



## **Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division**

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# ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF MASTER PLAN PROCESS AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

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The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan process is a vital component of local government operations. Its purpose is to assess the current state of affairs regarding the provision of community parks, recreation and open space services, stimulate an open public discussion of future needs for community parks, recreation and open space programs, services, areas and facilities, and establish a plan of action for the future growth and development of community parks, recreation and open space services. The end product of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan process provides the city and the parks and recreation division a viable blueprint and plan of action to guide the future orderly growth and development of the community's comprehensive parks and recreation system. This section of the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* contains a brief synopsis of the community characteristics of the City of Wilmington, a quick description of the public input portion of the planning process, and a summary of the master plan recommendations.



## ***Community Characteristics***

The City of Wilmington is a rapidly growing, predominantly residential coastal community, located in New Hanover County in southeastern North Carolina. It is bordered by the Cape Fear River and Brunswick County to the west; the Town of Carolina Beach to the south; the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway and the Town of Wrightsville Beach to the east; and, New Hanover County to the north. The City was first chartered in 1739 and is now considered the cultural, educational and economic center of southeastern North Carolina. Wilmington is the ninth largest city in North Carolina and comprises 54.3 square miles or approximately 27.4% of the total land area of New Hanover County (198.35 square miles). According to the 2000 United States Census, Wilmington boasted a population of 75,838 residents or 47.3% of the total population of New Hanover County (160,307 residents). A July 1, 2007 United States Census Bureau estimate placed the population at 99,623 with a density of 1,849.8 persons/square mile. The population of Wilmington is projected to increase to approximately 109,000 residents by the year 2010 or 55.3% of the anticipated New Hanover County total population (197,000 residents) and to approximately 115,000 residents by the year 2015.

## ***Public Input***

A significant amount of time and effort was expended identifying the desires, needs and interests of the citizens of the City of Wilmington for parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities. To this end, the citizens of the City of Wilmington were provided the following opportunities to directly and actively participate in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan process:

- Two (2) public meetings were facilitated
- Specific and detailed interviews were conducted with four (4) key community parks and recreation stakeholders
- Key parks and recreation stakeholders were identified and participated in a Focus Group discussion
- The City's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board comprised of selected local stakeholders met on several additional occasions to discuss and provide input into the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan process and document

- Parks and Recreation Survey instrument was administered by the City of Wilmington’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to city residents

### ***Summary of Recommendations***

The *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* outlines the existing and anticipated parks and recreation needs for the City of Wilmington. The Master Plan primarily focuses on the issues and challenges of **1)** land acquisition, **2)** area and facility development, **3)** program and service development, **4)** policy and procedure considerations, and **5)** personnel considerations.

While focusing on these five (5) identified issues and challenges, the *Master Plan* also acknowledges the facts that **1)** the City of Wilmington has been successfully working under the 2003 – 2008 Parks and Recreation Master Plan; **2)** the City of Wilmington is the largest municipality in New Hanover County and includes more than 50% of the total county population; **3)** New Hanover County is one of the smallest counties in North Carolina and the City of Wilmington is closely impacted by parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities provided by New Hanover County itself and the three additional incorporated municipalities of the Town of Wrightsville Beach, the Town of Carolina Beach and the Town of Kure Beach; and, **4)** the economic and fiscal environment in and surrounding the City of Wilmington is not currently, nor expected to be over the next 5 years, supportive of a high-dollar Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan detailing significant and costly parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities recommendations. With these perimeters in mind, this Master Plan makes specific recommendations for the next five (5) year operating budget period (2010 – 2015) while at the same time identifying several issues and challenges for the City of Wilmington beyond the calendar year 2015.

#### ***1. Land Acquisition—2010 – 2015 Budget Years***

The acquisition of land should be a priority for the City of Wilmington over the next five (5) year period. In particular, the City should pursue **1)** the acquisition of the land necessary to complete the downtown River Walk as well as a park at the north end near the Holmes Bridge and a park at the south end near the Memorial Bridge; **2)** jointly acquiring in partnership land suitable for a Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex; **3)** the acquisition of land suitable for the construction of a Recreation

Center/Gymnasium/Indoor Sports Complex; **4)** acquiring land for a neighborhood park in the area between Bradley Creek and Hewletts Creek; **5)** the acquisition of land for public access to the City's creeks, rivers, estuaries and sounds; **6)** acquiring the land necessary to successfully complete the *Cross-City Trail* and the recommendations of the *Walk Wilmington: Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan*; and, **7)** obtaining other undeveloped lands that are affordable and/or offer specific advantages for parks, recreation and open space. These acquisitions could be through outright purchases individually or in partnership with other agencies and organizations, but they could also include land donations, eminent domain acquisitions, gifts, leases and conservation easements.

## ***2. Area and Facility Development—2010 – 2015 Budget Years***

In terms of area and facility development, recommendations include, but are not limited to; **1)** the construction of a Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex; **2)** the continued planning and development of the Citywide pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular transportation system in concert with the *Cross-City Trail* and the *Walk Wilmington: Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan*; **3)** the construction of a major park in the downtown area of the City; **4)** the completion of the downtown River Walk; **5)** the completion of all phases of Olsen Park; **6)** the construction of a winterized dome over the Shipp Pool at Legion Sports Complex or the Murphy Pool at Robert Strange Park; **7)** the development of public water access facilities at the City's creeks, rivers, sounds and estuaries; and, **8)** the development of a neighborhood park in the area between Bradley Creek and Hewletts Creek

## ***3. Program and Service Development—2010 – 2015 Budget Years***

Expanded parks and recreation programs and services are needed for; **1)** small children and youth, particularly non-athletic/non-sports related programs and services; **2)** opportunities and experiences for persons with disabilities; and, **3)** in the area of environmental education and nature-oriented opportunities beyond those offered at Halyburton Park. Although the need for these general types of programs and services was identified through multiple sources during the needs assessment procedure, specific programs and services in these categories were not identified. It is therefore recommended that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board conduct a

comprehensive random telephone survey of City of Wilmington residents to determine the exact programs and services the people want in the identified categories. This random telephone survey would best be conducted by an outside consultant or agency.

#### ***4. Policy and Procedure Considerations—2010 – 2015 Budget Years***

The *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* discusses several policy and procedure changes impacting the delivery of parks and recreation services to city residents. Policy and procedure considerations presented in the Master Plan include, but are not limited to; **1)** the establishment of new and the expansion of existing formal partnerships and cooperative arrangements with interested community agencies and organizations such as the New Hanover County Parks Department and the New Hanover County School System; **2)** the creation of a non-profit “Friends of Parks, Recreation and Open Space Foundation”; **3)** enhancing and expanding the marketing and publicity of parks and recreation programs and services; **4)** increasing and improving the public awareness, publicity and communication of programs and services offered; and, **5)** the redesign and closure of a portion of Water Street to vehicular traffic.

#### ***5. Personnel Considerations—2010 – 2015 Budget Years***

Consistent with the development of significant parks and recreation areas and facilities, the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* identifies the need for approximately 3 – 6 additional full-time and 20 – 45 additional part-time/seasonal personnel between the 2010 – 2011 and 2014 – 2015 budget cycles. Beyond 2015, the master plan identifies the need for approximately 5 – 8 full-time and 18 – 36 additional part-time/seasonal personnel.

#### ***Highlights of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan***

In summary, the major focus of City efforts over the next five (5) years should be:

- ✚ The acquisition of land, in partnership, conjunction and cooperation with the New Hanover County Parks Department, the New Hanover County School System and other appropriate agencies, organizations and special interest groups, for a Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex

- ✦ The acquisition of land for a Recreation Center/Gymnasium/Indoor Sports Complex
- ✦ The completion of Olsen Park, in conjunction and cooperation with the New Hanover County Parks Department
- ✦ The construction of a Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex, in conjunction and cooperation with the New Hanover County Parks Department, the New Hanover County School System and other appropriate agencies, organizations and special interest groups
- ✦ The continued planning and development of the *Cross-City Trail* and *Walk Wilmington* recommendations
- ✦ The construction of a downtown city park
- ✦ The creation of a non-profit “Friends of Parks, Recreation and Open Space Foundation”
- ✦ Improved marketing, publicity and advertising of parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities through the creation of a comprehensive marketing, public relations and advertising plan
- ✦ The completion of the downtown River Walk and the corresponding representative parks at either end of the facility
- ✦ The completion of the comprehensive pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular transportation system
- ✦ The acquisition of land for a neighborhood park in the area between Bradley Creek and Hewletts Creek
- ✦ The construction of a neighborhood park in the area between Bradley Creek and Hewletts Creek
- ✦ The protection of Eagles Island
- ✦ The acquisition and development of public water access facilities
- ✦ The expansion of programs and services for small children, youth and people with disabilities
- ✦ The expansion of environmentally related programs and services
- ✦ The administration of a comprehensive random telephone survey to determine specific programs and services to be provided

- ✚ The creation and employment of several additional individuals to be employed within the current Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division

The *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* is intended to be a working document that is not encumbered by hypothetical or academic scenarios that hold little practical application in the real world. This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan gives the citizens, managers and administrators of the City of Wilmington solid recommendations that are both feasible and realistic but challenging given the economic, political, cultural and social climates of the time and area.

Standards developed and recommended by organizations such as the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR), Division of Parks and Recreation were considered and evaluated in the preparation of this Master Plan. These general standards were judged only to be guidelines to be considered and not requirements to be met. A listing of these general standards is presented in Chapter 6 of this document as well as specific standards for the City of Wilmington.

It is also worth noting that property development and growth in the Wilmington area over the last ten (10) years has gotten ahead of the parks, recreation and open space system's capacity and capability to provide adequate programs, services, areas and facilities for the citizens of the City of Wilmington. This places the city in an unenviable position of trying to "catch up" to the demand for parks, recreation and open space needs. This fact will require the community to be patient and supportive in its efforts to fund the recommendations contained in this document. It also means that key leadership in the City of Wilmington must decide what level of need they are willing to support and to what extent they are willing to ask the citizens of the city to support and fund the parks, recreation and open space recommendations contained in this master plan.





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## ***CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION***

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The purpose of this *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* is: (1) to identify and define the parks, recreation and open space needs and interests of the citizens of Wilmington; and, (2) to provide a recommended, practical, comprehensive plan of action for meeting the immediate and long-range parks, recreation and open space needs and interests for services, programs, areas and facilities in the City of Wilmington.

The City of Wilmington currently offers its residents and visitors a wide variety of recreational opportunities and experiences through the Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division. This division provides a diversity of recreation and leisure opportunities and experiences and unique amenities for the City of Wilmington and its residents and visitors. Opportunities and experiences for leisure fulfillment and enjoyment provided by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division include, but are not limited to: Special Services/Recreation Programs,

Recreation Facilities and Support, Athletics, Community Centers, a Golf Course and Downtown Services.

As stated by the Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Strategic Plan: *The purpose of these programs is to provide citizens with a diversity of recreation and leisure opportunities, experiences, and unique amenities. These programs and services offer significant psychological, physiological, sociological, cultural, environmental, and economic benefits by reducing health care costs, decreasing job turnover and contributing to the net local, regional and national economy through tourism.*

### ***Benefits of Parks and Recreation Programs and Services***

Individuals are universally beginning to accept the notion that well-planned, well-organized and well-managed parks, recreation and open space services, programs, areas, and facilities improve the quality of life within a community. Actual participation in parks and recreation and leisure programs and services provides benefits for both the individual involved in the activity and for society in general. DeGraff et al (1999) have identified five categories of individual and social benefits of parks and recreation and leisure—psychological benefits, psycho-physiological benefits, sociological and cultural benefits, economic benefits, and environmental benefits. These benefits are still identified and accepted today.

Individual psychological benefits include better mental health and health maintenance, personal development and growth, and, personal appreciation and satisfaction. In addition to these psychological benefits, psycho-physiological individual benefits of parks and recreation and leisure participation include increased bone mass and strength in children, decreased body fat and obesity, increased life expectancy, and, cardiovascular benefits—including prevention of strokes.

Environmental benefits of parks and recreation and leisure involvement encourage environmental preservation, the preservation of cultural/heritage/historic sites and areas, an increased understanding of human dependency on the natural world, and proper stewardship and preservation of natural areas and sites.

From a social and cultural standpoint, participation in parks and recreation and leisure enhances and highlights ethnic identity and cultural diversity, supports community

integration, provides an enhanced world-view, reduces social alienation, and, increases community satisfaction and family bonding.

Finally, parks and recreation and leisure participation and involvement offer significant economic benefits. The economic benefits of parks and recreation services and programs include reduced health costs, decreased job turnover, local and regional economic growth, and, contribution to the net national economic development and the international balance of payments through tourism (DeGraff et al, 1999).

### ***Demand for Parks and Recreation Programs and Services—Trends***

Parks and recreation programs and services were major forces in the economic and social life of twentieth century America and they will continue to be significant forces in the twenty-first century. Parks and recreation services and programs are a product of industrialization and the leisure-work trade-off. As industrialism increased during the twentieth century, workers sought outlets in the form of leisure. As a result of this search for leisure, an organized system of programs and services emerged to meet the leisure needs, expectations, interests and desires of these workers and their families. The City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division is an excellent example of one of the functioning components of this system.

Most of the accepted indicators utilized to estimate the future demand for parks and recreation programs and services lead one to believe that the demand for parks and recreation programs and services will continue to increase throughout the twenty-first century and beyond. Few services and industries over the last fifty years have expanded more rapidly than those associated with individuals' recreation and leisure behavior.

Several new trends in parks and recreation programs and services for the twenty-first century have been identified in the research literature. These new trends are the result of the gradual acceptance of an entrepreneurial and marketing-based emphasis in many parks and recreation agencies created by the new pressure to develop facilities and programs that lend themselves to fiscal self-sufficiency and universal accessibility. One of the more visible outcomes of this recognition is the recent development and operation by parks and recreation agencies of multifaceted, state-of-the-art indoor recreation facilities that are universally accessible and include fully equipped weight and exercise rooms, full-size gymnasiums, swimming pools, and in many cases meeting rooms, food

courts, and other specialized areas. Other trends include the demand for services for an aging population; the demand for walking, hiking, biking and greenway trails; merging the needs of an increasing Hispanic population with the needs of other program participants; and, addressing the overall population obesity concerns (Recreation Resources Services— [www.cnr.ncsu.edu/rrs](http://www.cnr.ncsu.edu/rrs)).

Population, demographics, and trends in lifestyles also have an impact on the type and amount of parks and recreation services and programs demanded by citizens. For example, as the overall size of the population in an area increases, so does the demand for parks, recreation and open space services and programs. As the age of the population increases the demand for alternative types of parks, recreation and open space programs and services expands. The demand for parks, recreation and open space programs and services also changes and increases with the influx of population diversity, such as Hispanics and individuals from different regions of the United States. And finally, lifestyle changes, such as the wellness and fitness craze and increasing environmental awareness, contribute to the demand for parks, recreation and open space programs and services.

Five core constraints have been identified by various researchers that hinder the actual satisfaction of an individual's demand for parks and recreation programs and services. These core constraints or barriers to participation in parks, recreation and open space programs and services are 1) lack of interest, 2) lack of money, 3) lack of time, 4) lack of the necessary skills and abilities, and 5) lack of facilities (Edginton et al., 1998). It is incumbent upon each professional parks and recreation agency to eliminate or minimize to the greatest extent possible the impact of each of these barriers to participation in the parks and recreation programs and services provided.

### ***Purpose of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan***

The purpose of the ***City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*** is to assess and determine the recreation and leisure needs, goals, objectives, and priorities of the citizens, elected officials, appointed officials, administrators and staff of the City of Wilmington. The ***City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*** is intended to serve as a long-range, comprehensive, practical planning document and policy guide for public policy decisions

pertaining to the quantity, quality, location, and scope of parks and recreation services, programs, areas and facilities. The Master Plan also makes recommendations regarding the administration, acquisition, development and operation of these parks and recreation services, programs, areas and facilities.

The *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* is organized into eleven (11) sections:

1. Executive Summary of Master Plan Process and Recommendations
2. Chapter One: Introduction
3. Chapter Two: Master Plan Goals and Objectives
4. Chapter Three: City of Wilmington Characteristics and Demographics
5. Chapter Four: Inventory of Existing Programs, Services, Areas and Facilities
6. Chapter Five: Assessment of City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Open Space Needs
7. Chapter Six: Parks and Recreation Standards
8. Chapter Seven: Master Plan Proposals and Recommendations
9. Chapter Eight: Implementation Plan
10. Appendices

The scope of the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* was delimited to the existing jurisdiction of the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division. However, the analysis recognized the fact that residents of the City of Wilmington are also residents of New Hanover County and that New Hanover County includes three other municipalities (Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach and Kure Beach) in addition to the City of Wilmington. As a result, the parks and recreation needs and resources of the entire County are factored into the analysis and assessment process in recognition of the fact that individuals' recreation and leisure involvement patterns and preferences are not normally restricted and limited by municipal or county boundaries and jurisdictions.



## ***Previous Community Studies and Assessments***

The following previous studies and assessments were consulted and examined in the preparation of the ***City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan***:

- a. City of Wilmington 2003 – 2008 Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- b. New Hanover County Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space, January 2006
- c. Town of Carolina Beach 2008 – 2013 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan
- d. Town of Wrightsville Beach 2007 – 2012 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan
- e. Wilmington Downtown Plan: Vision 2020
- f. Wilmington – New Hanover County CAMA Land Use Plan Update and Comprehensive Plan 1997 – 2010
- g. Cape Fear River Corridor Master Plan
- h. Walk Wilmington: Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan

## ***Community Services Department Mission***

*“To improve the quality of life for all City residents regardless of age or economic standing”*

## ***Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division Mission Statement***

*The Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division provides citizens with a diversity of recreation and leisure opportunities, experiences, and unique amenities. These programs and services offer significant psychological, physiological, sociological, cultural, environmental, and economic benefits by contributing to reductions in health care costs, decreasing job turnover and contributing to the net local, regional, and national economy through tourism.*

## ***Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division Goal and Objectives***

**Goal:** To ensure the community has equal opportunity and access to amenities such as open space, recreational programs and facilities by promoting opportunities that maximize the use of available land and facilities.

**Objective:** To provide positive outlets for social interactions, physical activity, and environmental awareness and to increase the sense of community through programming that improves quality of life.

**Objective:** To provide the community with facilities that offer various recreational opportunities and amenities.

**Objective:** To provide individual and team activities to youth and adults that offer physical, social and psychological benefits.

**Objective:** To provide infrastructure support and management in the downtown district.

**Objective:** To preserve the municipal golf course and provide excellence in public service.

**Objective:** To develop programs that provide high quality care, education and developmental experiences for youth.

### ***Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Mission Statement***

*The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board strives to effectively assess the wishes of the citizens of Wilmington regarding the needs, planning, and management for the quality of parks, facilities, and recreation programs while advocating for the improvement of these programs"*





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## ***CHAPTER TWO: MASTER PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES***

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Contained within this chapter of the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* are the overall goals and objectives of the planning process and the master plan itself. It is with these goals and objectives in mind that the planning process was conducted and the structure of the master plan formulated.

The City of Wilmington has experienced significant growth and development throughout the 1990's and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The result of this growth and development has been the exertion of tremendous pressures upon the City to adequately and sufficiently meet the demand and need for public services. It is the overall aim of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan to offer a practical framework for analyzing and evaluating the current level of parks, recreation and open space services provided by the City of Wilmington and to supply a strategic agenda for the realistic attainment of the projected parks, recreation and open space needs and interests of the citizens in the immediate future.

A clear and dynamic vision of the future and statements of concrete goals and objectives based upon that vision are important elements of a successful Master Plan. The vision statement provides the target to be achieved. Goals and objectives provide the concrete and tangible structure, guidance and direction. In addition, clear and concise goals and objectives assist in the definition of overall public policy and aid in decision-making during the planning and implementation phases of the Master Plan process. However, a progressive and successful parks and recreation delivery system for the City of Wilmington will require long-term commitment and coordinated action by all stakeholders in order to achieve these goals and objectives. This long-term commitment and coordinated action must be coupled with an effective program of overall citizen involvement in and support for parks and recreation programs and services.

### **Vision\***

- ◆ To provide a comprehensive and responsive parks, recreation and open space delivery system for the City of Wilmington that encourages and protects the historical and cultural integrity of the area while embracing open communication and collaboration and cooperation among various public, private, commercial and not-for-profit entities

### **Goals and Objectives\***

- ◆ **Goal #1—ACCESSIBILITY**

Provide and ensure now and in the future for easily accessible, conveniently located and equitably distributed recreation and leisure areas, facilities, programs, services, experiences and opportunities to serve the needs and interests of all citizens of the City of Wilmington including, youth, teenagers, adults, seniors, persons with disabilities, the economically disadvantaged and anyone requiring special considerations

- ✚ Objective A—to improve the access to all parks and recreation areas, facilities, programs and services
- ✚ Objective B—to add public water accesses where possible
- ✚ Objective C—to enhance pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular movement

- ✦ Objective D—to raise the public’s awareness of and appreciation for individuals with accessibility needs
- ◆ **Goal #2—*HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INTEGRITY***

Emphasize, accentuate and protect the unique cultural, historical and heritage aspects of the City of Wilmington

  - ✦ Objective A—to continue the development and enhancement of the Downtown Riverwalk
  - ✦ Objective B—to protect the integrity of the downtown historic district
  - ✦ Objective C—to enhance and promote the overall heritage and cultural ambiance of the City of Wilmington
  - ✦ Objective D—to increase programs and services emphasizing local heritage and culture
- ◆ **Goal #3—*OPEN COMMUNICATION***

Encourage and foster a sense of open communication between the citizens of the City of Wilmington and the Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division

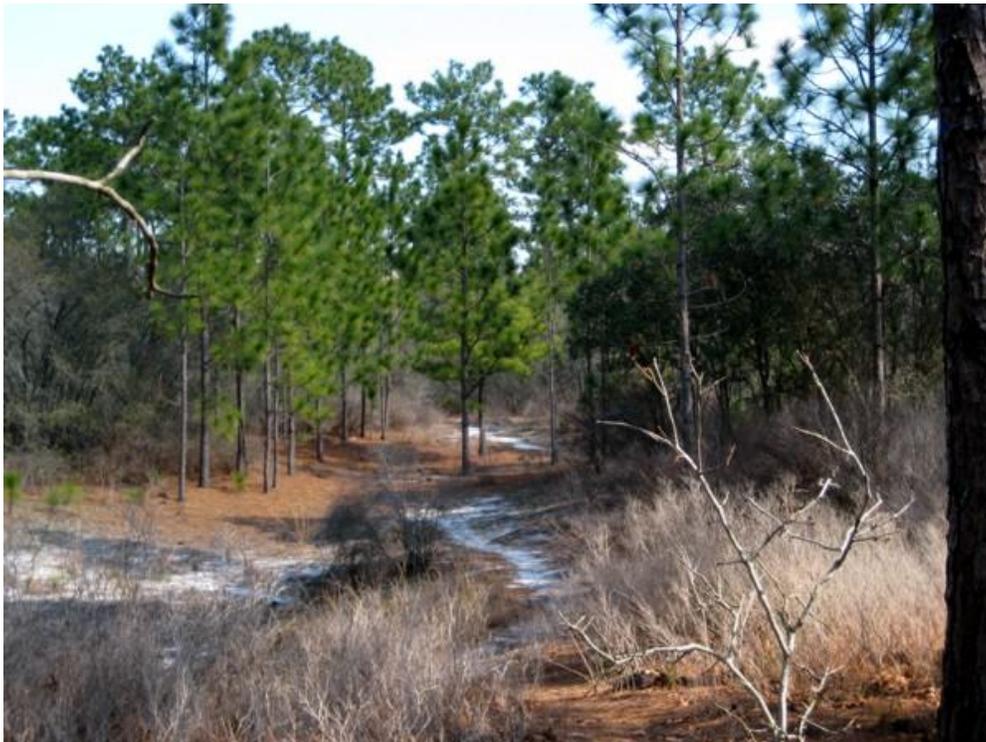
  - ✦ Objective A—to improve and enhance all agency public relations, marketing and customer service initiatives
  - ✦ Objective B—to remove barriers to citizen participation in the parks, recreation and open space planning process
  - ✦ Objective C—to increase citizen involvement and input into the parks, recreation and open space planning and implementation processes
  - ✦ Objective D—to establish new avenues of communication between residents and agency staff
- ◆ **Goal #4—*COLLABORATION***

Provide a manageable and effective framework for working with and through other stakeholders in and around the City of Wilmington

  - ✦ Objective A—to improve and/or develop close collaborative relationships with non-governmental agencies interested in parks and recreation issues

- ✚ Objective B—to expand and enhance cooperative efforts and communication with the Town of Carolina Beach, the Town of Wrightsville Beach, the Town of Kure Beach and New Hanover County
  - ✚ Objective C—to work closely with the New Hanover County Board of Education to enhance and improve the public’s use of and access to public school areas and facilities
  - ✚ Objective D—to improve and/or develop close collaborative relationships with local special interest groups interested in parks and recreation issues
- ◆ **Goal #5—*SAFETY***
- Provide safe and secure parks, greenways, open space areas, trails, bike paths, recreation programs and services, and, leisure opportunities and experiences for every citizen of the City of Wilmington
- ✚ Objective A—to make Water Street as pedestrian accessible, free of obstructions and available for recreation opportunities and experiences as possible
  - ✚ Objective B—to provide safe and enjoyable places for children, youth, adults, seniors and families to engage in parks and recreation programs and services
  - ✚ Objective C—to reduce safety concerns and issues in all parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities
  - ✚ Objective D—to enhance the public’s knowledge and awareness of safety and security issues related to parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities
- ◆ **Goal #6—*CONSERVATION***
- Ensure the protection and conservation of the natural resources and environmental quality in and surrounding the City of Wilmington
- ✚ Objective A—to preserve, conserve and facilitate maximum utilization of the Cape Fear River and the downtown waterfront of Wilmington
  - ✚ Objective B—to work with other interested parties and agencies to ensure the continued preservation of and recreational access to Eagles Island

- ✚ Objective C—to implement “green” practices in the planning, construction, evaluation and operation of all parks and recreation program, services, areas and facilities
- ✚ Objective D—to improve and expand parks and recreation programs and services related to environmental education and sustainable tourism



*\*The Vision, Goals and Objectives for the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan were developed in conjunction and collaboration with the members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board*



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## ***CHAPTER THREE: CITY OF WILMINGTON CHARACTERISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS***

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### ***Location/Geography/Natural Resources***

It is beyond the scope of this study to describe the specific and particular physical and geographical characteristics of the City of Wilmington in great detail. It is important, however, to set forth in brief form those characteristics that have significant implications for meeting parks, recreation and open space needs and interests in the City of Wilmington.

Wilmington is located in the southeastern portion of North Carolina and is the largest of four incorporated areas within New Hanover County. The City is bound on the west by the Cape Fear River and Brunswick County and on the east by the Intra-coastal waterway and the Town of Wrightsville Beach. Unincorporated areas of New Hanover County are to the north and south of Wilmington. The City of Wilmington is located approximately 60 miles from Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base to the northeast and approximately 125 from Fort Bragg Army installation to the northwest. Major roads

leading in and out of Wilmington include Interstate 40, U.S. Highway 421, U.S. Highway 74/76, and, U.S. Highway 17.

New Hanover County is the second smallest county in North Carolina covering approximately 185 square miles. Wilmington itself covers approximate 54.3 square miles or 27.4 % of the land area of New Hanover County. New Hanover County forms a peninsula bound on the east by the Atlantic Ocean and on the west by the Cape Fear River. Wilmington is the county seat of New Hanover County.

The City of Wilmington was first settled in 1733 and chartered in 1739. Wilmington is named after Spencer Compton the Earl of Wilmington in England. The area surrounding Wilmington is rich in cultural and historical heritage, supports a broad-based economy, and includes miles of beautiful beaches and protected coastal waterways, sounds, tidal creeks and estuaries. Wilmington's maritime location provides a climate that is unusually mild with an average January temperature of 44 degrees and an average July temperature of 79 degrees. The average annual rainfall for the area is 56 inches.

The topography of Wilmington is relatively flat with elevations typically around 38 – 40 feet above sea level or less. The low-lying, flat terrain is characterized by sandy soils covered with loblolly and long leaf pines and various species of hardwood trees. There are numerous creeks, rivers, and lakes in and around Wilmington supporting large expanses of freshwater and coastal wetlands and bottomland swamps.

The largest employers in and around Wilmington include the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, General Electric, Corning, Inc., Wal-Mart, Harris Teeter, Food Lion, Pharmaceutical Products Development (PPD), Belk Berry, the New Hanover County School System, Cape Fear Community College, and, local governments. Tourism is currently the second largest industry and major employer in the Wilmington area and continues to grow each year.

### ***General Demographics***

Source: [www.census.gov/main.www/cen2000.html](http://www.census.gov/main.www/cen2000.html)

The City of Wilmington is the largest municipality in New Hanover County. The City's population increased approximately 57% from 55,030 residents in 1990 to 75,838 in 2000. The population of Wilmington was estimated to reach 95,944 residents by 2006. The 2009 figures put the population of the City of Wilmington at 99,623 people.

According to the 2000 Census, 35.5% of the population of Wilmington had never been married, 41.8% was married, 3.4% was separated, 8.7% was widowed, and 10.5% was divorced. The male population was 35,397 (47%) and the female population was 40,441 (53%). 3.7% of the population was foreign born.

### **Families and Population in Families**

As of the Census of 2000, the City of Wilmington included 34,359 family households with 17,351 families residing in the city. The population density was 1,849.8 people per square mile. Of the 34,359 households, 20.4% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 33.5% were married couples living together, 14.0% had a female householder with no husband present, and 49.5% were non-families. 36.6% of all households were made up of individuals and 11.3% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.10 and the average family size was 2.77.

### **Age Groups**

For 2000 in the City of Wilmington, the population was spread out with 18.4% under the age of 18, 17.2% from 18 to 24, 28.5% from 25 to 44, 20.6% from 45 to 64, and 15.3% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 34 years (Appendix C). For every 100 females there were 87.5 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 85.0 males.

### **Income Characteristics**

The median household income in 2000 in Wilmington was \$31,099. The median income for a family was \$41,891. Males had a median income of \$30,803 versus \$23,423 for females. The per capita income for the city was \$21,503. About 13.3% of families and 19.6% of the population were below the poverty line, including 25.9% of those under the age of 18 and 12.0% of those ages 65 or over.

The 45 – 54 year old age group has the highest household income level in the City of Wilmington at \$43,788 compared to a North Carolina level of \$51,070 and a national level of \$56,300. As one would expect, the 25 and younger age group has the lowest household income level at \$14,074. This amount is lower than the North Carolina level of \$23,201 and the national level of \$22,679.

Whites have the highest household income level at \$25,366 while Blacks or African Americans have an income level of \$12,132 per household.

### **Ethnicity**

Of the 98,825 persons listed in the 2000 Census, 97,983 (99.1%) belonged to one race and 842 (0.9%) were of 2 or more races. 72,159 (73.0%) were White, 21,303 (21.6%) were Black or African American, 506 (0.5%) were American Indian and Alaska Native, and 2,975 (3.0%) were some other race.

### **Educational Attainment**

According to the 2000 Census data, 36.6% of the City's population 25 and older were high school graduates (includes equivalency), 28.9% had some college or an associate's degree, 22.5% had a Bachelor's degree, and 8.5% had a Master's degree, professional or doctorate degree. Of the City's population 3 years and over enrolled in school, 9.8% were in Pre-School or Kindergarten, 41.6% were in Grades 1 – 12, and 48.6% were in College.

### **Disability Status**

16.8% (15,420) of the population (99,623) of the City of Wilmington over the age of 5 have a disability. This figure is higher than the national average. 7,604 (18.0%) of the male population 5 years old and older (42,245) and 7,798 (15.8%) of the female population 5 years old and older (49,355) have a disability. 7.3% (866) of the population between the ages of 5 to 15 years (11,858) have a disability; 13.9% (9,219) of the population between the ages of 16 to 64 years (66,329) have a disability; and 39.8% (5,338) of the population 65 years old and over (13,413) have a disability.

### **Populations Projections**

Data providing accurate municipal population projections is not readily produced or available and does not take into account future municipal annexation projects. Therefore, official population projections were conservatively factored into the recommendations contained within this document.

## ***Summary of Existing Population and Economic Characteristics***

The City of Wilmington, like most of New Hanover County, is growing at a rapid pace. The permanent population of the City increased approximately 57% from 55,030 residents in the 1990 US Census to 75,838 in the 2000 US Census. By the 2004 population count, the permanent population had reached 93,500 people. The population of Wilmington as projected by the 2004 Census was estimated to reach 98,600 residents by 2010. However, the 2009 numbers put the population of the City of Wilmington at 99,623 people. Revised population projections estimate the city population to be 109,000 by 2010 and 115,000 by 2015. These figures show that the population of the City of Wilmington is quickly growing but at a little slower rate than from 1990-2000 but at a greater rate than projected in 2004.

A little less than the majority of the City of Wilmington's residents are married (41.8%) and 20.4% of the 34,359 households in the City of Wilmington have children under the age of 18 living with them. The average household size is 2.10 and the average family size is 2.83. The largest age group living in the City is the 20 – 24 age range (11.1%). 50.2% of the residents of the City of Wilmington are between the ages of 25 – 64 and only 24.7% are under the age of 18. 14.0% of the residents are 65 years of age or older. These numbers suggest that the majority of residents of the City of Wilmington are married, over the age of 25 and without children.

The residents of the City of Wilmington are relatively educated with 71.8% having at least a high school education and almost 50% having at least some college experience. The median household income (\$37,099) is below the North Carolina and United States median figures. However, the median household income for the 65 – 74 age range (\$33,269), and the median household income for the 75 and older age range (\$23,239) are higher than the North Carolina and United States median figures. These facts lead one to conclude that older adults are the better educated and wealthier segment of the City of Wilmington population.





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## ***CHAPTER FOUR: INVENTORY OF EXISTING PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AREAS AND FACILITIES***

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The City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation, and Downtown Services Division provides a diversity of leisure opportunities and experiences and unique, exceptional amenities for the citizens of Wilmington. A broad range of general and specialized programs and services are offered including recreation programs for all ages, special events, parks, athletic opportunities and experiences, a municipal golf course and community centers, just to name a few. The Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division provides outlets for social interaction, physical activity, environmental awareness, and to support community integration through creative programming for the total family and to make a positive impact towards their quality of life. The Division also maintains and improves all recreation amenities throughout the City, including basketball courts, softball/baseball fields, tennis courts, multi-use fields, and Legion Stadium. In addition to the programs and services provided by the Parks, Recreation, and Downtown Services Division, the citizens of the City of Wilmington can and do receive leisure service opportunities and experiences from numerous other public, private, commercial and not-for-profit organizations and agencies. Of the programs, services, areas and facilities provided by agencies and organizations other than the City of Wilmington only

those that could impact the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* are included in this inventory. This inventory acknowledges that the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division does partner with local civic groups in order to provide more enjoyable and cost-effective recreation, sports, youth and adult programs and special events.

**City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division**  
**“PARKS AND GREEN SPACES”**

This inventory of “parks” was obtained from the City of Wilmington’s web-site located on the Internet at: [www.wilmingtonnc.gov/cityparks/tabid/239/Default.aspx](http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/cityparks/tabid/239/Default.aspx). The City of Wilmington currently maintains and operates approximately 500 acres of landscaped parks, green spaces, medians, public buildings and athletic facilities. All of the City’s parks are open from sunrise to sunset.

**✚ NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS—17 Parks totaling 41.7 acres**

**Beaumont Park—3 acres**

- ◆ Location—Wayne Drive
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Playgrounds
  - b. Open space
  - c. Picnic areas
  - d. Basketball courts

**Cameron Park—3 acres**

- ◆ Location—Southern Boulevard
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Water fountains
  - b. Playgrounds
  - c. Tennis courts
  - d. Open space
  - e. Shelters
  - f. Picnic areas
  - g. Basketball courts
  - h. Lighted facilities

**Church and Nun Park—0.50 acres**

- ◆ Location—Church and Nun Streets
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Picnic areas

**Hanover Heights—0.50 acres**

- ◆ Location—Adelaide Drive
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Playground
  - b. Picnic areas

**HemenwayPark—1 acre**

- ◆ Location—206 N 5<sup>th</sup> Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Water fountains
  - c. Playgrounds
  - d. Lighted facilities
  - e. Picnic areas

**Kennedy Park—1 acre**

- ◆ Location—Plaza Drive
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Playgrounds

**Love Grove—3 acres**

- ◆ Location—Wynnwood Drive
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Playgrounds
  - b. Open space
  - c. Picnic areas
  - d. Grills
  - e. Basketball courts
  - f. Athletic fields
  - g. Lighted facilities
  - h. Water fountains

**Maides Park—15 acres**

- ◆ Location—1101 Manley Avenue
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Parking lot
  - b. Restroom facilities
  - c. Water fountains
  - d. Playgrounds
  - e. Walking trail



- f. Open space
- g. Shelters
- h. Picnic areas
- i. Grills
- j. Basketball courts
- k. Athletic fields
- l. Lighted facilities
- m. Recreation Center

**Mother's Park—0.10 acres**

- ◆ Location—Camden Circle
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Playgrounds
  - b. Picnic areas

**Northside Park—5 acres**

- ◆ Location—Bess Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Playgrounds
  - b. Parking lot
  - c. Open space
  - d. Shelters
  - e. Basketball courts
  - f. Swimming pool
  - g. Splash pad
  - h. Picnic areas

**Nunalee Park—2 acres**

- ◆ Location—17<sup>th</sup> & Church Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Picnic areas

**Rankin Park—2 acres**

- ◆ Location—10<sup>th</sup> & Rankin Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Playgrounds
  - c. Basketball courts
  - d. Lighted facilities

**Southgate Park—0.50 acres**

- ◆ Location—Hollins & Pershing Court
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Playgrounds
  - b. Planting beds
  - c. Picnic areas

**Sunset & Adams Park—0.10 acres**

- ◆ Location—Sunset & Adams Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Playgrounds

**Tower Park—2 acres**

- ◆ Location—9<sup>th</sup> Street – Dawson to Wooster
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Water fountains
  - c. Basketball courts
  - d. Lighted facilities
  - e. Parking lot

**Triangle Park—1 acre**

- ◆ Location—Wrightsville & Mercer Avenue
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space

**Wallace Park—2 acres**

- ◆ Location—Market Street to Metts Avenue
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Playgrounds
  - c. Basketball courts
  - d. Athletic fields
  - e. Lighted facilities
  - f. Picnic areas

 **CITY-WIDE PARKS—13 Parks totaling 449.7 acres**

**Claude Howell Park—0.10 acres**

- ◆ Location—Water Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Passive area
  - c. Planting beds

**Davis Park—0.50 acres**

- ◆ Location—Red Cross at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Planting beds

**Dram Tree Park—0.10 acres**

- ◆ Location—Foot of Castel Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Parking lot
  - b. Passive area

- c. Boat ramp
- d. Planting beds

**Empie Park—33 acres**

- ◆ Location—3300 Block of Park Avenue
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Parking lot
  - c. Restroom facilities
  - d. Water fountains
  - e. Playgrounds
  - f. All Children’s playground
  - g. Tennis courts
  - h. Shelters
  - i. Picnic areas
  - j. Basketball courts
  - k. Athletic fields
  - l. Lighted facilities
  - m. Passive area
  - n. Planting beds

**Greenfield Park—250 acres**

- ◆ Location—Hwy 421 South – Burnett Boulevard
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Passive area
  - c. Amphitheatre
  - d. Parking lots
  - e. Restroom facilities
  - f. Water fountains
  - g. Playgrounds
  - h. Tennis courts
  - i. Shelters
  - j. Picnic areas
  - k. Grills
  - l. Concession stand
  - m. Lighted facilities
  - n. Multi-purpose trail
  - o. Planting beds



**Halyburton Park—58 acres**

- ◆ Location—4099 South 17<sup>th</sup> Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Handicapped accessible 1.3 mile walking/bike trail
  - b. Picnic areas/shelters
  - c. Playground areas
  - d. Events Center
  - e. Environmental Education Center



**Hilton Park—3 acres**

- ◆ Location—North 4<sup>th</sup> Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Parking lot

**Innis Park—1 acres**

- ◆ Location—3<sup>rd</sup> and Princess Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Passive area
  - c. Planting beds

**Legion Stadium Park/Sports Complex—25 acres**

- ◆ Location—Carolina Beach Road
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Parking lot
  - c. Restroom facilities
  - d. Tennis courts
  - e. Picnic areas
  - f. Athletic fields
  - g. Lighted facilities
  - h. Swimming pool
  - i. Planting beds



**McCrary Park—42 acres**

- ◆ Location—Randall Parkway
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Parking lot
  - c. Shelters
  - d. Picnic areas
  - e. Grills
  - f. Passive area
  - g. Planting beds

**Optimist Park—5 acres**

- ◆ Location—Front Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Parking lot
  - b. Restroom facilities
  - c. Water fountains
  - d. Concession stand
  - e. Athletic fields
  - f. Lighted facilities

**Robert Strange Park—15 acres**

- ◆ Location—8<sup>th</sup> and Ann Street
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. Open space
  - b. Parking lot
  - c. Restroom facilities
  - d. Water fountains
  - e. Playgrounds
  - f. Tennis courts
  - g. Shelters
  - h. Concession stand
  - i. Basketball courts
  - j. Athletic fields
  - k. Lighted facilities
  - l. Swimming pool
  - m. Recreation Center
  - n. Planting beds
  - o. Picnic areas

**Wade Park—17 acres**

- ◆ Location—3500 Bethel Road
- ◆ Amenities
  - a. ½ half mile long, 10 foot wide multi-use path
  - b. Restrooms
  - c. Picnic shelter
  - d. Playground

- e. Open play area
- f. Building
- g. Educational interpretative signage

 **GREENSPACES**

1. Acadia Circle—0.10 acres
2. Bike Path
3. Bullock Park—4 acres
4. Country Club Circle—0.10 acres
5. Hanna Block—0.10 acres
6. Magnolia Circle—0.10 acres
7. Mary Bridgers Park—3 acres
8. Mimosa Circle—0.10 acres
9. Princess Place Water Tower—1 acre
10. 17<sup>th</sup> Street Park—58 acres
11. Thomas B. Lilly Park—1 acre
12. Trolley Stop—0.10 acres



**City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division**  
**“SPECIAL FACILITIES AND CENTERS”**

This inventory of “special facilities” was obtained from the City of Wilmington’s web sites locate on-line at:

<http://www.ci.wilmington.nc.us/Departments/CommunityServices/ParksRecreationDowntownServices/DowntownServices/Docking.aspx>;

<http://www.ci.wilmington.nc.us/Departments/CommunityServices/ParksRecreationDowntownServices/RecreationPrograms/Boxing.aspx>;

<http://www.ci.wilmington.nc.us/Departments/CommunityServices/ParksRecreationDowntownServices/RecreationPrograms/GreenfieldAmphitheater.aspx>;

<http://www.ci.wilmington.nc.us/Departments/CommunityServices/ParksRecreationDowntownServices/RecreationPrograms/SkatePark.aspx>;

and;

<http://www.ci.wilmington.nc.us/Departments/CommunityServices/ParksRecreationDowntownServices/RecreationPrograms/CityPools.aspx>

◆ **Boxing & Physical Fitness Center—302 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street**

Opened in September 1999, the center provides the opportunity for individuals and families to enjoy many of the same activities found at local health clubs for a fraction of the cost. The center offers free weights, weight machines, treadmills, stationary bikes and stair-climbers as well as aerobics classes. The center also provides programs including: Strength Training, Fitness Assessments, Exercise Programming, Cardio Training, Aerobic Training, and Certification Workshops.

◆ **Swimming Pools**

The City operates three public outdoor swimming pools and a “Splash Pad”, open each summer from Memorial Day weekend through mid-August, Mondays through Saturdays. The pools remain open on Saturdays from mid-August through Labor Day. All pools are handicap accessible and equipped with bathhouses. Swimming lessons are offered at the Legion Sports Complex pool and the Southside Stingrays Association Swim Team hold their practices and swim meets there.

- ◆ Legion Sports Complex (Shipp/Southside Pool)—2131 Carolina Beach Road



- ◆ Northside Park (Jackson Pool)—750 Bess Street



- ◆ Robert Strange Park (Murphy Pool)—401 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street



- ◆ **Greenfield Grind Skatepark**

The Greenfield Grind Skatepark is a 9,000 square foot, all concrete facility located at Greenfield Lake consisting of multi-bowls with a banked street course. The park features a variety of hips, rails, and ledges.



- ◆ **Fragrance Garden**

The Greenfield Park Fragrance Garden is easily accessible from Carolina Beach Road (US 421 South) and Tennessee Avenue. The garden contains natural beauty mirrored by the reflective waters, thousands of colorful azaleas, towering oaks, magnolias, and seasonal landscapes. The Fragrance Garden is an ideal setting for weddings.

- ◆ **Amphitheater**

The Greenfield Lake Amphitheater is a 39-year old facility located off West Lake Shore Drive inside Greenfield Park. It was constructed in 1962

to fill a need for outdoor concert space in the Wilmington community, and today is still the only amphitheater in southeastern North Carolina. It is currently home of Cape Fear Shakespeare, North Carolina's oldest free Shakespeare Festival with free performances taking place every weekend in June. The amphitheater has recently undergone renovations to add new seating. Additional improvements include a covered stage with adjoining restrooms, new concessions, and public restrooms. The amphitheater is available for booking concerts and other special events.



◆ **Downtown Boat Docking Facilities**

The City of Wilmington offers docking facilities for transient and short-term boaters. Usable bulkhead space is available at the foot of Market Street. In addition, there is 975 feet of linear face docks along Market Street, in front of the downtown Hilton and at the Conlon docks; 11 floating slips behind the Coastline Inn; and 200 feet of commercial dock/bulkhead space at London Wharf. The city also manages 265 feet of bulkhead/mooring space along Riverfront Park.

◆ **Municipal Golf Course**

The Municipal Golf Course, located at 311 Wallace Avenue, is designed to provide the public with a quality, championship 18-hole golf course at affordable prices. The course is host to both men's and women's City Championships.



◆ **Community/Recreation Centers**

The City of Wilmington maintains and operates three (3) Community/Recreation Centers:

***Information On-line at:***

<http://www.ci.wilmington.nc.us/community/recintervention.htm>

- Derick G. S. Davis Center—1101 Manly Avenue
- Hemenway Center—507 McRae Street
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Center—401 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street

**City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division**  
**“ATHLETICS, PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS”**

This inventory of “athletics, programs and special events” was obtained from the City of Wilmington’s web sites located on-line at:

<http://www.ci.wilmington.nc.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=SPJemNHkvGc%3d&tabid=218;>

<http://www.ci.wilmington.nc.us/Departments/CommunityServices/ParksRecreationDowntownServices/RecreationPrograms/Fit4Fun.aspx;>

<http://www.ci.wilmington.nc.us/Departments/CommunityServices/ParksRecreationDowntownServices/SpecialEvents.aspx;>

and,

<http://www.ci.wilmington.nc.us/Departments/CommunityServices/ParksRecreationDowntownServices/RecreationPrograms/Athletics.aspx>

The City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division offers the following athletics, programs and special events:

✦ **General athletics, programs and special events**

Aerobics, archery, badminton, 3 on 3 basketball, bocce ball, book club, bowling, cardio kickboxing, ceramics, cheerleaders, fun walk, golf, horseshoes, Pilates, nature walks (all ages), senior runners, shuffleboard, softball, step by step body jam (dance), table tennis (singles and doubles), Tae Kwon Do, tennis, tone & tighten I and II, youth track and field, T-ball, water aerobics, walking club, yoga, softball and basketball leagues, youth sports leagues, youth swimming classes, tennis clinics, BB & T open/city adult tennis championship, Southside Stingrays Association swim team, fitness programs, Wilmington dog jog, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Riverfront celebration, backpacking trips, backyard wildlife, adventure sprint, day

trips, backpacking, lighting of the World's Largest Christmas Tree and the Farmers' Market

✚ **Fit for Fun Center**

Located at 302 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, the Fit for Fun Center is a parent-child interaction center where parents and their children up to the age of 5 can participate in meaningful learning activities and fun. The inclusive center is exclusively designed for children from birth to five years of age and the adults who care for them. Developmental play equipment is available for maximum gross motor exercise.

✚ **Adventure Pathways**

Adventure Pathways is a unique program that invites participants to explore the world around them through adventurous activity. Activities provided to the community include trips to various parts of North Carolina and Virginia, whitewater rafting in North Carolina and South Carolina, youth adventure camps, canoe and kayak trips throughout the state and much more.

✚ **Senior Programs**

The senior program for adults 55 and older provides the opportunity for social interaction and physical activity. A wide variety of programming is offered to this segment of the population including tennis, tone & tighten, ceramics classes, and more.

✚ **Athletics**

The athletics section provides opportunities for participation in team and individual sports including leagues, classes, special events, and tournaments for youth and adults. Leagues for adults include basketball, tennis and softball. For children, basketball and tennis leagues are provided. Classes are also scheduled throughout the year for people who want to be introduced to a new sport. Three swimming pools are also operated by the athletic section. Athletics also acts as a public resource, providing referrals for area recreation and sports related organizations and information about statewide events and competitions.

✚ **Day Trips**

Day trips of all types for all ages are scheduled to various locations in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

✚ **Special Olympics**

Special Olympics Wilmington provides year-round sports training and athletic competition for more than 600 athletes. The goal is to help bring all persons with intellectual disabilities into the larger society under conditions whereby they are accepted, respected and given a chance to become productive citizens. Along with year-round sports training and athletic competition, social activities are locally provided such as summer camp, dance socials, and special events. Competition and training is for athletes ages 8 and older and young athletics is for kids 2 to 7 years of age. Twelve (12) sports are offered including: soccer, tennis, bocce and bowling, cheerleading, basketball, aquatics, golf, gymnastics, track and field, power-lifting and softball. Special Olympics Wilmington strives to

provide programs that are appropriate to the age and ability level of each athlete, from motor activities to the most advanced competition.

### *Other Public Parks and Recreation Events, Areas and Facilities*

◆ *Azalea Festival*



- ◆ *Cape Fear Museum of Science and History*
- ◆ *Carolina Beach State Park*
- ◆ *Fort Fisher State Historic Site*
- ◆ *Fort Fisher State Recreation Area*
- ◆ *North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher*
- ◆ *Masonboro Island National Estuarine Research Reserve*
- ◆ *New Hanover County Arboretum*
- ◆ *New Hanover County Department of Social Services Senior Center*
- ◆ *New Hanover County Public Library*
  
- ◆ *New Hanover County Parks Department*
  - Airlie Gardens—67 acres of gardens and 10 acres of freshwater lakes; 1 1/8 mile walking trail
  - Arrowhead Park—24 acres
    - Playground equipment, picnic shelter, 2 tennis courts, restrooms, multi-purpose court, ball field
  - Blair – Noble School Park—32 acres
    - 3 lighted baseball fields with seasonal concessions, 2 lighted tennis courts, multi-purpose court, restrooms, picnic shelter
  - Bradley Creek School Park—8 acres
    - Playground equipment, multi-purpose court, multi-purpose soccer/football field
  - Cape Fear Optimist Park—11 acres
    - 7 baseball/softball fields, restrooms/concession
  - Carolina Courtyard—adjacent to downtown library
  - Castle Hayne Regional Park—50 acres

- Ball field, playground equipment, 2 picnic shelters, restrooms, disc golf course, 2 soccer/football fields, 2 lighted tennis courts
- Hugh MacRae Athletic Complex—20 acres
  - Lighted baseball field, 3 lighted softball fields, 4 soccer fields, restrooms, seasonal concessions
- Hugh MacRae Park—98 acres
  - Lighted tennis courts, playgrounds, ball fields with seasonal concessions, an equestrian ring, a pet exercise area, 6 picnic shelters, picnic tables, grills, restrooms, garden, gazebo, pond
- Hugh MacRae Nature Trail
- Kings Grant Park—5 acres
  - Baseball/softball field, picnic shelter, basketball court, playground equipment, swing set
- Monterey Heights Park—2.5 acres
  - Playground equipment, ball field
- Myrtle Grove Middle School Park—7 acres
  - 2 Little League ball fields, softball/baseball field, soccer field, restroom, seasonal concessions
- Ogden Park—160 acres
  - 3 lighted baseball fields, lighted softball field, 2 lighted soccer/football fields, lighted youth football stadium, 6 lighted tennis courts, playgrounds, restrooms, seasonal concessions, picnic area with 3 shelters, walking/jogging trail, pet exercise area
- Parkwood Recreation Area—7 acres
  - Basketball court, baseball/softball field, picnic shelter, playground equipment, swings
- Pine Valley School Park—6 acres
  - Soccer/football fields, playground equipment, multi-purpose court
- River Road Park—11 acres
  - Fishing/observation pier, playground, restrooms, picnic shelter
- Riverside Park—4 acres
  - 2 fishing/observation piers, picnic shelters, community building with full kitchen, gazebo
- Roland-Grise School Park
  - Baseball field, 2 soccer fields, fitness trail, restrooms, seasonal concessions
- Snow's Cut Park—24 acres
  - 3 picnic shelters, 2 gazebos, 4 water accesses, playground, restrooms
- Summer Rest Trail—1.5 miles with parking off Eastwood Road
- Trask Middle School Park—7 acres

- 2 lighted baseball/softball fields, 4 soccer fields, restrooms, seasonal concessions
- Veteran's Park—212 acres
  - Tennis courts, picnic areas, stadium/track, playground equipment, softball/baseball fields, soccer fields, football fields, basketball courts, concessions, restrooms
- ◆ **Public Boat Ramps**
  - Carolina Beach State Park—Pleasure Island
  - Dram Tree Park—End of Castle Street
  - Federal Point—Terminus of U.S. 421 near Fort Fisher
  - Greenfield Lake—West Lakeshore Drive
  - Northeast Cape Fear River—At Castle Hayne
  - Sutton Lake Road—Off U.S. 421 North
- ◆ **Riverfest**
- ◆ **UNC Wilmington**
  - Brooks Baseball Stadium, Trask Coliseum, the Natatorium, Student Recreation Center, Soccer Stadium, Boseman Softball Stadium, Track, numerous intramural fields, tennis courts, outdoor basketball courts, Hanover Gymnasium, Gazebo Park, High and low Ropes Course, Kenan Auditorium, Herbert Blumenthal Memorial Wildflower Preserve, Lumina Theatre
- ◆ **Zeke's Island National Estuarine Research Reserve**

### **New Hanover County Public School Sites**

- **Elementary Schools**
  - ❖ E.A. Alderman, Edwin A. Anderson, H.C. Bellamy, J.J. Blair, Bradley Creek, Carolina Beach, Codington, College Park, Eaton, Forest Hills, Gregory School of Science, Math and Technology, Holly Tree, M.W. Howe Pre-Kindergarten, D.B. Johnson, Lake Forest Academy, Murrayville, NHCS Pre- Kindergarten Center, Ogden, Parsley, Pine Valley, Rachel Freeman School of Engineering, J.C. Roe Pre-Kindergarten, Snipes, Sunset Park, M.C. Williams, Winter Park, Wrightsboro and Wrightsville Beach
- **Middle Schools**
  - ❖ Murray, Myrtle Grove, Noble, Roland-Grise, Emma B. Trask, D.C. Virgo and Williston
- **High Schools**
  - ❖ Ashley, J.T. Hoggard, Isaac Bear Early College, E.A. Laney, Mosley Performance Learning Center, New Hanover, Wilmington Early College

*Private, Commercial, Non-Profit, and Church Recreational Events, Areas and Facilities*

- ◆ *ATA Black Belt Academy, Aikido-Garden of the Spring Wind Dojo, Battleship North Carolina, Beau Rivage Resort and Golf Club, Bellamy Mansion Museum, Belvedere Country Club, Brigade Boys and Girls Club, Burgwin-Wright Museum, Cameron Art Museum, Cape Fear Country Club, Cape Fear Cycling Club, Cape Fear Fencing, Cape Fear Nautilus Fitness Center, Cape Fear Optimist Little League, Cape Fear Soccer Association, Cape Golf and Racquet Club, Captain Bill's, Cardinal Bowling Lanes, Carolina Gymnastics Academy, Champion Karate and Kickboxing Center, Choe's Hap Ki Do Academy, Coastal Horizons, Coastal Tumblegym, Community Arts Center, Community Boys and Girls Club, Curves for Women, Diamond Body Center, Eagle Point Golf Club, Echo Farms Golf and Country Club, First Baptist Church Activity Center, Fitness for Life, Inc., Fly Trap Downs, Gold's Gym—3 locations, Grace Baptist Church, Gymnastics Unlimited, Holly Tree Racquet Club, Hurricane Cycling Club, Jellybeans Skating Center, Jungle Lagoon Miniature Golf, Jungle Rapids Family Fun Park, Landfall Country Club, Latimer House Museum, Louise Wells Cameron Art Museum, Masonboro Optimist Little League, Myrtle Grove Presbyterian Church Family Life Center, Peak Performance, Personal Wellness Studio, Pine Valley Country Club, Pine Valley Methodist Church Activity Center, Pop Warner Football and Cheerleading, Port City Spokesmen, Port City Diesel Football, Porter's Neck Country Club, Premier Cheerleading, Racine Center for Art, Scooters Family Skating Center, Screen Gems Studio, Seaside Yoga, Second Wind Fitness Center, Senior Softball Association, Southern Dance Explosion, SPA Health Club, St. Mary Catholic Church Gymnasium, St. Matthew Lutheran Church Gymnasium, Sutton Lake, Tee It Up Golf and Learning Center, Ten Pin Alley, Thalian Hall Center for the Performing Arts, The Cape Golf and Racquet Club, Tot-Em-In Zoo, Trinity United Methodist Church Family Life Center, Valley Golf Center and Driving Range, Walden's Gym, Wilmington Athletic Club, Wilmington Children's Museum, Wilmington Gallery, Wilmington Hammerheads Soccer, Wilmington Railroad Museum, Wilmington Roadrunners, Wilmington Sharks Baseball, Wilmington Ultimate Frisbee Federation, Wilmington Wave Rockers Basketball, Winter Park Optimist Little League, World Fitness Gym, Wrightsville Beach Museum of History, YMCA of Wilmington and the YWCA of Lower Cape Fear*



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## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

# **ASSESSMENT OF CITY OF WILMINGTON PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE NEEDS**

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A Needs Assessment is defined as a systematic exploration of the “*way things are*” and the “*way they should be.*” A typical Needs Assessment is a four-step process:

1. Perform a “Gap” Analysis—identify the “*current state of affairs*” and the “*desired state of affairs.*” The difference is the “*need*”.
2. Identify priorities and importance
3. Identify causes of problems and/or opportunities
4. Identify solutions and make recommendations

Chapter Four—Inventory of Existing Programs, Services, Areas and Facilities of this document gives us a very good picture of the “*way things are*” and the “*current state of affairs.*” This chapter, Chapter Five—Assessment of the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Open Space Needs, provides the information collected from all sources important to the delivery of parks and recreation services in the City of Wilmington area in relation to the “*way things should be*” and the “*desired state of*

*affairs*” and identifies priorities and importance. Chapter Seven—Master Plan Proposals and Recommendations completes the Needs Assessment process.

**1. *Community and Citizen Input on Parks, Recreation and Open Space Needs and Priorities—Public Meetings/Public Workshops (2)***

Direct community and citizen input received at two (2) public meetings/public workshops scheduled and conducted on October 20, 2008 at Halyburton Park with 35 citizens in attendance and November 13, 2008 at the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center with 57 citizens in attendance was utilized to provide an initial understanding and assessment of the specific expressed parks, recreation and open needs and priorities of the citizens of the City of Wilmington. This input from the City of Wilmington residents was then analyzed and synthesized along with other information to provide guidance and direction in the establishment of the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*.

Ms. Tara Duckworth, Recreation Superintendent, opened both of the meetings/workshops by welcoming the attendees and giving a brief synopsis of the recent bond referendum and the City’s interest in developing an updated comprehensive parks, recreation and open space master plan. Ms. Duckworth then stressed to those in attendance the importance of public participation in the overall comprehensive master plan process and introduced Dr. Jim Herstine, Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina Wilmington and the consultant hired by the City of Wilmington to lead the comprehensive master plan process. Dr. Herstine led each of the public meetings/public workshops by asking the following questions:

1. What facilities are you currently using for parks and recreation activities?
2. What parks and recreation activities do you currently participate in?
3. What parks and recreation activities would you like to participate in that are not currently provided?
4. What issues and areas of interest should the City of Wilmington master plan address?
5. Do you have any additional questions or comments?



The information collected and discussed at each of the public meetings/public workshops regarding Questions 3, 4 and 5 is summarized below:

**Halyburton Park Environmental Education Center—October 20, 2008**

◆ **Input Identification—Programs, Services, Areas, and Facilities “Needs”**

**THE CITY NEEDS:**

- ◆ A full-service Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex
- ◆ A major park in the downtown area
- ◆ A comprehensive system of bike and walking/hiking trails that are separate from each other if possible
- ◆ Additional softball/baseball fields for both youth and adults
- ◆ Additional soccer fields for both youth and adults
- ◆ Additional programs and services for people with disabilities
- ◆ Improved and increased access to the Cape Fear River and other water bodies for people and watercraft
- ◆ Continued improvement and enhancement of the existing neighborhood parks
- ◆ Increased and improved lighting on existing ball fields
- ◆ More open space and green areas
- ◆ To complete Olsen Park
- ◆ To protect Eagles Island
- ◆ Parks in the recently annexed areas of the City of Wilmington
- ◆ To add amenities such as picnic areas to the existing neighborhood parks
- ◆ To provide outdoor sand volleyball courts
- ◆ A Kiddies Zoo

◆ **Input Identification—Policy and Personnel “Considerations”**

**THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER:**

- ◆ Improved and increased cooperation and assistance with local clubs and groups participating in parks and recreation services and programs
- ◆ Working with New Hanover County government, the New Hanover County School System and other entities to provide the Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex
- ◆ Increased and improved cooperation between the City and the County parks and recreation agencies
- ◆ Increasing the Parks and Recreation Advisory Boards involvement in the purchase/sale/transfer of City property
- ◆ Keeping as much vehicular traffic off Water Street as possible

- ◆ Increased and improved cooperation between the City of Wilmington and the Towns of Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach and Kure Beach parks and recreation agencies
- ◆ Implementing a parks, recreation and open space provision in the City's Subdivision Ordinance
- ◆ Improved and increased cooperation between the City's Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division and the City's Planning Department
- ◆ Consolidation of the City and County parks and recreation agencies

**The highlights of the comments and recommendations from this public meeting are the need:**

1. for the City and County to complete the construction of the proposed Olsen Park
2. for a comprehensive Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex to be provided in cooperation with the New Hanover County Parks Department, the New Hanover County School System and other appropriate and interested groups, organizations and entities
3. for a major park in the Downtown Wilmington area
4. for neighborhood parks in the recently annexed areas of the City of Wilmington
5. for the completion of the comprehensive non-vehicular (biking and walking trails) transportation system
6. to make Water Street as pedestrian-user friendly as possible
7. for the City Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division to coordinate and cooperate closely with all parties interested in parks and recreation issues in the City of Wilmington to include, but not be limited to, local youth and adult athletic organizations, the New Hanover County Parks Department, the parks and recreation entities for the Towns of Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach and Kure Beach and the City Planning Department
8. to consider the consolidation of the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division and the New Hanover County Parks Department

**Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center—November 13, 2008**

- ◆ **Input Identification—Programs, Services, Areas, and Facilities “Needs”**

**THE CITY NEEDS:**

- ◆ Canoe and kayak access to the Cape Fear River
- ◆ A Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex with 8 lanes, a 50 meter pool, a diving well, and an extra side pool
- ◆ The completion of the proposed Olsen Park
- ◆ Additional programs and services for people with disabilities
- ◆ Expansion of the existing Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center

- ◆ Additional softball, baseball and soccer fields beyond those that will be provided at Olsen Park
  - ◆ Additional outdoor basketball courts
  - ◆ Indoor gymnasiums for basketball and other indoor sporting activities
  - ◆ A comprehensive network of bike and walking trails
- ◆ **Input Identification—Policy and Personnel “Considerations”**

**THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER:**

- ◆ Improving the ADA accessibility of the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center and all public parks and recreation areas and facilities
- ◆ Improving and increasing the advertising and announcing of City parks and recreation programs and services
- ◆ Improving the maintenance of outdoor ball fields
- ◆ The City, County and New Hanover County School Board jointly planning and constructing a Natatorium/Swimming Complex in cooperation with local swimming clubs and teams
- ◆ Protecting and safeguarding the area on Eagles Island



**The highlights of the comments and recommendations from this public meeting are the need:**

1. for the City and the County to complete the construction of the proposed Olsen Park
2. for a comprehensive Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex that is a joint venture between the City and several other governmental and non-governmental entities
3. to expand the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center and to provide additional indoor basketball facilities/gymnasiums at other locations
4. the construction of additional indoor gymnasiums
5. to provide canoe and kayak access to the Cape Fear River
6. to complete the comprehensive non-vehicular (bike and walking trails) transportation system
7. to protect Eagles Island
8. to improve the advertising and announcing of City parks and recreation programs and services



2. ***Community and Citizen Input on Parks, Recreation and Open Space Needs and Priorities—Interviews with Selected Key Stakeholders (4)***

A purposive, deliberate sample of City of Wilmington stakeholders was selected and each individual interviewed by Dr. Jim Herstine, Ph.D. regarding his/her opinions concerning parks, recreation and open space needs and priorities. The stakeholders interviewed were Myrna Wexler—(February 2, 2009), Matt Williard—(February 2, 2009), Clark Hipp—(February 9, 2009) and Gary Shell—(February 16, 2009).

The interviewees were individually asked to address the following questions:

1. How is the parks and recreation department doing now? Address programs, services, structure, accessibility even maintenance—good and bad points.
2. What should the parks and recreation department be focusing on in the future? Address programs, services, structure, accessibility even maintenance—good and bad points. What is your vision for the department for the next 5-years? Where do we need more parks, facilities, and open spaces? What types of programs, services, areas and facilities should the department offer?
3. If you were the crown monarchy for a day, had absolute authority to accomplish anything you wanted and had all the money available that you needed, what would be the five (5) things you would like to see the city doing in terms of parks, recreation and open space that it is either not doing now or could be doing better in terms of programs, services, areas and facilities?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add?

This input from the City of Wilmington stakeholders was then analyzed and synthesized to provide guidance and direction in the establishment of the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*.

The information generated from the interviews is anonymously summarized below:

◆ **Input Identification—Programs, Services, Areas and Facilities “Needs”**

**THE CITY NEEDS:**

- ◆ Additional ball fields for softball, baseball and soccer
- ◆ To improve the maintenance of existing areas and facilities

- ◆ Provide additional programs and services for people with disabilities and other special needs
- ◆ A comprehensive, coordinated and safe network of biking and walking trails
- ◆ A park in the downtown area
- ◆ A comprehensive, multi-purpose recreation complex
- ◆ To provide additional tennis courts
- ◆ Additional outdoor focused programs and services for youth
- ◆ To offer more programs and services that promote kids play and get kids involved in outdoor sports and activities
- ◆ Water access for people and boats to area creeks, sounds and rivers
- ◆ To provide parks and amenities in the newly annexed areas

◆ **Input Identification—Policy and Personnel “Considerations”**

**THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER:**

- ◆ Providing easy and greater access to all City amenities
- ◆ Increasing coordination and cooperation with the New Hanover County School Board for use of school areas and facilities
- ◆ Making all areas and facilities environmentally friendly by utilizing “green alternatives” such as solar energy
- ◆ Establishing Parks and Recreation as a separate, independent department
- ◆ Protecting the open and green spaces around the City

◆ **Top “Recommendations/Needs” as identified by the Selected Interviewees  
(Not in Priority Order)**

1. Acquire and protect open and green space in and around the City
2. Complete the comprehensive non-vehicular (bike and walking trails) transportation system
3. Provide a park in downtown Wilmington
4. Reorganize parks and recreation as a separate, independent department within City government
5. Increase cooperation and coordination between other agencies and organizations
6. Provide additional areas for softball, baseball, soccer and tennis
7. Improve and enhance existing programs, services, areas and facilities
8. Provide a new, comprehensive, multi-purpose recreation complex

**3. *Community and Citizen Input on Parks, Recreation and Open Space Needs and Priorities—Unsolicited Comments Received From Interested Stakeholders***

Several city residents submitted unsolicited comments and recommendations for the parks, recreation and open space master plan via E-mail and the regular postal service. This input from the City of Wilmington residents

was then analyzed and synthesized along with other information to provide guidance and direction in the establishment of the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*.

The information generated from the unsolicited comments and recommendations is anonymously summarized below:

◆ **Input Identification—Programs, Services, Areas and Facilities “Needs”**

**THE CITY NEEDS:**

- ◆ To help construct and operate a community Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex
- ◆ Increased cooperation and coordination with local soccer groups such as the Cape Fear Soccer Association (CFSA)
- ◆ A comprehensive network of bike/multi-use paths
- ◆ Additional areas and facilities for dogs like the Dog Park at Empie Park
- ◆ To enlarge and enhance the existing Dog Park at Empie Park
- ◆ To provide more opportunities street musicians and other musical groups to perform in City parks and other public areas and facilities
- ◆ To provide more opportunities for local artists to set up displays and work in City parks and other public areas and facilities
- ◆ To allow more food vendors to sell their goods in the downtown area
- ◆ To rebuild the old Market Street market building in the middle of the first two blocks of downtown Market Street
- ◆ Additional soccer fields

◆ **Input Identification—Policy and Personnel “Considerations”**

**THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER:**

- ◆ Consolidation of the City Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division and the New Hanover County Parks Department
  - ◆ Cooperating with other agencies to protect Eagles Island
- ◆ **Top “Recommendations/Needs” as identified by the Selected Interviewees (Not in Priority Order)**
1. Provide a community Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex
  2. Develop a comprehensive non-vehicular (bikes, walking and other uses) transportation system
  3. Offer more opportunities for individuals to take dogs to the parks—additional dog parks and the expansion of the Empie Park Dog Park
  4. Protect and save Eagles Island
  5. Increase opportunities for local musicians and artists to perform and display their talents and work
  6. Construct additional soccer/multi-purpose fields

#### **4. *Community and Citizen Input on Parks, Recreation and Open Space Needs and Priorities—Focus Group***

The Focus Group was formed from a purposive, deliberate sample of City of Wilmington stakeholders. The Focus Group members met on June 11, 2009. The encounter was lead by Ms. Amanda Rose and Dr. Jim Herstine, Ph.D. The Focus Group members were collectively asked to address the following questions:

1. What do you think are the best/most successful programs, services, areas and facilities currently offered by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation Downtown Services Division?
2. What new programs, services, areas and facilities would you like to see the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division offer in the future? What needs exist in terms of parks, recreation and open space?
3. What do you think are the major obstacles confronting the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division that would prevent these new programs, services, areas and facilities from becoming realities?
4. What do you think are the 10 most important issues in terms of programs, services, areas and facilities the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division must address in the future?

This input from the Focus Groups was then analyzed and synthesized to provide guidance and direction in the establishment of the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*.

The information generated from the Focus Group is anonymously summarized below:

##### **October 23, 2007 Focus Group**

##### **◆ Input Identification—Programs, Services, Areas, and Facilities “Needs”**

##### **THE CITY NEEDS:**

- ◆ A Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex
- ◆ A comprehensive non-vehicular (biking and walking trails) transportation system
- ◆ Increased open and green space
- ◆ Another “Doggie” park
- ◆ Additional indoor basketball and volleyball facilities
- ◆ Improved and increased water access for people and water craft

◆ **Input Identification—Policy and Personnel “Considerations”**

**THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER:**

- ◆ Increasing and improving the coordination and cooperation between the City and other public and private groups offering parks and recreation services—work with “vested” stakeholders
- ◆ Decreasing the amount of duplication of programs and services between the City and the County
- ◆ Developing a method for increasing volunteer opportunities

◆ **Top “Recommendations/Needs” as identified by the Focus Group (Not in Priority Order)**

1. Develop and operate additional gymnasiums and other indoor facilities
2. Work on decreasing duplication of programs and services between the City and the County—consideration consolidation of the agencies
3. Develop a central, independent fund-raising entity for parks and recreation—possibly a Parks and Recreation Non-Profit Foundation
4. Increase and improve coordination and cooperation between the City and the New Hanover County School System and other groups interested in parks and recreation programs and services
5. Improve information dissemination about programs and services

5. ***Community and Citizen Input on Parks, Recreation and Open Space Needs and Priorities—Public Survey***

A survey instrument entitled “Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Survey and Needs Assessment” was developed and posted to “Survey Monkey”. The survey instrument was introduced with the following: *“The City of Wilmington needs your input on current and future parks, recreation facilities and programs. The City of Wilmington Parks and Recreation Advisory Board is conducting a survey to assess the recreational needs of our community. Information gathered in this survey will be used to help in the development of a Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan for 2010 – 2015. Thank you for your participation.”*

As of September 30, 2009, a total of eighty-one (81) individuals had started to complete the survey and seventy-nine (79) completed the instrument. The data from the survey was analyzed and synthesized along with other information to provide guidance and direction in the establishment of the final

*City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.*

The information discussed and collected from the survey data is summarized below:

◆ **Input Identification—Programs, Services, Areas, and Facilities**

- ✚ Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents were residents of the City of Wilmington
- ✚ Forty-seven percent (47%) of the respondents had been a resident of the City of Wilmington for more than fifteen (15) years
- ✚ The top ten (10) responses when asked why did you and/or members of your household visit the City of Wilmington areas/facilities during the past 12 months were walking/jogging (83.5%); playgrounds (58.2%); rest and relaxation (55.7%); picnics (35.4%); fitness (31.6%); nature program (29.1%); softball (27.8%); Dog Park (25.3%); tennis (25.3%); and biking (24.1%)

<b>Question 8—Why did you and/or members of your household visit the City of Wilmington areas/facilities during the past 12 months?</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Walking/jogging</b>	<b>83.5%</b>
<b>Playgrounds</b>	<b>58.2%</b>
<b>Rest and relaxation</b>	<b>55.7%</b>
<b>Picnics</b>	<b>35.4%</b>
<b>Fitness</b>	<b>31.6%</b>
<b>Nature programs</b>	<b>29.1%</b>
<b>Softball</b>	<b>27.8%</b>
<b>Dog park</b>	<b>25.3%</b>
<b>Tennis</b>	<b>25.3%</b>
<b>Biking</b>	<b>24.1%</b>

- ✚ Greater than forty-six percent (46.8%) of the respondents disagreed or totally disagreed that there are an adequate number of parks and recreation

areas in the City of Wilmington (Halyburton Park, Empie Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. Center, Maides Park)

	<b>Totally Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Disagree/ Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Totally Agree</b>
<b>Question 10—There are an adequate number of parks and recreation areas (Halyburton Park, Empie Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. Center, Maides Park)</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>33.8%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>

- ✚ Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents disagreed or totally disagreed that there are an adequate number of parks and recreation facilities in the City of Wilmington (soccer fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, picnic areas, etc.)

	<b>Totally Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Disagree/ Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Totally Agree</b>
<b>Question 11—There are adequate numbers of parks &amp; recreation areas (soccer fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, picnic areas, etc.)</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>35.9%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>

- ✚ Greater than thirty-five percent (35.5%) of the respondents disagreed or totally disagreed that there are an adequate number of parks and recreation

programs in the City of Wilmington (example: sport leagues, activity lessons, youth activities, etc.)

	<b>Totally Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Totally Agree</b>
<b>Question 12—There are an adequate number of parks and recreation programs in the City of Wilmington (example: sport leagues, activity lessons, youth activities, etc.)</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>24.1%</b>	<b>32.9%</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

- ✚ Greater than ninety percent (90.9%) of the respondents agreed or totally agreed that public parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities enhance the health and well-being of the residents of the City of Wilmington
- ✚ Greater than ninety-eight percent (98.3%) of the respondents agreed or totally agreed that public parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities provide an economic and social benefit to the City of Wilmington
- ✚ Ninety-one percent (91%) of the respondents agreed or totally agreed that public parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities should be a high priority for the City of Wilmington
- ✚ The top ten (10) responses when asked what specific City of Wilmington parks and recreation programs and services you and/or members of your household participated in during the last 12 months were Fit For Fun—Ages 5 and Under (36.8%); Special Events (36.8%); Halyburton Park Nature Programs (35.5%); Softball (28.9%); Adult Basketball (21.1%);

Outdoor/Adventure Programs (19.7%); Basketball (19.7%); Soccer (17.1%); Youth Basketball (13.2%); and, Baseball (11.8%)

<b>Question 16—The top 10 responses when asked what specific City of Wilmington parks and recreation programs and services you and/or members of your household have participated in during the last 12 months</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Fit For Fun</b>	<b>36.8%</b>
<b>Special Events</b>	<b>36.8%</b>
<b>Halyburton Park Nature Programs</b>	<b>35.5%</b>
<b>Softball</b>	<b>28.9%</b>
<b>Adult Basketball</b>	<b>21.1%</b>
<b>Outdoor/Adventure Programs</b>	<b>19.7%</b>
<b>Basketball</b>	<b>19.7%</b>
<b>Soccer</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
<b>Youth Basketball</b>	<b>13.2%</b>
<b>Baseball</b>	<b>11.8%</b>

- ✚ The top ten (10) responses when asked what specific City of Wilmington parks and recreation programs and services you and/or members of your household intend to participate in during the next 12 months were Halyburton Park Nature Programs (51.9%); Special Events (39%); Outdoor/Adventure Programs (37.7%); Fit For Fun—Ages 5 and Under (33.8%); Softball (27.3%); Adult Basketball (18.2%); Youth Basketball (15.6%); Soccer (15.6%); Basketball (14.3%); and, Summer Camp (13.2%)



<b>Question 17—The top 10 responses when asked what specific City of Wilmington parks and recreation programs and services you and/or members of your household intend to participate in during the next 12 months</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Halyburton Park Nature Programs</b>	<b>51.9%</b>
<b>Special Events</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Outdoor/Adventure Programs</b>	<b>37.7%</b>
<b>Fit For Fun</b>	<b>38.8%</b>
<b>Softball</b>	<b>27.3%</b>
<b>Adult Basketball</b>	<b>18.2%</b>
<b>Youth Basketball</b>	<b>15.6%</b>
<b>Soccer</b>	<b>15.6%</b>
<b>Basketball</b>	<b>14.3%</b>
<b>Summer Camps</b>	<b>13.2%</b>

✚ When asked what parks and recreation programs and services ***NOT*** currently provided by the City of Wilmington that you and/or members of your household would like to participate in during the next 12 months, the respondents listed the following programs and services in non-priority order:

1. More environmental programs for youth
2. Safe location multi-purpose gym (indoor sports, etc.)
3. More bike trails
4. Horseshoes
5. Free play basketball
6. Martial arts
7. Disc golf
8. Gymnasium at Maides Park
9. Football/youth and adult
10. Baseball for under 28 year olds
11. Quick start tennis for kids
12. Indoor swimming area
13. Safe bicycle trails away from traffic and exhaust fumes
14. Toddler nature programs
15. Longer distance natural walking trails

16. Kayak tours
17. City Obstacle Course for Fitness
18. Anything for children under 5
19. Art projects using outdoor natural materials for under age 5
20. Aerobics or yoga classes
21. More dog parks
22. Par 3 golf
23. Senior golf tournament
24. Open more gyms
25. Bicycle trails
26. Volleyball/youth and adult
27. Something in the Ogden area
28. Art classes
29. Scuba diving trips
30. Climbing wall
31. More weekend activities for the under 6 age
32. More bike paths
33. Senior Olympics
34. Indoor multi-purpose recreation facility
35. Indoor pool with water aerobics
36. Nature programs on weekends
37. Leisure lectures in conjunction with UNC Wilmington

✚ When asked what parks and recreation areas/facilities/programs **NOT** adequately provided by the City of Wilmington that you and/or the members of your household would like to have the City of Wilmington provide within the next 5 years, the respondents listed the following areas/facilities/programs in priority order:

1. Neighborhood Parks (57.4%)
2. Multi-Purpose Recreation Complex (50%)
3. Pedestrian/Non-Motorized Vehicular Paths (45.6%)
4. Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex (38.2%)
5. Playgrounds (36.8%)
6. Open Space (32.4%)
7. Adult Softball Fields (27.9%)
8. Outdoor Basketball Courts (14.7%)
9. City Docks (10.3%)
10. Football/Soccer Fields (10.3%)
11. Tennis Courts (8.8%)

Other responses were:

- Skateboard areas for children
- Indoor basketball
- Cycle facilities/parks for mountain bikes

- Bicycle/Multi-use paths
- Family bike trails
- Under 5 age group appropriate play spaces indoor and outdoor
- Bike paths
- Dog parks
- Par 3 golf
- Disc golf

Question 19—Please indicate which of the following parks and recreation areas, facilities, programs NOT adequately provided by the City of Wilmington that you and/or members of your household would like to have the City of Wilmington provide within the next 5 years	Percentage
Neighborhood Parks	57.4%
Multi-Purpose Recreation Complex	50%
Pedestrian/Non-Motorized Vehicular Paths	45.6%
Natatorium/Swimming Complex	38.2%
Playgrounds	36.8%
Open Space	32.4%
Adult Softball Fields	27.9%
Outdoor Basketball Courts	14.7%
City Docks	10.3%
Football/Soccer Fields	10.3%
Tennis Courts	8.8%
Youth Softball/Baseball Fields	5.9%



✚ When asked the reasons why you and/or members of your household **DO** **NOT** use/visit the City of Wilmington parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities, the respondents listed the following sources in priority order:

1. Do not know what's offered (40.7%)
2. Safety issues (27.8%)
3. Programs/services are not offered during convenient times (27.8%)
4. Do not have time to use/participate in the offerings (18.5%)
5. Not interested in attending programs (7.4%)
6. Fees for the programs and services are too high (5.6%)

Other responses were:

- Wade Park is great but you have to dodge the skateboarders to walk or rollerblade
- Some classes are not well advertised
- We would love to kayak but where are the put-ins?
- Not good neighborhoods
- I work weekends and most programs are on weekends
- Not offered in the Ogden area
- Crowd control—older kids (and prisoners) at parks sometimes
- I would use the pools more if they were not all downtown. Why can't a public pool be offered in Ogden or Monkey Junction?
- Length of travel distance from our home

<b>Question 20—When asked to identify the reasons why you and/or members of your household DO NOT use/visit the City of Wilmington parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities, the responses in priority order were</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Do not know what's offered</b>	<b>40.7%</b>
<b>Programs and services are not offered during convenient times</b>	<b>27.8%</b>
<b>Safety Issues</b>	<b>27.8%</b>
<b>Do not have the time to use/participate in the offerings</b>	<b>18.5%</b>
<b>Not interested in attending programs</b>	<b>7.4%</b>
<b>Fees for the programs and services are too high</b>	<b>5.6%</b>

- ✚ Greater than sixty-five percent (65.3%) of the respondents stated that there is a need for a new “Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex” for swimming lessons, open swimming opportunities and swim team competition in the City of Wilmington
- ✚ Greater than seventy-six percent (76.6%) of the respondents stated that there is a need for a new “Multi-Purpose Community Center/Recreation Center Complex” with indoor basketball courts, volleyball courts, fitness/exercise rooms, meeting space, classroom space and other active recreation and sports amenities in the City of Wilmington
- ✚ When asked to identify the three (3) most important issues or needs regarding the City of Wilmington parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities, the respondents listed the following categories of issues/needs with the number of responses per category in parenthesis:
  1. Bike, walking and hiking paths/trails (19)
  2. Additional parks (18)
  3. Additional ball fields (12)
  4. Improved safety at areas and facilities (10)
  5. Natatorium/Swimming Complex (9)
  6. Additional youth programs (8)
  7. Improved and increased marketing and advertising of programs and services (8)
  8. Additional outdoor/nature programs (7)
  9. Community/Recreation Center (7)
  10. Additional access to water (5)
  11. Dog park (3)
  12. Cleanliness of areas and facilities (3)
  13. Additional playgrounds (3)
  14. Improved maintenance of areas and facilities (2)
  15. Additional tennis courts (2)



<b>Question 24—What in your opinion are the 3 most important issues or needs regarding the City of Wilmington parks and recreation program, services, areas and facilities?</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
<b>Bike, walking and hiking paths/trails</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Additional parks</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Additional ball fields</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Improved safety at areas and facilities</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Natatorium/Swimming Complex</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Additional youth programs</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Improved and increased marketing and advertising of programs and services</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Additional outdoor/nature programs</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Community/Recreation Center</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Additional access to water</b>	<b>5</b>

**6. *City of Wilmington 2003 – 2008 Parks and Recreation Master Plan***

The following is a list of comments/recommendations within the City of Wilmington 2003 – 2008 Parks and Recreation Master Plan that have an input upon and relevance to the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*:

◆ **Input Identification—Programs, Services, Areas and Facilities “Needs”**

- ◆ Complete the planning, development and construction of the River Walk from the Memorial Bridge to the Holmes Bridge
- ◆ Acquire land to extend and complete the existing River Walk along the Cape Fear River and the Northeast Cape Fear River from the Memorial Bridge to the Holmes Bridge
- ◆ Acquire land for two (2) public parks, each approximately 5 – 10 acres in size, at either end of the River Walk
- ◆ Acquire land for small vest-pocket parks of 0.25 – 1 acres in the downtown area of Wilmington
- ◆ Develop the parcels of land for small vest-pocket parks of 0.25 – 1 acres as appropriate and needed
- ◆ Provide a neighborhood park of 5 – 15 acres in the annexed area between Hewletts Creek and Bradley Creek

- ◆ Land should be acquired to permit full and easy public access to the creeks, rivers, estuaries and sounds within the City’s jurisdiction
- ◆ Complete the planning and development of a system of non-vehicular transportation between and connecting public areas and facilities within the City of Wilmington’s planning jurisdiction
- ◆ Develop facilities for additional public beach and coastal waterfront access, particularly access to the creeks, rivers and sounds of the City
- ◆ Construct a winterized dome over either the existing Shipp Pool at the Legion Sports Complex or the Murphy Pool at the Robert Strange Park
- ◆ A municipal Natatorium and multi-purpose recreational facility should be planned, developed and constructed
- ◆ A multi-purpose municipal indoor athletic recreational facility and center should be planned, developed and constructed
- ◆ Acquire any and all parcels of land that have potential for recreational use
  
- ◆ **Input Identification—Policy and Personnel “Considerations”**
  - ◆ Explore the possibility of creating a “Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Foundation”
  - ◆ A decision should be made regarding the consolidation of the New Hanover County Parks Department and the City of Wilmington Division of Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services
  - ◆ Consider the possibility and practicality of closing Water Street and making it a pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular Riverfront Mall from Princess Street to Ann Street
  - ◆ Expand and enhance the number and type of cooperative partnerships

The following tables highlight the accomplishments and status of the comments/recommendations within the City of Wilmington 2003 – 2008 Parks and Recreation Master Plan:

**STATUS OF THE 2003 – 2008 COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS  
CONTAINED IN THE 2003 – 2008 CITY OF WILMINGTON  
PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

**2003 – 2008 LAND ACQUISITION**

- ✚ Extend and complete River Walk
- ✚ Parks (5 – 10 acres each) at either end of the River Walk
- ✚ Vest pocket parks in downtown area
- ✚ Park land (1 – 2 acres) in the vicinity of the downtown Hilton Hotel
- ✚ Whiskey Creek/Hewletts Creek neighborhood park (5 – 15 acres)
- ✚ Hewletts Creek/Bradley Creek neighborhood park (5 – 15 acres)
- ✚ Park land (30 – 75 acres) for multi-purpose Community/District Park
- ✚ Beach and Coastal Waterfront access sites

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<b>River Walk</b>	<b>In-Progress; Carried over into 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>
<b>North End River Walk Park</b>	<b>Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>
<b>South End River Walk Park</b>	<b>Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>
<b>Downtown Vest Pocket Parks</b>	<b>In-Progress; Carried over into 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>
<b>Downtown Park near Hilton Hotel</b>	<b>In-Progress; Acquired &lt;1 acre lot at Water &amp; Chestnut; Carried over into 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>
<b>Whiskey Creek/Hewletts Creek Neighborhood Park</b>	<b>Acquired</b>
<b>Hewletts Creek/Bradley Creek Neighborhood Park</b>	<b>Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>
<b>Community/District Park</b>	<b>Acquired</b>
<b>Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Sites</b>	<b>In Progress; Carried over into 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>

**2003 – 2008 FACILITY DEVELOPMENT**

- + River Walk
- + Non-Vehicular Transportation System
- + Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Sites
- + Park at north end of the River Walk
- + Park at south end of the River Walk
- + Park in downtown area near Hilton Hotel
- + Whiskey Creek/Hewletts Creek neighborhood park
- + Hewletts Creek/Bradley Creek neighborhood park
- + Community/District Park
- + Winterized Swimming Pool Dome
- + Maides Park improvements
- + Robert Strange Park improvements
- + Legion Stadium Complex improvements
- + Greenfield Park improvements
- + Northside Park improvements
- + Vest-Pocket Parks



<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
River Walk	
Non-Vehicular Transportation System	In-Progress; Adopted “Cross City Trail”; Carried over into 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Sites	Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
North River Walk Park	Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
South River Walk Park	Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Downtown Park near Hilton Hotel	Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Whiskey Creek/Hewletts Creek Neighborhood Park	Completed
Hewletts Creek/Bradley Creek Neighborhood Park	Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Community/District Park	Phase I Completed; Carried over into 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Winterized Swimming Pool Dome	Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Maides Park Improvements	Completed
Robert Strange Park Improvements	Completed
Legion Stadium Complex Improvements	Completed 2003 – 2008 recommendations; additional improvements are planned for back field
Greenfield Park Improvements	Completed
Northside Park Improvements	Completed
Vest-Pocket Parks	In-Progress; Carried over into 2003 – 2008 Master Plan

**2003 – 2008 PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

- + Increased emphasis on aquatics programs and services
- + Additional programs and services for inner city youth
- + More “culturally and ethnically friendly” programs and services

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Aquatics Programs and Services	Accomplished
Inner City Youth Programs and Services	Accomplished
“Culturally and Ethnically Friendly Programs and Services	Accomplished

**2003 – 2008 POLICY AND PROCEDURE CONSIDERATIONS**

- + Partnerships
- + Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Foundation
- + Pedestrian and Non-Motorized Vehicular Transportation Committee
- + American With Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Compliance

- ✚ Consolidation of Parks and Recreation Services
- ✚ Closing and Redesign of Water Street
- ✚ Youth Sports Coaches Certification and Training Programs
- ✚ Adopt-A-Park Program
- ✚ 5-Year Capital Improvements Budget

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Partnerships	In-Progress; Carried over into 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Foundation	Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Pedestrian and Non-Motorized Vehicular Transportation Committee	In-Progress; Bike/Pedestrian Committees have been formed; Carried over into 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
American With Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Compliance	Accomplished; Carried over into 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Consolidation of Parks and Recreation Services	Discussed and terminated
Closing and Redesign of Water Street	Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Youth Sports Coaches Certification and Training Programs	Recommendation postponed
Adopt-A-Park Program	Recommendation postponed
5-Year Capital Improvements Budget	Accomplished

**STATUS OF THE BEYOND 2008  
COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS  
CONTAINED IN THE 2003 – 2008 CITY OF WILMINGTON  
PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

**BEYOND 2008 LAND ACQUISITION**

- ✚ Acquisition of land for potential active or passive recreational purposes
- ✚ Park land 930 – 75 acres) for multi-purpose northern Community/District Park
- ✚ Park land (30 – 75 acres) for multi-purpose southern Community/District Park
- ✚ Park land (2 – 10 acres) north of the Holmes Bridge

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
General land acquisition	In-Progress; Carried over into 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Northern Community/District Park	Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Southern Community/District Park	Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan
Park north of Holmes Bridge	Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan

**BEYOND 2008 FACILITY DEVELOPMENT**

- ✚ Municipal Natatorium and multi-purpose recreational facility
- ✚ Multi-purpose indoor athletic recreational facility and center
- ✚ Multi-purpose outdoor athletic recreational facility and center
- ✚ Community/District Parks in northern jurisdictional area
- ✚ Community/District Park in southern jurisdictional areas
- ✚ Greenhouse
- ✚ Property north of Holmes Bridge
- ✚ Vest-pocket parks

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<b>Natatorium</b>	<b>Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>
<b>Indoor Athletic Facility/Center</b>	<b>Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>
<b>Outdoor Athletic Facility/Center</b>	<b>In Progress; Carried over into 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>
<b>Northern Community/District Park</b>	<b>Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>
<b>Southern Community/District Park</b>	<b>Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>
<b>Greenhouse</b>	<b>Completed during 2003 – 2008 Master Plan</b>
<b>Property North of Holmes Bridge</b>	<b>Moved to 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>
<b>Vest-Pocket Parks</b>	<b>In Progress; Carried over into 2010 – 2015 Master Plan</b>

**7. *New Hanover County Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space, January 2006***

The following is a list of comments/recommendations within the New Hanover County Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space, January 2006 that have an input upon and relevance to the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*:

- ◆ **Input Identification—Programs, Services, Areas and Facilities “Needs”**
  - ◆ Development of a county-wide greenway plan and system
  - ◆ Expanded opportunities for water access
  - ◆ Development of a community park located in the southern part of the county
  - ◆ Development of a sports complex in the northern part of the county
  - ◆ Construction of two swimming pools in conjunction with the county school system: one in the northern part of the county and one in the southern area
  - ◆ Development of a county-wide bike plan and system

◆ **Input Identification—Policy and Personnel “Considerations”**

- ◆ Conduct an objective study to analyze the merits of a merger between the County and the City parks and recreation agencies
- ◆ Strengthen the language of the county’s subdivision ordinance to ensure that adequate land is set aside for residents
- ◆ Minimize efforts to develop neighborhood parks
- ◆ Focus efforts on the development and operation of community parks, sports complexes, greenways/open space, and special use facilities
- ◆ Develop, in cooperation with the City of Wilmington, a plan of action for greenway development within New Hanover County and its municipalities
- ◆ Work jointly with the City of Wilmington to develop and operate a softball field complex
- ◆ Develop, in coordination with the City of Wilmington’s plans for tennis development, a tournament level tennis facility
- ◆ Work closely with the City to coordinate efforts in facility development

8. ***Town of Wrightsville Beach 2007 – 2012 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan***

The following is a list of comments/recommendations within the Town of Wrightsville Beach 2007 – 2012 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan that have an input upon and relevance to the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*:

◆ **Input Identification—Programs, Services, Areas and Facilities “Needs”**

- ◆ Development and construction of a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian non-vehicular transportation network

9. ***Town of Carolina Beach 2008 – 2013 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan***

The following is a list of comments/recommendations within the Town of Carolina Beach 2008 – 2013 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan that have an input upon and relevance to the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*:

◆ **Input Identification—Programs, Services, Areas and Facilities “Needs”**

- ◆ Development and construction of a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian non-vehicular transportation network



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## ***CHAPTER SIX: PARKS AND RECREATION STANDARDS***

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Parks, recreation and open space standards are more likely to serve the needs of a community if those standards meet certain criteria. In reality, the true measure of a good standard is the level of citizen satisfaction with the standards. In developing parks, recreation and open space standards for the City of Wilmington, the following criteria were considered:

- ✚ **Relevance**—the standards should reflect the needs and lifestyles of the community’s residents.
- ✚ **People Orientation**—the standards should reflect the unique needs and preferences of people in the area being served.
- ✚ **Performance Standards**—the standards should provide a basis for measuring achievement of community objectives. They should measure the quality of recreation services rather than simply the quantity.
- ✚ **Feasibility**—the standards should be attainable within a reasonable timeframe and with available funding sources.

✚ **Practicality**—the standards should be simple to understand and apply. They should be based on sound planning principles, information and a credible development process. They should also be flexible enough to handle unanticipated situations and rapidly changing needs.

The national and state parks and recreation standards presented in this section of the Master Plan were utilized strictly as guidelines and benchmarks for comparison in the preparation of the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*. These national and state standards were not judged to be requirements. They were considered to be subjective recommendations that necessitated modification in order to meet the specific and particular demands and requirements of the City of Wilmington. The standards served only as tenets for what national and state professional agencies and organizations in the field of parks and recreation consider adequate and acceptable types and numbers of parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities. They were compiled by and proposed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NC DENR), Division of Parks and Recreation.

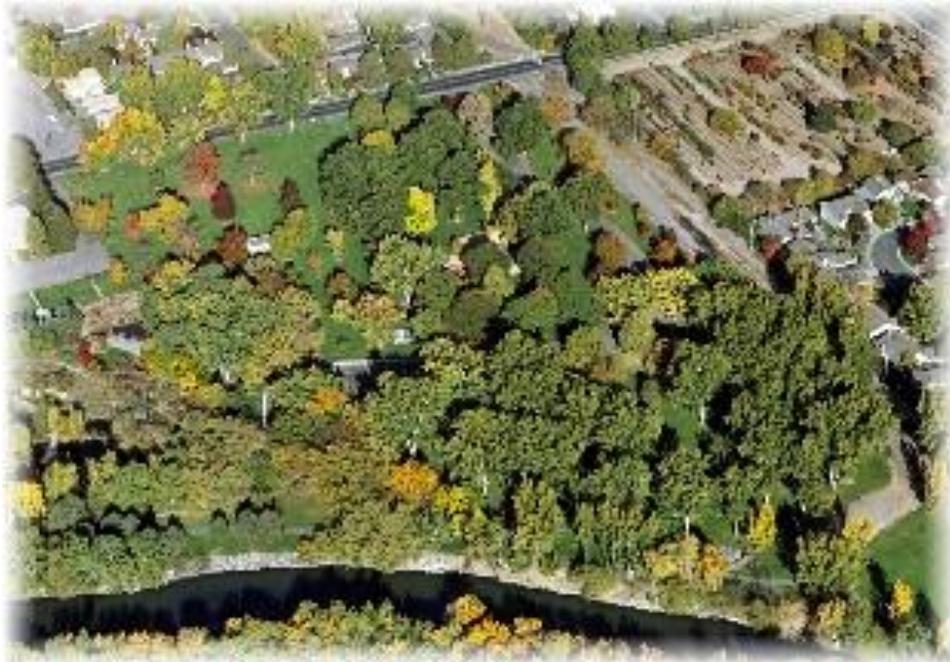
These national and state standards provided a starting point for establishing local standards for parks and recreation development for the City of Wilmington. It is appropriate to state that the NRPA, in a 1995 report entitled “Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines”, reached the conclusion that there are no “national standards” for parks and recreation development. In fact, the report reaffirms the notion that each local community is unique, and that standards reflecting the local community’s “uniqueness” should be established. This is the approach that was utilized in constructing standards for the City of Wilmington.

The *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* analysis considered and evaluated two types of parks and recreation standards: 1) the total acreage of parkland recommended for inclusion within a park and recreation system; and, 2) the programs, services, areas and facilities necessary to adequately meet the parks and recreation needs of the citizens. The *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* incorporates these park standards in its

recommendations for evaluating the current parks and recreation system and for establishing a plan of action to meet future growth patterns.

### **Parks, Open Space and Greenways Classifications**

A comprehensive park and recreation system is made up of a variety of park types. These park types range from very large Nature Preserves or Regional Parks, often encompassing hundreds of acres, to the very small neighborhood and mini-parks, sometimes less than one acre. Some of these park types are the responsibility of governmental entities other than municipalities, such as federal, state or county government. To fully appreciate and understand the City of Wilmington's role in the provision of parks and recreation services to its citizens, one needs to comprehend the context that makes up a total parks and recreation system.



**Nature Preserves**—the acquisition and development of Nature Preserves are typically undertaken by federal and state governments

Nature Preserves are typically very large sites, encompassing unique qualities that exemplify the natural features found in the region, the diverse land formations, and the variety of vegetation and wildlife. Examples of the types of facilities provided in a Nature Preserve are 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.

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

*Specific standards and criteria for developing Nature Preserves are as follows:*

Service Area:	County/Region Wide
Acreage/Population Ratio:	2.5 acres per 1,000 persons
Desirable Range:	150 – 1,000 acres with adequate area to encompass the resources to be preserved and managed
Typical Facilities:	Environmental Center      Picnic Tables/Grills Equestrian Center      Restrooms Vending      Primitive Camping Beach      Group Camping Swimming      Boating Nature Trails      Fishing Pier Boat Docks      Observation Decks Parking      Picnic Shelters/Grills RV Camping      Caretaker’s House

Specialty areas and facilities may be added to or substituted for other areas and facilities, depending on regional/community needs or special site characteristics.



**Regional Parks**—the acquisition and development of Regional Parks typically fall within the responsibility of county government

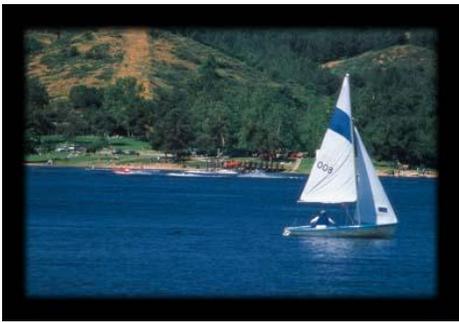
Regional Parks are typically large sites that provide a wide and varied range of both active and passive recreational opportunities. These parks are intended to serve a substantial number of people who are willing to spend travel time to visit the sites. Examples of the types of areas and facilities provided in a Regional Park are sports complexes, swimming pools, nature trails, fitness trails, restrooms, parking, concessions, picnic shelters, playgrounds, amphitheaters, recreation centers, picnic areas, boating facilities and open play areas.

Land selected for Regional Parks should be located on major transportation corridors and easily accessible by a large number of citizens. The majority of the site should be reserved and utilized for active recreation with adequate provision for passive recreation.

*Specific standards and criteria for developing Regional Parks are as follows:*

Service Area:	8-mile radius—typically serves a population base of approximately 60,000	
Acreage/Population Ratio:	2.5 acres per 1,000	
Desirable Range:	125 – 500 acres	
Desirable Size:	±250 acres	
Minimum Size:	125 acres	
Typical Features:	Picnic Shelters/Grills	Picnic Tables/Grills
	Nature Trails	Tennis Complex
	Tournament Baseball Fields	Playground
	Tournament Softball Fields	Fitness Trails
Specialty Features:	Swimming Pool	Recreation Center

Specialty areas and facilities may be added to or substituted for other areas and facilities, depending on regional/community needs or special site characteristics.



**Community Parks**—the acquisition and development of Community Parks typically fall within the responsibility of county and municipal governments

Community Parks provide a full range of facilities to support tournament competition for athletic and league sports. These parks also present opportunities for non-traditional types of recreation. Activities that generate large crowds, such as special events and tournament competitions, are well suited for Community Parks, where adequate space and parking are provided. Approximately fifty percent (50%) of a Community Park should be developed for only passive recreation. These relatively undisturbed areas may serve as buffers around the park or act as buffers between active areas and facilities.

Community Parks should have varying topography and vegetative communities. Forested areas should have a variety of tree species. Cleared areas should be present for placing active recreation areas and facilities. One or more natural water features, such as a lake, river, or creek should be included in a Community Park. Parkland should also be contiguous and strategically located in order to be accessible to all users within the service area.

*Specific standards and criteria for developing Community Parks are as follows:*

Service Area:	.5 – 3 mile radiuses—typically serves several neighborhoods	
Acreage/Population Ratio:	5 – 8 acres per 1,000 persons	
Desirable Range:	15 – 100 acres	
Desirable Size:	±25 acres	
Typical Facilities:	Recreation Center	Playground
	Picnic Shelters/Grills	Basketball Court
	Picnic Tables/Grills	Tennis Courts
	Nature Trails	Restrooms
	Tournament Baseball Fields	Parking
	Tournament Softball Fields	Volleyball Courts
	Concessions	Soccer Fields
Special Facilities:	Golf Course	Swimming
	Beaches	Environmental Center
	Boating	Equestrian Center
	Amphitheater	Fishing Pier
	Boat Docks	Observation Decks
	Marina Operations	Swimming Pool
	Fitness Course	Paddle Boats

**Sports Complex**—the acquisition and development of a Sports Complex typically falls within the responsibility of county or municipal governments

A Sports Complex functions as the major source of active recreation in the local community. Programs, services and activities found at a Sports Complex are similar to those in a Community Park, but are developed to support tournament competition. Passive recreation experiences and opportunities are generally limited, but may be found in undisturbed areas, preferably within the surrounding buffers.

Sites for Sports Complexes should be relatively flat to alleviate excessive grading and land preparation for active areas and facilities. Sites without significant vegetation or natural features are preferable since most of the land will be developed for active recreation such as athletic fields. Sites should be easily accessible from major thoroughfares. Direct access to residential areas should be limited and buffers provided adjacent to residential areas.

*Specific standards and criteria for developing a Sports Complex are as follows:*

Service Area:	3 – 5 mile radiuses	
Acreage/Population Ratio:	2.5 acres per 1,000 persons	
Desirable Range:	80 – 100 acres	
Desirable Size:	+100 acres	
Typical Features:	Playgrounds	Picnic Shelter/Grills
	Basketball Courts	Nature Trail
	Tennis Courts	Baseball Fields
	Softball Fields	Benches
	Parking	Multi-Purpose Fields
	Service Yard	Volleyball Courts
	Restrooms/Concessions	
	Tournament Level Soccer Fields	
	Tournament Level Baseball/Softball Fields	
	Tournament Level Tennis Complex	
Alternate Facilities:	Recreation Center	Running Track
	Amphitheater	Observation Decks

Specialty areas and facilities may be added to or substituted for other areas and facilities, depending on community needs or special site characteristics.



**District Parks**—the acquisition and development of District Parks typically fall within the responsibility of municipal government

District Parks function as the major source of active recreation in the neighborhoods they serve. Activities are similar to those found in Community Parks, but are not developed to support tournament competition. Their smaller size often requires District Parks to be more intensely developed than the Community Parks. Passive recreation opportunities are found in the undisturbed areas, preferably within surrounding buffers.

Sites for District Parks should be relatively flat to alleviate excessive grading of active areas and facilities. Where possible, there should be an equal balance of wooded and cleared areas. If a natural water feature is present, the adjoining land should be developed primarily with passive recreation. Accessibility to neighborhoods should also be a consideration when choosing a site for a District Park.

*Specific standards and criteria for developing a District Park are as follows:*

Service Area:	1 – 2 ½ mile radiuses		
Acreage/Population Ratio:	5 acres per 1,000 persons		
Desirable Range:	20 – 100 acres		
Desirable Size:	+50 acres		
Typical Features:	Playgrounds	Picnic Shelter/Grills	
	Basketball Courts	Nature Trail	
	Tennis Courts	Baseball Fields	
	Softball Fields	Benches	
	Parking	Multi-Purpose Fields	
	Service Yard	Volleyball	
	Soccer Fields		
	50% of Site to Remain Undeveloped		
	Alternate Facilities:	Recreation Center	Tennis Center
		Football Fields	Running Trail
Boating		Amphitheater	
Observation Decks		Fishing Piers	
Swimming Pool		Fitness Course	

Specialty areas and facilities may be added to or substituted for other areas and facilities, depending on community needs or special site characteristics.

**Neighborhood Parks**—the acquisition and development of Neighborhood Parks typically fall within the responsibility of municipal government

Neighborhood Parks offer the local citizens a convenient source of accessible recreation and serve as the basic unit of the parks and recreation system. These parks are located in residential areas and usually within walking distance of the areas served and provide a variety of activities to interest all age groups. While their small size requires intense development, fifty percent (50%) of each site should remain undisturbed to serve as a buffer between the park and adjacent land owners and users.

*Specific standards and criteria for developing Neighborhood Parks are as follows:*

Service Area:	¼ - ½ mile radiuses to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding neighborhood population	
Acreage/Population Ratio:	1 acre per 1,000 persons	
Desirable Range:	5 – 25 acres	
Desirable Size:	± 15 acres	
Typical Facilities:	Playground	Basketball Courts
	Softball Field	Baseball Field
	Multi-Purpose Field	Picnic Shelters/Grills
	Picnic Tables/Grills	Benches
	50% of Site to Remain Undeveloped	
Alternate Facilities:	Tennis Courts	Nature Trail
	Fitness Course	

These areas and facilities may be added to or substituted for other areas and facilities, depending on community needs or special site characteristics.



**Mini-Parks**—the acquisition and development of Mini-Parks typically fall within the responsibility of municipal government

Mini-Park is the smallest park classification. Mini-Parks are often very small in size and are only easily accessible by the citizens immediately surrounding the park. These small parks are usually located within walking distance of the area serviced and provide a limited variety of activities to targeted interest groups.

*Specific standards and criteria for developing Mini-Parks are as follows:*

Service Area:	¼ - ½ mile radiuses to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding population	
Acreage/Population Ratio:	.25 acres per 1,000 persons	
Desirable Size:	±½ acre	
Typical Facilities:	Benches	Picnic Tables/Grills
	Playground	
Specialty Features:	Water Fountain	½ Basketball Courts
	Open Play Area	
	Landscaped Public Use Areas	

These areas and facilities may be added to or substituted for other areas and facilities, depending on community needs or special site characteristics.

**School-Parks**—the acquisition and development of School-Parks typically fall within the responsibility of municipal and county governments

The joint use of public areas and facilities is a national growing trend. Through joint use both local government and the school system benefit from shared use of areas and facilities and valuable land resources. The School-Park concept takes full advantage of the joint use objective and provides a planned area and/or facility that also maximizes public funding. Historically, elementary and small middle schools provide the ideal setting for a Neighborhood Park while large middle schools and high schools are suitable for a Community Park or a Sports Complex.

*Specific standards and criteria for developing School-Parks are as follows:*

Service Area:	Varies depending upon the type of school and park
Desirable Size:	Varies depending upon the type of school and park
Typical Facilities:	Varies depending upon the type of school and park

**Greenways—the acquisition and development of Greenways typically fall within the responsibility of municipal and county governments**

Greenways provide an important component of most municipal and county park systems. A greenway is a corridor of protected open space managed for conservation, recreation and non-motorized transportation. Greenways often follow natural geographic features such as ridge lines, wetlands, streams and rivers, but may also be built along canals, utility corridors, or abandoned rail lines. Widths may vary from thirty (30) to a thousand (1,000) feet. Most greenways include a trail or bike path, but others may be designed strictly for environmental or scenic protection.

Greenways, as vegetated linear parks, provide tree cover, wildlife habitat, and riparian buffers to protect streams. The environmental benefits include reduced storm-water runoff, flood reduction, water quality protection, and preservation of biological diversity. The trails within the greenways provide access between neighborhoods and destination points, opportunity to travel without an automobile, outdoor education classrooms, and close-to-home paths for walking, jogging, bicycling, and other non-motorized forms of transportation. Tree cover and use of bicycles instead of cars provide for better air quality, fewer hard surfaced parking lots, and reduced energy costs.

*Specific standards and criteria for developing Greenways are as follows:*

Desirable Size:	Varies considerably—A thirty (30) feet width is generally considered a minimum
Typical Facilities:	Paved and non-paved paths, benches and lighting



**Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Sites**—the acquisition and development of Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Sites typically fall within the responsibility of municipal and county governments

The public’s right of access to beach and coastal waterfront areas is a long-standing tenet of the Public Trust Doctrine with its corresponding issues of Public Trust Rights. One way to guarantee and protect the public’s right to shorelines and waters is for local government to establish public beach and coastal waterfront access sites.

The North Carolina Division of Coastal Management recognizes four (4) types of public access sites: Regional, Neighborhood, Local and Waterfront.

- ✚ Regional—these access sites are generally the largest of the access sites. There are exceptions, but usually these sites have ample parking (25+), and often have additional facilities such as restrooms, showers and picnic tables
- ✚ Neighborhood—these access sites have fewer parking spaces than regional sites and often do not have facilities such as showers or restrooms. However, there are exceptions.
- ✚ Local—these sites are often simply dune crossovers with little or no associated parking and no facilities. However, bicycle racks may be provided. These are primarily used by pedestrians who reside within a few hundred yards of the site.
- ✚ Waterfront—these access sites are generally located on estuarine waters in urbanized areas. They vary greatly in the amount of parking and facilities provided.



This is a representative photo of a Neighborhood Site



This is a representative photo of a Local Access Site

**Boat Access Sites**—the acquisition and development of Boat Access Sites typically fall within the responsibility of municipal, county and state governments

Most public boat access sites in North Carolina are designed, constructed and maintained by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. However, there are standard construction and design guidelines for boat ramps.

*Specific standards and criteria for developing boat access sites are as follows:*

Standard Dimensions for Concrete Launch Ramp:

- ✚ Length—varies by site characteristics. Ensure that the bottom of the ramp at Mean Low Water (MLW) will be in at least 3' of water. The top of the ramp should be at least 1' above Mean High Water (MHW)
- ✚ Width—single launch ramp should be at least 14' wide
- ✚ Thickness—concrete should be at least 6".

Launch Ramp Slope:

- ✚ Approximately 14%, but can vary from 15% to 12.5%

Construction and Materials:

- ✚ Sub-Grade Preparation—the concrete ramp should be placed on compacted aggregate which is placed on geo-textile fabric to prevent washout.
- ✚ Push Slab—use a push slab for the launch ramp below the MLW level. The steel reinforced concrete slab should be cast on upland and allowed to cure for a minimum of 21 days before it is pushed into place. Typically, a 32'L x 14'W x 6" T push slab can be properly placed when the water level is at MLW
- ✚ Cast in Place Section—once the push slab is cast in place, there should be at least 2 – 3 feet of ramp left above the water line. The remaining ramp should be cast in place



**North Carolina Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**  
**2003 – 2008 Park and Recreation Area Class Names and Descriptions**

**Neighborhood Park**—Area for intensive recreation such as field and court games, playground equipment, picnicking and wading pools. 6 – 8 acres is a typical size. Examples include mini-parks serving residential areas, playgrounds, sports field complexes and combination playgrounds/sports fields/passive natural areas.

**Community Park**—Area providing a wide array of active recreational opportunities including a recreation center building, fields, hard surface courts, and picnicking. Natural or landscaped areas are provided for passive recreation. May include a swimming pool or be in conjunction with a school. 10 – 20 acres is a typical size. Examples include large parks/school complexes; recreation center/pool/sports field and court complexes; and community center/park complexes.

**District/Metro Area Park**—Area serving one or more suburban or rural communities. Similar to the Community Park, these areas offer intensive recreation activities and natural environment areas. Typical size is 20 – 100 acres. Examples include intensively developed county parks, developed public recreation sites at large reservoirs, and state recreation areas.

**Local Parks**—Combines Neighborhood, Community and District/Metro Area parks classes described above.

**Regional/State Parks**—Area of natural quality for natural resource-based outdoor recreation. Generally, 80% of the land is reserved for conservation and natural resource management with less than 20% developed for recreation. Typical size is 3,000 – 5,000 acres. Examples include state parks, state recreation areas, state natural areas, educational state forests and large natural resource-based county parks. Activities include nature study, picnicking, camping, fishing, boating, swimming and various trail uses.

**Dispersed Use/Conservancy Area**—Area for protection and management of the natural environment with recreation use as a secondary objective. Certain multiple use management approaches produce natural resource outputs such as timber, agricultural produce and minerals. Examples include state game-lands, multiple use areas of national and state forests, reservoir shoreline buffer lands, and Blue Ridge Parkway acreage.

Typical size should be sufficient to protect and manage the primary resource while providing secondary recreational use.

**Wilderness Area**—Area characterized by unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Low interaction between users and evidence of others is minimal. Motorized use is not permitted. Typical size is 5,000 – 15,000 acres. Examples are congressionally designated National Wildlife Areas.

**Historic/Cultural Area**—Area that preserves, maintains, and interprets buildings and places of archaeological, historical, or cultural significance. Should be of sufficient size to protect and interpret the resource while providing optimum use. Examples include local, state, and national historic sites.



## STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES

<u>Facility</u>	<u>NRPA Standard</u>	<u>NC DENR Standard</u>
<b><u>Fields</u></b>		
Adult Baseball	1 per 12,000 persons	1 per 5,000 persons
Youth Baseball/Girls Softball	1 per 10,000 persons	1 per 10,000 persons
Adult Softball	1 per 5,000 persons	1 per 5,000 persons
Football	1 per 10,000 persons	1 per 20,000 persons
Adult Soccer	1 per 10,000 persons	1 per 10,000 persons
Youth Soccer	N/A	N/A
<b><u>Courts</u></b>		
Basketball	1 per 5,000 persons	1 per 5,000 persons
Tennis	1 per 2,000 persons	1 per 2,000 persons
Volleyball	1 per 5,000 persons	1 per 5,000 persons
Shuffleboard	1 per 5,000 persons	1 per 5,000 persons
Horseshoe	1 per 5,000 persons	1 per 5,000 persons
<b><u>Outdoor Areas</u></b>		
Picnic Shelters	N/A	1 per 3,000 persons
Playgrounds	N/A	1 per 1,000 persons
Trails		
Hiking	1 per region	.4 mile/1,000 persons
Interpretive	1 per region	.2 mile/1,000 persons
Equestrian	N/A	.4 mile/1,000 persons
Camping	N/A	2.5 site/1,000 persons
Archery Area	1 per 50,000 persons	1 per 50,000 persons
<b><u>Specialized</u></b>		
Community Center	1 per 20,000 persons	1 per 20,000 persons
Swimming Pool	1 per 20,000 persons	1 per 20,000 persons
Golf Course	1 per 25,000 persons	1 per 25,000 persons
Bicycling		
Urban	N/A	1 mile/1,000 persons
Rural Touring	N/A	2 mile/1,000 persons
Canoeing		
Stream Mileage	N/A	.2 mile/1,000 persons
Stream Acreage	N/A	1 per 10 miles

## **TRENDS IN OUTDOOR RECREATION AND SPORTS**

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

### **President's Commission on Americans Outdoors**

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

Top 10 outdoor recreation activities nationwide:

Bicycling	Picnicking
Boating	Driving for pleasure
Fishing	Sightseeing
Swimming	Attending sport events
Playing sports	Walking for pleasure

Activities rapidly growing in popularity:

Canoeing	Hiking/backpacking
Water skiing	Bicycling
Sailing	Walking for pleasure
Attending outdoor sports	Camping



### **National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) Survey**

The National Sporting Goods Association conducts an annual survey of sports participation. The survey lists the following top 25 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 chart summarizes the finding for 1994 – 2004.

### *Ten-Year History of Selected Sports Participation*

<b>Sport</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1994</b>
<b>Aerobic Exercising</b>	29.5	29.0	26.7	25.8	24.1	23.2
<b>Archery (target)</b>	5.3	4.2	4.5	4.8	5.3	NA
<b>Backpack/Wilderness Camp</b>	17.3	14.8	15.4	14.6	11.5	9.8
<b>Baseball</b>	15.9	15.6	15.6	15.9	14.8	15.1
<b>Basketball</b>	27.8	28.9	27.1	29.4	31.8	28.2
<b>Bicycle Riding</b>	40.3	39.7	43.1	43.5	53.3	49.8
<b>Billiards/Pool</b>	34.2	33.1	32.5	32.3	34.5	34.0
<b>Boating, Motor/Power</b>	22.8	26.6	24.2	25.7	28.8	26.4
<b>Bowling</b>	43.8	42.4	43.1	40.1	42.9	37.4
<b>Camping (vacation/overnight)</b>	55.3	55.4	49.9	46.5	44.7	42.9
<b>Exercise Walking</b>	84.7	82.2	81.3	77.6	73.3	70.8
<b>Exercising with Equipment</b>	52.2	46.8	44.8	46.1	47.8	43.8
<b>Fishing</b>	41.2	44.2	47.2	43.6	45.6	45.7
<b>Football (tackle)</b>	8.2	7.8	8.0	8.1	9.0	NA
<b>Football (touch)</b>	9.6	10.3	9.8	10.8	11.6	NA
<b>Golf</b>	24.5	27.1	26.4	27.5	23.1	24.6
<b>Hiking</b>	28.3	27.2	24.3	27.2	26.5	25.3
<b>Hockey (ice)</b>	2.4	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.1	1.9
<b>Hunting with Firearms</b>	17.7	19.5	19.1	17.3	18.3	16.4
<b>Hunting with Bow and Arrows</b>	5.8	4.6	4.7	5.6	5.5	NA
<b>Ice/Figure Skating</b>	NA	NA	6.7	7.8	8.4	7.8
<b>Kayaking/Rafting</b>	NA	NA	3.1	3.2	3.6	NA
<b>Kick Boxing</b>	2.8	NA	3.9	2.3	NA	NA
<b>Martial Arts</b>	4.7	4.2	5.4	4.6	4.7	NA
<b>Mountain Biking (off road)</b>	8.0	7.8	7.1	8.6	7.3	5.7
<b>Muzzle-loading</b>	3.8	3.6	2.9	3.1	3.2	NA
<b>Paintball Games</b>	9.4	6.9	5.3	NA	NA	3.7
<b>Roller Skating (in-line)</b>	11.7	18.8	19.2			23.9
<b>Running/Jogging</b>	24.7	24.7	22.8	22.5	22.2	20.6
<b>Sailing</b>	2.6	NA	2.5	3.6	4.0	4.1
<b> Scooter Riding</b>	12.9	13.4	11.6	NA	NA	NA
<b>Skateboarding</b>	10.3	9.7	9.1	5.8	4.7	4.9
<b>Skiing (alpine)</b>	5.9	7.4	7.4	7.7	10.5	10.6
<b>Skiing (cross country)</b>	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.6	3.4	3.6
<b>Snorkeling</b>	NA	NA	5.5	7.3	7.1	5.9
<b>Soccer</b>	13.3	13.7	12.9	13.2	13.9	12.5
<b>Softball</b>	12.5	13.6	14.0	15.6	19.9	18.1
<b>Swimming</b>	53.4	53.1	58.8	58.2	60.2	60.3
<b>T'ai Chi/Yoga</b>	6.7	6.1	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Target Shooting</b>	19.2	18.9	16.9	18.9	21.2	NA
<b>Tennis</b>	9.6	11.0	10.0	11.2	11.5	11.6
<b>Volleyball</b>	10.8	11.5	12.3	14.8	18.5	17.4
<b>Water Skiing</b>	4.7	6.9	5.9	7.2	7.4	7.4
<b>Weight Lifting</b>	26.2	25.1	22.8	NA	NA	NA
<b>Workout at Club</b>	31.8	28.9	24.1	26.5	22.5	20.4

Source: National Sporting Goods Association, Mt. Prospect, IL 60056

### **2004 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE)**

The August 2004 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment provides participation rates for outdoor activities in 2004. The results of the NSRE show that viewing/photographing natural scenery was the single most popular activity in the nation and in the South, with over 70% of the population age 16 and over participating. The fifteen (15) most popular outdoor activities identified by the survey were:

1. View/photograph natural scenery—71%
2. Visit nature centers—64%
3. Driving for pleasure—61%
4. View/photograph other wildlife—58%
5. View/photograph wildflowers, trees, etc.—57%
6. Visit beach—57%
7. Swimming in lakes, streams, etc.—54%
8. Visit historic sites—53%
9. Picnicking—52%
10. Boating—44%
11. View/photograph birds—40%
12. Day hiking—38%
13. Bicycling—37.6%
14. Fishing—37.5%
15. Visit a wilderness or primitive area—34%

### **2004 Outdoor Recreation Participation Study**

Results of the 2004 Outdoor Recreation Participation Study for the United States, released by the Outdoor Industry Association, provide an analysis of outdoor recreation behavior in twenty-one (21) human-powered activities performed by Americans age 16 and over. The Study focused on the growth of casual “participants” as well as devoted “enthusiasts” since 1998. Outdoor “participants” now compromise two-thirds of the national population. Within that group, outdoor “enthusiasts” have surged more than 25 percent to 46.8 million people, indicating a shift toward more frequent and more dedicated outdoor use. Outdoor recreation has clearly established itself as one of the strongest, most stable activity populations since 1998. Since 1998, the demographic

profile of outdoor participants has shifted younger (median age 35), become slightly more diverse (20% non-white), and attracted more people with families (50% of households with a child under 18). According to the Study, the top three (3) outdoor activities were:

- ✚ Bicycling—87 million “participants” and 20.4 million “enthusiasts”
- ✚ Hiking—71.8 million “participants” and 10.5 million “enthusiasts”
- ✚ Camping—68.8 million “participants” and 10.8 million “enthusiasts”



The most significant additions of new “participants” since 1998 came in the following activities:

- ✚ Trail Running—6.4 million new “participants” (20.5% increase)
- ✚ Kayaking—5.7 million new “participants” (235.7% increase)
- ✚ Canoeing—4.3 million new “participants” (18.1% increase)
- ✚ Snowshoeing—3 million new “participants” (203.4% increase)

The top adventure vacation activities were:

- ✚ Hiking/Backpacking
- ✚ Swimming
- ✚ Fishing
- ✚ Camping

The Study stated that the bulk of interest and stability was centered on the following “blue chip” activities:

- ✚ Hiking/Backpacking
- ✚ Biking
- ✚ Paddling
- ✚ Camping

## **CITY OF WILMINGTON FACILITY STANDARDS**

Minimum standards for public recreational facilities (i.e., ball fields, pools, courts, playground areas, etc.) proposed for the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division were developed in accordance with industry guidelines established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NC DENR) and input from staff and community citizens generated during the needs assessment component of the master plan process. These standards, identified in **Table 6.1 “Standards for Public Recreational Facilities”**, are the minimum recreation facility standards that should be used in establishing the public recreation facility needs for the City of Wilmington.

**Table 6.1 “Standards for Public Recreational Facilities\*”**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>NRPA</b>	<b>NC DENR</b>	<b>City of Wilmington</b>
<b><u>FIELDS</u></b>			
Adult Baseball	1/12,000	1/5,000	1/30,000
Youth Baseball	1/10,000	1/10,000	1/10,000
Softball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/15,000
Football/Soccer/Multi-Purpose	1/10,000	1/10,000	1/40,000
<b><u>COURTS</u></b>			
Basketball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000
Tennis	1/2,000	1/2,000	1/2,000
Volleyball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/25,000
Shuffleboard	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/10,000
Horseshoe	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/10,000
Bocce Ball	N/A	N/A	1/10,000
<b><u>OUTDOOR AREAS</u></b>			
Picnic Shelters	N/A	1/3,000	1/5,000
Playgrounds	N/A	1/1,000	1/2,000
Multi-Purpose Trails	1/Region	.4 mile/1,000	.25 miles/1,000
<b><u>SPECIALIZED</u></b>			
Community Centers/ Recreation Centers	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/20,000
Swimming Pools	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/25,000
Golf Course	1/25,000	1/25,000	1/Community
Skateboard Park	N/A	N/A	1/Community
Fitness Center	N/A	N/A	1/Community
Amphitheater	N/A	N/A	1/Community
Water Access	N/A	N/A	1/20,000

\*National and state standards for public recreational facility development were used as a guide in developing standards for the City of Wilmington. The actual standards developed and established for the City of Wilmington are based on input generated during the public input process and reflect both staff and citizen comments.

## **CITY OF WILMINGTON EXISTING FACILITIES**

Table 6.2 “City of Wilmington Existing Public Recreational Facilities” depicts the number of existing public recreational facilities (i.e., ball fields, pools, courts, playground areas, etc.) currently maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division.

**Table 6.2 “City of Wilmington Existing Public Recreational Facilities”**

Facility	City Standard	City of Wilmington 100,000 Residents in 2010
<u><b>FIELDS</b></u>		<u><b>EXISTING FACILITIES</b></u>
Adult Baseball	1/30,000	1
Youth Baseball	1/10,000	10
Softball	1/15,000	6
Football/Soccer/Multi-Purpose	1/40,000	2
<u><b>COURTS</b></u>		
Basketball	1/5,000	1—indoor 13—outdoor
Tennis	1/2,000	22
Volleyball	1/25,000	1—indoor
Shuffleboard	1/10,000	2
Horseshoe	1/10,000	8
Bocce Ball	1/10,000	4
<u><b>OUTDOOR AREAS</b></u>		
Picnic Shelters	1/5,000	13
Playgrounds	1/2,000	38
Multi-Purpose Trails	.25 miles/1,000	7.26 Miles
<u><b>SPECIALIZED</b></u>		
Community Centers/ Recreation Centers	1/20,000	3
Swimming Pools	1/25,000	3—outdoor 1—Splash Pad
Golf Course	1/Community	1
Skateboard Park	1/Community	1
Fitness Center	1/Community	1
Amphitheater	1/Community	1
Water Access	1/20,000	1 boat, 1 canoe 11 wet slips, 1,175 linear feet dockage

## **CITY OF WILMINGTON CURRENT FACILITY DEMAND**

Table 6.3 “City of Wilmington Current Demand for Public Recreational Facilities” depicts the current demand in 2010 for public recreational facilities (i.e., ball fields, pools, courts, playground areas, etc.) that should be maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division based upon city standards.

**Table 6.3 “City of Wilmington Current Demand for Public Recreational Facilities”**

Facility	City Standard	City of Wilmington 100,000 Residents in 2010
<u>FIELDS</u>		<u>CURRENT DEMAND FOR FACILITIES</u>
Adult Baseball	1/30,000	4
Youth Baseball	1/10,000	10
Softball	1/15,000	7
Football/Soccer/Multi-Purpose	1/40,000	3
<u>COURTS</u>		
Basketball	1/5,000	20
Tennis	1/2,000	50
Volleyball	1/25,000	4
Shuffleboard	1/10,000	10
Horseshoe	1/10,000	10
Bocce Ball	1/10,000	10
<u>OUTDOOR AREAS</u>		
Picnic Shelters	1/5,000	20
Playgrounds	1/2,000	50
Multi-Purpose Trails	.25 miles/1,000	25 Miles
<u>SPECIALIZED</u>		
Community Centers/ Recreation Centers	1/20,000	5
Swimming Pools	1/25,000	4
Golf Course	1/Community	1
Skateboard Park	1/Community	1
Fitness Center	1/Community	1
Amphitheater	1/Community	1
Water Access	1/20,000	5

**CITY OF WILMINGTON CURRENT FACILITY NEED**

Table 6.4 “City of Wilmington Current Need for Public Recreational Facilities” depicts the current need in 2010 for public recreational facilities (i.e., ball fields, pools, courts, playground areas, etc.) that should be maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division based upon city standards identifying current demand and the existing public recreation facilities.

**Table 6.4 “City of Wilmington Current Need for Public Recreational Facilities”**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>City Standard</b>	<b>City of Wilmington 100,000 Residents in 2010</b>
<b><u>FIELDS</u></b>		<b><u>CURRENT NEED FOR FACILITIES</u></b>
Adult Baseball	1/30,000	3
Youth Baseball	1/10,000	0
Softball	1/15,000	1
Football/Soccer/Multi-Purpose	1/40,000	1
<b><u>COURTS</u></b>		
Basketball	1/5,000	6
Tennis	1/2,000	28
Volleyball	1/25,000	3
Shuffleboard	1/10,000	8
Horseshoe	1/10,000	2
Bocce Ball	1/10,000	6
<b><u>OUTDOOR AREAS</u></b>		
Picnic Shelters	1/5,000	7
Playgrounds	1/2,000	12
Multi-Purpose Trails	.25 miles/1,000	17.74 Miles
<b><u>SPECIALIZED</u></b>		
Community Centers/ Recreation Centers	1/20,000	2
Swimming Pools	1/25,000	1
Golf Course	1/Community	0
Skateboard Park	1/Community	0
Fitness Center	1/Community	0
Amphitheater	1/Community	0
Water Access	1/20,000	3

## **EVALUATION OF CITY OF WILMINGTON**

### **CURRENT FACILITY NEED IN 2010**

The assessment of public recreational facility standards against existing public recreational facilities maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington reveals several current areas of deficiencies in many of the established public recreational facility categories. Utilizing the public recreational facility standards that were established specifically for the City of Wilmington, there is a need for the following additional public recreational facilities in 2010:

- + 3 Adult Baseball Fields
- + 1 Softball Field
- + 1 Football/Soccer/Multi-Purpose Field
- + 6 Basketball Courts
- + 28 Tennis Courts
- + 3 Volleyball Courts
- + 8 Shuffleboard Courts
- + 2 Horseshoe Courts
- + 6 Bocce Ball Courts
- + 7 Picnic Shelters
- + 12 Playgrounds
- + 17.74 Miles of Multi-Purpose Trails
- + 2 Community Centers/Recreation Centers
- + 1 Swimming Pool
- + 3 Water Access Sites



## **CITY OF WILMINGTON 2015 FACILITY DEMAND**

Table 6.5 “City of Wilmington 2015 Demand for Public Recreational Facilities” depicts the projected demand in 2015 for public recreational facilities (i.e., ball fields, pools, courts, playground areas, etc.) that should be maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division based upon city standards.

**Table 6.5 “City of Wilmington 2015 Demand for Public Recreational Facilities”**

Facility	City Standard	City of Wilmington 115,000 Residents in 2015
<u>FIELDS</u>		<u>CURRENT DEMAND FOR FACILITIES</u>
Adult Baseball	1/30,000	4
Youth Baseball	1/10,000	12
Softball	1/15,000	8
Football/Soccer/Multi-Purpose	1/40,000	3
<u>COURTS</u>		
Basketball	1/5,000	23
Tennis	1/2,000	58
Volleyball	1/25,000	5
Shuffleboard	1/10,000	12
Horseshoe	1/10,000	12
Bocce Ball	1/10,000	12
<u>OUTDOOR AREAS</u>		
Picnic Shelters	1/5,000	23
Playgrounds	1/2,000	58
Multi-Purpose Trails	.25 miles/1,000	28.75 Miles
<u>SPECIALIZED</u>		
Community Centers/ Recreation Centers	1/20,000	6
Swimming Pools	1/25,000	5
Golf Course	1/Community	1
Skateboard Park	1/Community	1
Fitness Center	1/Community	1
Amphitheater	1/Community	1
Water Access	1/20,000	6

## **CITY OF WILMINGTON 2015 FACILITY NEED**

**Table 6.6 “City of Wilmington 2015 Need for Public Recreational Facilities”** depicts the need in 2015 for public recreational facilities (i.e., ball fields, pools, courts, playground areas, etc.) that should be maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division based upon city standards identifying 2015 demand and existing public recreational facilities.

**Table 6.6 “City of Wilmington 2015 Need for Public Recreational Facilities”**

Facility	City Standard	City of Wilmington 115,000 Residents in 2015
<u><b>FIELDS</b></u>		<u><b>CURRENT NEED FOR FACILITIES</b></u>
Adult Baseball	1/30,000	3
Youth Baseball	1/10,000	2
Softball	1/15,000	2
Football/Soccer/Multi-Purpose	1/40,000	1
<u><b>COURTS</b></u>		
Basketball	1/5,000	9
Tennis	1/2,000	36
Volleyball	1/25,000	4
Shuffleboard	1/10,000	10
Horseshoe	1/10,000	4
Bocce Ball	1/10,000	8
<u><b>OUTDOOR AREAS</b></u>		
Picnic Shelters	1/5,000	10
Playgrounds	1/2,000	20
Multi-Purpose Trails	.25 miles/1,000	21.49 Miles
<u><b>SPECIALIZED</b></u>		
Community Centers/ Recreation Centers	1/20,000	3
Swimming Pools	1/25,000	2
Golf Course	1/Community	0
Skateboard Park	1/Community	0
Fitness Center	1/Community	0
Amphitheater	1/Community	0
Water Access	1/20,000	4

## **EVALUATION OF CITY OF WILMINGTON 2015 FACILITY NEED**

The assessment of public recreational facility standards against existing public recreational facilities maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington reveals several areas of deficiencies in many of the established public recreational facility categories by 2015. Utilizing the public recreational facility standards that were established specifically for the City of Wilmington, there is a need for the following additional public recreational facilities by 2015:

- + 3 Adult Baseball Fields
- + 2 Youth Baseball Fields
- + 2 Softball Fields
- + 1 Football/Soccer/Multi-Purpose Field
- + 9 Basketball Courts
- + 36 Tennis Courts
- + 4 Volleyball Courts
- + 10 Shuffleboard Courts
- + 4 Horseshoe Courts
- + 8 Bocce Ball Courts
- + 10 Picnic Shelters
- + 20 Playgrounds
- + 21.49 Miles of Multi-Purpose Trails
- + 3 Community Centers/Recreation Centers
- + 2 Swimming Pools
- + 4 Water Access Sites



**CITY OF WILMINGTON PUBLIC**  
**PARKS/PARK LAND STANDARDS**

Minimum standards for public parks/park land (i.e., mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, etc.) proposed for the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division were developed in accordance with industry guidelines established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NC DENR) and input from staff and community citizens generated during the needs assessment component of the master plan process. These standards, identified in **Table 6.7 “Standards for Public Parks/Park Land”**, are the minimum park/park land standards that should be used in establishing the public park/park land needs for the City of Wilmington. The acreage requirement for each type of park/park land is based on the population ratio method (acres of park land per 1,000 of population) established for each park/park land. The current city population is approximately 100,000. The population is projected to be approximately 115,000 by 2015.

**Table 6.7 “Standards for Public Parks/Park Land\*”**

<b><u>PARK TYPE</u></b>	<b><u>STANDARD</u></b>
<b>Mini-Park</b> <b>1 – 2 acres but at least ½ Acre</b>	<b>.25 Acres/1,000</b>
<b>Neighborhood Park</b> <b>3 – 25 Acres</b>	<b>1 Acre/2,000</b>
<b>Community/City-Wide Park</b> <b>15 – 100 Acres</b>	<b>2.5 Acres/2,000</b>
<b>Green Spaces</b> <b>0.1 – 25 Acres</b>	<b>2.5 Acres/1,000</b>
<b>Sports Complex</b> <b>80 – 125 Acres</b>	<b>2.5 Acres/2,000</b>

\*National and state standards for public recreational facility development were used as a guide in developing standards for the City of Wilmington. The actual standards developed and established for the City of Wilmington are based on input generated during the public input process and reflect both staff and citizen comments.



## **CITY OF WILMINGTON EXISTING PUBLIC PARKS/PARK LAND**

Table 6.8 “City of Wilmington Existing Public Parks/Park Land” depicts the amount of existing public parks/park land (i.e., mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, etc.) currently maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division.

**Table 6.8 “City of Wilmington Existing Public Parks/Park Land”**

<u><b>PARK TYPE</b></u>	<u><b>STANDARD</b></u>	<u><b>EXISTING PARK LAND</b></u> <b>Population 100,000 in 2010</b>
Mini-Park	.25 Acres/1,000	12.7 Acres
Neighborhood Park	1 Acre/2,000	29 Acres
Community/City-Wide Park	2.5 Acres/2,000	424.7 Acres
Green Spaces	2.5 Acres/1,000	68.6 Acres
Sports Complex	2.5 Acres/2,000	25 Acres

## **CITY OF WILMINGTON CURRENT DEMAND FOR PUBLIC PARKS/PARK LAND**

Table 6.9 “City of Wilmington Current Demand for Public Parks/Park Land” depicts the amount of current demand in 2010 for public parks/park land (i.e., mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, etc.) that should be maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division based upon city standards for parks/park land acreage.

**Table 6.9 “City of Wilmington Current Demand for Public Parks/Park Land”**

<u><b>PARK TYPE</b></u>	<u><b>STANDARD</b></u>	<u><b>DEMAND FOR PARK LAND</b></u> <b>Population 100,000 in 2010</b>
Mini-Park	.25 Acres/1,000	25 Acres
Neighborhood Park	1 Acre/2,000	50 Acres
Community/City-Wide Park	2.5 Acres/2,000	125 Acres
Green Spaces	2.5 Acres/1,000	250 Acres
Sports Complex	2.5 Acres/2,000	125 Acres

**CITY OF WILMINGTON CURRENT NEED FOR  
PUBLIC PARKS/PARK LAND**

Table 6.10 “City of Wilmington Current Need for Public Parks/Park Land” depicts the current need in 2010 for public parks/park land (i.e., mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, etc.) that should be maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division based upon city standards identifying current demand for parks/park land and the existing public parks/park land.

**Table 6.10 “City of Wilmington Current Need for Public Parks/Park Land”**

<b><u>PARK TYPE</u></b>	<b><u>STANDARD</u></b>	<b><u>NEED FOR PARK LAND Population 100,000 in 2010</u></b>
<b>Mini-Park</b>	<b>.25 Acres/1,000</b>	<b>12.3 Acres</b>
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	<b>1 Acre/2,000</b>	<b>21 Acres</b>
<b>Community/City-Wide Park</b>	<b>2.5 Acres/2,000</b>	<b>0 Acres</b>
<b>Green Spaces</b>	<b>2.5 Acres/1,000</b>	<b>181.4 Acres</b>
<b>Sports Complex</b>	<b>2.5 Acres/2,000</b>	<b>100 Acres</b>

**EVALUATION OF CITY OF WILMINGTON  
CURRENT PUBLIC PARKS/PARK LAND NEED IN 2010**

The assessment of public park/park land standards against existing public park/park land maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington reveals several current areas of deficiencies in many of the established park/park land categories. Utilizing the public park/park land standards that were established specifically for the City of Wilmington, there is a need for the following additional public park/park land in 2010:

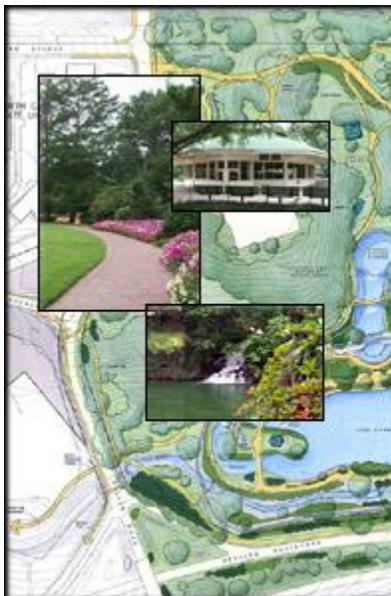
- ✚ 12.3 acres equals 6 – 25 Mini-Parks
- ✚ 21 acres equals 1 – 7 Neighborhood Parks
- ✚ 181.4 Acres of Green Space
- ✚ 100 acres equals 1 Sports Complex

**CITY OF WILMINGTON 2015 DEMAND FOR  
PUBLIC PARKS/PARK LAND**

Table 6.11 “City of Wilmington 2015 Demand for Public Parks/Park Land” depicts the projected demand in 2015 for public parks/park land (i.e., mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, etc.) that should be maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division based upon city standards for parks/park land acreage.

**Table 6.11 “City of Wilmington 2015 Demand for Public Parks/Park Land”**

<b><u>PARK TYPE</u></b>	<b><u>STANDARD</u></b>	<b><u>DEMAND FOR PARK LAND</u></b> <b>Population 115,000 in 2015</b>
<b>Mini-Park</b>	<b>.25 Acres/1,000</b>	<b>28.75 Acres</b>
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	<b>1 Acre/2,000</b>	<b>57.5 Acres</b>
<b>Community/City-Wide Park</b>	<b>2.5 Acres/2,000</b>	<b>143.75 Acres</b>
<b>Green Spaces</b>	<b>2.5 Acres/1,000</b>	<b>287.5 Acres</b>
<b>Sports Complex</b>	<b>2.5 Acres/2,000</b>	<b>143.75 Acres</b>



**CITY OF WILMINGTON 2015 NEED FOR  
PUBLIC PARKS/PARK LAND**

Table 6.12 “City of Wilmington 2015 Need for Public Parks/Park Land” depicts the amount of current demand in 2010 for public parks/park land (i.e., mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, etc.) that should be maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division based upon city standards for parks/park land acreage.

**Table 6.12 “City of Wilmington Current Demand for Public Parks/Park Land”**

<b><u>PARK TYPE</u></b>	<b><u>STANDARD</u></b>	<b><u>NEED FOR PARK LAND</u></b> <b>Population 115,000 in 2015</b>
<b>Mini-Park</b>	<b>.25 Acres/1,000</b>	<b>16.05 Acres</b>
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	<b>1 Acre/2,000</b>	<b>28.5 Acres</b>
<b>Community/City-Wide Park</b>	<b>2.5 Acres/2,000</b>	<b>0 Acres</b>
<b>Green Spaces</b>	<b>2.5 Acres/1,000</b>	<b>218.9 Acres</b>
<b>Sports Complex</b>	<b>2.5 Acres/2,000</b>	<b>118.75 Acres</b>

**EVALUATION OF CITY OF WILMINGTON 2015  
PUBLIC PARKS/PARK LAND NEED**

The assessment of public parks/park land standards against existing public parks/park land maintained and/or operated by the City of Wilmington reveals several areas of deficiencies in many of the established public parks/park land categories by 2015. Utilizing the public parks/park land standards that were established specifically for the City of Wilmington, there is a need for the following additional public parks/park land by 2015:

- ✚ 16.05 acres equals 8 – 32 Mini-Parks
- ✚ 28.5 acres equals 2 – 10 Neighborhood Parks
- ✚ 218.9 Acres of Green Space
- ✚ 118.75 acres equals 1 Sports Complex



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## ***CHAPTER SEVEN: MASTER PLAN PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

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The City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division has traditionally, historically and accurately seen its role as one of providing basic public parks and recreation opportunities and experiences for the citizens of the City of Wilmington. This accepted role is certainly one that the Division should continue, expand and enhance over the next five (5) years. Community input and a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the Division’s current areas, facilities, services and programs reveal several deficiencies or “needs” in the City of Wilmington existing parks and recreation delivery system and resources. These deficiencies or “needs” can be satisfied through the long-range strategic planning process and the careful allocation and management of the City of Wilmington’s resources over the next five (5) years.

The *Public Input and Needs Assessment* portion of the master plan process revealed several interesting pieces of information concerning the parks and recreation needs and issues facing the City of Wilmington over the next five (5) years. For

example, the need in varying degrees for each of the following programs, services, areas and facilities was mentioned during all components of the needs assessment process:

- ✦ a Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex
- ✦ a safe, functional and usable bike, pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular transportation system
- ✦ a multi-purpose, multi-use Recreation Center/Gymnasium/Indoor Sports Complex
- ✦ additional neighborhood parks and corresponding playgrounds
- ✦ acquisition, protection and preservation of open space and green space
- ✦ completion of all phases of Olsen Park
- ✦ continued improvement and enhancement of existing City parks, areas and facilities
- ✦ improved and increased marketing and advertising of existing City programs and services

To a lesser degree, the need for each of the following programs, services, areas and facilities was mentioned during two or more but not all components of the needs assessment process:

- ✦ a major park in downtown Wilmington
- ✦ additional public access to the City's creeks, rivers, estuaries and sounds
- ✦ conversion of a portion of Water Street between into a Riverfront Mall for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles
- ✦ addition of a Parks, Recreation and Open Space provision to the City's Subdivision Ordinance
- ✦ increased and improved cooperation and partnerships between the City and other viable entities
- ✦ creation of a non-profit "***Friends of Parks, Recreation and Open Space Foundation***" to serve as a "fund-raising" and volunteer recruitment entity for City parks and recreation programs, services, areas and facilities
- ✦ increased programs and services for youth below the age of eight (8)
- ✦ increased programs and services for people with disabilities

- ✚ increased emphasis on outdoor/adventure/nature/environmental education programs and services
- ✚ enhanced safety features at City programs, services, areas and facilities

Although there were over two hundred (200) specific and diverse comments regarding parks and recreation programs and services for the City of Wilmington generated during the public input and needs assessment process, it is impractical to suppose or believe that all of these suggestions and recommendations can or should be targeted for acceptance and completion in this current 5-year Master Plan, particularly in light of the current state of the economy. It is, however, wise, feasible and practical to identify the most significant of those suggestions and recommendations and to develop a plan of action for their incorporation and completion. Several of the recommendations in this document have been carried over from the *City of Wilmington 2003 – 2008 Parks and Recreation Master Plan*. These include, but are not limited to, the need for a Natatorium/Swimming Complex; for a neighborhood park in the area of the City between Bradley Creek and Hewletts Creek; completion of the River Walk between the Memorial Bridge and the Holmes Bridge; resolution of the issue of consolidation of the City and the New Hanover County parks and recreation agencies; the partial closing and redesign of a portion of Water Street; and, a Multi-Purpose, Multi-Use Recreation Center Complex.

In order to facilitate and simplify the recommendation process, the identified needs and issues have been categorized into four categories: **1) Land Acquisition, 2) Area and Facility Development, 3) Program and Service Development, 4) Policy and Procedure Considerations, and 5) Personnel Considerations.** In addition, the recommendations for land acquisition, area and facility development, program and service development, policy and procedure considerations and personnel considerations have been grouped, when appropriate, into two (2) sub-categories: recommendations for the budget years “*2010 – 2015*”, and, recommendations for the budget years “*Beyond 2015*”.

The recommendations for the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* are:

## **1) Land Acquisition**

### **A) Land Acquisition—2010 – 2015 Budget Years**

The acquisition of land for parks, recreation and open space is an important component of this master plan. However, this acquisition of land will be very difficult at best. This master plan document makes one (1) general and several specific recommendations regarding the acquisition of land for parks, recreation and open space purposes in the City of Wilmington. A general recommendation is that the City of Wilmington acquires any and all properties that become available that are affordable and offer specific advantages for parks, recreation and open space. Such advantages for parks, recreation and open space would include, but not be limited to, open space, green space, greenways, trails, public water access, environmentally sensitive areas, land adjacent to existing City of Wilmington parks and recreation areas and facilities, and, land suitable for neighborhood parks and mini-parks in residential areas of need.

The specific land acquisition recommendations are:

- 1) Jointly acquire in partnership and cooperation with New Hanover County, the New Hanover County School System and other appropriate agencies and organizations 10 – 25 acres of land in a centrally and conveniently located area of the city to accommodate a comprehensive Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex. This land will need to be easily accessible to the majority of City of Wilmington and New Hanover County residents. This recommendation is discussed in greater detail in the *Area and Facility Development* section of this document.
- 2) Acquire 10 – 25 acres of land in a centrally and conveniently located area of the City to accommodate an extensive multi-purpose, multi-use community-wide Recreation Center/Gymnasium/Indoor Sports Complex. This land will need to be easily accessible to the majority of City residents. This recommendation is discussed in greater detail in the *Area and Facility Development* section of this document.
- 3) Acquire the land necessary to extend and complete the River Walk along the downtown Cape Fear River and the Northeast Cape Fear River from the

Memorial Bridge to the Holmes Bridge. In addition to the land required to complete and extend the River Walk its full length, land for additional public parks should be acquired at the south and the north ends of the River Walk near the Memorial Bridge and the Holmes Bridge respectively. The park at the south end of the River Walk near the Memorial Bridge, along with the Convention Center and Park at the north end of the River Walk near the Holmes Bridge, would serve as foundations and destination points on both ends of the completed downtown River Walk. The south end park should include space for boat docking, a small marina, playground equipment, picnicking areas and facilities and other suitable amenities. The park could be acquired and developed as joint public-private venture and include other amenities as appropriate. A comprehensive park master plan should be developed for the north end park to tie the park in with the Convention Center and Park currently under construction.

- 4) Acquire land for a neighborhood park of 5 – 15 acres in the area between Bradley Creek and Hewletts Creek. This area is presently without any suitable City park area. The closest City parkland to this area is the Municipal Golf Course. However, the Municipal Golf Course does not contain amenities other than the golf course and a club house. This park should include playgrounds, open play area, picnic facilities, parking area and similar low-key amenities suitable for both active and passive recreational pursuits.

It is possible that the City of Wilmington, New Hanover County or another public entity such as the New Hanover County School Board may already own, manage or have access to land that would be suitable and available to the City of Wilmington for a park in this area. If land were available through this cooperative arrangement, the City's resources would be maximized and available for other acquisition and development projects. In order to take advantage of this possibility, it is recommended that a full and comprehensive inventory and analysis of existing publicly owned and/or managed land be conducted by the City staff. This inventory should include the actual owner of the land, location, general characteristics of the site, size

and dimensions, existing and planned uses for the land, existing and planned uses for the land surrounding the site, and, any special requirements or restrictions placed upon the land by deeds, regulations and ordinances.

- 5) Acquire land that will permit full and easy public access to the creeks, rivers, estuaries and sounds within the City's jurisdiction. Access to the oceanfront beaches is and should be adequately provided by New Hanover County, Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach and Kure Beach. However, there is a relative deficiency of public access to the City's extensive freshwater and estuarine water systems, particularly the Cape Fear River, the Northeast Cape Fear River, Bradley Creek, Hewletts Creek and Whiskey Creek. There are a small number of access points for boating, fishing, and/or scenic viewing within the city limits of Wilmington. Unfortunately, these are few and far between. Additional public beach and coastal waterfront access sites are desirable, especially considering the importance of these natural resources to the overall quality of life in Wilmington. Strong consideration should be given to acquiring access sites that allow for progressive and continual ingress and egress of users along the freshwater and estuarine waters of the City of Wilmington. This acquisition should be accomplished in cooperation with New Hanover County.
- 6) Acquire land that will allow for the completion of the *Cross-City Trail* and other acquisitions necessary to complete a comprehensive bike, pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular transportation system in and around the City of Wilmington.
- 7) Acquire all properties that become available that are affordable and/or offer specific advantages for parks, recreation and open space.

### ***B) Land Acquisition—Beyond 2015 Budget Year***

The City of Wilmington should pursue the following land acquisition Beyond 2015:

- 1) Acquire land for neighborhood parks (2) of 5 – 15 acres in the vicinity of City of Wilmington neighborhood areas without a suitable public park

- 2) Acquire land, approximately 10 – 25 acres, along a body of water such as the Cape Fear River, the Northeast Cape Fear River, Bradley Creek, Howes Creek, Smith Creek or a similar body of water suitable for a second nature-oriented park in the mold of Halyburton Park
- 3) Acquire two (2) specific 15 – 40 acre tracts of land outside the inner city of Wilmington and in the northern and southern ends of the jurisdictional boundaries. These lands would eventually serve as Community/District Parks for all City residents. These acquisitions would give the City three (3) Community or District Parks that would serve as the focal points for parks and recreations services and programs.
- 4) Acquiring any and all parcels of land within the City’s jurisdictional boundaries that have any potential for active or passive recreational purposes. This includes land within the inner city and in the residential areas outside the inner city of Wilmington. This land acquisition should be undertaken in order to protect and preserve the fragile natural resources and quality of life associated with Wilmington. These acquisitions should include lands of all sizes and characteristics.



## **2) Area and Facility Development**

### ***A) Area and Facility Development—2010 – 2015 Budget Years***

Area and facility development should be a primary focus of the City of Wilmington for the next 5 years. Numerous suggestions and recommendations for further area and facility upgrades and development were received during the public information gathering process. Nine primary (9) area and facility development needs and recommendations are specifically identified in the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* that are deemed to be the most urgent and the most practical to implement during the period of this document. These

“needs” and recommendations are not presented in any particular or priority order in this list:

- 1) An identified need and recommendation upon joint, cooperative and shared acquisition of the 10 – 25 acre parcel of land identified in *Land Acquisition* is to construct a comprehensive, full-service Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex. This complex should at a minimum include a 25 meter, 6 lane indoor pool complete with all the appropriate amenities and should be a joint cooperative effort and partnership between the City of Wilmington, the New Hanover County Parks Department, the New Hanover County School System and other appropriate and interested groups, organizations and agencies.
- 2) An identified need and recommendation is for continued planning, construction and development of a system of non-motorized vehicular and pedestrian transportation between and connecting public areas and facilities within the City of Wilmington’s planning jurisdiction and in concert with the *Cross-City Trail* currently under development. This system would include sidewalks, biking paths, hiking trails, walking trails, greenways, and, other pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular corridors.
- 3) An identified need and recommendation is to develop a public park in the downtown Wilmington area. This park could be developed on existing City property and could include a playground, picnic area, and a small community building with meeting space and classroom space and other amenities as appropriate.
- 4) An identified need and recommendation is to complete the planning, development and construction of the River Walk from the Memorial Bridge to the Holmes Bridge. This need has been identified repeatedly in past and recent years and publicly recorded in such documents as the “*Wilmington Downtown Plan: Vision 2020*”. This need should take a high priority because of the long-term and substantial recreational, tourism and economic impacts of the project and the influence of the proposed Convention Center project.

- 5) An identified need and recommendation is to work closely and aggressively with New Hanover County to complete all phases of construction and development for Olsen Park
- 6) An identified need and recommendation is to complete all phases of construction and development of Empie Park
- 7) An identified need and recommendation is to construct a winterized dome over either the existing Shipp Pool at the Legion Sports Complex or the Murphy Pool at the Robert Strange Park. This would allow the City to conduct year-round aquatics activities and increase and enhance opportunities for community individual citizens and groups to engage in aquatic programs and services. This winterized dome would compliment and supplement the new Natatorium/Swimming Complex and increase the City's ability to accommodate the need for indoor swimming facilities.
- 8) An identified need and recommendation is to develop facilities for additional public beach and coastal waterfront access, particularly access to the creeks, rivers, estuaries and sounds of the City. Additional public beach and coastal waterfront access facilities are desirable, especially those accommodating small, motorized boats, canoes, kayaks and other recreational vehicles and uses. These public beach and coastal waterfront access sites should include boat ramps, fishing piers and observation decks, and, provide little more than limited parking and restroom facilities. Strong consideration should be given to developing access facilities that allow for progressive and continual ingress and egress of users along the fresh and estuarine waters of the City of Wilmington, particularly along the Cape Fear River, the Northeast Cape Fear River, Bradley Creek, Hewletts Creek, Smith Creek and Whiskey Creek.
- 9) An identified need and recommendation is to development a neighborhood park of 5 – 15 acres in the area between Hewletts Creek and Bradley Creek. This section of the City between Hewletts Creek and Bradley Creek is without City parks and recreation areas and facilities. The neighborhood park facilities would include playground equipment, an open play area, a multi-

purpose athletic field, picnic shelters, benches, a fitness course, landscaping, a water feature, and, restroom facilities.

10) An identified generic need and recommendation is to continue the on-going upgrading, expansion and/or modernization of existing park, recreation and open space areas and facilities. This would include increased maintenance of areas and facilities and an increased emphasis upon safety at all City areas and facilities. In addition to these generic upgrades, expansions and modernizations a couple of specific needs and recommendations are to:

- a. **Maides Park**—construct a full-service gymnasium/recreation center/multi-purpose center that connects to the existing center building
- b. **Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center**—enhance the shower and restroom facilities, consider expanding the existing gymnasium and consider adding additional outdoor basketball courts
- c. **Splashpads**—construct a splashpad in the 1995 and a splashpad in the 1998 annexed area
- d. **Greenfield Amphitheater**—add a second concession stand; improve and enhance the existing power system at the stage house; and, construct appropriate security fencing and barriers
- e. **Legion Stadium Park/Sports Complex**—install synthetic turf on the stadium field; resurface the tennis courts and perform general upgrades and maintenance to the sports facilities
- f. **Wade Park**—rehabilitate the existing building
- g. **Greenfield Grind Skatepark**—replace the existing office structure
- h. **Coastline Docks**—replace the existing floating docks and include water and electric hookups
- i. **Swimming Pools**—perform necessary and appropriate repair and rehabilitation to all of the city’s swimming pools to include the bathhouses

### ***B) Area and Facility Development—Beyond 2015 Budget Year***

- 1) The development and construction of a comprehensive, full-service, multi-purpose, multi-use Recreation Center/Gymnasium/Indoor Sports Complex. This facility should include at a minimum a full court basketball/volleyball

gymnasium, fitness facility, exercise facility, meeting space, kitchen, aerobics room, and other amenities deemed appropriate.

- 2) Continue the planning, construction and development of a system of non-motorized vehicular and pedestrian transportation between and connecting public areas and facilities within the City of Wilmington's planning jurisdiction that will successfully complete the *Cross-City Trail and Walk Wilmington*
- 3) Continue the on-going upgrading, expansion and/or modernization of existing park, recreation and open space areas and facilities
- 4) The development and construction along a body of water such as the Cape Fear River, the Northeast Cape Fear River, Bradley Creek, Howes Creek or a similar body of water of a second nature-oriented park in the mold of Halyburton Park
- 5) Continue to develop facilities for additional public beach and coastal waterfront access, particularly access to the creeks, rivers, estuaries and sounds of the City

### **3) Program and Service Development**

#### ***A) Program and Service Development—2010 – 2015 Budget Years***

- 1) More emphasis should be placed upon programs and services of all types for small children and youth. Of special concern should be non-athletic and non-sports related programs and services
- 2) Increased emphasis on programs and services for persons with disabilities is necessary
- 3) Additional environmental education, nature-related, water-related and other outdoor-related programs and services including but not limited to canoe classes, sailing classes, kayaking classes, swimming classes, nature study, bird identification and so forth should be offered
- 4) A stronger effort needs to be made in programming the existing recreation/community centers in order to attract stronger participation. The city needs to focus on better efforts to market the services and programs provided to the community as well as work with other stakeholders in the

community to identify overlapping areas and gaps in current services. Partnerships need to continue to be developed to maximize community resources and support future parks, recreation and open space needs.

- 5) A comprehensive and detailed random telephone survey should be administered due to an overall lack of specific recommendations and needs identification in the area of program and service development beyond the need for general programs and services for children and youth, persons with disabilities and in the area of environmental education and nature-related experiences and opportunities

#### ***B) Program and Service Development—Beyond 2015 Budget***

- 1) There is no need or recommendation in this document for program and service development beyond 2015

### **4) Policy and Procedure Considerations**

#### ***A) Policy and Procedure Considerations—2010 – 2015 Budget Years***

There are several areas of policy and procedure that need to be examined and evaluated in light of the recommendations contained in this Master Plan. Some of these policies and procedures are currently strategic parts of the standard operating procedures of the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division. However, several of the policy and procedure recommends delve into areas not presently an active part of the City's operating procedures. Highlights of these policy and procedure considerations are detailed and summarized as follows:

- ◆ ***Partnerships***—The number and type of cooperative partnerships should continued to be expanded, enriched and enhanced. The most important and most beneficial partnership agency would be the New Hanover County Parks Department. Although the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division is already involved in several significant partnership commitments that have provided valuable services to the citizens of Wilmington, there are still numerous groups, agencies and organizations within the City's planning and jurisdiction sphere available and possibly willing to enter into additional and/or

expanded partnerships with the Division in the provision and administration of parks, recreation and open space programs, services, areas, and facilities to the citizens of the City of Wilmington. These partnerships would significantly increase the effectiveness and efficiency of City resources and expand the scope of available parks and recreation programs and services. Available potential partners include, but are not limited to, the New Hanover County School System and Board of Education, the New Hanover County Cooperative Extension Service, the New Hanover County Soil and Water Conservation District, the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust, the New Hanover County Parks Department, the Town of Carolina Beach Parks and Recreation Department, the Town of Wrightsville Beach Department of Planning and Parks, UNC Wilmington, the Audubon Society, Cape Fear River Watch, the North Carolina Coastal Federation, the North Carolina Nature Conservancy, other public entities operating in the City of Wilmington and New Hanover County, and, other non-profit, private, service and civic organizations. Particular emphasis should be placed upon the expansion of cooperative relationships and agreements with the New Hanover County Parks Department. Specific partnership arrangements could include, but are not limited to:

- ✚ Working with the New Hanover County School System to arrange mutual cooperation agreements for the city's use of school areas and facilities when not in use by the schools
- ✚ Working with the New Hanover County Parks Department, the New Hanover County School System and other appropriate agencies and organizations to acquire and develop property for parks, recreation and open space areas and facilities—i.e. a neighborhood park in the area between Bradley Creek and Hewletts Creek; the Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex; and, neighborhood parks in appropriate areas

- ✚ Working with the Town of Leland, NC, the New Hanover County Soil and Water Conservation District, the New Hanover County Parks Department, Cape Fear River Watch, the North Carolina Coastal Federation and other involved groups to acquire Eagles Island and to develop a conservation management plan for Eagles Island
  - ✚ Working with the New Hanover County Parks Department to complete all phases of construction of Olsen Park
  - ✚ Working with the Town of Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County and the Town of Carolina Beach to complete a comprehensive pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular transportation system for New Hanover County
- ◆ ***Parks, Recreation and Open Space Foundation***—It is a recommendation of this master plan that the City of Wilmington continue to explore the possibility of creating a “***Friends of Parks, Recreation and Open Space Foundation***” to assist the City of Wilmington and the Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division in generating support and raising funds for land acquisition, area and facility development and program services. Citizens are typically more willing and apt to provide financial support when non-profit organizations are involved in the fund raising effort rather than governmental entities. A non-profit Friends of Parks, Recreation and Open Space Foundation could become a valuable tool for increasing community volunteer support for parks and recreation programs and services while at the same time significantly increasing the availability of operating and capital funding for the Department.
- ◆ ***Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Compliance***—The 1990 passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) makes it imperative that the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division continue to make a strong and comprehensive commitment to providing ADA accessibility to all citizens of the City of Wilmington. The Department should continue to make

ADA compliance and recreational inclusion a top administrative priority in the development and implementation of all programs and services.



- ◆ ***Marketing and Publicity of Programs and Services***—Increased awareness, publicity and communication of programs and services offered by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division is necessary. It might be possible to work with the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW), particularly the Department of Health and Applied Human Sciences, the Department of Communication Studies and/or the Cameron School of Business, to have a Marketing and Publicity Strategic Plan prepared for the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division.
- ◆ ***Parks, Recreation and Open Space Requirements in the City's Development and Subdivision Ordinance***—The City of Wilmington is the largest municipality in one of the fastest growing counties in North Carolina. In order to control the orderly and desired growth of the City, a comprehensive Development and Subdivision Ordinance with a progressive, far-reaching and fully encompassing Parks, Recreation and Open Space provision should be developed. To this end, it is recommended that a Subdivision Ordinance Parks, Recreation and Open Space Provision Task Force be formed. This committee should include members of the Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services staff, the Planning Department staff, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Planning Board and interested and knowledgeable community citizens and stakeholders, including area consultants. The committee should also request the assistance of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Government and the North Carolina State University Recreation Resources Services technical assistant program.

- ◆ ***Certification of Parks and Playground Equipment—***  
Immediately and then on a regularly scheduled basis, the City of Wilmington should contract with a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) to inspect all parks and playground equipment and areas under the maintenance and operation of the City. This action will ensure that the City's parks and playground equipment are in compliance with existing park and playground standards and serve as an additional protection against negligence lawsuits.



- ◆ ***Closing and Redesign of a Portion of Water Street—***The possibility and practicality of permanently closing a portion of Water Street and making it a pedestrian Riverfront Mall should be considered. This would provide a beautiful and safe pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular avenue along the Cape Fear River and the downtown Wilmington riverfront and provide an excellent venue for city functions. Portions of Water Street are already currently closed on numerous occasions in order to accommodate downtown events and festivals.



- ◆ ***Telephone Survey to Assess Programs and Services Needs—***  
The City of Wilmington should contract with a private consulting firm or the University of North Carolina Wilmington to administer a random telephone survey to city resident's regarding the types and number of

specific programs and services the people want the Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division to provide. This survey is necessary in order to determine the exact needs of the citizens of the City of Wilmington regarding the provision of specific parks and recreation programs and services as this did not surface adequately during the public input portion of the needs assessment component of the master plan process.

***B) Policy and Procedure Considerations—Beyond 2015 Budget Year***

- 1) There is no need or recommendation in this document for policy and procedure considerations beyond 2015



**5) Personnel Considerations**

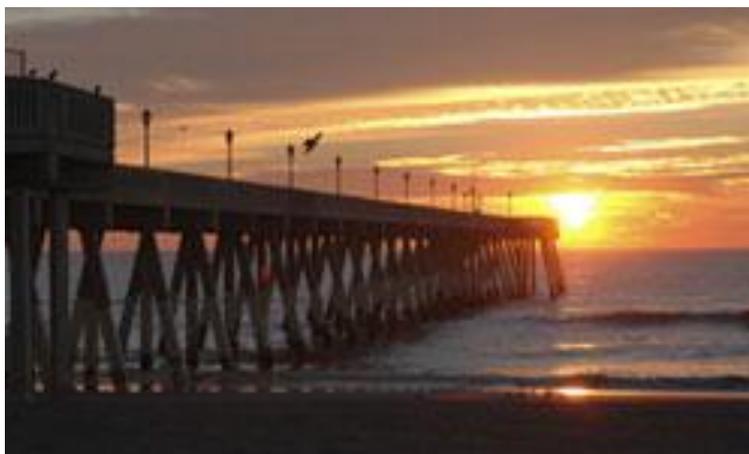
***A) Personnel Considerations—2010 – 2015 Budget Years***

- 1) The development, construction and operation of the full-service Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex will require the creation and hiring of approximately 2 – 4 full-time employees and 10 – 20 part-time/seasonal employees.
- 2) Planned park development projects will require additional full-time, part-time and seasonal building and grounds maintenance personnel (2 – 10 positions).

***B) Personnel Considerations—Beyond 2015 Budget***

- 1) The development and construction of the community-wide, multi-purpose, multi-use Recreation Center/Gymnasium/Sports Complex will require the creation and hiring of approximately 3 – 5 full-time employees and 10 – 25 part-time/seasonal employees.
- 2) The acquisition and development of additional parcels of land for public active and passive recreational purposes, including the *Cross-City Trail*, will require the hiring of additional full-time, part-time and seasonal building and grounds maintenance personnel (3 – 8 positions).

- 3) The development and construction along a body of water of a second nature-oriented park in the mold of Halyburton Park will require the creation and hiring of approximately 2 – 3 full-time employees and 5 – 8 part-time/seasonal employees.





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## ***CHAPTER EIGHT: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN***

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The *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* is grounded in an analysis and synthesis of current background information for the City of Wilmington, an inventory and evaluation of the current parks, recreation and open space delivery system, an understanding of existing parks, recreation and open space standards and guidelines, and, the identification of participant needs and interests.

The recommendations and proposals of the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* are designed to be planned and implemented over the next 5-year budget period utilizing revenues and funds from current appropriations, the annual city operating budget, grants, tax revenues, gifts, donations, the bond referendum, and/or, user fees and charges. The Master Plan is also contingent upon the city's ability to enter into joint partnerships and cooperative ventures with various complimentary public, private and quasi-public agencies and organizations currently operating in and around the City of Wilmington and New Hanover County.

**LAND ACQUISITION**—The land acquisition recommendations within the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* must be implemented within the next three (3) years or less in order to ensure the availability of appropriate and useable land for parks, recreation and open space purposes. Any current revenues, appropriations and funding dedicated for parks, recreation and open space acquisitions should be utilized without delay. If the amount of the current appropriations is not sufficient to meet all the land acquisition needs for the City of Wilmington, additional funding and acquisition possibilities should be sought from grants, donations, another general obligation bond referendum, tax revenues, land dedication, eminent domain proceedings, lease-purchase agreements, state and federal government assistance and joint public/private/non-profit ventures. The specific details for the land acquisition recommendations within this document should be worked out in a 5-Year Capital Improvements Project (CIP) Budget for the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division.

The *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* specifically identifies land acquisition needs totaling approximately 50 – 125 acres for 2010 – 2015. This land acquisition figure is calculated as follows:

- ✚ 10 – 25 acres of land for the Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex  
(The City of Wilmington would be responsible for approximately ¼ of the project)
- ✚ 10 – 25 acres of land for the Recreation Center/Gymnasium/Indoor Sports Complex
- ✚ 5 – 10 acres of land to complete River Walk and its associated northern and southern parks
- ✚ 5 – 15 acres of land for the neighborhood park in the area between Bradley Creek and Hewletts Creek
- ✚ 10 – 25 acres of land for public access to the waters in and around the City of Wilmington
- ✚ 10 – 25 acres of land to continue development of the Cross-City Trail and other pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular transportation corridors in the City

The *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* also specifically identifies land acquisition needs totaling approximately 60 – 160 acres for Beyond 2015. This land acquisition figure is calculated as follows:

- ✚ 10 – 30 acres of land for additional neighborhood parks in appropriate neighborhoods
- ✚ 10 – 25 acres of land for a second nature-oriented park in the mold of Halyburton Park
- ✚ 30 – 80 acres of land for the northern and southern Community/District Parks
- ✚ 10 – 25 acres of land suitable for active and/or passive recreation

The total amount of land acquisition expenditures identified in the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* for “2010 – 2015” is estimated to be \$750,000 – \$1,875,000. The total amount of land acquisition expenditures identified in the document for “Beyond 2015” is estimated to be \$900,000 – \$2,400,000. Funding for these land acquisition expenditures beyond monies currently available to the City of Wilmington can be sought from the North Carolina Natural Heritage Trust Fund, the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, North Carolina Department of Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grants, North Carolina Department of Transportation Enhancement Program—Federal Transportation Enhancement Fund, the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, and other state, federal, public and private funding sources and through partnerships and joint and cooperative acquisition of land.

✚ 2010 – 2015

- 50 – 125 acres of land acquisition requirements
  - **\$750,000 – \$1,875,000**

✚ Beyond 2015

- 60 – 160 acres of land acquisition requirements
  - **\$900,000 – \$2,400,000**

**AREA AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT**—Area and facility development should be consistent with the completion of the land acquisition phase of the *City of Wilmington 2010 – 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*. The specific details for the area and facility development recommendations contained within this

master plan should be worked out in a 2010 – 2015 fiscal year 5-Year Capital Improvements Project (CIP) Budget for the City of City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division. The City of Wilmington should definitely apply for grant funding from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), the Clean Water Management Trust fund and the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund for the 2010 – 2015 recommendations regarding the construction of the Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Pool, the downtown park, the completion of the River Walk, the completion of Olsen Park, the winterized pool dome, the public water access facilities, the neighborhood park and the improvements to Maides Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center, the Greenfield Amphitheater, the Legion Stadium Park/Sports Complex, Wade Park, the Greenfield Grind Skatepark, and the other recommended area and facility development recommendations. Additional funding might be available from the North Carolina Natural Heritage Trust Fund, the Public Fishing Access Areas Grants and the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant Program. The non-vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle transportation network between and connecting public areas and facilities within the City of Wilmington planning jurisdiction could be funded through grants administered by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, The North Carolina Trails Program, North Carolina Department of Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grants and the North Carolina Department of Transportation Enhancement Program—Federal Transportation Enhancement Fund.

**Total project development cost estimates and recommended completion dates for each of the ten (10) Area and Facility Development needs identified in the master plan for the 2010 – 2015 budget years are:**

- 1) Non-Vehicular Transportation Network                    **\$4,000,000 – \$8,000,000**  
     ✚ Recommended Completion Date—On-Going Project
- 2) Completion of River Walk                                    **\$200,000 – \$350,000**  
     ✚ Recommended Completion Date— On-Going Project
- 3) Public Water Access Sites                                    **\$750,000 – \$1,500,000**  
     ✚ Recommended Completion Date—On-Going Project

- 4) Swimming Pools **\$115,000 – \$175,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—On-Going Project
- 5) Winterized Pool Dome **\$50,000 – \$75,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Fall 2012
- 6) Park Improvements to Maides Park **\$650,000 – \$900,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Summer 2013
- 7) Park Improvements to Martin Luther King, Jr. **\$700,000 – \$1,000,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Summer 2013
- 8) Splashpads **\$350,000 – \$500,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Summer 2013
- 9) Wade Park **\$250,000 – \$275,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Winter 2013
- 10) Empie Park **\$300,000 – \$500,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Winter 2013
- 11) Greenfield Amphitheater **\$400,000 – \$500,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Spring 2014
- 12) Complete Olsen Park Development **\$2,500,000 – \$4,000,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Spring 2014
- 13) Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex **\$1,000,000 – \$2,000,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Summer 2014
- 14) Legion Stadium Park/Sports Complex **\$1,250,000 – \$1,750,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Fall 2014
- 15) Greenfield Grind Skatepark **\$15,000 – \$20,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Fall 2014
- 16) Downtown Park Development **\$600,000 – \$1,000,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Fall 2014
- 17) Neighborhood Park **\$350,000 – \$600,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Winter 2014
- 18) Coastline Docks **\$75,000 – \$100,000**  
  - ✚ Recommended Completion Date—Summer 2015

*Total Estimate for 2010 – 2015 Area and Facility*

*Development Recommendations* .....\$13,555,000 – \$23,245,000

**Total Project Development Cost Estimates for each of the Ten (10)**

**Area and Facility Development Recommendations for 2010 – 2015**

**Budget Year**

<b><u>PROJECT</u></b>	<b><u>ESTIMATED COMPLETION</u></b>	<b><u>COST</u></b>
Non-Vehicular Transportation Network	On-Going Project	\$4,000,000 – \$8,000,000
River Walk Completion	On-Going Project	\$200,000 – \$350,000
Public Water Access Sites	On-Going Project	\$750,000 – \$1,500,000
Swimming Pools	On-Going Project	\$115,000 – \$175,000
Winterized Pool Dome	By Fall 2012	\$50,000 – \$75,000
Maides Park Improvements	By Summer 2013	\$650,000 – \$900,000
Martin Luther King, Jr. Center Improvements	By Summer 2013	\$700,000 – \$1,000,000
Splashpads	By Summer 2013	\$350,000 – \$500,000
Wade Park	By Winter 2013	\$250,000 – \$275,000
Empie Park	By Winter 2013	\$300,000 – \$500,000
Greenfield Amphitheater	By Spring 2013	\$400,000 – \$500,000
Olsen Park Completion	By Spring 2014	\$2,500,000 – \$4, 000,000
Natatorium/Indoor Swimming Complex	By Summer 2014	\$1,000,000 – \$2,000,000
Legion Stadium Park/Sports Complex	By Fall 2014	\$1,250,000 – \$1,750,000
Greenfield Grind Skatepark	By Fall 2014	\$15,000 – \$20,000
Downtown Park Development	By Fall 2014	\$600,000 – \$ 1,000,000
Neighborhood Park	By Winter 2013	\$350,000 – \$600,000
Coastline Docks	By Summer 2015	\$75,000 – \$100,000
<b>Total Estimate for 2010 – 2015 Budget Years Area and Facility Development</b>		<b>\$13,800,000 –\$ 23,245,000</b>

**Total project development cost estimates for each of the five (5) Area and Facility Development needs identified Beyond 2015 are:**

- 1) Recreation Center/Gymnasium/Indoor  
Sports Complex **\$2,000,000 – \$3,000,000**
- 2) Non-Vehicular Transportation Network **\$1,500,000 – \$4,000,000**
- 3) Park Improvements **\$125,000 – \$250,000**
- 4) Public Water Access Sites **\$750,000 – \$1,000,000**
- 5) Nature-Oriented Park Development **\$2,250,000 – \$3,000,000**

*Total Estimate for Beyond 2015 Area and*

*Facility Development.....\$6,625,000 – \$11,250,000*

**Total Project Development Cost Estimates for each of the Five (5)  
Area and Facility Development Recommendations for Beyond 2015**

**Budget Year**

<b><u>PROJECT</u></b>	<b><u>ESTIMATED COMPLETION</u></b>	<b><u>COST</u></b>
Recreation Center/Gymnasium/Indoor Sports Complex	Beyond 2015	\$2,000,000 – \$3,000,000
Non-Vehicular Transportation Network	Beyond 2015	\$1,500,000 – \$ 4,000,000
Park Improvements	Beyond 2015	\$125,000 – \$250,000
Public Water Access Sites	Beyond 2015	\$750,000 – \$1,000,000
Nature-Oriented Park Development	Beyond 2015	\$2,250,000 – \$3,000,000
Total Estimate for Beyond 2015 Budget Years for Area and Facility Development		\$6,625,000 – \$11,250,000

**PROGRAM AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT**—The recommended additional programs and services should be offered by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division as a part of the normal operating budget and as staff, areas and facilities and financial resources allow. The environmental education, nature-related, water-related and other outdoor-related programs and services, the new programs and services for people with disabilities, and, the new programs and services for small children and youth can be accommodated through use of existing areas and facilities and after the development of some of the new areas and facilities recommended in this document. There is also the possibility to partner with other groups and organizations in the community in the joint offering of these programs and services.

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 1) **Partnerships**—The City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division should immediately begin to create, enhance and expand appropriate formal and informal partnerships with interested agencies and organizations such as the New Hanover County School System, the New Hanover County Parks Department, The Town of Wrightsville Beach Planning and Parks

Department, the Town of Carolina Beach Parks and Recreation Department, the New Hanover County Cooperative Extension Service, the New Hanover County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Coastal Land Trust, UNC Wilmington, the Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, the Nature Conservancy, and other public entities and non-profit, service and civic organizations in order to facilitate the delivery of recreation and leisure services. The Superintendent of Recreation for the Division should take the lead in this endeavor and commence immediately.

- 2) **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Foundation**—The City of Wilmington Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, in consultation with the Superintendent of Recreation, should immediately begin the process of developing a planning and implementation strategy for the creation of a “*Friends of Parks, Recreation and Open Space Foundation*”. A sub-committee of the Advisory Board should be formed by September 2010 to spearhead the process and a report summarizing the planning and implementation strategy made to the full Advisory Board by January 2011. The Foundation should be created and operational by the 2011 – 2012 fiscal year.
- 3) **Americans With Disabilities (ADA) Accessibility Compliance**—The Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division should hire a competent, certified professional to conduct a comprehensive inventory and evaluation of all existing programs, services, areas and facilities in order to determine current ADA and recreational inclusion compliance. This inventory and evaluation should be completed during the 2010 – 2011 fiscal year. All future programs, services, areas and facilities should be designed, constructed and implemented according to recommended and acceptable ADA and recreational inclusion guidelines and standards.
- 4) **Marketing and Publicity of Programs and Services**—A comprehensive Marketing and Publicity Strategic Plan should be developed by the City of Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division either through the hiring of a professional marketing consulting firm or through a cooperative arrangement with the University of North Carolina Wilmington (Cameron School of Business and/or the Parks and Recreation Management Program) or Cape Fear

Community College. The Superintendent of Recreation, in consultation with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, should evaluate these alternatives as well as others and make a recommendation to the City Manager regarding the most feasible course of action by August 2010. The comprehensive Marketing and Publicity Strategic Plan should be adopted and operable by the May 2011.

- 5) **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Requirements in the City's Subdivision Ordinance**—The City of Wilmington should aggressively pursue the creation and implementation of a progressive and far-reaching Parks, Recreation and Open Space stipulation in the City's comprehensive development and subdivision ordinance. To this end, a Development and Subdivision Ordinance Recreation and Open Space Provision Task Force should be formed by October 2010. The Task Force should be appointed by the Mayor and should include representatives of the Planning Department, the Parks, Recreation and Downtown Services Division, local developers and interested and knowledgeable community citizens and stakeholders, including area consultants and university professors. The Task Force should make an initial report and recommendation to the City Council by March 2011. Upon acceptance of the initial report and recommendations, the Planning Department staff in consultation with the Parks, Recreation Downtown Services Division staff will prepare a draft Development and Subdivision Recreation and Open Space Provision by June 2011.
- 6) **Certification of Parks and Playground Equipment**—The City of Wilmington should contract immediately with a Certified Playground Safety Instructor (CPSI) to perform a complete and detailed assessment of all parks and recreation areas and facilities, particularly the playground equipment. One of the playground equipment vendors or the faculty in the Parks and Recreation Management Program at UNC Wilmington might be able to assist with this process. Once the initial assessment has been completed by no later than December 2010, re-assessments by a CPSI should be scheduled for every 2 years. This recommendation would not eliminate the need for parks maintenance staff to conduct daily, weekly, and monthly inspections and assessments of its own at City parks and playgrounds.

- 7) **Closing and Redesign of Water Street**—The possibility, feasibility and practicality of closing a section of Water Street and making it a pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular Riverfront Mall should be considered. This action would provide a beautiful and safe pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular avenue along the Cape Fear River and the downtown Wilmington waterfront where numerous creative and desirable parks and recreation programs and services could be offered. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board should consider this recommendation at its September 2010 meeting and recommend the City Manager create a Task Force comprised of representatives from any and all city departments, services and programs as well as appropriate downtown business groups and organizations that might be impacted by a closing of a portion of Water Street to explore this action. The Task Force should make a report back to the City Manager by May 2011 recommending either to proceed with the closing of a portion of Water Street or recommending against the closing. The City Manager would then take whatever action was appropriate based upon the recommendation of the Task Force.
- 8) **Telephone Survey to Assess Programs and Services Needs**—A random telephone survey should be administered by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in order to determine the types and number of specific programs and services desired by the citizen's of the City of Wilmington. A private consulting firm or the University of North Carolina Wilmington should be hired to professionally conduct the survey instrument and analyze the results. The funding for the survey administration should be a part of the 2011 – 2012 fiscal year operating budget. The results of the survey should be presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board by no later than the board's March 2012 regularly scheduled meeting.



## **Grant Funding Opportunities**

In response to shrinking federal assistance during the 1980s and 1990s, North Carolina established dedicated funding sources for recreation from sources such as bonds, real-estate transfer taxes, user fees, state sales taxes, income tax write-offs, and mineral severance taxes. North Carolina has taken major steps to provide on-going sources of park and conservation funds with the establishment of the Natural Heritage Trust Fund, the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and the Clean Water Management Trust Fund. In addition, grant money is also available through the federally funded Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFTEA) [formerly known as the Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)]. The North Carolina Department of Transportation administers the funds and the local government agency can use these funds for developing portions of any proposed greenway system. Local governments can also apply for assistance with pedestrian, bikeway and greenway projects by applying for North Carolina Department of Transportation Enhancement Funds.

- ✚ ***North Carolina Natural Heritage Trust Fund (NHTF)***—The Natural Heritage Trust Fund (NHTF) was established in North Carolina in 1987. The fund provides supplemental funding to select state agencies for the acquisition and protection of important natural areas, to preserve the state’s ecological diversity and cultural heritage, and to inventory the natural heritage resources of the state.



- ✚ ***Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)***—The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) provides state parks and local governments with a reliable funding source for projects. The North Carolina General Assembly established the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund in July 1994 to fund improvements in the state’s park system, to fund grants for local governments and to increase the public’s access to the state’s beaches and coastal waters. The PARTF program provides dollar-for-dollar grants to local governments. Recipients use the grants to acquire land and/or to develop parks and recreational

projects that serve the general public. A portion of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund is the primary funding source for the Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access (PBCWA) Program. The PBCWA Program, administered by the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management (DCM), offers matching grants to local governments throughout North Carolina's 20 coastal counties. The fund is fueled by money from property sold in North Carolina and is allocated in 3 ways: 65% to the state parks through the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation; 30% as dollar-for-dollar matching grants to local governments for park and recreation purposes; and, 5% for the Coastal and Estuarine Water Access Program.



- ✚ ***North Carolina Division of Coastal Management Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grants***—The North Carolina Division of Coastal Management awards more than \$1 million a year in matching grants to local governments for projects to improve pedestrian access to the state's beaches and waterways. Local governments may use access grants to construct low-cost public access facilities, including parking areas, restrooms, dune crossovers and piers. Projects range in size from small, local access areas to regional access sites with amenities such as large parking lots, bathrooms and picnic shelters. Towns and counties may also use the grants to replace aging access facilities. In addition, local governments can use the funds to help acquire land for access sites or to revitalize urban waterfronts.



- ✚ ***North Carolina Department of Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grants***—The North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and the Transportation Planning Branch created an annual matching grant program—the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant

Initiative—to encourage municipalities to develop comprehensive bicycle plans and pedestrian plans. This program was initiated in January 2004 and is administered through the North Carolina Department of Transportation.



- ✚ **North Carolina Department of Transportation Enhancement Program—Federal Transportation Enhancement Fund**—The Federal Transportation Enhancement funding is administered by the Enhancement Unit and serves to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the Nation’s intermodal transportation system. Transportation Enhancement (TE) activities, awarded through the North Carolina Call for Projects process, must benefit the travelling public and help communities increase transportation choices and access, enhance the built or natural environment and create a sense of place. Transportation Enhancement projects must have a relationship to surface transportation and encompass one of the following qualifying activities: bicycle and pedestrian facilities; bicycle and pedestrian safety; acquisition of scenic easements, scenic or historic sites; scenic or historic highway programs; landscaping and other scenic beautification; historic preservation; rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities; preservation of abandoned rail corridors; control or outdoor advertising; archaeological planning and research; environmental mitigation; or transportation museums.



- ✚ **Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF)**—The 1996 North Carolina General Assembly created the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) “to clean up pollution in the state’s surface waters and to protect and conserve those waters that are not yet polluted.” State agencies, local governments or other political subdivisions of the state, and non-profit conservation organizations may apply for grants. Projects must “...specifically address water pollution problems

and focus on upgrading surface waters, eliminating pollution and protecting and conserving unpolluted surface waters, including urban drinking water supplies.” The funds from the CWMTF can be used for acquisition of riparian properties, financing of innovative wastewater management initiatives, storm water 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.



- ✚ ***The North Carolina Trails Program: Recreational Trails Program (RTP)***—The Recreational Trails Program is a \$1.3 million grant program funded by Congress with money from the federal gas taxes paid on fuel used by off-highway vehicles. This program’s intent is to meet the trail and trail-related recreational needs identified by the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Grant applicants must be able to contribute 20% of the project cost with cash or in-kind contributions. The program is dedicated to helping citizens, organizations and agencies plan, develop and manage all types of trails ranging from greenways and trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding to river trails and off-highway vehicle trails.



## **State trails program**

- ✚ ***Cooperative Forestry Assistance Funds: Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program***—The Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Grant Program provides 50/50 matching grants to the States, and through the states to any unit of local government, educational institutions, non-profit 501 (c) (3) organizations and other tax-exempt organizations to provide technical assistance and services to individuals, groups, communities, governmental agencies and organizations with respect to the protection, improvement, management, establishment and

utilization of trees and shrubs in urban areas, communities, and open spaces, for the improvement of the beauty and livability of the urban environment.



- ✚ ***Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)***—The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has historically been a primary funding source of the U.S. Department of Interior for outdoor recreation development and land acquisition by local governments and state agencies. In North Carolina, the program is administered by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.



- ✚ ***Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA): A Legacy for Users***—This program provides funding for transportation related bicycle and pedestrian facilities. There is a Surface Transportation Program (STP) category, which allows cities and counties the option of using bridge and road funds for providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Enhancements can include bicycle and pedestrian facilities, rail corridor preservation, scenic and environmental transportation opportunities and improvements to historical transportation sites. Funds from this program could be used to establish corridor linkages between neighborhoods and park and recreational areas.

