (below the age of 18) that also benefit from the recreational facilities and programs provided by the City. The socioeconomic conditions currently found in the community also indicate that any proposed improvements to the City's park system must be sensitive to the public's ability to pay additional taxes or user fees for those improvements.

PUBLIC INPUT

Perhaps the most important step in the planning process is gathering input from city residents with regard to their desires for public recreation. As part of the master plan process, the following initiatives were taken to gather public input:

Community Survey (controlled)

A written survey was sent to 3,000 addresses throughout the city. These addresses were selected from a random sample. A total of 240 completed surveys were returned.

Community Survey (on-line)

The written survey was also posted on the City's website to allow the general public an opportunity to voice their opinions on parks and recreation. A total of 15 people responded to the survey.

Stakeholder Interviews

One on one interviews were held with key community stakeholders to learn more about park needs.

Public Workshops

Two public workshops were held to allow citizens to discuss community park needs and review preliminary recommendations. Over 50 citizens attended these workshops and provided valuable input on recreational needs.

Staff Meetings

The Planning Consultant met with Park and Recreation Department staff to discuss facilities, programming and operation.

Community Survey (controlled)

In December (2012) the City's research consultant (Left Brain Concepts) mailed a written survey to 3,000 randomly selected residents located in the city limits. The written questionnaire contained seven questions asking for input on current park use, conditions of existing parks, interest in various recreational activities, priorities for park improvements and funding options for parks.

A total of 240 survey were completed. The maximum margin of error for this sample size is $\pm 6.3\%$ at the 95% level of confidence. A detailed summary of the responses is provided in the appendix of this report.



Most residents feel the condition of existing parks is good

Key Findings

Condition of Lexington facilities: Lexington residents gave high ratings (excellent, very good and good) for the condition of most of Lexington's facilities. However, 43% to 56% gave ratings of fair or poor for six of the City's parks.

Use/quality of Lexington parks and recreation facilities: Three-quarters (78%) of the respondents had visited a park or recreation facilities in the previous 12 months. Of these, 81% rated the facilities as excellent, very good or good.

Interest in new facilities/need for additional facilities: When given a list of 22 potential new parks and recreation facilities in Lexington, a majority of the respondents (53% or more) indicated an interest in the following activities:

- Walking trails (78%)
- Picnicking areas (64%)
- Playgrounds (63%)
- Outdoor event/performance area (58%)
- Indoor recreation center (56%)
- Play areas children with disabilities (55%)
- Natural areas and wildlife habitats (54%)
- New neighborhood (walk-to) parks (53%)

Most Important facilities: When asked to identify the four most important facilities from the list, the six facilities/activities most important to people were the following:

- Walking trails (50%)
- Playgrounds (32%)
- Indoor recreation center (31%)
- Outdoor event/performance area (27%)
- Picnicking areas (21%)
- Community pool (20%)

Reasons for not using Lexington facilities: The top six reasons people listed for not using Lexington parks, trails and recreation facilities were:

- Safety concerns (31%)
- Using facilities other than City of Lexington (27%)

- Facility(s) desired are not offered (26%)
- Facility(s) are not well maintained (22%)
- Concerns about quality of facilities (20%)

Allocating budget (dollars) for facilities: From a list of six possible spending categories - from improving existing facilities to building new facilities to preserving open space - Lexington residents indicated they would allocate 64% of the budget in the following manner:

- Improve existing parks and green space
- Trails and passive recreational activities
- Building a new indoor recreation facility

Funding upkeep of facilities: Respondents reported that they feel that 75% of the upkeep of facilities be funded from user fees or a general obligation bond. Only 13% suggested that the City increase taxes (property or sales) in Lexington to fund parks.

CONCLUSIONS

- While residents generally feel that Lexington facilities are in good condition, they also feel that many facilities are in fair or poor condition.
- Residents' use of, and interest in, Lexington facilities is high. At least one member of 78% of the households represented in this survey had used one or more of Lexington's parks or recreation facilities in the previous 12 months.
- Lexington residents can be best served by parks and recreation improvements that expand trails, open space and passive recreational activities. For facilities that would require a large capital investment, people voiced the greatest interest in an indoor recreation center, a skateboard or BMX park and a civic park/plaza.
- People who do not use Lexington facilities can be enticed to do so if safety concerns are addressed, if the quality of these facilities are improved and if facilities are maintained better. Residents feel that these improvements should be funded with user fees and/or a general obligation bond.

Community Survey (on-line)

The City's research consultant (Left Brain Concepts) also posted an online survey to the City's website. The questionnaire contained sixteen questions regarding current park use, evaluating conditions of existing parks, identifying interest in various recreational activities, setting priorities for park improvements and assessing funding options for parks.

A total of 15 survey were completed.

Key Findings

Condition of Lexington facilities: Condition of Lexington facilities: Lexington residents gave high ratings (excellent, very good and good) for the condition of most of Lexington's facilities.

Use of Lexington's parks or recreation facilities during the past 12 months: 100% of those participating in the online survey had visited a park or recreation facility within the last 12 months.

Quality of Lexington's parks and recreation facilities: Approximately two thirds of the respondents (66%) rated the quality of the parks and facilities as excellent, good or very good.

Interest in existing and potential parks and recreation facilities in the Lexington area: When given a list of 22 potential new parks and recreation facilities in Lexington, the following activities received the most demand:

- Indoor recreation center (92.9%)
- Walking trails (92.9%)
- Natural areas and wildlife habitats (92.3%)
- Public art in the parks (85.7%)
- Play areas for children with disabilities (81.8%)
- Tennis courts (75%)
- Playgrounds (75%)
- Civic parks/plazas (75%)
- Basketball courts (75%)
- Water access for fishing & boating (71.4%)
- Baseball fields (71.4%)

Desire for recreational facilities: Residents were asked to rate the same 22 potential facilities and indicate if current availability of the facility exceeds demand, met demand, or was not meeting demands. The following facilities received the highest percentage of people indicating there are not enough facilities to meet current demand:

- Indoor recreation center (92.3%)
- Play areas for children with disabilities (83.3%)
- Civic parks/plazas (83.3%)
- Outdoor event/performance area (80%)
- Natural areas and wildlife habitats (76.9%)

Reasons residents have chosen not to use the City's parks, trails and recreation facilities: The number one reason residents chose to not use the City's facilities is that the facilities they want are not offered (69.2%).

Allocation of funds for park expansion: When asked to allocate \$100 across the 7 categories, the largest allocation was recommended to build a new indoor recreation facility (\$43.18).

Funding upkeep of recreation facilities: Respondents reported that they feel that general obligation bonds should be the primary source of funding for recreation facilities.

Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews were held with the following community stakeholders:

Mayor Newell Clark
J. Alan Carson, City Manager
Tammy Absher, Director of Business and Community Development
Andrew Ward, Chairman, Lexington Recreation and Park Advisory Board
Dr. Keith Curry, President, NAACP, Lexington/Davidson County
Rick Kriesky, Lexington City Schools Superintendent

Interviews were conducted as open discussions regarding a number of issues surround parks

and recreation facilities within the community. The interviews were structured around a list of open ended questions, but were very informal. Interviewees were invited to share ideas and discuss issues they felt important for this plan to address.

Interviewees included elected officials, key city and school administrators, and engaged citizens. Almost everyone interviewed was a long time resident of Lexington. Several of those interviewed were native to Lexington. Everyone interviewed shared a love for the community and was actively engaged in making Lexington a better place to live.

The following is a summary of the questions and responses.

1. What do you like most about living in Lexington?

Almost everyone interviewed stated that the most attractive aspect of living in Lexington is the small town feel, the ability to know your neighbor, and the ease of getting around. Several people mentioned the City's uptown area and how it has a warm and inviting feel and great potential for being a place to attract people. Several people also mentioned the lack of traffic and accessibility as an asset. Residents can easily travel from one side of town to another; likewise, with the interstate it's easy to get to a larger city of shopping and entertainment.

2. What do you like least?

Almost everyone interviewed listed the impact the economic downturn has had on the community as the most disappointing aspect of living in Lexington. With the closing of the city's mills and the loss of jobs, the economy of the community has been challenged. Most everyone interviewed felt there are positive signs in the local economy and there is hope for a rebuilding of the community.

Other less desirable aspects of community life in Lexington included lack of shopping, arts,

entertainment, and a university. Someone also noted the City's lack of greenways as a negative.

3. What role do local parks and recreation facilities play in the quality of life in Lexington?

Most everyone interviewed felt that the City's parks and recreation facilities play an important role in improving the quality of life of the community. Generally it was recognized that the City's parks provide a place for more than just recreation. Parks provide a place for community pride and activities and can enhance the community's visual appearance. Some of the City's parks serve as real community assets, while some parks need improvements.

It was noted that the City's parks and recreation programs and facilities also provide recreational opportunities to county residents.

4. What role should they be playing?

Many of the City's parks are old and need updating. Likewise, there are some areas of the city that are underserved. Providing quality parks throughout the city could enhance the quality of life and provide incentive to attract new businesses to Lexington.



Finch Park

The City should do a better job marketing the facilities and programs it offers. A strong marketing

program would keep citizens informed and would increase use of park facilities. Marketing would also make the department more visible and would help attract new business to the community.

5. What parks and recreation facilities do you think are serving the community well?

The majority of the stakeholders interviewed immediately listed Finch Park as the “crown jewel” of the City’s park system. Other parks mentioned as quality parks included Pickett School Park, Grimes Park and Holt Moffitt Field.

6. What parks and recreation facilities could be improved?

Several people mentioned the need for more indoor recreation programming capabilities. Likewise the need for swimming pool improvements was also mentioned by several of the stakeholders. There was also some comments over the cost of pool operation and that one pool might be able to serve a community with less than 20,000 people.

Finch Park was mentioned by several people as having greater potential. There is considerable acreage that is not currently developed. This land could be used for development of additional facilities with a goal of creating a sports complex for tournaments.

Several people mentioned the proposed greenway identified in the Davidson County Parks and Recreation and Tourism Development Master Plan. This greenway would connect Finch Park with Lake Thom-A-Lex Park and the uptown area; creating a walkable trail to the center of Lexington.

Several people felt many of the City’s smaller parks were underutilized. An assessment of these smaller parks should be made. Those parks in areas where the facilities are used should be upgraded. There may be some small parks where facilities should be removed and the property be left vacant or sold.

The development of Green Needles and Erlanger Parks are an important addition to the City’s parks because they will serve neighborhoods that are currently underserved. There are other neighborhoods in the community that do not have a park. Salem Park and the country club area were mentioned.

Washington Park should be improved. The park gets heavy use, but the facilities are very limited.

7. What new parks and recreation facilities should the City consider?

Almost everyone interviewed talked about an indoor recreation facility, and there was a variety of views on this topic. Most everyone interviewed felt there was a need for a public indoor recreation facility. Several supported the idea of a community center with gymnasium similar to the youth recreation center that was discussed in 2005. Some felt the need for the indoor facility may have shifted and the focus of the building should be less on youth and more multi-generational. There was also a sentiment that the YMCA is currently meeting most of the city’s indoor recreational needs and public monies would be better spent on other facilities.

Interviewees discussed the importance of providing both seniors and youth with program opportunities.

Several people mentioned the desire to develop a dog park in one of the City’s existing parks.

Someone suggested adding fitness equipment to one of the City’s walking trails (Finch Park or Myers Park).

Developing park facilities that attract the community’s youth was listed by almost everyone. One recommendation was to develop a state of the art skate park to attract the current skateboarders and potentially create additional interest in this youth activity. Developing a highly visible skate park in the uptown area was suggested.

Several stakeholders suggested developing a greenway from Finch Park to Lake Thom-A-Lex as shown in the County's Parks and Recreation and Tourism Master Plan.

8. What role should Lexington City Schools play in providing facilities that offer opportunities for recreational activities?

Everyone interviewed felt there were positive aspects of the current working relationship between the City and Lexington City Schools. Several stakeholders mentioned the close relationship between the two public entities on Holt-Moffitt Field and Bingham Tennis Center. Likewise, several people mentioned the park school concept that was developed 8-10 years ago as good examples of joint use of facilities.



Pickett School Park is adjacent to Pickett Elementary School

All of the stakeholders interviewed felt the new school superintendent is open to building additional joint use arrangements that provide opportunities for public recreational use of school facilities. This was confirmed in the interview with Rick Kriesky, Lexington City Schools Superintendent.

Everyone suggested that the City and Lexington City Schools should explore opportunities to broaden current joint use of schools. These opportunities should include use of indoor and outdoor facilities, working together in mentoring

programs, after school programs, and health lifestyle education.

9. What role should the county play in providing parks and recreation facilities?

Several people mentioned the City and County working together at Lake Thom-A-Lex Park. Likewise, several people suggested the two agencies should coordinate efforts in developing the greenway trail from Lake Thom-A-Lex to Finch Park.

Most people interviewed felt the county has limited resources for parks and recreation and they will not be a major provider of recreation to Lexington residents.

10. Finally, all stakeholders were asked to provide additional comments they felt should be included in the City's Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan. The following recommendations were given:

- When building future facilities, make sure they are built right and built large enough to meet future demand.
- Development of a public gymnasium that is operated and managed by the City should be a priority.
- Development of a tournament level soccer complex should be a priority.
- Improving existing facilities is important.
- Reuse of the old Charles England School could be an important aspect of the plan.

Public Workshops

First Public Workshop

Tuesday February 12, 2013

City Hall

The first public workshop to discuss the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan was held in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Approximately 40 citizens and City staff attended the meeting; a very good turn-out for a comprehensive plan workshop.

Bruce Davis, the City's Recreation and Parks Director, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for attending. He then introduced elected officials, Recreation and Parks Board Members, and key City staff that were in attendance. Following the introductions, Mr. Davis spoke to the importance of the meeting and having the opportunity to hear the public voice their opinions on parks and recreation facility needs. He noted that there has been informal discussion among citizens for many years about the needs for new recreational facilities. Likewise, the new City Council has expressed a desire to make improvements to the parks and recreational facilities offered by the City. The purpose of this public workshop is to hear what the citizens of Lexington desire for future parks so those desires can be incorporated into the comprehensive plan.



Lexington residents participate in the public workshop

Following these remarks, he introduced Derek Williams with Site Solutions, the park planners. Mr. Williams began his comments by reinforcing the importance of the meeting as an information gathering session and asked that everyone participate and share ideas. Following these opening remarks, Mr. Williams described the planning process and explained the process began in December and would be finished in May. A second public meeting to discuss draft recommendations of the plan is scheduled for late March. He encouraged everyone to attend the second public workshop.

As part of his presentation on the planning process, Mr. Williams discussed the findings of a written community survey that was sent to 3,000 City households. Some general findings from that report that were noted included:

Results from Written Survey

When people were asked what recreation activities/facilities their household was interested in participating in, the following activities were ranked as the top ten:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Walking Trails | 78% |
| Picnicking | 64% |
| Playgrounds | 63% |
| Outdoor Performance Area | 58% |
| Indoor Recreation Facility | 56% |
| Play Areas for Children with Disabilities | 55% |
| Natural Areas/ Wildlife Areas | 54% |
| New Neighborhood Parks | 53% |
| Public Art in Parks | 48% |
| Water Access/Boating | 46% |

When asked to pick the 4 most important facilities for the City to develop, the following activities ranked as the top 5:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Walking Trails | 50% |
| Playgrounds | 37% |
| Indoor Recreation Center | 31% |
| Outdoor Event/Performance | 27% |
| Picnicking | 21% |

It was noted that there was consistency in activities listed in both questions indicating that these top five activities are the highest priorities.

When asked how they would fund park and recreation facilities, the following responses were given:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| User Fees | 41% |
| General Obligation Bonds | 34% |
| Tax Increase | 13% |
| Other (donation, grants, etc.) | 12% |

It was noted that ultimately it will require a combination of funding measures to improve and expand parks and recreation facilities. It was also noted that citizens do not appear to be willing to pay higher taxes to support park improvements.

Workshop Survey

With the completion of the presentation, the meeting then focused on gathering input from those in attendance. Utilizing an interactive survey process, every attendee was given a remote control voting device to record their opinions. Attendees were then asked questions similar to those on the written survey.

A list of recreation activities/facilities was read. Attendees were asked to indicate if they (or someone in their household) were interested in participating in this recreational activity. A yes vote indicates interest in the activity. Activities were then ranked based on the number of yes votes they received.

| | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| Indoor Recreation Facility | 26 | 6 |
| Walking Trail | 25 | 7 |
| Outdoor Event/Performance | 25 | 7 |
| Play Areas for Children with Disabilities | 24 | 8 |
| Football Fields | 23 | 10 |
| Picnicking | 22 | 9 |
| Tennis | 22 | 11 |
| Baseball | 22 | 10 |
| Basketball | 22 | 11 |
| Civic Parks/Plaza | 21 | 12 |
| Softball | 20 | 13 |
| New Neighborhood Park | 20 | 12 |
| Soccer | 18 | 13 |
| Public Art | 18 | 15 |
| Community Pool | 17 | 15 |
| Water Access/Fishing/Boating | 17 | 11 |
| Greenways | 17 | 16 |
| Volleyball | 15 | 17 |
| Disc Golf | 15 | 18 |
| Skateboard/BMX | 14 | 17 |
| Natural Areas | 13 | 19 |
| Mountain Bikes | 12 | 20 |
| Dog Park | 9 | 23 |
| Overnight Camping | 9 | 23 |

Next, attendees were asked to list the 3 most important types of park improvements from a list of seven general categories. The attendees set the following priorities:

- Build new indoor recreation facility 23
- Improve existing parks and green space 23
- Build sports fields & other active recreation facilities 18
- Trails and passive recreation 13
- Build new aquatics facilities 7
- Purchase land to preserve open space 6

No one voted for “no improvements needed.”

Finally, everyone was asked how they felt park improvements should be funded. The following responses were given:

| | Yes | No |
|------------------|-----|----|
| Grants/Donations | 28 | 3 |
| User Fees | 24 | 9 |
| Bonds | 18 | 15 |
| Higher Taxes | 8 | 24 |

Following the voting on specific questions, the meeting was opened up for comments and questions. Over half those in attendance offered comments. Comments included:

- Several people stood and made detailed presentations in support of the plan for the Intergenerational Community Center that has been developed by HOPE (Helping Organize People Effectively). HOPE has been working with the Lawrence Group to develop a vision plan for a multi-functional building that will include space for youth and adults. A space that will provide opportunities for indoor recreational activities including fitness, after school programs, adult day care, crafts, library, and indoor pool/spa, and many other activities. The plan does not include a gymnasium. The center is to be constructed uptown in the Depot District. Much work and community support has been invested in this project. Everyone who spoke in favor of this project emphasized the need for an indoor facility.

- Several people spoke of the importance of developing an indoor recreation facility where seniors can interact with younger people; sharing and mentoring youth.
- Edgar Miller, representing TRIP (Tourism Recreation Investment Partnership) for Davidson County spoke to the importance of parks and recreation facilities in a community. Benefits include healthier lifestyles, community pride, quality of life/attracting new business, and economic impact through sports events, greenway trails, tourism, etc. TRIP has completed a Parks and Recreation and Tourism Master Plan for the County (see other sections in this Master Plan Report for a summary). Someone expressed the need for a fenced dog park and for getting dogs away from playgrounds and other recreation facilities.
- It was noted that Lexington currently has 2 swimming pools. Swimming pools are very expensive to operate. A city the size of Lexington's only needs one pool. Why not close one of the pools and convert it to a splash pad/sprayground?
- Several people spoke in favor of developing walking trails and greenways. They discussed the value of healthy lifestyles, preservation of open space and water quality. One gentleman suggested the City look at property behind the hospital for a park and greenway trail.
- Someone discussed frustration about the lack of available space for indoor walking; saying seniors need a safe, dry, warm place to walk every day.
- Several people talked about the importance of funding both the construction and operation of facilities, particularly large facilities like an indoor recreation center. Someone suggested the development of facilities will require a community wide approach. Finding corporate sponsors, volunteer labor, and unique partners like the National Guard.
- Someone expressed the need to provide facilities for the community's youth. Currently there is no public gymnasium in Lexington. The City should have a public gym; open to all citizens.

Following about an hour of open discussion, the meeting was adjourned by Bruce Davis. He thanked everyone for their input and encouraged them to come to the second public workshop in March.

Second Public Workshop

Wednesday April 2, 2013

Robbins Center

A second public workshop was held to discuss the development of the City's Parks and Recreation Facility Development Master Plan. The meeting was held in Robbins Center. Sixteen citizens participated in the workshop.

Recreation and Parks Director Bruce Davis opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance and thanking them for participating in the meeting. He explained the purpose of the Master Plan process and provided background on the importance of having the community's opinions of parks and recreation facility needs. Following this brief introduction, he introduced Derek Williams, Park Planner for Site Solutions, to present the preliminary recommendations.

Derek Williams began his remarks by describing the planning process and presenting findings from the inventory and public participation phases of the planning study.

Following this summary of findings, he presented a list of general recommendations of the plan. He stressed the recommendations were preliminary and presented to the public in hopes of receiving input for making the plan better. The following recommendations were discussed:

- The City should develop an indoor recreation facility with gymnasium. Options for the development include:
 - Expand Robbins Center.
 - Utilize an existing vacant building.
 - Partner with HOPE.
 - Revisit 2004 study for youth center.
- Improve existing parks
 - Renovate existing facilities.
 - Expand facilities in some parks.

- Improve ADA accessibility.
- Develop multi-purpose fields to expand soccer program and provide tournament opportunities.
 - Explore expansion of Finch Park.
 - Consider development of property adjacent to Water Treatment Facility.
- Consider removing the swimming pool in Washington Park and develop a sprayground.
- Work with Davidson County to develop greenway connecting Lake Thom-A-Lex, Finch Park and the uptown area.
- Develop small “walk to” parks in under served neighborhoods.

PRELIMINARY BUDGET*

| Capital Improvement and Land Acquisition | 10 Year Total | 2013-2016 | 2017-2022 |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Existing Parks Renovation/Improvements | | | |
| Specific Renovations to Existing Parks | | | |
| Finch Park | \$1,750,000 | \$1,750,000 | |
| Multi-Purpose Fields | \$1,000,000 | | |
| Restroom/Concession Building | \$250,000 | | |
| Water Access (fishing docks) | \$150,000 | | |
| Infrastructure/ADA | \$150,000 | | |
| Playground | \$50,000 | | |
| Trail Improvements | \$150,000 | | |
| Neighborhood Park Improvements | \$500,000 | | \$500,000 |
| Mini Park Improvements | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |
| Planning & Design (10%) | \$250,000 | \$175,000 | \$75,000 |
| Renovation Total | \$2,750,000 | \$1,925,000 | \$825,000 |
| Land Acquisition | | | |
| Mini Park (1 acre at \$25,000) | \$25,000 | \$25,000 | |
| Mini Park (1 acre at \$25,000) | \$25,000 | \$25,000 | |
| Land Acquisition Total | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | \$0 |
| Park Development | | | |
| Mini Park | | | |
| Mini Park | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |
| Mini Park | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |
| Planning and Design (10%) | \$50,000 | \$0 | \$50,000 |
| Park Development Total | \$550,000 | \$0 | \$550,000 |
| Special Use Facilities | | | |
| Indoor Recreation Facility/Gymnasium | \$2,500,000 | \$2,500,000 | |
| Sprayground | \$500,000 | \$500,000 | |
| Greenway Trail/with Davidson County | \$1,000,000 | | \$1,000,000 |
| Skateboard Park | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |
| Planning & Design (10%) | \$425,000 | \$300,000 | \$125,000 |
| Special Use Facilities Total | \$4,675,000 | \$3,300,000 | \$1,375,000 |
| Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost | \$8,025,000 | \$5,275,000 | \$2,750,000 |

*Please note this Capital Improvement Plan is based on the preliminary plan. A final budget has since been formulated, see Action Plan Implementation: 5-13.



Two public workshops were conducted to gain feedback from the citizens

Based on these general recommendation, an order of magnitude cost has been developed for capital improvements. The following Capital Improvement Plan based on the draft plan was presented:

Following the presentation on recommendations and capital cost, the meeting was opened for discussion and comment. The following suggestions/comments were made by participants:

- Several people spoke in favor of developing an indoor recreation center with gymnasium. Overall, it seemed that everyone in attendance felt this was an important community need and should be a priority.
- Several people discussed the recommendation on developing a sprayground at Washington Park. One attendee noted she had lived in a community that had spraygrounds and they were very popular with children and adults. One gentleman suggested that spraygrounds be considered in locations other than Washington Park. Most everyone felt spraygrounds would be heavily used.
- Several people asked questions about greenways. One participant expressed a concern over sediment and erosion control issues with constructing trails in close proximity to creeks.

Another participant questioned the recreational value of a linear walking trail.

- Several participants spoke in support of developing an outdoor performance area. Most everyone felt the best location for this type of venue would be in the uptown area. Several people mentioned the area around the Smith Civic Center. Everyone felt an outside performance area would be well suited for the Depot District.
- One participant suggested the plan include provisions for Pétanque; a bowling court game similar to Bocce Ball. It can be played inside or outside and is a growing sport.
- Someone suggested the reuse of one of the City's abandoned buildings for the indoor recreation facility would be a cheaper way of developing a facility and would help eliminate an eye sore. The K&M Wholesale building was mentioned as a potential building to reuse.

Before closing the meeting, participants were asked if they felt the recommendations that were presented reflected the needs of the community and seemed to be a valid approach to meeting citizens' recreational needs. Everyone in attendance felt the plan was moving in the right direction.

The meeting was adjourned around 7:30 p.m.

Recreation and Parks Staff Interviews

In an effort to better understand the staff's perspective on the city's parks and recreational needs, key members of the recreation and parks staff were interviewed. Tammy Curry, Community Recreation Specialist and Kyle Swicegood, Facilities Supervisor, were interviewed. The interview was an open ended discussion that followed a list of questions focused on existing park conditions, park use, and potential gaps in service.

1. Which parks do you think are the most used?

Finch Park is the city's most used park. Radcliffe Park (pool and day camp) is also heavily used. The

basketball courts at Washington and Fourth Street Parks are heavily used. Grimes Park walking trail and Pickett School Park are also heavily used.

2. Which parks are the least used?

Cecil Street, Holt Street, and several of the city's smaller parks.

3. Overall how would you rate the condition of existing parks and facilities?

The condition of the parks varies considerably, but overall the city's parks are in average condition. Large, more used parks are in better condition. Smaller, unused parks are in worse shape.

It should be noted that the City's Recreation and Parks Department does not maintain the parks. The City's Public Grounds Department maintains its parks.

4. What factors do you feel attribute to the current condition of Lexington parks?

The current economic conditions limit the City's general operating funds and in turn limit funding for park maintenance and improvements. Like many departments throughout North Carolina, the City is forced to do more with less funding.

5. Are there facilities that are not currently available within the city's park system that should be offered?

The City Recreation and Parks Department is very limited in its ability to offer indoor recreation and programs because the only indoor facility is the Robbins Center. The Robbins Center only provides two rooms for recreation programming. A new recreation center with gymnasium would greatly expand programming opportunities. A facility that provided a kitchen and multi-purpose room would provide opportunities for special events (receptions, family reunions, etc.).

Currently the city offers only limited multi-purpose

fields. Development of additional multi-purpose fields would provide opportunities for soccer, lacrosse, and football.

6. Are there facilities currently being provided in Lexington's system that are over used and should be expanded?

There is a need for more picnic shelters; especially large shelters.

There is a need for more multi-purpose fields.

Most basketball courts are heavily used.

7. Are there facilities or parks that are underutilized?

Several of the city's smaller parks are not used.

The city's swimming pools are not heavily used. One pool could serve the city's need for aquatics. A splash pad would receive more use than the swimming pools.

8. What recommendations would you like to see come from this report?

The biggest need is indoor programming space. The city should have an indoor recreation facility and not be dependent of other agencies (schools, YMCA, etc.) for indoor recreation. An indoor facility should provide areas for the following programs:

- Crafts
- Meeting space with folding walls to increase the size of the room for large banquets, meetings or conventions
- Kitchen for cooking classes and banquets
- Fitness room with mirrors, lockers and showers (exercise) located beside weight room
- Weight room with lockers and showers
- Computer room for after school educational programs
- Child care room with dedicated playground area

- Movie room (for summer camps)
- Kiosk (ex: local hospital has health care information, recreation department registration, Fire Department, Police, Community and Non-profit Organizations)
- Indoor water slides and sprays
- Multipurpose gymnasium with two basketball courts with a second level walking trail
- Extreme room with rock climbing wall, simulated equipment such as skiing, driving, golfing, etc.
- Game room
- Indoor play structures
- Youth game room (computer gaming stations)
- Adult billiards

In addition to the need for an indoor recreation facility, the following improvements to Finch Park are needed:

- Add two additional entrances to the park that are aesthetically pleasing, maybe rock entry way with nice landscaping
- Update and widen the current entrance to the park
- Swimming pool with waterslides and sprayground
- Beach volleyball, disc golf, horseshoes and corn hole areas
- Additional fishing piers around the lake
- More restrooms at different areas of the park
- Modern and larger concession stand
- Modern shelters small and large
- Amphitheater area for outdoor movies and concerts during the summer
- Another large play structure in a different area of the park
- A large gazebo area for wedding with rustic wooden seats made from trees cut down to improve park (near the lake)
- In-line skating rink
- Skate park area
- Another basketball court area for multiple games



Finch Park is a popular park for families

Section Three

Recreation Standards & Needs Assessment

INTRODUCTION

This section contains the analysis and assessment on which the recommendations of this Parks and Recreation Facility Development Master Plan is based. It begins with a brief review of previous planning efforts conducted by the City, and how the documents developed from these studies have shaped the current system. Next, we review how other communities are working to provide park and recreation facilities to their constituents, and national and state trends in park and recreation preferences. This review of previous planning studies and similar agencies is followed by a description of the park types that typically make up a park system. Using these park types as a backdrop, standards from the City's 1986 Master Plan are reviewed and, where appropriate, revised. The new standards are then used as a basis for establishing a park and recreation facility needs assessment for the City.

It should be noted that the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), in its 1995 report "Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines", determined there are no "national standards" for park development. Instead, the latest NRPA study recommends that each community is unique, and that standards reflecting the local "uniqueness" should be established.

This study looks at two types of development standards. The first analysis looks at total acreage of parkland within the system and how this acreage is broken into park types. From this study it is possible to see how Lexington's existing parks compare with other communities, both in overall park acreage and park types within this overall acreage.

The second analysis looks at recreation activities and the facilities required to program these activities. By establishing a population-based standard for various recreation activities, this study establishes the type and quantity of facilities the Department should develop in the future.

The design standards used in this study were derived from citizen input and input from the Recreation and Parks Department staff. The development of these standards is perhaps the most important step in this planning process.



Recent improvements at Finch Park include new picnic shelters

PREVIOUS PARK PLANNING EFFORTS

The City of Lexington has a long history of providing park and recreation facilities and programs to its citizens. Likewise, the City has continuously made an effort to review and evaluate its programs and services to ensure they are meeting citizen's needs. The City's first Recreation Facility Plan was developed in the 1960's by Charles Scott.

This early plan guided much of the City's park development in the late sixties and through the seventies; a time when many of the City's parks were constructed. In 1987 a more detailed plan for the City's parks was developed.

Master Plan for Parks and Recreation July 1987

Gardner Gidley & Associates

A second Master Plan for parks and recreation was developed in the late eighties. This plan utilized public input and guidelines established by the National Recreation and Parks Association to establish standards for recreation facility development (see Table 3A-Facilities (FAC) for specific standards). The 1987 Plan identified the need to renovate existing recreation areas and to provide adequate indoor recreation space as the most "apparent need." Utilizing these standards, the 1987 master plan made the following recommendations for facility improvements and expansion:

- Invest over \$1 million (1987 dollars) to renovate the majority of the City's existing facilities.
- Invest almost \$250,000 (1987 dollars) in renovations to the Armory property to provide an indoor recreation facility. An alternate recommendation was to add a gymnasium to Robbins Center.
- Build a new neighborhood park in the southern portion of the City.

In summary, the 1987 plan provided a long list of needed park improvements and highlighted the need for an indoor recreation facility. With the exception of the underserved area in the southern portion of the City, the planning effort report did not recommend major park acquisitions.

1996 Evaluation Study Parks and Recreation Department NCSU Recreation Resource Services

In 1996, the City sought input on parks and recreation facilities and programs from the Recreation Resource Services at North Carolina State University. Through this process, a team of

professionals from the parks and recreation field visited the City's parks and recreation facilities, reviewed the department's programs and policies, and made recommendations on strengths and weaknesses.

The report included the following facility recommendations:

- The report identified a need for a public indoor recreation facility, and suggested the City "provide in conjunction with the YMCA, programming that meets the indoor recreation needs while allowing all citizens access to these programs, even if they are not members of the YMCA".
- Improve Radcliff Park and McCarn ball field.
- Improve seating and support facilities at Holt-Moffitt Field.
- Make beautification improvements to Robbins Center
- Improve Finch Park.
- Develop more definitive joint use agreements with Lexington City Schools at Dunbar and Eanes Schools. If agreements were reached, improvements were recommended at both schools.
- Evaluate each of the City's mini parks. Parks that are used should be renovated. Underutilized parks should be closed and the property sold.
- Improve the Pickett School site.
- Develop a master plan for Grimes Park.
- Renovate Washington Park.



The 1996 Evaluation Study recommended improvements to Holt-Moffitt Field

In addition to the recommendations on facility improvements, the evaluation study made recommendations on programs and operation. These recommendations included the following:

- The department should develop a long range comprehensive recreation program plan (at least two years) which includes implementation procedures and a priority listing of recreation programs which should be periodically reviewed and updated.
- The department should actively pursue and develop collaborative relationships or partnerships with non-profit and private organizations and with Davidson County public agencies in order to provide adequate level of programming to meet the growing recreation and leisure needs of the city.
- The department should demonstrate a commitment to provide quality recreation and leisure services to meet the needs of its diverse constituency.
- The department should expand on the variety, schedules and location of program opportunities offered to develop, maintain and improve leisure knowledge, skills and abilities of the populations served.
- The department should provide its constituency with easy access to up to date information necessary for participation in its parks, recreation and leisure programs.
- The department should allocate resources for professional training and development of recreation and parks staff necessary for effective and efficient program development, marketing implementation and evaluation.

2005 Youth Recreation Center Master Plan

In 2005 the City initiated a master plan study to identify program needs for a Youth Recreation Center and develop recommendations for meeting those needs. The planning study utilized a youth survey and public meeting to determine community needs for the facility. The final recommendation called for a 27,188 sf building that included gymnasium with basketball court, extreme room (climbing wall and skateboarding), multi-purpose

rooms, study areas, and game rooms. The building also included space for the administrative offices of the Recreation and Parks Department.

The projected cost of the facility was just under \$5 million. The master plan report suggested funding come from:

- 2006 Bond Referendum
- PARTF Funding
- Fundraising
- Corporate Donations

Following considerable public debate on the initiative, no public action was taken.

Davidson County Parks and Recreation and Tourism Development Master Plan 2005

In 2005 a countywide master plan was developed for Parks, Recreation and Tourism. The planning processes included representatives from the County, the Town of Denton, and the cities of Thomasville, and Lexington. Funding for the planning study came from Davidson County, the local Chambers of Commerce, Lexington Tourism, and Davidson County Horsemen's Association. The plan was developed to provide recommendations for strategic recreation and tourism investments aimed at creating economic development and quality of life opportunities.

Several of the recommendations found in the plan relate directly to the parks and recreation facilities of Lexington. One of the primary recommendations of the plan was the development of a countywide greenway trail that would connect Lake Thom-A-Lex, City Lake, Finch Park, uptown Lexington and the Thomasville Greenway System.

National and State Studies on Outdoor Recreation Demand

Surveys designed to determine the demand for outdoor recreation have been conducted on the Federal level by the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, the State of North Carolina, and various other organizations and associations.

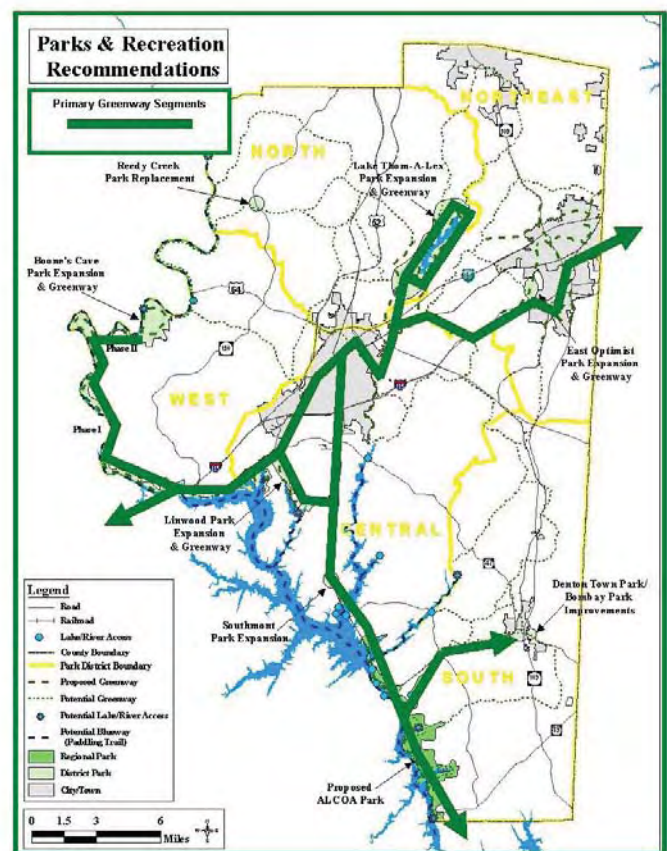
Findings from these studies can be found in Appendix 3: National and State Studies on Outdoor Recreation Demand.

Benchmarking Indoor Recreation Facilities

One aspect of this master planning process is to review other communities of Lexington's size to determine what standards and facilities they use to meet the recreational needs of their service population. An assessment of other communities indicates that many municipalities with 20,000 - 30,000 (and less) population offer their citizens an indoor recreation facility with gymnasium.

The following municipalities provide indoor recreation centers with gymnasiums:

- Thomasville
- Statesville
- Archdale
- Mebane
- Lumberton
- Kernersville
- Burlington





Lexington has nineteen playgrounds in its park system

CLASSIFICATIONS FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND GREENWAYS

A well balanced park system is made up of several park types that range from very large regional parks (often encompassing hundreds of acres) to very small mini parks (sometimes less than one acre). The descriptions on the following pages define the parks that typically comprise a community's park system. Numerous agencies (federal, state, county, and municipal) play a role in providing this system. Looking at the entire system helps identify the roles of the various agencies.

The following park descriptions are based on park classifications outlined in the 1995 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) publication "Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines". They are not intended to serve as park standards, but instead are used as a framework for describing the components found in a park system. Communities should structure their park types based on individual community needs. Table 3A-Park Acreage (PA) and Table 3B-Park Acreage (PA) reflect the standards for development that are recommended for the City of Lexington. The recommended standards vary slightly from NRPA guidelines listed on the following pages.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are typically very large sites, encompassing unique qualities that exemplify the natural features, diverse land formations, and the variety of vegetation and wildlife found in the region. Examples of the types of facilities provided in a regional park include environmental centers, camping, nature trails, observation decks, and picnic areas. Open fields for non-structured activities, such as frisbee throwing or kite flying, are also generally found in these parks.

Land chosen for future preserves or the expansion of existing sites should contain the previously mentioned characteristics accompanied with natural water features such as beach areas, rivers, and creeks. The majority of the site should be reserved for passive recreation, with the remaining acreage used for active recreation.

NRPA's guidelines for developing regional parks are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Service Area: | Typically serve the entire county |
| Acreage/Population Ratio: | 10 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Typical Size: | Sufficient area to encompass the resources to be preserved and managed. Typically a minimum of 200 acres; up to 1,000 acres. |

Typical Facilities:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Environmental Center | Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter) |
| Equestrian Center | Restrooms/Vending |
| Primitive Camping | Beach |
| Group Camping | Swimming |
| Recreational Vehicles Camping | Boating |
| Nature Trails | Fishing Piers/Boat Docks |
| Observation Deck | Parking |
| Picnic Shelters with Grills | Caretaker's House |

Development of **regional parks** typically falls within the responsibility of federal, state and/or county agencies.



Typical Regional Park 200 + Acres

District Parks and Sports Complexes

Sports complexes function as the major source of active recreation in many communities. Activities are similar to those found in community parks, but are developed to support tournament level competition. Passive recreation opportunities are usually limited, but may be found in undisturbed areas, often within surrounding buffers.

Sites for sports complexes should be relatively flat to minimize the need for excessive grading. Since much of the land may be developed for athletic fields, sites without significant vegetation or natural features are acceptable, and in some cases may be preferred. Sites should be reasonably accessible from major thoroughfares. Direct access to residential areas should be limited. Buffers should be provided adjacent to residential areas.

Listed below are NRPA's guidelines for developing sports complexes:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Service Area: | Typically serve the entire community |
| Acreage/Population Ratio: | 2.0 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Typical Size: | 40 acres minimum, 80-150 acres optimal |

Typical Facilities:

| | |
|---|---|
| Playground | Picnic Shelter with Grills |
| Basketball Courts | Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter) |
| Tennis Courts (lighted) | Nature Trail |
| Tournament Level Tennis Facilities | Benches or Bench Swings |
| Volleyball Courts | Restroom/Concessions |
| Multi-purpose Fields | Parking |
| Tournament Level Soccer Fields | Service Yard |
| Tournament Level Baseball/Softball Fields | |

Alternate Facilities:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Recreation Center | Amphitheater |
| Tennis Center | Observation Decks |
| Running Track | |

Development of **district parks and sports complexes** typically falls within the responsibility of county or municipal agencies.



Typical Sports Complex 80-150 Acres

Community Parks

Community parks provide for the recreation needs of several neighborhoods or large sections of the community. A range of facilities is typically provided and may support tournament competition for athletic and league sports or passive recreation. These parks also present opportunities for nontraditional types of recreation. Fifty percent of community park sites should be developed for passive recreation. These relatively undisturbed areas may serve as buffers around the park and/or act as buffers between active facilities.

Community park sites should have varying topography and vegetation. Forested areas should have a variety of tree species. Cleared areas should be present for siting active recreational facilities. One or more natural water feature(s), such as a lake, river, or creek, are desirable. Parkland should be contiguous and strategically located in order to be accessible to all users within the neighborhoods it serves.

Listed below are NRPA’s guidelines for developing community parks:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Service Area: | .5 - 3 mile radius |
| Acreage/Population Ratio: | 3 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Typical Size: | 30-50 acres |
| Typical Facilities: | |
| Recreation Center | Picnic Tables with Grills |
| Basketball Courts | Benches or Bench Swings |
| Tennis Court (lighted) | Nature Trails |
| Baseball/Softball Fields (lighted) | Restroom/Concessions |
| Multipurpose Fields | Parking |
| Soccer Fields (lighted) | Playgrounds |
| Swimming Pool | Volleyball Courts |
| Amphitheater | Disc Golf |
| Observations Decks | Lakes |
| Picnic Shelters | Paddle Boat/Canoe Harbor |
| Picnic Shelters with Grills | Fishing Piers/Boat Docks |

Specialty facilities may be added to or substituted for other facilities depending on community need or special site characteristics.

Development of **community parks** may fall within the responsibility of municipality or county agencies.



Typical Community Park 30 - 50 Acres

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide the basic unit of most park systems. These parks are usually located within walking distance of the area serviced and provide a variety of activities of interest to all age groups. While their small size requires intense development, fifty percent of each site should remain undisturbed, if possible, to serve as a buffer between the park and adjacent land users.

The NRPA guidelines for neighborhood park development are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Service Area: | .25 to .75 mile radius to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding populations |
| Acreage/Population Ratio: | 1.5 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Typical Size: | 5-20 acres |
| Typical Facilities: | |
| Playground | Picnic Shelters with Grills |
| Court Games | Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter) |
| Informal Play Field | Benches or Bench Swings |
| Volleyball | 50% of Site to Remain Undeveloped |
| Trails/Walkways | Parking (7-10 spaces) |

Neighborhood parks are typically developed by municipalities.



Typical Neighborhood Park 5 - 10 Acres

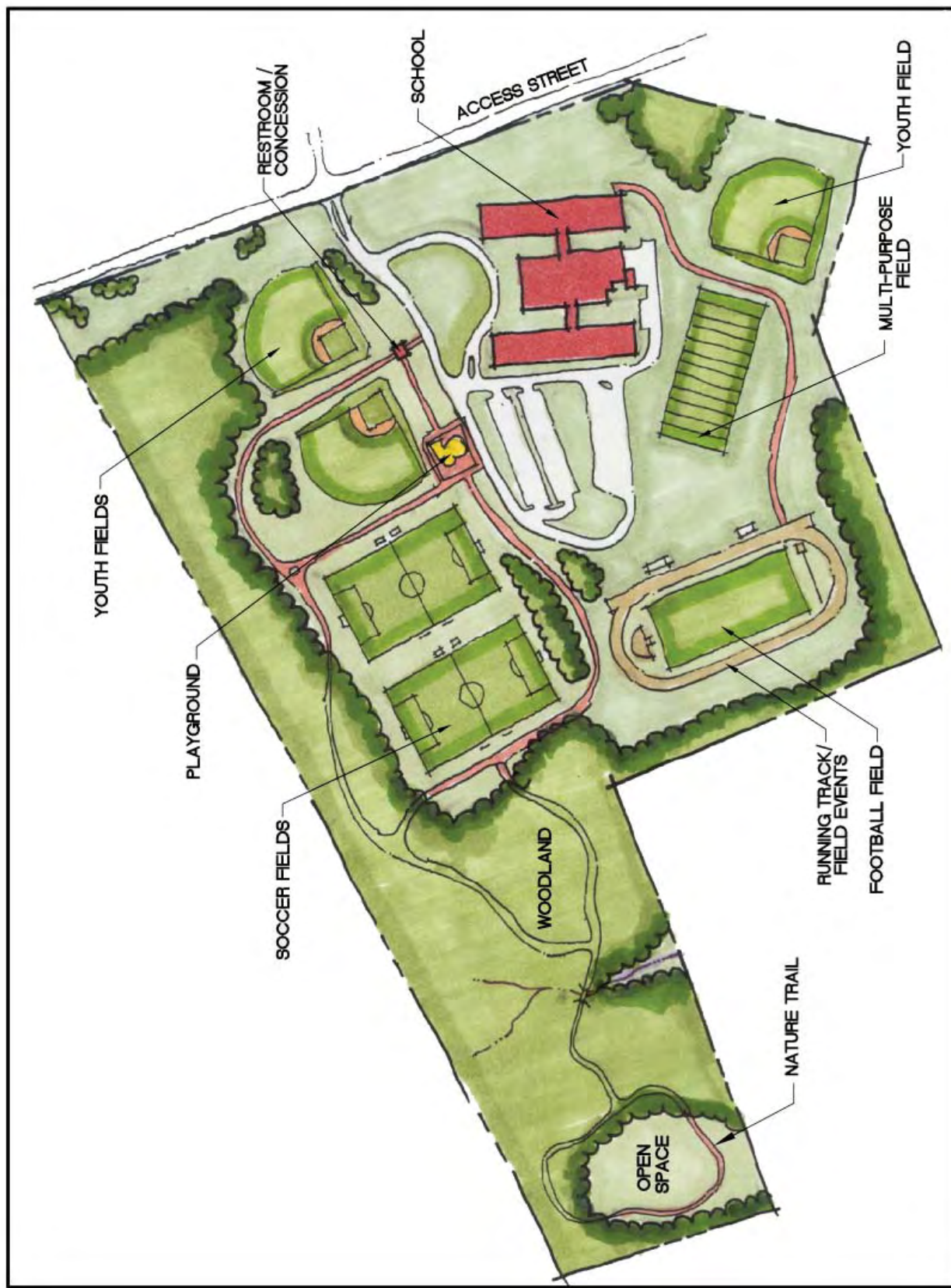
School Parks

Joint use is a mechanism that public agencies use to maximize resources. Through joint use, both the school system and the recreation and parks department benefit from shared use of facilities and valuable land resources. School park facilities typically go beyond the simple joint use of school facilities. The recreation and parks agency will become a partner in the development of a school site and fund recreational facilities beyond those typically built with a stand-alone school. These facilities may be indoor spaces (gymnasiums, classrooms, meeting rooms, etc.) or outdoor recreation facilities (ballfields, playgrounds, picnic shelters, etc.). The cost of developing and operating these additional facilities is minimized when constructing them in partnership with school development. Savings are also found in shared infrastructure (parking, restrooms, etc.) and shared maintenance and operational cost.

The school park concept maximizes the joint use objective and provides a planned facility that maximizes public funds. The school park concept typically varies depending on the school. Elementary and middle schools provide the ideal setting for a neighborhood park, while middle and high schools follow the function of a community park or sports complex. Access to school sports facilities at high schools and middle schools can be difficult based on team sports needs. This concept only works if there is a mutually agreed upon joint use agreement to define roles, responsibilities, and use of facilities.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Service Area: | Varies depending on school type and park type |
| Desirable Size: | Varies depending on school type and park type |
| Typical Facilities: | Varies depending on school type and park type |

Development of **school parks** usually fall within the responsibility of municipalities, county agencies, or school districts.



± 50 Acres

Typical School Park

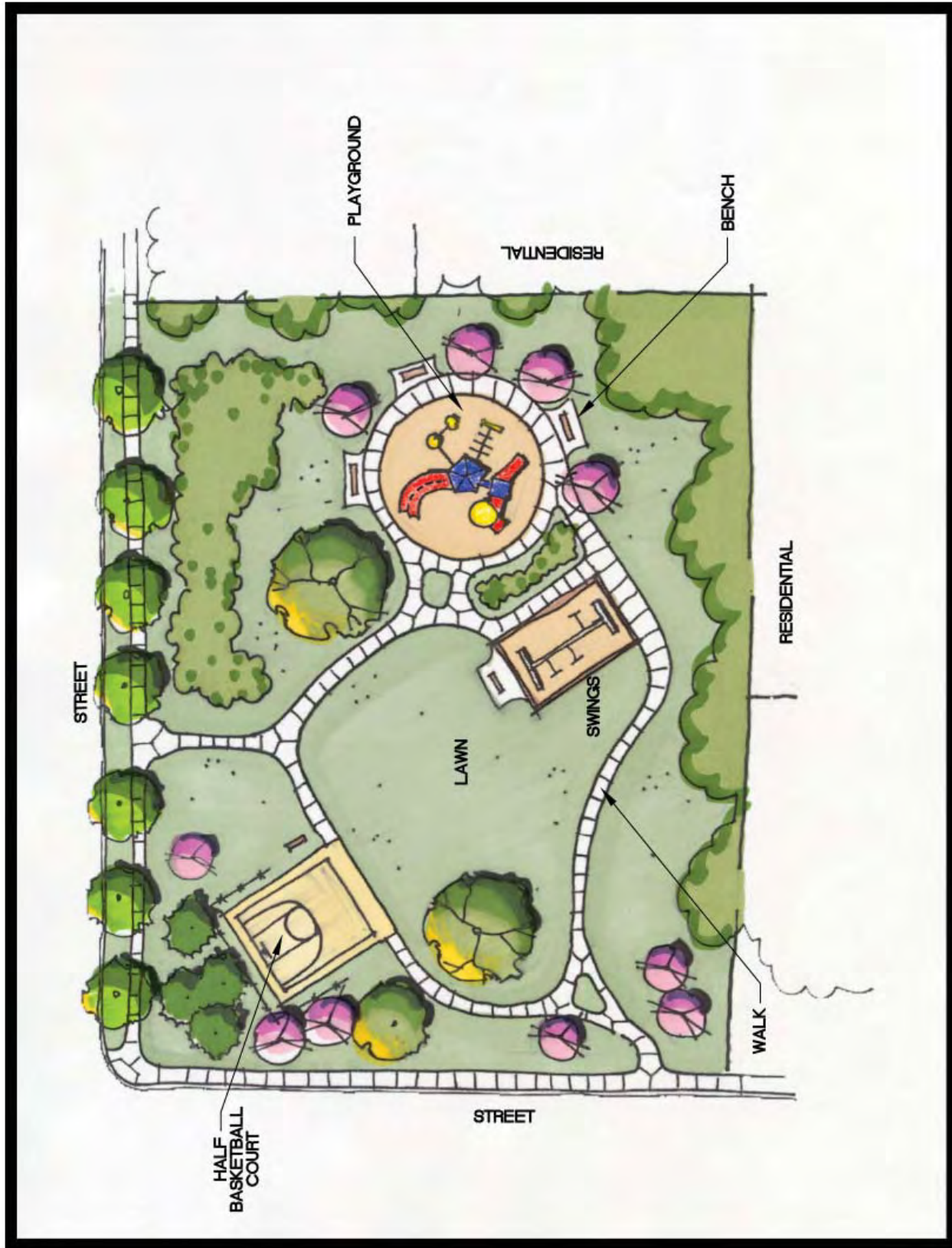
Mini Parks

Mini parks are the smallest park classification. These parks are located within walking distance of the area serviced, and they provide limited recreational needs. The small amount of land associated with mini parks usually results in intense development with little to no buffer between the park and adjacent properties.

NRPA's guidelines for mini park development are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Service Area: | .25 mile radius to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding populations |
| Acreage/Population Ratio: | .25 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Typical Size: | .25 - 1 acres |
| Typical Facilities: | |
| Playground | Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter) |
| ½ Basketball Courts | Benches or Bench Swings |
| Open Play Area | Landscaped Public Use Area |

Mini parks are typically developed by municipalities.



Typical Mini Park

.25 - 1 Acres

Greenway Trails

Greenways provide an important component of the overall park system. They:

- Serve as alternative non-motorized transportation facilities.
- Provide links between parks, schools, neighborhoods, and commercial areas.
- Emphasize harmony with the natural environment.
- Provide safe pedestrian movement.
- Provide resource based outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Enhance adjacent property values.
- Provide linear parks and open spaces.

Greenways are very similar to natural resource sites; the primary difference is the emphasis on pedestrian trails found in the greenway system.

Desirable Size: Greenways form corridors that vary considerably in length and width.
A 50' width is generally considered a minimum.



While Lexington does not currently have a greenway trail, many of its parks have walking trails

STANDARDS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The first step in developing a recreation and park needs assessment is to establish standards for park and facility development. Tables 3A-Park Acreage (PA) on page 3-26 and 3A-Facilities (FAC) on page 3-27 provide an overview of standards used for both park acreage (PA) and facilities (FAC). Each of these tables provide standards used by other North Carolina municipalities in establishing park and recreation needs. These tables also include the standards that were adopted by Lexington as part of their 1987 Comprehensive Plan.

A review of the standards indicates that while the standards adopted by the City in 1987 had slight variations from other published standards, the 1987 standards had many similarities with other communities across North Carolina.

Closer review of Tables 3A-Park Acreage (PA) and 3A-Facilities (FAC) also indicates that based on staff and consultant review and input received from the public, some of the standards adopted in 1987 remain valid. However, a number of the standards have been revised in this document to more accurately reflect community demand.

The following review describes the rationale used to establish the new standards for developing park land and recreation facilities.

STANDARDS FOR PARK ACREAGE

The final column (in yellow) on Table 3A-Park Acreage (PA) identifies the standards to be used by the City as it develops its park system. The new standards reflect minor changes in park acreage standards from those used in 1987. These changes include:

Mini Parks

As noted in the park descriptions listed earlier in this section, mini parks are the smallest park type.

Typically, mini parks are less than one acre in size and provide limited recreation opportunities. Most frequently they include a small playground, benches, and picnic facilities. Occasionally they may also include a basketball court and/or a small green space. The City's most recently constructed mini park, Hillcrest Circle Park, provides a place for quiet contemplation and socializing.

Lexington currently has seven mini parks. Some of the City's mini parks are heavily used, while others are rarely used. Those park sites that are underutilized should be studied to determine why they are not used. Underutilized parks should be redesigned and updated to increase use. If the neighborhoods in which these underutilized parks have changed and there is not longer a need for the park, the City should remove existing facilities and consider selling the property.

A standard of .25 acres for every 1,000 people in the service population has been established for mini parks. Based on this standard, the City will need 4.75-5 acres of mini park in the next ten years. Currently the City has 4.2 acres of mini parks.

There are several neighborhoods within the city limits that are not served by a neighborhood or mini park. The City should consider development of mini parks in underserved neighborhoods.



Lexington currently has seven mini parks

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are large enough (5-20 acres) to offer a wider variety of recreational opportunities than mini parks. With a service radius of one mile, neighborhood parks are also easily accessible, often within walking or biking distance of users.

Neighborhood parks are the cornerstone of Lexington's park system. There are eleven existing neighborhood parks covering almost 65 acres. This neighborhood park acreage provides the citizens of Lexington with a park acreage ratio for neighborhood parks of approximately 3.5 acres of neighborhood park land for every 1,000 people. Compared with other North Carolina communities of similar size, this is a very healthy inventory of neighborhood parks. Based on the current number of neighborhood parks there does not appear to be a need for additional neighborhood parks.



Lexington currently has eleven neighborhood parks

It should be noted that while most of Lexington's neighborhood parks are in good condition, there are some parks which need to be upgraded. Likewise, several of the City's existing parks could be greatly improved by expanding facilities. These improvements will be discussed in greater detail in Section Four.

In addition to improvements to existing parks, there are also several neighborhoods that may be underserved by either a mini park or neighborhood park. As noted in the previous section on mini parks, the most economical means of serving these

underserved neighborhoods will be the expansion/development of mini parks in those areas.

Community Parks

Community parks are typically the "backbone" of municipal park systems. With an ideal size of 30-50 acres, these parks are large enough to provide both active and passive recreation. Lexington currently has one community park, Finch Park. Finch Park is perceived by most everyone in the City as the "Crown Jewel" of Lexington's parks. At 77 acres, Finch Park is large by community park standards and in many ways also serves the citizens of Lexington (and portions of Davidson County) as a district park.

Based on a park land/population ratio of 2.5 acres/1,000 population (the standard used in the City's 1987 Plan and currently used by many similar communities), citizens of Lexington have a need for approximately 47.5 acres of community park. Since community parks are typically in the 30-50 acre range, that would imply one community park meets citizen's needs for this park type. Finch Park meets this need.

While Finch Park meets the City's needs for community parks, there are facilities at the park that need to be improved and there are opportunities for expanding facilities to better serve users. With only one restroom, there are recreational facilities in the park that do not have adequate ADA accessibility to restrooms. Likewise, there are existing facilities in the park that are not adequately served with accessible parking.

In addition to ADA access and restroom improvements, Finch Park has the potential to offer a wide variety of recreational activities. A master plan should be developed for Finch Park to determine specific park needs. Utilizing the facility needs identified in this systemwide plan and incorporating input from the public through public workshops, the City will be able to develop a vision for the park that will enhance the public's use of this important community asset.

District Parks and Sports Complexes

District Parks, or Sports Complexes, are typically provided by county or large municipal agencies. These parks are larger than community parks and provide more opportunities for active recreation, including team sports, tournament play, and other forms of recreation that require more land.

The City of Lexington does not have a district park in its park system; although as noted in the previous paragraph on community parks, Finch Park serves as both a community and a district park.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are the largest park type. Usually they are passive in nature and often have been established to protect natural features or environmentally sensitive areas. These are “drive to” parks, and are not necessarily located in the jurisdictional areas of the people they serve.

Old City Lake Park has the potential to serve as a regional park for Lexington and Davidson County. The former reservoir is an outstanding water resource and low impact recreation resource for the region. The City currently offers playground and picnic facilities below the dam. The development of trails and water access (docks, kayak launch, etc.) could greatly expand the use of this facility. The majority of park use is by county residents. The County should be encouraged to take the lead in any improvements made to Old City Lake Park since the majority of use comes from county residents.

The citizens of Lexington are also served by the water based recreation facilities at the Lake Thom-A-Lex Park. Picnic shelters, playground, fishing docks and boat ramp provide valuable recreational opportunities.

In addition to Old City Lake Park and Lake Thom-A-Lex, the citizens of Lexington are served by several North Carolina State Parks within a relatively short drive (1-2 hours). The State’s closest parks are Morrow Mountain and Mayo River State Parks.

With the opportunities at Old City Lake Park, Lake Thom-A-Lex Park, and the state parks, Lexington does not need to focus its park expansion efforts on regional parks.

Overview

An overall assessment of Lexington’s existing parks indicates there are no major deficiencies in the amount of park land or the balance of park types in its park system. The 400 acres of park land that is currently serving the community is largely meeting citizen’s park acreage needs. The only area of concern may be that some neighborhoods are underserved with smaller park types (mini or neighborhood). With that understanding the City should look for opportunities to provide smaller parks in a few areas.

STANDARDS FOR FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

Table 3A-Facilities (FAC) reflects standards of other similar size municipal agencies in North Carolina, and the standards for facility development that were used in the City’s 1987 Comprehensive Plan. The final column (in yellow) reflects the new standard for facility development to be used by the City as it plans its park system for the coming decade. The following changes and additions to the City’s standards have been made:

Youth Baseball 1 field/10,000 people

The standard for development for youth baseball has been reduced significantly. There was not a significant demand for this sport expressed in the written survey, public workshop or stakeholder interviews.

Softball 1 field/10,000 people

The standard for development for softball has been reduced significantly. There was not a significant demand for this sport expressed in the written survey, public workshop or stakeholder interviews.

Football **1 field/10,000 people**

The 1987 Master Plan did not include a standard for football, but the public expressed a desire for football in the written survey and at the public workshop.

Soccer **1 field/6,000 people**

The 2012 standard for field development remains at the standard used in 1987. Based on this standard there is a need for several soccer fields.



Multi-purpose fields provide opportunities for a variety of youth athletics

Outdoor Basketball Courts **1 court/2,500 people**

No standard was used in the 1987 Plan for basketball. The 1/2,500 standard used in this plan is reflective of the popularity of the sport in Lexington.

Tennis **1 court/2,000 people**

The standard for development for tennis courts has been changed to accurately reflect the standard used by other North Carolina communities.

Volleyball, Shuffleboard & Horseshoes **1 court/10,000 people**

Standard for these court games were not established with the 1987 Plan. A standard of one court per 10,000 implies there may be future need for these facilities, but there is not immediate demand.

Picnic Shelter **1 shelter/1,500 people**

No standard of development for picnic shelters was provided in the 1987 Plan. The standard for facility development established for this plan is comparable to other North Carolina communities and reflects the demand indicated in the survey and public workshop.

Playgrounds **1 shelter/1,000 people**

No standard of development for playgrounds was provided in the 1987 Plan. The standard for facility development established for this plan is comparable to other North Carolina communities and reflects the demand indicated in the survey and public workshop.

Hiking/Fitness/Jogging Trails **.4 miles/1,000 people**

No standard of development for trails was provided in the 1987 Plan. The standard for facility development established for this plan is comparable to other North Carolina communities and reflects the demand indicated in the survey and public workshop.

Recreation Center With Gymnasium **1 center/20,000 people**

This standard is similar to the standard utilized in the 1987 Plan (1 center/15-25,000 people). This standard indicates there is a need for a recreation center with gymnasium. See Section Four for more detailed assessment of the indoor recreation facility.

Recreation Center Without Gymnasium **1 center /20,000 people**

The standard for recreation center without a gymnasium has been revised from the 1987 standard. The standard has been reduced to indicate the City only needs one recreation center without a gymnasium. That need is currently being met by the Robbins Center.

Outdoor Pools **1 pool/20,000 people**

The new standard reflects a change that significantly reduces the need for outdoor swimming pools. The

1987 Plan proposed a significantly high standard for outdoor pools (1 pool/8-10,000 people). NRPA and the state of North Carolina have traditionally used a standard for outdoor pool development of 1 pool for every 20,000 people in the service population. Utilizing this standard of development would change the City's approach on the operation and maintenance expense of offering two pools.

Golf Course **1 municipal course/city**

The 1987 Plan did not provide a standard for municipal golf course development. The City currently provides the citizens with a quality municipal golf course.

Bicycling Routes **1 mile/1,000 people**

The 1987 Plan did not provide a standard for bike routes. Bicycling is a much more popular sport than it was in 1987. A standard of development for bicycling routes is included because of the importance of this recreational activity.

Disc Golf **1 course/20,000 people**

Skateboard Park **1 facility/20,000 people**

Dog Park **1 facility/20,000 people**

Community Garden **1 garden/20,000 people**

Each of these activities are relatively new and were not addressed in the 1987 Plan. Each of these activities have been mentioned in the public workshop and stakeholder interviews. A

standard has been established for each activity that indicates there is a need for the facility within the park system. Currently the need for a community garden is being met by the community garden at Robbins Park.

See Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations for more detailed description of recreation facility needs.

PARK NEEDS

Table 3B-Park Acreage (PA) illustrates the park acreage requirement for the City of Lexington's service area. The acreage requirement is based on the population ratio method (acres of park land per 1,000 population) established for each park. The current population for the City is approximately 19,000 and the 2022 projected population is 20,000 (see Section Two: The People of Lexington).

Based on the current and projected population, the City generally has adequate park land to serve its citizens. The only potential park need is several neighborhoods are not served well with mini parks or neighborhood parks. With this understanding, it is recommended the City consider the development of several mini parks in these underserved areas.

Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations defines the City's need for new parks in greater detail.

FACILITY NEEDS

Minimum standards for recreational facilities (i.e., ballfields, courts, picnic shelters, etc.) proposed for the Department were developed in accordance with industry guidelines established by NRPA, the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and from input gained during the public input process. These standards, identified in Table 3A-FAC Facility Standards, and discussed in greater detail in Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations, are the minimum recreation facility standards for the City.



Skateboard parks provide a facility for youth activities

Based on these standards, the number of public facilities needed in the park system through the planning period (2013 to 2022), are identified in Table 3B-Facilities (FAC), “Current/10 Year Facility Needs” (page 3-27) and summarized on the adjacent column.

The “Existing Facilities” column indicates the number of existing recreation facilities the City currently provides. The “2022 Need” column identifies the total number of additional facilities needed by 2022 (ten year need). The “Current Need” column further refines the City’s recreation facility needs by identifying the number of new facilities currently needed (this number is included in the “2022 Need” column).

As an example of how the needs assessment is presented; consider playgrounds. Currently the City has 19 existing playgrounds. Based on the Standards for Facility Development that have been recommended for the City (one playground for every 1,000 people in the service population), there is a current demand for 19 playgrounds ($19,000 \div 1,000 = 19$); therefore the City does not need to construct additional playgrounds (demand of 19 – 19 existing playgrounds) to meet the current demand. By 2022, with the increase in population, the demand will grow to 20 playgrounds ($20,000 \div 1,000 = 20$); therefore by 2022, the City will need to build 1 new playgrounds.

| | Existing Facilities | Current Need | 2022 Need |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Adult Baseball Fields | 1 | - | - |
| Youth Baseball Fields | 2 | - | - |
| Softball Fields | 2 | - | - |
| Football Fields | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Soccer Fields | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Basketball Courts | 17 | - | - |
| Tennis Courts | 15 | - | - |
| Volleyball Courts | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Horseshoe | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Shuffleboard Courts | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Playground | 19 | - | 1 |
| Picnic Shelters | 17 | - | - |
| Miles of Hiking/ | | | |
| Jogging Trails (miles) | 2.46 | 5.2 | 5.54 |
| Amphitheater | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Community Garden | 1 | - | - |
| Outdoor Swimming Pool | 2 | - | - |
| Rec. Center w/Gym | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Rec. Center w/out Gym | 1 | - | - |
| Dog Park | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Skate Park | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Disc Golf | 0 | 1 | 1 |

Table 3A-Park Acreage (PA)
City of Lexington
Standards for Acreage by Park Classification

Comparison of Standards

| Park Types | City of Archdale | Town of Statesville | Kernersville | Lexington Master Plan 1987 | Lexington 2013 Proposed Standards |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Mini Parks | <5 Acres/Park (.25 acres/1,000) | 1-2 Acres/Park (.5 acres/1,000) | NA | 2,500 SF – 1 Acre NA | 1-4 Acres/Park (.25 Acres/1,000) |
| Neighborhood Parks | 5-15 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/1,000) | 10-15 Acres/Park (2 acres/1,000) | 2-15 Acres/Park (2.0 acres/1,000) | 5-20 Acres/Park (2.5 acres/4,000) | 5-20 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/1,000) |
| Community Parks | 40-100 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/1,000) | 20-30 Acres/Park (2.5 acres/1,000) | 40-80 Acres/Park (4 Acres/1,000) | 10-40 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/1,000) | 40-80 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/1,000) |
| District Parks | NA | 200 Acres/Park (5/1,000) | 200-400 Acres/ Park (5 acres/1,000) | NA | NA |
| Regional Parks | 100-400 Acres/ Park (20 Acres/1,000) | 1,000 Acres/Park (10 acres/1,000) | +1,000 Acres/Park (10 Acres/1,000) | Open Space (5 Acres/1,000) | 100-400 Acres/Park (5 Acres/1,000) |

NA assumes County agency provides District Parks.

Table 3A-Facilities (FAC)
City of Lexington
Recreation Facilities Standards

Comparison of Standards

| | NRPA Guidelines | State Standard | City of Archdale | Town of Statesville | Kernersville | Lexington 1987 Standards | Lexington 2013 Standards |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Fields | | | | | | | |
| Adult Baseball | 1/20,000 | 1/15,000 | 1/15,000 | N/A | 1/20,000 | 1/12,000 | 1/20,000 |
| Youth Baseball | N/A | N/A | 1/5,000 | 1/8,000 | 1/2,500 | 1/3,000 | 1/10,000 |
| Softball | N/A | N/A | 1/5,000 | 1/8,000 | 1/2,500 | 1/6,000 | 1/10,000 |
| Football | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/10,000 | 1/8,000 | 1/2,500 | | 1/10,000 |
| Soccer | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/2,500 | 1/6,000 | 1/6,000 |
| Courts | | | | | | | |
| Basketball | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | | 1/2,500 |
| Tennis | 1/2,000 | 1/2,000 | 1/2,000 | 1/2,000 | 1/2,000 | 1/1,500 | 1/2,000 |
| Volleyball | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | | 1/10,000 |
| Shuffleboard | 1/2,000 | N/A | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | | 1/10,000 |
| Horseshoe | 1/5,000 | N/A | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/2,000 | | 1/10,000 |
| Outdoor Areas | | | | | | | |
| Picnic Shelter | 1/2,000 | N/A | 1/3,000 | 1/3,000 | 1/2,500 | | 1/1,500 |
| Playground Activities | N/A | 1/1,000 | 1/3,000 | 1/1,000 | 1/2,000 | | 1/1,000 |
| Trails | | | | | | | |
| Hiking/Fitness/Jogging | 1/region | .4 mile/1,000 | .4 mile/1,000 | .4 mile/1,000 | 1 mile/3,300 | | .4 mile/1,000 |
| Specialized | | | | | | | |
| Rec. Center w/Gym | 1/25,000 | N/A | 1/20,000 | 1/20,000 | 1/25,000 | 1/15-25,000 | 1/20,000 |
| Rec. Center w/out Gym | 1/10,000 | N/A | | | 1/10,000 | 1/3-10,000 | 1/20,000 |
| Outdoor Pool | 1/20,000 | 1/20,000 | 1/20,000 | 1/20,000 | 1/10,000 | 1/8-10,000 | 1/20,000 |
| Golf Course | 1/25,000 | 1/25,000 | 1/25,000 | 1/25,000 | 1/25,000 | | 1/community |
| Bicycling/Urban | 1 mile/2,000 | 1 mile/1,000 | 1 mile/1,000 | 1 mile/1,000 | 1 mile/2,000 | | 1 mile/1,000 |
| Amphitheatre | 1/20,000 | N/A | | | | | 1/10,000 |
| Disc Golf | N/A | N/A | | | | | 1/20,000 |
| Skateboard Park | N/A | N/A | | | | | 1/20,000 |
| Dog Park | N/A | N/A | | | | | 1/20,000 |
| Community Garden | N/A | N/A | | | | | 1/20,000 |

Table 3B-Park Acreage (PA)
City of Lexington
Park Sites and Acreage Needs Assessment

Current and 10 Year Needs

| Park Types | 2013 Existing Facilities | Standard for Development | Current Demand 19.000 | Current Need 19.000 | 2022 Demand 20.000 | 2022 Need 20.000 |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mini Parks | 7 Parks 4.2 acres | .5-1 Acres/Park (.25 Acres/1,000) | 8-9 Parks 4.75 Acres | 1 New Mini Park | 8-9 Parks 5 Acres | 2 New Mini Parks |
| Neighborhood Parks | 11 Parks ± 65 Acres | 5-20 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/1,000) | 8-10 Parks 47.5 Acres | Needs Met | 10-11 Parks 50 Acres | Needs Met |
| Community Parks | 1 Parks ± 77 Acres | 30-50 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/1,000) | 1 Park 47.5 Acres | Needs Met | 1 Park 50 Acres | Needs Met |
| District Parks | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| Regional Parks | 1 Park 198 Acres | 100-400 Acres/ Park (5 Acres/1,000) | 1 Park 95 Acres | Needs Met | 1 Park 100 Acres | Needs Met |

NA assumes County agency provides District Parks.

Table 3B-Facilities (FAC)
City of Lexington
Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment

Current and 10 Year Needs

| | 2013 Standard | Existing Facilities | Current Demand | Current Need | 2022 Demand | 2022 Need |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| Fields | | | | | | |
| Adult Baseball | 1/20,000 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Youth Baseball | 1/10,000 | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | - |
| Softball | 1/10,000 | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | - |
| Football | 1/10,000 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Soccer | 1/6,000 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Courts | | | | | | |
| Basketball (outdoor) | 1/2,500 | 17 | 8 | - | 8 | - |
| Tennis Court | 1/2,000 | 15 | 10 | - | 10 | - |
| Volleyball | 1/10,000 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Horseshoes | 1/10,000 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Shuffleboard | 1/10,000 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Outdoor Areas | | | | | | |
| Playgrounds | 1/1,000 | 19 | 19 | - | 20 | 1 |
| Picnic Shelter | 1/1,500 | 17 | 13 | - | 13 | - |
| Trails | | | | | | |
| Hiking/Fitness/Jogging | .4 miles/1,000 | 2.46 miles | 7.6 miles | 5.2 miles | 8 miles | 5.54 miles |
| Specialized | | | | | | |
| Amphitheater | 1/10,000 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Community Garden | 1/20,000 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Swimming Pool | 1/20,000 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - |
| Recreation Center w/ Gym | 1/20,000 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Recreation Center w/o Gym | 1/20,000 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Dog Park | 1/20,000 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Skate Park | 1/20,000 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Disc Golf | 1/20,000 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |



Finch Park Entrance

Section Four

Proposals & Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The City of Lexington has historically recognized the value of parks and recreational facilities. Finch Park, the City's flagship park was developed over 50 years ago. It was not the City's first park. Many of the City's parks are over 70 years old. Currently the City provides its citizens with almost 400 acres of park land and over 20 parks and special use facilities. As the Needs Assessment in Section Three indicates, these parks are meeting most outdoor recreational needs of the citizens.

Even with 400 acres of park land and 20 parks, there are several areas where improvements are needed. The most important need for the City is an indoor recreation facility. An indoor facility would meet a wide variety of program needs. There are also missed opportunities with regard to walking trails and greenway connections between parks. In addition to the lack of an indoor recreation facility, there are some neighborhoods that do not have immediate access to parks and there are deficiencies in some of the City's parks.

Identification of these recreational needs/opportunities come at a time when Lexington (like most communities in North Carolina) is attempting to grow out of the nation's worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Finding the revenue to improve its parks must be balanced with the reality of the current economic conditions; therefore, it will require a balanced Plan of Action that seeks partnerships with other community agencies.

Lexington is not alone in its mission to provide parks and recreational facilities to its citizens. There are a number of public and private agencies and organizations in the community that take part in that role.

Lexington City Schools offers its students a wide range of athletic facilities. Some of those facilities are currently being used by the City for non-school recreational purposes. While there is currently some joint use of facilities, the exploration and expansion of joint use opportunities would benefit taxpayers.

Davidson County offers programs and facilities through its Recreation and Parks Department. Several county parks (Linwood and Hamby Creek Trails) are relatively close to the citizens of Lexington. Lake Thom-A-Lex Park is actually on City property, but is operated by the County. In addition to existing facilities, the County's Parks and Recreation and Tourism Development Master Plan calls for a greenway connection between city and county parks.

Another major player with the mission of improving community health and quality of life is Lexington Memorial Hospital. The City should look for opportunities to partner with the hospital in the promotion of healthy lifestyles.



The YMCA offers a variety of recreational opportunities

Finally, the private sector plays an important role in providing recreational opportunities in the community. Historically, the YMCA has been a cornerstone of the community's indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities. The J. Smith Young YMCA is a community landmark and an integral part of the lives of many Lexington residents. In addition to the YMCA, a number of fitness clubs, neighborhood swim clubs, churches, and other private or semi-private organizations provide valuable recreation opportunities to the citizens of Lexington. The facilities and programs these private sector organizations provide should be considered as Lexington plans development of future facilities.

To determine specific park and recreation recommendations for Lexington, it is essential to clearly understand how the City will interface with the other recreational programs in the community. This cooperative effort will eliminate duplication of facilities and services. The proposals in this Master Plan are based on what each recreational provider is anticipated to offer through the ten year planning period (2013-2022).

State of North Carolina

Several state parks (Morrow Mountain State Park and Mayo River State Park) are within a relatively short drive of Lexington. It is anticipated that the State of North Carolina will continue to maintain and operate all state parks within the region. The City, along with other nearby government agencies, should express their interest to see these parks enhanced to their utmost potential. This may include the expansion of facilities and recreational opportunities. The State should continue to offer a variety of recreational facilities and programs on a regional basis. In addition, the State should be the provider of regional state parks that include opportunities for camping, fishing, biking, and special facilities of regional and statewide interest.

Davidson County

Davidson County, through its Department of Parks and Recreation, offers a variety of parks and recreation facilities throughout the county.

However, most of the County's park facilities are located in the northeastern and southern areas of the county. There are only limited developed County parks with a service radius in the Lexington area. Linwood Park is the closest county park to Lexington, but its facilities are limited to a baseball field, picnic shelter and short walking trail. The next closest county park, Hamby Creek is predominately passive trails.



Fishing is a popular activity at Lake Thom-A-Lex

In addition to these existing facilities, the County's park system Master Plan calls for a greenway trail from Lake Thom-A-Lex to Finch Park and the uptown area. This would be an excellent facility that would serve county residents, as well as citizens of Lexington.

Another potential project for collaboration with the County would be improvements to Old City Lake Park. This City owned reservoir provides a wonderful opportunity for fishing, hiking, and picnicking. Unfortunately, the value of this water resource is underutilized because of the lack of facilities at the park. The development of walking trails, fishing docks, and improved picnic facilities would greatly enhance this facility. Since the majority of lake use is by County residents, Davidson County should be encouraged to take the lead in any park improvements.

City and County recreation professionals should work together to minimize duplication and explore opportunities for joint development and use of facilities. An example could include the

coordinated development of the greenway trail system to connect city and county parks.

Surrounding Park and Recreation Agencies

The Lexington Recreation and Parks Department is not the only municipal recreation provider in the area. The City of Thomasville has a Parks and Recreation Department and offers park and recreation programs through both indoor and outdoor facilities. Across the Yadkin River, the City of Salisbury also provides municipal recreation facilities and parks. All park and recreation agencies operating within the region should meet annually to communicate with each other in an effort to minimize duplication and maximize cooperative planning.

Lexington City Schools Value of Joint Use Agreements – Parks, Recreation and Schools

The Recreation and Parks Department has a tradition of collaborating with other agencies and organizations in the delivery of quality leisure experiences and the development and management of parks and recreation areas and facilities. The City has partnered with Lexington City Schools to develop outdoor facilities (Pickett School Park and Charles England Park) that serve the needs of both the schools and citizens as public park facilities.

These cooperative efforts should be expanded through joint use agreements.

The justification for the creation of joint use agreements is based on the premise that the majority of costs for developing and operating schools and recreation facilities come from the same source, local taxpayers. The development of duplicate facilities by those entities could constitute a waste of public funds. A shortage of affordable land and rapidly increasing construction costs are reasons enough for encouraging the efficient use of land and tax revenue. Combining resources allows for greater potential in the development of school and recreation facilities that neither entity is likely to afford if pursued independently. Other potential

advantages of joint development and management include:

- The development of centralized public facilities usually requires less land than would be required if the schools and the parks department were to develop separate facilities. The creation of a Capital Facilities Review Committee for Parks and Recreation would be a very positive step in helping to assure the coordination and cost-effectiveness of any new facilities.
- Centralized locations for city services (including schools and parks) allows for the convenience of all citizens, particularly parents, by facilitating their children's participation in various education and recreation pursuits.
- Centralized school/park developments can eliminate the duplication of maintenance functions and result in overall cost savings.
- Many of the outdoor areas and facilities needed for schools are also necessary for park and recreation services. Partnering in the development and management of facilities minimizes the duplication of land acquisition and development needs and represents an efficient use of public resources.
- Joint developments are eligible for grants from the North Carolina Park and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF).
- School/Park partnerships encourage the development of positive after-school and weekend enrichment activities focused on the development of the "whole child". Seeking opportunities for collaboration on after school programs should be a priority for both the City and the school board.
- Park systems usually have the resources for developing and maintaining higher quality sports fields than can be found in most school systems.

Joint use agreements between local park and recreation agencies and school systems are very prevalent across the country. Examples of school/park and recreation joint use agreements in North Carolina can be found in Fayetteville/Cumberland County, High Point, and Greenville.



Pickett School Park is an example of joint use

Lexington Memorial Hospital

Lexington has an outstanding medical facility in Lexington Memorial Hospital. This facility provides residents of Lexington and the surrounding area with outstanding health care. Recent studies on obesity and healthy lifestyles have made it apparent that a community's health is linked to regular physical activity. Many of these activities are offered by the City's Recreation and Parks Department.

The Hospital and Recreation and Parks Department should continue to explore opportunities to work together to assist citizens in achieving a more active lifestyle.

CITY OF LEXINGTON PROPOSALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The City, through its Recreation and Parks Department, currently affords its citizens a variety of recreation opportunities with over twenty parks and recreational facilities. These parks provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation. The offerings of the Department are varied. There is a good balance between large parks (community) and the smaller "walk-to parks" (neighborhood and mini). The City also offers several stand alone recreation facilities in addition to the traditional park types.

Some of the City's parks are well designed and maintained, and are in relatively good condition. Several of the parks are older facilities and could be significantly improved (both in appearance and function) by redesign and/or renovation.

The City's existing parks provide a solid foundation of recreation facilities and green space, however, there are a number of areas where expansion and improvements are needed.

The Recreation and Parks Department must work with other agencies in the community to provide the park land and facilities that will be required. This collaborative effort should include working with the local school board, the county, and adjacent municipal departments to minimize duplication of facilities by developing and maintaining joint use agreements wherever possible.

Through the planning and public involvement process, the standards established in the 1987 Parks and Recreation Master Plan have been updated to reflect current community demand. These standards were defined in Section Three: Standards and Needs Assessment and identified in Table 3A- Park Acreage (PA) and Table 3A- Facilities (FAC).

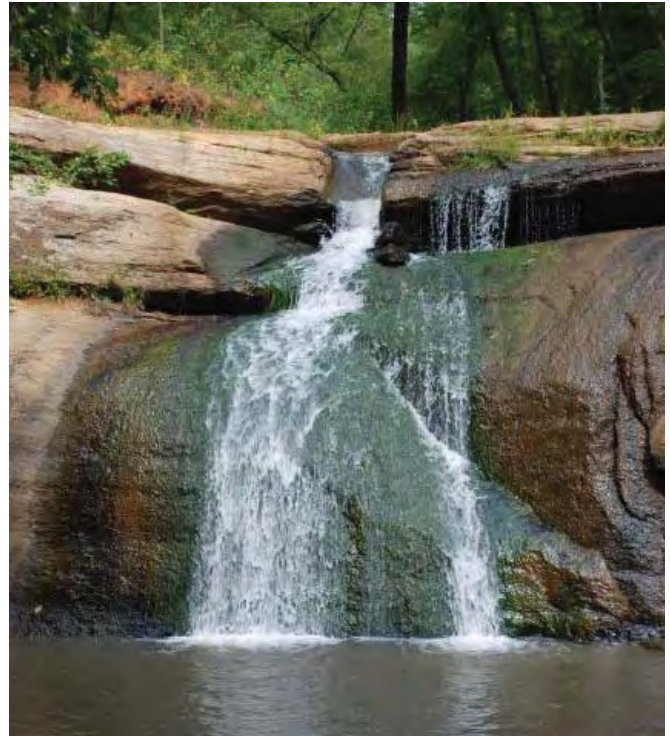
Utilizing the modified standards for development and applying them to the City's current and projected population, a needs assessment for both parks and recreation facilities was developed. The summary of this needs assessment is found in the tables at the end of Section Three.

While the tables provide "the numbers" of the needs assessment, this section will define the reasoning behind the numbers and a description of how the numbers are used to provide recommendations that will ultimately guide the Department in the coming decade.

We begin with a overview of the different park types found in the City's system, and how these parks will be developed in the future.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are typically large, passive oriented parks that highlight, utilize and protect a unique feature. These parks, as the name implies, serve people from across a region; therefore, most people have to travel to enjoy these park types. As noted in Section Three, regional parks are typically offered by national, state, or county agencies. Occasionally municipalities will provide a regional park.



Mayo River State Park provides passive recreation for citizens of Lexington

The City of Lexington has a unique public property at Old City Lake. The former reservoir offers a valuable water resource with opportunities for trails and water access. Currently park development is limited to two picnic shelters and a playground below the dam. The addition of walking trails, a canoe/kayak boat launch, and fishing dock could greatly expand the use of this facility. Likewise, connecting this site with the proposed County greenway would make an outstanding regional attraction. Any improvements made to Old City Lake Park should be made in conjunction with Davidson County. Much of the park's current use is by county residents.

In addition to Old City Lake Park, the State of North Carolina operates two state parks within easy driving distance of the citizens of Lexington. Morrow Mountain State Park and Mayo River State Park provide nature trails, camping and picnic facilities.

Old City Lake Park, in combination with Lake Thom-A-Lex Park and the area's state parks, provide adequate passive recreation and open space opportunities for the citizens of Lexington. Development of an additional regional park should not be a priority for the City.

District Park/Sports Complex

District Parks, or Sports Complexes, are another large park type often provided by county agencies or larger municipalities. These parks are typically in the 80 acre range, and provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities. The popularity of team sports, particularly youth team sports, has encouraged many communities to develop this park type with a focus on league and tournament play. These parks can provide economic benefits through sports tourism.

The development of this type facility often falls to the County agencies. Unfortunately none of the park facilities offered by the County close to Lexington qualify as district parks.

While it is unlikely the City will develop a new district park, it is possible that improvements and expansion of facilities at Finch Park could allow it to serve as both a community/district park. Many of the City's recreational needs (multipurpose fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, etc.) could be developed at Finch Park, making it a district park with a focus on athletics.

During the public input process, several people mentioned the need for expanding sports facilities that could meet local needs and provide economic impact through tournaments. **Expansion of facilities at Finch Park or development of property adjacent to the City's water treatment facility could meet the need for a sports complex.**

Community Parks

Community parks are an important component in most municipal park and recreation system. These parks are usually large enough (30-50 acres) to provide both valuable active recreation opportunities and preservation of undeveloped open space and passive recreation areas.

Lexington has one community park. Finch Park is the City's "Central Park". It provides a wide variety of active recreation (ball fields, playgrounds, etc.), family and low impact recreation (trails, picnicking, etc.), and open space. The park, which was constructed in the 1970's has continuously been improved and expanded.



Concession/restroom building at Finch Park should be improved

Finch Park has adequate size and facilities to meet the community park needs of the City. There is not a need for an additional community park. With that said, there are improvements that could be made to the park that could expand its use and provide additional recreational opportunities. Some of the ideas that have been discussed in stakeholder interviews and staff discussions include:

- Conducting an ADA accessibility audit and making recommended improvements
- Adding restrooms in playground area and lake area
- Adding fishing piers and water access
- Improving the concession area
- Expanding the amphitheater or potentially developing a larger facility
- Adding picnic shelters
- Building multipurpose fields
- Adding a playground

A site specific master plan should be developed for Finch Park. Any proposal for park development should carefully consider any areas of the park that have development limitations. These areas include the lower areas of the park associated with Abbotts Creek or those portions of the site that contain steep slopes. Prior to making improvements, the planning process should include public workshops.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks play an important role in providing both active and passive recreation in most municipal park systems. These parks, usually in the 5 - 20 acre range, are large enough to include both active and passive recreation opportunities. Most community parks also serve as a neighborhood park to those citizens living within a mile radius.

Lexington has eleven neighborhood parks (Charles England School, Childers, Erlanger, Green Needles, Grimes, Jaycee, Myers, Pickett School, Radcliffe, Robbins, and Washington). These parks are located throughout the City's corporate limits, and provide relatively good coverage to most City neighborhoods.

Overall Lexington has very good neighborhood parks. For a city of $\pm 20,000$, eleven neighborhood parks covering ± 65 acres is an adequate number of neighborhood parks. In the few neighborhoods that may not be served by these smaller parks (Salem Park), the City may opt to develop mini parks to serve those areas.

While overall the City's neighborhood parks are in good condition, there are some parks that need improvements. Likewise, neighborhood parks would be a logical location for some of the individual outdoor recreational facility needs listed in this report.

Improvements to be considered in the City's existing neighborhood parks include:

- An ADA accessibility audit should be conducted at all parks. Improvements should be made accordingly.

- Renovate the playground in Childers Park. Consider locating a dog park in this park.
- Resurface tennis courts in Grimes Park. Consider additional facilities to expand use.
- Paint and fix up existing equipment and shelters at Jaycee Park.
- Add facilities (playground, shelters, etc.) at Myers Park.
- Expand facilities at Radcliffe Park.
- Renovate basketball courts in Washington Park. Remove bouncy animals for safety reasons. Reuse area currently covered by concrete pad.

The City should conduct public workshops prior to making improvements to any of its existing parks to ensure the citizens have a voice in the improvements.

Mini Parks

Mini parks are the smallest of the park types. These parks typically are less than an acre and provide a limited range of activities (playground, picnic shelter, benches, etc.). The City currently has seven mini parks (Cecil Street, East 3rd Street, Fourth Street, Hillcrest Circle, Holt Street, Smith Avenue, and Tussey Street).



Hillcrest Circle Park provides areas for quiet contemplation

All of the City's mini parks, except Fourth Street Park, are less than an acre in size. Several of the parks provide very limited recreational opportunities. Smith Avenue, East 3rd Street,

and Holt Street Parks offer little more than an old basketball court and outdated play equipment. These parks are not heavily used.

The City should assess each of its mini parks to determine if there is an adequate service population to support a park. If there are residences in the area to support a small park, these under utilized parks should be renovated to provide a wider variety of recreational opportunities and more attractive places for public gatherings. If there is not residential support for any of these parks, the City should consider removing the existing facilities and selling the property. Eliminating existing parks is a difficult decision, but if the park is not being used, it may be better to eliminate the maintenance cost and property liability and utilize resources where they are more beneficial.

As noted in the section on neighborhood parks, there are some neighborhoods of the City that do not have good access to a neighborhood or mini park. These underserved areas could have their park needs met with a well designed mini park.

Civic Parks

Civic parks are community spaces that often provide a sense of place for a town or city. The size and form of civic parks may vary considerably. Likewise, how the spaces are used and programed vary. Civic parks may include urban plazas, community green spaces and lawns, memorials, etc.

There may be opportunities for the development of civic parks as part of the Depot District or other uptown improvements.

Greenways

The most popular form of outdoor recreation in the nation is walking. This popularity was reflected in the survey that was conducted as part of this planning study and in comments made during the public meetings. Greenway trails are typically off-road trails that meander through neighborhoods and natural areas providing transportation corridors

and recreational opportunities for walkers, joggers, roller bladers, and cyclists. The trail surface can either be natural or paved. Paved trails are normally eight to ten feet in width. Natural surface trail widths can vary based on conditions.

In addition to providing environmental protection and recreation opportunities, greenways can produce economic development. The North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation recently conducted a study on a bicycle trail constructed along the northern Outer Banks region. This study determined that a \$6.7 million investment in off-road bike paths and shoulder improvements produced an estimated \$60 million annually in economic benefit. In addition, the study found that:

- Bicycle facilities in the area are an important factor to many tourists visiting the region.
- Investments in the bicycle facilities improved the safety of the area's transportation system.
- Bicycle activities include the benefits of health, fitness, quality of life, and the environment.



Greenways improve quality of life

Greenways also offer a valuable alternative to automotive transportation. A greenway trail often provides a linkage between communities, schools, churches, businesses, and parks. The City does not currently have any greenways, but in the future there should be consideration given to developing this type of community amenity. The first step in that process would be to develop a greenway master plan.

The City should also consider teaming with Davidson County in the development of their proposed greenway that is planned to connect Lake Thom-A-Lex Park, Finch Park, and the downtown area. As noted in the County's Park and Tourism Master Plan, this proposed amenity could provide a valuable community resource and potentially create tourism revenue for the area.

Greenways should be developed in conjunction with other park and recreation providers in the area (Davidson County, Thomasville, etc.) to ensure they are coordinated with other planning efforts and that there is continuity between plans.



Greenways provide opportunity for walking and biking.

Bikeways

The need for bikeable roads and the development of greenways for biking was mentioned in many of the interviews and in the public meeting. With the focus on healthy lifestyles, the environment, and alternative transportation, there is a great need to develop and implement a bike plan.

The City should encourage the State to include bike lanes whenever roadway improvements are made or new roads constructed. The City should also address their subdivision process to ensure developers provide bicycle (and pedestrian) routes in the roadway improvements they construct as part of the development process.

The City should consider applying for federal

SAFETEA program non-vehicular transportation funds that encourage alternative means of transportation. These funds have been used to construct bike lanes and greenway trails in communities throughout North Carolina.

The development of a greenway to Lake Thom-A-Lex Park, linked with a citywide bike plan, would provide an important amenity that would benefit residents. As documented in the NCDOT study on bicycle facilities along the northern Outer Banks, the development of a bicycle/pedestrian trail system can have a significant economic impact on a community.

RENOVATION AND EXPANSION OF EXISTING PARKS

While the focus of the previous recommendations has been on the acquisition and development of new parks, there is also a need to improve and expand facilities at many of the City's existing parks. As part of the ongoing planning and budgeting process, the City's Recreation and Parks Department annually establishes a list of capital improvement projects. This list of capital improvement needs is then used by the Department and elected officials to establish yearly capital improvement budgets.

As noted in previous sections, master plans should be developed for many of the City's existing parks. Parks and facilities that warrant special study include:

- Finch Park
- Old City Lake Park
- Grimes Park
- Assessment of existing mini parks

FACILITY PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report recommends the City should construct several mini parks, build an indoor recreation

center with gymnasium, work with the County on a major greenway trail, and renovate many of its existing parks by the year 2022. The improvements that will be made as part of these renovations and expansions will add many new facilities to the parks inventory. The City should consider the list of facility needs established in Section Three and described in greater detail on the following pages:

Adult Baseball

Over the past five to ten years, the popularity of adult baseball has waned, both locally and across the nation. The City's 1987 Master Plan recommended a standard of one field per 20,000 people for the development of adult baseball fields. Utilizing this standard of field development, the City does not have a need for an additional adult baseball field.



Youth Baseball

The 1987 Master Plan established an extremely aggressive criteria for the development of youth baseball fields (one field per 3,000). Based on this standard for youth baseball, the City would exhibit a demand for this sport greater than that expressed in the national, state, and other similar municipal department standards. The standard for facility development of youth baseball fields has been adjusted to one field per 10,000 people. This matches the national and state standards (one field per 10,000). Utilizing this standard for development results in the demand for youth baseball being met.

Softball

Men's adult softball has traditionally been a popular sport in North Carolina. NRPA and NCDENR standards (one field per 5,000 people) reflect that popularity. While the sport is still popular in some areas, there has been a shift in demand of men's adult softball in many communities. The standard used in the 1987 Master Plan was aggressive (1 field/6,000), and does not reflect local demand. The 1987 standard has been changed to 1 field/10,000. Based on this new standard, the City does not have a need for additional softball fields.

It should also be noted that changes in demand have now placed additional emphasis on women's softball. In the future, softball fields should be designed to accommodate this new area of play, or alter some of the existing fields should be retrofitted to allow for women's play.

Football

Football's popularity as a community based youth sport has been reduced by the emergence of soccer and (most recently) lacrosse. With that said, demand for football was heard at the public workshop and through the written survey. With this understanding, **the standard for development of football fields is one field for every 10,000 people within the service community. This new standard results in the need for two football fields.**

Soccer

Soccer is one of the fastest growing sports in America. This master plan reflects this demand by establishing a standard of one field for every 6,000 people within the service population. Utilizing this standard for development, **the City will need two soccer fields in the future.** These fields could be constructed at Finch Park or could be located on property adjacent to the wastewater treatment plant.

The City may consider lighting its soccer fields, which can effectively double their use. Likewise, the development of synthetic turf fields could greatly increase playing time on existing fields and reduce the number of fields needed.

A final note on soccer. The demand for multi-purpose fields will be made more intense by the new interest in lacrosse. Played on a field very similar to a soccer field (they are slightly larger than soccer fields), lacrosse will likely increase in popularity and should be planned for as the City reviews its soccer field needs. The new sport should be taken into consideration since play for both sports can be programmed on similar fields. One method to accommodate the variety of field games (soccer, lacrosse, rugby, football) is to develop larger multi-use fields that can be used for play by a variety of field games.

Basketball

Basketball remains an extremely popular sport in the United States. Played by a variety of ages, and increasingly by females, this sport can be played either indoors or out. Currently the City provides seventeen outdoor courts, but does not provide an indoor court. Based on national and state standards of development of one basketball court per 2,500 people, the City currently does not have a need for additional outdoor courts; however, there is a need for an indoor basketball court.

See the section on Community Centers and Gymnasiums for the community's need for indoor courts.



Tennis

Tennis has not experienced the same growth and interest as some of the nation's newer sports (soccer, lacrosse, etc.), but as the baby boomers move into their 50s and retirement, the demand for sports that keep people active without physical contact will likely increase.

The City has an excellent tennis facility (Bingham Tennis Center), as well as several community courts located adjacent to the golf course. Utilizing a standard of facility development matching the national and state standards (one court per 2,000 people), there is not a need for new courts.



Volleyball

The City currently has one outdoor volleyball court. Courts could be constructed in the future if demand is expressed. Volleyball courts are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.

Shuffleboard

There has been no expressed demand for outdoor shuffleboard courts from citizens of Lexington; therefore, the City does not have any courts. This activity provides a recreational outlet and opportunities for social interaction, particularly for older citizens.

The City should consider building shuffleboard courts in parks if there is a demand for this activity in the future. Like volleyball courts, shuffleboard courts are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.

Horseshoes

There has been no expressed demand for horseshoe pits in the community; therefore, the City does not have any pits in its park system. This activity provides a recreation outlet for social interaction, particularly for older citizens. The City should consider building horseshoe pits if there is demand for this activity in the future. Like shuffleboard courts, horseshoe pits are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.

Picnic Shelters

Picnicking was one of the most popular recreational activities listed by respondents in the City's survey. Lexington currently has fifteen shelters in its park system. Based on a standard of one shelter per 1,500 people, there is not a need for additional shelters.

While no new shelters are currently recommended, several of the existing shelters are old and need to be renovated.



Playgrounds

The City has nineteen playgrounds in its parks. As new parks are developed, Lexington should look for locations for additional playgrounds. Larger parks may warrant more than one playground.

Safety inspections and ADA accessibility audits should be conducted at all existing playgrounds.

As new playgrounds are completed and existing playgrounds renovated, the department should replace wood fiber and sand surfaces with poured in place (PIP) safety surfacing. PIP surfaces provide wheelchair accessibility and reduces maintenance and lifecycle costs of the playgrounds.

Pedestrian Trails

Walking is the number one outdoor recreational activity in the United States. Walking trail use scored high in the public survey ($\pm 78\%$ indicated they are interested in using trails).

With this level of public demand, the development of walking trails should be a priority for future park development. A priority should be placed on walking trail development in all existing and future parks. **A paved walking trail is an important component of all park types, and should be provided in all neighborhood and community parks as well as sports complexes.**

Biking Trails

Biking is a rapidly growing outdoor recreational activity. The City should expand opportunities for biking through the development of a greenway trail system, including paths suitable for biking in existing and future parks, and through encouraging NCDOT to develop roads with bike lanes or wider shoulders to accommodate bikers. The Recreation and Parks Department should work with other stakeholders to help promote and facilitate new bikeways throughout the City.

Amphitheaters and Neighborhood Performing Areas

Currently the City has one small stage located at Finch Park. This facility provides a venue for concerts and special events. Over a half (58%) of those surveyed indicated they would like to attend outdoor performances. **The City should consider development of another venue to address this demand.**

Several stakeholders identified the need for creating economic impact through festivals and community events. The development of an outdoor performing

arts area could support this recommendation. Several people at the public workshop suggested developing an outdoor performance area in the uptown area.

The City should also make provisions for smaller, neighborhood gathering places for plays, small concerts, and other special events. These facilities would provide a small stage and space for gathering in a more informal manner when compared to a large amphitheater.

SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

Community Centers and Gymnasiums

Currently the City does not offer its citizens a community center with gymnasium. Youth basketball programs are conducted at the YMCA. Other indoor recreation programs such as Zumba, ballet dance, arts and crafts classes are offered at the Robbins Center. Limited space and support facilities (showers, lockers, etc.) greatly limit the programs that are offered. The lack of adequate indoor space eliminates the opportunity for fitness center, volleyball, free play, etc.



The need for a public indoor recreation center with gymnasium has been identified and discussed in the community for over three decades. **The City's 1987 Master Plan said "Perhaps the greatest need is for a recreation center building containing a gymnasium and active program spaces."** The 1987 Plan discussed two potential

solutions to the lack of indoor space. The two options included renovating the existing National Guard Armory or adding a gymnasium to the Robbins Center.

In 2005, the City considered a third option when it developed a Master Plan Study for a youth recreation center. This study recommended a much larger facility ($\pm 27,000$ SF) and an estimated capital cost of just under \$5 million. The proposed building included indoor basketball, extreme room (skateboarding and rock climbing), multipurpose rooms, gathering hall, study areas, and kitchen/cafe. There was considerable community support for the facility, but no action was taken on the plan.

Most recently Helping Organize People Effectively (HOPE) completed a vision study for "An Intergenerational Community Center". The outcome of the vision process created a multiuse building that included a crafts market, artisans incubator, library, stage/theater, classrooms, fitness center, therapy pool, and support facilities. The function of the building is to "draw families together" by providing a place for special events, community education, places for youth and adults/seniors to interact, etc. Currently this building is envisioned as part of the Depot District. While many of the stakeholders in the international community center were involved in the study for the youth center, the latest plan for this indoor facility does not include a gymnasium.

Based on the responses from both the community wide written survey and the public workshop, there is strong community support for an indoor recreation center with gymnasium. This need is further identified in the Needs Assessment presented in Section Three. Finally, the consideration for developing a multipurpose indoor facility is further understood when you review the facility offerings of other communities the size of Lexington. **Simply stated, it is rare that a municipality with 15,000 - 20,000 people does not have a multipurpose indoor facility with a gymnasium.**

With that stated, it is understood that the development of a multipurpose indoor recreation center is a major capital and operational undertaking. Based on the other demands currently on the City's operational and capital budgets, it will take considerable resources to fund a \$3-4 million facility. Funding two separate indoor facilities would double the capital and operational cost. Seeking ways to work together to consolidate the two building plans into a central indoor facility would greatly reduce the cost of both construction and operation.

Another option would be to consider the recommendations from the 1987 Plan regarding development of a gymnasium expansion to the Robbins Center. This option could reduce the cost of an indoor facility to \$1-2 million and reduce operational cost because current staff could be used to operate the expanded building.

A third option for meeting the need for an indoor facility would be to renovate one of the vacant buildings in the downtown area. One potential location for this facility would be the former Tri-Distributors facility adjacent to the Holt-Moffit Field. This facility has been vacant for some time and may provide an excellent site for an indoor recreation center.

Developing a plan for the indoor recreation facility is beyond the scope of this Master Plan, but a significant recommendation of this plan is there is a need for an indoor facility. The development of an indoor facility should be a priority for the City in the next 10 years.

Swimming Pools and Spraygrounds

In the past, NRPA and NCDENR provided a standard for pool development of one pool for every 20,000 people. This standard was based on the concept of multi neighborhood or community pools. Today, with the high cost of operation and construction of swimming pools, very few agencies develop neighborhood/community pools to that old standard. Instead municipalities typically provide more centralized facilities where one pool may serve a greater population.

The City currently operates two outdoor swimming pools. For a community with less than 20,000 people in the service population, this represents a level of service extremely high (1 pool/10,000 people). Pools are expensive to operate and older pools can often require significant cost to keep them operational. As noted in the inventory section of this document, the City is currently facing a significant improvement expense to keep the pool at Washington Park operational. Before the City invests hundreds of thousands of dollars in a fifty year old pool, it should consider other options. **While it is critical that the City maintains one fully functional pool for swimming lessons, water safety, etc., in the long term, it may make more sense to maintain one pool and convert the Washington pool to a sprayground.**



Splashpads provide an alternative to the high cost of swimming pools

Spraygrounds are growing in popularity across the country. In addition to offering a water-based play experience, the play structures, sprays, etc. afford children of all ages a total play environment and are much more economical to operate than a standard swimming pool. A properly designed, large water park sprayground can serve as a regional draw, provide revenue to the Department, and provide a beneficial economic impact to the surrounding areas.

TRENDS IN PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The list of recreational activities developed for this Comprehensive Plan is based on national and state standards that have been used in park planning for decades. As noted earlier in this section, these standards are used as a point of reference, with the understanding that each community should develop standards that are unique to their specific needs.

One of the downsides of the national and state guidelines is that they are not updated often and fail to incorporate newer trends and activities. In the past decade, several new activities have been growing in popularity and should be considered in future park development. These activities include:

Skateboard Parks and Extreme Sports

Skateboarding has been popular for several decades. In the past decade, many communities have recognized its popularity and have tried to provide a safe and vandal resistant setting for this creative sport. There was some discussion among community stakeholders that a skateboard park in the downtown area would provide a program need and could provide an attraction to this area. There was some interest in a skateboard park expressed in both the written survey and public workshops, but this activity ranked relatively low in priority. **While not an immediate priority, a skateboard park should be considered as a future amenity.**

Disc Golf

The popularity of disc golf continues to grow. The City does not currently have a disc golf course. Disc golf courses are inexpensive and have minimal impact on the land. **The City should consider development of a disc golf court in one of its existing larger parks.**

Off-leash Dog Areas

Off-leash dog areas are one of the newest trends in park development. The popularity of these facilities (also known as dog parks), is a response to the nation's love of pets. Communities throughout

North Carolina are now constructing dog parks. Several people spoke in favor of a dog park at the public workshop.



Man's best friend at play

Dog parks take many forms, but are primarily a place within a park where park users can bring their dogs to run, walk, and recreate. They usually include a fenced open area where dogs, accompanied by their owner, are allowed to run free. Often the off-leash dog area is divided into sections for large and small dogs.

The City has already begun to consider development of a dog park in one of its parks.

Community Gardens

Community gardens provide a wide variety of community enhancements. They offer health benefits by providing local gardeners with fresh vegetables and increased exercise as they tend the gardens. They also provide environmental benefits by reducing transportation cost for food production and providing more plant cover, which reduces urbanization impacts on climate change. In addition, community gardens provide a venue for social interaction that reduces isolation and supports community involvement.

With the many benefits provided by community gardens, many parks and recreation agencies are implementing community garden programs. **The City has developed its first community garden in Robbins Park. Should this initial garden prove successful, other garden locations should be considered.**



Picnic area at Old City Lake Park

Section Five

Action Plan Implementation

INTRODUCTION

The City of Lexington's Parks and Recreation Facility Development Master Plan is based upon an assessment of the community's character and growth, an analysis of the existing park system, the development of recreation standards, the identification of user needs, and the creation of proposals and recommendations to meet those needs. The plan is designed to provide recommendations that will allow the City's Recreation and Parks Department to enhance their parks and recreation system.

Instrumental to the implementation of the Master Plan is the identification of adequate funding for facility development improvements. Finding adequate funding is particularly difficult in this time of lower tax base and budget concerns. Limited budgets place an even greater importance on planning carefully to meet projected needs. In addition to capital cost, the Master Plan must also consider operational and management issues. This section reviews some of these issues.

While much of the focus of previous sections has been on capital needs and facility improvements. Physical improvements are only part of the needs for the Department. As staff plans for the future, they should also consider a number of operational and management issues that will position them to meet community needs. This section reviews some of those issues.

This section will look at the Capital Improvements Plan from Section Four and provide a strategy for raising funds to construct the proposed improvements and new facilities.

Implementing the recommendations made in this Master Plan will result in meeting the future needs for parks and recreation services, as well as preserving open space in the area. The City should establish annual budgets on projected capital improvements, staffing, operations and maintenance costs for the Department that not only meet current needs, but also allow acquisition and development for future needs. This Action Plan is designed to give the Department a realistic approach to financing the proposals and recommendations of this Master Plan.

REVENUE PLAN

Upon adoption of the Master Plan, the Department, with input from civic leaders, should consider the establishment of a revenue plan. A revenue plan incorporates all available funding resources in a community, prioritizes them, and puts each option into a funding strategy. In a revenue plan, the following funding alternatives are evaluated for their appropriate use in funding capital improvements and programs.

Key Funding/Revenue Sources

The Recreation and Parks Department has strong public support, but even so, innovative measures will be required to meet some of the needs identified in this plan. The proposed additional facilities and expanded operations will require dollars from a variety of sources. The following funding sources are provided to help the City evaluate funding options.

General Tax Revenues (operational and capital)

General tax revenues traditionally provide the principle source of funds for general operations and maintenance of a municipal and county recreation and parks system. Recreation, as a public service, is scheduled along with health, public safety, schools, etc. in annual budgets established by the



governing authority. Assessed valuation of real and personal property provides the framework for this major portion of the tax base. This tax base is then used to fund the majority of municipal services. If the City wishes to offer a park and recreation system that provides quality of life and health maintenance opportunities for the community, the level of funding for parks and recreation must be maintained or increased.

Park Foundation (operational and capital)

A park foundation can be instrumental in assisting the City in acquiring land, developing facilities, sponsoring programs, and buying equipment for the Department. Park foundations typically create strategies for generating funds to support park projects. These include foundation membership fees, individual gifts, grants from other recognized and national foundations, long term endowments, and land trusts for future acquisitions.

The City of Lexington has the support of an outstanding community based support group in the Lexington Recreation Department Booster Club. This organization, created to assist the development of the City's recreation program, has raised funds to provide uniforms, equipment and other needs for children in their programs and raise awareness for the Department.

The Booster Club has been a successful tool for gathering local support, and should be utilized in the future to support the recommendations made in this document.

General Foundations (operational and capital)

Another source of revenue is the direct contribution of money from General Foundations within the state or nation. Foundation funds should be sought for both development and construction of facilities as well as providing programs. They should include general-purpose foundations that have relatively few restrictions, special program foundations for specific activities, and corporate foundations with few limitations and typically from local sources. The Trust for Public Land and NC Rails-Trail have been instrumental in providing financial and technical assistance for open space conservation and development of greenways in North Carolina.

Another source of local assistance may be large corporations with foundations established to provide grants for public projects. Companies such as Bank of America, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and Duke Energy, may have available funding through existing grant programs, or they may be interested in creating a program or partnership for specific projects. The Department should actively pursue grants from foundation and trust sources on a regional and national level. Information on trusts and foundations can be found through the Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003-3076 (<http://foundationcenter.org/>) and the Non-Profit Gateway to Federal Government agencies (<http://www.usa.gov/index.shtml>).

General Obligation Bonds (capital)

General tax revenue for parks and recreation are usually devoted to current operations and maintenance of existing facilities. General obligation bonds are often used to finance capital improvements in parks. The State of North Carolina gives municipal and county governments the authority to accomplish this borrowing of funds for parks and recreation through the issuance of bonds not to exceed the total cost of improvements (including land acquisition). For purposes of paying the debt service on the sale of these bonds, cities are often required to increase property taxes. Total bonding capacities for local government is limited to a maximum percentage of assessed property valuation.

Lexington has used this method of financing park improvements in the past. In view of the recommended capital improvements suggested in this plan, borrowing of funds to acquire new land and develop facilities may continue to be necessary.

An added value of a governing agency's bonding authority and capacity is its ability to use those funds to leverage other funding opportunities. Bonding enables government agencies to utilize funds to match federal grant-in-aid monies or state funds. General obligation bonds are still the greatest source utilized to fund park projects in North Carolina. Through a well thought out and publicly presented bond campaign, voters would be given the opportunity to choose to support park improvements through the sale of bonds.

Revenue Bonds (capital)

Revenue bonds are used for financing high use specialty facilities like golf courses, aquatic centers, tennis centers, and complexes for softball and soccer. The users, and other revenue sources, pay for operations and sometimes repay the bonds. This revenue source would only be of use to the City if they choose to change their tax subsidy policy for using this type of funding. The City most likely would not seek out this option.

The legal requirements for utilizing these funding mechanisms are extremely complicated and can actually require approval from the state legislature. Use of revenue bonds seem to be unlikely at this time.

Limited Option or Special Use Tax (capital)

Limited option or special use taxes can be established in various ways. A municipality or county can establish the tax by determining the source, such as property valuation, real estate transfer taxes, or sales tax. This option requires legislative approval. Typically, special use taxes are structured on sales tax or transfer taxes and are earmarked for a specific project. A governing body can approve a tax that is identified or earmarked on property valuation; however, other sources may require state approval. The idea behind a

special option or limited option tax is that the tax is identified or limited for a special purpose or projects and the duration can also be limited to accomplishing the projects.

Federal and State Assistance (capital)

Federal funding sources are available to assist with financing capital improvement recommendations found in this plan. One of the oldest park funding sources has been available from the U.S. Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Several of the City's existing parks were funded with monies from this funding source. Unfortunately, funding through this program has been sporadic over the past few years. Other potential federal funding sources are the National Foundation of Arts and Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

The North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill in 1994 creating a consistent source of funds for parks and recreation in the state. The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) provides money for capital improvements, repairs, renovations, and land acquisition in state and local parks. Revenues from the state's portion of the real estate deed transfer tax support the fund. Revenues vary from year to year. Since 2007, funds from real estate taxes have been significantly lower.

Of the funds allocated, 65% go to the state parks system, 30% provide matching grants to local governments, and the remaining 5% go to the Coastal and Estuarine Water Beach Access Program. The maximum matching grant is limited to \$500,000 for a single project. The PARTF system allows an agency to apply for a 50/50 cost-sharing grant to develop or acquire parkland and facilities.

The City has applied for these funds previously, but has never received a PARTF grant for park development. They should continue to apply for funds through this program on a regular basis.

Additionally, the State can fund projects such as bikeways and pedestrian walks through the federally funded SAFTEA [formerly known as

the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)]. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) administers the funds and the local government agency can use these funds for developing portions of any proposed greenway system. Local communities can also apply for assistance with pedestrian, bikeway, and greenway projects by applying for "NCDOT Enhancement Funds."

Another source of state administered funding is through the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF). These funds are set aside for the acquisition of riparian properties, financing of innovative wastewater management initiatives, stormwater mitigation and stream bank restoration projects, support for greenways, and some planning programs. The acquired or purchased property can be used for recreation while protecting valuable water resources from the affects of urban encroachment. Money from this grant is particularly applicable to the preservation of open space, greenway development, and water access.

Unfortunately, since the economic downturn that started in 2008, all of these funding sources have been greatly reduced.

User Fees (operational)

User fees are often charged by park and recreation departments to offset operational cost, and (occasionally) provide funding for the construction of facilities. Every department must establish its philosophy with regard to cost recovery through the use of fees. Lexington has historically charged fees for some facilities and programs, but these fees have typically not been set to cover the total operational cost of the program and have never been used to finance construction of facilities.

In the future, the City may consider user fees as a larger source to offset operational cost; particularly if new facilities like an indoor recreation facility are constructed. User fees were identified as the preferred method of funding operations, in both the community wide written survey and the survey conducted at the public workshop.

Currently the City does receive some revenue from rentals and classes. While these user fees are an important part of the Department's budget, it must also be noted that the user fees do not cover the cost of their respective programs.

Ultimately the City may consider a change in user fees that will help offset the cost of some activities. Based on elected officials' direction, the revenue generated by increased fees could then be used to reduce the general fund and possibly increase capital improvement funding to help make park improvements and expansion.

Many of the Department's facilities are outdoors (trails, open space, athletic facilities, etc.) and offer only limited opportunity for cost recovery. There may be some areas where greater cost recovery could be achieved. Examples may include higher rental fees for shelters, fields, etc. or for requiring permits for dog parks, disc golf, etc.

This method of funding is particularly applicable in the event the Department constructs an indoor facility. The Department will need to update its current revenue and pricing policy as part of an overall revenue plan based on the values and guiding funding principles of the area. The cost of additional facilities and operation of those facilities must be increasingly borne by the user through user fees. Lexington has a number of potential significant revenue sources of this type. Fees from the proposed indoor recreation facility, Bingham Tennis Center, and Holt-Moffit Field could provide significant income which is then used in the operation and expansion of these programs.



Revenue Opportunities

User fees are not the only means of generating revenue. The Department should be constantly exploring additional opportunities for generating income. Some of these opportunities include:

- Sponsorships from local private businesses. Sponsorships typically come in the form of products, events, programs, cause-related, and in-kind. Sponsorships can also take the form of naming rights for a facility or program. Sponsorship or naming agreements should include very specific details related to sponsorship cost, duration, use of promotional materials, etc.
- Grant applications from local foundations, state and federal agencies, or individuals are typically created by staff. Most grants take time to prepare and require coordination effort with other agencies or departments from within the community to create a quality submittal. Grants also require extensive tracking of expenditures and outcomes for attaining future funding.
- Partnerships are a relatively new method of sharing funding resources to provide services. These partnerships can be formed with a wide variety of other public or private agencies. Many times the partners are two or more government agencies. Through these partnerships, the City receives direct benefit in either facility use, programming assistance, or volunteer man hours. All of these benefits add value to the department and help offset cost; thus creating earned income for the department. This earned income requires both agencies to have common visions, values, and goals for the partnership to be successful. Examples of partnerships include:
 - Church facilities or recreation services.
 - Youth sports associations that help the Department provide the services to the community for the sports that they represent.
 - Trail sponsors that adopt sections of trails for maintenance and cleanup.
 - Adopt-a-park partners that help maintain park lands. These sponsors are typically in the form of neighborhood associations and businesses that are in proximity to parks.

- School partnerships where both partners invest in the development of facilities and programs based on shared use of facilities and staff. This investment may be financial, or may include other means of support.
- Special event partners that assist with the development of community-wide events.
- Program partners who assist in providing services to the community. The City is already working with the YMCA and area churches to provide athletic and after school programs.
- Advertising and licensing in programs, facilities, and events sponsored by the Department. The City could leverage highly exposed advertising space to businesses willing to pay a fee for the right to advertise.
- Volunteer development programs can reduce staff costs. Volunteers can create advocacy and bring down the cost of programs and services.
- Privatizing the development of facilities or services is an opportunity that is used by communities when they are unable to control the cost of labor and are unable to find the needed capital to develop a recreational facility or a concession operation. This gives the government agency a management tool to create an asset or improve a service without tapping into their own resources. Facilities that are typically considered for privatization may include golf courses, marinas, camping and RV facilities, boat rentals, bike rentals, equipment rentals, and other forms of concessions.
- Marketing strategies are an important component in developing untapped revenue opportunities. Promotional activities improve awareness of the activities provided by the Department and assist in bringing more revenue to the system by filling programs and facilities.

METHODS FOR LAND ACQUISITION AND DEDICATION

With over 20 parks and special use facilities and approximately 400 acres of park land, major land

acquisition does not seem to be the Department's number one priority. With that said, there may be some need for land acquisition in the development of some of the facility needs listed in Section Four (greenway, indoor recreation facility, multipurpose fields, etc.). Should the need arise, there are a number of ways to acquire needed land. Methods available for acquiring land include the following:

Fee Simple Purchase

Outright purchase is perhaps the most widely used method of obtaining parkland. Fee simple purchase has the advantage of being relatively simple to administer and to explain to the general public to justify a particular public expenditure. Unfortunately, fee simple purchase often is the most expensive means of obtaining and utilizing a property.

Fee Simple with Lease-Back or Resale

This technique of land acquisition enables the Department to purchase land to lease or sell to a prospective user with deed restrictions that would protect the land from abuse or development. This method is used by governments who impose development restrictions severe enough that the owner considers himself to have lost the major portion of the property's value and it is more economical for him to sell with a lease-back option.

Long-Term Option

A long-term option is frequently used when a property is considered to have potential future value though it is not desired or affordable to the Department at the time. Under the terms of a long-term option, the Department agrees with the landowner on a selling price for the property and a time period over which the Department has the right to exercise its option. The first benefit of this protective method is that the option stabilizes the escalating land cost and establishes land use for the property. Secondly, the Department does not have to expend large sums of money until the land is purchased. Thirdly, the purchase price of the land is established. The disadvantage of this method is that a price must be paid for every right given by

the property owner. In this case, the cost of land use stabilization and a price commitment comes in the form of the cost of securing the option.

First Right of Purchase

This approach to acquiring parkland eliminates the need for fixing the selling price of a parcel of land, yet alerts the Department of any impending purchase which might disrupt the parkland acquisition goals. The Department would be notified that a purchase is pending and would have the right to purchase the property before it is sold to the party requesting the purchase.

Land Trust

The role and responsibility of a Land Trust is to acquire parkland and open space while maintaining a well-balanced system of park resources representing outstanding ecological, scenic, recreational, and historical features. A Land Trust is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit corporation made up of key knowledgeable leaders in the area who represent a cross section of interest and experience in recreation, historic properties, conservation, preservation, land development, and environmental issues. Their goals and responsibilities are to work with landowners to acquire parkland for current and future generations. The individuals appointed to the Land Trust must have knowledge of land acquisition methods and tools used to entice land owners to sell, donate, provide easements, life estates, irrevocable trusts, or a combination of all. This includes seeking out a knowledgeable land acquisition attorney who is trained in these areas to provide the most efficient and effective processes to achieve the balance of types of land to meet the goals of this Master Plan.

The Department does not have to go through the time and expense of setting up a land trust to utilize this vehicle for land donation or conservation. The Land Trust of Central North Carolina is an established land trust in the area. The City could partner with them to provide protection of valuable open space without creating a new entity.

Donations

A significant, and yet often untapped, source of funding acquisition and development of local park projects is through a well-organized local gifts program. Donations of land, money, or labor can have a meaningful impact on the development of the City's park system.

The most frequently used type of gift involves the giving of land to be used for a park. The timing of such a donation can correspond with a PARTF grant application, thereby providing all or a significant portion of the local matching requirement associated with this fund. A similar use of gifts involves donated labor or materials, which become part of an improvement project and help to reduce project costs. The value of the services or materials can, in some cases, also be used to match non-local grant funds.

Some agencies have developed a gift catalog as a tool for promoting a gifts program. Such a publication should explain the role and importance of the gifts program, describe its advantages, define the tax advantages that may occur to the donor, and identify various gifts (land, labor, play equipment, materials, trees, etc.) that are needed to meet local program needs. The gifts catalog should be prepared in a format that can be distributed effectively and inexpensively and should provide a clear statement of needs, typical costs associated with various gifts, and be made readily available to the public.

To aid this type of gift program, a strategy for contacting potential donors (individuals, businesses, foundations, service clubs, etc.) should be developed. An important part of this strategy should include contacting the local Bar Association, trust departments of lending institutions, and the Probate Court. Communicating with these groups regularly will make them aware of the potential for individuals to include a gift to the Recreation and Parks Department as part of their tax and estate planning.

Life Estate

A life estate is a deferred gift. Under this plan, a donor retains use of his land during his lifetime and relinquishes title to such land upon his death. In return for this gift, the owner is usually relieved of the property tax burden on the donated land.

Easement

The most common type of less-than-fee interest in land is an easement. Property ownership may be viewed as a combination of rights. With this understanding, it is possible to purchase any one or several of these rights. An easement seeks either to compensate the landholder for the right to use his land in some manner or to compensate him for the loss of one of his privileges to use the land. One advantage of this less-than-fee interest in the land is the private citizen continues to use the land while the land remains on the tax records continuing as a source of revenue for the City. Perhaps the greatest benefit lies in the fact that the community purchases only those rights that it specifically needs to execute its parkland objectives. By purchasing only rights that are needed, the Department is making more selective and efficient use of its limited financial resources.

Zoning/Subdivision Regulations

Many communities in North Carolina have zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations that require a developer to donate a portion of the property they are developing to the government agency to be used for public park land. Through these regulations zoning ordinances, subdivision regulation, and mandatory dedications may be utilized to create new parkland at no cost to the community. Regulations can require that land is dedicated and/or compensation made to the City for the development of parkland. Lexington's land development code has a section on the required dedication for recreational use. This dedication requirement applies to single family subdivisions and multi-family development. The City's requirements provide for both land dedication and payment in lieu. Likewise, the dedication requirements call for review by Recreation and Parks staff.

PARK FACILITIES AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS

John L. Crompton, in his publication "Parks and Economic Development", determined there are four economic development benefits that a community may derive from park and recreation services. These benefits include:

- **Attracting Tourists:** The features and programs that attract tourism to a community include parks, beaches, historic sites, museums, special events and festivals, and athletic tournaments. The majority of these features are provided by public agencies (national, state, local park agencies, etc.).
- **Enhancing Real Estate Values:** Research shows people will pay more to live close to natural park areas. These higher property values result in owners paying higher property taxes, which in turn offsets some of the cost for the development parks and preservation of open space.
- **Attracting Business:** Quality of life issues influence where businesses locate. Parks, recreation, and open space are an important component of the quality of life equation. Good parks help cities attract and retain businesses.
- **Attracting Retirees:** A new growth industry for American communities is the retirement population. The decision to relocate by this segment of our population is primarily governed by climate and recreation opportunities. This segment of the population is extremely attractive to local governments because retirees are unlikely to have children enrolled in the local school system and therefore are less of a burden on the community's tax base.

Lexington has traditionally placed a high value on parks and recreation programs and facilities that provide quality of life improvement. Development of this master plan is further evidence that the City recognizes the importance parks play in the quality of life. Davidson County shares this belief that parks and recreation facilities have economical impact. Its Parks and Recreation and Tourism Development Master Plan identified the role that

park and recreation facilities can have on attracting both tourism and business to the community.



Athletic tournaments attract tourism

Through investing in parks over the years, local officials can ensure that Lexington provides the quality of life that helps attract new businesses, enhances real estate values, and provides an attractive option to the retirement community.

There are many more opportunities for attracting economic impact to Lexington through tourism. John Crompton lists the following opportunities for tourist attractions:

Tournament Sports

- Softball
- Soccer
- Baseball
- Basketball

Arts

- Theaters
- Art Galleries
- Museums
- Performing groups, Music
- Concerts

Heritage Places

- Ethnic cultural places
- Shrines/churches

- Historical sites and structures
- Educational institutions
- Industry factory tours

Parks

- National
- State
- Regional
- Local
- Beaches
- Theme parks

Recreation

- Events and festivals
- Aquatic and coastal areas
- Outdoor recreation (e.g., camping, fishing, hunting)

Arenas

- College sports
- Professional franchises
- Concerts and exhibitions

Some of these activities and facilities are already found within the City. Many of these potential tourism attractions are in the public realm or are a public/private venture.

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to looking at future facility needs of the Department, this Master Plan must also address some of the operational issues that will face the Department in the coming decade. These issues relate to the manpower and organizational changes that will be required as the Department adds new parks/facilities. Likewise, these recommendations address some of the critical operational issues the Department needs to identify as it works to become not only a bigger department, but a better department.

Staff Needs

With the expansion of park facilities over the next decade, there will be a need for additional staff to

develop, operate, and maintain these new facilities. These anticipated new facilities will require program/operational staff for the new recreation center/gymnasium. In addition, expansion of Finch Park, several new mini parks, and miles of new greenways will require new grounds crews, park supervisors, and administrative staff.

While the development of a true operation and maintenance program for these future facilities is beyond the scope of this master plan study, it is important that the City plan and budget for adequate staff positions for any new facilities that are constructed. Likewise, as these new facilities come on line, the City should actively seek the highest level of programming staff with strong educational experience in the various areas of park and recreation administration.

Operational Costs

As noted above, the development of new recreation facilities will require additional staff for the Department. These new staff positions will add to the annual operational budget in both staff and equipment costs. The expansion of recreational facilities will also add significantly to the energy and utility cost of park and recreation facilities. Based on recent increases in energy cost, these operational costs could be substantial. The recommended facility improvements included in this Plan will increase the Department's facilities by 20-25%. Expansion of this magnitude will have implications to the operational budget. The Department's management staff and elected officials must carefully consider the financial impact of each major capital improvement project as projects are considered. No capital improvement project should be undertaken without the commitment of support for adequate ongoing operational funding. Likewise, consideration should be given to the positive economic impacts that some facilities may have on Lexington's economy, and if applicable, their potential for revenue generation.

Greener Operation

As the world's population expands and

environmental concerns over global warming, conservation of resources, and preservation of our fragile natural systems become more apparent, greater environmental responsibility by public and private agencies has become critical. As a government agency, particularly one that is involved with the management of public open space and the improvement of the public's health, the Recreation and Parks Department should make a concerted effort to minimize its environmental impact.

With this understanding, the Department should evaluate its maintenance and operational procedures with an intent to minimize waste and environmental impact. Where economically feasible, the Department should look to implement operational procedures that emphasize conservation, recycling, and sustainability. Likewise, as the Department looks to build new facilities, it should consider constructing facilities that minimize environmental impacts, conserve energy, and reuse building materials where possible.

As a starting point for this conversion to a "greener" operation, the Department should establish a committee of operation, maintenance, and construction stakeholders to study the options available and develop a plan for becoming "greener".



Promoting recycling is one initiative to reduce waste

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Capital Improvement Program for the acquisition, renovation, and development of parks for the planning period was prepared with input from City staff and public involvement. All of the proposed costs are shown in current dollar values. The capital improvement costs include funds for land acquisition, site preparation, site utilities, and facility development as well as estimated planning and design fees.

The Capital Improvement Program can be summarized into the following components:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Park Renovations | \$2,750,000 |
| Land Acquisition | 50,000 |
| Park Development | 550,000 |
| Special Use Facilities Program | 4,675,000 |
| Total Capital Improvement Budget | \$8,025,000 |

Table 5-1 “Capital Improvements Plan” shows the costs associated with the capital improvement program (ten-year planning period). The table reflects the proposals and recommendations as outlined in Section Four of this Master Plan.

MASTER PLAN FUNDING STRATEGY

Over the planning period (2013 - 2022), the City will not be able to support the growth in operational cost and the proposed capital improvement (±\$8,000,000) with the current level of capital appropriations. The Department will need to use a combination of revenue sources to accomplish the recommendations of the Master Plan. There are numerous combinations of funding strategies that can be explored and implemented. Upon careful analysis of past budget documents, current practices, available resources, and national trends, an example of a funding strategy is presented as one possible strategy.

General Funds

Allocations from the General Fund will need to increase to pay for operation of future facilities. This additional per capita funding, along with the increase in population, could fund the majority of future operational costs, but will not provide the funding required for capital improvements.

In addition to this increased operational spending, the City should begin budgeting for capital improvements projects on an annual basis. Annual allocations of \$250,000 to capital improvements over the next ten years could provide \$2-3 million in funds for capital projects.

General Obligation Bonds

General Obligation Bonds could be used for major renovations and to acquire and develop new parks and recreation facilities. A successful bond campaign for park improvements in the next ten years could generate \$4 - \$5 million for construction and acquisitions. This would represent a significant portion of funds needed for the proposed capital improvements budget. These funds can be dedicated to funding the indoor recreation facility and making major park improvements. As noted earlier in this section (General Obligation Bonds, page 5-3), this level of bond sales will likely result in the need for additional tax revenues to pay for the debt service created by the sale of these bonds.

Revenues and User Charges

A crucial strategy to accomplish the goals of this plan is to price services based on the value and benefits received by the participants beyond those of all taxpayers. Increasing the number of participants using the facilities and programs will increase revenue opportunities. A good time to price services to their value and benefits is after new facilities are constructed or when facilities have been renovated to enhance a participant’s recreational experience. A proposed user charge revenue strategy designed to recoup a larger percentage of program cost should be considered. This will create more revenue and capacity opportunities for the program needs of the City.

Currently, revenues and user charges account for a relatively small percentage of the operating budget. The City should develop a fee structure that will allow greater net revenue to be realized. Assuming the level of funding can increase, it could generate \$50,000 to \$100,000 annually, providing as much as a million dollars in increased income over the next ten years that can be used for operating new facilities developed as recommended in this plan.

Partnerships and Gifts

The City should work with the Booster Club to explore ways to raise sponsorships and gifts. This non-profit organization has already engaged private citizens and corporations to donate money and in-kind services for use by the Recreation and Parks Department. Through active involvement with the Booster Club the Department may be able to realize \$20,000 - \$30,000 in funds annually. This could result in donations of as much as a quarter of a million over the ten year planning period. This level of funding would require the Booster Club to grow and increase its operations.

Sponsorships and Naming Rights

Another excellent source of development capital is through project sponsorship/underwriting by corporations throughout the community. Quality facilities, properly marketed, provide an excellent venue for raising development funds. Naming rights for athletic fields, swimming facilities, playgrounds, etc., can be used to raise tens of thousands of dollars.



Naming rights is one way to generate revenue

Grants

The Recreation and Parks Department has been successful in finding and procuring funds from state and local grants. The City should continue to explore grants such as LWCF, PARTF, SAFTEA, clean water grants, etc. Active pursuit of this funding could provide several million dollars in funds for capital improvements over the next ten years.

Overview

Together, these funding options could be used to raise millions of dollars of development capital over the next decade. It may be unrealistic to assume the City can fund \pm \$8 million of park improvements in the next ten years especially during these challenging economic times. Actively pursuing the options that are available should provide funding for many of the needs listed in this master plan. Through the continued use of this document, City staff and elected officials can identify and prioritize community needs and actively seek funds to meet those needs over the next ten (or more) years.

Table 5-1
CITY OF LEXINGTON
PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

| Capital Improvement and Land Acquisition | 10 Year Total | 2013-2016 | 2017-2022 |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Existing Parks Renovation/Improvements | | | |
| Specific Renovations to Existing Parks | | | |
| Finch Park | \$1,750,000 | \$1,750,000 | |
| Multi-Purpose Fields | \$1,000,000 | | |
| Restroom/Concession Building | \$250,000 | | |
| Water Access (fishing docks) | \$150,000 | | |
| Infrastructure/ADA | \$150,000 | | |
| Playground | \$50,000 | | |
| Trail Improvements | \$150,000 | | |
| Neighborhood Park Improvements | \$500,000 | | \$500,000 |
| Mini Park Improvements | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |
| Planning & Design (10%) | \$250,000 | \$175,000 | \$75,000 |
| Renovation Total | \$2,750,000 | \$1,925,000 | \$825,000 |
| Land Acquisition | | | |
| Mini Park (1 acre at \$25,000) | \$25,000 | \$25,000 | |
| Mini Park (1 acre at \$25,000) | \$25,000 | \$25,000 | |
| Land Acquisition Total | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | \$0 |
| Capital Improvement and Land Acquisition | 10 Year Total | 2013-2016 | 2017-2022 |
| Mini Park | | | |
| Mini Park | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |
| Mini Park | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |
| Planning and Design (10%) | \$50,000 | \$0 | \$50,000 |
| Park Development Total | \$550,000 | \$0 | \$550,000 |
| Special Use Facilities | | | |
| Indoor Recreation Facility/Gymnasium | \$2,500,000 | \$2,500,000 | |
| Sprayground | \$500,000 | \$500,000 | |
| Greenway Trail/with Davidson County | \$1,000,000 | | \$1,000,000 |
| Skateboard Park | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |
| Planning & Design (10%) | \$425,000 | \$300,000 | \$125,000 |
| Special Use Facilities Total | \$4,675,000 | \$3,300,000 | \$1,375,000 |
| Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost | \$8,025,000 | \$5,275,000 | \$2,750,000 |

Appendices

CITY OF LEXINGTON, NC

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Prepared by:
Left Brain Concepts, Inc.
Lakewood, Colorado

January 2013

BACKGROUND

This report presents the findings of a community survey of Lexington residents. The survey was conducted to help guide Lexington's parks and recreation master plan which is being completed by Site Solutions in Charlotte, NC.

The survey determined Lexington residents':

- ✓ Ratings of Lexington's facilities
- ✓ Reaction to potential new or expanded recreation facilities
- ✓ Reasons for not using Lexington's facilities
- ✓ Opinions of how budget should be allocated for potential new facilities
- ✓ Opinions of how budget should be allocated for maintenance of facilities

The survey was conducted in December, 2012 by Left Brain Concepts, Inc., (LBC) a Denver-area market research and consulting firm. People were also given the option of responding electronically. The survey was written by LBC with input from Derek Williams, President of Site Solutions and Bruce Davis, Director of Parks and Recreation in Lexington.

LBC began with an exhaustive list of households in Lexington (including individual units in multi-family housing) provided by the City. Speed Printing in Lexington, mailed 3,000 surveys to randomly selected households. People were given the opportunity to respond to the survey electronically through a link that was printed on the survey.

The survey was conducted by mail because it is the best methodology for generating a random sample of Lexington residents. While telephone surveys are valuable when issues need to be discussed and probed, mail surveys are more defensible, largely because of the difficulty of reaching people who use cell phone as their sole telephones.

A total of 240 surveys were completed. The maximum margin of error for this sample size is $\pm 6.3\%$ at the 95% level of confidence.

KEY FINDINGS

Condition of Lexington facilities: Lexington residents gave high ratings (excellent, very good and good) for the condition of most of Lexington's facilities. However, 43% to 56% gave ratings of fair or poor for six parks.

Use / Quality of Lexington parks and recreation facilities: Three-quarters (78%) of the respondents had visited a park or recreation facility facilities in the previous 12 months. Of these, 81% rated the facilities as excellent, very good or good.

Interest in new facilities / Need for additional facilities: When given a list of 22 potential new parks and recreation facilities in Lexington, 53% or more indicated an interest in:

- ✓ Walking trails (78%)
- ✓ Picnicking areas (64%)
- ✓ Playgrounds (63%)
- ✓ Outdoor event / Performance area (58%)
- ✓ Indoor recreation center (56%)
- ✓ Play areas children with disabilities (55%)
- ✓ Natural areas and wildlife habitats (54%)
- ✓ New neighborhood (walk-to) parks (53%)

Most important facilities: When asked to note the four most important facilities from the list, the six most important to people were the following.

- ✓ Walking trails (50%)
- ✓ Playgrounds (32%)
- ✓ Indoor recreation center (31%)
- ✓ Outdoor event / Performance area (27%)
- ✓ Picnicking areas (21%)
- ✓ Community pool (20%)

Reasons for not using Lexington facilities: The top six reasons people reported they do not use Lexington parks, trails and recreation facilities were:

- ✓ Safety concerns (31%)
- ✓ We use facilities other than City of Lexington (27%)
- ✓ Facility(s) I want are not offered (26%)
- ✓ Facility(s) are not well maintained (22%)
- ✓ Concerns about quality of facilities (20%)

Allocating budget (dollars) for facilities: From a list of six possible spending categories - from improving existing facilities to building new facilities to preserving open space – Lexington residents indicated they would allocate 64% of the budget in the following manner.

- ✓ Improve existing parks and green space
- ✓ Trails and passive recreational activities
- ✓ Building a new indoor recreation facility

Funding upkeep of facilities: Respondents reported that they feel that 75% of the upkeep of facilities be funded from user fees or a general obligation bond. Just 13% suggested that the City increase sales or property taxes in Lexington to support parks.

CONCLUSIONS

- While residents generally feel that Lexington facilities are in good condition, they also feel that many facilities are in fair or poor condition.
- Residents' use of, and interest in, Lexington facilities is high as at least one member of 78% of the households represented in this survey had used one or more of Lexington's parks or recreation facilities in the previous 12 months.
- Lexington residents can be best served in the parks and recreation master plan mostly with trails, open space and passive recreational activities. For facilities that would require a large capital investment, people voiced the greatest interest in an indoor recreation center, a skateboard or BMX park and a civic park / plaza.
- People who do not use Lexington facilities can be enticed to do so if safety concerns are addressed, if the quality of the facilities are improved and if facilities are maintained better. Residents feel that these improvements should be funded with user fees and/or a general obligation bond.

CONDITION OF LEXINGTON FACILITIES

Question: Please rate the physical condition of the following facilities that you or members of your household have used in the past 12 months. Please use the scale of 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Very Good and 5=Excellent and write the number next to each facility.

Lexington residents have high opinions of the condition of most of Lexington's facilities. However, for the third set of facilities below, 43% to 56% rated the facilities as fair or poor.

More than 70% rated these facilities as good, very good or excellent:

- ✓ Finch Park (92%)
- ✓ Grimes Park (90%)
- ✓ Holt-Moffitt Field (86%)
- ✓ Bingham Tennis Center (85%)
- ✓ Charles England Park (83%)
- ✓ Hillcrest Circle Park (82%)
- ✓ Pickett School (74%)
- ✓ Jaycee Park (73%)
- ✓ Robbins Center Park (72%)
- ✓ Myers Park (70%)

61% to 69% rated these facilities as good, very good or excellent:

- ✓ Erlanger Park Circle (69%)
- ✓ Municipal Club tennis courts (68%)
- ✓ Old City Lake Park (67%)
- ✓ Radcliff Park (66%)
- ✓ Radcliffe Park pool (65%)
- ✓ Robbins Center (64%)
- ✓ Smith Avenue Park (62%)
- ✓ Washington Park pool (61%)
- ✓ Childers Park (61%)

Less than 60% rated these facilities as good, very good or excellent:

- ✓ Washington Park (57%)
- ✓ Tussey Street Park (57%)
- ✓ East 3rd Avenue Park (50%)
- ✓ Holt Street Park (50%)
- ✓ Cecil Street Park (48%)
- ✓ Fourth Street Park (44%)

| CONDITION OF LEXINGTON FACILITIES | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|
| | Poor | Fair | Good | Very good | Excellent |
| Hillcrest Circle Park | 7% | 11% | 24% | 24% | 34% |
| Finch Park | 2% | 6% | 27% | 35% | 30% |
| Grimes Park | 4% | 6% | 25% | 37% | 28% |
| Bingham Tennis Center | 9% | 6% | 28% | 29% | 28% |
| Holt-Moffitt Field | 4% | 10% | 32% | 28% | 26% |
| Charles England Park | 3% | 14% | 37% | 22% | 24% |
| Pickett School | 9% | 17% | 21% | 29% | 24% |
| Erlanger Park Circle | 9% | 22% | 27% | 22% | 20% |
| Municipal Club tennis courts | 8% | 24% | 28% | 20% | 20% |
| Jaycee Park | 6% | 21% | 40% | 15% | 18% |
| Washington Park | 19% | 24% | 25% | 15% | 17% |
| Radcliff Park | 11% | 23% | 35% | 14% | 17% |
| Robbins Center Park | 13% | 15% | 40% | 17% | 15% |
| Washington Park pool | 20% | 19% | 29% | 17% | 15% |
| Radcliffe Park pool | 15% | 20% | 38% | 12% | 15% |
| Myers Park | 9% | 21% | 37% | 19% | 14% |
| Smith Avenue Park | 17% | 21% | 32% | 17% | 13% |
| Old City Lake Park | 9% | 24% | 35% | 21% | 11% |
| Tussey Street Park | 20% | 23% | 41% | 5% | 11% |
| Cecil Street Park | 26% | 26% | 27% | 12% | 9% |
| East 3rd Avenue Park | 21% | 29% | 29% | 12% | 9% |
| Fourth Street Park | 17% | 39% | 24% | 13% | 7% |
| Robbins Center | 11% | 25% | 37% | 20% | 7% |
| Childers Park | 11% | 28% | 36% | 19% | 6% |
| Holt Street Park | 17% | 33% | 31% | 13% | 6% |

USE / QUALITY OF LEXINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Question: Have you or other members of your household visited City of Lexington parks or recreation facilities during the past 12 months?

Question: How would you rate the overall quality of the City of Lexington Parks and Recreation's facilities in which you or members of your household have participated?

About three-quarters (78%) of the respondents had visited Lexington parks or recreation facilities in the previous 12 months. Of these, 81% rated the parks or facilities as excellent, very good or good.

| USE / QUALITY OF LEXINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES | |
|--|------------------|
| | % of respondents |
| Visited? | |
| Yes | 78% |
| No | 22% |
| | |
| Quality of facilities | |
| Excellent | 16% |
| Very good | 34% |
| Good | 31% |
| Fair | 16% |
| Poor | 3% |

INTEREST IN NEW FACILITIES / NEED FOR ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

Question: For the following list of existing and potential parks and recreation facilities in Sedona and surrounding areas, please indicate if you or members of your household have a desire/want for these facilities by circling yes or no. Then, for the facilities for which your household members have a desire, please tell us how well your household members' wants are being met.

Interest in facilities

53% or more are interested in:

- ✓ Walking trails (78%)
- ✓ Picnicking areas (64%)
- ✓ Playgrounds (63%)
- ✓ Outdoor event / Performance area (58%)
- ✓ Indoor recreation center (56%)
- ✓ Play areas children with disabilities (55%)
- ✓ Natural areas and wildlife habitats (54%)
- ✓ New neighborhood (walk-to) parks (53%)

42% to 55% are interested in:

- ✓ Public art in the parks (48%)
- ✓ Water access for fishing & boating (46%)
- ✓ Baseball fields (43%)
- ✓ Civic parks / Plazas (43%)
- ✓ Basketball courts (42%)
- ✓ Tennis courts (42%)
- ✓ Softball fields (42%)

40% or fewer are interested in:

- ✓ Community pool (40%)
- ✓ Football fields (39%)
- ✓ Dog park (39%)
- ✓ Overnight camping areas (36%)
- ✓ Soccer fields (34%)
- ✓ Skateboarding and/or BMX park (34%)
- ✓ Volleyball courts (33%)

Desire for new facilities in Lexington

For each facility in which households have an interest, people feel there are not enough of the following facilities. However, the reader is cautioned to note the percentages of households that have an interest in each activity. That is, when the “interest” percentage is low and the “not enough” percentage is high, this represents a vocal minority. That is, special interest groups.

- ✓ Play areas for children with disabilities (85%)
- ✓ Skateboarding and/or BMX park (83%)
- ✓ Public art in the parks (81%)
- ✓ Indoor recreation center (79%)
- ✓ Dog park (78%)
- ✓ Overnight camping areas (80%)
- ✓ Natural areas and wildlife habitats (74%)
- ✓ Outdoor event / Performance area (73%)
- ✓ Volleyball courts (73%)
- ✓ Walking trails (69%)
- ✓ New neighborhood (walk-to) parks (70%)
- ✓ Civic parks / Plazas (64%)
- ✓ Picnicking areas (62%)

| Type of facility | Do you have an interest in this type of facility? | | Please tell us if there are too many, about the right number, or not enough in and around Lexington | | | |
|---|---|-----|---|----------|-------------|------------|
| | Yes | No | | Too Many | About Right | Not Enough |
| Walking trails | 78% | 22% | | 3% | 28% | 69% |
| Picnicking areas | 64% | 36% | | 3% | 35% | 62% |
| Playgrounds | 63% | 37% | | 3% | 51% | 46% |
| Outdoor event / Performance area | 58% | 42% | | 3% | 24% | 73% |
| Indoor recreation center | 56% | 44% | | 2% | 19% | 79% |
| Play areas for children with disabilities | 55% | 45% | | 2% | 13% | 85% |
| Natural areas and wildlife habitats | 54% | 46% | | 3% | 23% | 74% |
| New neighborhood (walk-to) parks | 53% | 47% | | 3% | 27% | 70% |
| Public art in the parks | 48% | 52% | | 2% | 17% | 81% |
| Water access for fishing & boating | 46% | 54% | | 3% | 38% | 59% |
| Baseball fields | 43% | 57% | | 5% | 53% | 42% |
| Civic parks / Plazas | 43% | 57% | | 3% | 33% | 64% |
| Basketball courts | 42% | 58% | | 6% | 41% | 53% |
| Tennis courts | 42% | 58% | | 4% | 55% | 41% |
| Softball fields | 42% | 58% | | 5% | 47% | 48% |
| Community pool | 40% | 60% | | 3% | 30% | 67% |
| Football fields | 39% | 61% | | 5% | 48% | 47% |
| Dog park | 39% | 61% | | 4% | 18% | 78% |
| Overnight camping areas | 36% | 64% | | 3% | 17% | 80% |
| Soccer fields | 34% | 66% | | 4% | 31% | 65% |
| Skateboarding and/or BMX park | 34% | 66% | | 3% | 14% | 83% |
| Volleyball courts | 33% | 67% | | 5% | 22% | 73% |

MOST IMPORTANT FACILITIES

Question: Which four of the above are most important to your household? Please write the letters in the left hand column below for your 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th choices, or circle none

The six most important facilities to Lexington residents are the following.

- ✓ Walking trails (50%)
- ✓ Playgrounds (32%)
- ✓ Indoor recreation center (31%)
- ✓ Outdoor event / Performance area (27%)
- ✓ Picnicking areas (21%)
- ✓ Community pool (20%)

| MOST IMPORTANT FACILITIES | |
|---|------------------|
| | % of respondents |
| Walking trails | 50% |
| Playgrounds | 32% |
| Indoor recreation center | 31% |
| Outdoor event / Performance area | 27% |
| Picnicking areas | 21% |
| Community pool | 20% |
| Natural areas and wildlife habitats | 19% |
| Dog park | 18% |
| Play areas for children with disabilities | 17% |
| Public art in the parks | 15% |
| Overnight camping areas | 12% |
| Water access for fishing & boating | 12% |
| New neighborhood (walk-to) parks | 12% |
| Basketball courts | 11% |
| Tennis courts | 11% |
| Baseball fields | 11% |
| Civic parks / Plazas | 11% |
| Skateboarding and/or BMX park | 10% |
| Volleyball courts | 6% |
| Softball fields | 6% |
| Soccer fields | 3% |
| Football fields | 2% |

REASONS FOR NOT USING LEXINGTON FACILITIES

Question: Please CHECK ALL the reasons you or other members of your household have chosen NOT to use the City of Lexington parks, trails, recreation facilities.

The top five reasons people gave for not using City of Lexington facilities were:

- ✓ Safety concerns (31%)
- ✓ We use services other than City of Lexington (27%)
- ✓ Facility(s) I want are not offered (26%)
- ✓ Facility(s) are not well maintained (22%)
- ✓ Concerns about quality of facilities (20%)

| REASONS FOR NOT USING LEXINGTON FACILITIES | |
|--|------------------|
| | % of respondents |
| Safety concerns | 31% |
| We use services other than City of Lexington | 27% |
| Facility(s) I want are not offered | 26% |
| Facility(s) are not well maintained | 22% |
| Concerns about quality of facilities | 20% |
| Too far from home | 19% |
| Just not interested | 19% |
| Inadequate information / signage | 14% |
| Activity times are not convenient | 12% |
| Not accessible for people with disabilities | 11% |
| Fees are too high | 9% |
| Unhelpful employees | 6% |
| Registration for activities is difficult | 5% |

ALLOCATING BUDGET FOR NEW FACILITIES

Question: Please tell us how you would recommend Lexington allocate \$100 across the categories below. [Please be sure your numbers total \$100]

Respondents would allocate 64% of the budget to the following facilities:

- ✓ Improve existing parks and green space
- ✓ Trails and passive recreational activities
- ✓ Build new indoor recreation facility

| ALLOCATING BUDGET FOR NEW FACILITIES | |
|--|------|
| Improve existing parks and green space | \$25 |
| Trails and passive recreational activities | \$21 |
| Build new indoor recreation facility | \$18 |
| Build sports fields and other active recreational facilities | \$11 |
| Purchase land to preserve open space | \$9 |
| Build new aquatics facilities | \$7 |
| Other | \$9 |

FUNDING UPKEEP OF FACILITIES

Question: Please tell us how you think the City of Lexington should pay for the upkeep of recreation facilities by allocating a percentage to each of the following. Please make sure your numbers total 100%.

Respondents would allocate 75% of the maintenance budget to:

- ✓ User fees
- ✓ General Obligation bond

| FUNDING UPKEEP OF FACILITIES | |
|---|-----|
| User fees - daily, monthly, etc. | 41% |
| General Obligation bond (voter approval required) | 34% |
| Increase Lexington sales tax or property tax to support parks | 13% |
| Other | 12% |

DEMOGRAPHICS

- About two-thirds (65%) of the respondents had one or two people in their households. The average was 2.4 people.
- The median age of respondents was 58.
- Respondents have lived in Lexington for an average of 35 years.
- Most of the respondents were either White/Caucasian (69%) or African American (23%).
- Respondents were split between men (51%) and women (49%).

COMMENTS

We welcome any other comments or suggestions you have regarding parks, trails, open space and recreation in Lexington.

A quarter (24%) of the respondents provided comments at the end of the survey.

New facilities

A skateboarding and/or BMX Park should be a priority. As a member of 1st United Methodist Church and the YMCA, I have seen the damage skateboarders have caused. These children and young adults do not mean to cause damage but have no other place to enjoy their sport. Other cities furnish these facilities.

I hope a bowling alley could be used in some of the old box buildings for young people in stead of spending \$ in surrounding cities.

Do something about these run down houses. Would improve the quality of life.

Not enough activities or playground equipment. Would visit park more often, but they are boring if visited more than once a month.

Build new facilities for people with disabilities. Use federal assistance.

Build bike trail and dog park.

Need more bathrooms.

Dogs on walking trails. Need fenced in walking trail.

Need running trails/tracks.

Whenever money is allocated to green space as opposed to structural development and facilities, the money is far better spent.

Build bike parks.

Build a skate park.

Need a plaza/performance area.

We need a skateboard park.

Need more events that would attract tourists. Need to utilize vacant buildings for train station, indoor mall.

Need bike route and trails through city.

Need green spaces and fewer slum areas.

Better maintenance

You need to put a bathroom at Charles England School. The bathrooms are always a mess at Finch Park, the toilets are messed up, at times no napkins, no toilet paper. We go to these places a lot in the summer and will be checking on them again this coming year.

We love to use the Old City Lake. It has been kept up a little better, but they really should weed eat between the wall and the water. It is a wonderful place but I am concerned about snakes in the overgrown area between the wall and water.

Update bathrooms.

Need general upgrade. Get community involved.

Need to do better getting leaves up on King Street.

Most of the parks can barely be classified as a park.

Grimes Park tennis court is in terrible shape.

Grimes Park could use basketball goals and a volleyball court. Demolish old unusable buildings owned by city uptown and create green spaces or parks until a better use or development arises.

Duck poop, litter, and soil erosion.

Resources need to be spent on existing facilities to improve the aesthetics and expand the walking and jogging trails, especially at Finch Park.

Don't raise taxes

No new taxes. I support the YMCA.

Do not raise any fees that a resident has to pay extra.

Return the money to the taxpayers. We don't need any of these things. The existing facilities are entirely adequate. We don't need a tax increase. Lexington gets plenty of money from property taxes and for overcharging utilities to pay the existing bills.

Cut taxes. Don't fund.

Use existing budget more wisely. No more property tax increases, we just had one this year. Tax rate with local school tax is nearly same as larger cities in area. Maintain what city currently has.

Cut unnecessary funding and salaries.

Safety concerns

There are too many drug related people that stay down there. Not safe.

The ones I use are great. Would love to have a security guard when walking.

There needs to be a light on the park of the walking path behind the tennis court. Because of the dark area, safety is a concern.

When I get off work late and go to a park, I have to worry about the trouble that hangs out there at night.

Gangs and illegals have taken over the parks. Safety is a concern.

Safety in the parks is a concern.

Swimming pool

Swimming access for all ages and races.

Lexington survey2




1. Please rate the physical condition of the following facilities that you or members of your household have used in the past 12 months.





| | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good | Excellent | Rating Average | Rating Count |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Finch Park | 0.0% (0) | 13.3% (2) | 40.0% (6) | 40.0% (6) | 6.7% (1) | 3.40 | 15 |
| Old City Lake Park | 10.0% (1) | 30.0% (3) | 30.0% (3) | 30.0% (3) | 0.0% (0) | 2.80 | 10 |
| Cecil Street Park | 28.6% (2) | 28.6% (2) | 28.6% (2) | 14.3% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 2.29 | 7 |
| Childers Park | 33.3% (2) | 33.3% (2) | 33.3% (2) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 2.00 | 6 |
| Erlanger Park Circle | 16.7% (1) | 33.3% (2) | 0.0% (0) | 16.7% (1) | 33.3% (2) | 3.17 | 6 |
| East 3rd Avenue Park | 57.1% (4) | 14.3% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 28.6% (2) | 0.0% (0) | 2.00 | 7 |
| Robbins Center Park | 37.5% (3) | 25.0% (2) | 25.0% (2) | 12.5% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 2.13 | 8 |
| Fourth Street Park | 0.0% (0) | 83.3% (5) | 0.0% (0) | 16.7% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 2.33 | 6 |
| Grimes Park | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 50.0% (5) | 30.0% (3) | 20.0% (2) | 3.70 | 10 |
| Holt Street Park | 0.0% (0) | 66.7% (4) | 16.7% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 16.7% (1) | 2.67 | 6 |
| Hillcrest Circle Park | 0.0% (0) | 40.0% (2) | 40.0% (2) | 20.0% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 2.80 | 5 |
| Charles England Park | 0.0% (0) | 33.3% (3) | 55.6% (5) | 11.1% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 2.78 | 9 |
| Tussey Street Park | 33.3% (2) | 33.3% (2) | 16.7% (1) | 16.7% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 2.17 | 6 |
| Washington Park | 50.0% (4) | 37.5% (3) | 0.0% (0) | 12.5% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 1.75 | 8 |
| Jaycee Park | 16.7% (1) | 50.0% (3) | 16.7% (1) | 16.7% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 2.33 | 6 |
| Radcliff Park | 14.3% (1) | 42.9% (3) | 28.6% (2) | 14.3% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 2.43 | 7 |
| Smith Avenue Park | 28.6% (2) | 28.6% (2) | 28.6% (2) | 14.3% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 2.29 | 7 |
| Myers Park | 16.7% (1) | 33.3% (2) | 33.3% (2) | 0.0% (0) | 16.7% (1) | 2.67 | 6 |
| Holt-Moffitt Field | 0.0% (0) | 45.5% (5) | 27.3% (3) | 18.2% (2) | 9.1% (1) | 2.91 | 11 |
| Municipal Club tennis courts | 11.1% (1) | 22.2% (2) | 55.6% (5) | 11.1% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 2.67 | 9 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------|----|
| Bingham Tennis Center | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 37.5% (3) | 50.0% (4) | 12.5% (1) | 3.75 | 8 |
| Pickett School | 0.0% (0) | 9.1% (1) | 63.6% (7) | 9.1% (1) | 18.2% (2) | 3.36 | 11 |
| Robbins Center | 14.3% (1) | 42.9% (3) | 28.6% (2) | 0.0% (0) | 14.3% (1) | 2.57 | 7 |
| Washington Park Pool | 25.0% (2) | 62.5% (5) | 0.0% (0) | 12.5% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 2.00 | 8 |
| Radcliffe Park Pool | 22.2% (2) | 55.6% (5) | 11.1% (1) | 11.1% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 2.11 | 9 |
| answered question | | | | | | | 15 |
| skipped question | | | | | | | 0 |

2. Have you or other members of your household visited City of Lexington parks or recreation facilities during the past 12 months?

| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
|-------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------|
| Yes |  | 100.0% | 15 |
| No | | 0.0% | 0 |
| answered question | | | 15 |
| skipped question | | | 0 |

3. How would you rate the overall quality of the City of Lexington Parks and Recreation's facilities in which you or members of your household have participated?

| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Excellent |  | 6.7% | 1 |
| Very good |  | 20.0% | 3 |
| Good |  | 40.0% | 6 |
| Fair |  | 33.3% | 5 |
| Poor | | 0.0% | 0 |
| answered question | | | 15 |
| skipped question | | | 0 |

4. For the following list of existing and potential parks and recreation facilities in Lexington and surrounding areas, please indicate if you or members of your household have a desire/want for these facilities by noting yes or no.

| | Yes | No | Rating Count |
|---|------------|-----------|--------------|
| Community pool | 61.5% (8) | 38.5% (5) | 13 |
| Indoor recreation center | 92.9% (13) | 7.1% (1) | 14 |
| Basketball courts | 75.0% (9) | 25.0% (3) | 12 |
| Volleyball courts | 66.7% (8) | 33.3% (4) | 12 |
| Tennis courts | 75.0% (9) | 25.0% (3) | 12 |
| Baseball fields | 71.4% (10) | 28.6% (4) | 14 |
| Softball fields | 53.8% (7) | 46.2% (6) | 13 |
| Soccer fields | 66.7% (8) | 33.3% (4) | 12 |
| Football fields | 63.6% (7) | 36.4% (4) | 11 |
| Skateboarding and/or BMX park | 58.3% (7) | 41.7% (5) | 12 |
| Playgrounds | 75.0% (9) | 25.0% (3) | 12 |
| Play areas for children with disabilities | 81.8% (9) | 18.2% (2) | 11 |
| Dog park | 63.6% (7) | 36.4% (4) | 11 |
| Walking trails | 92.9% (13) | 7.1% (1) | 14 |
| Picnicking areas | 91.7% (11) | 8.3% (1) | 12 |
| Outdoor event / performance area | 92.9% (13) | 7.1% (1) | 14 |
| Civic parks / Plazas | 75.0% (9) | 25.0% (3) | 12 |
| Natural areas and wildlife habitats | 92.3% (12) | 7.7% (1) | 13 |
| Overnight camping areas | 46.2% (6) | 53.8% (7) | 13 |
| Water access for fishing & boating | 71.4% (10) | 28.6% (4) | 14 |
| New neighborhood (walk-to) parks | 58.3% (7) | 41.7% (5) | 12 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| Public art in the parks | 85.7% (12) | 14.3% (2) | 14 |
| | | Other (please specify) | 4 |
| answered question | | | 15 |
| skipped question | | | 0 |

5. For the facilities for which your household members have a desire, please tell us how well your household members' wants are being met by noting too many, about the right number, or not enough on the scale shown in the table.

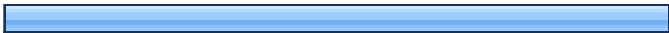


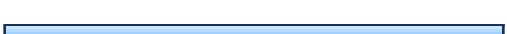

| | Too Many | About Right | Not Enough | Rating Count |
|--|-----------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| A. Community pool | 16.7% (2) | 58.3% (7) | 25.0% (3) | 12 |
| B. Indoor recreation center | 0.0% (0) | 7.7% (1) | 92.3% (12) | 13 |
| C. Basketball courts | 25.0% (3) | 25.0% (3) | 50.0% (6) | 12 |
| D. Volleyball courts | 8.3% (1) | 25.0% (3) | 66.7% (8) | 12 |
| E. Tennis courts | 9.1% (1) | 54.5% (6) | 36.4% (4) | 11 |
| F. Baseball fields | 8.3% (1) | 58.3% (7) | 33.3% (4) | 12 |
| G. Softball fields | 8.3% (1) | 66.7% (8) | 25.0% (3) | 12 |
| H. Soccer fields | 8.3% (1) | 33.3% (4) | 58.3% (7) | 12 |
| I. Football fields | 9.1% (1) | 36.4% (4) | 54.5% (6) | 11 |
| J. Skateboarding and/or BMX park | 0.0% (0) | 25.0% (3) | 75.0% (9) | 12 |
| K. Playgrounds | 23.1% (3) | 61.5% (8) | 15.4% (2) | 13 |
| L. Play areas for children with disabilities | 0.0% (0) | 16.7% (2) | 83.3% (10) | 12 |
| M. Dog park | 0.0% (0) | 30.8% (4) | 69.2% (9) | 13 |
| N. Walking trails | 0.0% (0) | 40.0% (6) | 60.0% (9) | 15 |
| O. Picnicking areas | 0.0% (0) | 46.2% (6) | 53.8% (7) | 13 |

| | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-------------------|----|
| P. Outdoor event / performance area | 0.0% (0) | 20.0% (3) | 80.0% (12) | 15 |
| Q. Civic parks / Plazas | 0.0% (0) | 16.7% (2) | 83.3% (10) | 12 |
| R. Natural areas and wildlife habitats | 0.0% (0) | 23.1% (3) | 76.9% (10) | 13 |
| S. Overnight camping areas | 0.0% (0) | 25.0% (3) | 75.0% (9) | 12 |
| T. Water access for fishing & boating | 0.0% (0) | 36.4% (4) | 63.6% (7) | 11 |
| U. New neighborhood (walk-to) parks | 18.2% (2) | 18.2% (2) | 63.6% (7) | 11 |
| V. Public art in the parks | 0.0% (0) | 28.6% (4) | 71.4% (10) | 14 |

Other (please specify) 2









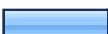


| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| answered question | 15 |
| skipped question | 0 |

6. Which FOUR of the above are most important to your household? Please write the letters in the left hand column below for your 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th choices, or note none.

| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
|------|--|------------------|----------------|
| 1st |  | 100.0% | 12 |
| 2nd |  | 100.0% | 12 |
| 3rd |  | 100.0% | 12 |
| 4th |  | 75.0% | 9 |
| NONE |  | 8.3% | 1 |

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| answered question | 12 |
| skipped question | 3 |

7. Please CHECK ALL the reasons you or other members of your household have chosen NOT to use the City of Lexington parks, trails, recreation facilities.

| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Facility(s) are not well maintained |  | 38.5% | 5 |
| Facility(s) I want are not offered |  | 69.2% | 9 |
| Safety concerns |  | 15.4% | 2 |
| Concerns about quality of facilities | | 0.0% | 0 |
| Too far from home |  | 38.5% | 5 |
| Activity times are not convenient |  | 15.4% | 2 |
| Fees are too high | | 0.0% | 0 |
| Unhelpful employees |  | 7.7% | 1 |
| Not accessible for people with disabilities |  | 7.7% | 1 |
| We use services other than Lexington Parks and Recreation |  | 23.1% | 3 |
| Registration for activities is difficult |  | 15.4% | 2 |
| Inadequate information/signage |  | 38.5% | 5 |
| Just not interested | | 0.0% | 0 |
| Other (please specify) |  | 7.7% | 1 |
| answered question | | | 13 |
| skipped question | | | 2 |

8. Please tell us how you would recommend Lexington allocate \$100 across the categories below. [Please be sure your numbers total \$100]

| | Response Average | Response Total | Response Count |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Improve existing parks and green space | 23.82 | 262 | 11 |
| Purchase land to preserve open space | 4.00 | 32 | 8 |
| Build sports fields and other active recreational facilities | 18.56 | 167 | 9 |
| Build new indoor recreation facility | 43.18 | 475 | 11 |
| Build new aquatics facilities | 7.75 | 62 | 8 |
| Trails and passive recreational activities (picnic areas, trailheads, shade shelters) | 15.20 | 152 | 10 |
| Other | 25.00 | 50 | 2 |
| answered question | | | 12 |
| skipped question | | | 3 |

9. Please tell us how you think the City of Lexington should pay for the upkeep of recreation facilities by allocating a percentage to each of the following. Please make sure your numbers total 100%.

| | Response Average | Response Total | Response Count |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| % Increase the Lexington sales tax or property tax to support parks | 30.00 | 150 | 5 |
| % User fees – daily, monthly, etc. (Users pay as they use facilities) | 30.83 | 185 | 6 |
| % General Obligation bond (voter approval required for project specific infrastructure property tax) | 41.88 | 335 | 8 |
| % Other | 47.14 | 330 | 7 |
| | answered question | | 10 |
| | skipped question | | 5 |

10. Including yourself, how many permanent residents live in your household?

| | Response Count |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 14 |
| answered question | 14 |
| skipped question | 1 |

11. Including yourself, please note the number of people in your household in each of the following age categories.

| | | Response Average | Response Total | Response Count |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | Under 5 | 0.67 | 2 | 3 |
| | 5-9 | 1.00 | 5 | 5 |
| | 10-14 | 1.75 | 7 | 4 |
| | 15-19 | 1.20 | 6 | 5 |
| | 20-24 | 0.67 | 2 | 3 |
| | 25-34 | 1.25 | 10 | 8 |
| | 35-44 | 1.00 | 4 | 4 |
| | 45-54 | 1.80 | 9 | 5 |
| | 55-64 | 1.25 | 5 | 4 |
| | 65+ | 0.00 | 0 | 1 |
| answered question | | | | 14 |
| skipped question | | | | 1 |

12. What is your age?

Response
Count

14

answered question

14

skipped question

1

13. How many years have you lived in the City of Lexington?

Response
Count

14

answered question

14

skipped question

1

14. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?

Response
Percent Response
Count

White/Caucasian



69.2%

9

Hispanic/Latino

0.0%

0

African American/Black



15.4%

2

Native American

0.0%

0

Asian

0.0%

0

Other (please specify)



15.4%

2



answered question

13

skipped question

2

15. Please tell us your gender:

| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Male |  | 64.3% | 9 |
| Female |  | 35.7% | 5 |
| answered question | | | 14 |
| skipped question | | | 1 |

16. We welcome any other comments or suggestions you have regarding parks, trails, open space and recreation in Lexington. Please feel free to attach your comments on a separate sheet of paper.

| | Response Count |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 6 |
| answered question | 6 |
| skipped question | 9 |

National and State Studies on Outdoor Recreation Demand

President's Commission

The President's Commission Report indicated the following significant facts:

The top ten most popular outdoor recreation activities nationwide are:

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Picnicking | Playing sports |
| Driving for pleasure | Fishing |
| Swimming | Attending sporting events |
| Sightseeing | Boating |
| Bicycling | Walking for pleasure |

Activities rapidly growing in popularity are:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Canoeing | Sailing |
| Bicycling | Hiking/backpacking |
| Attending outdoor sports | Walking for pleasure |
| Camping, all types | Water skiing |

The President's Commission report also noted that municipal agencies are providing 39% of the public recreation opportunities.

North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Survey

The North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Survey provided a list of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in the state. The most popular outdoor recreation activities in North Carolina are:

1. Walking for pleasure
2. Driving for pleasure
3. Viewing scenery
4. Beach activities
5. Visiting historical sites
6. Swimming
7. Visiting natural areas
8. Picnicking
9. Attending sporting events
10. Visiting zoos

National Sporting Goods Association Survey

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) conducts an annual study of sports participation. The survey lists the following top activities per million participants. A participant is defined as someone seven years of age or older who participates in a sport more than once within a year for all sports except aerobic exercising, bicycle riding, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, running/jogging, step aerobics, weight lifting, and swimming. For these seven fitness sports, participation is defined as six times or more during the year. The following information reviews the findings for the past ten years.

| Sport | 2010 | 2008 | 2006 | 2004 | 2002 | 2000 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Aerobic Exercising | 38.5 | 36.2 | na | 29.5 | 29.0 | 26.7 |
| Archery (target) | 6.5 | na | na | 5.3 | 4.2 | 4.5 |
| Backpack/Wilderness Camp | 11.1 | 13.0 | 13.3 | 17.3 | 14.8 | 15.4 |
| Baseball | 12.5 | 15.2 | 14.6 | 15.9 | 15.6 | 15.6 |
| Basketball | 26.9 | 29.7 | 26.7 | 27.8 | 28.9 | 27.1 |
| Bicycle Riding | 39.8 | 44.7 | 35.6 | 40.3 | 39.7 | 43.1 |
| Billiards/Pool | 24.0 | 31.7 | 31.8 | 34.2 | 33.1 | 32.5 |
| Boating, Motor/Power | 20.0 | 27.8 | 29.3 | 22.8 | 26.6 | 24.2 |
| Bowling | 39 | 49.5 | 44.8 | 43.8 | 42.4 | 43.1 |
| Camping (vacation/overnite) | 44.7 | 49.4 | 48.6 | 55.3 | 55.4 | 49.9 |
| Canoeing | na | 10.3 | 7.1 | 7.5 | 7.6 | 6.2 |
| Cheerleading | na | 2.9 | 3.8 | 3.8 | na | na |
| Exercise Walking | 95.8 | 96.6 | 87.5 | 84.7 | 82.2 | 81.3 |
| Exercising with Equipment | 55.3 | 63.0 | 52.4 | 52.2 | 46.8 | 44.8 |
| Fishing | 33.8 | 42.2 | 40.6 | 41.2 | 44.2 | 47.2 |
| Football (tackle) | 9.3 | 10.5 | 10.1 | 8.2 | 7.8 | 8.0 |
| Golf | 21.9 | 25.6 | 24.4 | 24.5 | 27.1 | 26.4 |
| Hiking | 37.7 | 38.0 | 31.0 | 28.3 | 27.2 | 24.3 |
| Hunting with Firearms | 16.3 | 18.8 | 19.9 | 17.7 | 19.5 | 19.1 |
| Hunting w/Bow & Arrow | 5.5 | 6.2 | 5.9 | 5.8 | 4.6 | 4.7 |
| In-line Roller Skating | 7.5 | 9.3 | 10.5 | 11.7 | 18.8 | 21.8 |
| Kayaking/Rafting | 5.6 | na | na | na | na | 3.1 |
| Mountain Biking (off road) | 7.2 | 10.2 | 8.5 | 8.0 | 7.8 | 7.1 |
| Paintball Games | 6.1 | 6.7 | 8.0 | 9.4 | 6.9 | 5.3 |
| Running/Jogging | 35.5 | 35.9 | 28.8 | 24.7 | 24.7 | 22.8 |
| Skateboarding | 7.7 | 9.8 | 9.7 | 10.3 | 9.7 | 9.1 |
| Skiing (alpine) | 7.4 | 6.5 | 6.4 | 5.9 | 7.4 | 7.4 |
| Skiing (cross country) | 2.0 | 1.6 | 2.6 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 2.3 |
| Snowboarding | 6.1 | 5.9 | 5.2 | 6.6 | 5.6 | 4.3 |
| Soccer | 13.5 | 15.5 | 14.0 | 13.3 | 13.7 | 12.9 |
| Softball | 10.8 | 12.8 | 12.4 | 12.5 | 13.6 | 14.0 |
| Swimming | 51.9 | 63.5 | 56.5 | 53.4 | 53.1 | 58.8 |
| Yoga | 20.2 | 16.0 | na | na | na | na |
| Target Shooting | 19.8 | 20.3 | 19.1 | 19.2 | 18.9 | 16.9 |
| Tennis | 12.3 | 12.6 | 10.4 | 9.6 | 11.0 | 10.0 |
| Volleyball | 10.6 | 12.2 | 11.1 | 10.8 | 11.5 | 12.3 |
| Water Skiing | 5.2 | 5.6 | 6.3 | 4.7 | 6.9 | 5.9 |
| Weight Lifting | 31.5 | 37.5 | 32.9 | 26.2 | 25.1 | 22.8 |
| Workout at Club | 36.3 | 39.3 | 34.9 | 31.8 | 28.9 | 24.1 |

SOURCE: National Sporting Goods Association, Mt Prospect, IL 60056

