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TOWN OF GARNER

Parks, Recreation + Cultural Resources
Comprehensive Master Plan

Adopted January 21, 2020



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 > EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- > Community Engagement
- > Vision and Goals
- > Demographics
- > Health and Wellness
- > Level of Service and Benchmarking

2 > INTRODUCTION

- > Comprehensive Planning
Purpose and Process
- > Community Context
- > Planning Context
- > Plan Outline

3 > DEMOGRAPHICS + TRENDS

- > Methodology and Analysis
- > Population and Households
- > Age Segment
- > Household Income
- > Race + Ethnicity
- > Emerging Trends in Parks and Recreation

4 > INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

- > Parkland, Facilities, and Open Space
- > Programming
- > Cultural Resources
- > Operations and Maintenance
- > Finances

5 > COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- > Public Open House
- > Focus Groups
- > Stakeholder Meetings
- > Town Council Work Session

6 > LEVEL OF SERVICE + BENCHMARKING

- > Level of Service
- > Benchmarking

7 > HEALTH + WELLNESS

- > The Case for Parks and Health
- > Wake County Community
Health Needs Assessment
- > Parks and Health Equity
- > Parks for a Healthier Community
- > Alignment of Health and Parks
and Recreation Objectives

8 > GREENWAYS

- > Why Greenways and Trails?
- > Greenway Network Guiding Principles
- > Existing Conditions
- > Community Engagement
- > Town of Garner Proposed
Greenway Network Map

9 > VISION + RECOMMENDATION

- > Parkland, Facilities, and Open Space
- > Programming
- > Cultural Resources
- > Operations and Maintenance
- > Finances

10 > ACTION + IMPLEMENTATION

- > Parkland, Facilities, and Open Space
- > Programming
- > Cultural Resources
- > Operations and Maintenance
- > Finances

11 > APPENDIX

- > Park Classifications
- > Program Classifications
- > Wake County Health and Wellness Goals
- > CAPRA Review
- > Statistically Valid Survey
- > Best Practices
- > Funding Sources
- > Greenway Segment Prioritization



1

executive summary

CHAPTER 1 > EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department achieves excellence in providing their community with parks, recreation, and cultural resources services with committed staff, diverse amenities, and quality programs and community events. The Department was founded in 1967 and achieved a major milestone in 2015 when it was awarded CAPRA accreditation by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies.

The Department completed this Comprehensive Planning process throughout 2019, resulting in a 10-year vision and workplan for the Department. This executive summary includes a summary of the community engagement process, the goals and recommendations resulting from the planning process, and a summary of findings of the demographics, health and wellness, and benchmarking chapters of this plan.

This plan is organized around six topic areas summarized below. Parkland, programming, arts and cultural resources, operations and maintenance, and finances are included in this plan's Chapter 4 > Inventory and Analysis. Chapter 8 > Greenway Trails summarizes the findings and recommendations for the 10 year greenway vision.

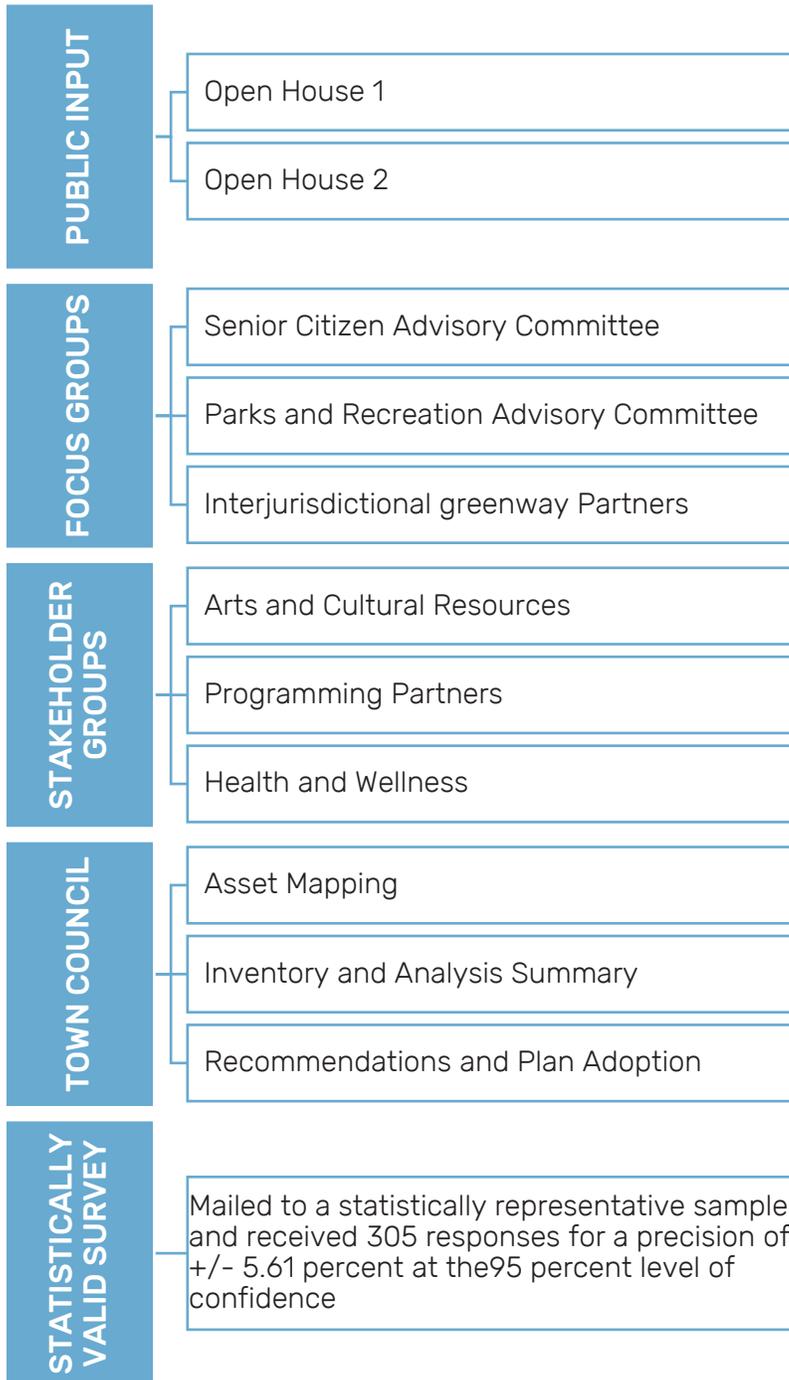


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement process informs the identification of goals, recommendations, and priorities within the plan. Community engagement influences recommendations for programming and development of future parks and programming, identifies desired trail corridors

within the greenway network plan, and identifies partnerships and strategies for achieving the plan’s goals. Community engagement is summarized further in Chapter 5 > Community Engagement.

Figure 1 - Outline of Community Engagement



VISION + GOALS

This plan identifies vision, goals, and recommendations for parkland, programs, arts and cultural resources, operations and maintenance, finances and greenway trails. The visions are included in this executive summary with the high-level goals and recommendations. A detailed implementation plan is included in Chapter 10 > Action and Implementation.

PARKLAND

Enhance quality of life for Garner residents by providing quality parks, trails, facilities, and a variety of recreation opportunities.

Parkland Goal 1: Build high quality parks for the Growing Garner Community

Parkland 1.1 - Develop between 83.2 acres and 184.3 acres of parkland to maintain a level of service of 10.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents during the next 10 years.

- > Diversity of park amenities
- > Green infrastructure
- > Maintenance
- > ADA and inclusivity
- > Shade and comfort
- > Placemaking
- > Connectivity
- > CPTED and Safety

Parkland 1.2 - Upgrade existing parks to reflect best practices in park design for:

- > Diversity of park amenities
- > Green infrastructure
- > Maintenance
- > ADA and inclusivity
- > Shade and comfort
- > Placemaking
- > Connectivity
- > CPTED and Safety

Parkland 1.4 - Evaluate Unified Development Ordinance and revise as necessary to increase private investment into parks and trails.

Parkland 1.5 - Use results of community engagement and statistically valid survey when identifying amenities for existing park upgrades and future park programming

Parkland 1.3 - Implement best practices in park design for future park development using:

Parkland Goal 2: Create a community trail network that connects people to the places they want to go locally and within the regional trail network.

Parkland 2.1 - Maintain a level of service of 1 mile of trail per 1,000 residents during the 10-year planning horizon

Parkland 2.2 - Update Unified Development Ordinance to explicitly include greenway acquisition in language for "open space" acquisition.

Parkland Goal 3: Maintain existing indoor facility space and remain responsive to changing demographic and recreational trends.

Parkland 3.1 - Construct additional indoor recreation facility space between 34,600 square feet and 76,800 square feet to maintain a level of service of 4.38 square feet of indoor facility space per 1 resident.

- > rehearsal, activity, display, and performance space for performing arts, visual arts, and music
- > fitness and wellness programming space

Parkland 3.2 - Provide or expand facility space for the following community needs based on community engagement:

- > age targeted programs, especially for teens and seniors
- > refurbished senior center

Parkland 3.3 - Reference maintenance plans implemented by Public Works Department to improve overall visual appearance of buildings and facilities.

Parkland 3.4 - Ensure ADA Transition Plan is up to date and being implemented by Public Works Department.

Parkland Goal 4: Leverage parks and greenway trails as a platform to meet larger community goals

Parkland 4.1 - Create parks people can use to achieve personal health and wellness goals

Parkland 4.2 - Ensure residents have equitable access to high quality parks

Parkland 4.3 - Determine, track, and communicate the park system's economic impact and significance on the Town.

Parkland 4.4 - Pursue best practices

for environmental sustainability for park design, construction, and operation.

Parkland 4.5 - Implement universal design standards to guarantee access and use of parks and amenities regardless of a user's age or disability status.

Parkland 4.6 - Maintain high quality athletics facilities for Department-led and partner- led athletic programming.

PROGRAMMING

Continue to provide programs and events that meet the needs of the community while preparing new services as resources allow.

Goal 1: Build capacity to continue existing services and implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Programming 1.1 - Strategically seek out potential partners or contracted facilitators to build capacity in service delivery as new programming needs and interests are developed.

Programming 1.2 - Develop new recreation positions to meet the needs of the community through cost of service and identified cost recovery to assist in building position salary and capacity.

Programming 1.3 - Enhance the Senior Center facility, technology and audio-visual capabilities to better provide for security and programming that meets the need of the community.

Goal 2: develop a program mix that is balanced in the lifecycle stages with new creative programming that serves the diverse interests of the community.

Programming 2.1 - Develop quality new programming that aligns with community needs and interests.

Programming 2.2 - Continue to obtain feedback from the community to be responsive as the community evolves.

Programming 2.3 - Continue to evaluate programs annually in participation and effectiveness using key performance indicators from the Program Assessment.

Goal 3: Implement annual collection, analysis, and documentation best practices for recreation programs and services.

Programming 3.1 - Implement program management principles using key performance indicators to ensure consistent delivery of programs and services.

Programming 3.2 - Develop miniature business plans for each core program area that will empower staff to manage the services to defined outcomes from all aspects of operations.

ARTS + CULTURAL RESOURCES

To continue the protection, celebration and enhancements of valued arts and cultural resources and services contributing to the economic vitality of Garner.

Goal 1: Invest in arts and cultural resources to continue developing the Town's culture and arts.

Arts and Cultural Resources 1.1 - Establish sustainability for arts and cultural resources, cultural assets, programming and events.

Arts and Cultural Resources 1.2 - Identify additional cultural resources that should be protected and communicate with owners to establish a plan moving forward for preservation and potential procurement.

Arts and Cultural Resources 1.3 - Capture cultural history to guide the overall direction of arts and cultural resources in Garner.

Goal 2: Enhance services to activate spaces and contribute to the Town's cultural resource services.

Arts and Cultural Resources 2.1
- Establish a public art program to incorporate pieces into the park system.

Arts and Cultural Resources 2.2 - Continue to nurture appreciation for and participation in the culture and arts of Garner.

Arts and Cultural Resources 2.3 - Enhance arts and cultural resources within Garner through partnerships including local similar providers and businesses.

OPERATIONS + MAINTENANCE

To position the Department's preparedness to achieve operational outcomes and support Town outcomes to move Garner forward.

Goal 1: Build capacity in the organization to deliver quality services to the community.

Operations and Maintenance 1.1 - Continue to ensure quality management through updated standards, additional staff, and updated plans that provide direction to achieve the desired outcomes.

Operations and Maintenance 1.2 - Maximize existing technology and research new technology that can help the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department.

Operations and Maintenance 1.3
- Evaluate existing declining services and new opportunities to determine the workload and departmental capacity.

Operations and Maintenance 1.4 - Use contracted services to build capacity and implement contract management best practices to achieve outcomes.

Goal 2: Continue building capacity in facilities that support recreation and cultural arts.

Operations and Maintenance 2.1 - Conduct a capacity study to maximize the use of spaces in the Garner Recreation Center, Avery Street Recreation Center and Annex, Senior Center and GPAC.

Operations and Maintenance 2.2 - Allow for flexibility in capacity to remain agile in responding to changing priorities.

Goal 3: Continue to enhance marketing and communications of services using best practices in the private industry to achieve outcomes increasing awareness.

Operations and Maintenance 3.1 - Update the marketing and communications plan for the Department to include recommendations and data developed from the Comprehensive Plan and continue to ensure it is in line with Town standards.

Operations and Maintenance 3.2 - Identify and include the features, advantages, and benefits of Department programs and services into marketing to increase awareness.

Operations and Maintenance 3.3 - Implement additional best practices in Departmental marketing and communications through content development, tracking, reach, and return on investment.

Operations and Maintenance 3.4 - Work with Public Works Department to enhance communication internally and tell the story of park maintenance to increase community awareness.

Goal 4: Continue to train staff on best practices to build capacity and create new skillsets needed to achieve operational outcomes.

Operations and Maintenance 4.1 - Identify necessary training to increase knowledge and capacity of employees for managing duties, responsibilities and outcomes.

Operations and Maintenance 4.2 - Train staff on implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and improved operations for increased efficiency and effectiveness.

Goal 5: Regularly track and monitor capacity and workload to ensure resources needed are obtained to manage assets to achieve full lifecycle.

Operations and Maintenance 5.1 - Classify and prioritize parks maintenance functions and services as essential, important and value added.

Operations and Maintenance 5.3 - Develop a cost of service and total cost of ownership model from maintenance tasks on specific parks, facilities and amenities.

Operations and Maintenance 5.2 - Evaluate current workload and services annually to determine current capacity.

Operations and Maintenance 5.4 - Anticipate resources that will be needed as the Town evolves based off planned development, initiatives and enhancements in Town services.

Goal 6: Continue to train staff to ensure readiness, responsiveness, and develop new skillsets needed to Achieve operational outcomes.

Operations and Maintenance 6.1 - Identify necessary training to increase the knowledge and skillsets of employees as new parks, facilities and amenities are added to the park system.

Operations and Maintenance 6.2 - Train staff on implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and the desired outcomes for increased efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.

FINANCES

To establish best practices that increase sustainability as the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department evolves to meet the community needs.

Goal 1: Establish strategies for identifying financial resources needed to incorporate new facilities, amenities, and services.

Finances 1.1 - Develop a full cost of service assessment for the Department to determine unit costs in parks and cost recovery level goals in recreation programs and facilities.

Finances 1.2 - Develop a full cost of ownership assessment for the Department assets to determine unit costs in parks and facilities development.

Finances 1.3 - Continue cost containment measures to improve the cost recovery of each division and the Department.

Goal 2: Continue exploration of varied funding sources and develop business plans to support operations, maintenance, and capital projects.

Finances 2.1 - Explore all funding for capital projects and implement the most feasible strategies.

Finances 2.2 - Explore funding for operations and maintenance and implement the most feasible strategies.

Finances 2.3 - Develop business plans for each cost center and facility and train staff to the outcomes.

Goal 3: Develop strategies and Guidelines for management of Deferred maintenance and financial documents.

Finances 3.1 - Establish a strategy to minimize deferred maintenance growth and ensure timely replacement of infrastructure and amenities.

Finances 3.2 - Amend existing financial policies and develop new to include cost recovery for cost centers and core program areas using the Cost of Service to improve sustainability.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Town’s planning department anticipates steady population growth during the next 10-years, but the rate of increase depends on factors outside of the Town’s control, including the rate of residential housing unit construction. To accommodate this future uncertainty, this plan uses two growth rates to create a high and low estimate for population projection for 2029. A projected growth rate of 2 percent indicates an additional 7,919 residents and a projected growth rate of 4 percent indicates an additional 17,335 residents.

The population growth rate for the state of North Carolina is 1 percent per year, and the population growth rate for the united states is 0.7 percent per year. Even Garner’s conservative estimates for population growth in the next 10 years is twice the growth rate of North Carolina overall.

As Garner’s population grows and changes in the coming decade, the community’s recreation needs will grow and change.

- The overall population growth indicates a need for expanding parks, recreation, and cultural resources services and suggests a growing tax base to support that work.

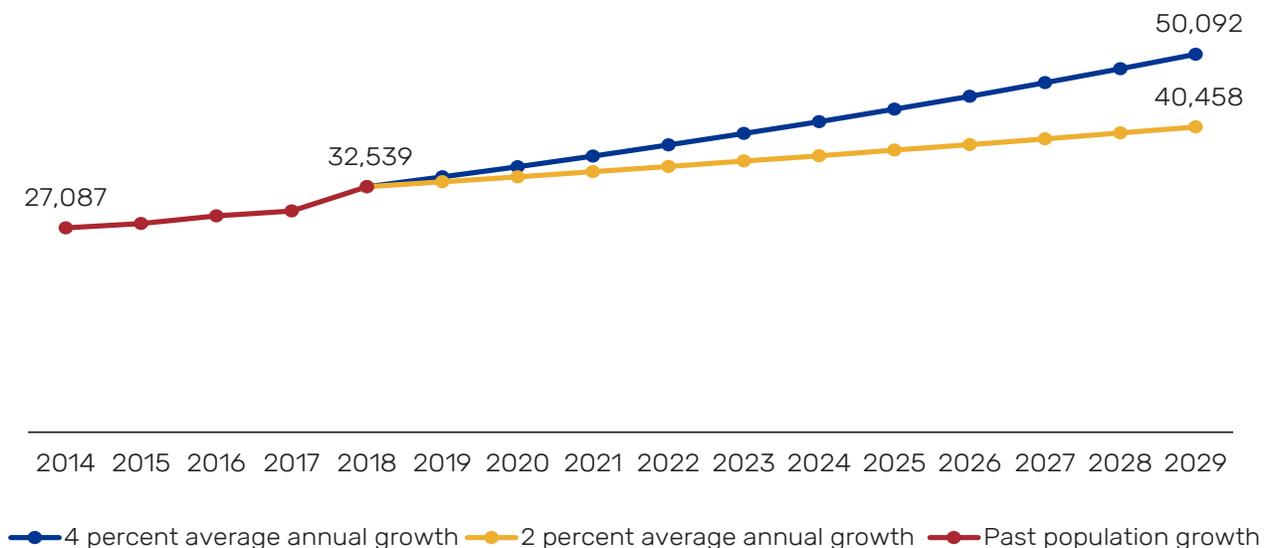
- An aging population suggests the need for expanding senior services while ensuring all parks and facilities feature amenities and design elements that universally include people with and without mobility challenges.
- The increasing household income levels indicate an ability to pay for parks, recreation, and cultural resources services. Regardless of rising income for some community members, low-income residents must still have affordable or no-cost access to parks, recreation, and cultural resources services.
- The area’s increasing racial diversity suggests an increasing need for equity, diversity and inclusion efforts to ensure equitable provision of parks, facilities, amenities and programs.

In addition to Garner’s specific community context, emerging trends in parks, recreation, and cultural resources include understanding the many far-reaching benefits of parks, incorporating parks and greenway planning into larger connected networks of alternative forms of transportation, and understanding and quantifying the economic impacts parks have on their communities.

Figure 2 - Average Annual Growth Rates for each jurisdiction

UNITED STATES	NORTH CAROLINA	TOWN OF GARNER
0.7%	1%	2-4%

Figure 3 - Historic population growth with linear projections for the 10-year planning horizon



HEALTH + WELLNESS

The 2019 Wake County Community Health Needs Assessment identified existing and emerging challenges to health and wellness throughout the County. Data collected through the assessment process, existing data, and extensive community input from surveys, focus groups and more, the Community Health Needs Assessment identifies five areas for county-wide health priorities. The five priority areas are described in Figure 2.

Adopting a data-driven approach to parks, recreation, and cultural resources planning, design, and programming is an example of the type of strategies that are needed to ensure that the criteria for high impact parks are translated into action. The ability to use this data requires building capacity and strategic partnerships for the collection, sharing, analyzing and reporting of relevant data. Thus, it is important that recommendations in comprehensive plans explicitly address how shared parks and health aims can be achieved through strategies that leverage the strengths and resources of public, private, and nonprofit partners.

The three takeaways from this section on parks planning for a healthier community are:

- › There are concrete, measurable criteria that can be used through the park planning and design process for creating a parks, recreation and cultural resources system that advances health equity in the community.
- › The criteria are not one-size fits all. The community context including demographics, geography, population health outcomes and behaviors, community preferences and desires, stated health and wellness goals, and local budgets should be used to adapt and prioritize criteria that are meaningful and achievable.
- › Strategies for leveraging the resources of different sectors towards achieving selected criteria should be incorporated into the recommendations of the parks, recreation, and cultural resources comprehensive plan to ensure that collaboration with diverse stakeholders is explicitly built into the implementation and evaluation process.

Figure 2 - Five priority areas identified in the 2019 Wake County Community Health Needs Assessment



LEVEL OF SERVICE + BENCHMARKING

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Level of Service, Benchmarking and national standards provide concrete numbers that allow for comparison. This plan does not adopt any standard wholesale, but considers the full analysis, staff input, and community input to

help identify standards and metrics that will be meaningful points of guidance as the Town grows parks, recreation, and cultural resources services to meet a growing population's needs.

Figure 5 - Town of Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department inventory and current level of service

	THE DEPARTMENT OFFERS -	THE CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE IS -
 <p>PARKLAND</p>	<p>341.19 acres of developed parkland</p>	<p>10.5 acres of developed parkland per 1,000 residents</p>
 <p>TRAILS</p>	<p>7.43 miles of trail</p>	<p>0.23 miles of trail per 1,000 residents</p>
 <p>INDOOR FACILITY SPACE</p>	<p>142,647 square feet of indoor recreation space</p>	<p>4.38 square feet of indoor recreation space per 1 resident (per capita)</p>

BENCHMARKING

The benchmarking analysis reveals that Garner is a leader among peer communities in providing unique indoor recreation facilities. The Department stands out in both the amount of square footage offered and the variety of facility types offered

Garner is above the median in providing developed parkland to residents, and a significant amount of undeveloped land (ranking fourth highest in undeveloped parkland among peer communities) indicates the Town is well positioned to expand the park system as population grows.

Garner is ranked lowest overall in trail mileage and next-to-last in trail mileage per 1,000 population. This analysis indicates that Garner has fallen behind in greenway and trail construction as compared to peer communities. The greenway network master plan conducted as part of this planning process will position the town to achieve

more with trails in the coming years.

Garner's cost recovery falls in the middle of peer communities, indicating the department is achieving a standard approach to programming cost recovery where some revenue is generated without an expectation of full cost recovery.

Garner ranks in the lower end of the comparison for operating budget, staff, and maintenance budget. The most likely cause of this discrepancy is that the department does not employ maintenance staff or include those salaries in their budget. Among Department's without a full maintenance staff, including Clayton and Salisbury, Garner ranks highest for operating expense per capita, lowest in staff, and next-to-last in maintenance budget. Operations and Maintenance is discussed further in the Inventory and Analysis chapter.



2 introduction



CHAPTER 2 > INTRODUCTION

The Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department achieves excellence in providing their community with parks, recreation, and cultural resources services with committed staff, diverse amenities, and quality programs and community events. The Department was founded in 1967 and achieved a major milestone in 2015 when it was awarded CAPRA accreditation by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies.

The Town of Garner has 13 parks, a boathouse, nature center, senior center, performing arts center, two recreation centers and 12.6 miles of trails. The Department offers a diverse array of athletic, life skills, and arts and culture programming. The staff strives for and achieves excellence in providing parks, recreation, facilities, and programming for Town of Garner residents. This plan will define the role that these park system elements will play in Garner’s future.

The Town is approximately 16 square miles and extends urban services to an extraterritorial jurisdiction that extends approximately 3 miles outward. In 2018, the Town of Garner completed a comprehensive planning process called Garner Forward that included a supplemental transportation piece. The plan outlines a vision for the Town that incorporates new growth while preserving the small-town community feel that Garner’s residents love. Parks, recreation and cultural resources play a role in preserving this character and preparing for future growth.

The last Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2007. The Department is pursuing a comprehensive plan as an update to a past planning effort based on a 10-year planning horizon. The community’s recent rapid growth is an additional reason for comprehensive planning, to ensure that the department’s services expand to meet demand new residents generate. Finally, having a comprehensive plan adopted within the past 10 years makes a community eligible to access funding sources to expand the system.

This comprehensive plan will guide improvements to parkland and facilities, programming, arts and culture, operations and maintenance, finance and budget and greenway trails and natural surface trails. The plan is focused on a 10-year planning horizon. The plan is a Town resource for officials and the public alike to understand current park and facility offerings and learn the future direction of the Department. The action and implementation plan provides decision makers with a framework to guide, validate, and



prioritize project implementation.

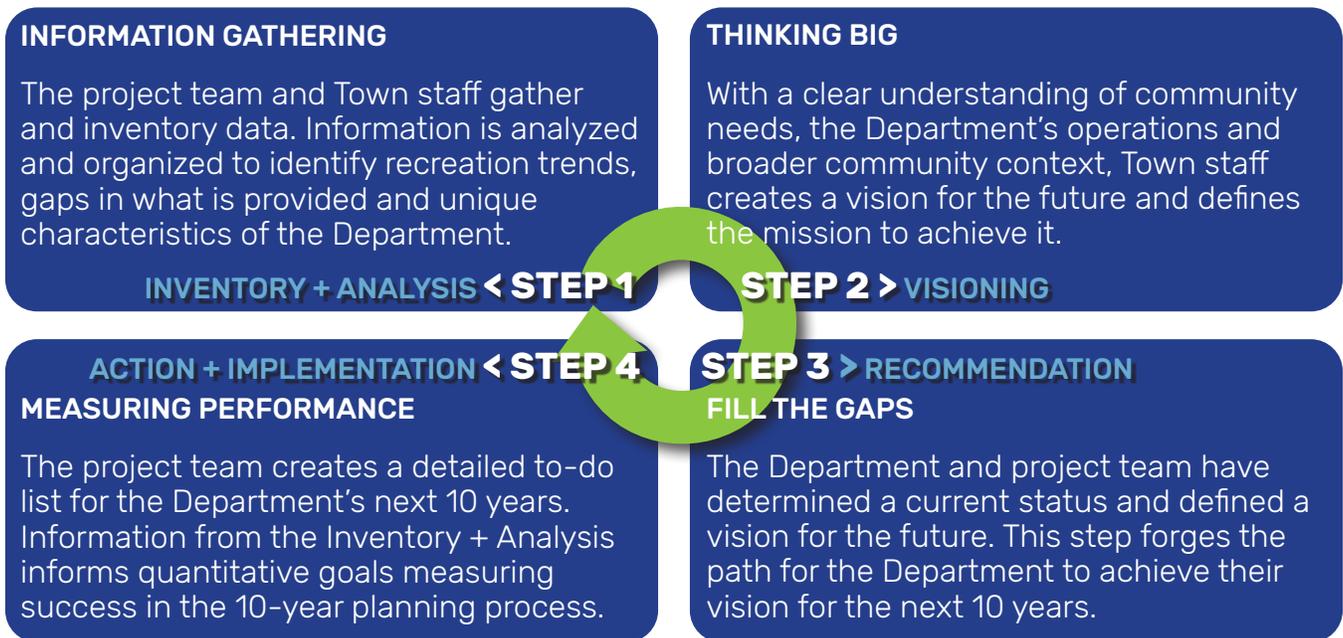
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PURPOSE + PROCESS

Comprehensive planning provides the information a town requires to make informed, equitable, and responsible decisions for meeting diverse community needs. Some of the reasons for pursuing a comprehensive planning process include the following:

2 > introduction



Comprehensive planning provides a structure for evaluating needs and setting priorities. The planning process captures the status of the Department at a moment in time, creates a vision for the future, and identifies steps to achieve that vision. The plan will guide the Department's decisions and priorities for the next 10 years.



COMMUNITY CONTEXT

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Town of Garner acquired its charter in 1905 after the location of a railroad depot put this small agricultural settlement on the map. Since that time, the community's location in the region has shaped its growth. Historically a small commercial hub in an agricultural area of the state, Garner has retained elements of its rural history in the form of a low-density and spacious urban layout.

The Town's proximity to Raleigh provided access to an employment and entertainment center, and

the Town grew into a suburban area. Currently the Town of Garner is experiencing rapid growth and many new residential developments have been permitted. Garner is connected to the greater region via Interstate 40, Highway 401, and Highway 70. The planned route of the 540 extension runs to the south of town and will provide additional connectivity to the north and west of the Town's area.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Garner is located in the piedmont region of North Carolina and exhibits many natural features typical of this area. Swift Creek, part of the Neuse River watershed, runs through the southern portion of town and creates Lake Benson, one of the town's most well-known natural features. Buck Branch, Mahlers Creek and a few other

unnamed tributaries are small streams that run through town. White Deer Park provides a peaceful setting for hiking and environmental education in a typical piedmont Oak-Hickory forest. Lake Benson Park provides recreational access to Lake Benson where residents can fish or rent a boat.

Figure 1 - Historic Garner Depot



Source: Garner Area Historical Society

PLANNING CONTEXT

Areas of growth, current planning documents and development ordinances all form a planning context in which this plan exists. This comprehensive plan must be responsive to the existing policies, planning efforts, and growth patterns that influence Garner now and in the future

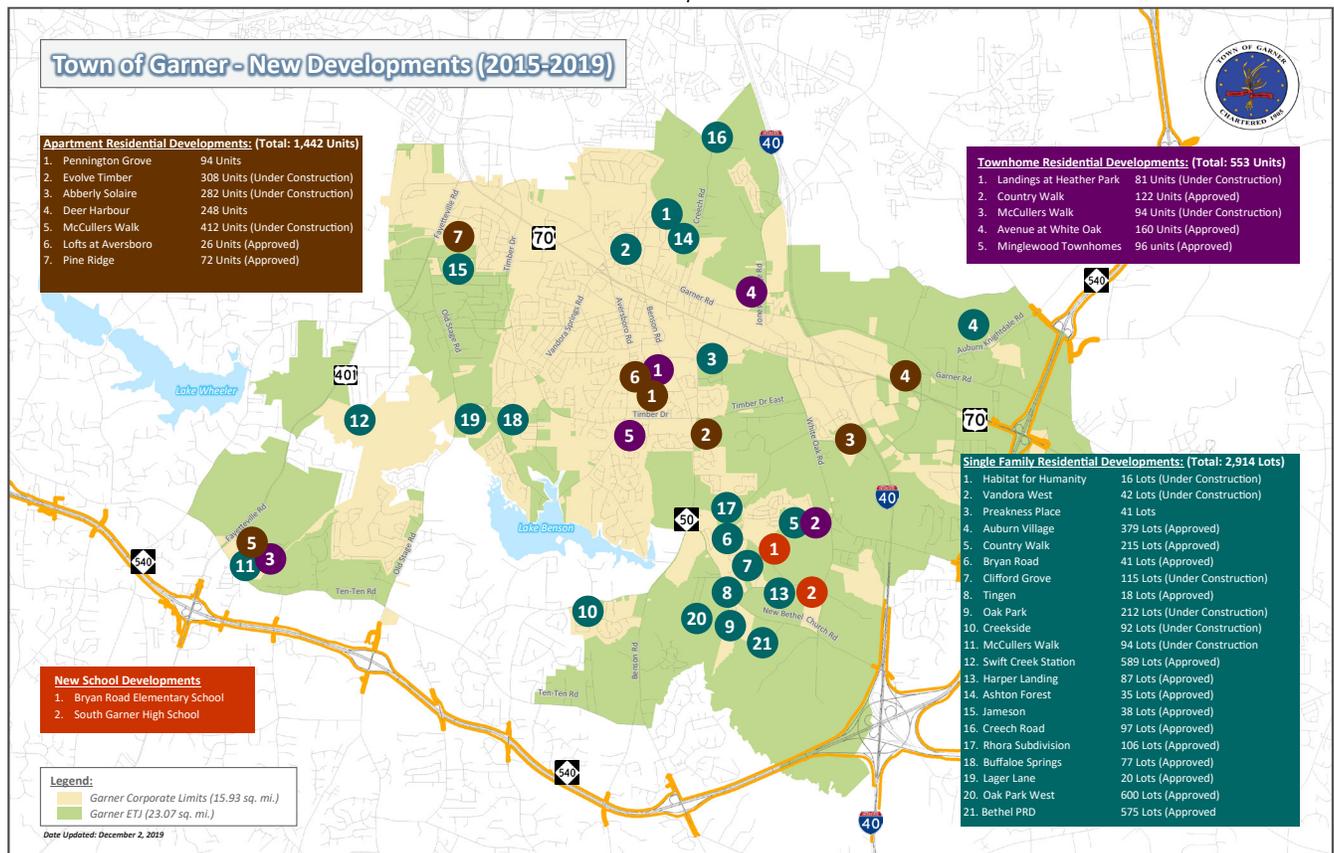
2 > introduction

GROWTH CENTERS

According to the Town’s Planning Department, the Town of Garner approved building permits for 21 new developments between 2015 and 2019 for a total of 4,909 new housing units as of December 2, 2019. Figure 2 summarizes the approved permits. The new developments are concentrated in the

southeastern part of town within the city limits and are mostly in the eastern part of the Town, with a secondary cluster in an annexed area in the southwest. The largest development is the number 20 teal dot which represents 600 new single-family housing units.

Figure 2 - New developments in the Town of Garner. Dots indicate new developments and the tables list the number of units associated with each development.



Source: Town of Garner Planning Department

PLANNING DOCUMENTS



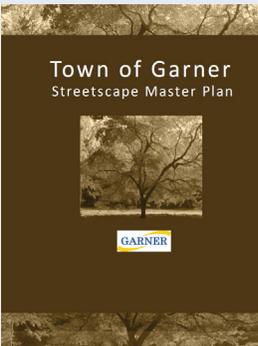
Adopted June 12, 2018

Garner Forward Comprehensive Plan - The plan identifies housing, character, transportation, recreation and commerce are essential components to sustainable growth of the Town of Garner. The plan identified that 63 percent of residents found pedestrian connectivity important or very important, and that 78 percent of residents said that tree canopy and open space preservation are where Garner should focus attention. Recreation recommendations include 1) secure open space and recreational areas in the south of town, 2) develop a public arts program, 3) invest in maintenance of current parks and recreation facilities and increase programming, and 4) preserve, install, and maintain street trees.



Adopted June 12, 2018

Garner Forward Transportation Plan - The plan's vision for Garner transportation is that "Garner's transportation system provides its citizens with efficient and safe travel options for auto, bicycle, pedestrian and public transit users that serve transportation needs in a balance with land use development patterns as well as regional and local partnerships." Greenway trail development will be a key part of fulfilling this vision. The plan identifies a need for 34 miles of new trail.



Adopted November 2010

Garner Streetscape Master Plan - This plan identifies five sites for improvements to visual character and access for walking and biking. The sites include Main Street, the intersection of Benson Road and US-70, the intersection of New Rand Road and US-70, the intersection of New Rand Road and Garner Road, and the intersection of Garner Road and Benson Road. The implementation of this plan is relevant to parks, recreation and cultural resources based on decisions regarding maintenance of enhanced street scape areas such as planters and benches, the creation of plazas that may be designated and maintained as parks, and the potential for integrating improvements into greenway trail network planning.



Adopted April 2010

Historic Downtown Garner Plan - The Study Area of this plan includes Garner Recreational Park, the Senior Center, and the Garner Performing Arts Center (GPAC). The plan recommends an Arts and Culture District surrounding the GPAC and a Sports and Recreation District including Garner Recreational Park. The plans vision includes additional recreation space consisting of regional recreation facilities, a Town Green and stormwater detention contributing as parks or open space.

CODES + ORDINANCES

Chapter 8 of the Town's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) is the Subdivision Design/Improvements section which outlines requirements for open space provision at new developments. The Chapter's purpose is outlined in Section 8.4 (A) (1) is for the protection of open spaces areas that serve the following objectives:

- › Preservation of open vistas, providing relief from an urban landscape
- › Preservation of environmentally sensitive lands
- › Preservation of habitat for wildlife
- › Preservation of historically or archaeologically significant areas, and
- › Provision of areas for passive recreation, such as walking or jogging.

Article 8.4 dictates that a developer is required to allocate 10 percent of the total area of the development as permanent open space. Article 8.4 applies only to residential developments over one acre in size.

Article 8.4 A (2)(a) further defines open space as meeting the following requirements:

- › Is not encumbered with any substantial structure
- › Is not exclusively devoted to use as a roadway, parking area, or sidewalk
- › Is not part of any privately owned lot that is used or intended for use for residential purpose
- › Is private, is legally and practicably accessible to the residents of the subdivision or development it is designated to serve, and
- › If publicly dedicated, is legally and practically accessible to the general public.

The section includes additional inclusions and exclusions of what areas can and cannot be defined as open space.

Section 8.4B requires a park land dedication or fee-in-lieu payment for park and recreation services. A fee in-lieu payment may serve in place of a land dedication.

The provision for land dedication and fee in-lieu requirement as an alternative to a developer creating and maintaining private recreation

open space is included in 8.4 (B). The ordinance indicates that new residential developments must contribute either land dedication or a fee in-lieu payment. A fee in-lieu payment is appropriate in cases where a new residential development is expected to place new demand on existing park facilities and there is a need for new or improved park and recreation facilities. Any fee in-lieu payment that is allocated to a park and recreational facilities capital improvement fund can be used for the acquisition of additional park land or the construction of new recreational facilities. The improvements must be in areas that will benefit the residents of the new development that contributed to the fund.

Section 8.4 B (4) provides details about the ratios of land dedication required. For single-family detached housing, a developer must provide 0.0354 acres of open space per unit developed. For all other residential development, the developer must provide 0.0287 acres of open space per unit developed.

Section 8.4 B (4) (a) describes the process for accepting fee in-lieu. It reads "the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission shall have the opportunity to review the proposed land dedication and recommended on its acceptability with the guidelines of this UDO and Town plans, and on the preferability of land dedication or payment as fee-in-lieu of dedication."

The UDO outlines the standards that must be in place for the Town to accept ownership of an open space dedication. Section 8.4 B (4) (b) outlines 7 elements that land intended as an open space dedication must meet. The ordinance reads:

- › Unity. The dedicated park land shall form a single parcel of land except where the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends, and the Town Council finds, that two parcels or more would be in the public interest. Where two or more parcels exist, any connecting path or strip of land shall not be less than 30 feet in width.
- › Shape. The shape of the dedicated parcel of land shall be a shape to be sufficiently usable for recreational activities generally associated with a public recreation park.

- › Location. The dedicated land shall be located so as to reasonably serve the recreation area needs of the development and surrounding area for which the dedication was made.
- › Access. Public access to the dedicated land shall be provided either by adjoining street frontage or public easement at least 30 feet in width.
- › Topography. Slope on areas dedicated for parks shall not exceed five percent.
- › Utility. The dedicated land shall be usable for active recreation or could be improved so as to be so usable without exceeding the amount of the fee in-lieu.
- › Consistency with adopted plans. The acceptance of dedication shall be consistent with the officially adopted open space and greenway plan, parks and recreation master plan or other applicable policies or plans.

PLAN OUTLINE

This plan is based on robust community and staff engagement and data-driven recommendations determined through an analytical approach. From the initial inventory and analysis through the recommendations and action and implementation plan, the team engaged stakeholders and acknowledged local, regional and national recreation needs and trends, demographic shifts and agency performance. The project team studied current facilities and programs to evaluate the overall operational successes and challenges of the Department and its mission. Finally, the project team alongside Department staff developed a plan that prioritizes recommendations to improve recreational offerings and meet growing expectations from an increasing population.

This 2019 Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Comprehensive Plan includes the following components:

INTRODUCTION

The project team reviewed the planning context of the Town's Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department to understand past planning efforts and the Department's evolution. Comprehensive plans, specific park master plans and long-range recreation planning were reviewed

to gain a comprehensive understanding of the plans that guide the growth and development of the Town. It is the goal of this plan that the recommendations presented herein will be seamlessly integrated with Town plans.

DEMOGRAPHICS + TRENDS

The project team completed a demographic and trends analysis to consider national and local recreation trends and cross-referenced Census data with the Town's demographic data

and national publications to draw conclusions about current and future recreation trends and participation levels.

INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

The inventory and analysis takes a full account of the existing parks, recreation, and cultural resources system. The inventory and analysis chapter covers parkland and facilities,

programming, arts and culture, operations and maintenance, finance and budget, and greenway trails.

VISION + RECOMMENDATIONS

Visioning allows Department staff to develop a future direction for the department and each of its component parts. The visioning session results in vision statements for each of the plan elements

that informs the creation of goals and objectives. Each of this plan's goals, objectives and action items are in service to achieving this vision.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The project team performed a robust public input process which gathered input through staff input, stakeholder groups, focus groups, community input meetings, and pop-up stations. The process was designed to be transparent, equitable, and engage the widest range of residents possible. The engagement plan consisted of the following

elements:

- › Two open house meetings
- › Pop-up community meetings
- › Three focus group meetings
- › Three stakeholder group meetings
- › Statistically valid survey

BENCHMARKING + LEVEL OF SERVICE

Benchmarking and level of service evaluate current and future needs for park acreage, trail mileage, and operational standards compared to national standards, best practices, and peer agencies. These metrics are population based to allow the department to expand to meet future demand for parks, recreation, and cultural resources services. The level of service standard includes current and future standards for parkland, facilities, and trails.

Benchmarking peer communities provides a comparison for the existing state of the

Department's amenities and informs level of service standards for the ten-year planning horizon. Metrics for parks, trails, acreage, staffing, and budget, are evaluated for each peer community which informs the development of an appropriate level of service standard specific to the Town. Such standards are normalized by population so target metrics can evolve to meet demands of the rapid population growth Garner is experiencing.

RECOMMENDATIONS + ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The recommendations and prioritized implementation plan provide a framework to guide park, facility, open space, programming and operational improvements for the future. It is structured to guide decision making for Department policy. Each recommendation is

further prioritized as short term (1-3 years), mid-term (3-7 years) or long-term (7-10+). Criteria for recommendation prioritization vary based on the context and criteria may range from land availability to financial implications but are firmly rooted in community preferences.

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Carolina Recreation and Park Association presented the agency with the Arts and Humanities Award for the Independence Celebration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White Deer Park Nature Center earned LEED Gold Level Certification. Department received ConAgra Donation for Recreation Center. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Carolina Recreation and Park Association presented the agency with the Arts and Humanities Award for Broadway Voices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Carolina Recreation and Park Association presented the agency with the Arts and Humanities Award for the Theatre Basics Camp. The North Carolina City and County Communicators presented the Excellence in Communications Award for the Most Creative Activity with the Least Dollars Spent to the agency. The North Carolina Association of Festivals and Events presented the agency with Event Photo of the Year Award for a photograph made during the Spring Eggstravaganza. Greater Triangle Stewardship Award – White Deer Park Project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The North Carolina Association of Festivals and Events presented the agency with the Rising Star Award for Trick-or-Treat the Trails. North Carolina Recreation and Park Association presented the agency with the Innovative Program Award for Trick-or-Treat the Trails. Town of Garner was recognized as an All-America City and the activities of the agency played a significant role in this designation. Bond Package for \$7 million overwhelmingly passed and included new amenities such as new dog parks, new park shelters, new concessions stands and restrooms, and a new indoor recreation center. 	

Figure 3 - Department accomplishments achieved since adoption of last Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Comprehensive Plan.

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Garner Senior Center was recognized as a Center of Excellence by the North Carolina Council on Adult Services and Aging. ➤ Town of Garner was named a Playful City USA by KaBOOM! in partnership with the Humana Foundation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). ➤ Big Sweep Excellence award by Wake Soil and Water Conservation District ➤ Constructed KaBOOM playground. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Town purchased the former Meadowbrook Golf Course. ➤ Constructed KaBOOM Playground. ➤ Statewide Star Party for NC Science Festival. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Constructed KaBOOM Playground. ➤ Carolina Solar Eclipse Party Host Site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Won 3 NC3C awards for Marketing materials: ➤ First Place in Photography ➤ First Place in Brochures ➤ Second Place in Program or Activity Catalogue ➤ North Carolina Recreation and Park Association presented the agency with the Arts and Humanities Award for Picket Fence Project. 	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">2019 PARKS, RECREATION + CULTURAL RESOURCES COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN</p>



3

demographics + trends



CHAPTER 3 > DEMOGRAPHICS + TRENDS

Understanding the Town of Garner’s population and demographics is an essential foundation for creating an effective long-range plan. Population growth drives many of this plan’s goals and objectives. This analysis ensures the Town’s parks, recreation, and cultural resources offerings keep pace with demand generated by the increasing number of residents. Additionally, the analysis determines what types of recreation the Town may need as demographics related to age, race and income change and influence preferences for recreational activities.

The demographic analysis adds a detailed understanding to the variable of population growth. The data tracks changes in proportional allocations of age, race, ethnicity and income within a growing population. While the population is growing overall, changes in the proportions of demographic characteristics suggest changes in recreational needs. For example, as residents over the age of 55 become a larger proportion of the population, the Town can consider expanding recreation facilities, amenities and programs to target that population.

National trends in recreation preferences change continually, influencing local demand for new activities and programs. Even when other demographic factors remain constant, changing preferences influence and alter a population’s demand for parks, recreation, and cultural resources facilities.

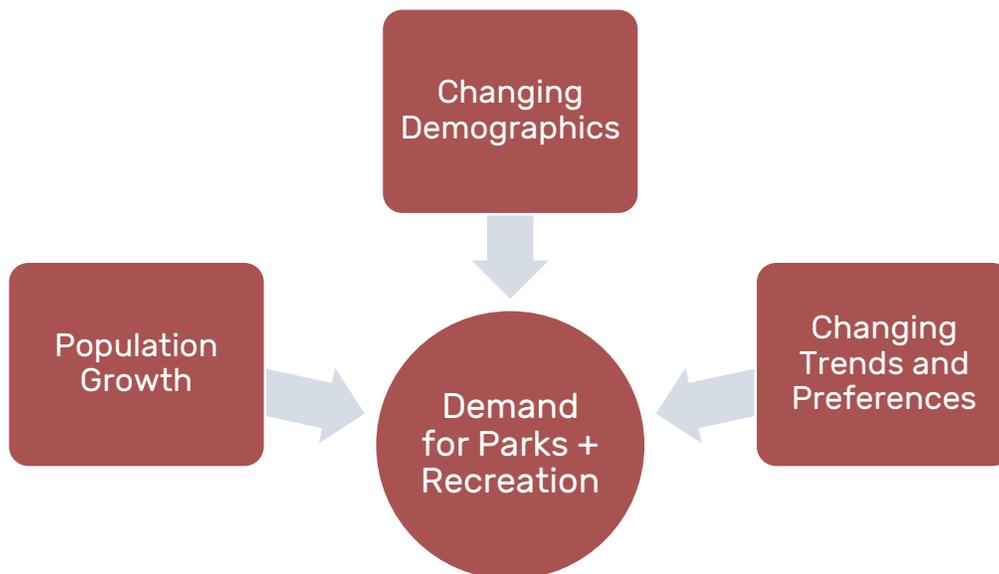
This chapter summarizes the Town of Garner’s demographic characteristics, and projects these characteristics through 2029. The analysis includes population growth projections, overview of demographic characteristics, and a summary of national and local recreation trends in recreation.

METHODOLOGY + ANALYSIS

This demographic analysis uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau, which gathers data on a continual basis, and Esri, which uses U.S. Census data and other sources to conduct demographic analyses.

Estimates and projections are the core of this demographic analysis. The overall population,

as well as each characteristic are based on a Census estimate, then projected to the year 2029. Estimates provide a summary of an area’s current population or demographic characteristics, while projections are a proposed scenario for a future population, based on certain assumptions such as a consistent growth rate.



POPULATION + HOUSEHOLDS

The Town of Garner completed its comprehensive plan in the summer of 2018. A key theme emerging from the community engagement process revealed that residents are attracted to Garner’s “combination of small-town atmosphere and proximity to urban amenities.” Conserving the Town’s existing character while continuing to expand options became one of the plan’s guiding principles.

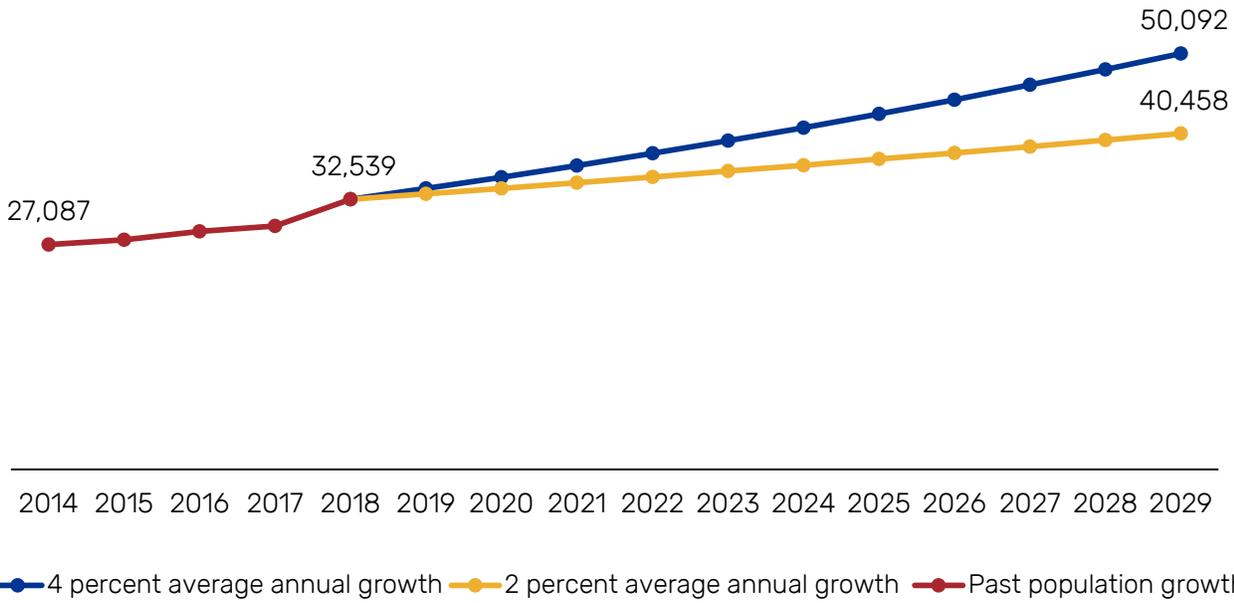
The Town’s planning department anticipates steady population growth during the next 10-years, but the rate of increase depends on factors outside of the Town’s control, including the rate of residential housing unit construction.

To accommodate this future uncertainty, this plan uses two growth rates to create a high and low estimate for population projection for 2029. A project growth rate of 2 percent indicates an additional 7,919 residents and a projected growth rate of 4 percent indicates an additional 17,335 residents.

The population growth rate for the state of North Carolina is 1 percent per year, and the population growth rate for the united states is 0.7 percent per year. Even Garner’s conservative estimates for population growth in the next 10 years is twice the growth rate of North Carolina overall.

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Figure 1 - Historic population growth with linear projections for the 10-year planning horizon

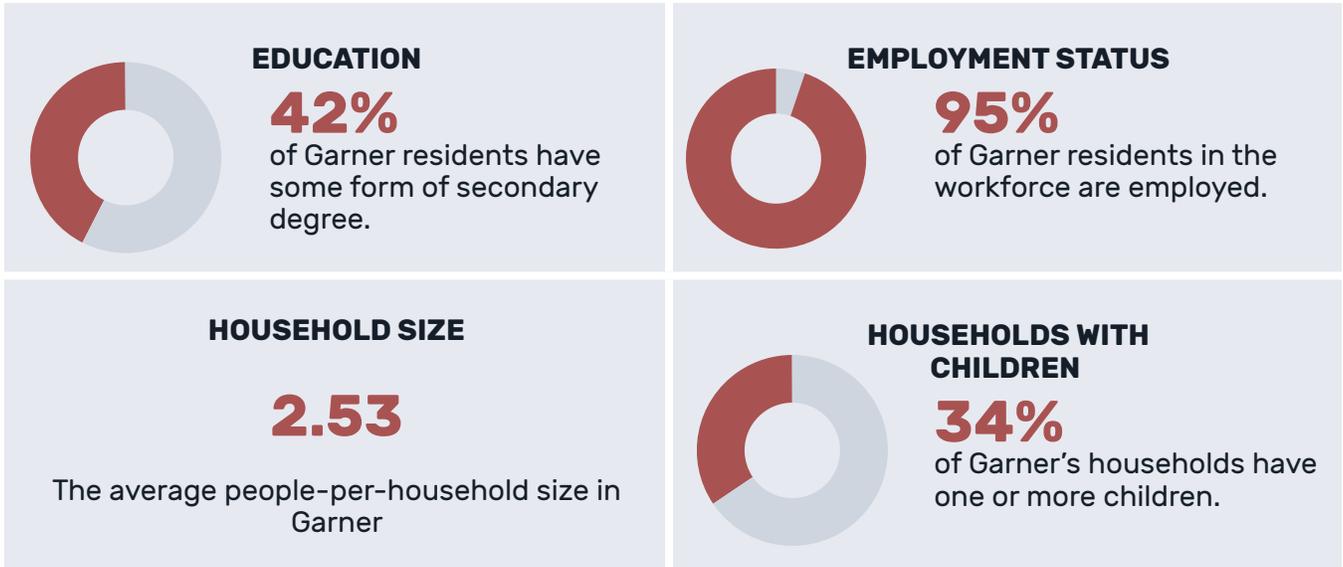


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1, Esri forecasts for 2018 and 2023. Project team projected data for 2019, 2024 and 2029

Figure 2 - Average Annual Growth Rates for each jurisdiction

UNITED STATES	NORTH CAROLINA	TOWN OF GARNER
0.7%	1%	2-4%

Figure 3 - Selected demographic details for Town of Garner



demographics + trends

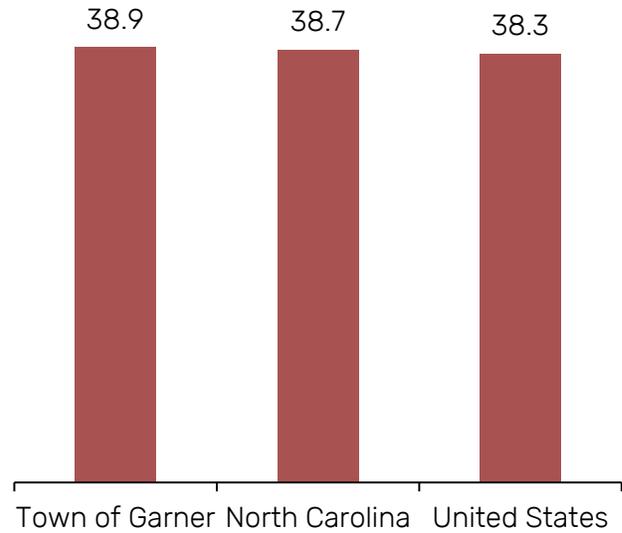
AGE SEGMENT

The Town of Garner will experience changes in the proportions of age cohorts during the 10-year planning horizon. The proportional charts show a significant increase in the proportion of the population over the age of 55, with most of the proportional decrease occurring in adults ages 25 to 54 category.

Youth and young adults will become a proportionately smaller segment of the population, but overall the population of residents under the age of 15 will increase. Adults over the age of 55 however will experience a significant increase. It is likely this increase will occur from current residents aging into this category, indicating the Town's population over the age of 55 will have a variety of recreation needs to accommodate a wide range of ability levels.

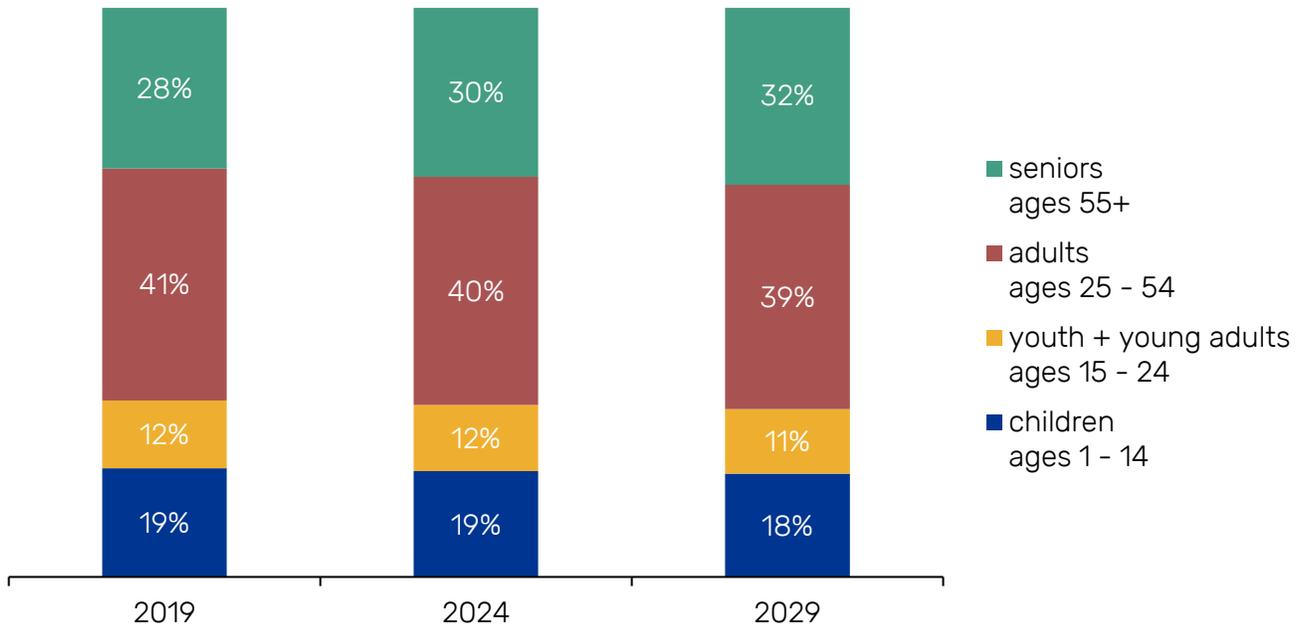
The median age of the population for the Town, North Carolina, and the United States is approximately 39 years of age, with the Town of Garner's median age being slightly higher.

Figure 4 - Median age of residents in each geographic area



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2018 and 2023. Project team projected data for 2019, 2024 and 2029.

Figure 5 - Population proportion by age. Each bar represents 100 percent of the population.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2018 and 2023. Project team projected data for 2019, 2024 and 2029.

TRENDS IN RECREATION FOR OLDER ADULTS

Older adults in the United States are living longer, healthier lives than ever before. Throughout the country, communities are seeing growing senior communities, with rapidly changing and widely variable recreational needs. This population of older adults, once considered homogeneous,

now includes 80-year-old marathon runners and 55-year-olds with school aged children. Recreation trends indicate the following practices to engage with this specialized and changing demographic:



Many communities have a network of public and private service providers to connect older adults with senior resources. The Town of Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources manages the Garner Senior Center which provides facilities and programs for adults age 55 and up in the Town of Garner.²

The Senior Center provides catering kitchens, gymnasium, a fitness and exercise building, a health room for medical screenings, and programming spaces for meals and activities. Senior programs include arts and painting, education, cards and games, day trips, fitness and dance classes, health and wellness programs, and competitive and noncompetitive sports. The Senior Center provides a daily meal for seniors Monday through Friday with Meals on Wheels of Wake County.

Nationally, seniors comprise 21 percent of all people who walk for exercise, and 28 percent of people who walk for exercise frequently³. Other activities popular among seniors include exercising with equipment, swimming, golfing and fishing.

While many of these needs are fulfilled through the Senior Center, others can be met through parks, recreation and cultural arts amenities and programming serving the entire community. For example, parks and greenway trails can be designed to ensure access to senior populations and others with mobility difficulties. The National Recreation and Parks Association indicates that park needs for older adults include flatter topography, shorter trails, frequent resting spots, improved wayfinding signage, and partnerships with senior communities or programs to increase awareness of offerings for seniors.

1 <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2012/may/are-seniors-a-core-target-audience-for-your-programs-and-services/>

2 <https://www.garnernc.gov/departments/parks-recreation-and-cultural-resources/parks-facilities/garner-senior-center>

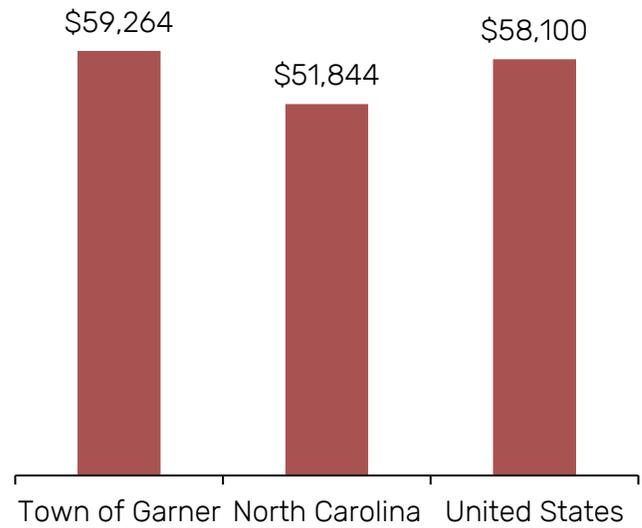
3 Sports participation lifecycle demographics, 2018

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The change in the proportional spread of Town of Garner household income levels shows an upward trend in household income over time. Despite this upward trend, the Town will need to ensure parks, recreation and cultural resources remain accessible to individuals of all income levels.

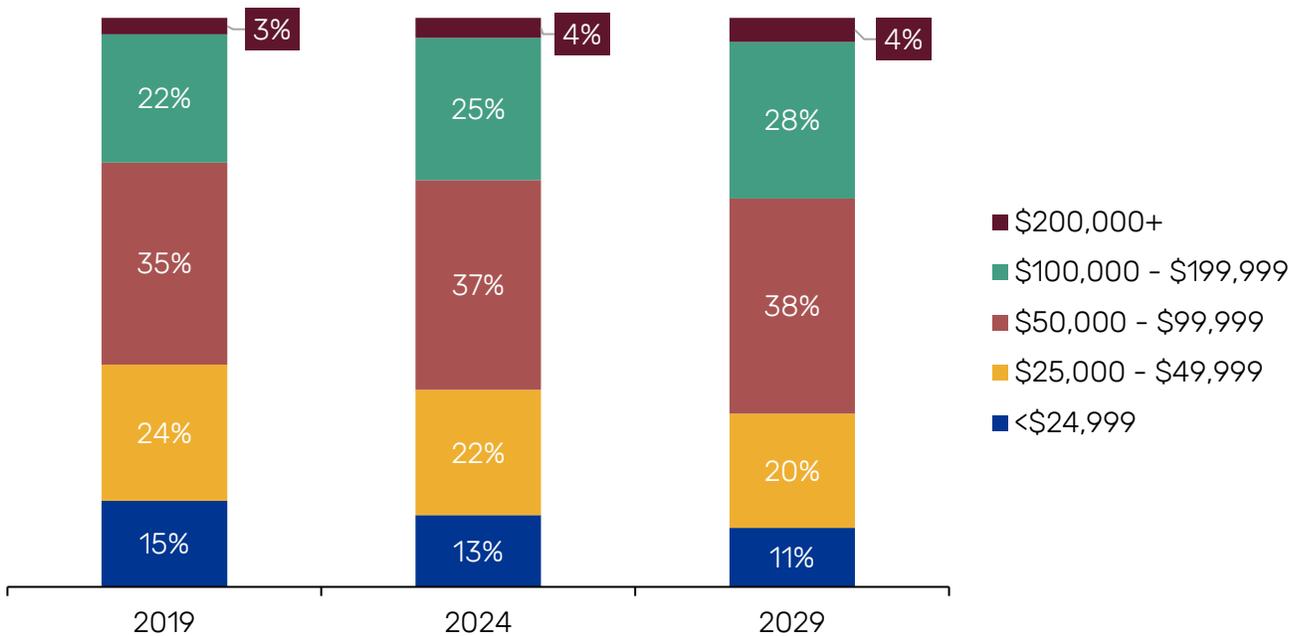
The median household income of the Town of Garner is 13 percent higher than the median household income of North Carolina and slightly higher than the median household income of the United States. This indicates that residents in the Town residents may have more ability to pay for parks, recreation, and cultural resources programming. However, it is essential for a public parks, recreation, and cultural resources provider to meet the needs of all residents and provide access to low-income residents.

Figure 6 - Median household income of residents in each geographic area.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2018 and 2023. Project team projected data for 2019, 2024 and 2029.

Figure 7 - Population proportion by household income. Each bar represents 100 percent of the population.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2018 and 2023. Project team projected data for 2019, 2024 and 2029.

TRENDS IN ENSURING AFFORDABLE ACCESS

10-MINUTE WALK

Parks are free and open to the public and serve as important locations for people to play, socialize and gather as a community. Community members are only able to access free or low-cost parks and programs if they can afford the trip to get there. Ensuring an equitable distribution of parks and amenities throughout a geographic area means residents truly have affordable access to parks and programs.

The 10 Minute Walk campaign⁴ is working to “ensure there’s a great park within a 10-minute walk of every person, in every neighborhood, in every city across America.” Five North Carolina Mayors have signed the pledge.

93%⁵

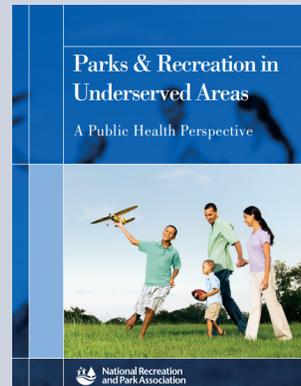


Percentage of Americans looking to local governments to increase affordable out-of-school time programming at their park and recreation agency.

Parks, recreation, and cultural resources departments frequently provide day programs and camps for children at below-market or discounted rates. This service provides an affordable alternative for families who must find child care when school is out of session.

A recent study from the National Recreation and Parks Association found “93 percent of Americans believe providing affordable out-of-school time programs at local parks, recreation centers and libraries to families of all income levels should be a goal of their local government. Currently, 93 percent of park and recreation agencies nationwide administer or manage out-of-school time programs.”

Day programs and camps can benefit all children but are especially important for low-income families with few other options for daytime childcare options.



*Parks and Recreation in Underserved Areas: A Public Health Perspective*⁶ states “Several studies have documented that while parks and recreational facilities are available throughout the United States, there are several additional factors that affect park use and physical activity levels.” Factors include:

Park Access - Easy park access is associated with increased park use. Park visits are more frequent and physical activity levels are higher.

Park Distribution - Disparities in park distribution are particularly evident in areas with low income and racial/ethnic populations.

Park Facilities - Within parks, there are certain types of facilities that encourage higher levels of physical activity than others, such as trails and playgrounds.

Park Conditions - Park facilities that are consistently well maintained, aesthetically appealing and safe have increased public use and physical activity.

4 <https://www.10minutewalk.org/#Home>

5 <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/park-pulse/park-pulse-survey-affordable-out-of-school-time-programming/>

6 https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Papers/Parks-Rec-Underserved-Areas.pdf

RACE + ETHNICITY

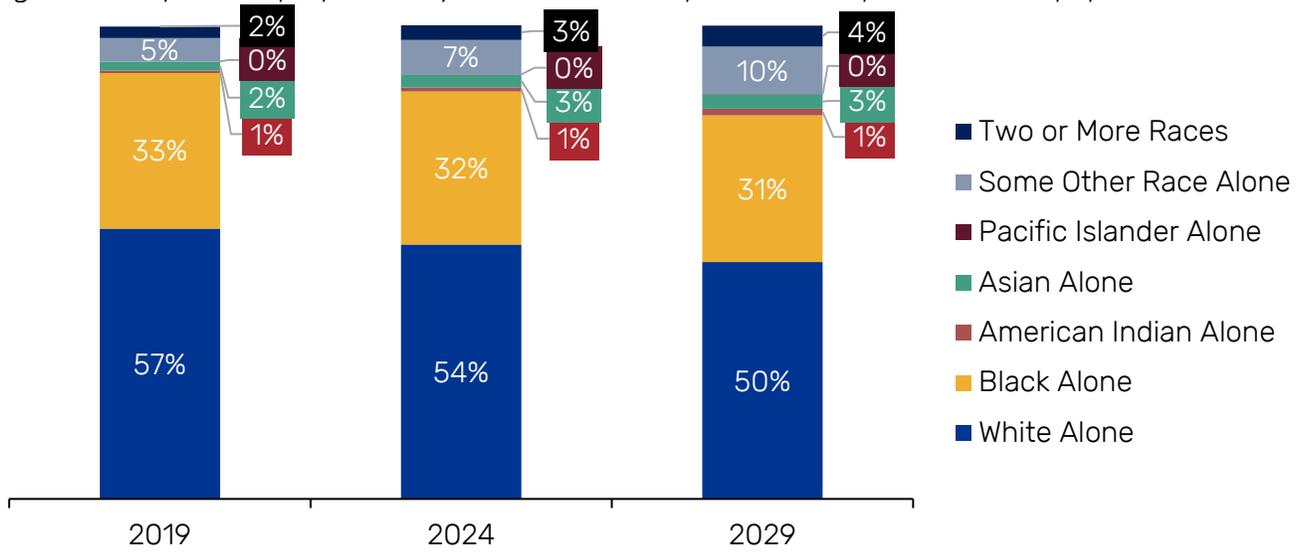
Demographic trends indicate the proportions of the population identifying as any race other than “white alone” is increasing. The second largest proportion, after “white alone”, is “black alone”. Approximately 90 percent of the Town of Garner identifies as either “white alone” or “black alone”. The white alone category comprises 57 percent of the population, which is below the proportion of “white alone” population in North Carolina, at 66 percent. This indicates a higher degree of racial

diversity in Garner than in the State as a whole.

Approximately 11 percent of the population currently identifies as “Hispanic origin”, and that population will increase in proportion in the coming years. The Town of Garner has a higher proportion of “Hispanic origin” residents than the State of North Carolina, in which 10 percent of the population identifies as “Hispanic origin”.

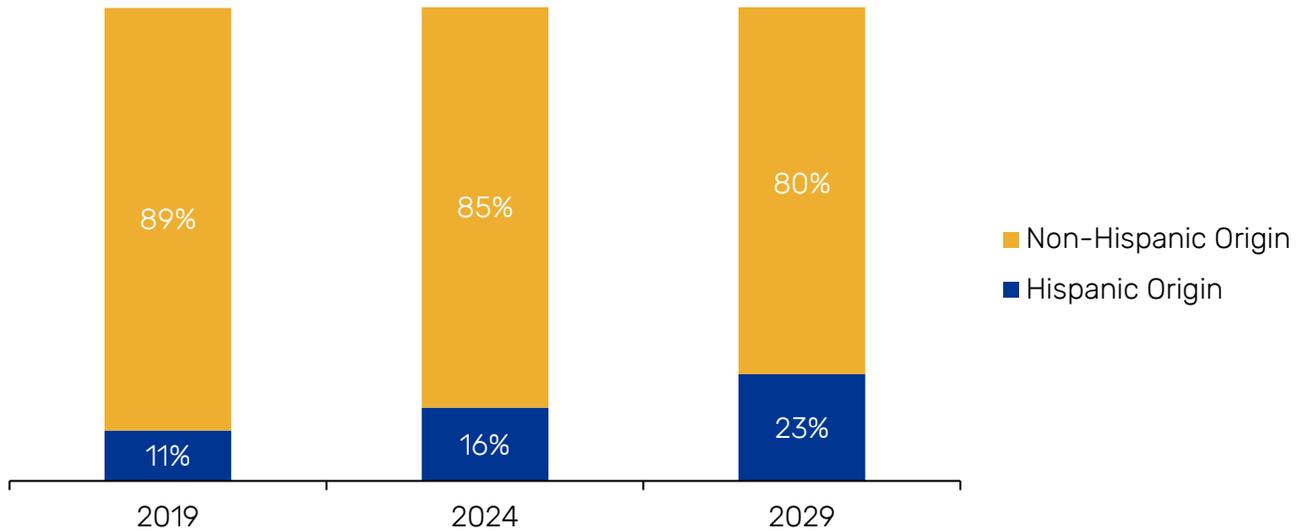
3 > demographics + trends

Figure 8 - Population proportion by race. Each bar represents 100 percent of the population.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2018 and 2023. Project team projected data for 2019, 2024 and 2029.

Figure 9 - Population proportion by Hispanic ethnicity. Each bar represents 100 percent of the population.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2018 and 2023. Project team projected data for 2019, 2024 and 2029.

TRENDS IN ACHIEVING RACIAL EQUITY

Many communities are recognizing that intentions to equitably provide parks, recreation, and cultural resources services to all community members equally has not resulted in equally positive outcomes for all community members, especially communities of color. Special attention is required to rectify historic disparities between resources available in white communities and communities of color. The following recreation trends indicate practices for improving outcomes for all community members by applying a racial equity lens.

The National Recreation and Parks Association acknowledges that parks, recreation, and cultural resources providers can be at the forefront of addressing racial equity due to their unique role as a public service provider of many quality of life programs and amenities. The NRPA recommends the following considerations for addressing racial equity in parks, recreation, and cultural resources:

- › **Normalizing conversations about race is the only way to develop effective strategies for racial equity.** One of the biggest challenges is the general discomfort many people experience in talking about race. This is a critical hurdle to get over. Avoiding conversations about race means there is a greater likelihood that organizations will not develop appropriate strategies to address institutional and structural racism.
- › **Behavior drives attitude.** Sometimes we think that attitude drives behavior – we want people to “understand” racism and expect that behavioral changes will follow. In reality, the opposite is true: changing behavior changes understanding. Giving employees a common understanding of racial equity terminology and tools to use to do their jobs differently leads to an increased understanding of institutional and structural racism.
- › **Equity is a process.** It takes continual learning and practice to embed racial equity into your organization. Equity cannot be relegated to a check-box or an additional step to an existing process. Instead, it is a shift in the way our agencies do business.

In addition to identifying considerations for addressing racial equity in parks, the NRPA provides design approaches promoting inclusion and representation of communities of color in park design and creation.⁸

- › **Accessibility** is perhaps the most important element of a small public space. A small park should be a central part of a community and should be encountered in the course of a normal day’s routine. Locating parks on leftover parcels, private spaces or behind homes provides little relevance to their context or the overall community and can result in them being underutilized.
- › **Specificity** means a site is specific to its location and users. It implies a site possesses qualities making it special and unique and may come from a neighborhood’s ethnic or religious affiliation.
- › **Authenticity** means a park is genuine, or “the real deal,” and must actually be the thing it is representing. Simply copying something successful from one area to another does not take into account a site’s authenticity.
- › **Adaptability** in a park allows for upgrades, maintenance and change overtime as a neighborhood’s needs evolve. Adaptability reflects the organic nature of public space.
- › **Functionality** speaks to a park’s place in the urban fabric and provides opportunities for play, recreation, retreat and socializing in practical ways by providing activities a community wants.

⁷ <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2015/december/racial-equity-in-parks-and-recreation/>

⁸ <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2017/march/public-spaces-and-social-equity/>

EMERGING TRENDS IN PARKS AND RECREATION

SEVEN BENEFITS OF PARKS

Adapted from Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System by the Trust for Public Land (2009) <<https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/cloud.tpl.org/pubs/ccpe-econvalueparks-rpt.pdf>>

1 > TOURISM

Though not always recognized, parks play a major role in the City's tourism economy. Some are tourist attractions by themselves and others are simply great venues for festivals, sports events and demonstrations. Ready any newspaper's travel section and you'll usually see at least one park among the "to see" picks.

2 > DIRECT USE

While city parks provide many indirect benefits, they also provide tangible value through such activities as team sports, bicycling, skateboarding, walking, picnicking, bench sitting and visiting a flower garden. Economists call these activities "direct uses". Most direct uses in city parks are free of charge but economists can still calculate value by knowing the cost of a similar recreation experience in the private marketplace. This is known as "willingness-to-pay". In other words, if parks were not available in the city, how much would the resident pay in a commercial facility? (Thus, rather than income, this value represents savings by residents).

3 > PROPERTY VALUE

Other things being equal, most people are willing to pay more for a home close to a nice park. Property value is affected primarily by two factors: distance from the park and the quality of the park itself. People's desire to live near a park depends on characteristics of the park. Beautiful natural resource parks with great trees, trails, meadows and gardens are markedly valuable. Other parks with excellent recreational facilities are also desirable (although sometimes the greatest property value is a block or two away if there are issues of noise, lights and parking). Less attractive or poorly maintained parks are only marginally valuable. And parks with frightening or dangerous aspects can reduce nearby property values.

4 > COMMUNITY COHESION

The more webs of human relationships a neighborhood has, the stronger, safer and more successful it is. Any institution that promotes this kind of community cohesion, whether a club, a school, a political campaign, a religious institution or a co-op, adds value to a neighborhood and by extension, to the whole

city. This human web, which Jane Jacobs termed "social capital", is strengthened by parks. Whether programmed with playgrounds, sports fields, park benches, chessboards, swimming pools, ice skating rinks or flower gardens, parks offer opportunities for people of all ages to interact, communicate, compete, learn and grow.

5 > HEALTH

Lack of exercise is shown to contribute to obesity and its many effects and experts call for a more active lifestyle. Research suggests that access to parks can help people increase their level of physical activity. Park users who undertake at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity at least three days per week cut their annual medical costs by an average of \$250 per year.

6 > CLEAN WATER

Stormwater runoff is a significant problem in urban areas. When rainwater flows off roads, sidewalks and other impervious surfaces, it picks up pollutants. Parkland reduces stormwater management costs by capturing precipitation and/or slowing its runoff. Large pervious (absorbent) surface areas in parks allow precipitation to infiltrate and recharge the groundwater. Also, vegetation in parks provides considerable surface area that intercepts and stores rainwater, allowing some to evaporate before it ever reaches the ground. Thus, urban green spaces function like mini storage reservoirs.

7 > CLEAN AIR

Air pollution is a significant and expensive urban problem, injuring health and damaging structures. The human cardiovascular and respiratory systems are affected and there are broad consequences for healthcare costs and productivity. In addition, acid deposition, smog and ozone increase the need to clean and repair buildings and other costly infrastructure. Trees and shrubs remove air pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone and some particulates. Leaves absorb gases and particulates adhere to the plant surface, at least temporarily. Thus, vegetation in city parks plays a role in improving air quality and reducing pollution costs.

CONNECTIVITY

Healthy Spaces and Places is a project aimed at creating places that promote wellness. They define wellness as “the directness of links and the density of connections in a transport network... Good connectivity promotes easy access to key destinations for pedestrians. Excellent connectivity actively seeks to discourage car use by making local trips easier and more pleasant by foot than by car.” Connectivity is often addressed through design approaches impacting all areas of urban development, such as transportation, parks, economic development, and public health.

Parks and greenway trails promote connectivity by serving as both routes and destinations. Greenway trails create transportation routes protected from automobile traffic and parks create attractive destinations for socializing, exercising and playing.

The demographic analysis findings, especially the increasing senior population and increasing population of communities of color suggest a need for connectivity that can be promoted through parks and greenway trails. Greenway trails have low barriers to entry and make appealing recreational destinations for seniors and others with limited or declining mobility.



Figure 10 - Relationship between connectivity and health
 Source: Healthy Spaces & Places. Design Principle – Connectivity and Permeability

Characteristics of Parks that Promote Connectivity

Adapted from the National Parks and Recreation Association. "Designing Parks for Health," October 1, 2016. Joanna Lombard, AIA, LEED, AP

Mixed-Use – Access to mixed-use destinations provides multiple reasons for more people to walk. Neighborhoods with mixed-use destinations show higher levels of social interaction and physical activity, essential elements of a healthy lifestyle. Mixed-use in a park context can mean the park is part of a mixed-use district with shops, residences and other kinds of activities nearby, or the park itself can serve as a mixed-use destination in the neighborhood.

Connectivity – Mixed-use depends on connectivity. Multiple destinations are only beneficial when they are accessible. Studies show that people walk more in areas with connected sidewalks and having many route choices is associated with high connectivity. Parks and open space are opportunities to build connectedness throughout otherwise sprawling areas.

Greenness – Shade trees, green spaces and opportunities for community gardens provide significant health benefits. Streetscape and a sidewalk system that connects a park to its neighborhood can help contribute to greenness. Research shows neighborhood greenness enhances community identity and encourages physical activity.

Eyes on the Park – Neighborhood safety and vitality depend on a maximum number of people watching over a streetscape. Parks are especially sensitive to supervision and the proximity of residents, the presence of mixed-use, easy access through a well-connected network, and the presence of trees are all linked to higher levels of activity and social support. Providing proximity of active uses and easy visual and physical access can ensure sufficient numbers of Eyes on the Park, as well as enhancing both physical activity and social interaction.

Mobility – Mobility enables people to reach places through multiple modes of travel – walking, biking, and various forms of private and public transit. Parks accessible on foot by the first circle of users provide important neighborhood destinations. Park infrastructure can connect parks and greenway trails across a region through trails, sidewalks, streets and rails.

demographics + trends

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A well-documented economic impact of parks, recreation, and cultural resources is the positive influence on surrounding property values. Though parks remove property from the total bank of land that could generate property taxes, they more than justify their existence by increasing the property values of the surrounding properties and therefore the amount of property tax owed. This concept is important to consider in terms of land acquisition in areas of new residential development. Parks and facilities should be well-maintained and properly programmed to ensure the desired effect. Improving and expanding parks should be considered an investment in protecting and expanding the Town's tax base.

In addition to increasing a community's existing wealth, parks, recreation, and cultural resources can generate new income by generating tourism revenue. Out-of-town visitors to parks may spend

money at restaurants, gas stations and other local businesses.

Finally, there are the economic impacts of the management and operation of the department itself. This results in the direct, indirect and induced effects spurred by public investment in parks, recreation, and cultural resources and the revenue the department generates. For example, the Department has an economic impact on the people it directly employs and generates demand for certain equipment and contracted services. The Department's demand for goods and services has an indirect ripple effect throughout the community as contractors conduct their own businesses. The Department's induced effect on the local economy is generated by employees spending their wages within Garner on goods and services for themselves and their families.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As Garner's population grows and changes in the coming decade, the community's recreation needs will grow and change.

The overall population growth indicates a need for expanding parks, recreation, and cultural resources services and suggests a growing tax base to support that work.

An aging population suggests the need for expanding senior services while ensuring all parks and facilities feature amenities and design elements that universally include people with and without mobility challenges.

The increasing household income levels indicate an ability to pay for parks, recreation, and cultural resources services. Regardless of rising income

for some community members, low-income residents must still have affordable or no-cost access to parks, recreation, and cultural resources services.

The area's increasing racial diversity suggests an increasing need for equity, diversity and inclusion efforts to ensure equitable provision of parks, facilities, amenities and programs.

In addition to Garner's specific community context, emerging trends in parks, recreation, and cultural resources include understanding the many far-reaching benefits of parks, incorporating parks and greenway planning into larger connected networks of alternative forms of transportation, and understanding and quantifying the economic impacts parks have on their communities.



4 inventory + analysis



CHAPTER 4 > INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

The Inventory and Analysis chapter provides a big picture view of the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department as it currently exists, describing its parkland, facilities, operations and maintenance and finances. This chapter serves as the foundation for the plan’s recommendations. Each of the plan’s recommendations will be firmly rooted in the discoveries and realities of Garner’s parks, recreation, and cultural resources system and will help inform the priorities of the recommendations provided and a strategy for achieving them.



PARKLAND, FACILITIES + OPEN SPACE

The Town of Garner manages 14 parks and more than 540 acres of recreational open space. Garner’s park system includes developed parkland (341.19 acres), undeveloped parkland (199.37 acres), facilities and greenway trails for public use. Of the 14 parks, two are owned by Wake County, two are jointly used and maintained by the Wake County School District and two are rented by sport’s organizations throughout the year. Recreation opportunities provided throughout the park system are diverse. Ranging from athletic fields, playgrounds, trails and nature parks to the Senior Center and performing arts center, a clear effort has been placed on providing recreational opportunities for all residents. Based upon conversations with Town staff, the department provides programming focused on youth athletics, especially camps and afterschool with a desire to expand youth basketball, volleyball, and arts.

Developed parks range from neighborhood pocket parks, sized less than five acres, serving the immediate area, to regional community parks, sized 20 acres or greater, offering diverse amenities to serve a variety of users throughout the community and region.

The Town is currently determining the best strategy for developing five undeveloped parcels totaling 199.37 acres. Meadowbrook Park, two parcels totaling 126.88-acres, located in Southwest Garner near South Garner High School and Interstate 40. The other park, referred to as the Yeargan Property, consists of three parcels totaling 72.49-acres and is located approximately one mile east of the downtown core. As the Town continues to grow, developing these open spaces will provide a valuable opportunity to serve the Town’s growing population.

4 > inventory + analysis

 PARKLAND	 TRAILS	 INDOOR FACILITY SPACE	 OUTDOOR FACILITIES	 PARK AMENITIES
<p>341.19 acres of developed parkland ---</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 pocket parks 5 neighborhood parks 3 community parks 1 regional park 1 sports complex 1 nature park 6 special use facilities 1 undeveloped open space area 2 future parkland sites 	<p>7.43 miles of trail ---</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.68 miles of walking trail 2.25 miles of mountain bike trail 0.5 miles of greenway 	<p>142,647 sq. ft. of indoor recreation space ---</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Avery Street Recreation Center and Annex 1 Garner Recreation Center 1 nature center 1 Senior Center 1 performing arts center 	<p>23 outdoor fields and courts ---</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 baseball and softball fields 7 tennis courts 1 basketball court 1 soccer field site striped as needed 6 multipurpose fields 	<p>15 picnic shelters 13 playgrounds ---</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 grills 8 restroom buildings 1 boathouse 1 fishing dock 2 dog parks

EXISTING PARKLAND + FACILITY INVENTORY

The project team conducted a site assessment and inventory of the Town's existing parks and facilities. The assessment used five themes to organize the assessment. The themes included accessibility, connectivity, safety, green infrastructure, aesthetics and sense of place.

The themes are intended to be a summary of the realities, opportunities and challenges of the current conditions observed throughout the entire Garner park system. The findings are meant to inform the future recommendations provided by this plan.

 <p>ACCESSIBILITY + SAFETY</p> <p>Is the park designed so people of all abilities can access the park and all its amenities?</p> <p>Does the park meet most or all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?</p> <p>Does the park feel safe and encourage user safety?</p>	 <p>BRANDING, WAYFINDING + SENSE OF PLACE</p> <p>Does the park design support the intended use of the park and create an enjoyable place to pursue those activities?</p> <p>Does the park appear to reflect the history or identity of the Town?</p> <p>Are people able to identify this park as a Town of Garner Park and easily navigate both to and within the park?</p>	 <p>CONNECTIVITY</p> <p>Does the park connect to its surroundings through sidewalks, greenway trails and natural surface trails?</p>	 <p>GENERAL CONDITION</p> <p>Is the park maintained to department standards?</p> <p>Do the park amenities and facilities need to be updated?</p> <p>Are the park amenities and facilities showing signs of wear and tear?</p> <p>How old are the amenities and facilities?</p>	 <p>GREEN PARKS</p> <p>Does this park promote green building practices, environmental sustainability and education?</p> <p>Are maintenance methods promoting department cost savings?</p>
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Inventory + analysis

ACCESSIBILITY + SAFETY

As a public agency, the Department has a responsibility to provide facilities and amenities that are accessible by all ages and ability levels, and that feel safe to visitors. When touring Garner parks and facilities, the design team evaluated each site to better understand any accessibility deficiencies or safety concerns.

In a system with many well-established parks and facilities, older facilities may not meet the

standards outlined by the current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As standards and regulations evolve it is very common for existing facilities to fall behind. Many of the older parks and their facilities do not provide sidewalks and walkways at the desired frequency creating disjointed park offerings that aren't reachable by users of all ability levels. For example, many playgrounds such as that at Greenbrier Park are disconnected from the sidewalk infrastructure

and as a result are inaccessible. Similarly, older facilities may not provide adequate handicap parking or ingress/egress requirements meeting the current ADA code. For example, many stalls are too narrow, and some buildings do not provide clearly defined and maintained routes to and from the building that meet ADA standards. This is seen at Lake Benson Park, Jackie Johns Sr. Community Park and Creech Road Elementary Park.

Park safety, whether perceived or real, can affect park utilization and the public's overall perception of the park system. Evidenced by open site lines, cleanliness, separation between vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and well-staffed facilities, the design team found the overall system offers both real and perceived safe park surroundings. All these factors contribute to higher rates of park utilization and continual activity resulting in

“eyes on park,” a natural surveillance system that contributes to improved safety by discouraging undesirable behavior.

Parks which seemed to present some safety concerns were Creech Road Elementary Park, Jaycee Park and Greenbrier Park. The trails at Creech Road Elementary Park, exhibit mature and often overgrown vegetation. This combined with low site lighting levels can impair site lines and create places for wrong doers to hide. Jaycee Park and Greenbrier Parks are older parks within the system and are beginning to show signs of wear and tear. ADA compliance is lacking from steep sidewalk slopes, settling concrete causing tripping hazards, rusting play equipment, as well as soil erosion creating steep embankments resulting in potential fall hazards. Each of these elements create concerns with user safety and well-being.

BRANDING + WAYFINDING + SENSE OF PLACE

One of the best ways to promote consistency of recreational quality and department character is through department branding. The department has offered a consistent hierarchy and typology of branding at each of its parks and facilities achieved through consistency of signage, building architecture and furnishings within new parks. Older parks appear to be falling behind and do not appear to follow the standard set by the newer parks and renovations. Much of the park system can be identified through its primary and secondary signage while the consistency of building architecture and park furnishings (trash receptacles, benches, water fountains, etc) were observed to be lacking or inconsistent. It was observed that the Town seal has been used in many parks, but not all parks. Use of Town specific logos, fonts, colors, etc can improve system branding.

Wayfinding adheres to Town branding, provides directional clarity and often expands park identity. It appears that wayfinding signage has been used minimally throughout the Garner park system. Wayfinding can be found in White Deer Park in the form of maps informing trail routes and locations, dictating directional decisions. Wayfinding has not been used along trails and pathways for continued guidance and direction in Garner Recreational Park or Creech Road Elementary Park. It was also noted that several parks, such as

South Garner Park and Creech Road Elementary Park have multiple vehicular entry points and very little signage to inform visitors directional priorities (leading to increased opportunities for confusion).

Both branding and wayfinding can help create a sense of place within parks. Parks which have a strong sense of place exhibit a specific visual and contextual identity that is felt by visitors. Elements that typically contribute to sense of place are vegetation, wayfinding signage, brand recognition, public art, historic elements and building materials characteristic of a certain geographic location or time period.

When touring Garner parks and facilities the design team noticed that the two greatest contributors of sense of place seemed to be the system's natural park-like character and the use of Garner's arts and cultural resources. From White Deer Park to the athletic complex at South Garner Park, the tree canopy has been preserved and enhanced to become an integral park-aesthetic associated with the Garner Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources system. This canopy is native to the Piedmont region comprised of Oak, Hickory and Pines. The number of parks with opportunities to connect to nature and the native vegetation have begun to define the characteristic of Garner Parks. Using trails, playgrounds, greenway trails

and picnic shelters many parks offer users experiences within the mature tree canopy.

Finally, sense of place is evidenced using Garner's arts and cultural resources. The Garner Performing Arts Center has been repurposed for use by the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department for theater, concerts and community/staff meetings. Additionally, Garner's historic, small-town culture is reflected by way of park diversity, historic preservation and core program offerings familiar to past generations.

CONNECTIVITY

Parks within a given system often strive to connect to other parks via sidewalk or greenway infrastructure to eliminate auto-dependent access to parks. Not only do sidewalks and trails provide safe alternatives to vehicular access, recreational activities such as running, walking and biking are trending nationally. The concept of park connectivity through greenway trails promotes these individual activities and can improve the overall health of the community. Throughout the Town of Garner, greenway trails

GENERAL CONDITION

Garner Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources has long been providing indoor and outdoor recreation to its residents. While the department has been recognized by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), which encourages agencies to maintain parks, recreation, and cultural resources services at the highest level, it is nearly impossible to maintain all park amenities and facilities to the ever-evolving standards of the industry. When analyzing the overall park system, it was observed that many of the parks are showing signs of heavy use, such as play equipment, courts, restroom buildings, recreation centers and landscaping.

Playground equipment at Jaycee Park, Greenbrier Park, Jackie Johns Sr. Community Park and even White Deer Park are beginning to show signs of age and wear and tear. These amenities are outdated, rusting and do not provide enough unique features to gather the excitement of park visitors. Many courts, have been fixed with short term solutions and some of the minor improvements are already beginning to fail causing cracked play surfaces, peeling or faded court paint and inadequate fencing.

Nature parks such as White Deer Park immerse park visitors into the natural native habitats and offer opportunities for environmental, regional and historical education reflecting the Town's heritage and culture.

While the design team did not observe placemaking strategies such as brand recognition, public art, consistency of site furnishings, etc, this master plan includes a series of recommendations to deepen the character, aesthetic and visual continuity of each park.

and natural surface trails appear to be localized within park properties, leaving many parks disconnected from the overall system. While looped trails in Centennial Park and White Deer Park are examples of well-used trails internal to parks, greenway trail connections between parks appear to be few. As a part of this master plan, an in-depth exploration into the existing trail system and the opportunities that exist to connect parks via a complete greenway network has been provided.

Similarly, some facilities within the system no longer meet requirements as defined by ADA (as mentioned earlier) or are beginning to show signs of wear and tear (chipping wall paint, dented facilities, small restroom stalls and high maintenance costs). For example, the Avery Street Park and Avery Street Recreation Center have an HVAC system requiring more maintenance and repair year by year. Avery Street Annex, a subset of the Recreation Center, is an old school building and many of the facilities are out of date and do not meet current ADA standards. It was also noted that the Senior Center (operating at maximum capacity) needs expansion and many of the exterior materials are beginning to weather. The restrooms in the Senior Center are functional, but do not have all of the elements necessary to make this an easily usable facility for users with mobility challenges. A more detailed architectural/building assessment could provide insight into additional maintenance or building repairs required.

Finally, a consistent condition noted was the overall aesthetic of the park landscape. It was observed that cleanliness is prioritized and park properties are maintained at a high standard. It was

also observed that parks are lacking in enhanced plant material (landscaping) which not only offer visual aesthetics but can also create a sense of place, safety and refuge. Many parks have large open areas with few shade canopies which can discourage visitors in the warm summer months.

GREEN PARKS

For the purposes of this assessment, the design team assessed the existing parks, recreation, and cultural resources facility's provision of green practices by analyzing each park's offering of green infrastructure, environmental education and sustainable maintenance practices.

Few Garner parks explicitly exhibit the promotion of green infrastructure (education, inclusion of native plant materials, reduction of pollutants, stormwater management, reduced maintenance and increased environmental equity)¹. It is very evident White Deer Park uses green infrastructure methods for maintenance, water re-use, sustainable building materials and the inclusion of environmental education. To add, the Nature Center is Gold-LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified, one of the more prestigious green infrastructure certifications within the industry. Many of the parks protect

It was also noted (South Garner Park, Garner Recreational Park and Lake Benson Park) that areas with minimal landscaping are experiencing erosion of soils. This erosion is causing increased maintenance due to runoff and in some cases steep stream banks as seen in Greenbrier Park.

the natural character of the site, but few appear to promote environmental green infrastructure outwardly.

Many of the parks offer limited environmental education outside of White Deer Park (as mentioned above). Lake Benson Park and Creech Road Elementary Park can incorporate educational materials and signage because of the existing vegetation, natural character and existing natural surface trails. Additionally, the two undeveloped properties recently acquired appear to have great potential for the inclusion of education signage and exhibits.

This assessment of the existing conditions of the Garner Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources system will help inform this plan's final recommendations made.

¹ Green Infrastructure in Parks: A Guide to Collaboration, Funding, and Community Engagement; https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-05/documents/gi_parksplaybook_2017-05-01_508.com

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Chapter 4 continues with Programming on page 52.

PROGRAMMING

The assessment offers an in-depth analysis of the Department's programming strengths, challenges, and opportunities. The assessment also assists in identifying core program areas, program lifecycles, program classification, cost recovery, similar providers, program standards, and best practices.

The Department provided the project team with information including program descriptions, financial data, website content, statistically significant survey results, demographic information, and discussions with focus groups.

The Department has a recreation program plan that directs staff on the development and implementation of programs. This is a best practice and is beneficial as the Department provides a broad range of year-round recreation and leisure programming for all ages. This analysis excludes arts and cultural resources programming from the analysis, as arts and cultural resources programming is discussed individually in the Arts and Cultural Resources section of this chapter.

Currently in Garner, 52 percent of households participate in Town of Garner programming within the past 12 months, according to the statistically valid survey. Participants had good experiences with Town of Garner programming, with 96 percent of survey respondents who participated in programming rated their experience as good or excellent. This analysis will identify challenges and opportunities to ensure that Garner will continue to provide high quality programming to a majority of residents during the next 10 years.

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

The statistically valid survey provides valuable insight to understand the need and importance of program areas. The full survey report can be found in the appendix. Survey results are supportive of the Town Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources services. A few specific program related results that demonstrate the demand, value, and quality of programs are:

- › 52 percent of households have participated in special events or programming within the past 12 months. The national average for this question in responding yes is 33 percent. The Department is nineteen percentage points above the national average.
- › 43 percent of households who have participated in programming rated the quality of those programs as "excellent". This is seven percentage points higher than the national average. 53 percent rated the quality as good, and the national average is the same.

- › 71 percent of households report using the Town of Garner for their program and facility needs. The national average for households using their local municipality's services is 44 percent. This demonstrates a high level of satisfaction and perceived value from the community.

In addition to these questions, the survey asked if there is programming that is important to households and how many residents have an unmet need for the programs. These two questions are used to determine the priority investment rating (PIR) for programming. Based on the survey results, the priority investment rating identified the following six programs/activities as "high priorities" for investment:

- › Outdoor music and concerts
- › Aquatics programs
- › Swimming
- › Fitness and wellness
- › Special events and family festivals
- › Music lessons and classes

PROGRAM STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Program standards set the framework and expectations that Departments need to perform at high levels and become community and industry leaders. Program standards and performance measures are essential to accurately and effectively providing customer services Department-wide through all staff members and at all parks, recreation and cultural resources locations.

Best practice for performance measures includes tracking the participant to staff ratios, cancellation rate, customer satisfaction and customer retention rate. Customer retention rate can be captured at registration or on the program

survey. Surveys can be very useful indicators of success if used in the right way – keeping the number of questions to a minimum and avoiding survey fatigue.

Other best practices are:

- › Pre-program surveys
- › Post-program surveys
- › Regular/recurring user surveys
- › Lost customer/user surveys
- › Non-customer/non-user surveys
- › Focus groups
- › Statistically valid surveys
- › In-facility, in-park, or on-site surveys

CORE PROGRAM AREAS

Identifying Core Program Areas creates a sense of focus around specific program areas. Ensuring that these Core Program Areas are based on current and future recreation needs ensures programming remains relevant and fulfilling to residents and participants. Establishing Core Program Area enables staff, policy makers, and the public to focus on programs that will provided the greatest benefit to the community. Program areas are considered as Core if they meet a majority of the following categories:

- › Has been provided for more than 4 to 5 years.
- › Meets the community’s expectation that the program will be provided.
- › Requires 5 percent or more of the Department’s budget.

- › Is offered 3 to 4 seasons per year.
- › Serves a tiered level of skill development within program offerings.
- › Has wide demographic appeal.
- › Has full time staff dedicated to programming.
- › Has special use facilities to specifically support the program area.
- › Is providing greater than 20 percent of the total program offering within the community, including private providers

The project team and Department staff identified the following Core Program Areas. Arts and cultural resources is included in this list, but data has been omitted from this analysis. The arts and cultural resources core program area is discussed independently later in this chapter.

Figure 1 - Core program areas

ADULT	CAMP	NATURE / OUTDOOR	PRESCHOOL
SENIOR	SPECIAL EVENTS	YOUTH	ARTS + CULTURAL RESOURCES *Included in a separate analysis

Adult

Adult programming provides promotes a healthy, vibrant and well-connected community by offering a variety of fitness and wellness opportunities.

Programs include:

- › Sport Leagues
- › Group Fitness Classes

Camps

Camps goal is to provide recreational opportunities that stress participation, skill development, and fun with diverse youth programs that provide a safe place for children to play, learn and develop social skills.

Programs include:

- › School Break Camps
- › Summer Camps
- › Sports Camps
- › Junior Counselor Leadership Programs

Nature/Outdoor

Nature/Outdoor programs provide memorable, affordable, special events that blend education and entertainment while showcasing parks and facilities. White Deer Park is an important facility for this program area.

Programs include:

- › Hikes
- › Tree Identification
- › Animal/Creature/Bugs-Education for Youth
- › Youth Nature Camp
- › Paddle Events

Preschool

Preschool programming is similar to camps with a priority to offer diverse youth programs that provide safe place for children to play, learn and develop soft skills for the preschool age segment.

Programs include:

- › Preschool Sports
- › Daddy/Mommy Events
- › Camps

Seniors

Senior programming promotes arts, education, fitness, health and wellness, special events, and travel programming for the community's seniors. The Garner Senior Center and many community partners make this Core Program Area successful.

Programs include:

- › Cooking
- › History
- › Languages
- › Fitness
- › Sports
- › Arts
- › Social Games
- › Health and wellness education
- › Trips

Special Events

Special events create moments of civic pride and community cohesion by bringing together thousands of residents and visitors to mark specially occasions. Special events include fireworks displays and Easter egg hunts.

Programs include:

- › Holiday Events
- › Cultural Events
- › Family Events
- › Pop Up Markets
- › Outdoor Movie Nights

Youth

Youth programming goals are the same as camps and preschool by providing athletic opportunities that stress participation, skill development, sportsmanship and fun while creating a safe place for children to play, learn, and develop social skills for school-aged children.

Programs include:

- › STEM
- › Youth Sports

AGE SEGMENT ANALYSIS

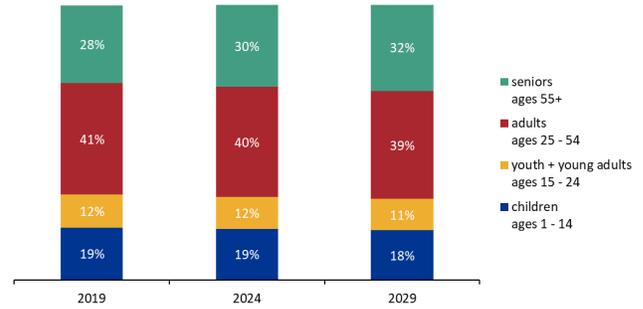
The age segment analysis identifies the target ages each core program area serves and determines whether certain age segments are adequately served based on the community's current and projected demographics.

Demographic characteristics and future trends are detailed in the Demographics and Trends chapter of this plan. Figure 2 indicates the portions of the population by age projected for the next 10 years. The trend indicates that the senior population is becoming a larger proportion of the population, while young children are becoming a smaller proportion of the population. Both populations are increasing in overall numbers. Understanding and being responsive to these trends over time will ensure that the Department continues to effectively serve residents of all ages.

Table 1 depicts each Core Program Area and the most prominent age segments they serve. Recognizing that many Core Program Areas serve multiple age segments, Primary, noted in green, and Secondary, noted in yellow, markets are identified.

The Age Segment Analysis uses Core Program Areas to illustrate which age segments Department programming serves and identifying any gaps.

Figure 2 - Population proportion by age during the next 10 years. Each bar represents 100 percent of the population.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri Forecasts for 2018 and 2023. Project team projected data for 2019, 2024, and 2029.

The analysis indicates that Department programming serves all age groups and identifies some gaps. For example, Camps and Youth programming reach teens, but teens are not the primary target for any Core Program Area. Seniors are the target age segment only for senior programming, but this Program Assessment shows that senior programming is one of the most extensive and diverse Core Program Areas, indicating that this age segment is well-served through department programming.

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Figure 3 - Age segment analysis

CORE PROGRAM AREA	PRESCHOOL (<5 YEARS)	ELEMENTARY (6-12)	TEENS (13-17)	ADULT (18+)	SENIOR (55+)	ALL AGES
Adult	-	-	-	Primary	Secondary	Primary
Camps	-	Primary	Secondary	-	-	-
Nature / Outdoors	-	Secondary	-	-	-	Primary
Preschool	Primary	-	-	-	-	-
Senior	-	-	-	-	Primary	-
Special Event	-	-	-	-	-	Primary
Youth	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	-	-	-

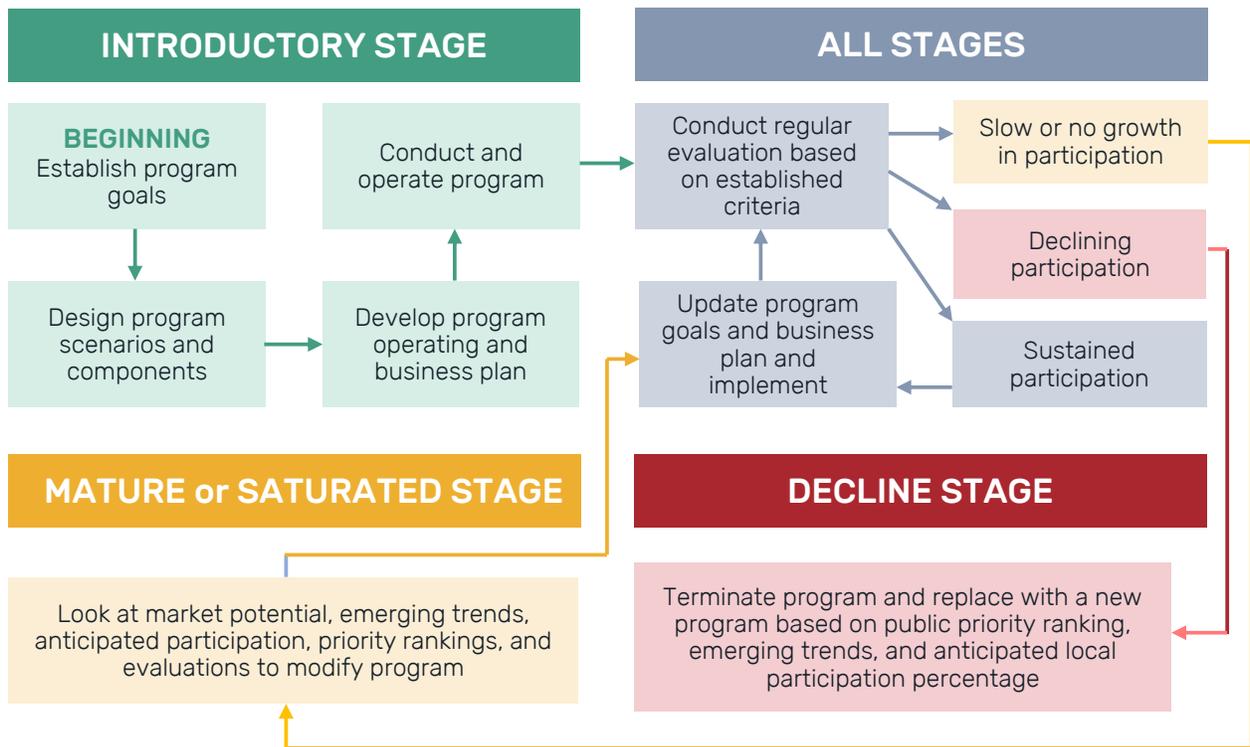
PROGRAM LIFECYCLE

The Program Lifecycle Analysis determines the stage of growth or decline for each program the Department offers. Understanding the program lifecycles informs strategic decisions about introducing and retiring new programming. A department with a healthy mix of programming will have offerings at each stage of the program lifecycle. Department staff introduce new programs, and as trends, preferences, and demographics change, programs will flow through the lifecycle stages. As programs reach decline stages, Department staff will make informed decisions about retiring programs, and introducing new programs to maintain customer retention. A healthy mix of program offerings will also offer some legacy programs, which operate outside of the program lifecycle. Legacy programs tend to be longstanding, established programs that the community expects will always be provided. Participation may increase or decrease across seasons, but its legacy status within the community will prevent it from fully reaching decline stage.

This analysis is not based on strict quantitative data and instead uses staff members' knowledge of their program areas. The following table shows the percentage distribution of the various lifecycle categories of Department programs. These percentages were obtained by comparing the number of programs in each individual stage with the total number of programs listed by staff members. The department currently has a healthy distribution of programs at all stages within the program lifecycle. Though the program distribution varies slightly from best practices of program distribution, programs currently in the Introductory lifecycle stage will eventually transition into mature programs, evening the distribution within best practice guidelines. Annual tracking will equip staff with the information needed to ensure program lifecycle distribution is responsive to best practices as the distribution evolves from year to year.

4 > inventory + analysis

Figure 4 - Program lifecycle flow chart



According to staff, zero percent of programs fall into the introduction lifecycle stage. Take-off and Growth lifecycle stages represents 65 percent which is over the recommended distribution of 50 to 60 percent. It is useful to have a strong percentage of programs in these early stages to ensure the department is innovating and being responsive to community needs. In instances where introductory is stronger than the recommended levels, the Department should monitor program participation in the Growth stage to identify when participation levels slow and programs need to transition into the

Mature stage. Currently, seventeen percent of programs are in the Mature stage. This is below the recommended level of forty percent and it is anticipated that programs will transition from Growth into Mature bringing the programs into a better balance among the lifecycle stages.

As programs enter into the Decline stage, they must be closely reviewed and evaluated for repositioning or elimination. When this occurs, the Department should modify and update these programs, at which point they become new programs in the Introductory stage.

Figure 5 - Program lifecycle distribution

LIFECYCLE STAGE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION		BEST PRACTICE PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION
Introduction	New program; modest participation	0%	65% Total	50% - 60% Total
Take-off	Rapid participation growth	17%		
Growth	Moderate, but consistent participation growth	48%		
Mature	Slow participation growth	17%	17% Total	40% Total
Saturated	Minimal to no participation growth; extreme competition	9%	18% Total	0% - 10% Total
Decline	Declining participation	9%		

PROGRAM CLASSIFICATION

Program classification analyzes how each program serves the Department’s mission and the goals and objectives of each core program area. A program’s classification informs how the program should be funded with regard to tax dollars versus user fees and charges. How a program is classified determines appropriate management, funding, and marketing strategies with limited resources and capacity.

Program classifications are determined by the degree of public benefit versus a private benefit a program provides. Figure 5 illustrates the balance of public and private benefit within program classifications. Public benefit indicates

that a program serves a purpose that benefits the community overall and provides equal access to all residents. Private benefit indicates that a program offers individual benefit to the participant and may serve a smaller segment of the population. Senior programming provides a useful example of all program classifications. A senior meal program creates a public benefit by providing food and socialization for seniors, a population that may be low-income or lack transportation. Senior trips also provide socialization, but these activities serve a primarily private benefit to the residents who are able to participate.

Figure 6 - Program classification descriptions, current classification distributions, and cost recovery best practices.

		CURRENT	COST RECOVERY BEST PRACTICE
ESSENTIAL SERVICE	Town must provide this service. Service is expected and supported, is a sound investment of public funds, has broad public support and benefit, will result in a negative impact if not offered, is part of the mission, requires high to complete subsidy.	19%	0-50%
IMPORTANT SERVICE	Town should provide this service if it expands and enhances core services. Service is broadly supported and used, has conditional public support, has an economic, social, or environmental community benefit, has community importance, requires moderate subsidy.	69%	50-75%
VALUE-ADDED SERVICE	Town may provide this service with additional resources. Service adds value to the community, supports core and important services, has community support, generates income, has an individual benefit, can be supported by user fees, enhances community, requires little to no subsidy.	12%	75-100+%

The Department currently classifies programs as Essential, Important, and Value-Added services. Program classification depends upon alignment with organizational mission, financial sustainability, public versus private benefit, marketplace competition, and access.

The project team and Department staff classified all programs the Town offers. The current program distribution is 19 percent Essential, 69 percent Important, and 12 percent Value-added.

Each Core Program Area includes the number of programs classified as Essential, Important,

or Value Added. Understanding the relationship between Core Program Area and Program Classification enables programming staff to balance and plan where programs can be added or altered to represent all classifications. A Core Program Area, such as Seniors, may be challenged to meet a high cost recovery goal. Programs weighted toward Important and Value-Added should have higher cost recovery goals and should be monitored to determine they are adequately meeting community expectations for serving the public good.

Figure 7 - Program Classification

CORE PROGRAM AREA	ESSENTIAL PROGRAMS		IMPORTANT PROGRAMS		VALUE-ADDED PROGRAMS	
	Program Number	%	Program Number	%	Program Number	%
Adult	-	0%	15	10%	3	11%
Camp	5	11%	-	0%	2	7%
Nature/Outdoor	1	2%	35	22%	2	7%
Preschool	-	0%	18	12%	-	0%
Senior	24	55%	71	46%	16	59%
Special Events	8	18%	5	3%	1	4%
Youth	6	14%	12	8%	3	11%
Core Program Area Total	44	100%	156	100%	27	100%
CORE PROGRAM AREA OVERALL DISTRIBUTION	19%		69%		12%	

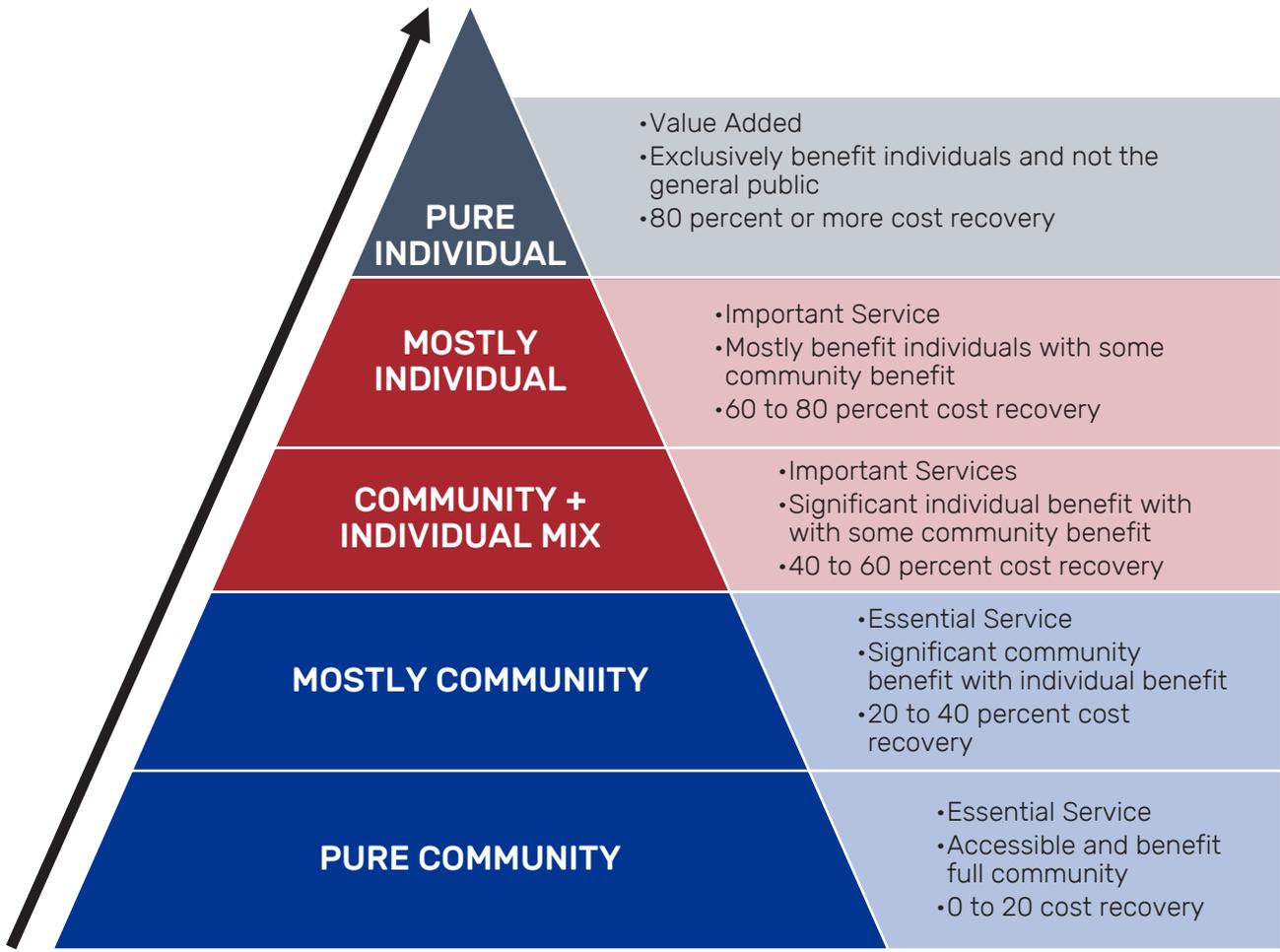
PROGRAM CLASSIFICATION AND COST RECOVERY

Cost recovery is a tool for addressing the Department’s financial subsidy of programs based on whether they serve a public or private benefit. Essential programs with a greater public benefit can be offered with a lower cost recovery threshold, whereas programs with a primarily private benefit can be offered with a higher cost recovery expectation. As the Department evolves to meet community needs, services should be managed according to the Cost Recovery Model

for Sustainable Services in Figure 6.

The Cost Recovery Model adds an additional level of detail to determining cost recovery goals for programs based on public versus private benefit. The next section of this chapter includes a discussion of meeting cost recovery goals through an understanding of a total cost of services model.

Figure 8 - Cost recovery model for sustainable services



4 > inventory + analysis

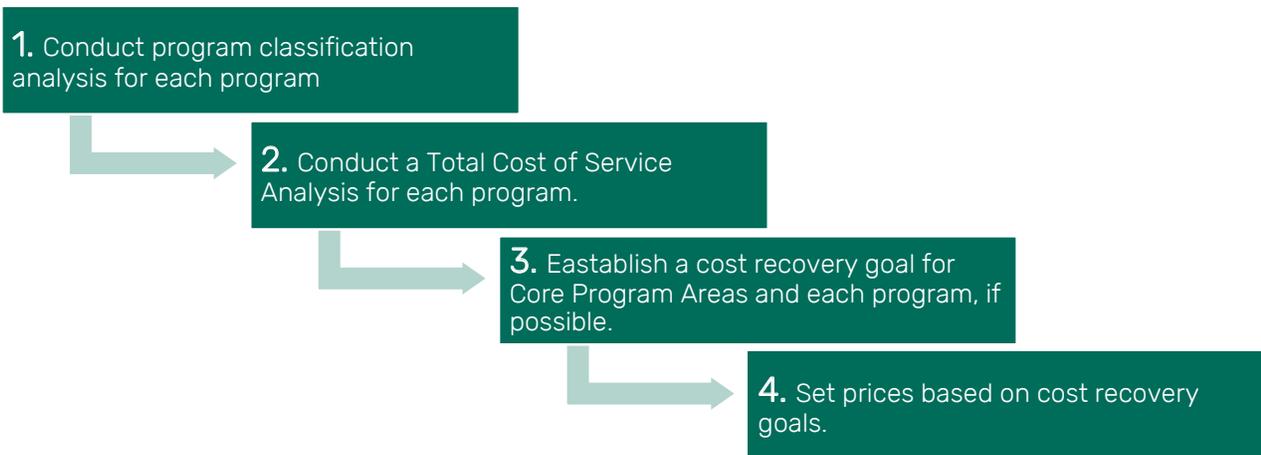
COST RECOVERY + TOTAL COST OF SERVICE

Cost recovery is the amount of a program’s total cost of service that is recovered through program fees. Cost recovery goals are identified for each Core Program Area and for specific programs or events when feasible. Best practice includes reviewing program classification to inform cost recovery, and identifying subsidy goals that

enable equitable program access and contribute to the Department’s financial sustainability.

Determining cost recovery performance and using it to make informed pricing decisions includes four steps.

Figure 9 - Cost recovery determination process



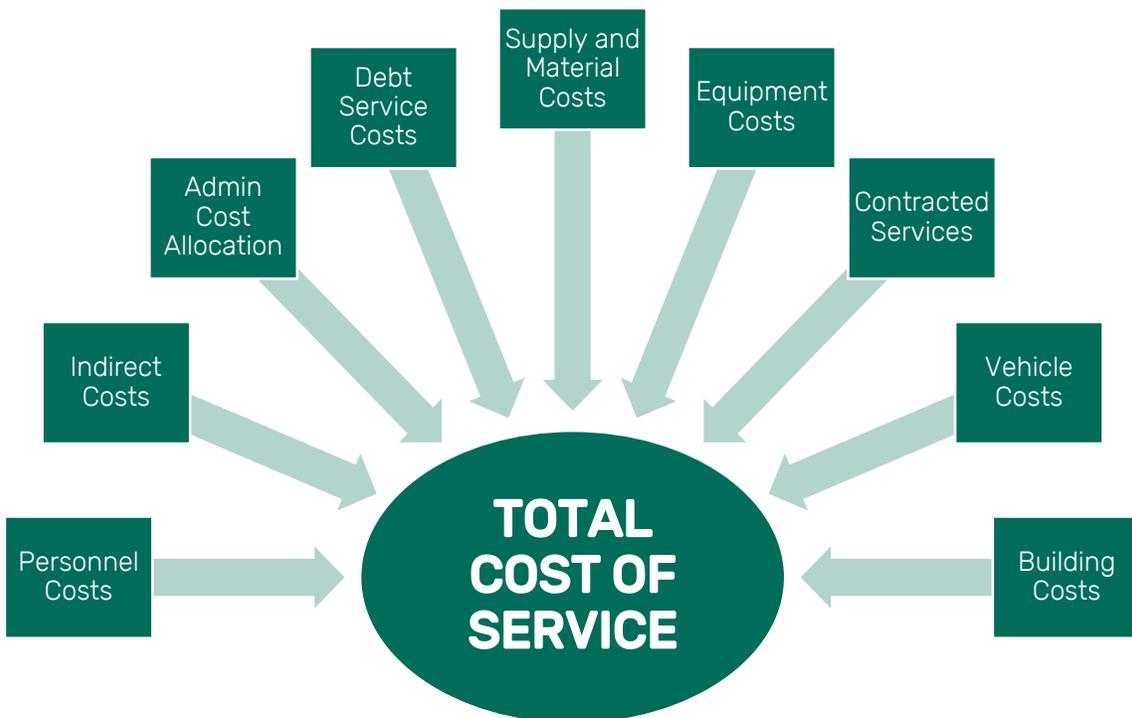
Inventory + analysis

UNDERSTANDING THE FULL COST OF SERVICE

Step Two in the process above includes calculating the full cost of service. Department staff must have an accurate understanding of a program’s

direct and indirect costs in order to create and achieve cost recovery goals.

Figure 10 - Total cost of service conceptual model



A Total Cost of Service Analysis should be conducted on each Core Program Area and, if possible, each program. The total cost of service will calculate direct (program specific) and indirect (comprehensive, including overhead and administrative) costs. Figure 9 illustrates common costs that contributed to a Total Cost of Service for recreational programming.

Costs can be derived on a per unit basis. Program or activity units may include:

- › Number of participants
- › Number of tasks performed
- › Number of consumable units
- › Number of service calls
- › Number of events
- › Hours for offering program/service.

Best practice suggests that program staff be trained in conducting a Total Cost of Service Analysis and regularly conduct the analysis for new programs.

CURRENT COST RECOVERY

After determining the Total Cost of Service for Core Program Areas and individual programs, the next step is to set cost recovery goals based on department policy. The Department’s current cost recovery goals are identified in Table 3. This analysis determined actual cost recovery based on the Departments current record keeping

practices. Adult, Camps, Nature/Outdoor, Preschool, Special Events and Youth Core Program Areas currently meet or exceed cost recovery goals. Senior Core Program Area cost recovery is less than the goal. Best practice in cost recovery for Senior programming is typically between 25 and 50 percent cost recovery.

Figure 11 - Cost recovery goals and actual cost recovery by core program area

CORE PROGRAM AREA	COST RECOVERY GOAL	ACTUAL COST RECOVERY ACTUAL	COST RECOVERY GOAL ACHIEVED?
Adult	100%	117% Fitness 103% Athletics	Yes
Camps	60%	100%	Yes
Nature/Outdoor	95%	143%	Yes
Preschool	80%	87%	Yes
Senior	100%	73%	No
Special Events	0%	0%	Yes
Youth	60%	70%	Yes

4 > inventory + analysis

PRICING

Setting customer price is an important tool for ensuring programs achieve cost recovery goals. Pricing strategies enable programs to achieve cost recovery goals while remaining affordable and accessible to those with less ability to pay.

Strategies currently include adjusting prices based on a customer’s age, residency, and ability to pay. Strategies not currently used are adjusting prices based on household/family status, weekday/weekend rates, prime/non-prime time, group discounts, by location, and market rate.

Pricing strategies can stabilize usage patterns for programs or facilities with high demand. For

example, offering discounts at recreation centers during workday hours may alleviate peak hour attendance as some residents adjust their routine to come earlier in the day to receive a discount. Best practice is to monitor the effectiveness of pricing strategies employed and adjust as necessary within the policy frameworks that guide the overall cost recovery and pricing guidelines. The Department created a Revenue Policy approved by Town Council in March of 2015. Best practice is to review the pricing direction to staff and ensure the policy is referenced during program development. Annually monitoring competitor pricing can also inform pricing strategies.

Figure 12 - Pricing strategies by core program area

CORE PROGRAM AREA	AGE	HOUSEHOLD STATUS	RESIDENCY	WEEKDAY WEEKEND	PRIME NON-PRIME TIME	GROUP DISCOUNTS	BY LOCATION	MARKET RATE	COST RECOVERY	ABILITY TO PAY
Adult	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	●	-
Camps	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	●	●
Nature/Outdoor	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	●	●
Preschool	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	●	-
Senior	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	●	-
Special Event	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Youth	●	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	●	●

CURRENT COST OF SERVICES

The Department provided a framework of current cost of each program. The figure below indicates

the program inventory by Core Program Area and the fees associated.

Figure 13 - Program price framework by core program area

CORE PROGRAM AREA	FREE	PARTNER	\$1-\$10	\$11-\$30	\$31-\$50	\$51-\$80	\$81-\$100	\$100+
Adult	1	-	3	13	4	3	-	6
Camps	1	-	-	3	2	3	1	2
Nature/Outdoor	3	-	26	13	4	-	-	1
Preschool	-	-	6	10	9	-	-	-
Senior	43	13	22	12	11	-	-	-
Special Events	17	2	-	1	-	-	-	-
Youth	2	16	3	4	3	7	1	2
TOTAL	67	31	60	56	33	13	2	11

inventory + analysis

SIMILAR PROVIDERS

Similar providers are organizations with programs and facilities providing an experience similar to Department offerings. Department staff identified 19 organizations considered to be providing similar services and experiences. Direct Competitors are organizations that provide the same experience as Department programs.

Similar Providers are defined as organizations offering recreation opportunities that may not have the same programs, amenities, or services as the Department. Five operations were considered a Direct Competitors with a Town of Garner address. Other direct providers are located nearby in Raleigh.

Figure 14 - Analysis of other providers of parks, recreation, and cultural resources services

NAME OF SIMILAR PROVIDER	LOCATION	DIRECT COMPETITOR OR SIMILAR PROVIDER
PUBLIC		
Biltmore Hills Community Center	2615 Fitzgerald Dr. Raleigh, NC 27610	Direct Competitor
Cary Recreation and Enjoyment	316 N. Academy St. Cary, NC 27513	Direct Competitor
Clayton Parks and Recreation	715 Amelia Church Road Clayton, NC 27520	Direct Competitor
Fuquay-Varina Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources	820 S. Main Street Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526	Direct Competitor
Raleigh Parks and Recreation	222 W Hargett St Raleigh, NC 27601	Direct Competitor
Ralph Campbell Community Center	756 Lunar Dr Raleigh, NC 27610	Direct Competitor
Sanderford Road Center	2623 Sanderford Road Raleigh, NC 27610	Direct Competitor
Worthdale Community Center	1001 Cooper Rd. Raleigh, NC 27610	Direct Competitor
NOT-FOR-PROFIT		
Communities of Hope Ministries	601 Saint Marys St. Garner, NC 27529	Direct Competitor
Poole Family YMCA	2110 Aversboro Rd. Garner, NC 27529	Direct Competitor
PRIVATE		
Polar Ice House	103 New Rand Rd. Garner, NC 27529	Similar Provider
Go Play Outside Now (Privately Owned Park)	44 Cornwallis St. Garner, NC 27529	Direct Competitor
Rush Hour Karting	5335 Raynor Rd. Garner, NC 27529	Similar Provider
Heather Hills Pool (Private Pool)	901 Claymore Dr. Garner, NC 27529	Similar Provider
Edgebrook Pool (Private Pool)	1503 Kenbrook Drive Garner, NC 27529	Similar Provider
Planet Fitness	1885 Aversboro Dr. Garner, NC 27529	Direct Competitor

Rex Wellness Center	1400 Timber Dr. East, Garner, NC 27529	Direct Competitor
Riverwood Golf and Athletic Club (Semi-Private)	400 Riverwood Drive Clayton, NC 27527	Direct Competitor / Similar Provider
Buffaloe Lanes South Bowling Centers	6701 Fayetteville Rd. Raleigh, NC 27603	Similar Provider
Artistic Gymnastics	3315 Anvil Pl. Raleigh, NC 27603	Direct Competitor
Interskate	5300 Fayetteville Rd. Raleigh, NC 27603	Similar Provider
Second Round Boxing	600 W Cabarrus St. Raleigh, NC 27603	Similar Provider

MARKETING, VOLUNTEERS, AND PARTNERSHIPS

Marketing programs, organizing volunteers, and maintain partnerships are essential elements to ensuring the Department can offer its impressive array of programming at such a high quality.

Marketing generates interest and enrollment while volunteers and partnerships expand the capacity of department staff and facilities.

MARKETING

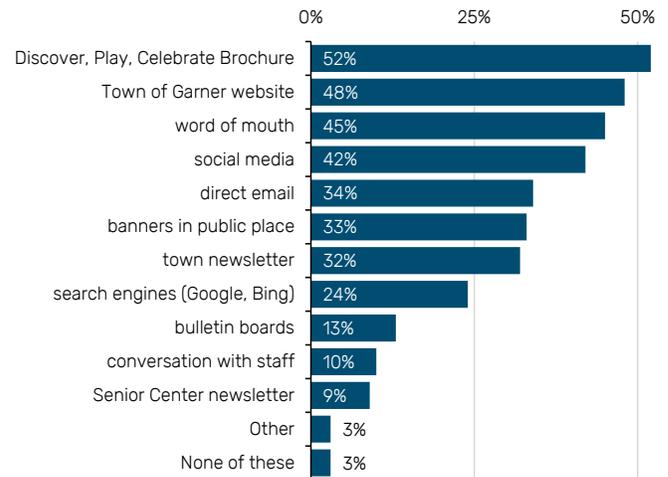
Effective marketing ensures that residents are aware of Department offerings of programs and events and generates interest and excitement to spur enrollment and participation. The following list includes strategies the Department currently uses to market programming.

- › Discover, Play, Celebrate Program Guide (print and online)
- › Town of Garner website
- › Fliers
- › Direct mail
- › Email blasts
- › Public service announcements
- › Roadside marquees
- › Paid advertisements
- › Radio
- › Television
- › Newsletter
- › Signage in facilities
- › Social media (facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube)
- › QR Codes

- › Target audiences/markets identification
- › Key messages for each target market
- › Communication channels/media for each target market
- › Graphic identity and use protocols
- › Style handbook for all marketing material
- › Social media strategies and tactics
- › Communication schedule
- › Marketing roles and responsibilities
- › Staffing requirements

An effective marketing plan must build upon and integrate with supporting plans, such as this master plan, and directly coordinate with organization priorities. The plan should also provide specific guidance as to how the Department identity and brand are consistently portrayed across multiple communication methods and deliverables.

Figure 15 - Results of the statistically valid survey for "How do you currently learn about Town of Garner parks, facilities and special events?"



The Discover, Play, Celebrate Brochure is the number one way residents are currently hearing about parks, recreation and cultural resources programming. The results of the statistically valid survey are illustrated in Figure 9.

Marketing Strategies

An effective marketing strategy accounts for content, messaging, and methods of delivery. The Town of Garner has a Communication Plan that identifies goals and objective for communicating to the public using the website, social media, and videos. The Department has developed a Marketing Plan that identifies target markets, market objectives, evaluation, and examples of marketing materials. Having a Strategic Marketing Plan brings the department in line with industry best practices for marketing.

A strategic marketing plan should address the following:

Website

The current Town of Garner website connects to the Parks Recreation and Cultural Resources homepage through the Department drop down menu. The mobile friendly website is effective and displays well on mobile devices. Website layout has Core programs to the left; the center

highlights registrations, reservations and the ability to download the brochure guide, while the right side lists upcoming events and news.

Social Media

The Town of Garner has great use of Web 2.0 technology with Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr. In 2018, they had 40,000 followers across all departments and platforms. The Garner Performing Arts Center, Avery Street Recreation Center, White Deer Park, and the Garner Senior Center each have their own social media presence. Successful social media use moves the audience from awareness to action by creating user engagement. Strategies for increasing user engagement include:

- ▶ Allowing controlled 'user generated content' by encouraging users to send in their pictures from the Town's special events or programs
- ▶ Introducing Social media-only promotions to drive greater visitation to the Department's social media pages
- ▶ Obtain customer feedback for programs, parks and facilities and customer service
- ▶ Expand opportunities for Crowd-sourcing information on an ongoing basis. Existing resources include www.mindmixer.com and www.peakdemocracy.com
- ▶ Create opportunities for Donations or Crowd-funding through the website
- ▶ Use www.kickstarter.org / www.indiegogo.com / www.razoo.com for crowd funding options including printing program guides or developing marketing material
- ▶ Maximize the website's revenue generating capabilities
- ▶ Conduct annual website strategy workshop with the staff to identify ways and means that the website can support social media trends

Inventory + analysis



VOLUNTEERS

Today's realities require most public park and recreation departments to seek productive volunteers and meaningful partnerships with individuals and community organizations to deliver quality and seamless services to residents. Relationships should be mutually beneficial to each party to better meet overall community needs and achieve the Department's mission. Effective partnerships and meaningful volunteerism are key strategies for the Town to meet community needs in years to come.

Currently, residents interested in volunteering sign up through the Department website. Potential volunteers give the Department permission to email them with volunteer opportunities. Garner has effective volunteer management procedures in place, including requiring an application process and a signed volunteer agreement. Volunteers receiving training, a volunteer manual and an information packet. The Department hosts two annual major volunteer recognition events.

In developing the policy, some best practices that the Town should be aware of in managing volunteers include:

- › Involve volunteers in cross-training to expose them to various organizational functions and increase their skill. This can also increase their utility, allowing for more flexibility in making work assignments, and can increase their appreciation and understanding of the Town.
- › Ensure a Volunteer Coordinator (a designated program staff member with volunteer management responsibility) and associated staff stay fully informed about the strategic direction of the Department overall, including strategic initiatives for all divisions.
- › Periodically identify, evaluate, or revise specific tactics the volunteer services program should undertake to support the larger organizational mission.
- › Developing a good reward and recognition system. Identify and summarize volunteer recognition policies in a Volunteer Policy document.
- › Regularly update volunteer position descriptions. Include an overview of the volunteer position lifecycle in the Volunteer Policy, including the procedure for creating a new position.
- › Add end-of-lifecycle process steps to the Volunteer Policy to ensure that there is formal documentation of resignation or termination of volunteers. Also include ways to monitor and track reasons for resignation/termination and perform exit interviews with outgoing volunteers when able.
- › In addition to number of volunteers and volunteer hours, categorize and track volunteerism by type and extent of work, such as:
 - › Regular volunteers: Those volunteers whose work is considered to be continuous, provided their work performance is satisfactory and there is a continuing need for their services.
 - › Special event volunteers: Volunteers who help out with a particular event with no expectation that they will return after the event is complete.
 - › Episodic volunteers: Volunteers who help out with a particular project type on a recurring or irregular basis with no expectation that they will return for other duties.
 - › Volunteer interns: Volunteers who have committed to work for the Department to fulfill a specific higher-level educational learning requirement.
 - › Community service volunteers: Volunteers who are volunteering over a specified period of time to fulfill a community service requirement.

Encourage employees to volunteer themselves in the community. Exposure of staff to the community in different roles (including those not related to parks, recreation, and cultural resources) will raise awareness of the Department and its volunteer program. It also helps staff understand the role and expectations of a volunteer if they can experience it for themselves.

PARTNERSHIPS

Currently, Garner partners with eight different organization to provide Youth Sports, they also partner with a Tennis organization for Youth and Adult Pickleball and Tennis. As stated in Town of Garner Strategic Plan from 2016, their first objective is to build and maintain strong relationships with regional and community partners to enhance program partnership, economic development, planning, and emergency services.

All partnerships developed and maintained by the Town should adhere to common policy requirements. These include:

- › Each partner will meet with or report to Town staff on a regular basis to plan and share activity-based costs and equity invested.
- › Partners will establish measurable outcomes and work through key issues to focus on for the coming year to meet the desired outcomes.
- › Each partner will focus on meeting a balance of equity agreed to and track investment costs accordingly.

- › Measurable outcomes will be reviewed quarterly and shared with each partner, with adjustments made as needed.
- › A working partnership agreement will be developed and monitored together on a quarterly or as-needed basis.
- › Each partner will assign a liaison to serve each partnership Department for communication and planning purposes.
- › If conflicts arise between partners, the Town-appointed lead, along with the other partner's highest-ranking officer assigned to the agreement, will meet to resolve the issue(s) in a timely manner. Any exchange of money or traded resources will be made based on the terms of the partnership agreement.

Each partner will meet with the other partner's respective board or managing representatives annually, to share updates and outcomes of the partnership agreement.

Figure 16 - Town of Garner Athletic Program Partners

SPORT	ORGANIZATION	AGES	SEASON
Baseball	Garner Sports League	5-14	March - June
	Garner Sports League	5-14	August - October
	Garner Baseball, Inc.	Boys 5-18	March - June
	Garner Baseball, Inc.	Boys 5-18	August - October
Basketball	Garner Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources	Boys and Girls 5-17	June - Early August
	Garner Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources	Boys and Girls 5-17 Girls 5-17	December - March Early March
	Garner AAU Flames	Select Girls 8-13	Year-Round
Cheerleading (Pop Warner)	Garner Civitan Club	Girls 5-15	August - November
Football (Pop Warner)	Garner Civitan Club	Boys and Girls 5-15	August - November
Soccer	North Carolina Football Club	Boys and Girls 5 - 17	Mid-February - Early June
	North Carolina Football Club	Boys and Girls 5-17	Mid-August - November
Softball (Fast Pitch)	Garner Sports League	Girls 5 - 16	March - June
	Garner Sports League	Girls 5 - 16	August - October
Volleyball	Garner Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources	Girls 8 - 17	Mid-November - Early March

ARTS + CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Town of Garner's vision for culture and arts in the community began over two decades ago while the Old High School Building's future was uncertain. Garner High School was built in 1923 in Garner, North Carolina, a small community originally incorporated in 1883 and re chartered in 1905, around a depot for the Eastern Seaboard Railroad, just outside the capital of Raleigh. It graduated its last class in 1956 and was later converted to Garner Elementary School, which was in operation until 1992. In 1998 Wake County School Board shared plans to demolish the main building, and just a few months later the Garner District Education and Recreation Foundation initiated a drive to save the school.

In 1998, after an extensive interior renovation, it was reopened for senior citizens. The original auditorium along with its original wooden seats was purchased and operated by the Town of Garner as Garner Historic Auditorium. In 2006 an extensive renovation of the auditorium took place with the addition of an expansive stage and backstage area with improved theatrical lighting and sound, fly space and rails, separate dressing rooms with restrooms, a green room and loading dock.

In 2011 the Garner Historic Auditorium was renamed the Garner Performing Arts Center. The facility is dedicated to preserving the arts and being a service to the community of Garner. All three of the Garner School buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Place and are a part of the Garner National Register Historic District. The Town's commitment to cultural history is seen as an important component to preserving the character, charm, and culture while developing the community and Town services moving forward.

This Arts and Cultural Resources Assessment is part of the Town of Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department Comprehensive Plan. The current conditions of arts and cultural resources in Garner and more specifically those provided by the Department are categorized into community support, similar providers, cultural assets, management, sustainability, and Department events and programs.

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The level of community support is evident beginning with the preservation of historic buildings and designating the Garner Historic Downtown. The Town has developed the Historic Downtown Garner Plan and the Garner Forward Plan that show a very intentional approach to the Cultural Heritage that exists and the one desired by the community moving forward. The Town has worked with organizations to help create a historical and cultural arts centerpiece and enhance the character of the community. This includes promoting standards within services to enhance the community appearance. This is affirmed through the community needs assessment results where parks received 94

percent of the random sampling responded that the quality of parks and facilities as either excellent (49 percent) or good (45 percent).

The Town intends to carry forward the public expectation of quality. This mindset of having high expectations for the quality and effectiveness of all programming also impacts providing arts and cultural resources facilities and programs, open spaces, natural features, historic resources, private business, nonprofits, schools, architecture, landscaping, and public art as important components to preserving and celebrating Garner's arts and cultural resources.

SIMILAR PROVIDERS

The community is fortunate to have additional providers helping to foster the cultural environment. The similar providers make up public, private, and nonprofit organizations which are the three pillars to providing services to a thriving community. Some of the similar providers are cultural centers in other communities close to

Garner. These providers include organizations in Garner and similar providers that are competitors with the Garner Performing Arts Center including:

CDE Dance

CDE Dance is a studio where the students are encouraged to use what they have learned to try new moves and develop in their areas of interest.

Students are supported by the staff and parents to develop skills that help them achieve their aspirations. The studio offers classes, competitive teams, and performances. The CDE Dance Studio is located in the Town of Garner.

Center Stage Music School

Center Stage Music School is a provider of musical lessons, instruments and accessories including instrument rental and performances. The individualized approach to instruction and technique helps to achieve the goal to developing a musical experience that can lead to lifelong enjoyment for creating music. Performances add to the experience and are an important component to student growth. This organization is in the Town of Garner.

The Clayton Center

The Clayton Center is a cultural arts and municipal building that was renovated from 1915 school buildings into a complex with multiple services for the community of Clayton and visitors. The site has a 600-seat auditorium, lobby area where art exhibits are held and six multi-functional rental rooms. The Town municipal services can be found in the building with office space. Several community events are held on the property for the public.

Downtown Garner Association

The Downtown Garner Association encourages downtown revitalization through the administration of Garner's Main Street program in a public-private partnership with the Town of Garner. The organization sets strategic priorities for downtown economic development within the context of historic preservation. The partnership builds off of existing community assets, key stakeholders, and the commitment of the Town of Garner.

The Towne Players of Garner

The Towne Players is a nonprofit organization that was formed in 1998. The formation of Towne Players of Garner was intended to be a conduit for performing arts by increasing awareness in Garner and Wake County citizens and to increase participation in the theater. The Towne Players of Garner has a governing board that consists of citizens from Garner and the surrounding area. In partnership with the Town of Garner, the Towne Players produce theatrical plays each year and

offer classes for children to grow their talents. The Towne Players relies upon the community and granting organizations to operate and produce the theatrical plays. The mission of the Towne Players of Garner is "To involve, develop, and enrich our diverse local community by producing traditional, engaging, and challenging theatre." (Towne Players of Garner 2019)

TheGifted Arts

TheGifted Arts is a nonprofit organization focused on developing an environment where underserved youth have access to developing their talent under the guidance of TheGifted Arts staff. The organization was formed in 2011. TheGifted Arts mission is "to strengthen character, confidence and leadership skills in our youth. The conduit that the organization uses to achieve this, is the arts (Fashion, Dance, Step, Music, and Drama)" (TheGifted Arts 2019).

The Danze Zone

The DanZe Zone is an organization that provides a positive experience for youth and adults looking for an outlet. The Studio helps students progress and strengthen their talents through an uplifting environment that encourages expression through the art of dance. The welcoming staff is guided by the focus to keep dancing fresh and exciting for participants. The DanZe Zone is located in the Town of Garner

Longleaf School of the Arts

Longleaf School of the Arts is a charter high school that incorporates fine arts and performing arts with the academic curriculum. Students motivated in the arts are encouraged to develop their craft through creativity and dedication to achieve their desired outcomes. A variety of methods are used in integrating the academic and arts for students to grow and take ownership of their future. The Charter School is located in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Wake County Public School System

Public schools have a steep history in the arts helping to foster a cultural environment where the arts are appreciated and continue to develop future talents in youth. Wake County Public Schools focus on the lifelong enjoyment of the arts including music, theater, dance and visual arts. The public schools use a standards-based curriculum that creates the foundation for

student to build upon throughout their academic years. This foundation helps students develop life skills that they carry with them as they transition into adulthood.

Southeast Regional Library

The Public Library in Garner is operated by the Wake County Government. A library in a community is more than just books. Many libraries offer genealogy, art exhibits, art classes, and local historical documents and books. The Library is a cultural asset to the community as reading and gathering to use their services have been a part of the community.

Holly Springs Cultural Center

The Cultural Center is one of several facilities within close proximity to Garner. The facility is located in Holly Springs approximately seventeen miles from Garner. The facility offers performing arts, visual arts, and classes to support local interests. The Center has 184-seats for observing performances and boasts a state-of-the-art sound, video and lighting systems adding to the visitor's experience. Included within the facility is a conference center with four gathering spaces where meetings are conducted, camps and classes are implemented and are available for rent. The property plays host to many events including performances on the outdoor stage and community festivals. Visitors enter through the grand lobby which serves as a large reception and art exhibition area with a coffee bar for refreshments.

Fuquay-Varina Arts Center

The Arts Center opened in March of 2019 making it the newest addition to the cultural arts scene in Wake County. The oldest part of the building,

which was renovated and added to the structure began as a Belk's department store. The spaces created as part of the renovation and new construction include administrative offices for operations, an art gallery, digital studios and 4 classrooms that can be used for a variety of art activities. The Center has 294-seats in the theatre and a technical booth for support to performances and instructional classes on sound and lighting. Just as seen with Garner, the space is helping to develop the Downtown as a destination for appreciation of the arts. The Arts Center is approximately 16 miles outside of the Town of Garner.

Music & Arts

Music & Arts is a private company that specializes in the sale and rental of music instruments. The business also provides music lessons.

Sword Circle-LLC

An authentic medieval education service provider for the US East Coast and surrounding area, which includes classes, educational programs, performances, craft shows, Medieval/Renaissance Festivals in the medieval arts.

Garner Area Historical Society

The mission of the Garner Area Historical Society is "to preserving the history of Garner, North Carolina, and nearby crossroads; educating youth; and promoting Garners story in and outside the community." The organization recently relocated the Historic Garner Deopt and caboose to a perminante location where the structure will be renovated and repaired to serve as The Garner Depot Museum.

CULTURAL ASSETS

The Garner Performing Arts Center represents the public's investment into cultural assets for the performing arts. Since this initial investment began by the Town, several other cultural assets have developed within the community. Several community places are on the National Register of Historic Places. The two additional school buildings, the Downtown Historic District, Edenwood, and Meadowbrook Country Club.

Garner Recreation Center

More recently, the addition of the Garner Recreation Center to Downtown will become a cultural asset through spaces and activities that will take place within the building. This facility has been designed with spaces to incorporate instructional classes and visual arts through building aesthetics, paintings, pictures and sculptures. The Garner Recreation Center is a 40,000-square-foot facility with three basketball courts, an elevated walking track, three multipurpose rooms, a family restroom, shower facilities, an outdoor walking trail and a multi-purpose field. The facility construction is funded through money donated by ConAgra, John Rex Endowment grant money, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant money and bond money approved by voters in 2013. The new recreation center will be located at the corner of Main and Montague Streets.

Garner Senior Center

The Garner Senior Center provides a place where the community gathers to participate in activities and appreciate the people that make up the culture of Garner. Recreation has played an important role in the United States for hundreds of years, defining how a community spends their leisure time, what the community celebrates, and where the community gathers to celebrate. Part of what makes this building a cultural asset is the activities that are provided by the Town. The Senior Center was created by a group of senior club members and community leaders that established a non-profit group called Garner Senior Center, Inc. This group convinced local officials to donate land to the cause if they raised \$350,000. The goal was met in less than a year and the 8,700 square

foot facility was built. The Town of Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department has managed and operated the facility since the facility opened in July 1991. The facility was expanded in 2006 with money from a bond referendum to offer the fitness annex facility, offering: a gym, dressing rooms, health room, kitchen, and fitness equipment room. Square Footage: 16,000 sq. feet includes: Multipurpose room, craft room, card room, lounge, dining hall, 2 catering kitchens, gym, fitness exercise room, health room (used for screenings and individual appointments).

Garner Parks

Garner Parks are a cultural asset for the gathering spaces they have become for a wide variety of activities that have established recreation in the community. Garner Parks are the backdrop to the personal memories residents and family members have created for generations. In times of celebration, it is not uncommon to see thousands of people celebrating what is important to Garner. Example of this would be the Easter Egg Hunt and Independence Day Celebration held in Lake Benson Park. While across the street at White Deer Park the public gathers with Mother Nature to celebrate the natural beauty found in and around Garner.

Avery Street Recreation Center

The Avery Street Recreation Center is a cultural asset for the community as the home to several athletic programs for youth and adults. The Raleigh Durham area is a hub of athletic activities due to the popularity and national recognition of college athletic programs. Communities, including Garner, offer athletics from youth to seniors through municipal parks, recreation, and cultural resources departments. Many residents have grown up attending youth athletic programs and clinics in the facility or as spectators of friends and family playing sports. The impact to the community is greater than athletics with the facility having multi-purpose rooms for various types of other programs and the ability to reserve the facility for gathering with family and friends.

MANAGEMENT

Department staff are responsible for facility management, program management, volunteer management, event management, contract management, partnership management,

sponsorship management, financial management stakeholder management, and communications management at the Garner Performing Arts Center.

STRENGTHS

The incorporation of volunteer coordination helps with the various programs and many other needs that vary from service to service. Volunteers, partners, and sponsors increase capacity for services by increasing resources. Garner has become known for being a driving force pulling together the community to build and grow the arts with key stakeholders identified in the Similar Providers section.

The entire cultural arts community in Garner has created a nurturing atmosphere within the arts for youth and individuals with special needs. A good segment of the community values the innovation to develop arts and cultural resources in Garner

and the willingness to try new things that improve the quality of life and provide a positive image of a great facility, activities and events. One recent example of this is the additional parking at the Garner Performing Arts Center that will assist in addressing access to arts and cultural resources. Parking may be seen as a small improvement, but this improvement is beyond just the GPAC. Adequate parking at such a facility also has an economic impact on the community and downtown that helps bring people to Main Street. This level of understanding how all pieces are connected is a major contributing factor to the Garner culture and arts growth.

CHALLENGES

Management has regularly been challenged with facility constraints and lack of capacity to manage all facets of operations when demand is increasing. The resourcefulness of staff has contributed greatly to establish a lead role in instances where the Department has capacity and a support role when the capacity is not present. Some limitations include parking due to the mixed use of the building. The limitations carry into the building for the same reason. These limitations can impact partners in rehearsal and storage space. The layout is like a labyrinth creating several pinch points during performances and has some accessibility challenges due to the age of the facility and layout.

Expansion of arts and cultural resources is limited by staffing capacity and space capacity. Low-level support staff could help enhance services

and allow GPAC management to focus more on business development and partnerships. The addition of a marketing coordinator has improved the reach and capacity of the Arts and Cultural Resources division. Recently there have been improvements to the marketing that has increased the attractiveness of the information and captures the reader's attention. The facility is the largest of the three cultural arts facility auditoriums and this presents the opportunity to create a greater level of synergy in Garner with existing partners with the Town. Intentional marketing of all arts and cultural resources in Garner when an event is happening can help with the overall reach and collaboration on marketing between public, private and non-profits partners can increase the reach through cross promotion, making Garner a cultural arts centerpiece within the region.

SUSTAINABILITY

This approach to include public, private and nonprofits into the solutions to fill the culture and arts needs of residents is what will continue to sustain arts and cultural resources over time. It is important for each organization to understand the bigger picture and how they fit into the overall culture and arts in Garner. It is understandable that these organizations all have their own missions

and essential services necessary to provide in order to achieve their outcomes. It is equally important to know that what makes arts and cultural resources strong and growing in Garner is the sum of all the parts. Each organization contributes to building and preserving arts and cultural resources in Garner in their own way at the own capacity. Continuing to build upon this is

identified within the Garner Forward Plan.

In many instances culture and arts within communities will have a council of the arts to help with a collective vision and sustainability. The reality of this type of an organization is that sometimes they are a force and driver for the arts. Conversely, there are instances where the public at large takes a lesser role with the development of an organization, as some may see the organization as the responsible party and

less engagement from the community can set in. These are things to consider should discussions on an arts organization progress to defining the structure and purpose of such an organization. Ensuring the sustainability of culture and arts in Garner is something that the community has already initiated with fundraisers, partnerships, and collaborations. Outcomes are well defined with a unified vision. The community enjoys seeing the collaboration work to achieve results.

ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

This section of the assessment offers a deeper perspective of programs and services offered. The intent is to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities regarding programming. The assessment also assists in identifying core programs specific to arts and cultural resources, program gaps within the community, key issues, areas of improvement, and future programs and

services for residents and visitors.

The project team based program findings and comments from a review of information provided by the Agency including program descriptions, financial data, website content, statistically significant survey feedback, demographic information, and discussions with focus groups.

CURRENT PROGRAMMING SERVICES

To help achieve the mission, energize the facility, and help develop future thespians it is important to identify programs based on current and future needs. Public recreation is challenged by the premise of being all things to all people. However, the philosophy of the defining services

and developing key performance indicators will assist staff, policy makers, and the public to keep focused on what is most important. Program areas for the Arts and Cultural Resources Division are summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 17 - General information for the 2018-2019 programming year. All programs are located at GPAC.

NAME	AGE/GRADE REQUIREMENT	REGISTRATION NOTES (IF OTHER THAN ACTIVE)	RESPONSIBLE TEAM	PARTNER/ SPONSOR
Theatre Production Camp	Age 12 to 19	Etix and Partner for tickets Camp registration through ActiveNet	GPAC	Towne Players
Broadway Voices	N/A	Etix and Partner (Chamber) for tickets	GPAC	Garner Chamber of Commerce, White Oak of Garner
Art Gallery Exhibits	N/A		GPAC	none
Preschool Theater Camp	Ages 4-5		GPAC	Town of Garner
Towne Player Shows	N/A	Etix and Partner for tickets	GPAC	Towne Players
Theatre Basics Camp	Age 6 to 11	Etix and Partner for tickets Camp registration through ActiveNet	GPAC	Towne Players
It's Showtime	All	Etix	GPAC	none

LOCAL TARGET MARKET

Department arts and cultural resources programming is currently well-suited to address the programmatic needs of the current population including youth programming to build

future artists. The Demographic characteristics and future trends for the Town are detailed in the Demographics and Trends chapter of this plan.

AGE SEGMENT ANALYSIS

Figure 2 depicts the age segment analysis for arts and cultural resources programming. Core Program Areas likely serve multiple age segments, so the table indicates whether an age group is a Primary target, noted with a 'P', or a Secondary target, noted with an 'S'.

An Age Segment Analysis was completed for arts and cultural resources, exhibiting an overarching view of the age segments served by different program areas, and displaying any gaps

in segments served. Best practice is to perform an age segment analysis by individual program to gain a deeper understanding of the data.

The demographic data shows that Garner is an aging community. Forty-one percent of the population is over the age of 25 and 28 percent of the population greater than age 55. Department programming generally targets all ages, but some programs are age targeted to reach a specific age group.

Figure 18 - Age segment analysis

CORE PROGRAM AREA	PRESCHOOL (<5 YEARS)	ELEMENTARY (6-12)	TEENS (13-17)	ADULT (18+)	SENIOR (55+)	ALL AGES PROGRAMS
Cultural Arts	-	-	-	-	-	Primary

PROGRAM LIFECYCLE

A Program Lifecycle Analysis reviewing each program offered by arts and cultural resources to determine the stage of growth or decline for each. This provides a way of informing strategic decisions about the overall mix of programs the agency manages to ensure an appropriate number of programs are "fresh" and relatively few programs, if any, need to be discontinued. This analysis is not based on strict quantitative data, rather, is based on staff members' knowledge of their program area and participation levels. The following table shows the percentage distribution of the various lifecycle categories of the programs. These percentages were calculated by comparing the number of programs in each individual stage with the total number of programs listed by staff members.

a strong percentage in the Introduction stage to make sure there is innovation in programming. The 71 percent of programs in growth stage will transition into mature unless they are legacy programs that consistently run but fluctuate in participation over time. Some may not be able to grow from facility or resource limitations but the programs still receive decent participation.

According to the table above, 14 percent of programs fall into the Mature lifecycle stage and 14 percent in the Saturated stage. These percentages represent one program each in the seven program areas identified earlier in this chapter. Mature programs will transition into Saturation unless they are a legacy program. As programs enter into Saturation, this provides an opportunity to look at areas of the program that could be enhanced to revive the program with a fresh component. Programs that enter into the Decline stage should be planned to retire and replace with another program to retain customers.

The combined total of the Introduction, Take-off, and Growth stages are slightly above best practice, 0 percent of programs fall into the Introduction and Take-off stage. It is useful to have

4 > inventory + analysis

Figure 19 - Arts and cultural resources lifecycle distribution

LIFECYCLE STAGE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL PROGRAM		BEST PRACTICE PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION
Introduction	New program; modest participation	0%	71% Total	50% - 60% Total
Take-off	Rapid participation growth	0%		
Growth	Moderate, but consistent population growth	71%	14% Total	40% Total
Mature	Slow participation growth	14%		
Saturated	Minimal to no participation growth; extreme competition	14%	14% Total	0% - 10% Total
Decline	Declining participation	0%		

SURVEY RESULTS

The statistically valid survey asked questions to develop top priorities for investment for Garner Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources for parks and facilities and programming. The survey ranked priorities for investment and facilities included a visual arts studio, auditorium (1,200 seats), black box theater, and performing arts rehearsal space identified as low priorities for the Town. This is likely due to the fact that many of the respondents feel these spaces already exist and adequately serve the current needs of the community. Additionally, residents who enjoy attending and viewing the performing arts without necessarily participating may discount the need for rehearsal space and other facilities without understanding their essential role in bringing them the plays and showcases they enjoy.

The top priorities for programming indicate areas of interest in arts and cultural resources programming. This data is telling for staff who are continuously looking for opportunities to grow the arts in Garner. These priorities identified by respondents of the community survey can serve the staff well when deciding to develop new programming to replace declining programs.

- › Outdoor music and concerts – High Priority
- › Music lessons and classes – High Priority
- › Painting and drawing classes – Medium Priority
- › Arts, dance and performing arts – Medium Priority
- › Theater workshops and programs – Medium Priority

PROGRAM CLASSIFICATION

Program Classification provides a snapshot of how each program serves the overall organization mission, the goals and objectives of each program area, and how the program should be funded with regard to tax dollars and/or user fees and charges. Understanding a program’s classifications assists staff in determining the most appropriate form of management, funding, and marketing strategies.

Program Classifications are based on the degree to which the program provides a public benefit versus a private benefit. Public benefit can be described as everyone receiving the same level of benefit with equal access, whereas private benefit can be described as the user receiving exclusive

benefit above what a general taxpayer receives for their personal benefit. Current classification distribution is 86 percent Essential and 14 percent Value-Added. There are not currently any programs classified as Important.

Best practices for classification of services can be found in earlier in this chapter in the Program Analysis. The best way to describe these three classifications is to analyze the degree to which the program provides a community versus an individual benefit along with what is the level of subsidy. Using the classification and cost recovery in tandem is best practice.

Figure 20 - Program Classification descriptions, current classification distributions and cost recovery best practices

		CURRENT	COST RECOVERY BEST PRACTICE
ESSENTIAL SERVICE	Town must provide this service. Service is expected and supported, is a sound investment of public funds, has broad public support and benefit, will result in a negative impact if not offered, is part of the mission, requires high to complete subsidy.	86%	0-50%
IMPORTANT SERVICE	Town should provide this service if it expands and enhances core services. Service is broadly supported and used, has conditional public support, has an economic, social, or environmental community benefit, has community importance, requires moderate subsidy.	0%	50-75%
VALUE-ADDED SERVICE	Town may provide this service with additional resources. Service adds value to the community, supports core and important services, has community support, generates income, has an individual benefit, can be supported by user fees, enhances community, requires little to no subsidy.	14%	75-100+%

4 > inventory + analysis

Figure 21 - Arts and cultural resources program classifications

ESSENTIAL	IMPORTANT	VALUE-ADDED
Theatre Production Camp	-none-	Art Gallery Exhibits
Broadway Voices		
It's Showtime		
Preschool Theater Camp		
Towne Player Shows		
Theatre Basics Camp		

CURRENT COST RECOVERY

The Department currently has a revenue philosophy for arts and cultural resources programming and utilizes price ranges for programming to capture revenue to offset expenses. The Department has cost recovery goals for each of the other core program areas and is successfully achieving those goals. This

core program area is a significant investment for the community and has further reaching benefits than revenue generation. The economic impact of the preservation of Garner's heritage and the celebration of culture and arts creates a quality of life that is unique to Garner.

Figure 22 - Target price ranges for arts and cultural resources programming for the year 2018-2019

PROGRAM NAME	PARTNER/ SPONSOR	FREE	PARTNER DETERMINED	\$1-\$10	\$11-\$30	\$31-\$50	\$51-80	\$81-\$100	\$100+
Broadway Voices	Garner Chamber of Commerce, White Oak of Garner	-	-	-	-	●	●	-	-
Art Gallery Exhibits	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Preschool Theater Camp	Town of Garner	-	-	-	●	●	-	-	-
Towne Player Shows	Towne Players	-	-	-	●	-	-	-	-
Theatre Basics Camp	Towne Players	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●
It's Showtime	-	●	-	-	●	●	-	-	-

ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Currently communication about arts and cultural resources is done with the Discover, Play, Celebrate Program Guide in print and online, Town of Garner website, fliers, direct mail, email blasts, public service announcements, roadside marquees, paid advertisement, radio, television newsletter, in facility signage, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube channel, and QR codes. All of these avenues are open to all other core program areas and arts and cultural resources.

Effective communication strategies require striking an appropriate balance between the content with the volume of messaging while utilizing the best methods of delivery. The Department has a variety of methods for program promotion. The recently updated Garner Communications Plan benefits the overall brand and delivering messages to target markets. The Communications Plan is strategic and well crafted to intentionally improve the Town’s efforts.

WAYS PEOPLE LEARN OF ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES SERVICES

As part of the statistically valid survey respondents were asked, “How do you currently learn about Town of Garner parks, facilities, and special events?” The top responses were

- › Discover. Play. Celebrate. program guide

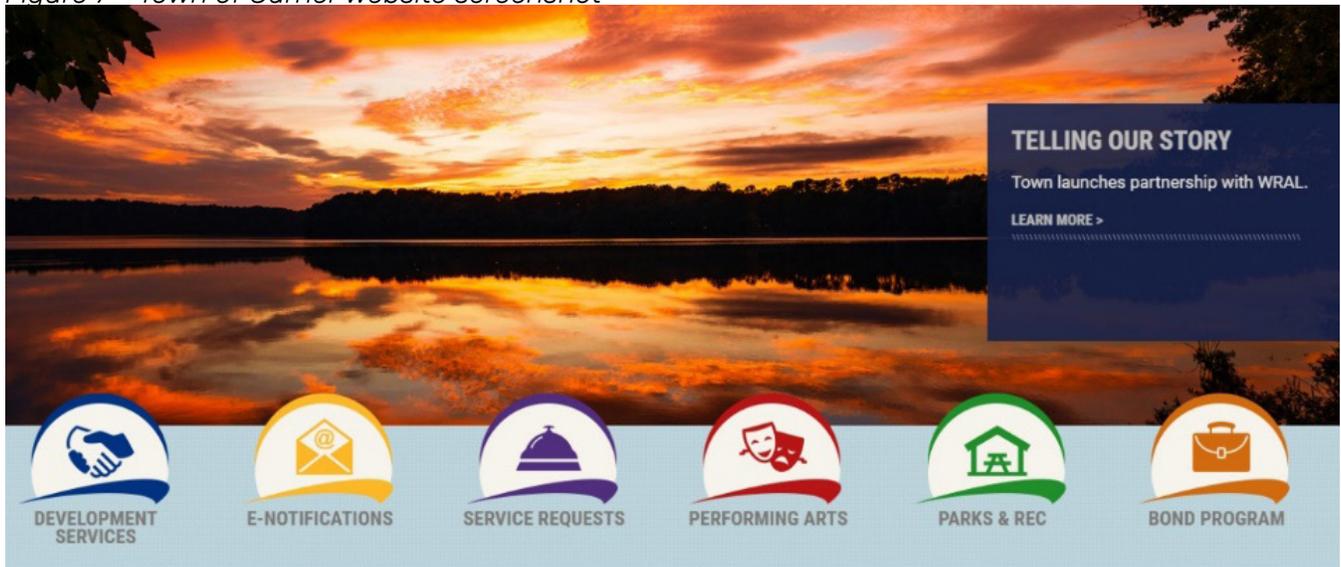
- › Town of Garner website
- › Word of mouth
- › Social Media
- › Direct Mail
- › Banners in public places
- › Town newsletter

WEBSITE

The Town website connects to the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources page through the Department drop down menu. Performing arts is easily accessed from the icon just below

the rotating banner at the top of the Town’s page. The mobile friendly website is a key tool in today’s times of increased smartphone utilization.

Figure 7 - Town of Garner website screenshot



IT'S SHOWTIME SERIES

The It's Showtime Series is looked at specifically as this has the potential to be a significant upfront investment without a guaranteed return on investment. The performances vary in costs and so do the ticket prices. Staff use a performance budget to track and monitor costs and revenues. eTix is used for all ticketing services and the staff are able to pull reports from the web-based service provider to analyze the level of capacity.

While not a part of the Showtime Series, other performance's ticket sales are run through eTix and in some instances partners of the Town are reserved a certain amount of tickets for their organization to sell. The scheduling of local partners is given priority to ensure dates are set and availability for rentals and the It's Showtime Series can fill in the gaps. The schedule is limited from the standpoint of availability of the venue. At this point with availability of the facility and the current budget, five shows are a good number. Until a time where the venue availability has more openings or additional funds are allocated to expand the series. The budget cycle also poses a challenge to the scheduling and attendance when it has not been approved, as Garner will not move forward with contracts until formal approval of the budget and all documentation is secured. This can negatively impact the ability to promote certain early fall performances, not leaving enough time to get the word out and reach target markets. This is especially challenging when artists are not as well known, requiring additional marketing to educate people on their talents.

The It's Showtime Series features a diverse genre of performers that are booked by the Garner Performing Arts Center as opposed to contracting out the booking. This saves on average between five and ten percent on the overall costs of the performer. The dedication of staff to the outcomes of diversifying the performances has helped to build the awareness and attendance from its original inception. The diversity of performance was set in motion to fill gaps and increase draw

to the facility by creating a wider segment appeal. The GPAC staff use a block scheduling philosophy as cost containment obtaining a savings of up to \$3,000 on a performance when the performer is already within close proximity to the Garner Performing Arts Center as part of their tour.

Customer retention exists within the It's Showtime Series. Each genre has a following and staff implement intentional marketing methods to reach these target markets. However, there is not as large of a cross over as was expected. The genre of classical music is currently provided for through Raleigh and the target market does not have enough capacity for Garner to compete with successfully.

The diversity has expanded to include the following genres:

- › Bluegrass
- › Comedians
- › Country
- › Family entertainment (example of Angelina Ballerina, the Musical)
- › Motown
- › Jazz Dinner

A concession operation is in place for the audience of performances. The operations of this can be a challenge due to the estimation of how much and the type of beverages to order in preparation. There is not a science to this except to look at past actual data, by genre, to help make decisions on the amount to order. In some instances, the venue has run out of beverages and do not have the ability to be responsive and acquire additional beverages in the middle of the performance. Conversely, there are some instances where the consumption is low and a surplus exists after the show. This is a challenge since there is not an ample amount of storage in the venue. The surplus beverage stock is stored in a locked cabinet and reserved for future performances to help contain costs.

CONCLUSION

It is the sum of all parts that elevates the arts and culture of Garner. It is a story that shows a high level of engagement from residents, businesses, government, and nonprofits to develop a collective vision. The community has captured what is important and has committed to sustaining these structures, talents and connections that demonstrates the community's values.

Solid planning efforts are visible in approved plans and sound performance measures are in place for achieving outcomes. The Town is committed to incremental improvements in all aspects of operations and has demonstrated this through the recent investments made in the culture and arts in Garner.

Below are the major takeaways from the arts and cultural resources assessment.

- › There are many similar providers in Garner or in close proximity that can help to encourage appreciate for the arts and partners in providing additional services as identified with in the survey and listed above. Some of these organizations are direct competition. It is noted that GPAC works with other providers to schedule acts and coordinate for better pricing of performances.
- › Garner's arts and cultural resources are strong. The Town has initiated a strong focus to make this a centerpiece of the community and partnerships, including financial grants contribute greatly overall.
- › There are several Cultural Assets within the community. Each site is unique, yet stronger collectively. Capturing and sharing the history of these sites in story board and interpretive signs could empower the Town to connect them all with a cultural trail. This would make the collective arts and cultural resources a bigger asset.
- › The management of arts and cultural resources was established intentionally through proper planning techniques identifying outcomes and performance measures. While challenges still exist and are difficult to completely eliminate, this foundation has kept challenges more manageable allowing the Town to be more responsive to short-term factors that impact operations.

- › Funding is a key factor to the sustainability of arts and cultural resources. Foundations and a dedicated one percent of all capital projects can help build a funding mechanism for arts and cultural resources increasing financial sustainability. There are agencies that have cultural arts as a committee of a Park Foundation to avoid having too many competing organizations for fundraising.

Below are overall observations that stood out when analyzing the program assessment key performance indicators.

- › Overall the program descriptions within arts and cultural resources effectively communicate the key benefits and goals of each Core Program Area.
- › Age segment distribution is appropriate. While all ages is appropriate for arts and cultural resources programming, the marketing of events and programs has become more target oriented instead of simple mass marketing approach. This is a best practice.
- › Program lifecycles are distributed in line with the classifications. New programming is needed to meet the needs of the community and to have a fresh supply of varying interests with arts. Given the nature of arts having core classes that do not change frequently, it is anticipated the lifecycle of programs will not fluctuate very much. Creativity will be needed to combine interests and develop greater experiences when developing new programs.
- › Pricing strategies are used as part of the revenue philosophy. Currently the department budgets for events and there are several variables that impact the pricing for events and performances. Each performance has a different cost so knowing the expenses helps to determine the cost per participant or per person in the 454-seat auditorium. Some of the variables are, performance agreement, performance layout decreasing the number of seats available, special requests, beverage orders, and the amount of time afforded to market and reach target audiences
- › The classification of programs and events within arts and cultural resources is essential. This is most likely due to the investment made by the Town to develop Arts and Cultural

Resources as an important component in planning Garner Forward. Best practice is to develop exclusive value-added events that enhance the customer's experience and help generate additional revenue.

- › Recent improvements efforts and staffing for marketing has improved the customer experience from being aware of events to ease
- › of registration or purchasing tickets, to overall appearance of the facility and programming on line.
- › Concessions and purchasing for each target market is a challenge and staff have developed a system that helps with cost containment even though there is no science to it.

OPERATIONS + MAINTENANCE

Garner Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department is a Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) Accredited agency. There are one hundred and fifty-one standards for accreditation with thirty-seven being fundamental standards that must be met along with one hundred and three of the non-fundamental standards for initial accreditation. The agency must achieve a higher level of non-fundamental standards for reaccreditation. Standards in business operations, service delivery, maintenance and asset preservation ensure the best outcomes for residents from parks, recreation, and cultural resources agencies.

Parks, recreation, and cultural resources departments continue to face a multitude of growing market demands, ranging from providing a superior customer experience, addressing the needs of the community at large, capital development project management, keeping up with changing industry regulatory requirements, to attracting and retaining the best possible employees. At the same time, challenges such as cost recovery, customer retention, expenditure reduction, brand awareness and consistency, and technology applications can present an opportunity to improve efficiency and effectiveness in delivery of service. This review will identify opportunities within these facets of operations.

The operations and maintenance reviews current practices, organization and staffing needs, improved operational efficiencies, policy updates and development, technology improvements and marketing and communication opportunities. The analysis identifies opportunities to improve operations and the capacity to manage existing workload and implement the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Comprehensive Plan. The analysis includes reviewing existing plans and procedures, an asset mapping exercise, interviews of key staff, facility tours, and business operations and organizational structure reviews.

OPERATIONS

It is important to know that Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources are services provided by the Town. To improve operational efficiencies the parks and facility maintenance are managed by the Department of Public Works. The Department of Public Works oversee municipal infrastructure services for the community such as a comprehensive solid waste services, stormwater maintenance, roads, right-of-way, medians, maintenance of parks and facilities, and contracted services. The planning, operations, and management of parks, facilities, programs, and events is conducted for the Town by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department.

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department oversees operational management, staffing scheduling, and contracted services. More detail for operations will be identified in the Operations and Maintenance in separate sections of this report.

Since the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources are governed by the Town, both Departments follow the Town's established vision, mission, core values and strategic priorities. The Town has the following vision, mission and core values as seen in previous plans.

TOWN OF GARNER VISION STATEMENT

The Town of Garner is a “Community of Choice” for residents and businesses that maximizes the desirability of its existing built environment while encouraging new economic, environmental and cultural opportunities through well-planned growth with appropriate infrastructure.

TOWN OF GARNER MISSION STATEMENT

The Town of Garner is an emerging regional leader committed to success, strategic planning, developing citizens to become active leaders and emphasizing and promoting hometown values and services. We invest to create opportunities and implement the vision.

TOWN COUNCIL’S ESTABLISHED CORE VALUES

- › Good Governance
- › Accountability
- › Return on Capital Investments
- › Neighborhoods that are Healthy and Strong
- › Economic Development that is Active and Strong
- › Respect, Cohesiveness and Shared Mutual Understanding among Council and Staff

TOWN OF GARNER STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- › Fiscal Responsiveness
- › Efficient and Timely Service Delivery
- › Orderly Growth
- › Quality of Life



Source: About Us, Town of Garner, NC Website

TOWN PLANS, POLICIES, AND STANDARD PROCEDURES

There are best practice documents that help provide direction to staff on approach to management, mandates, and outcomes. The facilities, amenities, community program needs, and identified service improvements determine which of these best practice documents are needed. Figure 1 lists plans, policies,

standards and procedures the Town of Garner, Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department, and Public Works has in place that relates to best practices for parks, recreation, and cultural resources services.

Figure 23 - The Department's existing plans, policies, and procedures.

PLANS	POLICIES	STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Department Master Plan › Town Strategic Plan › Communications Plan › Recreation Plan – Recreation Services and Events › Park Maintenance Plan › Greenways Master Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Park Rules and Regulations › Purchasing Policy › Cost Recovery Goals › Fee Assistance Policy › HR Policies › Special Event Policy for outside organizations – Guideline and Process › Refund Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Maintenance Standards including checklist for inspections › Facility Standards – yes, these vary by facility as each one is unique › Recreation Program Standards – event standards › Marketing Procedure › On-boarding Procedure › Training Standards (tracked and documented for certifications too) › Customer Service Standards › Customer brochures

4 > inventory + analysis

OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

The Operations review identifies opportunities in the overall management of the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department. This includes opportunities for efficiency, cost containment, and increased capacity. Properly aligning people, processes, resources, and technology with the right strategy helps staff manage the system and challenges to defined outcomes. This section of operations is to all facets except park maintenance which can be found in a separate section of this chapter, below.

As identified above, the Department has a more specific mission, vision, and core values as it relates to the services of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources. The items below were obtained from the Department's web page.

Mission:

To enrich the quality of life in Garner by offering a diverse system of parks, recreational facilities, programs and cultural resources.

Vision:

Helping Garner maintain its high quality of life and service delivery to its citizens and visitors through

the following core values:

Core Values

Our core values reflect and align with Town of Garner Strategic Priorities in the following ways:

Leadership- fostering a climate of creativity that develops high-potential talent and embraces innovation cutting-edge ideas and accountability for making decisions and recommendations. (TOG- Efficient and Timely Service Delivery).

Efficiency- Ensuring that programs and services are provided efficiently and effectively while matching community needs. (TOG- Fiscal Responsiveness, Efficient and Timely Service Delivery).

Diversity- Recognizing the changing demographics of the community and celebrating the unique qualities, characteristics, and experiences. (TOG- Orderly Growth).

Stewardship- Maintaining aesthetically pleasing parks and facilities (TOG- Quality of Life).

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

The current operations of Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department is one with a solid foundation being CAPRA Accredited. The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department has a high level of commitment to each other internally and to the outcomes for the community. There is a culture of engagement by staff in all facets of operations. Teamwork is present with regular team leader meetings that keep communication avenues open. Customer service is a high priority to help build a community of choice. People feel welcome due to the Department communications and the culture. This contributes to the community support and excitement for services. Staff are also professionally engaged in the national and state associations actively shaping the direction of the Industry through their involvement. This has added value to the Department in the form of networking and knowing professionals that have encountered issues that could assist Garner in addressing challenges they are facing or will face in the future.

Currently, the department is not as proactive as it could be, due to lack of capacity. The capacity is not there to drive a proactive approach to the operations but the desire to is still present. Factors impacting capacity are the Department being without an administrative assistant for the past four years. To meet the demand for services the Department has moved the Administrative Assistant to athletics due to the need being greater there four years ago. The Town has grown, as has the demand, more than anticipated and this trend is expected to continue with a quality of life focus in park planning and development. The Town Council is supportive of the Department and sees value from investing in this vibrant community.

Staff must build capacity to manage the system moving forward. Currently there is one position dedicated to non-athletic programming and more would assist in meeting the needs of the community. The Senior Center has a part time position for nineteen hours. The service workload

in the Senior Center is appropriate for a full-time position. Additional staffing levels are currently needed and growing with the addition of the Garner Recreation Center. Additional properties that will be developed and incorporated into the park system will also require additional staff.

The Department has the following divisions that

focus on a particular facet of operations;

- › Administration
- › Cultural Arts and Events
- › Outdoor and Adventure
- › Youth and Athletics
- › Adults and Seniors
- › Park Maintenance (through Public Works)

MAJOR FUNCTIONS

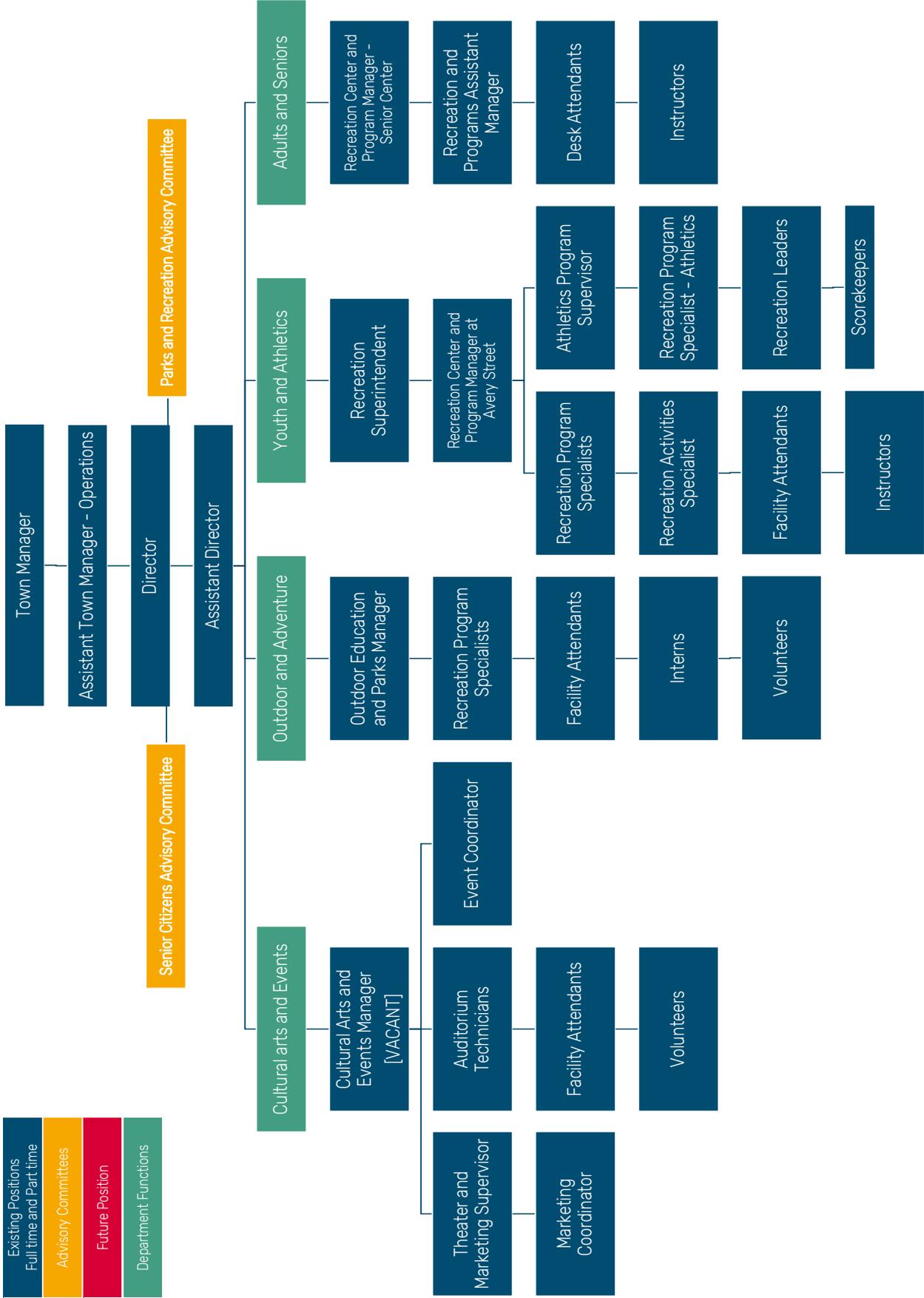
Major functions and services within the division are extensive and can be categorized into these management areas:

- › Administrative management
- › Communications management
- › Contract management
- › Document management
- › Land use management
- › Facility management
- › Emergency management
- › Environmental management
- › Equipment management
- › Event management
- › Financial management
- › Human resource management
- › Information technology management
- › Operations management
- › Partnership management
- › Planning management
- › Project management
- › Recreation program management
- › Resource management
- › Risk management
- › Stakeholder management

CURRENT PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ORGANIZATION CHART

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART KEY

- Existing Positions Full time and Part time
- Advisory Committees
- Future Position
- Department Functions



inventory + analysis

OPERATIONAL PROCESSES

Many processes are standardized and provide direction to employees through policies and procedures manuals. This type of documentation has led to the Department becoming CAPRA Accredited. This demonstrates a strong understanding of the importance in service delivery by the Department and Town. These standards help keep the Department operations pretty efficient and effective.

Gaps exist in operations within administrative support services, park planning, and park maintenance. These operational aspects carry into the benefits customers receive and represents a great concern in moving forward with capacity to continue a high level of service while adding assets and programming that meets the needs of the community.

Leadership interacts with each team to ensure the culture of communication stays intact. Under

direct leadership and supervision, a culture of strong professionals that take ownership in areas of responsibility has developed. This is important as staff have not been able to be as responsive to changing variables. With an increase in demand for services, smaller situations that arise now take time from leadership. In several instances, leadership has to handle directly. This is another driver of the high-level communication to avoid silos from developing and services from becoming fragmented.

The Department and Team leaders work with the Town Finance Department on budgets, tracking and ensuring cost recovery levels are achieved. Staff are creative in managing changing variables to still accomplish the desired outcomes. Processes are in place to track and monitor cost centers and this allows staff to adjust to fluctuations in revenue and expenses.

OPERATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Technology is one facet in management that can help with the automation or immediate ability to capture data necessary to complete or report on operational tasks. Technology currently has a place within the Department as staff are continuously researching technology and applications that will help with data collection and provide staff with increased productivity through mobility. Best practice is to ensure staff are proficient with new technology and its application in the facilities and in the field will help to ensure outcomes are achieved. This may also include updating computers to be able to run new software as well.

Currently the Department uses applications for general productivity, registration, scheduling, and communicating with sport leagues through Quick Scores. The Department uses social media platforms to communicate and promote services, projects, and accomplishments to celebrate. The Town Website has a Department page that houses information on the operations and services. A new registration software has been launched this year to provide better customer service through ease of use and navigation.

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GOING LIVE!
SEPTEMBER 23

rec desk
BETTER BY DESIGN. SIMPLE BY NATURE.
Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources
new recreation software lets you:
Register for programs
Create memberships
Pay online
All users must create a profile to register.
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OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

The Department has experienced an increase in challenges. The following list captures challenges to be addressed once the issue of capacity is addressed. Addressing these challenges will position the Department to handle increased demand and Comprehensive Plan implementation.

- › A lack of administrative staff leads to challenges with high level reporting. Senior Center staff have taken on roles of answering the phone and handling Senior Services administration.
- › The Department does not track or report economic impact or significance within the Garner community to determine the Town's return on investment for parks, recreation, and cultural resources investments.
- › Maintaining existing level of service in light of population growth will present operational challenges without support from additional funding for asset preservation in aging facilities.
- › Aging infrastructure and lack of current technology in the Senior Center and Garner Performing Arts Center present challenges to providing the highest quality service possible.
- › 1991 Senior Center layout is a challenge with multiple access points.
- › Poor cellular phone reception in Senior Center
- › Lack of a centralized PA system to enhance efficiency and safety.
- › Senior Center bathrooms are old, have developed an odor that is difficult to remove or mask.
- › The facility was grandfathered in for ADA, but improvements would enable facility to effectively serve senior clientele.
- › Competing priorities spread staff thin and limit ability to fully execute all responsibilities. Increasing staff capacity will improve the Department's ability to implement the Comprehensive Plan while assets are added to the system.
- › Population growth and changing demographics will influence community needs and expectations.
- › Turnover in other Town Departments causes additional administrative challenges for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources staff adjusting to processes and preferences of new staff.
- › Each division within Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources is responsible for accounts payable and receivable. This decentralization is necessary without administrative support at the leadership level.
- › Overtime and comp time accrual have increased due to lack of capacity.
- › Aging demographics will drive the need for more staff for senior programming and facilities.

FINANCES

The section of the report presents the financial assessment for Garner’s Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department. The revenues, expenditures and capital funds were analyzed to identify trends and assess the Department’s financial integrity. This assessment includes cost recovery of facilities, programs and services at major functional levels.

DATA REVIEWED

The project team reviewed detailed cost and activity information Department staff provided. The project team reviewed the following cost and activity data.

- › Actual Revenue and Expenditure Summary Reports for 2015 through 2019
- › Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for 2018
- › Planned Capital Expenditures from 2020 Adopted Budget

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The revenues and expenditures for fiscal years ending 2015 through 2019 are shown in Figure 1.

The total cost recovery is between 23.37 percent and 26.28 percent for the study period. Cost recovery has increased during the analysis period.

Best practices for cost recovery for park and recreation activities between 40 percent to 60 percent for departments heavily reliant on earned income to support services. The goal in Garner is not necessarily to achieve 100 percent cost recovery but to engage youth in the community with recreational opportunities. Garner seeks

to do this through programming that builds character and develops lifelong skills. This preventative approach for Garner is driven by a philosophy to keep parks and programs accessible to all residents regardless of their ability to pay. The equity built into programs and facilities is a strength of the Town.

The functional program areas are analyzed in the following sections. The analysis shows that there are areas of operations where cost recovery is better and areas where the Town is serving a true need that improves lives and the community as a whole.

Figure 24 - Revenues, expenditures, and cost recovery

	2015 ACTUAL	2016 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 ACTUAL
Revenues	\$414,678	\$410,688	\$462,493	\$464,206	\$562,159
Expenditures	\$1,685,752	\$1,757,287	\$1,878,060	\$1,735,083	\$2,139,057
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(\$1,271,074)	(\$1,346,599)	(\$1,415,567)	(\$1,270,877)	(\$1,576,898)
Cost Recovery	24.60%	23.37%	24.63%	26.75%	26.28%

PARKS + RECREATION ADMINISTRATION

The Parks and Recreation Administration revenues and expenditures for fiscal years ending 2015 through 2019 are shown in Figure 2.

not anticipated to recover costs of operations.

Cost recovery is between -0.01 percent and 4.45 percent.

Parks and Recreation Administration divisions are

Figure 25 - Parks and Recreation Administration revenues, expenditures, and cost recovery

PARKS + RECREATION ADMINISTRATION	2015 ACTUAL	2016 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 ACTUAL
Revenues	\$5,131	(\$37)	\$1,355	\$1,079	\$15,126
Expenditures	\$339,565	\$341,613	\$315,815	\$313,697	\$339,843
Wages and Benefits	\$286,337	\$296,223	\$269,262	\$269,582	\$280,738
Supplies and Services	\$53,228	\$45,390	\$44,987	\$44,115	\$59,105
Capital	\$0	\$0	\$1,566	\$0	\$0
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(\$344,696)	(\$341,576)	(\$317,170)	(\$314,776)	(\$354,969)
Cost Recovery	1.51%	-0.01%	0.43%	0.34%	4.45%

Inventory + analysis

CULTURAL ARTS + EVENTS

The Cultural Arts and Events revenues and expenditures for fiscal years ending 2015 through 2019 are shown in Figure 3.

Best practice for cost recovery for Cultural Arts and Events activities to be approximately 40 percent to 80 percent. The cost recovery for the Town of Garner Cultural Arts and Events programs is 26 percent to 32 percent.

The cost recovery is between 24.99 percent and 32.34 percent for the study period.

Figure 26 - Cultural Arts and Events revenues, expenditures, and cost recovery

CULTURAL ARTS + EVENTS	2015 ACTUAL	2016 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 ORIGINAL BUDGET
Revenues	\$99,860	\$105,458	\$131,714	\$123,630	\$130,508
Expenditures	\$383,470	\$401,296	\$407,328	\$472,095	\$522,241
Wages and Benefits	\$227,715	\$241,141	\$250,893	\$327,747	\$329,256
Supplies and Services	\$155,755	\$160,155	\$156,435	\$144,348	\$192,985
Capital	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(\$283,610)	(295,838)	(\$275,614)	(348,465)	(\$391,733)
Cost Recovery	26.04%	26.28%	32.34%	26.19%	24.99%

MARKETING + SPECIAL EVENTS

The Marketing and Special Events program revenues and expenditures for fiscal years ending 2015 through 2019 are shown in Figure 4. Marketing is not anticipated to have significant revenues.

Special Events usually have sponsorships to cover a portion of the event costs.

The 2019 fiscal year is the first year with division expenditures.

Figure 27 - Marketing and Special Events revenues, expenditures, and cost recovery

MARKETING + SPECIAL EVENTS	2015 ACTUAL	2016 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 ORIGINAL BUDGET
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$36,261
Wages and Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies and Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$36,261
Capital	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$36,261)
Cost Recovery	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

YOUTH + ATHLETICS

The Youth and Athletics revenues and expenditures for fiscal years ending 2015 through 2019 are shown in Figure 5.

The cost recovery is between 24.25 percent and 46.13 percent for the study period.

is between 40 percent and 50 percent. Athletic programs are anticipated to recover 20 percent to 80 percent. The cost recovery for Youth and Athletics is less than similar agencies, possibly due to the amount of competition from similar providers and nearby jurisdictions.

Best practice for cost recovery for Youth programs

Figure 28 - Youth and Athletics revenues, expenditures, and cost recovery

YOUTH + ATHLETICS	2015 ACTUAL	2016 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 ORIGINAL BUDGET
Revenues	\$149,168	\$128,345	\$142,097	\$146,011	\$146,996
Expenditures	\$323,362	\$360,401	\$446,368	\$371,306	\$606,080
Wages and Benefits	\$224,943	\$267,784	\$355,476	\$354,743	\$482,839
Supplies and Services	\$80,081	\$92,617	\$90,892	\$16,563	\$123,241
Capital	\$18,338	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(\$174,194)	(\$232,056)	(\$304,271)	(\$225,296)	(\$459,084)
Cost Recovery	46.13%	35.61%	31.83%	39.32%	24.25%

ADULT + SENIOR

The Adult and Senior revenues and expenditures for fiscal years ending 2015 through 2019 are shown in Figure 6.

Adult and Senior programs are anticipated to recover 50 percent to 100 percent for adult

programs and 20 percent to 100 percent for senior programs. The Adult and Senior cost recovery is 15.78 percent to 23.39 percent during the study period.

Figure 29 - Adult and Senior revenues, expenditures, and cost recovery

ADULT + SENIOR	2015 ACTUAL	2016 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 ORIGINAL BUDGET
Revenues	\$51,556	\$59,209	\$49,919	\$54,335	\$43,304
Expenditures	\$244,946	\$253,174	\$313,261	\$299,833	\$274,368
Wages and Benefits	\$212,092	\$223,182	\$230,983	\$240,025	\$247,074
Supplies and Services	\$32,854	\$29,992	\$82,278	\$59,808	\$27,294
Capital	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(\$193,390)	(\$193,965)	(\$263,342)	(\$245,498)	(\$231,064)
Cost Recovery	21.05%	23.39%	15.94%	18.12%	15.78%

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

The Outdoor Adventure revenues and expenditures for fiscal years ending 2015 through 2019 are shown in Figure 7

Outdoor Adventure operations are anticipated to

have cost recovery of 10 percent to 40 percent. Rentals should recover 100 percent of direct cost.

Outdoor Adventure cost recovery is 43.8 percent to 148.17 percent during the study period.

Figure 30 - Outdoor Adventure revenues, expenditures, and cost recover

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE	2015 ACTUAL	2016 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 ORIGINAL BUDGET
Revenues	\$108,963	\$117,713	\$137,408	\$139,153	\$226,225
Programs	\$110,870	\$117,713	\$137,858	\$137,433	\$88,005
Parks and Rec Facility Rental	(\$1,907)	\$0	(\$450)	\$1,720	\$138,220
Expenditures	\$248,764	\$244,149	\$233,075	\$131,578	\$152,675
Wages and Benefits	\$170,858	\$175,325	\$168,424	\$119,164	\$135,168
Supplies and Services	\$77,906	\$68,824	\$64,651	\$12,414	\$17,507
Capital	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(139,801)	(126,436)	(95,667)	7,575	73,550
Cost Recovery	43.80%	48.21%	58.95%	105.76%	148.17%

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Program Partners revenues and expenditures for fiscal years ending 2015 through 2019 are shown in Figure 8. Program Partners provide recreation programs through non-profit organizations.

The Town provides financial support to program partners. A list of athletics program partners is on page 75 and a list of arts and cultural resources partners is on page 79.

Table 31 - Program Partners revenues, expenditures, and cost recovery

PROGRAM PARTNERS	2015 ACTUAL	2016 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 ORIGINAL BUDGET
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Expenditures	\$163,983	\$156,654	\$163,779	\$146,574	\$207,589
Wages and Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies and Services	\$163,983	\$156,654	\$163,779	\$146,574	\$207,589
Capital	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(\$163,983)	(\$156,654)	(\$163,779)	(\$146,574)	(\$207,589)
Cost Recovery	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

STAFFING

Staffing, shown Figure 9, demonstrates consistent strength to operate facilities and programming. The staffing has increased 20 percent during the study period. Nationally, municipal park operations

have experienced a significant decrease in personnel due to economic conditions. The Department demonstrates a commitment to parks facilities by maintaining adequate staffing.

Table 32 - Staffing level

STAFFING	ACTUAL 2015	ACTUAL 2016	ACTUAL 2017	ACTUAL 2018	BUDGET 2019
Total FTE's	25	25	25.5	29	30

AMENITIES

Amenities, shown Figure 10, demonstrates a growth in acres maintained. Nationally, municipal park systems are having difficulty funding

existing amenities. The Town and the Department demonstrate a commitment to parks increasing amenities.

Table 33 - Amenities

AMENITIES	2014	2015	2019	2017	2018
Park Acres Maintained	350	350	350	350	375
Number of Parks	13	14	14	14	14
Baseball Fields	7	7	7	7	7
Tennis Courts	6	6	6	6	6
Basketball Courts	2	2	2	2	2

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Town has demonstrated a commitment to the Department’s facilities and infrastructure through planning substantial investments in the Department’s system as shown in Figure 11.

Table 35 - Parks, recreation and cultural resources Capital Program

CATEGORY	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	5 YEAR TOTAL
Facility Development	0	0	\$1,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$21,000,000
Park Enhancements	0	\$700,000	0	0	0	\$700,000
Greenway trails	0	\$3,307,659	\$3,307,659	0	0	\$6,615,318
Total	\$0	\$4,007,659	\$4,307,659	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$28,315,318

REVENUE SOURCE	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	5 YEAR TOTAL
Transfer from General Fund	0	0	0	0	0	\$0
Bond Proceeds	0	\$750,000	0	0	0	\$750,000
Future Bond Proceeds	0	0	\$1,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$21,000,000
Impact Fees	0	\$700,000	0	0	0	\$700,000
Powell Bill	0	--	0	0	0	\$0
Appropriated Fund Balance	0	--	0	0	0	\$0
Unknown Funding Source	0	\$2,231,131	\$3,307,659	0	0	\$5,538,790
Partner Agency Funding	0	\$245,828	0	0	0	\$245,828
Other	0	\$80,700	0	0	0	\$80,700
Total	\$0	\$4,007,659	\$4,307,659	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$28,315,318

Inventory + analysis

FUNDING STRATEGIES

Park and Recreation systems across the United States have learned to develop a clear understanding of managing revenue options to support parks, recreation, and cultural resources services in a municipality based on the limited availability of tax dollars. Park and Recreation systems no longer rely on taxes as their sole revenue option but have developed new sources of revenue options to help support capital and operational needs.

The Town has developed policies on pricing of services, cost recovery goals and partnership agreements for programs and facilities provided

to the community. The Department has developed partnerships in the delivery of services based on whom receives the service, for what purpose, for what benefit and for what costs. In addition, agencies have learned to use parks, recreation, and cultural resources facilities, amenities, programs and events to create economic development as it applies to keeping property values high around parks and along trails through maintenance standards, adding sports facilities and cultural events to drive visitors into Garner positively impact the economic impact of Town services. They have learned to recognize that people will

drive into their community for good recreation facilities such as sports complexes, pools, and for special events if presented correctly and are well managed as Garner has demonstrated.

The following sources are financial options that the Town of Garner has implemented or is currently implementing. This list is intended to serve as one resource to provide inspiration in considering other strategies beyond the following:

Corporate sponsorships

This revenue-funding source allows corporations to invest in the development or enhancement of new or existing facilities in park systems. Sponsorships are also highly used for programs and events.

Partnerships

Partnerships are joint development funding sources or operational funding sources between two separate agencies, such as two government entities, a non-profit and a governmental entity, or a private business and a governmental entity. Two partners jointly develop revenue producing park and recreation facilities and share risk, operational costs, responsibilities and asset management, based on the strengths and weaknesses of each partner.

Volunteerism

The revenue source is an indirect revenue source in that persons donate time to assist the organization in providing a product or service on an hourly basis. This reduces the organization's cost in providing the service plus it builds advocacy into the system.

Private Donations

Private Donations may also be received in the form of funds, land, facilities, recreation equipment, art or in-kind services. Donations from local and regional businesses as sponsors for events or facilities should be pursued.

Impact Fees / Retail Impact Fees

Impact Fees are assessed on residential developments. These funds are used to acquire land and expand parks, recreation, and cultural resources systems. This allows for an increased level of service with an increase in residents as a community grows.

Fees and Charges

The Department must position its fees and charges to be market-driven and based on both public and private facilities. The potential outcome of revenue generation is consistent with national trends relating to public park and recreation agencies, which generate an average 35 percent to 50 percent of operating expenditures. This could include daily fees for access to public owned facilities and parks.

Permits (Special Use Permits)

These special permits allow individuals to use specific park property for financial gain. The Town either receives a set amount of money or a percentage of the gross service provided.

Reservations

This revenue source comes from the right to reserve specific public property for a set amount of time. The reservation rates are usually set and apply to group picnic shelters, meeting rooms for weddings, reunions and outings or other types of facilities for special activities.

Equipment Rental

The revenue source is available on the rental of equipment such as tables, chairs, tents, stages, bicycles, roller blades, kayaks, boats etc. that are used for recreation purposes.

Recreation Service Fees

This is a dedicated user fee, which can be established by a local ordinance or other government procedures for the purpose of constructing and maintaining recreation facilities. The fee can apply to all organized activities, which require a reservation of some type or other purposes, as defined by the local government. Examples of such activities include adult basketball, volleyball, tennis, and softball leagues, youth baseball, soccer, football and softball leagues, and special interest classes. The fee allows participants an opportunity to contribute toward the upkeep of the facilities being used.

Ticket Sales / Admissions

This revenue source is on accessing facilities for self-directed activities such as pools, ice skating rinks, ballparks and entertainment facilities. These user fees help off-set operational costs.

Lease of Development Rights

Lease land for fiber optics, utilities alongside of trails to support operations trails.

Property Tax

Ad valorem taxes on real property.

Pouring Rights

Private soft drink companies that execute agreements with organizations for exclusive pouring rights within facilities. A portion of the gross sales goes back to the organization. As an example, the Town of Westfield, IN just signed a 10 year, \$2 million pouring rights deal at their sports complex with Pepsi.

GRANTS

The Town has applied for grants to fund several projects over the years. The grant opportunities identified below may be applied and awarded more than once.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

LWCF is a grant administered by the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources. The funds come from the Federal Government that is received for drilling rights off the cost of the United States. Up to 50 percent reimbursement for outdoor recreation projects. North Carolina reviews LWCF grant applications and submits recommended projects to the National Park Service for final approval. All recommended projects must be in accord with North Carolina's SCORP priorities.

Recreational Trails Program

For development of urban trail linkages, trail head and trailside facilities; maintenance of existing trails; restoration of trail areas damaged by usage; improving access for people with disabilities; acquisition of easements and property; development and construction of new trails; purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment; environment and safety education programs related to trails.

Naming Rights

Many cities and counties have turned to selling the naming rights for new buildings or renovation of existing buildings and parks for the development cost associated with the improvement. This funding strategy has been used in the past.

Inter-local Agreements

Contractual relationships entered into between two or more local units of government and/or between a local unit of government and a non-profit organization for the joint usage/development of sports fields, regional parks, or other facilities.

NRPA Grant and Funding Resources

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) periodically posts information about grant and fundraising opportunities that are available for park and recreation agencies. Grant opportunities are posted in areas of conservation, environmental/habitat, programming, social issue initiatives, Art and facility/amenity development. The Town is already regularly reviewing these opportunities, but need to make sure the cost benefit is present for the agency before applying.

Local Nonprofit Foundation Grants

These nonprofit foundations raise money through community foundations for parks and help support local park foundations on a local and regional level.

Land Trust

Many systems have developed land trusts to help secure and fund the cost for acquiring land that needs to be preserved and protected for greenway purposes. This could be a good source to look to for acquisition of future lands.

Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants to local governments for parks and recreational projects to serve the public.



H NATURE

GO ON SHORT TRIPS

ME WITH FAMILY OR FRIENDS

WALK A PET

OVE HEALTH + WELLBEING

SHOW VISITORS AROUND

RELIEVE STRESS

5

community engagement

EARN

CHAPTER 5 > COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public input is an essential part of any planning process. The most effective plans are firmly rooted in the realities and visions of the communities that created them. This feasibility study collected public input through an online questionnaire and at a public drop-in meeting. This section summarizes all public input received during the planning process.

Figure 1 - Outline of community engagement



PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

DATE

May 9, 2019

NUMBER OF ATTENDEES

Approximately 50

PURPOSE

This meeting asked residents about their values regarding parks, recreation, and cultural resources. Input focused on greenway trails, parks amenities, and programming.

- Community Values input focused on identifying which values are important to the community. A question regarding health and wellness identified ways people would like to pursue their personal health and wellness goals with the Department's parks and programs.
- Amenities and Programming input focused on which amenities and programs residents would like to see, and how to prioritize providing those options. An activity gave participants \$10 million to spend on park amenities and facilities to gauge interest in specific elements.
- Greenway trails input focused on how people currently use greenway trails and how people would like to use greenway trails in the future and what types of experience they would like to have. A mapping exercise allowed residents to identify destinations they want to access and identify or prioritize greenway and trail corridors.

5 > community engagement



COMMUNITY VALUES

Community values reflect the things that are important to a community’s residents. In the word cloud listed here, the size is related to how much support a value received. Community values inform the planning process by informing the character of parks, programs, and amenities that

will resonate with the community. The values of environment and nature, people and community, and economic vitality received the most responses. This exercise identifies popular values but should not be used to eliminate values as being important to the community or worthwhile.

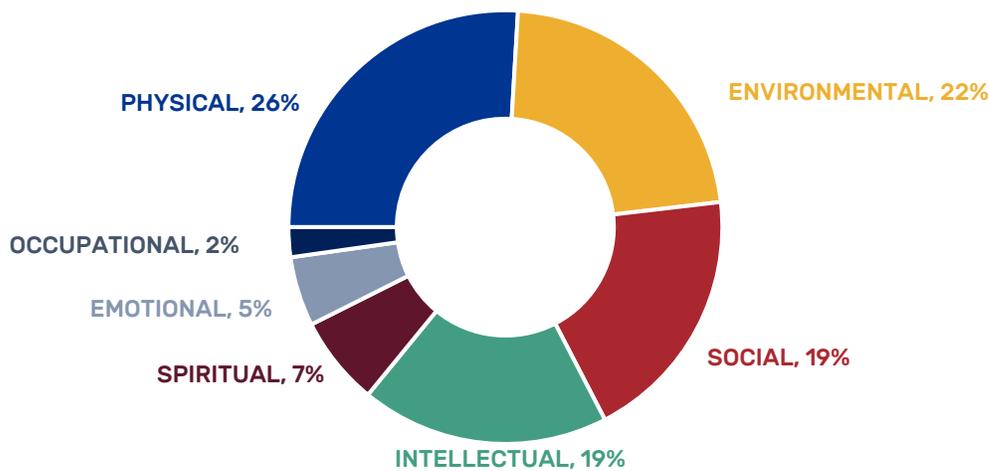
Figure 2 - Community Values word cloud. Larger size indicates more responses.



The event also asked residents about their health and wellness values. Figure 3 shows that physical, environmental, social, and intellectual health and the elements of health and wellness that people want to engage with at Town of Garner parks, facilities, and programs. These results provide implications about what types of parks and facilities are needed to help Garner residents

meet their personal health and wellness goals. The results indicate programs and amenities that promote physical activity, places for people to access nature, events that bring the community together, and educational facilities and programming that expand resident’s knowledge and skills.

Figure 3 - What elements of health and wellness would residents like to pursue at Garner parks, facilities, and programs?



community engagement

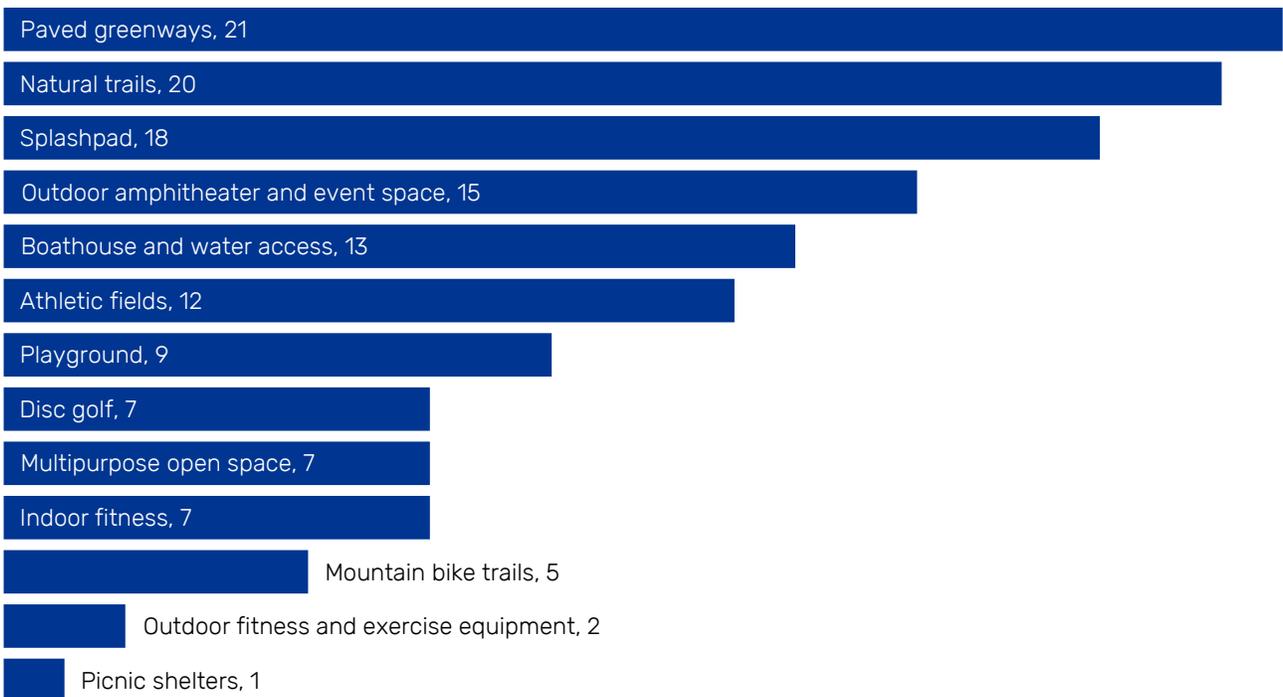
AMENITIES

Each participant ranked the top three amenities they would like to see the Department offer or expand. The items on this list were generated by Department staff. The items staff selected are amenities that the community has asked for, items that are in line with emerging trends, or items that are currently popular and may need to be expanded or renovated. The top responses

are paved greenway trails, natural trails, and a splashpad.

Some respondents listed additional amenity needs that included basketball and tennis courts, safety features such as cameras and police call boxes, and a suggestion to locate outdoor fitness equipment near playgrounds.

Figure 4 - Responses to the question "Which park amenities would you like to see?" Respondents were able to choose three responses.



5 > community engagement

Residents also indicated how they think the Department should prioritize providing new amenities. Residents indicated that the following considerations should guide prioritization of providing, expanding, or improving parks, recreation, and cultural resources amenities.

An amenity should be prioritized if it:

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| 1.
Strengthens community connections. | 2.
Is welcoming to a diversity of users. | 3.
Preserves the environment. | 4.
Balances the cost of doing nothing. | 5.
Promotes safe, walkable, bikeable access to the community. |
|---|--|---|--|---|

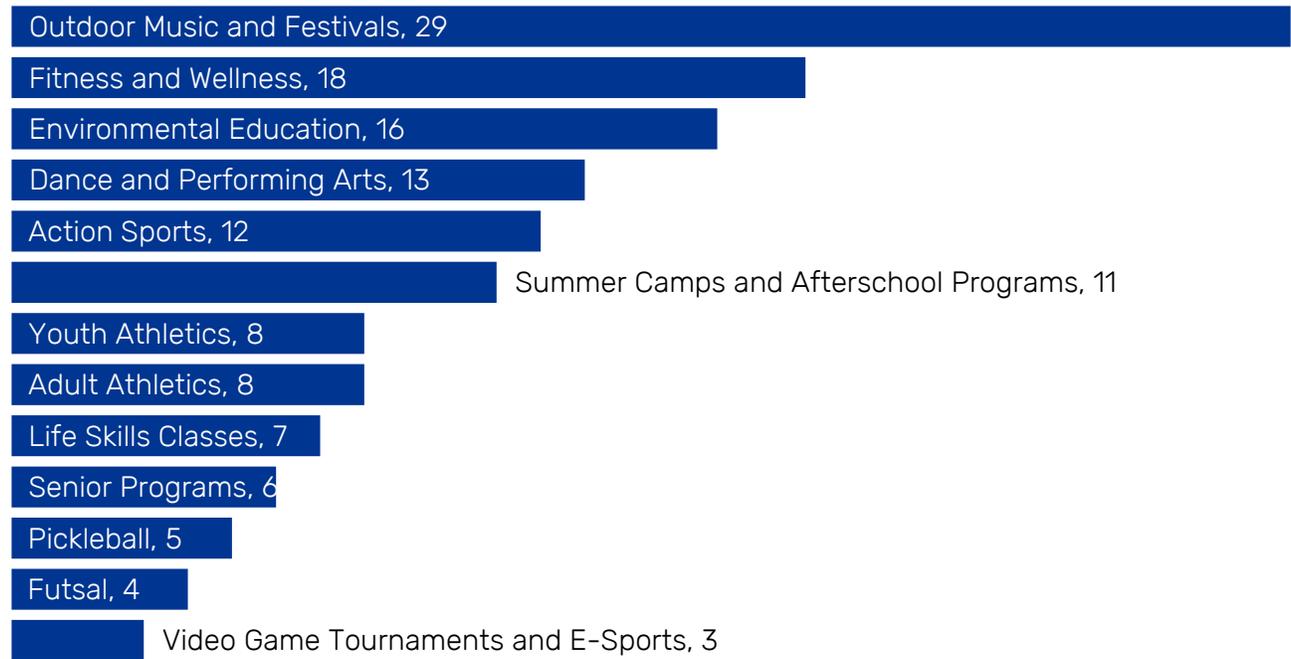
PROGRAMMING

Each participant ranked the top three programs they would like to see the Department offer or expand. Like the list of amenities, the programs on this list were generated by Department staff. The items staff selected are programs that residents have asked for, programs that are in line with current trends, or programs that are popular and may need to be expanded or refreshed. The top responses were for outdoor music and festivals,

which received one third more responses than fitness and wellness programs, the next highest ranked program. Environmental education was the third highest ranked program.

Some respondents indicated additional programming needs. These programs included family and kid-friendly events and lacrosse.

Figure 5 - Responses to the question “Which programs would you like to see?” Respondents were able to choose three responses.



community engagement

Residents also indicated how they think the Department should prioritize providing new programs. Residents indicated that the following should be prioritized among the town’s programmatic offerings.

Programming should be prioritized based on the following:

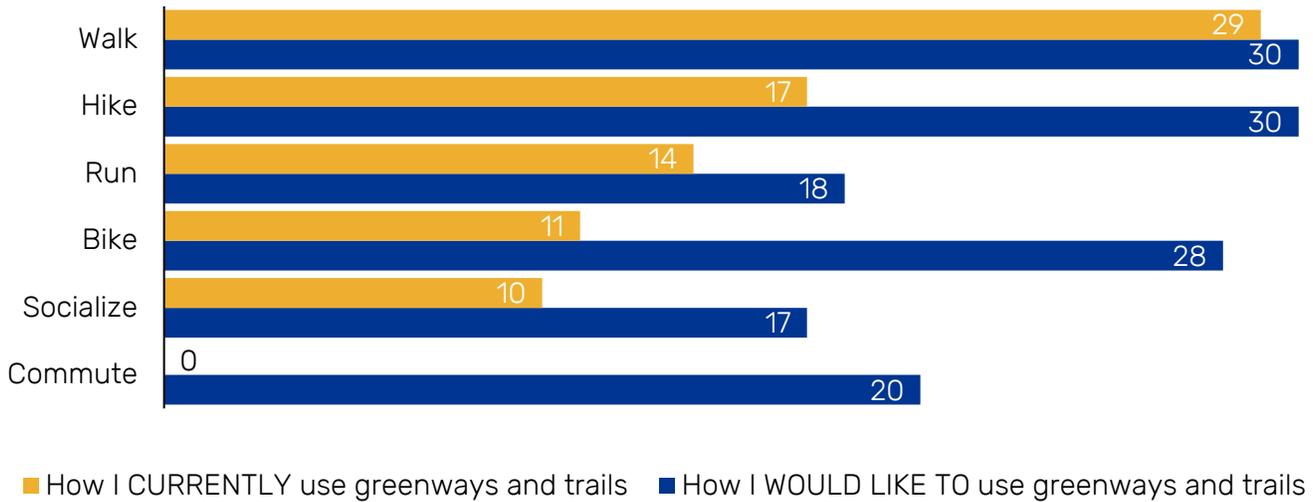
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1.</p> <p>Small, frequent, local community events such as weekly movies.</p> | <p>2.</p> <p>Large, successful events that serve the community and attract regional visitors once or twice a year.</p> | <p>3.</p> <p>Age targeted programs for seniors, adults, youth, etc.</p> |
|--|---|--|

GREENWAY TRAILS AND NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

Each participant indicated how they would like to use greenway trails and how they currently use greenway trails. The two questions indicate gaps in how residents currently use trails and how they would like to use trails. For each of the six categories, the number of people who would like to use trails for that purpose is greater than the number of people who do use trails for that purpose.

This question does not illuminate specifically all of the possibilities for why residents do not use trails as much as they would like to use trails. However, given Garner’s existing limited but popular natural surface trails and greenway trails, a lack of facilities could be a significant barrier to people desiring to use natural surface trails and greenway trails more.

Figure 6 - Response to how people currently and how people would like to use greenway trails and natural surface trails



The type of experience people want to have on natural surface trails and greenway trails is an important consideration when planning and designing corridors. The results indicate that the top three experiences people want to have on greenway trails and natural surface trails include improving health and wellness, connecting with nature, or spending time with family or friends.

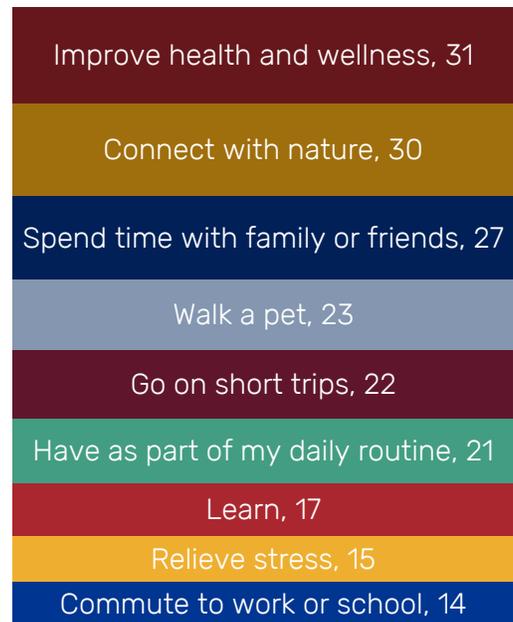


Figure 7 - Responses to “What experiences would you like to have on Town of Garner greenway trails and natural surface trails?”

PRIORITIZING INVESTMENTS

The meeting included an exercise that allowed participants to choose how to invest Garner’s budget into parks, recreation, and cultural resources amenities and facilities. Participants received 10 chips with each chip equaling \$1 million, for a total of \$10 million to spend on parks, recreation, and cultural resources amenities and facilities. Each item had an associated dollar amount that corresponded to the number of chips needed to pay for that item. Participants could only choose to fully fund an item with the listed number of chips, but they could pay for as many units of the item that they could afford.

This activity showed support for both miles of greenway trails and splashpads. The Indoor aquatics center required participants to use all of their chips for that facility, which 5 participants did. This results in a high dollar amount spent, but a small number of units purchased.

The lower cost amenities that received the most support were outdoor basketball courts, music pavilion, and a ropes adventure course. The summary of the lower cost items is in Figure 8 as the fifth bar from the left. This suggests support for investing in more amenities with lower costs to improve park experiences in many locations.

Why include the amount spent AND units purchased?

This exercise used costs estimations for each item, meaning that some items “cost” more chips than others.

For example, the item “boathouse, meeting room and fishing dock at Lake Benson Park had an associated cost of \$2 million. A participant would be able to use all 10 of their chips to purchase 5 units of this item. This example would create a result of \$10 million spent on 5 units.

Greenway trails, splashpads, playground replacement, and turf multipurpose fields, however, had an estimated cost of \$1 million per mile or unit, creating a 1 to 1 correlation between the dollars spent and the units purchased.

community
engagement

Figure 8 - Results of prioritizing investments exercise for items costing less than \$1 million. Participants could trade 1 chip to receive 3 dots to vote for these items. The above is a detailed look at the amount represented in Figure 9 in the 5th bar from the left.

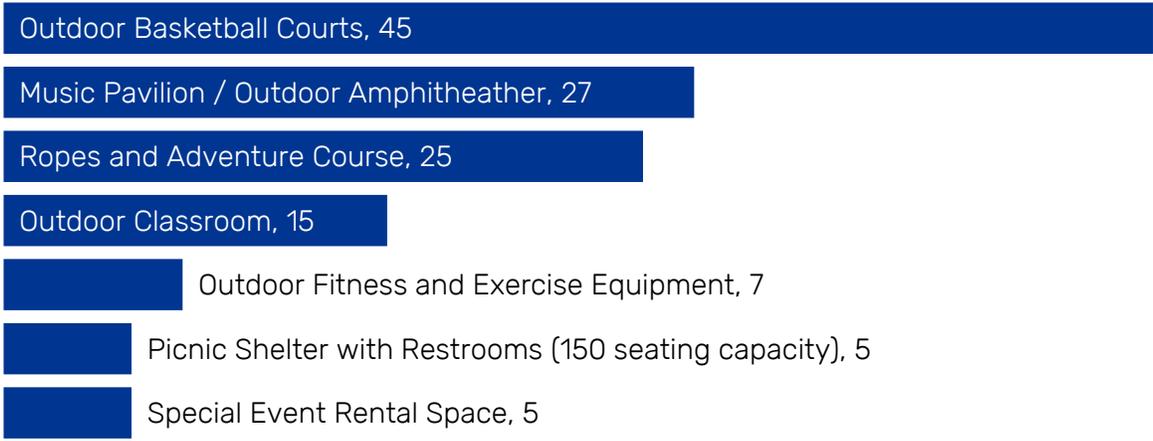
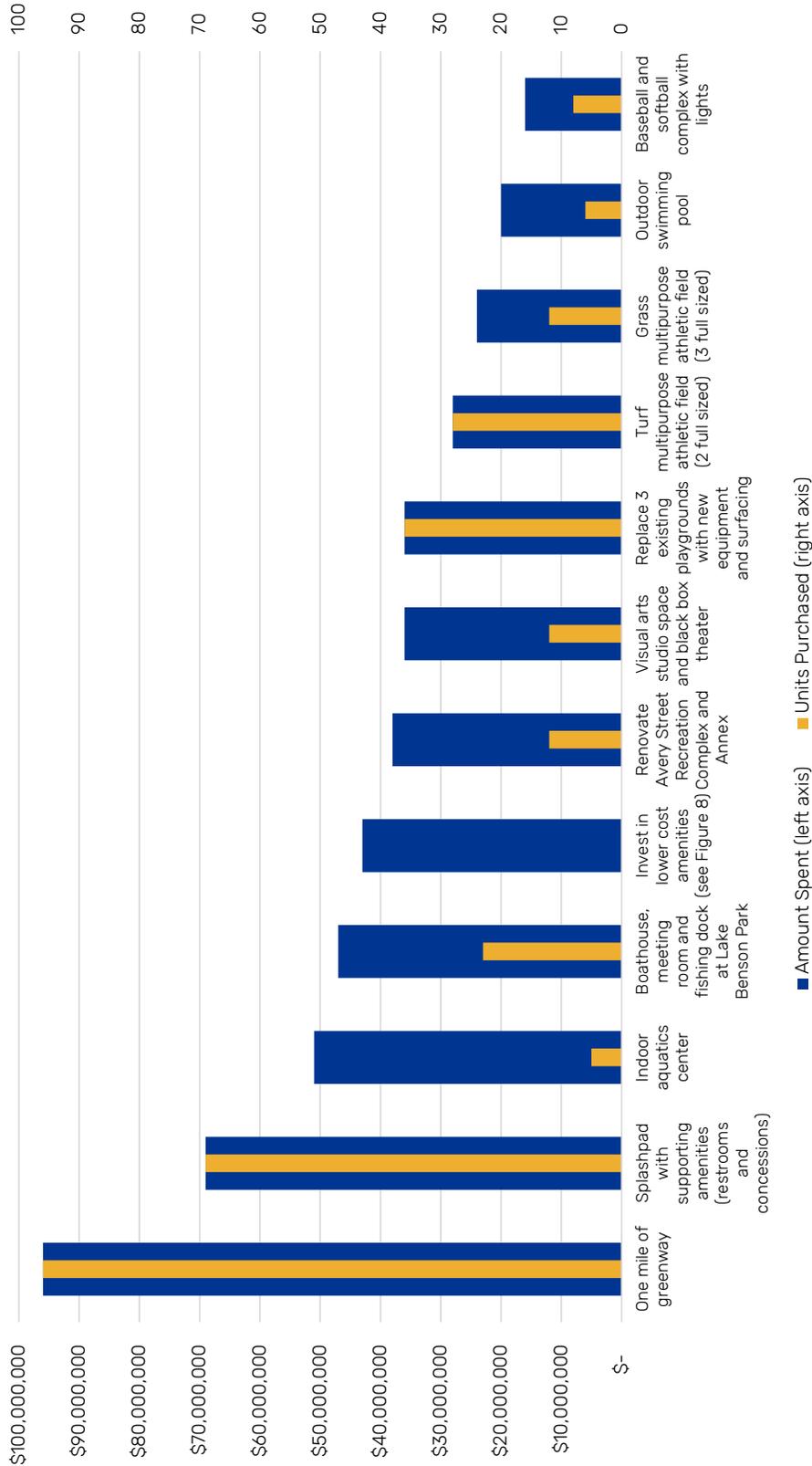


Figure 9 - Results of prioritizing investments exercise. Participants received \$10 million dollars to spend on the above amenities and facilities. Each item has an associated cost and residents could spend the number of chips reflecting that cost to purchase a unit of that item. Blue bars indicate the total number of chips "spent" for each item, and yellow bars indicate the number of units "purchased".



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Information from the first community engagement meeting show support for values, amenities, and programs. The two strongest messages emerging

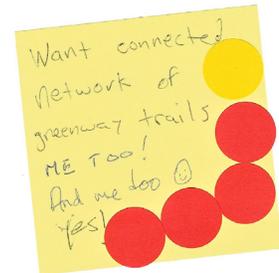
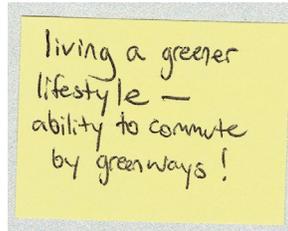
from this meeting include support for greenway trails and natural surface trails, and support for a variety of community events.

GREENWAY TRAILS + NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

Many activities and priorities indicate strong support for greenway trails and natural surface trails. Paved greenway trails and natural surface trails are the amenities that received the most support, greenway trails was the most “purchased” item in the funding exercise, and there is a gap between how people CURRENTLY use greenway trails and natural surface trails and how people WANT TO use greenway trails and natural surface trails.

trails and natural surface trails, questions about priorities and values also point to expanding greenway and trail networks. Trails are often placed in high-quality natural areas where the environment and nature are protected, and trails offer people places to pursue physical and environmental health. Finally, trails meet the three amenity prioritization goals residents selected to strengthen community connections, welcome many types of users, preserve the environment, and promote bikeable, walkable access to the community.

In addition to this explicit support for greenway

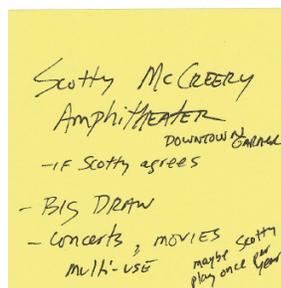


community engagement

COMMUNITY EVENTS

The event also pointed to community events as an important service of the Department. People and community and economic vitality were ranked as top three community values, and people indicated they would like to pursue social health goals with the Departments parks and programming. Outdoor amphitheater and events space was the fourth highest ranked amenity and outdoor music and events was the highest ranked program with about 30 percent more responses than the next highest program.

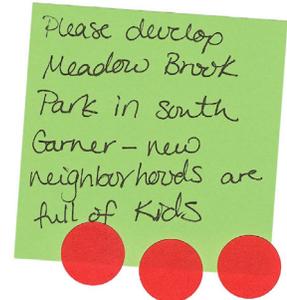
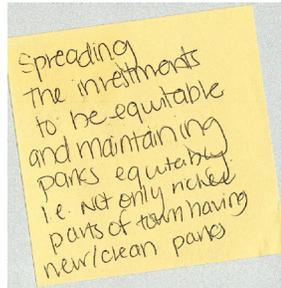
Finally, responses to how the department should prioritize programs indicated support for both small programs that happen frequently and large events that happen a few times a year. Emphasis on both of these event types speak to both the community value of people and community, and economic vitality. Events can be used to support local social networks and communities, and can draw out of town visitors to Garner, increasing spending at local businesses.



OTHER COMMENTS

Some comments made at the meeting indicate additional needs or opportunities for the department. A few comments expressed concerns about litter in parks and around town, stating that people wanted their community to be able to have a better image. Many comments suggested additional amenities or programs not included

on the boards or in the activity. Other comments emphasized the need for environmental protection and investing in environmental education. Finally, some comments recommended awareness around investing in parks equitably to ensure that underserved areas have high-quality parks.



FOCUS GROUPS

The planning process included three focus group meetings with community members. The intention of a focus group is to convene a group of individuals with specific knowledge of a topic in order to identify focused input on that topic. Focus Groups included the following groups

- Senior Citizens Advisory Committee for the Town of Garner - advisory board that meets every other month
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee for the Town of Garner - advisory board that meets monthly
- Representatives from adjacent jurisdictions - parks and greenway trails professionals from adjacent jurisdictions to provide input on feasibility and opportunities for partnerships based on work in their jurisdictions.

SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Senior Citizen Advisory Committee is a volunteer advisory board that meets every other month. The Town of Garner website states that the purpose of this group is to “serve in an advisory capacity with the Town of Garner, Resources for Seniors, and Meals on Wheels, in

planning, coordinating, and directing of programs and activities for senior citizens.”

The input of the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee included the following themes.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GARNER’S SENIORS

About one-third of Garner’s population is over age 55. The primary characteristic of Garner’s Senior population is that seniors are a diverse group! Some seniors are physically and socially active while others face limited mobility and isolation. Some are retired while others still work. Garner’s senior population is growing with the increase in

residential developments and facilities that cater to older adults. Since many Seniors relocated to the area, there is a variety of experiences and opinions of what types of services parks, recreation, and cultural resources and senior services should provide.

PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCE’S BENEFITS TO SENIORS

The Senior Center provides programming and space where Garner’s seniors can be active and social. Many stated that this community atmosphere and active programming is a strength of the Senior center and a key benefit for seniors to maintain their quality of life as they age. The Senior Center offers common programs

such as senior meals and open game room hours, but there are also unique offerings, such as a championship-winning senior dance team, and trips to local museums and cultural festivals. Finally, many recognized that seniors benefit from the Senior Center staff that create a friendly and welcoming environment for seniors.

BARRIERS FOR SENIORS ACCESSING PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES SERVICES

Cost, transportation, and awareness are the three biggest barriers for seniors to access the Senior Center’s programs, facilities, and services. Many seniors are on fixed incomes and cannot budget for recreational activities. Many of the programs the center offers are free or low cost, but there are other costs for accessing the Center, such as transportation to the facility. Including transportation is important for programming success but is limited by Tracts or other outside

transportation service providers. There are limited service providers located in proximity to the Senior Center. Awareness of programming and facilities is also a challenge, as seniors may not access the internet or other digital forms of marketing. Other challenges include lack of safe ADA accessible parking at Senior Center and other facilities, competition for office space and programming space within the Senior Center, and prioritizing Senior needs in relationship to other

town priorities.

PROGRAMMING NEEDS FOR SENIORS

The Senior Center offers a variety of programs for Seniors, and advisory committee members emphasized the importance of socializing and health for Senior Programs. Additional needs for senior programming include more interaction with younger generations, additional day trips,

and services such as grief and health counseling. Needs for expanding programs include volunteers and paid staff to run programs, discounts for Seniors to participate, and transportation to attend.

AMENITY AND FACILITY NEEDS FOR SENIORS

The Town offers many amenities and facilities that serve Senior's needs and comments primarily focused on needed improvements or expansions of existing amenities and facilities. Ensuring that parks provide paved walking paths and open areas with benches and shade is a key

consideration. Another amenity need is enclosed rental shelters with grills. Improvements and renovations needed include finishing the Garner Recreation Center, improving restrooms at the senior center, expanding reservable space at the senior center, and providing snack machines.

PARKS + RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee is a volunteer advisory board that meets monthly. The Town of Garner website states that the committee “provides recommendations to the Town Council

on recreation services, facilities and fee policies.”

Input from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Included the following themes:

EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

The Committee sees events and programs as one of the Town’s specialties. The Town hosts annual holiday celebrations including a popular July 3rd Independence Day Celebration. The Town offers a variety of programming that reaches a wide spectrum of residents. Youth athletics and performing arts are also strengths. Committee

members indicated that there are many programs for children and families, but few programs targeted to people age 20 to 45. Suggestions for events and programs included providing additional programming at parks and hiring new staff to expand programming.

PARKS

Parks provide people with places to connect with nature. Many parks are near the places live, work, and play. Popular park amenities include walking trails, and sports fields and courts for pick-up games. Maintenance standards for parks are high

and many parks have an open and natural feel. Connectivity between parks could be improved by integrating park destinations into greenway and sidewalk networks.

COMMUNITY

Committee members observed that there is already community support for parks, recreation, and cultural resources services in Garner. The system will need to expand to accommodate the area’s growing population. There are many opportunities for leveraging this support to improve, renovate, and expand the parks, recreation, and cultural resources system. Suggestions for leveraging support for parks,

recreation, and cultural resources include continuing to engage residents through marketing efforts and identifying “ambassadors” who will promote parks, recreation, and cultural resources within their community. The department can also leverage business support for parks, recreation, and cultural resources through sponsorships, advertising, and partnerships.

FACILITIES

The primary concern for parks, recreation, and cultural resources is opening the Garner Recreation Center. Facility space serves a diversity of recreation uses, including performing arts,

senior services, and environmental education. Committee members indicated that there is a good match between programming and the facility space available.

CHALLENGES

Population growth is a concern for the future of parks, recreation, and cultural resources. The system will need to expand to meet the growing population’s needs. Connectivity is an important consideration moving forward to ensure that current and future parks are accessible by

sidewalk, trail, and non-motorized forms of transportation. Funding for these new initiatives will be generated in part by growing the corporate limits and increasing the tax base, but decision-makers must ensure that the system remains adequately funded as it grows.



INTERJURISDICTIONAL PARTNERS

At the interjurisdictional greenway partners meeting, representatives from the Town of Garner, Wake County, Capitol Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, and City of Raleigh convened to discuss future considerations for greenway network expansion in the Garner area. Representatives from these jurisdictions shared their knowledge of long-range planning for their area and shared thoughts about how this may tie

into Garner's future network.

Attendees at this meeting worked with a map summarizing all greenway trails-related community input and identified how to create a network that made important connections to adjacent jurisdictions. The results of this meeting have been incorporated into the final greenway trails network recommendation plan.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The planning process included three stakeholder meetings with community members. The intention of a stakeholder meeting is to convene representatives from a similar field to discuss the wider impact of their efforts on the community. Each stakeholder meeting focused on a specific topic. Each of the three topics below brought together representatives from organizations throughout Garner engaged in these topic areas.

- › Arts and cultural resources - partners that provide arts and cultural resources programming.
- › Programming - partners that provide life skills, athletics, fitness, and other programming.
- › Health and Wellness - representatives from organizations involved in health and wellness.

ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

MARKETING

Increasing visibility for arts and cultural resources performances is important for continuing to grow performing arts in Garner. Performances are well attended but additional marketing could continue to grow the program's impact on economic development. Ideas for additional marketing include billboards, TV, and radio. Many expressed interest in a collaborative marketing effort

promoting all Garner performances and programs. Sponsorships also create visibility and increase funding. Many programs depend on sponsorships and losing them would negatively impact performing arts programming. Finally, approving the curb appeal of the Garner Performing Arts Center could improve visibility. All programs are proud of their excellent customer service.

NEW OR EXPANDED FACILITIES

Arts and cultural resources partners agreed that facility space is a key limitation for expanding programming. Many had input on new facilities needed and facilities to be improved. Improvements at Garner Performing Arts Center included parking accessibility, lobby accessibility, sound system, dressing room, seating, storage,

and office space. Partners agreed that there are some facilities that do not currently exist in Garner. Affordable rehearsal space, a larger theater, and a black box theater are all facilities that groups have expressed a current demand. Some organizations are renting these types of spaces in other communities.

PARTNERSHIPS

Discussion revealed similar needs and efforts among providers. Participants recognize the opportunity to work together to achieve common goals such as coordinated marketing and new

rehearsal space. A shared vision, arts council, or a regular partner meeting were all identified as straightforward opportunities for achieving common goals.

NEW OR EXPANDED PROGRAMMING

Partners expressed a desire to expand programming but stated that availability of suitable rehearsal space is a limiting factor. Participants

noted that while there is programming for young and old residents, there are fewer programming opportunities for those between ages 20 and 55.

CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

Comments noted that other Town needs may come before the needs of arts and cultural resources, and that there is an additional need for financial support. This additional support can come from grants, other levels of government, or sponsorships. Partners indicated that those engaged with the arts community may experience "burnout" whether from having too many options

of events to attend or depending on the same volunteers to run programs. Additionally, arts programming in other cities like Cary and Raleigh pull participants or attendees away from Garner. Participants noted that the Department and community focus on performing arts, and there may be an additional need for visual arts programs.

PROGRAMMING PARTNERS

MARKETING AND SPONSORSHIPS

Many partners depend on sponsorships to support their work. Partners believe increasing marketing increases program visibility and appeal to sponsors. More sponsorships and marketing

can attract new participants and expand program resources to accommodate them. Other marketing needs include signage and online presence.

RESOURCES NEEDED

Resources program partner needs included a combination of facilities, staff (paid and volunteer) and funding. Discussion revealed that some facility needs may be met through communication and resources sharing while others may require public or private investment.

For some programs, participant transportation is a crucial need. Program partners recognize they compete against one another for grant resources, but partnership, collaboration, and a shared vision could address competition and create opportunities for new resources.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Athletics partners generate economic impact in Garner when they generate overnight stays at hotels and generate spending at restaurants. Currently only one or two partners conduct economic impact assessments. Those that do

conduct assessments do so at the County level. There is a need to understand the economic impact to understand the full benefits of sports tourism (direct and indirect revenues for example).

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Partners consider youth development one of the most important benefits of programming. Programs provide mentoring opportunities and activities that build good health and social

habits. Garner health and athletics partners offer programs for many skill levels, from recreational to highly competitive leagues.

FACILITIES

Many program partners have gaps in facility space, whether it is a program in need of more space or a partner with space reservable for programs. Better understanding the community's

existing facility space (both private or other types) and facility needs will identify any service gaps that may be solved through partnership rather than program or facility expansion.

ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS

Program partners run independently from the Town, but provide parks, recreation, and cultural resources service and, in some cases receive funding from the Town. Organizational needs include funding, ability to cope with population growth, planning support, and volunteer and partnership support. Athletics programming is particularly competitive in Wake County. Securing grant funding, keeping programs affordable, and retaining staff are all challenges. Program diversity is strong, but there may be a

gap in programming for young and middle age adults. Many programs depend on volunteers. Volunteerism builds community but creates risk for programs that depend on this sometimes-unpredictable source of staffing. There are opportunities for organizational efficiencies in planning and partnerships. A shared vision for programming can help unify efforts and sharing planning and facility resources through healthy partnerships is valuable.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

CREATING LIFELONG HABITS FOR HEALTHY AND SOCIAL LIVES

Parks, recreation, and cultural resource services create a healthier community by offering opportunities for people of all ages to lead healthy and social lives. Many of Garner's services focus on the youngest and oldest residents, ensuring access and participation for these vulnerable communities. Providing youth opportunities helps create a lifelong habit out of healthy lifestyle choices and the Department provides

programming to continue those habits into the future. Many expressed the need for more programming for teens and older children, and ways to ensure that families can be active together. Co-locating adult and youth programming and providing spaces and equipment where people of all ages can engage and be active is one strategy for addressing this need.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVING LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS

Employment and access to housing are two of Wake County's health and wellness priorities. The Department's most impactful health and wellness focused programs are aimed at providing needed services for vulnerable populations.

Highly impactful programs include the summer camp program offering free lunches, the senior meals program, chair fitness for seniors, and the ENERGIZE! Program led by WakeMed that supports youth engagement and family education.

CONNECTIVITY AND FLEXIBLE SPACES

Integrating parks into Garner's walking, biking and active transportation network is essential for supporting people's opportunities for active lifestyles. Connectivity throughout town via greenway trails achieves the challenging goal

of integrating physical activity into people's daily routines. Ensuring senior residents have transportation to senior programs is important for maximizing senior programming by expanding the number of residents able to attend.

NEED FOR UNIVERSALLY DESIGNED PARKS AND PLAY

Universal design is the design of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of age, size, ability or disability.¹ More

universally designed play areas would create more opportunities for people with disabilities to recreation. Universal design ensures people can play side-by-side regardless of disability status.

NEEDS

Attendees discussed the Department's needs for continuing to promote health and wellness efforts among residents. Specific needs included programming space that can be programmed

for youth and adults simultaneously, a farmer's market for promoting healthy eating, fitness equipment along walking trails, and expanded teen programming.

¹ Center for Excellence in Universal Design. <<http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/>>

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

The Town Council serves as the municipal legislative body for the Town. The Town Council convened to participate in a focus group-style meeting to discuss parks, recreation, arts and cultural resources and greenway trails. The project team guided the discussion with focus questions to receive targeted feedback from Council members.

REPUTATION OF PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Council recognized that parks, recreation, and cultural resources offer many benefits to the Town and its residents. The Department's services provide opportunities to create and foster a sense of community. The Department achieves this by offering a variety of accessible and quality parks, programs, and facilities. Parks, recreation, and cultural resources offers opportunities for economic development by attracting visitors to Garner.

Specifically, the Department is known for unique facilities such as White Deer Nature Center, Garner Performing Arts Center, and Lake Benson Park. Popular community events such as the July 3rd Celebration, Egg Hunt, and Trick or Treat the Trails serve residents and visitors. Programming at GPAC, summer camps, and athletic programming are also known for providing high-quality programming for Garner residents.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN PARKS, RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES, AND GREENWAY TRAILS

Council members believe that an ongoing understanding of community needs through public engagement would benefit the Department's understanding of recreation needs. Specific ideas for additions to the Department's services included greenway trails, splash pad, more programming at GPAC, play spaces, and running events. Council recognized that the local public access channel could provide a low-cost option for marketing. Participants acknowledged

that the department could be expanded with additional funding to support staff, facilities and programming. Some Council members voiced anticipation of financing parks, recreation, and cultural resources expansion through bond funding in the next 2 to 3 years. Council members hope that this plan will identify key gaps in services and create a common vision for the next 10 years of parks, recreation, and cultural resources in the Town of Garner.

VISION FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

Council members shared their visions for the results of the next 10 years of parks, recreation, and cultural resources services. Council members shared a vision of continued excellence in athletics programming, arts and cultural resources programming, and facilities provision.

Visions also included emphasizing new pursuits for the department including health and wellness outcomes and greenway trails planning. Visions recognize the need for long-term planning, the need to dedicate resources to achieve the desired visions.

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6

level of service +
benchmarking

CHAPTER 6 > LEVEL OF SERVICE + BENCHMARKING

Level of Service, Benchmarking and National Standards provide important metrics for guiding future growth in parks, recreation, and cultural resources. Considered together, these metrics provide a broad understanding of current parks, recreation, and cultural resources conditions in the Town, similar jurisdictions and nationally. This analysis provides detailed metrics and statistics that should be considered within the full context of parks, recreation, and cultural resources services Garner is offering residents.

Level of Service, Benchmarking and national standards provide concrete numbers that allow for comparison. This plan does not adopt any standard wholesale, but considers the full analysis, staff input, and community input to help identify standards and metrics that will be meaningful points of guidance as the Town grows parks, recreation, and cultural resources services to meet a growing population’s needs.

LEVEL OF SERVICE	BENCHMARKING	NATIONAL STANDARDS + BEST PRACTICE
<p>Measures the Department’s current offerings. Analysis is local.</p> <p>This analysis asks: What do we offer?</p> <p>The Level of Service analysis identifies what the Town is currently offering, based on current population. This metric is population based and forms a baseline standard moving into the future. The analysis answers the question, if Garner currently offers this much parkland for this many people, how much parkland will we need to serve the population in 10 years?</p>	<p>Compares measures among similar jurisdictions. Analysis is amongst similar communities regionally.</p> <p>This analysis asks: What do others offer?</p> <p>The benchmarking analysis identifies communities that share similar characteristics with the Town of Garner and then compares data points across all communities. This generates an understanding of the department’s strengths and chosen areas of expertise. Shortcomings in the benchmarking may represent deficiencies or areas that have been deprioritized in favor of other priorities.</p>	<p>Measures national statistics or case studies. Analysis is national or based on a case study.</p> <p>This analysis asks: What do experts say is best to offer?</p> <p>National standards and best practices serve as an “ideal state” for parks, recreation, and cultural resources in a community. These standards may account for emerging trends communities are beginning to implement, such as greenway trails or inform how the Town may meet their individual priorities such as providing parks, recreation, and cultural resources services to help residents meet personal health and wellness goals.</p>

level of service + benchmarking

LEVEL OF SERVICE

The level of service measures how much access to parks, trails and indoor facility space residents have based on the park system’s current inventory and the jurisdiction’s total population. The analysis identifies deficits or surpluses within what the department provides. The level of

service, combined with benchmarking and best practices, will provide the foundation for this plan’s recommendations of how much parkland, trails, and indoor facility space the department should acquire or construct to meet the recreation needs for the future, based on population growth.

METHODOLOGY

The level of service is a ratio that includes the current offering of parkland, trails, and facility space, divided by a portion of the current population. Parkland and trails are calculated based on a rate per 1,000 residents, and indoor facility space is based on a per capita rate, or rate per 1 resident. This difference reflects reporting standards created by the National Recreation and Parks Association.

The population figure used for this analysis is 32,539 residents. This number is used throughout the plan as the estimate for Garner’s 2019 population. The estimate is from the Town of

Garner Planning Department and is consistent with the population projections created as part of the Garner Forward Comprehensive Plan. Numbers have been rounded to two decimal places.

This formula is used to determine current level of service for any given population number. Current level of service is determined using the current population, and future level of service is determined based on future population projections. This plan determines 2029 level of service using population projects determined in the Demographics and Trends chapter.

6 > level of service + benchmarking

$$\frac{\text{parks, recreation, and cultural resources offering}}{\text{portion of population}^*} = \text{Level of Service}$$

**(EITHER 1,000 population OR per capita)*

CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

The Department’s current level of service is summarized in the table below. The table shows the Department’s offering for parkland, trails, indoor facility space, outdoor fields and courts, and selected park amenities. The left-hand column shows the level of service and the portion of the population used to determine that level of service.

The purpose of the level of service analysis is to establish a baseline level of service standard for the Department’s current offerings. Creating the level of service as a ratio means that the Department can use this level of service standard to project future needs for parkland, trails, indoor facility space, outdoor fields and courts, and park amenities based on future population.

Figure 1 - Town of Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department inventory and current level of service

	THE DEPARTMENT OFFERS -	THE CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE IS -
 <p>PARKLAND</p>	<p>341.19 acres of developed parkland</p>	<p>10.5 acres of developed parkland per 1,000 residents</p>
 <p>TRAILS</p>	<p>7.43 miles of trail</p>	<p>0.23 miles of trail per 1,000 residents</p>
 <p>INDOOR FACILITY SPACE</p>	<p>142,647 square feet of indoor recreation space</p>	<p>4.38 square feet of indoor recreation space per 1 resident (per capita)</p>
 <p>OUTDOOR FIELDS + COURTS</p>	<p>23 outdoor fields and courts 8 baseball / softball fields 7 tennis Courts 1 outdoor basketball court 1 soccer field area* 6 multipurpose fields</p> <p><small>*Soccer fields are striped as needed on a single soccer field site. This location has been counted once but provides more than one soccer field.</small></p>	<p>0.71 outdoor fields and courts per 1,000 residents</p>
 <p>PARK AMENITIES</p>	<p>15 picnic shelters 13 playgrounds</p>	<p>0.46 picnic shelters per 1,000 residents 0.40 playgrounds per 1,000 residents</p>

level of service + benchmarking

BENCHMARKING

Benchmarking provides a direct comparison among peer communities with departments that have similar characteristics to the Town of Garner. Looking to peer communities is a valuable tool for decision-making, evaluation, and goal setting.

It is a common tendency to believe that numbers above the median are good and numbers below the median are bad. Another common tendency is to believe that numbers below the median must be brought up to the standard, while numbers above the median indicate a jurisdiction is over-

providing a service. A better interpretation is to consider metrics as a representation of services the jurisdiction has chosen to invest in. A high metric may indicate a service particularly important to the Town. A low metric may indicate an area in need of additional investment, or an area that is not considered a priority. A benchmarking analysis may identify areas where the department is excelling or falling behind, but it is essential to understand the connections among all metrics rather than focus on one isolated fact.

METHODOLOGY

Peer communities should be jurisdictions that share similar enough characteristics to allow for a meaningful comparison, but still represent an array of circumstances and situations among departments. The project team identified peer communities based on the following characteristics.

- › Communities with a similar population
- › Communities that serve on forward-looking comparisons
- › Departments that have similar facility and program offerings including athletic leagues, diverse parks, and cultural and performing arts.
- › Communities are suburban and growing
- › Communities located in the Southeast

The project team distributed a questionnaire to each peer community. This report includes information from all reporting agencies. All information in this chapter is self-reported by participating communities.

This benchmarking analysis summarizes data for the following categories to compare peer communities.

- › Parkland
- › Programming
- › Special Focus Areas
- › Trails
- › Finances
- › Facilities

PEER COMMUNITIES

The project team and Town staff selected peer communities to compare common metrics across different departments. No department can offer a one-to-one comparison and each department

serves a different community and pursues different priorities. All information in this analysis is self-reported by peer communities.

Figure 2 - Summary of peer communities

	GARNER	HOLLY SPRINGS	WAKE FOREST	KERNERSVILLE	CLAYTON	APEX	MOORESVILLE	NEW BERN	SALISBURY
Population	32,539	36,973	45,000	25,200	21,500	48,741	42,000	29,942	33,849
Tax rate per \$100 valuation	\$0.56	\$0.48	\$0.52	\$0.57	\$0.58	\$0.42	\$0.49	\$0.48	\$0.72
CAPRA Accredited	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes	-
Seniors	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Pre-School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-
Recreation Centers	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nature Center or Park	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arts Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	-
Athletics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Camps	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Outdoor Programs	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-
Special Events	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arts Programs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: All information self-reported by peer communities

level of service + benchmarking

PARKLAND

Garner provides 10.5 acres of developed parkland per 1,000 population. This falls above the benchmarking median of 9.2 acres per 1,000 population. Garner is fourth among peer communities for provision of developed parkland per 1,000 population, with Salisbury, Mooresville, and Kernersville ranking as the top three.

Many peer communities hold undeveloped parkland to accommodate future growth or to be held for environmental conservation. Garner holds nearly 200 acres that are intended for future

park development. Undeveloped parkland did not contribute to the acres per population calculation, but it does indicate the capacity a department has to accommodate future parkland growth. Garner ranks fourth in holdings of undeveloped parkland.

Some departments maintain land that does not contribute a recreational use to their community, such as a road right of way or Town office building lawn. Garner’s public works department handles maintenance for the system, so they do not take on any other maintained acreage.

Figure 3 - Acreage of parkland types by peer community

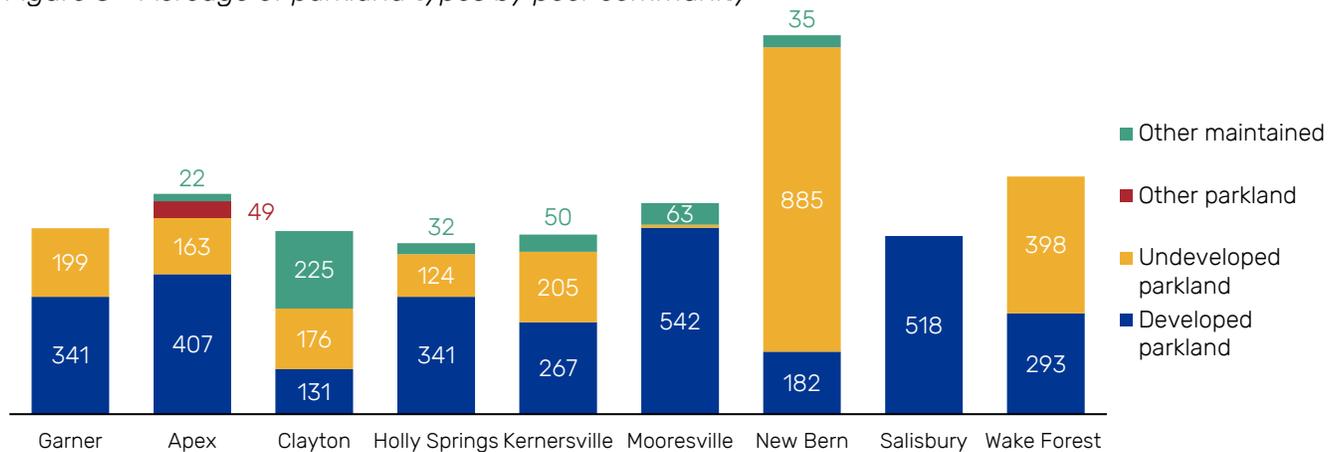


Figure 4 - Acres of developed parkland per 1,000 population in peer communities

	ACRES OF DEVELOPED PARKLAND	POPULATION	ACRES OF DEVELOPED PARKLAND PER 1,000 POPULATION	
1	Salisbury	518	33,849	15.3
2	Mooresville	542	42,000	12.9
3	Kernersville	267	25,200	10.6
4	Garner	341	32,539	10.5
5	Holly Springs	341	36,973	9.2
6	Apex	407	48,741	8.3
7	Wake Forest	293	45,000	6.5
8	Clayton	131	21,500	6.1
9	New Bern	182	29,942	6.1
	Median			9.2

6 > level of service + benchmarking

TRAILS

Garner ranks last in trail mileage per 1,000 population, with 7.43 miles of trail. Every peer community provides natural surface trails and paved trails. Many including Garner also offer walking loop trails that provide an exercise opportunity but may not connect to a larger trail network. Wake forest offers 2.48 miles of other trail mileage.

Garner’s 0.2 miles of trail per 1,000 population is below the median of 0.5 miles of trail per 1,000

population. Clayton is providing the highest trail level of service at 0.8 miles of trail per 1,000 population. Greenway trails have grown in popularity as communities recognize the recreational, transportation, and quality of life benefits trails provide. This analysis indicates that as many communities are undertaking the challenging task of constructing trails, some are emerging as leaders while others are just beginning the process.

Figure 5 - Mileage of trail types by peer community.

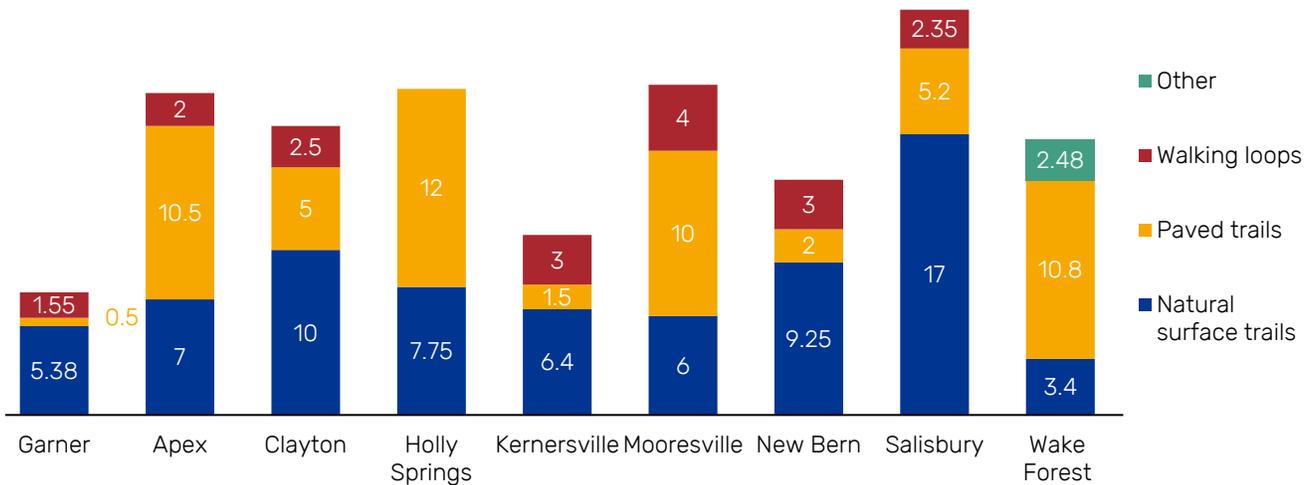


Figure 6 - Miles of trails per 1,000 population in peer communities

		MILES OF TRAIL	POPULATION	MILES OF TRAIL PER 1,000 POPULATION
1	Clayton	17.5	21,500	0.8
2	Salisbury	25	33,849	0.7
3	Holly Springs	20	36,973	0.5
4	Mooresville	20	42,000	0.5
5	New Bern	14.25	29,942	0.5
6	Kernersville	10.9	25,200	0.4
7	Apex	20	48,741	0.4
8	Wake Forest	16.68	45,000	0.4
9	Garner	7.43	32,539	0.2
	Median			0.5

level of service + benchmarking

INDOOR FACILITY SPACE

Garner ranks first among peer communities for providing indoor recreation space. The department offers a variety of indoor recreation spaces including a senior center, a nature center, and a performing arts center, all counted under Special Use Facilities. This indoor facility space includes the square footage of the Garner Recreation Center which will be opened during the creation of this plan. Garner provides 4.4 square feet of indoor recreation space per capita, which is nearly four times the median for indoor recreation space of 1.4 square feet per capita. This analysis indicates that Garner is truly a leader in providing indoor recreation space.

Figure 7 - Indoor facility space by peer community.

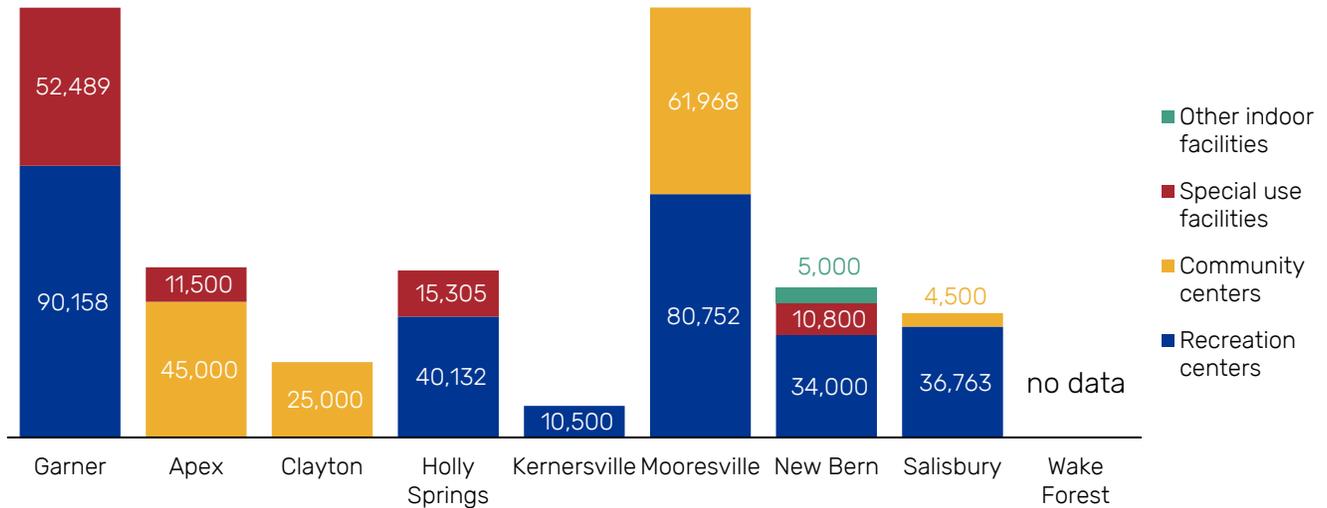


Figure 8 - Square feet of indoor facility space per 1,000 population in peer communities

		SQUARE FEET OF INDOOR RECREATION SPACE	POPULATION	SQUARE FEET OF INDOOR RECREATION SPACE PER RESIDENT
1	Garner	142,647	32,539	4.4
2	Mooresville	142,720	42,000	3.4
3	New Bern	49,800	29,942	1.7
4	Holly Springs	55,437	36,973	1.5
5	Apex	56,500	48,741	1.2
8	Clayton	25,000	21,500	1.2
6	Salisbury	41,263	33,849	1.2
7	Kernersville	10500	25,200	0.4
9	Wake Forest	no data	45,000	no data
	Median			1.4

6 > level of service + benchmarking

PROGRAMMING

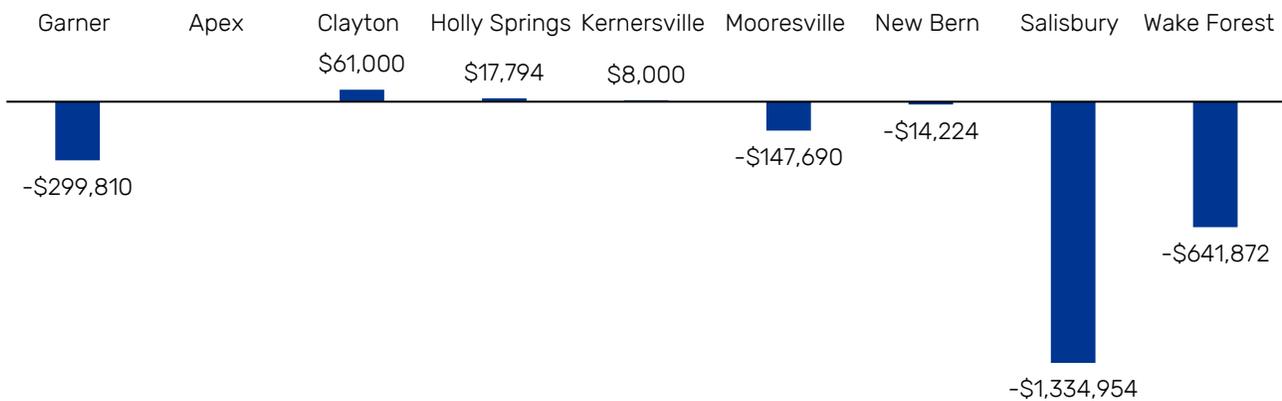
This analysis includes the overall cost recovery of programming among peer communities and the number of volunteers each department depends upon to provide programming to their communities.

COST RECOVERY

Cost recovery is the amount of revenue a department's programs generate and subtracts the cost of running those programs. As a public service offered to residents, departments are not necessarily expected to achieve full cost recovery for programming. Three departments are recovering costs above the cost of providing programming. Two departments have a gap in cost recovery less than \$200,000 and two

departments have a gap in cost recovery greater than \$600,000. Garner falls between these two thresholds with a cost recovery gap of approximately \$299,000. Gaps may represent differences in philosophical approaches to parks, recreation, and cultural resources programming or may represent different accounting processes that include additional costs in programming that other peer communities omitted.

Figure 9 - Programming cost recovery (Programming revenue minus programming cost)

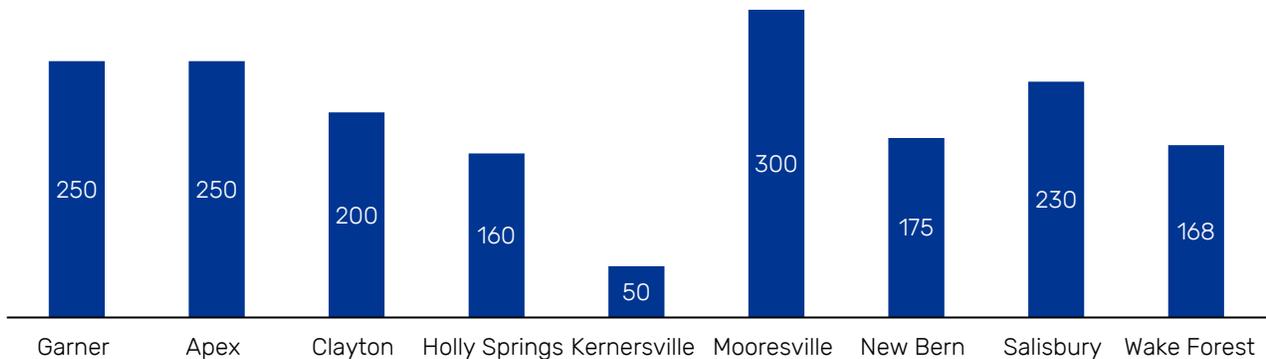


VOLUNTEERS

Parks, recreation, and cultural resources runs on volunteers. Five departments depend on more than 200 volunteers to provide programming and

services for their respective departments. Garner appears to have strong local support through its large numbers of annual volunteers.

Figure 10 - Number of volunteers supporting department programming



level of service + benchmarking

FINANCES

The benchmarking analysis includes comparisons of departmental operating budgets and capital budgets.

OPERATING BUDGET

Garner ranks second to last for operation expenses per capita at a rate of \$49.40 of spending per resident. In this comparison, the lowest ranking departments Salisbury and Garner do not include

maintenance within the department. This means that maintenance spending will be captured in the Public Works budget and not the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department.

Figure 11 - Total operating budget for the most recent fiscal year by peer community

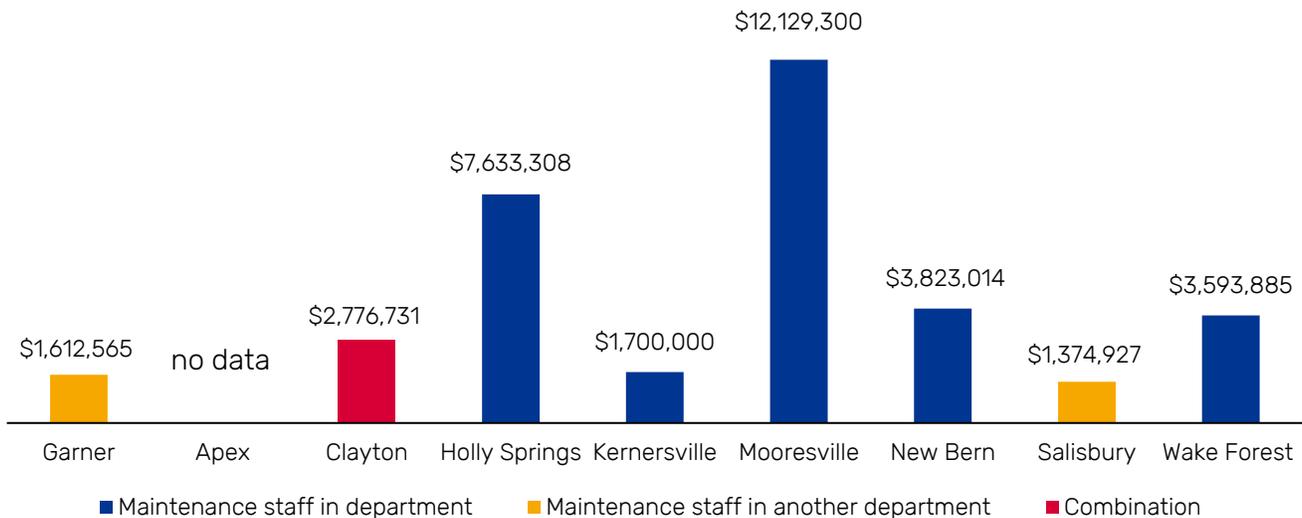


Figure 12 - Operating expenses per capita by peer community

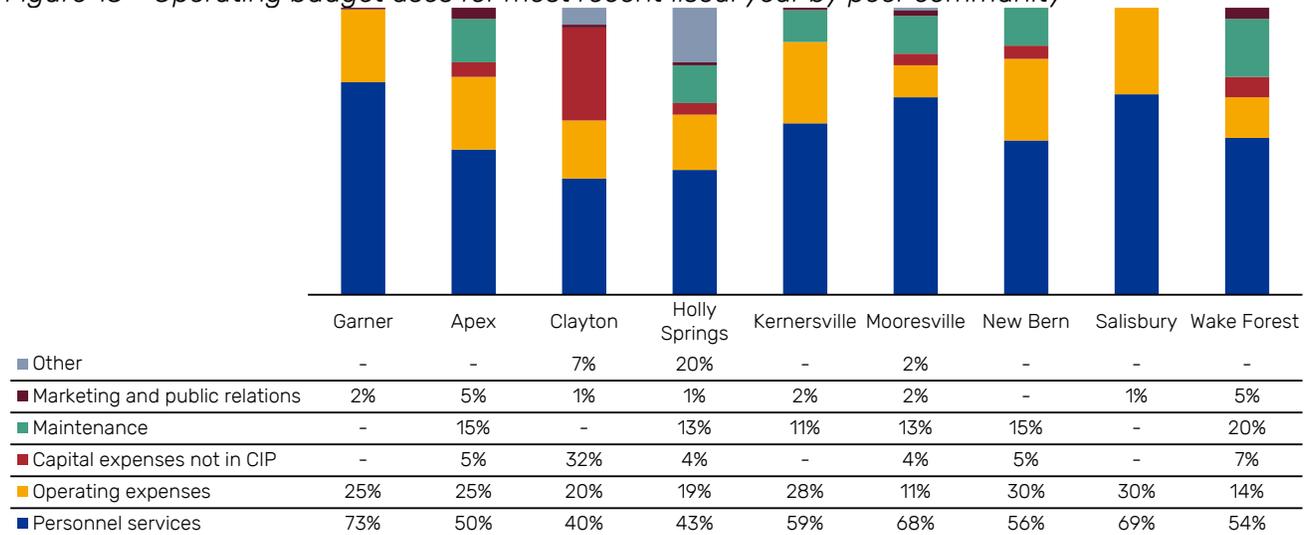
	OPERATING BUDGET	POPULATION	OPERATING EXPENSE PER CAPITA	INCLUDES MAINTENANCE?	
1	Mooresville	\$12,129,300	42,000	\$288.80	Yes
2	Holly Springs	\$7,633,308	36,973	\$206.50	Yes
3	Clayton	\$2,776,731	21,500	\$129.20	Combination
4	New Bern	\$3,823,014	29,942	\$127.70	Yes
5	Wake Forest	\$3,593,885	45,000	\$79.90	Yes
6	Kernersville	\$1,700,000	25,200	\$67.50	Yes
7	Garner	\$1,612,565	32,539	\$49.40	No
8	Salisbury	\$1,374,927	33,849	\$40.60	No
9	Apex	no data	48,741	No data	Yes
	Median			\$103.80	

OPERATING BUDGET USES

Garner has the highest percentage of operating budget allocated for personnel costs, due in part to not having maintenances costs as a portion of the budget. Additionally, without non-CIP capital costs, there are few other expenditures to

compete with staff time for a percentage of the budget. In a customer service-based industry, investing in high-quality and effective staff is essential for running a department.

Figure 13 - Operating budget uses for most recent fiscal year by peer community

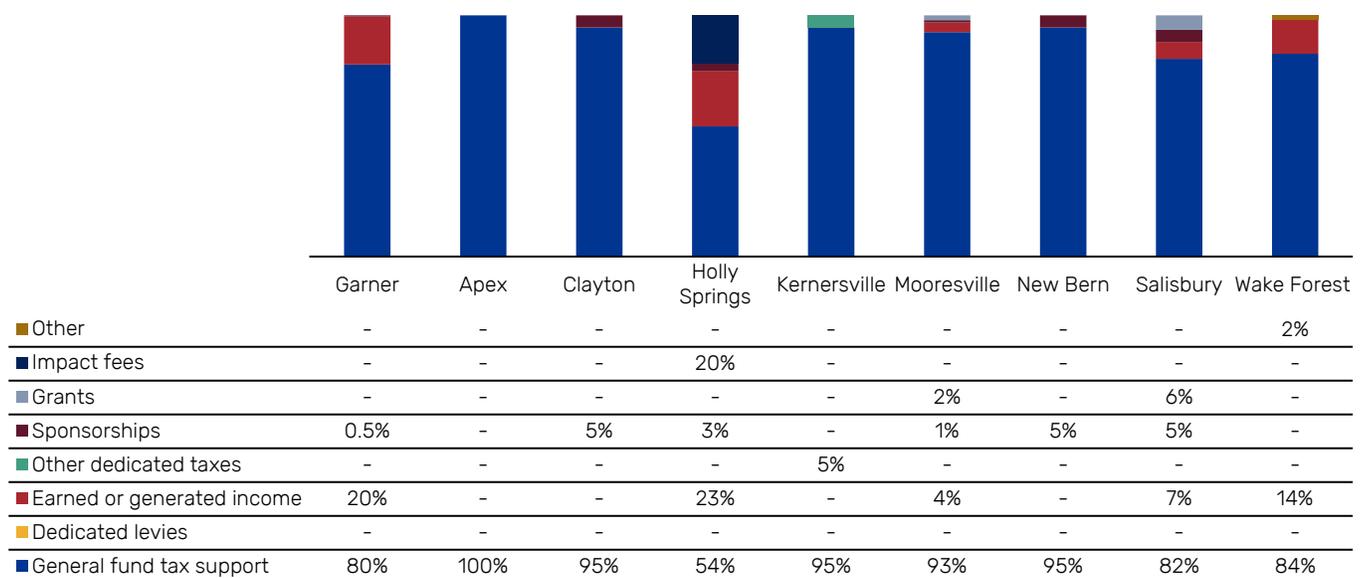


OPERATIONAL BUDGET SOURCES

Nearly 20 percent of the Department’s budget comes from earned or generated income. This is the second highest percentage among peer

communities. This indicates that more than most Departments, Garner generates their own budget from program fees, rental fees, and ticket sales.

Figure 14 - Operating budget sources for most recent fiscal year by peer community



level of service + benchmarking

CAPITAL BUDGET

Capital budgets include funding for non-operational costs such as construction of new facilities, land acquisition, and large-scale renovations and improvements. At nearly \$3.5 million over 5 years, Garner is budgeting the second-lowest amount for capital improvement among peer communities. With the recent opening of the Garner Recreation Center, Garner has had significant investment into capital improvements as a result of a successful bond referendum.

Garner has recently acquired nearly 200 acres of undeveloped land. All capital improvement projects planned are for new development rather than renovation or acquisition. Apex, Kernersville, and Wake Forest will all be making significant investments into capital improvements in the next 5 years. The questionnaire did not ask about sources of capital funding, so it is unclear whether this funding is from a bond, operating fund, or other source.

Figure 15 - Peer community capital budgets for the next five fiscal years

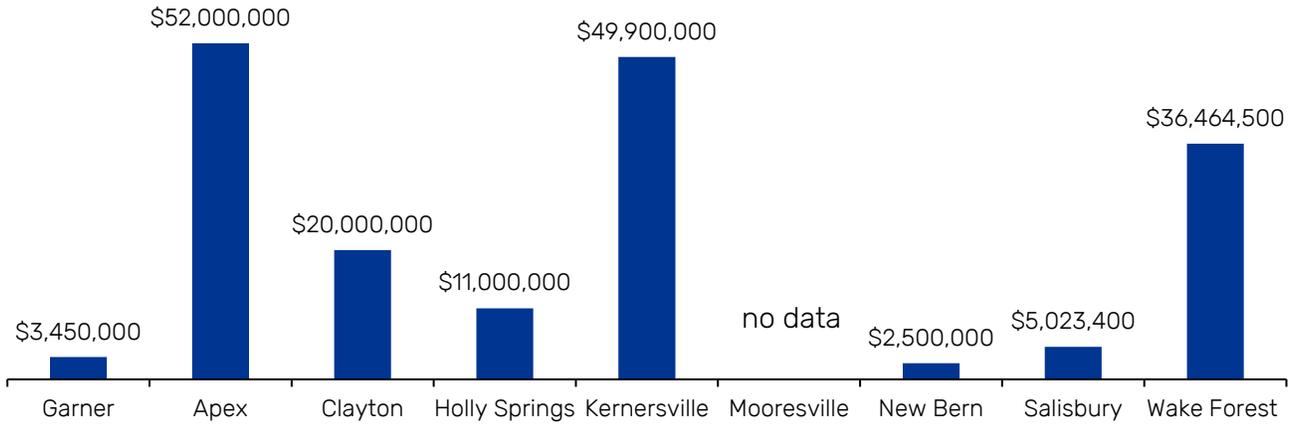
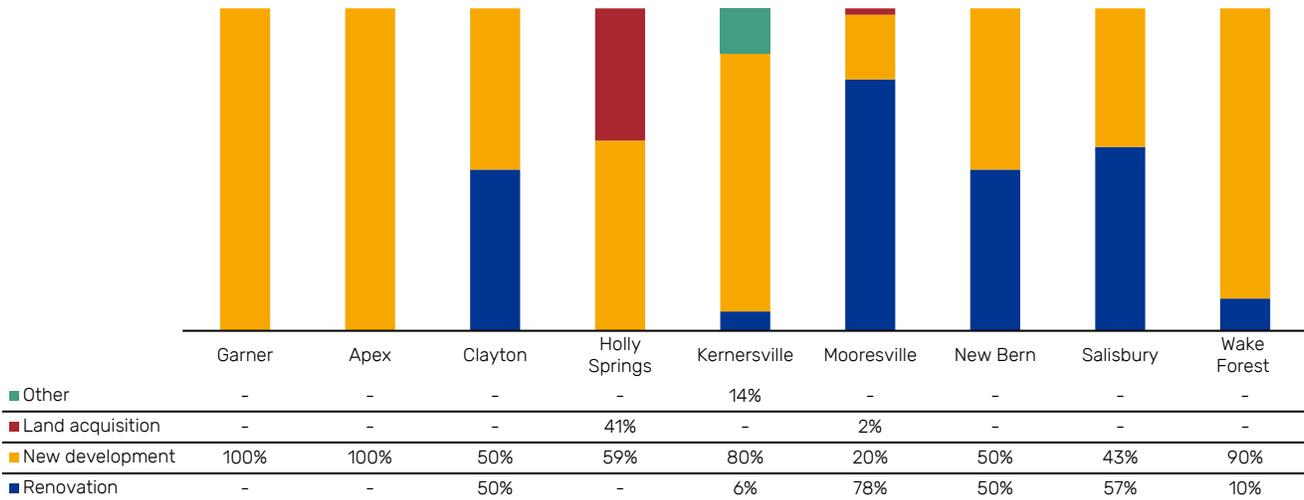


Figure 16 - Capital budget for next five fiscal years by peer communities.



6 > level of service + benchmarking

STAFFING

The Town of Garner has the smallest staff of all benchmarking communities. Notably, the peer communities with the smallest staffs do not house maintenance staff within the department. Garner’s Department staff has few seasonal staff and is comprised mainly of full-time staff. This indicates the Department has a consistent foundation in order to add additional seasonal or

part time staff in the case that additional staff is needed to expand parks, facilities or programs. Garner provides 0.8 FTEs per 1,000 residents, the second lowest rate of FTEs per 1,000 residents among peer communities. The staffing level of service may vary throughout the year with seasonality, but this analysis uses annual staff numbers to generate one annual level of service.

Figure 17 - Number of employees per employment type by peer community

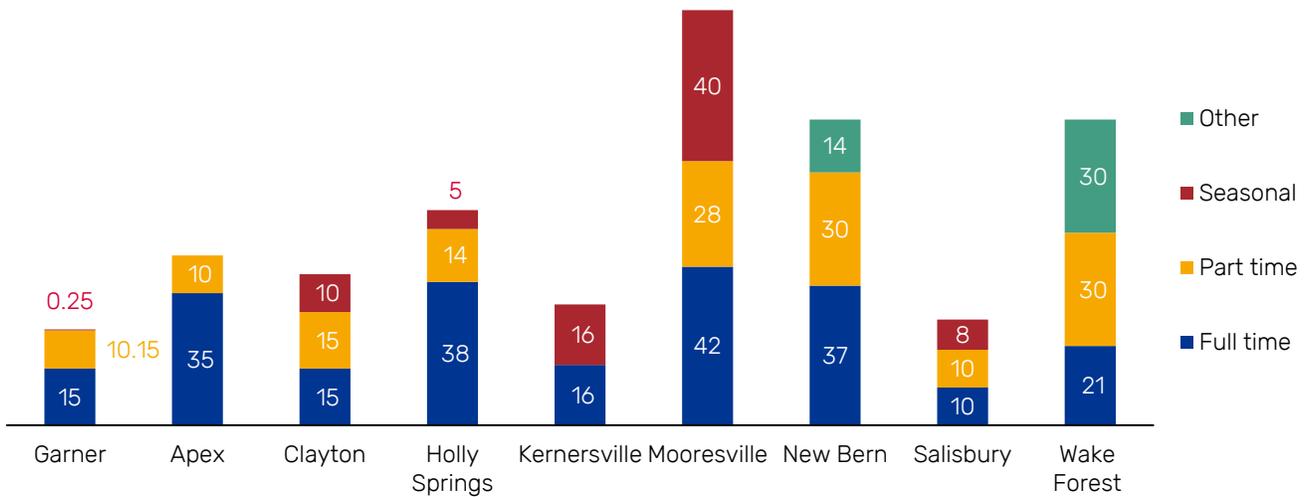


Figure 18 - Full Time Equivalent staff per 1,000 population by peer community

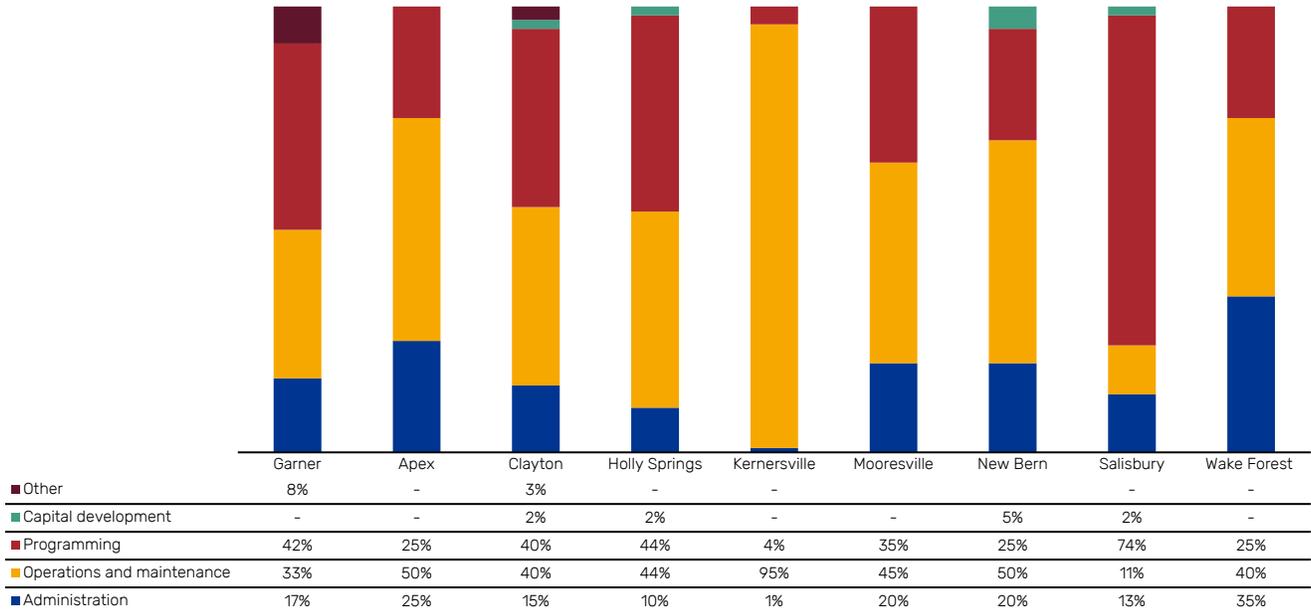
	FTES	POPULATION	FTES PER 1,000 POPULATION	INCLUDES MAINTENANCE?
1 New Bern	81	29,942	2.7	Yes
2 Mooresville	110	42,000	2.6	Yes
3 Clayton	40	21,500	1.9	Combination
4 Wake Forest	81	45,000	1.8	Yes
5 Holly Springs	57	36,973	1.5	Yes
6 Kernersville	32	25,200	1.3	Yes
7 Apex	45	48,741	0.9	Yes
8 Salisbury	28	33,849	0.8	No
9 Garner	25.4	32,539	0.8	No
MEDIAN			1.5	

level of service + benchmarking

Like most peer communities, the majority of staff time is spent on operations and maintenance, and programming. Approximately 17 percent of staff time is spent on administration of the department

and programs. Four departments spend more time on administration and four departments spend less. This places Garner at the median for staff time spent on administration.

Figure 19 - Uses of staff time by peer community

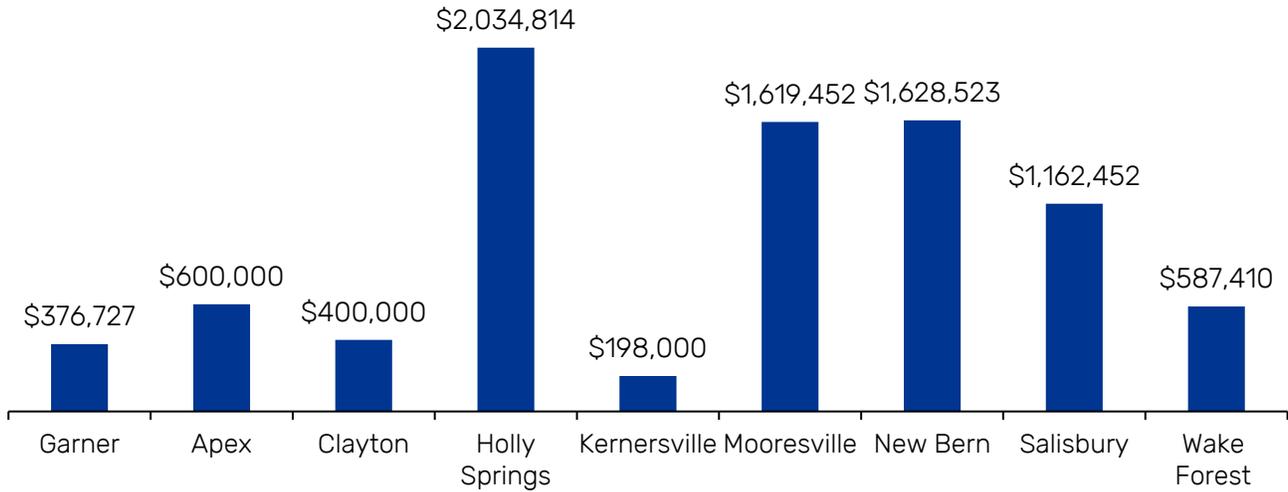


MAINTENANCE

Garner ranks second lowest for maintenance spending among peer communities. This is similar to trends shown in other sections of this analysis with Garner’s low ranking likely attributable to maintenance services being housed in Public

Works. The Inventory and Analysis chapter of this plan will discuss maintenance more thoroughly. This benchmarking analysis can serve as an indicator of maintenance spending of other departments that do include this service.

Figure 20 - Maintenance budget by peer community



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The benchmarking analysis reveals that Garner is a leader among peer communities in providing unique indoor recreation facilities. The Department stands out in both the amount of square footage offered and the variety of facility types offered

Garner is above the median in providing developed parkland to residents, and a significant amount of undeveloped land (ranking fourth highest in undeveloped parkland among peer communities) indicates the Town is well positioned to expand the park system as population grows.

Garner is ranked lowest overall in trail mileage and next-to-last in trail mileage per 1,000 population. This analysis indicates that Garner has fallen behind in greenway and trail construction as compared to peer communities. The greenway network master plan conducted as part of this planning process will position the town to achieve

more with trails in the coming years.

Garner's cost recovery falls in the middle of peer communities, indicating the department is achieving a standard approach to programming cost recovery where some revenue is generated without an expectation of full cost recovery.

Garner ranks in the lower end of the comparison for operating budget, staff, and maintenance budget. The most likely cause of this discrepancy is that the department does not employ maintenance staff or include those salaries in their budget. Among Department's without a full maintenance staff, including Clayton and Salisbury, Garner ranks highest for operating expense per capita, lowest in staff, and next-to-last in maintenance budget. Operations and Maintenance is discussed further in the Inventory and Analysis chapter.

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7

health + wellness



CHAPTER 7 > HEALTH + WELLNESS

The integral relationship between parks and health is easy to demonstrate. The first parks in the United States were developed in the 19th century as public health resources. Conceived as ‘green refuges’ in urban areas, parks were designed with the aim of improving the health and the quality of life for all residents by offering places for recreation, spiritual transformation through nature, exposure to fresh, clean air, and social interaction that transcended class.¹ Since that time, public investment in parks has been a priority for every level of government and the evidence suggesting that parks are ‘green health spaces’ has grown.

THE CASE FOR PARKS AND HEALTH

Among an endless list of benefits, some of the documented health-related benefits of parks are increased physical activity, reduced stress,

improved mental health, and increased social connectivity² (Figure 1).

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The public health impact of these documented benefits are “broad and cross-cutting”³ with the ability to impact population health in the most holistic sense of the word. Physical inactivity has been identified as a primary cause of most chronic health conditions⁴ including, cardiovascular disease, Type II Diabetes, obesity, certain cancers, depression, and anxiety. One study estimated that

11 percent of all deaths in the United States are attributable to physical inactivity and projected that life expectancy in the United States would be increased by 0.78 years with the elimination of physical inactivity.⁵ The direct and indirect cost burden of chronic illnesses associated with physical inactivity exceeds \$500 billion a year in the United States.⁶

MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS

Depression, anxiety, and chronic stress are also major public health concerns. In 2016, approximately one in five adults in the United States (43.8 million individuals) had a mental illness.⁷ More than a third of these adults (16 million individuals) were living with major depression. Anxiety disorder is even more prevalent. It is estimated that 18 percent of American adults (42 million individuals) are living with anxiety disorder.⁸ Among youth the prevalence is high as well. 20 percent of youth ages 13 to 18 live with a mental health condition, 11 percent have depression, and 8 percent have an anxiety disorder.⁹ These numbers have been on the rise in recent years.

The consequences of the high prevalence of mental illness in the United States are significant. For instance, suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States and the third leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24. For every suicide death, it is estimated that there are 11.4 hospital visits for suicide attempts. Notably, 90% of those who die by suicide had an underlying mental illness with depression being the most common underlying disorder (30 percent to 70 percent of suicide victims).¹⁰ Depression has been associated with reduced educational attainment, lower earning potential, increased chance of teenage childbearing, higher unemployment,

1 The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space. Paul Sherer. Trust for Public Land, San Francisco, CA, 2006. Accessed at: <https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/cloud.tpl.org/pubs/benefits-park-benefits-white-paper12005.pdf>

2 Barret, Meredith, Miller, Daphne, and Frumkin, Howard. Parks and Health: Aligning Incentives to Create Innovation in Chronic Disease Prevention. Preventing Chronic Disease, 11:130407. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.58888/pcd11.130407>

3 Improving Public Health through Public Parks and Trails: Eight Common Measures. Merriam, D., Bality, A. Stein, J., Boehmer, T. 2017. US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and US Department of the Interior. Accessed at: https://go.nps.gov/improving_public_health

4 Booth FW, Roberts CK, Laye MJ. Lack of exercise is a major cause of chronic diseases. Compr Physiol. 2012;2(2):1143-211.

5 Lee IM, Shiroma EJ, Lobelo F, et al. Effect of physical inactivity on major non-communicable diseases worldwide: an analysis of burden of disease and life expectancy. Lancet. 2012;380(9838):219-29.

6 A Smart Investment for America's Health. Codevilla, B., The Land and Water Conservation Fund. City Park Alliance, 2015. Accessed at: https://www.cityparksalliance.org/storage/documents/Mayors_for_Parks/CPA_SMART_INVEST_FINAL_RPT_LL_1.pdf

7 Any Mental Illness (AMI) Among Adults. (n.d.). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/any-mental-illness-ami-among-adults.shtml>

8 <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/major-depression.shtml>

9 <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers>

10 Ibid

and increased work disability.¹¹ A recent study estimated that the workplace and medical cost burden of depression in the United States is \$210.5 billion a year and that 62 percent of these

costs were incurred as a result of co-occurring disorders like anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and chronic pain.¹²

SOCIAL COHESION

While social cohesion is a broader and less measurable concept, there is evidence of its importance for fostering a healthy community. Healthy People 2020 identified social cohesion as a key issue in shaping social determinants of health. According to Healthy People 2020, social relationships, which are conceptualized with concepts like social cohesion, social capital, and social support, are important for health and well-being.¹³ Studies have found that social capital, for example, is associated with mortality¹⁴

and social support serves as a protective factor against risk factors that cause poor health¹⁵. Another study of social cohesion and health found that countries with higher levels of social inclusion, social capital, and social diversity had populations who were more likely to report good health.¹⁶ Global economists, political scientists, and social scholars have gone as far as arguing that social cohesion is an important factor in promoting economic growth and population health worldwide.¹⁷

CONNECTING PARKS + HEALTH

The connections between parks planning and community health are clear. Communities should consider parks, recreation, and cultural resources planning as an opportunity to pursue community health and wellness goals to ensure that residents have opportunities for physical activity in safe and accessible locations, provide spaces for connecting with nature to achieve and maintain mental health, and provide events and community interactions that promote social cohesion.

Parks, recreation, and cultural resources professionals and health and wellness professionals frequently share a vision for residents to achieve health and wellness within their community. This Health and Wellness Assessment connects parks, recreation, and cultural resources planning efforts to Wake County's ongoing Community Health Needs Assessment priorities.

11 Kessler, R. C. (2012). The costs of depression. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 35, 1–14. doi: 10.1016/j.psc.2011.11.005

12 Greenberg, P. E., Fournier, A. A., Sisitsky, T., Pike, C. T., & Kessler, R. C. (2015). The economic burden of adults with major depressive disorder in the United States (2005 and 2010). *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 76, 155–162. doi: 10.4088/JCP.14m09298

13 <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/social-cohesion>

14 Kawachi I, Kennedy BP, Lochner K, Prothrow-Stith D. Social capital, income inequality, and mortality. *Am J Public Health*. 1997;87(9):1491–98.

15 Cohen S, Wills TA. Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychol Bull*. 1985;98(2):310.

16 Social Cohesion Matters in Health. Ying-Chih Chuang, Kun-Yang Chuang. *International Journal for Equity in Health*: 2013 1287 <https://doi.org/10.1186/1475-9276-12-87>

17 Foa, R. (2011). The economic rationale for social cohesion—the cross country evidence. In *The international conference for social cohesion*. OECD. Paris, OECD.

Figure 1 - Highlighted Research Findings on Health-Related Benefits of Parks

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Counties with more facilities and acreage devoted to recreation have a lower proportion of the population reporting insufficient physical activity	People who use parks and open spaces are 3 times more likely to achieve the recommended levels of physical activity than nonusers	People who live near trails are 1.5 times more likely to meet physical activity guidelines	Access to outdoor space that is well-maintained and safe has been associated with initiating and maintaining physical activity and reducing obesity
Time spent outdoors is predictive of higher levels of activity in children	Children living within 1/2 mile of a park are more likely to have higher levels of physical activity	Studies have shown that a 1% increase in park and recreation areas is associated with a 1.2% to 1.4% increase in young children's physical activity	

MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS

Higher levels of neighborhood green space are associated with significantly lower levels of depression symptoms, anxiety and stress.	Outdoor exercise improves mental and physical well-being more so than indoor activity	In one study, more than 70% of participants had fewer symptoms of depression after going on an outdoor walk.
Exposure to nature can reduce stress levels in children by 28%	Even a 20-minute walk in nature can help children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder concentrate better	

SOCIAL COHESION

Parks have been shown to serve as places where people of different cultures interact acting as a catalyst for interactions between people of different backgrounds and reducing intolerance.	The casual interactions that happen between people in parks—a simple hello, nod, or wave of the hand—have been shown to be important in fostering a sense of community and feelings of inclusion	Older adults who have more exposure to green common spaces report a stronger sense of unity among residents within their local neighborhood, and experience a stronger sense of belonging to the neighborhood
Outdoor common areas in low-income housing neighborhoods that featured more greenery have been shown to lead to more social activity and stronger feelings of belonging		

Source: National Recreation and Parks Association <https://www.nrpa.org/>

health +
wellness

WAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The 2019 Wake County Community Health Needs Assessment identified existing and emerging challenges to health and wellness throughout the County. Data collected through the assessment process, existing data, and extensive community input from surveys, focus groups and more, the Community Health Needs Assessment identifies five areas for county-wide health priorities. The five priority areas are described in Figure 2.

The Community Health Needs Assessment identifies eight zones within Wake County. Garner is in the South-Central zone. The report includes findings specific to this region. Garner is fully within the South-Central zone, but the area also includes portions of Raleigh and unincorporated areas of Wake County. The report indicates “the South-Central zone is the second most racially diverse zone within Wake County. This zone represents approximately 11 percent of the total Wake County population in 2018.”¹⁸

Figure 2 - Five priority areas identified in the 2019 Wake County Community Health Needs Assessment



RELATION TO PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Figure 3 - Wake County Community Health Needs Assessment Performance Measures with Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Relevance

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SOUTH CENTRAL ZONE	WAKE COUNTY	NORTH CAROLINA
TRANSPORTATION + TRANSIT			
Percentage of workforce driving alone to work	81.0%	79.5%	81.1%
Percentage of workforce commuting more than 30 minutes in a car alone	-no data-	33.1%	31.3%
Percentage of workforce commuting by public transportation	1.6%	1.1%	1.1%
Percentage of workforce walking to work	1.2%	1.3%	1.8%
UNEMPLOYMENT			
Unemployment rate (percentage of population age 16+ unemployed)	-no data-	4.2	5.1
ACCESS TO CARE			
Percentage of uninsured individuals	14.1%	10.40%	13.2%
Mental Health ED visits per 1,000 population	195.8	132.3	
MENTAL HEALTH + SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS			
Suicide mortality rate (per 100,000 population)	- no data-	8.9	12.9
Poor mental health days (avg. number in past 30 days age-adjusted)	-no data-	3.6	3.9
HOUSING + HOMELESSNESS			
NA	-	-	-
BUILT ENVIRONMENT INDICATORS			
Percent of population living within a half mile of a park	-no data-	50.0%	23.0%
Access to exercise opportunities (percent of the population with adequate access to locations for physical activity)	-no data-	92.2%	76.1%

Source: 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment

PARKS + HEALTH EQUITY

Health equity can be defined as “the state in which everyone has the opportunity to attain their full health potential and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or any other socially defined circumstance”¹⁹. Up to 80 percent of an individual’s health is determined by physical determinants of health. These determinants include the natural environment, the built environment and anywhere people live, work, play, worship, and age.²⁰ Community-wide issues like poverty, unemployment, poor education, income inequality, inadequate housing, poor public transportation, exposure to violence, and racial and ethnic discrimination diminish people’s

opportunities to be healthy. Conversely, economic stability, early childhood education, high school and college education, employment, stable housing, and a sense of belonging and security can increase people’s opportunities to be healthy. The result of the unequal distribution of these ‘social determinants of health’ are systematic disparities in health that are directly tied to systems-level policies, structures, and decisions that are enacted across multiple sectors.²¹ A Health-in-All Policies approach seeks to reduce these disparities by addressing systemic social and economic inequities that prevent all people from achieving their optimal health.

HEALTH-IN-ALL POLICIES

According to the Public Health Institute (PHI), Health-in-All policies act as a guide to inform state and local governments about the health consequences of various policy options during the policy development process. It is a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas.²²

A Health-in-All Policies approach is only impactful if the common goals healthy and wellness and parks, recreation, and cultural resources partners identify translate into ongoing collaboration, the sharing of resources, and innovative funding partnerships beyond the planning process. In other words, the inclusion of a health element in the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Comprehensive Plan is only a nominal step. To achieve the full impact of incorporating health equity into the planning process, strategies to successfully pursue shared aims are necessary.

Given the strong relationship between parks and health, it is necessary to purposely address

disparities associated with parks, recreation, and cultural resources. Currently across the country, local parks systems are not equitable. Research shows that youth who live in poor or mostly minority neighborhoods are 50 percent less likely to have a recreational facility near their home²³ and that 70% of predominantly African American neighborhoods and 81 percent of predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods lack recreation facilities²⁴. Moreover, even in studies that have found minority and low-income neighborhoods have walkable access to parks, persistent disparities exist in acres of parks per person, park spending, park quality, park maintenance, and park safety when compared to wealthier, non-Hispanic white neighborhoods.²⁵ Disparities in access and utilization exist for other populations as well. Approximately 12 percent of adults aged 18–64 years have a disability, and nearly half are inactive creating a disparity in the participation rates in leisure engagement for persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, studies have found that despite the American Disabilities Act, many

19 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Health and Medicine Division, Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice, Committee on Community-Based Solutions to Promote Health Equity in the United States; Baciu A, Negussie Y, Geller A, Weinstein JN, editors. *Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2017 Jan 11.

20 <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>

21 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Health and Medicine Division, Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice, Committee on Community-Based Solutions to Promote Health Equity in the United States; Baciu A, Negussie Y, Geller A, Weinstein JN, editors. *Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2017 Jan 11.

22 Rudolph, L., Caplan, J., Ben-Moshe, K., & Dillon, L. (2013). *Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments*. Washington, DC and Oakland, CA: American Public Health Association and Public Health Institute. 5.

23 Gordon-Larsen P, Nelson MC, Page P, Popkin BM. "Inequality in the Built Environment Underlies Key Health Disparities in Physical Activity and Obesity. *117*(2): 417-424, 2006

24 Moore LV, Diez Roux, AC, Evenson KR, et al. "Availability of Recreational Resources in Minority and Low Socioeconomic Status Areas". *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 34(1): 16-22, 2008.

25 Wen, M., et al. (2013). Spatial Disparities in the Distribution of Parks and Green Spaces in the USA. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 45(Suppl): S18-S27.
Sister, C., Wolch, J., Wilson, J (2010). "Got Green? Addressing Environmental Justice in Park Provision". *GeoJournal*, 75:229-248.

parks, recreation, and cultural resources systems fall short of meeting the needs of people with disabilities. Built and natural environmental features, type of equipment, lack of information,

perceptions and attitudes among staff, and availability of resources all serve as barriers to access and participation for many people with disabilities.²⁶

PARKS PLANNING FOR A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

Positive health outcomes are clearly an essential benefit of parks, but inequities in parks and park systems remain. Maximizing the health benefits of parks for all residents requires purposeful planning and ongoing evaluation. Fortunately, there is a growing body of literature outlining the many criteria that can be used to improve the health and equity impact of parks, specifically

though the planning and design process. This health Assessment establishes various criteria for each of the three primary phases of the development process that intend to improve health equity and health and wellness outcomes. The following table offers a summary of some of the cited criteria and their associated measures.

Figure 4 - Metrics for incorporating parks and recreation criteria into planning, design, and programming phases of park development.

PARKS + RECREATION CRITERIA	PHASES OF PARK DEVELOPMENT		
	PLANNING	DESIGN	PROGRAMMING
	Determining the where and when of park development	Envisioning the built environment	Bringing parks to life
Proximity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % population within ½ mile of a park or shared use recreation area - Location in area with high Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) 	NA	NA
Walking Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % of population with a less than ½ mile walkable route to park (or shared use recreation area) or trail entrance - Ratio of the number of people with less than a half-mile walk route to a public park or trail entrance to the number of people living within a half mile of that specific park or trail corridor boundary. 	NA	NA
Acreage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total land area designated as public parks or trails in a given range ('park deserts', unequal distribution) 	NA	NA

health + wellness

26 Rimmer, J. H., Riley, B., Wang, E., & Rauworth, A., & Jurkowski, J. (2004). Physical activity participation among persons with disabilities. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 26,419-425.

		PHASES OF PARK DEVELOPMENT		
PARKS + RECREATION CRITERIA	PLANNING	DESIGN	PROGRAMMING	
	Determining the where and when of park development	Envisioning the built environment	Bringing parks to life	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment per park user - Investment per resident within ½ mile of park - Investment per park acre - Ratio of reinvestment (how much invested in park/total cost of ownership) - Investment strategy that includes consideration of community characteristics and site-specific characteristics 	NA	NA	
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of community context (demographics, community health, inequality, and assets) informs overall priorities and strategies for inclusion - # of community members from underrepresented social groups actively engaged in the planning process - Proportion of decisions made with stakeholder input - Level of impact of stakeholder / inclusivity consultant involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of design decisions that are made with stakeholder input from local community members, underrepresented or excluded social groups - # of cultural, locally sourced public art, and natural heritage features incorporated into park design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % of programs dedicated to special needs of under-represented populations 	
Safety	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple access/entry points - Extent Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Guidelines are followed - Hierarchy of lighting types and clear sight lines incorporated into design - Wayfinding Signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage instructors to achieve CPR certifications 	

PHASES OF PARK DEVELOPMENT			
PARKS + RECREATION CRITERIA	PLANNING	DESIGN	PROGRAMMING
	Determining the where and when of park development	Envisioning the built environment	Bringing parks to life
Access	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of ADA required features - # of entry points - # of connections to nearby neighborhoods, trails, and primary destinations - # of walkable routes to the park - Visible entrance and wayfinding signs - Signage in multiple languages 	- % of programs that provide transportation for non-vehicular households
Physical Activity	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of leisure, moderate, and vigorous physical activity areas - # of park elements for different age groups and populations 	NA
Healthy Eating	NA	- # of acres dedicated to edible landscapes	NA
Social Cohesion	NA	- # of park elements that encourage social interaction	- % of programs that encourage social interaction

*Criteria in this table are derived from a variety of sources including the National Park Service and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's eight common measures, the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC), the Community Parks Assessment Tool, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation's Equity Action Plan, the Gehl Institute's Inclusive Places Framework, and professional expertise.

These criteria move beyond traditional park measures by building in criteria that make explicit the elements needed for developing a parks system that promotes health for all residents.

That said, in order to make these criteria meaningful and achievable local parks, recreation, and cultural resources systems must take the time to ensure that outcomes are tailored to reflect the community context and to identify feasible strategies for achieving outcomes. For instance, what serves as an outcome in an urban environment (i.e., 100% of population within a ½ mile of a public park) may be unrealistic in the rural extents of a municipality and alternative measures or strategies should be pursued.

To tailor the criteria to meet community health equity, local data is essential. Using data collected

through the Master Parks Planning process as well as local health data and other primary and secondary sources, the specific needs of the community can be assessed to guide the planning, design, and programming process.

Outcomes specific to the Town of Garner are discussed above in relation to the Wake County Community Health Needs Assessment. Other measures to consider include:

- › Crime rates
- › Population Density
- › Percentage of population with self-reported safe place to exercise near home
- › Percentage of population in poverty (Areas of Concentrated Poverty)
- › Percentage of minority population in poverty (Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty)

- › Percentage of households with children
- › Percentage of households with people age 65 and up
- › Percentage of no car households
- › Percentage of population meeting daily physical activity recommendations
- › Percentage of population meeting daily fruits and vegetables consumption recommendations
- › Percentage of population with one or more chronic illnesses

Mapping measures like these can take the analysis further and help inform how decisions are made about where parks are located, how they are designed, and what programs need to be offered. They can also help identify opportunities for partnerships and be used to educate decision-makers about the enhanced value of parks, recreation, and cultural resources investments in specific locations throughout the community.

Adopting a data-driven approach to parks, recreation, and cultural resources planning, design, and programming is an example of the type of strategies that are needed to ensure that the criteria for high impact parks are translated into action. The ability to use this data requires building capacity and strategic partnerships for the collection, sharing, analyzing and reporting of relevant data. Thus, it is important that recommendations in parks, recreation, and

cultural resources plans explicitly address how shared parks and health aims can be achieved through strategies that leverage the strengths and resources of public, private, and nonprofit partners.

The three takeaways from this section on parks planning for a healthier community are:

There are concrete, measurable criteria that can be used through the park planning and design process for creating a parks, recreation, and cultural resources system that advances health equity in the community.

The criteria are not one-size fits all. The community context including demographics, geography, population health outcomes and behaviors, community preferences and desires, stated health and wellness goals, and local budgets should be used to adapt and prioritize criteria that are meaningful and achievable.

Strategies for leveraging the resources of different sectors towards achieving selected criteria should be incorporated into the recommendations of the parks, recreation, and cultural resources comprehensive plan to ensure that collaboration with diverse stakeholders is explicitly built into the implementation and evaluation process.

ALIGNMENT OF HEALTH AND PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OBJECTIVES

Based on the preceding sections, the following table demonstrates the alignment of health objectives and parks, recreation, and cultural resources objectives. The first column lists health and wellness objectives relevant to parks, recreation, and cultural resources. The table identifies where parks, recreation, and cultural resources objectives align with the goals and objectives of other health and wellness activities in Wake County. A grey dot indicates that this is a priority shared by parks, recreation, and cultural resources, and health and wellness partners.

Pursuing all health and wellness objectives is an important undertaking. This table identifies objectives that will receive wider community support because they align with the goals of other health and wellness organizations. The table can inform how potential collaborative strategies are prioritized within the Town of Garner. This plan includes additional considerations for implementation in the Recommendations and Action and Implementation Chapters.

Figure 5 - Policy crosswalk of parks, recreation, and cultural resources objectives and Wake County Community Health Needs Assessment Priority Areas. The table identifies where parks, recreation, and cultural resources objectives align with the goals and objectives of other health and wellness activities in Wake County. A grey dot indicates that this is a priority shared by parks, recreation, and cultural resources, and health and wellness partners.

PARKS, RECREATION + CULTURAL RESOURCES OBJECTIVES FOR HEALTH + WELLNESS IN GARNER	2019 WAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT PRIORITY AREAS					
	TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS + TRANSIT	EMPLOYMENT	ACCESS TO CARE	MENTAL HEALTH + SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDERS	HOUSING + HOMELESSNESS	BUILT ENVIRONMENT INDICATORS
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY						
Increase percentage of residents who live within 1 mile of park, trail/greenway, or shared-use recreation area	●	-	-	-	●	●
Increase the percentage of residents who have a safe route for walking or biking to a park, trail/greenway, or shared-use recreation area	●	-	●	-	-	●
Increase the percentage of residents who report that parks are safe spaces for recreation	-	-	-	●	●	●
MENTAL HEALTH						
Increase the percentage of residents who report visiting a park at least 1x/month	●	-	-	●	-	●
Increase the number of adults who participate in parks, recreation, and cultural resources programming	-	-	-	●	-	-
Increase the number of youth who participate in parks, recreation, and cultural resources programming	-	-	-	●	-	-
Increase the percentage of park visitors who engage in moderate or vigorous activity	-	-	-	●	-	-
HEALTHY EATING						
Increase the percentage of locally sourced foods sold at parks, recreation, and cultural resources events	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase the number of healthy food options available at parks, recreation, and cultural resources events	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase number of healthy eating and cooking programs offered by parks, recreation, and cultural resources	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase the number of parks that incorporate edible landscapes into their design	-	-	-	-	-	-
SOCIAL CONNECTION + COHESION						

Increase the number of community gathering spaces in parks (i.e. amphitheaters, picnic shelters, bleachers, community kitchens, etc.)	-	-	-	●	-	-
Increase the number of community events hosted in parks each year	-	-	-	●	-	-
Increase the number of community partnerships that support and sustain recreation and programs	-	●	-	-	-	-
Increase the number of recreational programming opportunities available at parks	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase the number of youth who participate in parks, recreation, and cultural resources programming	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOBACCO USE						
Achieve 100 percent no tobacco or e-cigarette use in parks	-	-	-	●	-	-

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8

greenway trails



CHAPTER 8 > GREENWAY TRAILS

Greenway corridors are trails, sidewalks, or multi-use paths that allow people to make muscle powered trips for transportation and recreation. Greenway trails are recognized for their ability to connect people and places, working as a tool for transportation, economic development, environmental preservation, and leisure activities. They serve an array of user needs and activities including pedestrian commuters, recreational cyclists, and runners exercising. Greenway trails and natural surface trails serve many needs. Understanding a greenway trail’s purpose and intended use will inform the trail’s location, design, and network connectivity.

WHY GREENWAY TRAILS?

Greenway trails contribute to a community’s quality of life by promoting individual and community health, environmental quality and economic impact. Greenway trails are one of the very few public investments that have such a wide

impact on a community’s quality of life. A dollar invested in a greenway project will yield return on that investment in transportation, health, environmental quality and economic vibrancy.

Figure 1 - Relationship among community, environmental, and economic sustainability achieved through investing in greenway trails



Figure 2 - Community health, environmental quality, and economic impact benefits of investing in greenway trails

COMMUNITY HEALTH	ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY	ECONOMIC IMPACT
 <p>HEALTH AND WELL-BEING facilitate active living and connecting with nature</p>	 <p>ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP protect air quality, water quality and wildlife habitat</p>	 <p>ECONOMIC IMPACT CATALYST promote tourism and business through public investment</p>
 <p>INCREASED MOBILITY OPTIONS expand resident's options for non-vehicular travel and commuting</p>	 <p>EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES connect residents to information about the natural world</p>	 <p>WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT attract new residents and businesses with high quality of life</p>
 <p>CULTURAL AWARENESS define community identity through public art</p>	 <p>HAZARD MITIGATION buffer hazard-prone areas such as floodplains</p>	 <p>HIGHER TAX REVENUE increase tax revenue by increasing property values</p>

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Simply being in nature and away from the stressors of everyday life promotes improved health and well-being. Greenway trails provide residents an opportunity to be away from driving, traffic, noise, and dense development. Greenway trails promote a healthy, active lifestyle providing a safe and attractive environment for running, jogging, biking, walking, and other forms of physical activity. Providing safe facilities for these activities away from areas of automobile traffic allows users to pursue these activities safely and comfortably.

Health benefits range from short to long-term effects in both physical and mental health. Evidence shows that trails and parks provide an opportunity for residents to create long-term health habits and active lifestyles that improve cardiovascular health and reduce chances of cardiovascular, skeletal, or other health complications.

A recent study on the cost benefit analysis of physical activity on bike and pedestrian trails revealed that for every \$1 in investment in trails for physical activity led to \$2.94 in direct medical benefit, indicating that building trails is cost beneficial from a public health perspective.¹

In North Carolina, 32.1 percent of adults and 15 percent of children are obese, with trends projected to increase. In 2017, 11.4 percent, or roughly 820,000 North Carolinians are diabetic. That number is projected to increase to over 1.2 million people by 2030.

Walking as a form of exercise becomes easier, safer, and more fun when people can use greenway trails for their exercise. Greenway trails have low barriers to entry; there is no entry fee and no special equipment is needed.

Greenway and trail users are more likely to interact with neighbors and community members,

¹ Wang, Guijing, Caroline A. Macera, Barbara Scudder-Soucie, Tom Schmid, Michael Pratt, and David Buchner. "A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Physical Activity Using Bike/Pedestrian Trails." Health Promotion Practice 6, no. 2 (April 2005): 174-79. doi:10.1177/1524839903260687

improving their own social health and the social connectedness of the community. This has been proven to reduce stress, diminish depression, and promote overall positive health outcomes.

Greenway trails provide a critical opportunity to connect children with nature. Studies show that regular non-structured play in a natural setting reduces symptoms of ADHD. Connecting with nature allows children and adults to release stress, engage in physical problem solving, and find space for contemplation and reflection.

Vehicular traffic congestion is often an issue in areas experiencing population growth. Robust greenway networks are a tool to mitigate congestion by providing residents transportation options other than driving a vehicle. When residents are able to choose cycling or walking to their destination, vehicular traffic is removed from the road, decreasing congestion.

Greenway trails can be constructed to comply with universal design standards that ensure accessibility to people who use mobility devices such as a wheelchair or crutches. Following design standards that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act will ensure that all residents can have expanded choices in their modes of transportation.

Nationally, about 836,569 Americans commuted by bike in 2017, an increase of 43 percent since 2000. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average commute time nationally was 50 minutes

and the Town of Garner's average commute time was 26 minutes.

The protection of sacred places with lasting identities set years ago allows a community to maintain a sense of place for not only local residents, but for tourism and economic purposes.

Redevelopment of formerly neglected community resources with walking and biking infrastructure brings a new sense of identity, as observed at the American Tobacco Campus in Durham, North Carolina and The High Line in New York City, New York. In both cases, industrial uses prohibited public use until the installation of trails and active public/private destinations. Greenway trails are a catalyst for urban revitalization and restoration of economic vitality in derelict industrial centers. The incorporation of historic monumentation, interpretive signage and public art have the potential to capture and celebrate the past, enhancing cultural awareness and connection to community identity.

Paired with economic benefits and community identity, greenway trails add and/or protect aesthetically pleasing aspects of a community. Not only is the natural environment portrayed in a raw state accessible to the public, but with the addition of artwork such as commissioned sculptures and murals an added aesthetic is achievable. This improves the experience for user and potentially attracting users who would otherwise not utilize a greenway trail system.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Greenway corridors are often located along stream corridors, utility easements, and forested areas. This urban trail infrastructure protects water quality, air quality, and wildlife habitat.

Greenway trails located along stream corridors create undeveloped areas where stormwater is able to filtrate through soils naturally, rather than entering stormwater infrastructure. Once water enters a jurisdiction's stormwater infrastructure, it is either deposited into natural waterbodies without any treatment or filtration, or it is treated as wastewater at a cost to the area's water customers and utilities. Using greenway trails to create vegetated buffers along streams creates opportunities for stormwater to filter through soils before seeping into natural bodies of water.

Greenway corridors protect water quality by allow water to filter out pollution carried in storm water and reducing stormwater velocity to reduce erosion and sedimentation.

The positive impact greenway trails have on air quality is two-fold. First, greenway corridors are often vegetated with trees or shrubs. These plants provide air filtration and carbon sequestration ecosystem services by taking in polluted air and carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. Additionally, greenway trails promote forms of transportation other than driving a car. The avoided car trips add up to reduce the amount of non-point source pollution in the form of fossil fuel exhaust released into the atmosphere.

Wildlife can also benefit from greenway trail networks. Greenway trails are frequently forested or vegetated and provide connections between forested areas providing significant areas of

wildlife habitat. These connections can prove critical to supporting wildlife populations that need safe routes for local migration, as well as bird species following much longer migration routes.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

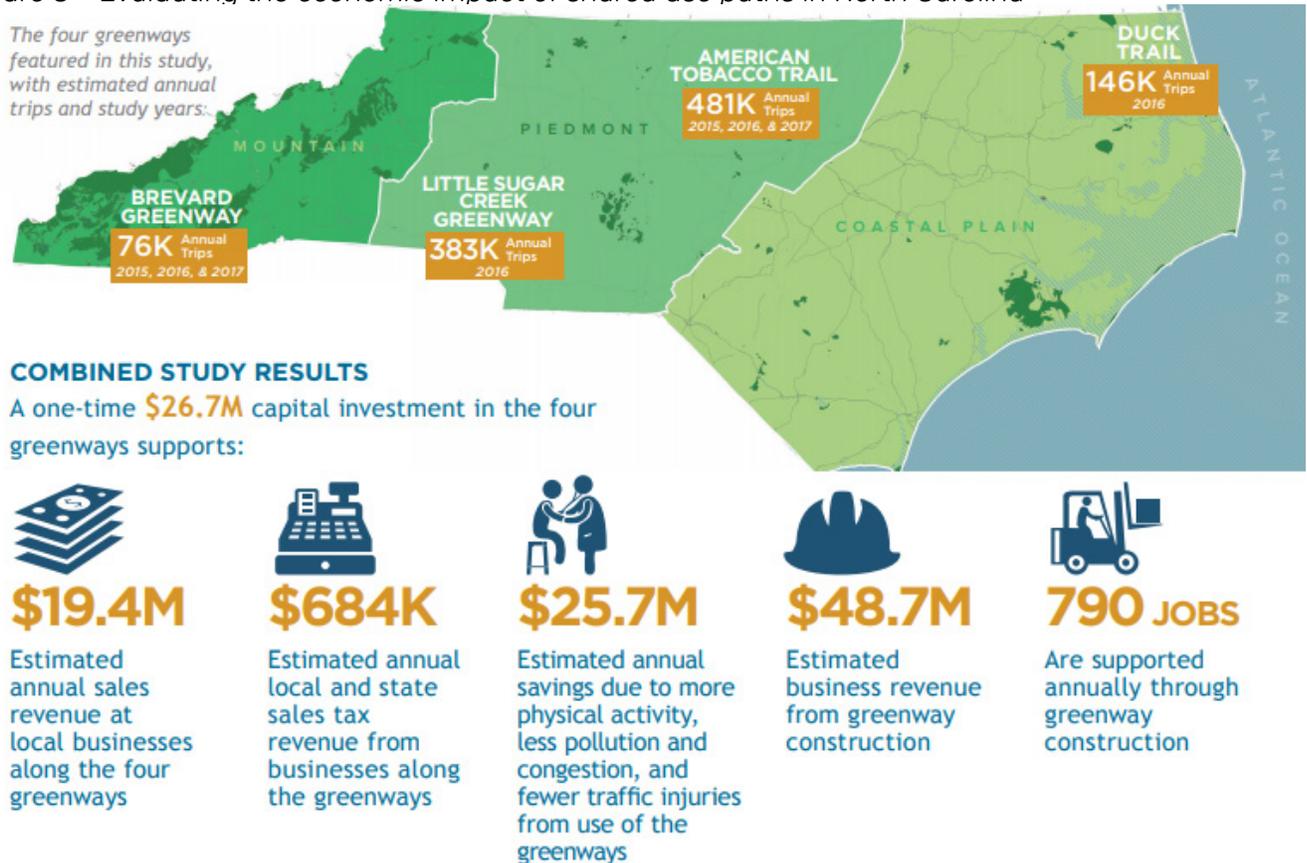
Comprehensive trail systems bring new business and economic life to cities, towns, and communities. Communities benefit by creating a greenway network that provides important local connections, and by extending local connections to higher provide regional trail networks.

Greenway trails benefit the surrounding area on a micro-economic scale by increasing adjacent property values and enticing business transactions near trails. Proximity to a greenway trail is an important consideration for home buyers and business looking to locate in a community.

The value of homes and properties adjacent to a trail statistically are higher than comparable properties further away from the trail corridor.

The East Coast Greenway is a regional trail project that runs through North Carolina with the goal of creating a continuous greenway connection between Maine and Florida. This trail benefits the Triangle area of North Carolina by bringing in more than \$90 million in related revenue and taxes per year. The trail has also created nearly 800 temporary and permanent jobs.

Figure 3 - Evaluating the economic impact of shared use paths in North Carolina²



2 The Institute for Transportation Research and Education and Alta Planning + Design for the North Carolina Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation.

GREENWAY NETWORK GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Proper long-range planning is essential to ensuring that greenway trails can be planned, designed, and constructed to fully meet the benefits they can provide.

Guiding principles of a greenway system

represent the broad philosophy that guides greenway planning and design. Consistent across the industry, the following guiding principals were considered when authoring the recommendations contained herein.

GREENWAY TRAILS SHOULD BE			
ACCESSIBLE	EQUITABLE	EXPERIENTIAL	SAFE

ACCESSIBLE

Accessible greenway trails can be enjoyed by all people of all ages and ability levels. Accessibility is regulated through technical design standards outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but more communities are recognizing the benefit of Universal Design, which considers accessibility comprehensively, beyond ADA requirements. Universal Design is defined as the

“design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.” Aspects of the built environment contribute to universal accessibility of greenway trails, such as trail width, surface material, and longitudinal and horizontal slopes.

EQUITABLE

The result of equitable greenway planning is that all people have access to greenway trails regardless of race, class, location, and other factors. Greenway trails should support all residents, and equity recognizes that equally providing infrastructure may not equitably meet the needs of neighborhoods and individuals. For

example, individuals who use greenway trails to achieve fitness goals will have different needs than individuals who use trails to commute to a workplace. Investment in greenway infrastructure should happen in a way that provides more vulnerable populations with equitable greenway infrastructure, access and experiences.

EXPERIENTIAL

Experience is the sensory feedback an individual receives while engaging in a task of activity. Sensory feedback forms an experience, one that is positive or negative. Creating greenway trails to generate positive experiences includes considering the natural views, a comfortable

environment, and perceived safety. Greenway trails should contribute to an overall quality of life and become a regular part of everyday life for short trips, exercise, and connecting with nature and loved ones.

SAFE

Safety refers to trail elements that minimize the risk of injury, danger and crime. Safe greenway trail networks are comfortable for users of all ages and ability levels as a safe means of alternative transportation making it easier to walk, jog or ride a bike. The application of relevant design

standards ensures that grades, curves and intersections with roadways and driveways are as safe as a possible. Greenway trails are as safe as the neighborhoods they traverse. Communities should develop appropriate policing and volunteer ambassador programs as their network expands.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Trails planning is a relatively new undertaking in Garner. Many communities are investing in greenway trails planning as they recognize the importance and feasibility of creating network system of greenway trails that create community connections and expand opportunities for recreation and transportation. Garner offers walking and hiking trails, mountain biking trails, and greenway trails.

Two plans have guided greenway trails planning in Garner, the Wake County Greenway System Plan and The Garner Forward Transportation Plan. Other plans that have informed this planning process are included in the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Comprehensive Plan’s introduction.

EXISTING GREENWAY TRAILS + NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

The Town of Garner offers 7.43 miles of trail throughout the parks and recreation system. Most of that mileage is walking trails, with a smaller mileage of mountain bike trails, and a half mile of greenway trail. The Town is currently extending their greenway system with the South Garner Greenway Extension, a project that is still underway.

Figure 4 - Town of Garner current trail mileage inventory

TRAIL TYPE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATIONS	TOTAL MILEAGE
Walking and hiking trails	Trails intended for leisure walking or fitness walking. These trails may be paved or natural surface. Trails typically form a loop and users begin and end at the same point.	Centennial Park Creech Road Elementary School Park Garner Recreation Center Lake Benson Park South Garner Park White Deer Park	4.68
Mountain bike trails	Trails intended for mountain biking. These trails are natural surface or gravel. Trails must be constructed to a standard durable to withstand biking.	Garner Recreation Park	2.25
Greenway trails	Trails intended for connectivity to provide recreation and commuting options. These trails are usually paved. Trails form a network that enable users to create loops or travel point-to-point to a destination	White Deer Park	0.50
TOTAL			7.43

PLANNING CONTEXT

Two planning efforts have identified trail networks for the Garner area and provide high-level recommendations for locating trails throughout the community. These recommended trail networks are based in a combination of community input and technical expertise. The

current greenway trails planning efforts use existing plans as a starting point to provide additional community engagement and provide a more detailed analysis and prioritization of trails projects.

WAKE COUNTY GREENWAY SYSTEM PLAN

The Wake County Greenway System Plan creates a county-wide trail network and prioritizes trail segments for construction. This document is important to the current planning effort because it shows prioritization of interjurisdictional trail connections. Successfully creating these points

of connection requires long-term coordination and focused planning efforts. Ensuring this plan reflects these regional connections is essential to generating a successful and functional trail network.

Plan Vision

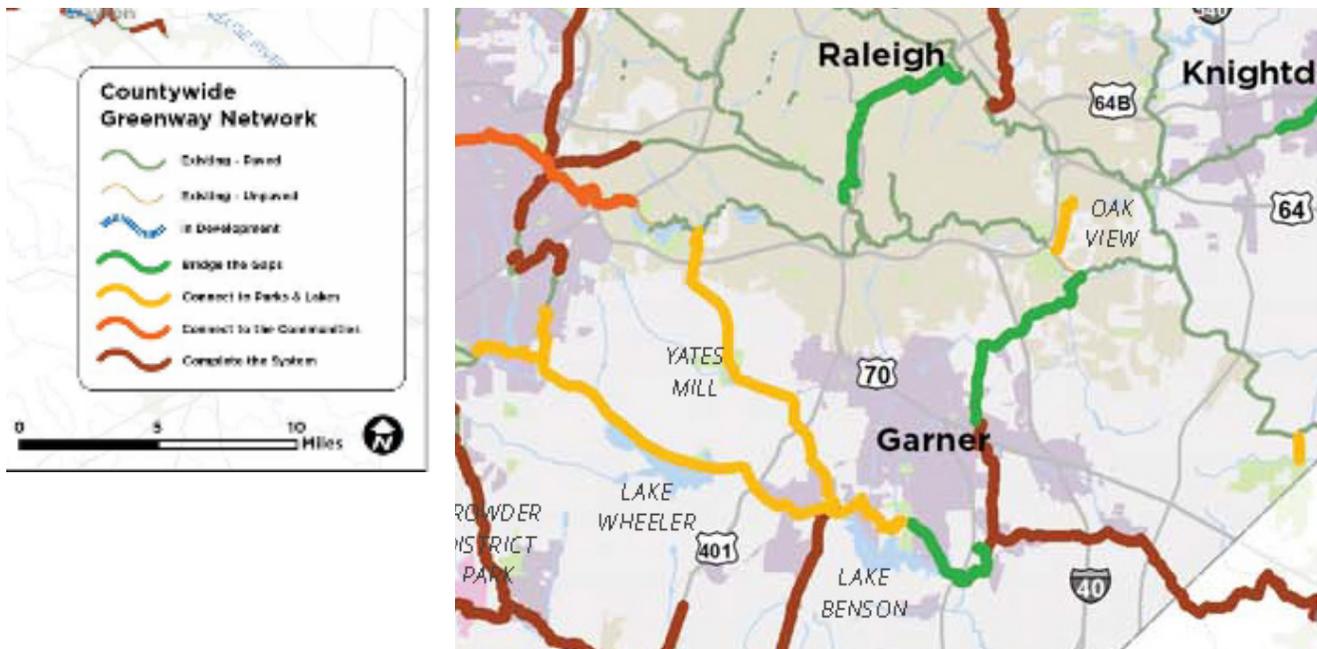
The vision for this plan is to create a connected and comprehensive system of greenway trails that enhances quality of life throughout Wake County. There is no other single type of investment that can be made on a local and regional scale that provides such a wide range of positive impacts. Greenway trails improve quality of life by providing

opportunities for transportation, recreation, public health, economic development, and environmental stewardship. This Plan serves as a clear guideline for trail planning and development, providing a framework for local governments and project partners to create a connected system of cross-county greenway trails.

Plan Goals

- › Improve access to outdoor recreation for health and wellness.
- › Increase connectivity for multi-modal transportation.
- › Support economic development and capitalize on trail-based tourism.
- › Protect waterways, wildlife habitat, and natural areas along greenway trails.

Figure 5 - Excerpt and map detail from the Wake County Greenway System Plan



GARNER FORWARD TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Garner Forward Transportation Plan prioritizes transportation and expansion projects for all forms of transportation infrastructure, including roadways, sidewalks, crosswalks, and public transit. The Pedestrians and Bicycles

chapter identifies projects that will improve network connectivity or pedestrians and cyclists with the goal of expanding safe and convenient transportation choices for Garner's residents.

Plan Vision

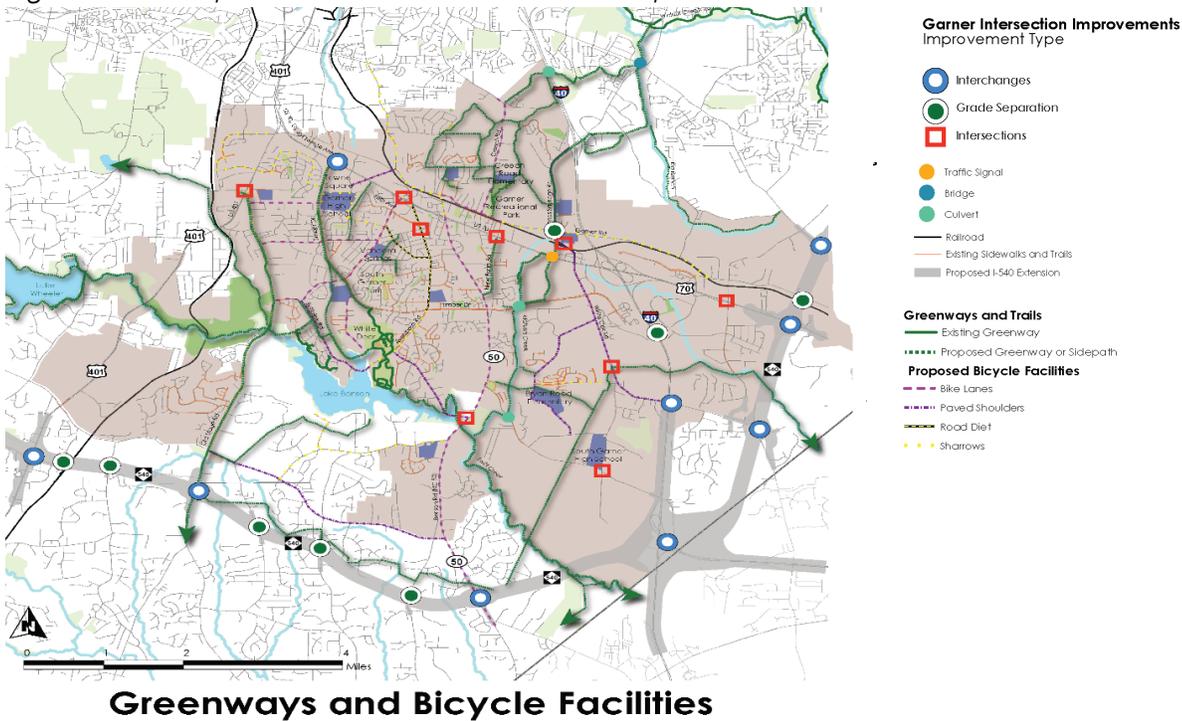
Garner's transportation system provides its citizens with efficient and safe travel options for auto, bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit users

that serve transportation needs in a balance with land use development patterns as well as regional and local partnerships.

Plan Guiding Principles

- ▶ The Garner Forward Transportation Plan will be a visionary document that includes a variety of strategies and partners from adjacent communities and our own to address transportation needs.
- ▶ The Garner Forward Transportation Plan is achievable because it includes both short-term and longer-term actions that respect political and regulatory frameworks, and can be undertaken with currently available or projected resources.
- ▶ The Garner Forward Transportation Plan considers users of all modes of transportation to produce a community that is more walking-, bicycling-, and public transit-friendly than it is today. The Plan shall also consider impacts to neighborhoods and the business community, and especially major employers, during its implementation.
- ▶ The Garner Forward Transportation Plan will provide efficient and reliable access for its citizens and businesses, while prioritizing their safety.

Figure 6 - Excerpt from the Garner Forward Transportation Plan



POLICY CONTEXT

The Town of Garner's Unified Development Ordinance includes several references for including greenway trails into new development and times they are required to do so.

Article 8 of the Unified Development Ordinance covers Subdivision Design / Improvements. Article 8.4 Open space and recreational facilities outlines the requirements for incorporating greenway trails into new subdivisions. Areas where greenway trails are planned qualify as "Primary Conservation Areas". This means that a subdivision with a planned greenway will be required to include the greenway area as part of the required open space dedication. The Town may determine which areas will be set aside when there is a "primary conservation area" such as a greenway, on the property.

Article 8.4 Open space and recreational facilities also states that "the Town's acceptance of greenway dedication must be "consistent with the officially adopted open space and greenway plan, parks and recreation master plan, or other applicable policies or plans." This article also states that the Town has the option of accepting

a fee-in-lieu of a required open space dedication. Section 8.4.B.5 of Article 8 outlines the process for accepting fee-in-lieu.

This language gives the Town the ability to require subdivision developers to dedicate greenway for public use and ensures that the town will only accept dedicated greenway right of way that is consistent with adopted plans. It also gives the Town the ability to accept a payment in lieu of dedicated facilities.

Article 3.10 Planned Development indicates that greenway routes can be included as part of a site master plan and Article 7.1 Landscaping and Tree Protection indicates that greenway routes can be included as part of a development's landscape plan.

Article 4.14 C states that new development within the Mixed-Use Development zoning code "shall be consistent with the Town's parks and greenway plan, special highway overlay district (SHOD) and other adopted Town policies." According to Section 4.14, Mixed Use Development will no longer be used for zoning future land but will remain as a zoning code on the official zoning map.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

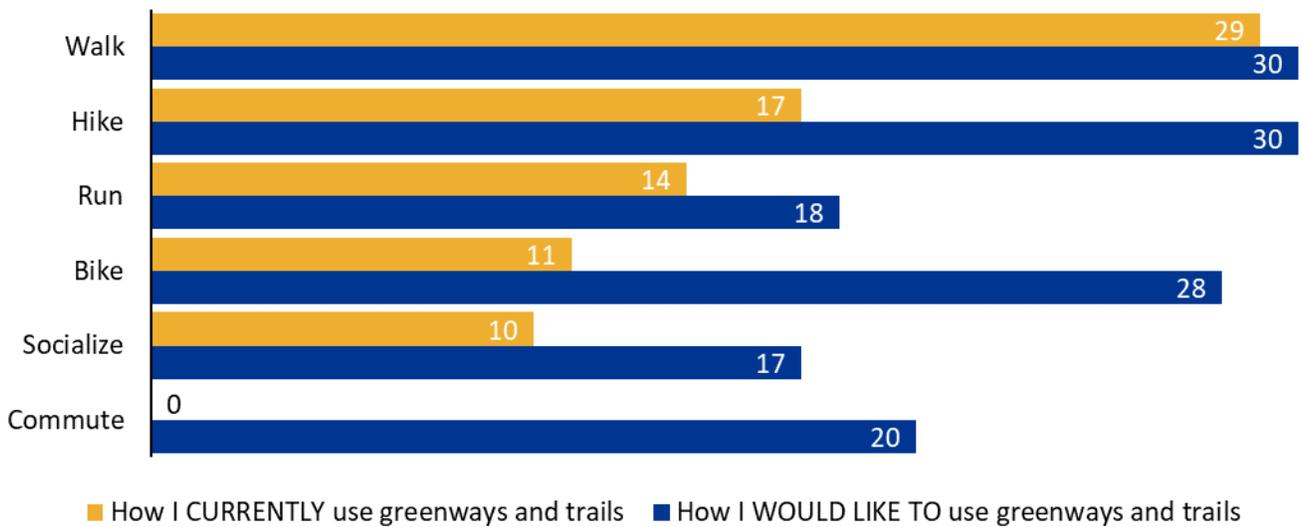
The first public input meeting asked residents about how they currently use greenway trails and natural surface trails, and how they would like to use greenway trails and natural surface trails. The two questions indicate gaps in how residents currently use trails and how they would like to use trails. For each of the six categories, the number of people who would like to use trails for that purpose is greater than the number of people who do use trails for that purpose.

DOT ACTIVITY RESULTS

This question does not illuminate specifically all of the possibilities for why residents do not use trails as much as they would like to. However, given Garner’s existing limited but popular greenway

trails and natural surface trails, a lack of facilities could be a significant barrier to people desiring to use greenway trails and natural surface trails more.

Figure 7 - Response to how people currently and how people would like to use greenway trails and natural surface trails



The type of experience people want to have on greenway trails and natural surface trails is an important consideration when planning and designing corridors. The results indicate that the top three experiences people want to have on greenway trails and natural surface trails include improving health and wellness, connecting with nature, or spending time with family or friends.



Figure 8 - Responses to “What experiences would you like to have on Town of Garner greenway trails and natural surface trails?”

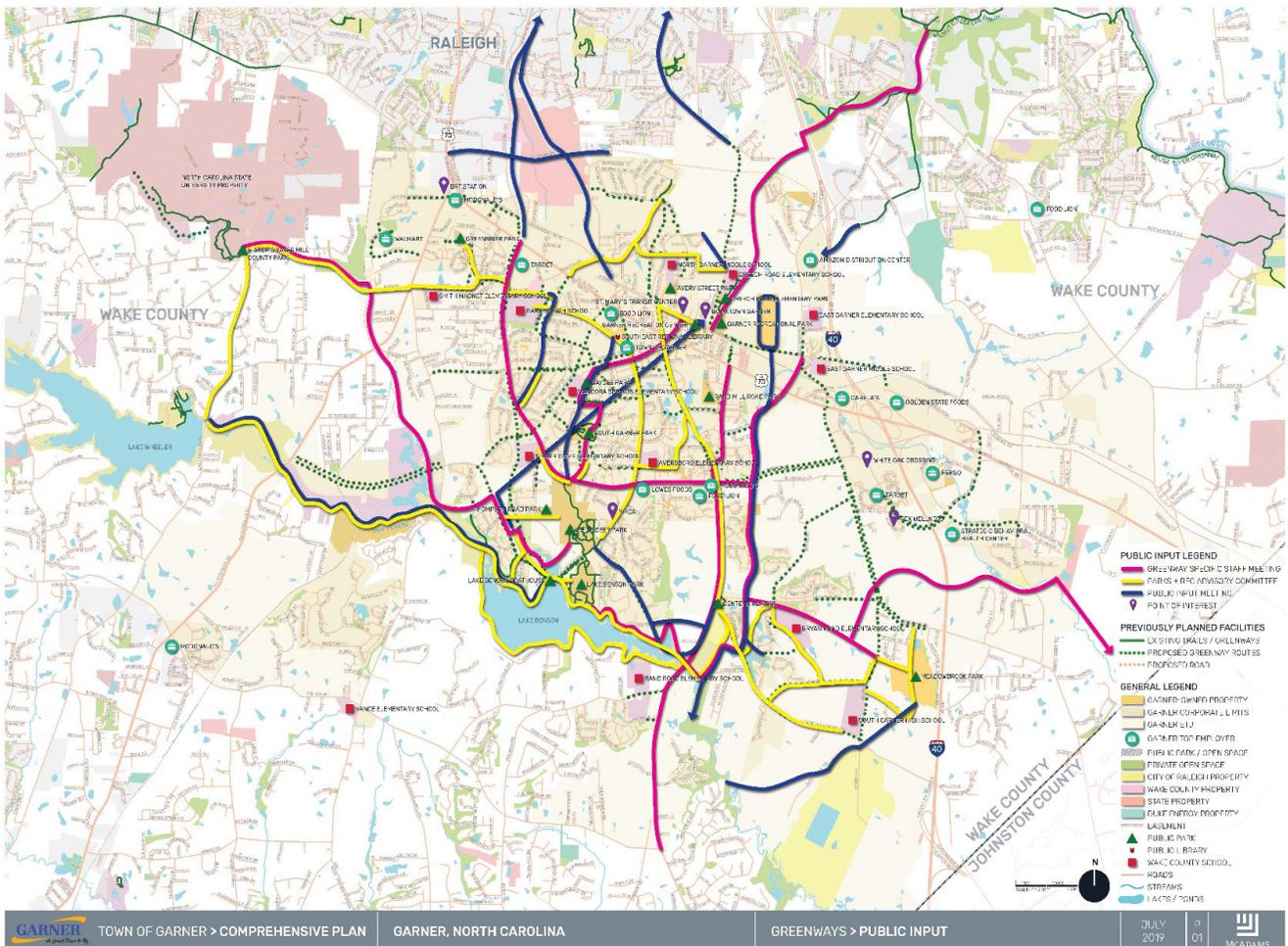
MAPPING ACTIVITY RESULTS

Residents, Town staff, and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members all had the opportunity to provide input on the greenway trails master plan. Participants indicated sites where they would like to begin and end greenway trips, such as their home or a local employer. Participants also indicated what corridors they would like to use to reach these destinations. The project team synthesized the information into the map below, which represents community engagement from

three meetings.

This community input provides the project team with an understanding of where people want to go and serves as the basis for a technical analysis of corridor feasibility and corridor prioritization. This map summarizing community engagement also indicates when multiple groups indicated support or a similar corridor, which also informs prioritization.

Figure 9 - Summary of mapping community engagement exercises



greenway
trails

ADDITIONAL STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Wake County completed a 2017 Greenway System Plan focused on connections across the county. Since that time they have been partnering with jurisdictions to implement this greenway trails plan. There is a Wake County bond that gives \$20 million over 6 years to invest in greenway trails. The county is working to develop a request for proposals process that allows jurisdictions like Garner to submit a grant request to implement parts of the Wake County plan through their own communities. The County has also been working with NCDOT on the development of the 540 extension to include culverts and bridge widths that allow for the addition of greenway trails.

CAMPO has also been working to ensure appropriate greenway infrastructure is included as part of the 540 extension process. They recently created a network plan identifying priorities for creating low-stress greenway trail connections between communities in southeastern Wake County.

The City of Raleigh is currently updating their greenway master plan and have recently adopted design guidelines for developers and contractors constructing greenway. One of Raleigh's priorities is creating a trail connection to the forthcoming Garner Station that is part of the proposed bus rapid transit network. The City is also working on a tool that uses modeling to create estimates for greenway construction. Estimates can vary widely based on terrain and their tool will account terrain considerations for estimate pricing.

The Town of Garner's greenway priorities include determining how to connect to the surrounding jurisdictions. Three primary considerations for the greenway network include connecting to downtown Raleigh via the Neuse River Greenway, finding a feasible connection over the railroad tracks that bisect town, and creating Town policy that enables private developers to construct greenway trails when constructing developments along planned greenway routes.

NETWORK RECOMMENDATION AND PRIORITIZATION

The Town of Garner Proposed Greenway Network Map is included on pages 66 and 67. This network summarizes community input, technical expertise, long-range planning, interjurisdictional collaboration, and common-sense connections. The Network Map depicts 111.8 miles of recommended greenway trails. This Map does not operate on the same 10-year planning horizon as the rest of this plan. The 10-year recommendation for trail mileage construction is included in the Chapter 9 > Recommendations under Parkland Goal 2. The recommendation is to construct between 33 miles and 42.7 miles of greenway trail within the next 10 years, depending on the rate of population growth. The Town should aim to achieve a level of service of 1 mile of greenway trail per 1,000 residents.

This network plan will be implemented over time as The Town adds greenway mileage. Strategies the Town will pursue for constructing new greenway trails includes construction by private developers for public use as part of new planned community construction, inclusion in transportation projects that will be required to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in accordance to this adopted plan, and through the Town's pursuit of stand-alone trail construction projects.

The appendix includes a prioritization of each trail segment based on the segment's connections to desired community destinations. Community input identified greenway trails and natural surface trails as the community's greatest recreation need, so segments are prioritized as highest, high, and medium priority.

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TOWN OF GARNER PROPOSED GREENWAY NETWORK MAP



health +
wellness



GENERAL LEGEND

- PROPOSED GREENWAY CORRIDOR
- EXISTING TRAILS / GREENWAY
- BUS RAPID TRANSIT ROUTE
- I-540 PROPOSED ALIGNMENT
- GARNER-OWNED PROPERTY
- GARNER CORPORATE LIMITS
- GARNER ETJ
- POINT OF INTEREST
- GARNER TOP EMPLOYER
- PUBLIC PARK / OPEN SPACE
- PRIVATE OPEN SPACE
- CITY OF RALEIGH PROPERTY
- WAKE COUNTY PROPERTY
- STATE PROPERTY
- DUKE ENERGY PROPERTY
- EASEMENT
- PUBLIC PARK
- PUBLIC LIBRARY
- WAKE COUNTY SCHOOL
- ROADS
- STREAMS
- LAKES / PONDS

greenway trails



9

vision + recommendations

CHAPTER 9 > VISION + RECOMMENDATIONS

DEPARTMENT MISSION

To enrich the quality of life in Garner by offering a diverse system of parks, recreational facilities, programs, and cultural resources.

DEPARTMENT VISION

Helping Garner maintain its high quality of life and service delivery to its citizens and visitors through the following core values:

PARKS, RECREATION + CULTURAL RESOURCES CORE VALUES

Our core values reflect and align with Town of Garner Strategic Priorities in the following ways:

- › Leadership- fostering a climate of creativity that develops high-potential talent and embraces innovation cutting-edge ideas and accountability for making decisions and recommendations. (TOG- Efficient and Timely Service Delivery)
- › Efficiency- Ensuring that programs and services are provided efficiently and effectively while matching community needs. (TOG- Fiscal Responsiveness, Efficient and Timely Service Delivery)
- › Diversity- Recognizing the changing demographics of the community and celebrating the unique qualities, characteristics, and experiences. (TOG- Orderly Growth)
- › Stewardship- Maintaining aesthetically pleasing parks and facilities (TOG- Quality of Life)

TOWN OF GARNER STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Fiscal Responsiveness

Efficient and Timely Service Delivery

Orderly Growth

Quality of Life

PARKLAND

Enhance quality of life for Garner residents by providing quality parks, trails, facilities, and a variety of recreation opportunities.

Parkland Goal 1: Build high quality parks for the Growing Garner Community

Residents in the Town of Garner support the growth their community is experiencing but want to retain the area’s small-town character amid this expansion. Parks, recreation, and cultural

resources are a valuable tool for enhancing and elevating that character and often create the iconic spaces that make a place feel like home.

NEW PARKLAND

This plan recommends that Garner develop between 83.2 acres and 184.3 acres of new parkland within the 10-year planning horizon. Garner is experiencing rapid population growth at a rate between 2 percent and 4 percent growth every year. The average annual growth rate in North Carolina is 1 percent per year. This recommendation is included as a range to account for the variability of population growth over the next 10 years. The Department can assess population growth throughout the lifespan of this plan and determine which level of service

projection will best serve the future population.

The Town is already positioned to add this additional acreage to their park system. The Department is pursuing master plans for Yeargan Park and Meadowbrook Park. The plans for these parks will be finalized in early 2020. Full build out of both of these parks will fully account for the 184.3 acres needed within the next 10 years at the high rate of population growth. A cost estimate for the proposed park development will accompany each master plan.

Figure 1 - Parkland acreage level of service recommendation

GARNER’S CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE IS -	BENCHMARKING LEVEL OF SERVICE IS -	INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICE IS -	RECOMMENDATION
10.5 acres* of developed parkland per 1,000 pop.	9.2 acres of developed parkland per 1,000 pop.	10.1 acres of developed parkland per 1,000 pop.	MAINTAIN a level of service of 10.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents

*Meadowbrook and Yeargan are not included in this calculation as they are not currently developed parkland. Development of these parks will contribute to meeting this recommendation.

Figure 2 - Parkland acquisition recommendation

2% AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH	4% AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH
83.2 acres of parkland developed by 2029	184.3 acres of parkland developed by 2029

UPGRADES TO EXISTING AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

In addition to acquiring new land and constructing new parks, existing parks should be upgraded to reflect best practices in park design. Best practices for park design include the following strategies.

Provide a diversity of park amenities: Parks should include diverse amenities with wide community appeal. A diversity of amenities leads park users to extend their length of stay and appeals to a wider audience of potential

park visitors. A combination of amenities with low barriers to entry and more “niche” amenities provide all visitors with recreation opportunities while offering a unique amenity that gives a park its own identity. Examples of amenities with low barriers to entry include paved, looped walking trails and open multipurpose lawns for unprogrammed play. Niche amenities may include splash pads, inclusive playgrounds, sensory gardens or ropes courses.

Green infrastructure: Green infrastructure as defined by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is any practice that uses or replicates natural systems to achieve a desired outcome¹. The benefits of implementing green infrastructure improvements throughout a park system include reduction of urban heat island effect, increase in rainwater infiltration that replenishes the groundwater supply, filtration of stormwater runoff limiting pollution of waterways and sequestration of emissions. Examples of green infrastructure include rain gardens, vegetated swales, green roofs, porous pavements, restoration of natural habitat, and preservation of wetlands and riparian stream buffers.

Maintenance: The Town should develop a maintenance management plan as part of every park renovation or development process. Each park includes a variety of maintenance zones, ranging from low intensity to high intensity, indicating the level of attention each element of a park requires. Understanding what level of maintenance is needed for a park will indicate whether Town staff currently have the capacity to adequately care for the park. If a new park or amenity extends the system's overall maintenance level beyond what existing staff can manage, the department must increase staff to manage the work or must identify work saving strategies for staff, such as identifying tasks that staff can contract out. Identifying maintenance management levels to all areas of a park will set expectations for long-term maintenance needs, especially since maintenance is addressed through the public works department. Examples of intense maintenance zones may include highly visible areas such as park entrances, gathering spaces, athletic turf, event spaces, or specialty gardens. Low maintenance zones may include undisturbed vegetated areas, natural buffers or preserved habitat. Park and facility maintenance considerations are discussed further in the Operations and Maintenance Section.

The Department should work closely with Public Works to continually update deferred maintenance lists and address upgrades and replacements as soon as possible, incorporating the associated costs into annual operating

budgets. This allows equipment to be repaired or replaced as soon as it becomes in disrepair. Immediately addressing equipment in disrepair or showing signs of wear and tear extends the overall lifecycle of equipment and facilities. For example, the HVAC system at Avery Street Annex will need replacement, the play structure at White Deer Park has been removed and needs replacement, and the restroom building at South Garner Park is outdated and showing signs of water intrusion which can lead to more significant structural concerns. Tennis courts throughout Town are also in need of updating. Additionally, play structures at Jaycee Park and Greenbrier Park are showing signs of wear and tear and should be repaired or replaced as a short-term priority.

Similarly, maintenance and / or replacement of fields and courts should be included in maintenance plans and replacement schedules. Repairs to cracked play surfaces, peeling or faded court paint or inadequate fencing as seen at parks including the basketball court at Rand Mill Park and all Town tennis courts can extend the longevity of the courts. While these are a few examples of park and facility elements that need repair or replacement, a more detailed and exhaustive list should be prepared by Department staff and addressed by Public Works.

ADA and Inclusivity: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) outlines minimum standards for compliance with regulations that govern public accommodations to provide goods and services to people with disabilities on an equal basis². The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has also undertaken an inclusivity initiative to ensure all people have access to the benefits of local parks, recreation, and cultural resources. The NRPA defines inclusion as removing barriers, both physical and theoretical, so that all people have an equal opportunity to enjoy the benefits of parks, recreation, and cultural resources³. Inclusivity tends to go beyond the requirements of the ADA and encourage built environment enhancements that increase access to parks for people with cognitive disabilities, the LGBTQ community and racial and ethnic minorities.

The Department should work closely with the Public Works Department to ensure the Town's

1 Brown, Hannah Jane. Green infrastructure: Exploring solutions in LEED, SITES and Parksmart. Jan 26, 2017.

2 The Americans with Disabilities Act Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal. Adaptive Environments Center, Inc. and Barrier Free Environments, Inc. 1995.

3 Parks and Recreation Inclusion Report. National Recreation and Park Association, 2018.

ADA Transition Plan is current and implemented on a routine basis. Implementation of this plan should address both site features and buildings. For example, many amenities do not have ADA compliant access such as the playground at Greenbrier Park and the water fountain at South Garner Park. The park system also lacks all-inclusive park amenities and the Department should consider upgrading or replacing outdated play equipment with inclusive or sensory-rich playgrounds.

Shade and Comfort: Shade and comfort are two key concepts to improve park experience. Summer temperatures in the south not only threaten personal comfort, but also safety. Providing adequate opportunities for temperature moderation such as shade from mature canopy trees, shelters, shade sails, or other means is essential to fostering comfort in parks. Additional consideration should be given to comfort amenities including seating options, range of public and private gathering spaces, restrooms, access to drinking water, and adequate parking.

Placemaking: Parks present an opportunity to communicate a community's unique image and brand, distinct community characteristics and ensure vibrant shared public spaces. Most often, this is accomplished by balancing consistency of signage, furnishings and materiality with the flexibility to express each park's authentic self. Insistence on integration of community involvement and public art into all park design projects will contribute to a unique sense of place at each park and allow expression of historic, cultural and social narratives. Currently, most parks have limited way-finding signage or consistent furnishings. The Department should consider upgrading site furnishings with a consistent pallet of benches, trash receptacles, kiosks, water fountains and other amenities. Similarly, the Department should consider development and implementation of a wayfinding or signage master plan for the park to enhance branding, safety and user experience.

Connectivity: Both internal and external to a park, connectivity through a trail system can improve access to park amenities and provide opportunities to improve health. Within parks, paved walkways and trails can connect individual amenities while offering recreational value with a

low barrier to entry. External to parks, greenway trails can provide system-wide connections between parks and places of work, employment, residence or shopping. Park development should consider proximity to local greenway trails and include provisions for both connectivity within the park and to other civic destinations. The Town recently undertook a feasibility study for the South Garner Trail corridor to determine the most constructible and cost-effective alignment for connecting White Deer Park with a proposed Wake County greenway corridor and eight surrounding neighborhoods. Connections like these promote connectivity between parks, neighborhoods and other civic destinations.

CPTED and Safety: Safety can be real or perceived. While statistics such as annual incidents of reported crimes provide data to illustrate real safety concerns across a given park system, perhaps more important are perceived feelings of safety, a users' level of comfort and perception of risk. Simple concepts related to the built environment can improve both real and perceived safety. Employing the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) or prospect and refuge can discourage crime and foster feelings of safety. The theory of CPTED is built on four principles: Natural Access Control, Natural Surveillance, Territorial Reinforcement and Maintenance. Prospect and refuge are created through patterns of enclosure and outlook in the built environment.

The Department should use the results of community engagement to make decisions regarding improvements and amenities at new parks. Results from the statistically valid survey indicate that the department should invest in:

- › Natural trails
- › Greenway trail system
- › Splash pad
- › Boathouse and water access
- › Ropes course or adventure course
- › Athletic fields
- › Outdoor amphitheater and event space

ACQUIRE LAND FOR FUTURE PARKS

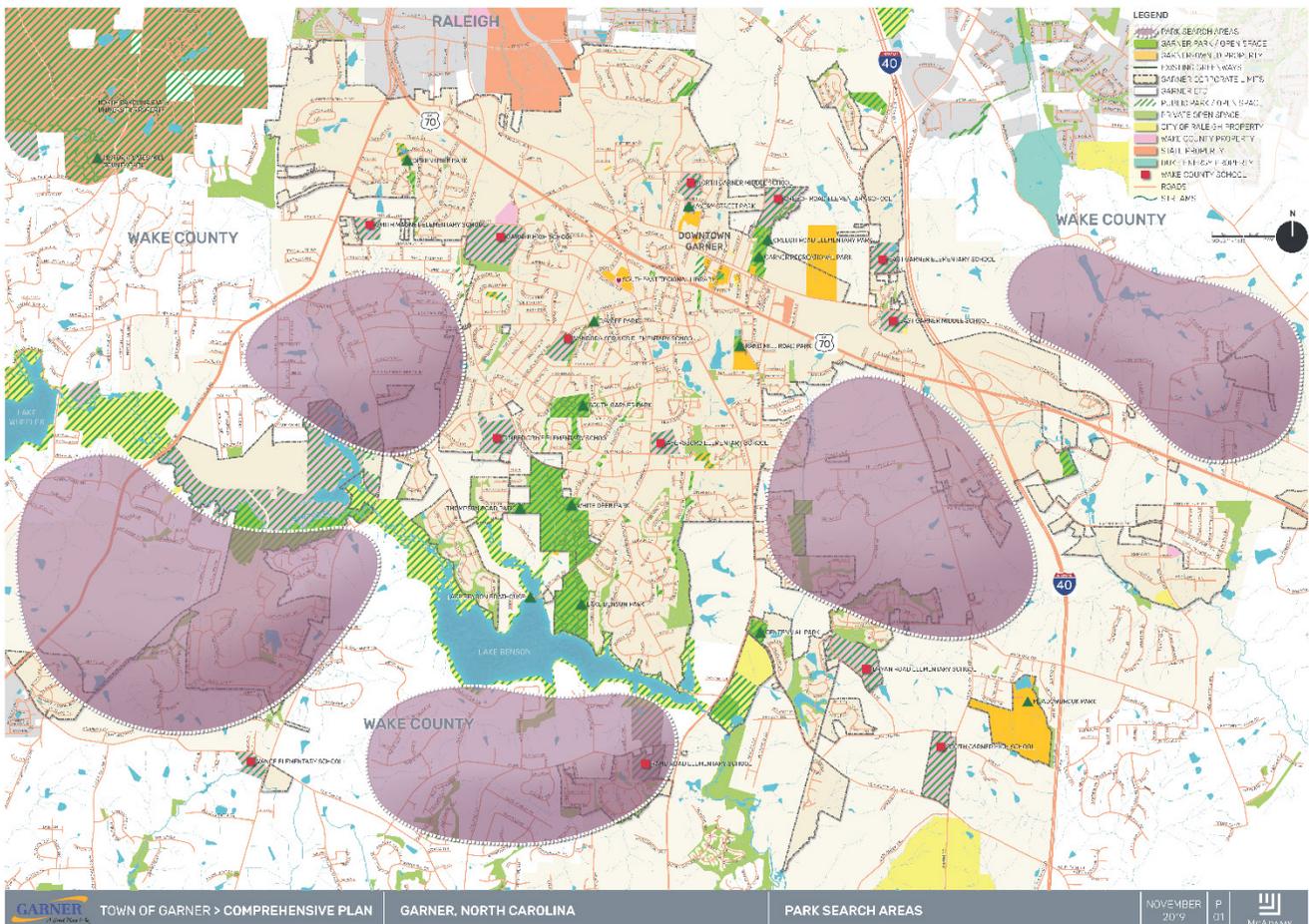
The Department is poised to meet the upcoming 10-year planning horizon of parkland needs due to careful planning and Department leadership that anticipated community needs. This approach is necessary during the next 10 years to ensure that the Town holds land banking reserves to be constructed as parks in 2030 or later.

The park search area included as part of this plan identifies areas that should be prioritized for new parkland acquisition. Park search areas are identified based on a lack of existing parks and a proximity to future population centers and growth areas, as determined by building permits the Town has issued. Areas near the proposed Bus Rapid Transit route are also identified as priorities for parkland acquisition as land in these areas becomes attractive for future development as transportation infrastructure is developed.

This plan recommends a high degree of due diligence prior to land acquisition to maximize Town resources and inform the decision-making process. Both the right location and the right land should be considerations when acquiring land.

The Town can use a parcel scoring system to identify the desired characteristics and then rank each potential acquisition accordingly. This same process can be applied to the Town’s surplus properties to determine if parcels the Town already holds should be designated for future park uses. A site suitability study provides an overview of the legal and physical opportunities and constraints of the site that can be used to determine if a site is suitable for a desired end use. Site suitability studies provide evidence to validate informed decisions regarding land acquisition.

Figure 3 - Park Search areas map



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Figure 4 - Considerations for acquiring land suited for park development

	SITE SUITABILITY	DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL	CHARACTERISTICS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Appropriate for passive recreation and minimal disturbance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › More prescriptive › Fewer options › More constraints on developability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Shallow surficial rock › Steep slopes › Poor or hydric soils › Title commitments › Development regulations don't allow intended use
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Appropriate for active recreation, maximum disturbance possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Less prescriptive › More options › Few constraints on developability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Road frontage or deeded access › Acreage sufficient for intended use › Development regulations allow for intended use › Less topographical variation › Soils suitable for development

Preference is given to parcels that are adjacent to existing parks, are within proximity to other civic destinations, connect to trail networks or are in areas with gaps in services.

EVALUATE THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE TO SUPPORT PRIVATE INVESTMENT INTO PARKS

The Unified Development Ordinance accounts for the provision of open space and recreation facilities in Article 8. Subdivision Design/Improvement. Section 8.4 states that “The Town Council finds that, when land is developed for residential purposes, the public health, safety, and welfare are best served if a portion of the land so developed remains as common open space.” The ordinance continues on to state that “except as otherwise provided herein, every residential development shall be developed so that at least 10 percent of the total area of the development remains permanently as open space.” Developments less than one acre in size are exempt. The ordinance also includes a fee in-lieu option for a private developer to provide funds in lieu of an open space designation. The Town is able to use fees obtained through this process for the capital improvement fund that is separate from the Town’s general fund. This fund may be only used for the “acquisition of additional

park land or the construction of new recreational facilities in areas that will benefit the residents of the development that contributed to the fund.”

This ordinance is in line with best practices for designated open space, allowing for fee in-lieu, and dedicating fees specifically to recreation acquisition or improvements. Lacking from this ordinance is the provision for trail construction and easement dedication. The Department should work with Town leadership to update ordinance language to include greenway trail provisions.

This plan also recommends including performance measures in trail and parkland stipulations to ensure successful installation and maintenance of required park and trail improvements in new development. Requiring performance measures guarantees set standards and expectations and ensures that the Town has recourse for enforcing parkland and trail provision policies. Such policies and standards may include provisions for open

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space typologies (i.e., squares, gardens, active open space), inclusion of minimum amenities (benches, plantings, trash receptacles, bike parking, etc.), location requirements (no home can be more than ¼ to ½ mile from an active recreation space), construction standards for trails, or even the requirement to turn over the facility to the Department for ownership and maintenance. Another example, providing developed parkland upfront may place an undue burden on a developer. However, stipulating that parkland be developed proportionally as units are constructed and sold is a way to incrementally

create parkland based on the success of the development, and thereby the growing need for recreation facilities in a development.

In addition to amending the policy, the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Director should continue to be involved in the site plan approval process to ensure that the Department’s needs for suitable parkland are met. The Town should ensure that decision makers are educated about the constraints and realities of park development and the need for due diligence for parcels of land acquired or dedicated for park use.

USE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS TO IDENTIFY NEEDED AMENITIES

This plan uses community engagement to guide recommendations for selecting amenities to expand or introduce in parks. Table 3 lists amenities identified through different community engagement strategies. This is not an exclusive list of amenities the Town may add during the

10-year planning horizon. Addition of amenities is also influenced by replacement of existing amenities at the end of their useful lifecycle and amenities that need to be expanded based on population growth.

Figure 5 - Summary of amenity recommendations identified through community engagement process. Items are listed approximatley in order of priority.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETINGS	FOCUS GROUPS	STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Paved greenway trails > Natural trails > Splashpad > Outdoor amphitheater and event space > Boathouse and water access > Outdoor basketball courts > Ropes and adventure course > Outdoor classroom > Tennis courts > Biking trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Improved Senior Center > Paved walking trails and benches > Reservable shelter space > Greenway trails > Rehearsal space > Large theater > Black box theater > Indoor active recreation space > Athletic fields > Artificial turf fields > Universally designed playground, parks, and facilities > Outdoor fitness equipment > Arts classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Natural surface trails > Greenway trails system > Splashpad

Parkland Goal 2: Create a community trail network that connects people to the places they want to go locally and within the regional trail network.

The popularity of greenway trails and natural surface trails is a unifying factor of all elements of this plan’s community engagement. The statistically valid survey identified greenway trails and natural surface trails as a high priority for investment and greenway trails received the most support for investment at community engagement meetings.

This plan recommends the Department construct between 33 miles and 42.7 miles of greenway trail within the 10-year planning horizon. This is an ambitious goal but is recommended in response to the overwhelming community demand for

greenway trails demonstrated throughout the community engagement process. This plan includes a proposed network of greenway trails that serves routes and destinations community members identified as important to them. Focus groups with interjurisdictional stakeholders ensured that the plan accounts for future transportation improvements such as the planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station and I-540 extension and integrates the network into the planned networks of the surrounding communities.

Figure 6 - Trail mileage level of service recommendation

GARNER’S CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE IS -	BENCHMARKING LEVEL OF SERVICE IS -	INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICE IS -	RECOMMENDATION
0.23 miles of trail per 1,000 pop.	0.5 miles of trail per 1,000 pop.	1 mile of trail per 1,000 pop.	INCREASE level of service to 1 mile of trail per 1,000 residents.

Figure 7 - Trail mileage construction recommendation

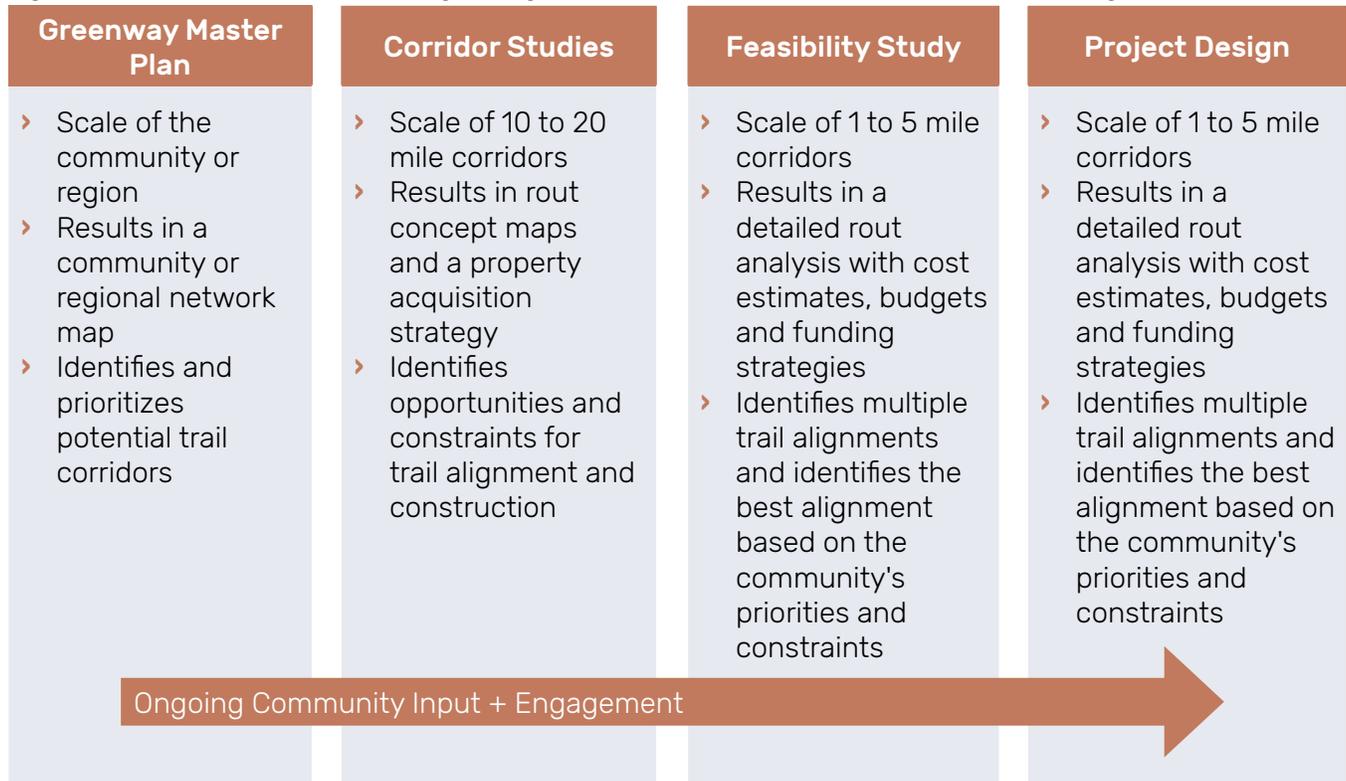
2% AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH	4% AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH
33 miles of trail constructed by 2029	42.7 miles of trail constructed by 2029

GREENWAY PLANNING

A connected network of greenway trails can only be achieved through intentional planning and inter-agency coordination. This plan includes the first step of implementing a greenway system by developing a greenway master plan network (See Chapter 8). While this plan provides a vision and overall framework for the greenway system, it needs to be “ground-proofed” and funded. By conducting detailed corridor and feasibility

studies, a network plan can evolve into a detailed plan that considers opportunities and resolves constraints. Typically, these factors include input from the public, property or easement acquisition, grading and drainage, environmental impacts, crossings, surface material, comfort facilities, maintenance and connections to adjacent or regional trail networks. The Figure 3 represents a typical greenway planning process.

Figure 8 - Greenway trail planning, design and construction process and sequencing



ADOPT POLICIES TO PROMOTE GREENWAY CONSTRUCTION

Greenway trails should be included as part of the Unified Development Ordinance evaluation included in Parkland Goal 1.4. Currently, the town can accept greenway corridor dedications under the provision for accepting “open space”. The UDO should be updated to specifically detail Greenway corridor dedication, public right of way easement dedication. The ordinance can also include exactions requiring developers to construct greenway sections identified in the greenway master plan. The Town should develop

and adopt greenway cross section specifications and design standards prior to accepting constructed greenway dedications to ensure that developer-constructed greenway trails meet the Town’s standards for materials, safety, design and maintenance. The updated ordinance language should consider allowing developers to credit construction of new public greenway trails against the required parks, recreation, and cultural resources fees.

Parkland Goal 3: Maintain existing indoor facility space and remain responsive to changing demographic and recreational trends

The Town of Garner provides a unique and diverse mix of indoor facility spaces for residents to pursue recreational activities. The Department includes a senior center, performing arts center, an environmental center, and two recreation

centers. Each facility provides a unique experience and list of programming for residents. The Town successfully meets the expectations of residents who view the Department as a first option for fitness, cultural and recreational programming.

CONSTRUCT ADDITIONAL INDOOR RECREATION SPACE

The Department’s current level of service for indoor recreation space is 4.38 square feet per resident. This is above the benchmarking standard of similar communities providing a

median standard of 1.4 square feet of recreation space per resident. The Town should maintain a high standard in order to promote the Town as a residential community with a high quality of life.

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Figure 9 - Indoor facility square footage level of service recommendation

GARNER'S CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE IS -	BENCHMARKING LEVEL OF SERVICE IS -	INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICE IS -	RECOMMENDATION
4.38 square feet* of indoor recreation space per 1 resident	1.4 square feet of indoor recreation space per 1 resident	none determined	<p>MAINTAIN level of service of 4.38 square feet of indoor recreation space per 1 resident.</p> <p>At least 2.77 square feet of the above per resident recommendation should be ACTIVE indoor recreation space.</p>

*Garner Recreation Center is included in this figure. The opening of the Garner Recreation Center will not contribute to meeting this recommendation.

Figure 10 - Indoor recreation space square footage recommendation

2% AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH	4% AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH
<p>34,559 square feet of indoor recreation space by 2029</p> <p>At least 21,910 square feet of the above total should be ACTIVE indoor facility space.</p>	<p>76,756 square feet of indoor recreation space by 2029</p> <p>At least 48,596 square feet of the above total should be ACTIVE indoor facility space.</p>

This plan recommends that the Department maintain the high level of service for indoor recreation space to continue providing residents with the facilities and centers that ensure Garner is a community with a high quality of life and a variety of offerings.

The recommendation for indoor facility space square footage includes two parts. The first is the overall square footage recommendation, and the second identifies what portion of the overall recommendation should be active indoor recreation space. This distinction is necessary due to the variety of indoor facility space that Garner provides residents, including the nature center, GPAC, the senior center, Avery Street Recreation Center and the forthcoming Garner Recreation Center. Active indoor recreation space is relatively low when compared with other indoor uses such as performing arts and age-based programming. This plan recommends increasing the ratio between active indoor recreation space and other indoor recreation space.

Recreation centers are considered active recreation space. They are open nearly daily for long hours, host drop in participants for open

gym, host scheduled programming, and are locations for afterschool programs and summer camps. Given the demand for these activities, this plan recommends active indoor recreation space account for 63% of the total indoor recreation space. This results in construction of at least one additional recreation center during the next 10 years. The 2019 NRPA's Agency Performance Review reports the median provision for indoor active recreation space for agencies of similar population density as the Town of Garner is 27,776 population per center. The recommendation that the Town should construct one additional active indoor recreation center in the next ten years aligns with the national reported metrics. Active indoor recreation space may account for more than 2.77 square feet per resident of the total 4.38 square feet per resident recommendation.

Other indoor facilities such as the Garner Performing Arts Center are programmed less frequently than recreation centers. These spaces provide important community benefit but are not used as consistently as active indoor recreation space. This plan does recommend expansion of recreation space for performing arts.

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CREATE FACILITIES TO ACCOMMODATE NEW PROGRAMMING

Community engagement identified three primary needs for indoor recreation space during the next 10 years. A refurbished and expanded senior center, additional rehearsal space for the performing arts community, and space for fitness and wellness programming. Community input indicated there is a particular need for programming space that serves seniors and teens.

The first step for accommodating each of these programmatic areas is to determine spatial requirements for programming and cross reference these requirements with availability identified through facility capacity studies. In some cases, space may already be available or can be renovated or repurposed to meet existing needs. In other cases, new facilities must be constructed to meet demonstrated needs.

PRIORITIZE SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY

The Department should follow best practices for facility maintenance, including updating building maintenance plans regularly. The Department should continue implementing its ADA transition plan and undertake improvements and upfits to enhance accessibility. Upfits that enhance safety and accessibility should be prioritized.

Facility maintenance plans and ADA Transition plans will be implemented by the Public Works Department. The Department should continue managing the relationship with Public Works to ensure the implementation of these plans. Twice annual or quarterly check ins with maintenance documents and Public Works staff will set expectations and ensure timely implementations.

Parkland Goal 4: Leverage parks and greenway trails as a platform to meet larger community goals

A benefit of the comprehensive planning process is identifying multiple community needs and understanding how larger community goals and efforts relate to parks, recreation, and cultural resources. The purpose of this goal is to identify important community needs that emerged

through the community engagement process, draw direct connections to parks, recreation, and cultural resources, and set recommendations for how the Department can achieve these community needs.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The connection between recreation and health and wellness is clear. Parks increase physical activity, reduce stress, improve mental health, and increase social connectivity, all of which improve positive health outcomes. This plan recommends improving health and wellness through improving health equity, integrating Department leadership into existing health and wellness networks, and using health and wellness metrics in park creation.

This plan recommends improving health outcomes by pursuing park improvements that promote health equity. Health equity is people's ability to access programs and facilities used to achieve personal health and wellness goals. This plan recommends ensuring the existing park system is suited to help residents pursue these goals. The 10-Minute Walk campaign identifies that people living within a 10-minute walk of a park have higher levels of physical activity. Geographic distribution, financial investment

in parks, and access to parks are all elements of health equity. Residents must have access to high-quality park, close to their residence or workplace, that they are able to easily access. Tracking investment in parks ensures the Town uses resources equitably to provide high quality parks in all areas of the Town. It is important to consider whether residents living near parks have easy access to that park by bicycling or walking. Providing access to parks via sidewalks and trails is important for achieving health equity.

Wake County has an existing network of health and wellness professionals working to promote positive health outcomes for Wake County residents. Wake County recently completed their Community Health Needs Assessment and will be implementing its goals and objectives during the next 3 years. The Town can participate in this ongoing conversation to learn about emerging trends, resources for implementation, and new

and ongoing efforts. The Health and Wellness Assessment in this plan includes a policy crosswalk identifying shared goals held by Garner

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, and Wake County health and wellness stakeholders.

Figure 11 - Five priority areas identified in the 2019 Wake County Community Health Needs Assessment



Finally, achieving health and wellness goals should be incorporated into the park planning, design, and construction phase to position facilities to meet these goals in the long term. The health and wellness assessment includes detailed steps for integrating these goals into each step of the park planning process.

Three takeaways from this section on parks planning for a healthier community are:

1. There are concrete, measurable criteria that can be used through the park planning and design process for creating a parks, recreation, and cultural resources system that advances health equity in the community.
2. The criteria are not one-size fits all. The

community context including demographics, geography, population health outcomes and behaviors, community preferences and desires, stated health and wellness goals, and local budgets should be used to adapt and prioritize criteria that are meaningful and achievable.

3. Strategies for leveraging the resources of different sectors towards achieving selected criteria should be incorporated into the recommendations of the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Comprehensive Plan to ensure that collaboration with diverse stakeholders is explicitly built into the implementation and evaluation process.

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PARKS

Community engagement results and conversations with Department staff indicated that equity and access is an important consideration as the park system expands to meet additional needs. The Town should ensure that residents have equitable access to parks, recreation, and cultural resources facilities in the future. This plan recommends tracking park investment, accessibility, and greenway connections to ensure equitable provision to parks for all residents. Similarly, to health equity, equitable access to parks can be improved by addressing geographic distribution of parks, financial investment and physical access. Geographic equity will address current gaps in service and aim to provide more recreation opportunities for underserved or vulnerable communities.

more. Understanding the geographic distribution of where the Town directs investment can reveal unintentional gaps in funding. The study should normalize results when possible, for example, tracking investment per park user, investment per residents within a quarter mile, or investment per acre of parkland. The results of any such analysis will need to be properly investigated, appropriately contextualized and should avoid focusing on dollar amounts alone.

Parks must be accessible to all forms of transportation including walking, biking, public transit and driving. The Town must ensure that all users are able to move around the park and benefit from the park’s amenities. Accessible parks will meet design requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) outlines, but a truly inclusive park will focus on the experience of users of all ages and ability levels and promote their full involvement in play, fitness and social engagement at parks. The Town should ensure that parks are accessible along public

9 > vision + recommendation

transportation routes and should continue to promote connectivity of parks with the greenway

system, ensuring bicycle and pedestrian access where possible.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Parks, recreation, and cultural resources is often seen as a cost center in municipal budgets, but only considering department expenditures without considering the revenue generated or the economic impact on the community is short sighted. Parks, recreation, and cultural resources departments can measure the economic return residents receive on the Department’s investment. Evaluating the Department’s role in economic development includes understanding the impact and the economic significance of the activities the park system supports. An economic impact analysis should focus on the economic impact of parks, recreation, and cultural resources by analyzing the direct financial impact of events held at Town of Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources facilities.

The Department does not currently track overall economic impact of the Department’s activities. There is some tracking of economic impact for events held at the Garner Performing Arts Center, and some athletics program partners track economic impact of tournaments. The Department should track economic impact for special events, athletic tournaments, and performing arts programming. These items should be tracked individually and reported as a whole to provide an overall summary of the Department’s economic impact.

Understanding the Department’s economic impact can inform decision making regarding where the Town should allocate time and resources. A park system impacts the revenue of the Town through personal income of employees, sales tax generated through visitor purchases, and visitor spending on food, gas, entertainment, and overnight lodging.

Parks also have an indirect impact on the local economy. This significance is not tracked directly but is often determined using a multiplier effect based on a given assumption supported with research and observation. Some of these indirect impacts include property value increases for private property next to parkland, and healthcare cost avoided from people who avoid illness or

health issues due to the improved air quality parks can provide. The local chamber of commerce may be a source of information for determining common multipliers used in Wake County.

Parks, recreation, and cultural resources departments are frequently viewed as having high maintenance costs, high capital costs and low revenues. These areas generate revenue for only a fraction of the costs they generate. Parks departments themselves have frequently reinforced this idea by only reporting annual financial data, rather than reporting economic impact data which captures a wider variety of impacts. Figure 5 depicts the traditional conceptualization of parks, recreation, and cultural resources spending that illustrates tax dollars funneled into parks, recreation, and cultural resources programming with no return on investment.

Figure 12 – Traditional conceptualization of parks, recreation, and cultural resources spending⁴



The expanded cycle depicted in Figure 6 shows more accurately the impact dollars invested into parks, recreation, and cultural resources have in the community. This conceptualization recognizes that parks are assets that attract visitors and induce spending local spending that would otherwise not exist. This full cycle recognizes residents as the true investors and benefactors of the economic system. Simply looking at department expenditures fails to measure the economic return residents receive on their investments.

4 Crompton, John L. Measuring the Economic Impact of Park and Recreation Services. National Recreation and Parks Association Research Series, 2010.

Figure 13 – Expanded conceptualization of parks, recreation, and cultural resources spending to include community impacts⁵



Understanding this full framework validates and justifies the need for a high-quality park system that can support a variety of needs including events and tournaments. It places an economic benefit on activities that often go unnoticed, such as staff efforts to coordinate and host events and maintain facilities in good condition. This consideration is especially important for the Department’s athletic facilities. Though they are expensive to maintain, quality athletic facilities that can attract tournament play are an important source of economic impact.

Finally, using the expanded model to conceptualize parks, recreation, and cultural resources spending

provides important information to decisionmakers regarding parks, recreation, and cultural resources spending. Parks are expensive capital projects, but the funds to build and maintain them should be seen as an investment in the community and its economy. A high-quality park system that includes desired amenities and facilities will increase tourism through day trips for individuals and families and create opportunities for sports tournaments and events. These events draw large numbers of out-of-town visitors, attract businesses seeking to employ individuals who desire living in an area with a high quality of life and maintain or increase property values of adjacent properties.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Input from the community and department staff indicates that environmental sustainability is an important priority for the Department and the community. The Department currently offers a variety of elements that cater to resident interests in the environment. Lake Benson Park offers opportunities for hiking and paddling, White Deer Park and White Deer Nature Center provide hiking

opportunities and environmental education. Though Garner currently offers extensive opportunities for environmental education, results of community engagement indicate that there is additional demand that could be met.

Expanding environmental education programming is one option for meeting this need. Another option is to implement environmental

⁵ Ibid.

sustainability projects at existing parks and provide interpretive signage to illustrate their significance. Including green infrastructural elements displays environmental stewardship. Open spaces that contain natural elements and vegetation aid in the reduction of water and air

pollutants by using biological processes to absorb pollutants from contaminated water runoff. Green infrastructure improvements include bioswales, raingardens, green roofs and environmental education.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN STANDARDS

The National Disability Authority defines universal design as “the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.” They continue by stating “It is a fundamental condition of good design. If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits.”⁶

Universal design goes beyond ADA accessibility and focuses on the user experience, as well as the design of a specific space. There are seven principles of universal design that can be incorporated into park design, specifically, and generally through the parks, trails, facilities, programs and employment opportunities the Department provides.

1. Equitable use - The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

- › Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
- › Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.
- › Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users.
- › Make the design appealing to all users.

2. Flexibility in use - The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

- › Provide choice in methods of use.
- › Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use.
- › Facilitate the user’s accuracy and precision.
- › Provide adaptability to the user’s pace.

3. Simple and intuitive use - Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user’s experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

- › Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
- › Be consistent with user expectations and

intuition.

- › Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills.
- › Arrange information consistent with its importance.
- › Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

4. Perceptible information - The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user’s sensory abilities.

- › Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
- › Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.
- › Maximize “legibility” of essential information.
- › Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e., make it easy to give instructions or directions).
- › Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.

5. Tolerance for error - The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

- › Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
- › Provide warnings of hazards and errors.
- › Provide fail safe features.
- › Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.

6. Low physical effort - The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

- › Allow user to maintain a neutral body position.
- › Use reasonable operating forces.
- › Minimize repetitive actions.
- › Minimize sustained physical effort.

⁶ The National Disability Authority. “The 7 Principles”. <http://universaldesign.ie/what-is-universal-design/the-7-principles/the-7-principles.html>

7. Size and space for approach and use

- Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation and use regardless of user's body, posture or mobility.

- › Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.

- › Make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user.
- › Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.
- › Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance

ATHLETICS FACILITIES

Athletics programming and facilities play an important role in the Garner community. The Department provides league programming at their indoor facilities, but primarily partners with local athletic providers to provide youth sports league programming for residents. Many program partners report having gaps in facility space. In some cases, partners lack needed facility space, and in other cases, program partners have facility space that is available for use by others. The Department can expand the positive impact to the community by fostering conversations about sharing facility space within the community.

Wake County hosts multiple sports leagues that play at a competitive level. Providing high end sports facilities will support the efforts of these sports leagues to provide their programs in the area. The Town may consider investing in artificial turf and field lighting to expand the capacity of these facilities. These facilities will be a significant investment for the Town. Any decision to invest in artificial turf fields should be accompanied by an operations plan and a pro forma that details

the total cost of the project, expected revenue, and timeline for the Town to receive a return on the investment. The Financial Goals include additional suggestions for pricing strategies that could be applied to a tournament-level or artificial turf facility.

Athletics facilities did not rank highly in the priority investment results of the statistically valid survey. However, community engagement, staff input, and Town leadership indicate that athletics for all age groups, youth, adults, and seniors is an important part of the Town's culture and on-going programming. The Town should continue to expand provision baseball/softball and multipurpose fields to meet additional need in athletics facilities that population growth will generate. The Department should monitor participation rates and recreation trends to determine demand for additional athletic fields. To improve playability and extend programming capacity, the Town should consider conversion of existing fields or construction of new fields be synthetic turf and lit with athletic lighting.

PROGRAMMING

Continue to provide programs and events that meet the needs of the community while preparing new services as resources allow.

The Department follows many best practices regarding management, implementation, and evaluation of programming. Implementing additional best practices discussed in this goal will assist the department in achieving a higher level of service delivery and provide direction to program staff. The Department has received funding for development of new parks and facilities that will move the department forward. The Town must also establish funding to manage the service and programs offered at these parks and facilities to meet community expectations of increasing services. This section identifies opportunities to continue a consistent high-quality experience through programming for user groups, visitors, and program participants.

Programming Goal 1: Build capacity to continue existing services and implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan

The Department has experienced growth in recreational facilities and services, but there has not been equivalent growth in the Department's staffing capacity. The Department is sustaining the current level of service but will not be able to do so indefinitely without increasing capacity. The Department can increase capacity through

the following means:

- › Hiring additional qualified staff
- › Contracting out services
- › Cultivating partnerships
- › Maintaining a well-developed volunteer base
- › Maximizing information technology

PROGRAM PARTNERS AND CONTRACTORS

New programming needs can be met through partnerships or contracted facilitators to expand the Department's service delivery. In this approach, the Department serves as a facility provider and handles scheduling and registration. Partners and contracted facilitators provide materials and instruction time to deliver the desired program. Agreements with partners and contracted facilitators should be written and include detailed expectations and outcomes. These agreements should include a revenue sharing calculation based on the Department's

cost recovery standards. Best practices for partnerships can be found in Finances Goal 3.

The town recently assumed planning and programming of a youth basketball league run by the Optimist Club. The former Optimist League Basketball Program will now be a Town of Garner program. This recent shift in responsibility is a key example of a dynamic department shifting capacity to ensure residents are able to receive programming they need and expect.

EXPAND STAFF

The intentional approach to meeting needs and enhancing services is to fill existing vacancies and develop new positions in a sustainable manner. New positions needed include managing Garner Recreation Center operations, fulfil customer services at Garner Recreation Center, instruct classes at Garner Recreation Center, enhance special event programming, and implement new special event programming. Building new positions to deliver service should be driven by defined responsibilities that are in line with a fulltime position workload in a calendar year. It is best practice to consider if there are any part-

time positions in areas of high priority to the community that, if fulltime, could enhance the services to better meet the needs. Combining this with other existing functions and services could justify the fulltime position. Taking this a step further, conduct a cost of service to identify indirect costs to each area of responsibility for the position. Use cost recovery goals and value-added service areas to build out the position where revenue generated would help offset the expenses of the position.

IMPROVE SENIOR CENTER

Enhancing senior programming is identified as a high priority for investment in the results of the statistically valid survey, included in Chapter 5. The space will need to be improved to accommodate new program needs identified through community engagement. The Department should identify the spaces current programming use within the Garner Senior Center to understand any gaps and additional needs. The Garner Senior Center has maximized its use through extensive senior programming, including hosting the largest senior meals site in Wake County. Space at the facility will need to be repurposed or expanded to meet the growing need for senior programming during the 10-year planning horizon. Needs for evaluating the Senior Center building include a capacity study for current programming levels to determine whether the facility has room to expand to meet the growing need, or whether a

new space or expanded space will be needed.

Improvements should be made to the current building to ensure the space is safe for staff and visitors. Two potential improvements include upfitting restrooms to be ADA accessible and suited to people with mobility challenges and making improvements to building security and maintaining safety for staff and participants. Installing signal boosters for cell reception within the building would also improve building safety in the event of an emergency. In addition to building improvements to enhance safety, the space could be improved to reduce the its institutional character. Audio visual equipment should be updated and integrated throughout the facility to accommodate interactive classes and presentations

Programming Goal 2: Develop a program mix that is balanced in the lifecycle stages with new creative programming that serves diverse community interests

Garner has a program lifecycle distribution of 65 percent of programs in the Introductory stage, 17 percent in the mature stage, and 18 percent in the declining stage. Programs and events energize spaces and help the public understand how these spaces are intended to be used. A fresh program rotation adds value to the park system by enhancing the Town's investment in parks and facilities and maximizing their benefit for residents. The Department should develop program standards that focus on the outcome of

a great customer experience. Program standards establish norms for the quality of service delivery for programming, including staff arrival time, set up completion, uniform requirements, customer service protocols, risk management, outcomes, evaluation of participants, and reporting requirements. Program standards ensure new staff can be trained to conduct programming, and provide information when substitutes are needed. Program standards should be established for each program and can be as detailed as necessary.

NEW PROGRAMMING

The Department should use current trends as a starting point to identify new programming that is aligned with programs community engagement identified as high priority. Results of the statistically valid survey should inform Department decision making about new programming to offer. Programming recommended in the priority investment rating include:

- › Outdoor music and concerts
- › Aquatics programs
- › Swimming
- › Fitness and wellness
- › Special events and family festivals
- › Music lessons and classes

Understanding new and emerging trends in parks, recreation, and cultural resources will help the Department craft programming that meets needs in exciting fresh ways. For example, "fitness and wellness programming" is a community priority, but residents' expectations of engaging programming have changed over time, with current trends leaning toward mind-body exercises and boot-camp style group workouts. Focus groups and surveying are effective tools for determining user expectations of fresh programming. Department staff can select programming with the highest potential for success by aligning stated community needs with emerging trends.

Offering the fastest growing trends that align with the survey results will get quick results. Conducting focus groups and surveys for program areas that have a large variety of specific programs within them could help staff to be more efficient

and effective when launching new programs. Choosing the programs with the highest potential for success will give the Department a strong foundation until capacity is increased.

FEEDBACK AND TRACKING

Tracking feedback and satisfaction of program participants is essential to the Department’s success and generates repeat, committed customers. Strategies for gathering feedback include surveys, comment cards, focus groups,

and intercept surveys. Survey results will assist staff decision making about new programming to provide, and about when it is appropriate and needed to retire a program and offer a new one in its place.

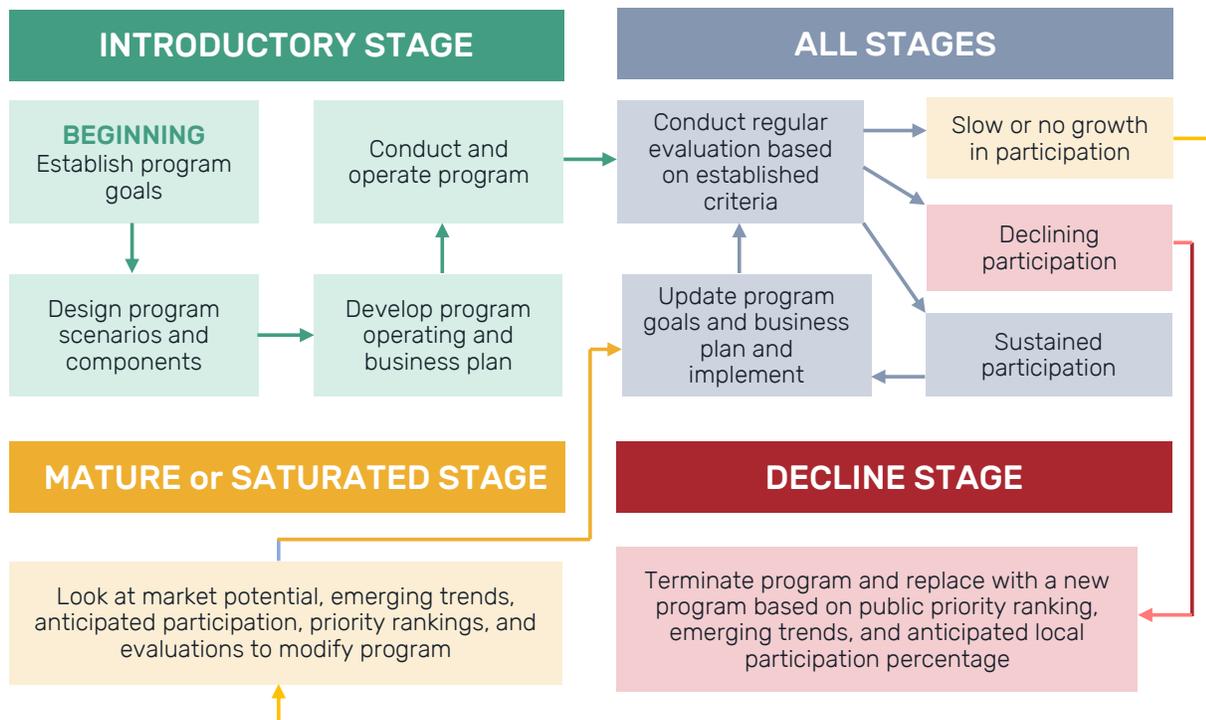
EVALUATION

Annual program evaluation tracks program participation and outcomes. Tracking program enrollment and participation over time informs staff about the program’s lifecycle stage, as illustrated in Figure 7. The lifecycle stage tool assists staff’s decision regarding when to introduce new programs or retire existing programs. Understanding facility constraints on enrollment, such as room size or equipment availability. Another limitation is instructor to participant ratio. These limitations must be tracked to understand the change in enrollment trends overtime. Most of a department’s programs will fall under Introductory, Mature, or Decline stages, but some programs fulfil a legacy role in the community. These legacy programs operate outside of the lifecycle stage model and have

usually been offered for many years or seasons. Legacy programs will vary in participation but will remain popular and important to the community.

When programs are in the saturated stage and close to retirement, the Department should begin the development of new spin off programs. Participant’s survey results for programs in the decline stage should be used to develop new programs that will begin when or slightly before the declining program is retired. This is a best practice in customer retention. When customers do not continue participating, the Department should follow up with a lost customer service including an offer of a discount or a branded promotional item of quality.

Figure 14 - Program evaluation process



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Programming Goal 3: Implement annual collection, analysis, and documentation best practices for recreation programs and services

The Department's Recreation Program Plan outlines policies, procedures, and principles that guide programming decisions. This goal describes how the department can use the tools of program

management principles and miniature business plans to enhance the guidance of the Recreation Program Plan.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Program management principles are the management activities that plan, organize, measure and control the recreation program operations. Examples of would be program goals/outcomes, age segment analysis, program classifications, program lifecycle analysis, pricing strategies, cost recovery, marketing methods, and customer feedback methods. Best practice is to collect internal data, analyze the data for

better decision making and then document any adjustments made when annually updating plans, policies and procedures. Implementing program management principles includes using key performance indicators to achieve outcomes defined for programs and services. This consistency in development, management and delivering quality services will help reinforce the Department's brand.

MINIATURE BUSINESS PLANS

The development of miniature business plans using program management principles provides a roadmap for managing the programs and services to the outcomes using best practices. This empowers staff to manage all aspects of operations to defined outcomes and includes data sets for more effective decision making. External data that should be incorporated into

the business plans are demographics, target market characteristics, national trends in the Core Program Areas, age segments, SWOT Analysis of external and internal factors, cost of service, pricing strategies, cost recovery goals, applicable policies, and define performance measures. A template for creating a miniature business plan is included in Figure 8.

Figure 15 - Sample of miniature business plan to guide program development

MINIATURE BUSINESS PLAN	
Program Area:	
Completed By:	Date:
General description of Core Program Area	
Department Vision Statement	
Department Mission Statement	
Core Program Area Outcomes	
Service Area Profile	
Service Area description:	
Key Demographic Trends:	

ARTS + CULTURAL RESOURCES

To continue developing the protection, celebration and enhancements of valued arts and cultural resources and services contributing to the economic vitality of Garner.

Arts and Cultural Resources Goal 1: Invest in arts and cultural resources to continue developing the Town's culture and arts

The Town of Garner has invested in developing culture and arts as a centerpiece of the community. The Department provides performance space and youth programming to many residents and these investments have supported the growth of a number of private and non-profit theater and performance groups in the community. Input gathered from the arts community as part of this plan indicates that this thriving scene has momentum to continue expanding but partners hold varied visions and the effort needs a funding resources to achieve more. The Department is well positioned to provide this structure to enable

existing and new organizations expand their access to the resources they need to grow.

The Town's commitment to arts and cultural resources is managed through a consistent and intentional effort. The Town can continue its cultivation of arts and cultural resources and the arts by leveraging public resources to generate private investment. Strategies for achieving this include establishing a funding and operational structure, tracking assets, and promoting arts and cultural resources.

ESTABLISHING STRUCTURE AND FUNDING

The Department should position itself as a conduit for community and private investment in arts and cultural resources. This will require the Department to develop internal structures and processes to support these efforts and create a business plan for arts and cultural resources. The business plan should begin with an assessment of the town's vision, inventory of cultural assets, and inventory of similar providers. The Department should determine their management philosophy, target market, and desired outcomes for investment in arts and cultural resources. Finally, the business plan should include cost of service, marketing, pricing, and performance measures for implementing the plan. The Department should include efforts and outcomes of the investment in an annual report.

Creating dedicated funding sources for the Department's investment in arts and cultural

resources programs will be essential to managing, operating, and maintain arts and cultural resources in Garner. Funds can be established by partnering with the private sector, non-profits, similar providers, and artists. Fostering partnerships will strengthen the arts community and create opportunities for combining resources for grants, events, programs, and fundraising.

There are many examples of municipalities creating successful investment decisions and funding sources for culture and arts to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. Establishing long-term dedicated funding and creating methods to determine how to allocate resources is the key to a successful cultural arts program. Complementing the long-term funding with short-term funding is best practice and should be used to increase the caliber of performances.

TRACKING

The Department should develop a database of assets that contribute to the area's arts and cultural resources. The Town should determine criteria to identify arts and cultural resources and determine if new items should be included in the database. Criteria should be updated along with

the database as needed. Not all assets will be publicly owned. Maintaining an established list of arts and cultural resources will inform the Town's decision to work with private owners for cultural resource enhancement or protection.

ENHANCING AND PROMOTING

Tracking cultural assets demonstrates an intentional vision moving forward. One low-barrier strategy for generating interest in Garner's cultural assets is to create a cultural heritage trail marketed to visitors and residents. The trail

could be as simple as a brochure including a map with cultural sites and could be expanded and formalized to include interpretive signage at locations.

Arts and Cultural Resources Goal 2: Enhance services to activate spaces and contribute to the Town's cultural resource services

Community engagement for this plan identified support for incorporating more visual public art into parks and the community. Strategies for achieving this goal include enhancing the Town's public art program, nurturing community

appreciation for the arts, and pursuing effective partnerships and coalitions. The established arts and cultural resources program is heavily focused on the historical downtown area.

ENHANCE EXISTING PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

The Town's public art initiative can be expanded by including placing or commissioning art for parks and other gathering spaces as they are constructed or renovated. Consideration for art in public spaces should begin during the design phase of any new facility, park, or amenity. Infrastructure improvements, such as sidewalks, bridges, and greenway trails also pose

opportunities for public art. Public art should be commissioned through a request for proposal process that attracts artists with appropriate skill and experience for the desired project. These pieces can be funded through dedicated funding sources identified in Goal 1 or through public-private partnerships.

NURTURE APPRECIATION FOR ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Creating a sustainable and ongoing arts and cultural resources program requires fostering appreciation and participation in cultural arts and services within the community. Opportunities for nurturing this appreciation include awareness campaigns and youth programs. Community

interest in public art can be generated by a Town-sponsored grant program that funds small public art projects. A rubric for the grant program would identify appropriate arts program recipients and measure a project's potential to achieve Town identified goals.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COALITIONS

The community should celebrate the solid foundation for arts and cultural resources and the arts that the Town, existing partners, and community have created. Community engagement identified that arts and cultural resources is a valued service the Town contributes to the community's vitality. Strong partnerships and community engagement will be essential to achieving the goal to enhance services. Establishing an arts and cultural resources advisory committee will create a clear

method for engaging residents in enhancing public arts efforts in Garner. This committee will provide an opportunity for artists, residents, and representatives from local arts organizations to oversee grant processes for local artists, provide recommendations for Town investments, and supplement the Town's marketing efforts. The group can create cohesion and generate a shared vision for the future of arts and cultural resources in the Town of Garner.

OPERATIONS + MAINTENANCE

To position the Department's preparedness to achieve operational outcomes and support Town outcomes to move Garner forward.

The focus of this plan is the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department. The Department's ability to provide parks, recreation, and cultural resources services is supplemented by the support of the Public Works Department which provides maintenance support. Public Works oversees municipal infrastructure services for the community including solid waste, sewer services, roads, rights of way, medians, parks, recreation, and cultural resources, and contracted services. The Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department oversees operational management, staffing, scheduling, and contracted services. Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources communicates with Public Works to provide routine maintenance and immediate maintenance needs requests.

Operations Goal 1: Build capacity in the organization to deliver quality services to the community

Garner has established a strong foundation of best management practices to ensure they are providing a high quality of recreational services to residents. The Department has exhibited a strong commitment to providing high quality services and programs to the community by achieving CAPRA accreditation through the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies. To become accredited, the Department must meet the majority of standards for efficient and effective operation of the system.

The Town of Garner has many operational best practices in place. This high functioning department has achieved its outcomes without compromising its functional areas or quality of service, even as staff's capacity becomes more constrained. The Department must maintain its capacity to manage existing operations, develop services, and meet resident needs identified in this plan.

Programming Goal 1 mentions best practices for building capacity in programming. There are additional strategies for expanding operational capacity. These strategies include expanding staff, increasing technology, and achieving efficiency through standardization.

Currently the Town currently exhibits best practices in building capacity within the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources services provided by the Town. Capacity building is an investment by the Town in the future efficiency and effectiveness to take the Department to the next level while developing sustainability. When

additional staffing levels are not possible, the staff can employ several other initiatives to build capacity to meet the needs of the community. These initiatives include:

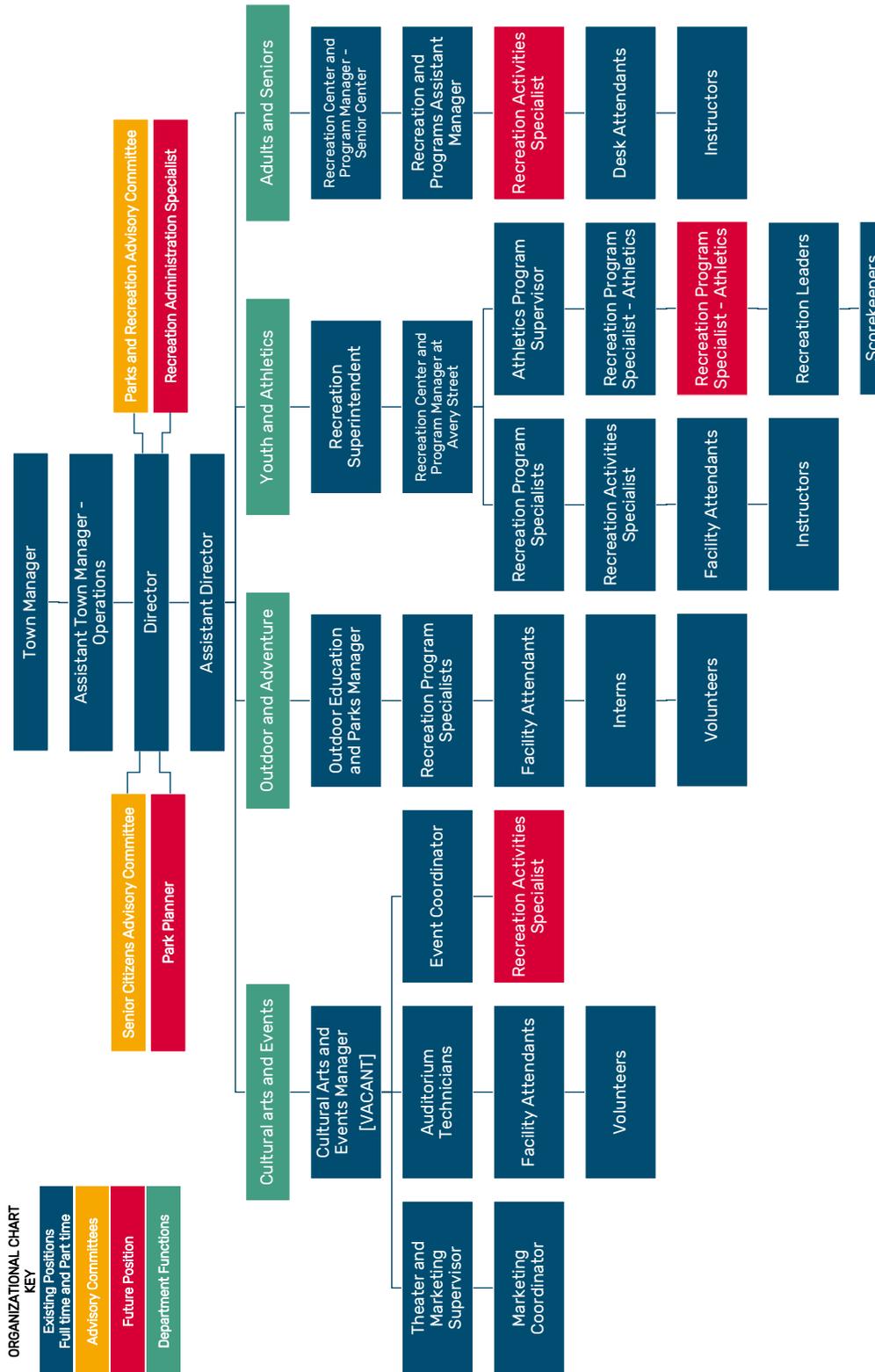
- › Partnerships and sponsorships help fill gaps and build capacity where resources do not exist for the Department to be the sole provider.
- › Developing additional diversity of staff will help with language and culture gaps that exist due to the changing demographics of the Town. Department employee diversity should represent the community's diversity in order to reach target audiences.
- › Increasing and enhancing technology to streamline processes and reporting. This allows tracking and reporting from the field to limit windshield time.
- › Additional funding is necessary for technology upgrades in devices and software to support streamlining operations.
- › An established volunteer base along with tracking hours, talents, groups and calculating the indirect cost savings to communicate the value volunteers bring can help identify needs and help the Department to accomplish more until a time when staffing levels can be increased.
- › Combining part-time and seasonal positions into a fulltime position using the combined salaries for compensation.
- › Contracted services where capacity does not exist to maintain the expectation of quality.

STAFF

Essential to achieving this goal will be the ability to hire the necessary staff to fill existing vacancies and prepare for increased services at the new recreation center and future planning of recently purchased parkland. The Department currently lacks administrative support, which is vital to collecting data, developing reports, updating

metrics, and assisting with the administration of the Department. The new recreation center will increase the need for front desk staff, instructors, and visitor customer services. The recent purchase of two large park parcels will require the need for a park planner.

Figure 16 - Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources proposed organizational chart



TECHNOLOGY

Technology is another strategy for maximizing efficiency and effectiveness. Periodic research of new technology or new services offered by existing provider and manufacturers is a best practice to keep up with the evolution of the Department and technology. Each software program the Department uses should have a

staff “expert” with a detailed understanding of the software’s intended use and role within the organization. Internal training is essential to staff adoption of protocols regarding a new software program and future updates and expansions of the software.

STANDARDIZING

Parks, recreation, and cultural resources departments are known for holding on to declining services beyond when they should be retired. This is due mostly to the firsthand observation of the benefits these services bring to participants. Department staff should be equipped with metric-based decision making when determining whether to retire an existing program. Key performance indicators have been created to assist the Department in appropriately evaluating services on outcomes and performance.

essential, important and value-added. Definitions of these designations are included in Figure 10. Once each function is classified, the Department should define the role each division takes in these functions and services as either a “lead” role or a “support” role. Charting these results, as seen in Figure 11, creates a snapshot in time that the Department can then build upon as it evolves and use this tool to manage workloads. Once completed and tracking begins, the Department can evaluate existing declining services as well as new opportunities through the classification of services. This will help the Department to determine workloads and identify where capacity does and does not exist.

The Department should classify all major functions and services of each division by

Figure 17 - Classification of services mode

SERVICE CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	COST RECOVERY EXPECTATIONS
Core Essential	Services the agency must provide to meet its mission, and statutory and/or regulatory obligations; maintains valuable assets and infrastructure investments; essential to protect visitor safety; preserves the integrity of natural and cultural resources; reasonably expected and supported (or demanded) by visitors	Largely supported by taxes with little to no cost recovery
Important	Services the agency should provide or are important to effectively serve visitors; may expand or enhance provision of core services; broadly supported and utilized by visitors, although support may be conditional upon the perceived benefit, quality, and pricing of the services	Supported by a balance of taxes and earned income
Value-Added	Services the agency may provide when they are fiscally sustainable through visitor support; add value above and beyond what is required or expected of the agency’s core functions; are easy opportunities to integrate alternative providers and operators into providing services at one or more sites	Heavily or fully supported by earned income

Figure 18 - Service Classification Worksheet Example

SERVICE AREA	MAJOR SERVICES + FUNCTIONS	CLASSIFICATION	LEAD OR SUPPORT
Marketing and Communication	Website content	Essential	Lead
	Crisis and emergency communication	Essential	Support
	Community outreach (parades, expos, races, etc.)	Essential	Support
	Communication (meetings, correspondence, mail, etc.)	Essential	Lead
	Market analysis (target markets, trends, demographics, etc.)	Essential	Lead
	Market research (customer satisfaction surveys, focus groups, etc.)	Essential	Lead
	Corporate reports (annual reports, quarterly reports, etc.)	Essential	Lead
	General park and facility strategy and creative prep work (meetings, goals, objectives, targets, etc.)	Essential	Lead
	Park events (ground breakings, opening ceremonies, etc.)	Essential	Lead
	Graphics for ads and promotions	Essential	Lead
	Photography	Essential	Lead
	Video, radio, media production	Essential	Lead
	Press releases and photo opportunities	Essential	Lead
	Media relations (interviews, tv appearances)	Essential	Lead
	Social media (managing committee, planning, posting, monitoring, engaging, etc.)	Essential	Lead
	Media planning and buys	Essential	Lead
	Writing (editing, copy development, speeches, etc.)	Essential	Lead
	Partnerships with friends' groups and third parties	Essential	Lead

Operations Goal 2: Continue building capacity in facilities that support recreation and cultural arts

The addition of the Garner Recreation Center has substantially increased the capacity of indoor facility spaces within the Department’s control. The Department will need to ensure this space is responsibly allocated to programming to ensure it effectively meets community needs and

expectations. The Department should conduct a capacity study to maximize the use of spaces in the Garner Recreation Center, Avery Street Recreation Center and Annex, White Deer Nature Center, Garner Senior Center, and the Garner Performing Arts Center.

UNDERSTAND CAPACITY DEMAND

Capacity demand should be measured monthly to establish a baseline of the Department’s needs and capacity. This process identifies the optimal

capacity that a space or area provides and a snapshot of the estimated demand. Capacity of a space is defined as the maximum number of

activities, hours and persons that an individual area can service. To determine the capacity of each asset, determine usage factors and guidelines for optimal management practices based on industry accepted practices and the Department’s professional experience and operational knowledge. Demand is defined as an

area’s actual use and is calculated independently of capacity. The number of potential users who are turned away because a space or program is at capacity should also be tracked. Demand is measured by usage hours and daily use. Refer to Figure 13 for an example of a Facility Capacity and Usage Worksheet for tracking capacity demand.

ANTICIPATE FLEXIBILITY

Flexible space must be included in a capacity study to ensure the Department can be responsive to changing community needs and competing priorities. Sustained use of 60 to 70 percent of a facility is optimal to avoid user conflicts and allow for flexibility to address changing needs. The

Department should regularly track attendance at programs where drop-ins participate, such as open gym. This informs decision making on the effectiveness of uses, when to retire programs, and whether internal uses need additional hours to meet demand.

Figure 19 - Example of Capacity Study Worksheet

Facility Capacity and Usage Worksheet

Nashville Parks Master Plan

Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County



Facility Name	Watkins Community Center		
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Facility Type	Community Center	Other:	
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Facility Size		Square Feet
		Acres

Program Space(s)	Type	Quantity	Weekly Hours Used (quantity)	Average Weekly Visitation
	Meeting room	1	30	375
	Basketball court	1	40	600
	Multipurpose field	1	32	335
	Demonstration / community	1	2	35
	Tennis court	3	14	168
	Other	1	9	350
	Baseball / softball field	1	10	100
	Pavilions	1	28	900

Facility Operation Days (open)	Yes / No	Hours Open (quantity)	Peak Hours (ie. 8-9 am)	Average Daily Visitation
Sunday	Yes	6 seasonaly	12-2:00 pm	65
Monday	Yes	9	11a-2p, 3-6:30p	160
Tuesday	Yes	9	11a-2p, 3-6:30p	160
Wednesday	Yes	9	11a-2p, 3-6:30p	170
Thursday	Yes	9	11a-2p, 3-6:30p	170
Friday	Yes	9	3-6:00p	140
Saturday	Yes	6 seasonaly	12-2:00 pm	80

Operations Goal 3: Continue to enhance marketing and communications of services using best practices in the private industry to achieve outcomes

The Department's marketing and communication's efforts are directed by the Town's Communications Plan. The Department has best practices in place with a Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Marketing and Communications Plan that compliments the Town's guidelines. The needs of the Department are different than the Town

and should be updated as the system evolves to ensure the Department brand is reinforced. The marketing and communications plan directs staff on important details to help increase awareness, engage followers, and increase demand for services.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A marketing and communications plan is key to increasing awareness, engagement, and demand for services. It enables the Department to control the brand and develop content that reinforces it. Goals of the marketing and communication plan should be telling the Department's story, proactively communicating, engaging stakeholders, and developing a consistent message. A marketing and communications plan should direct staff on collecting photos of programming that tell the Department's story. The result will be a database of photos depicting program participants and staff demonstrating their positive impact on the community.

The Department should establish priority population segments to target for new program and service development. Priority population segments can be identified using data on demographics and trends combined with survey results. It is beneficial to leverage relationships with partners to enhance marketing efforts through cross-promotion. The Department can track performance measures of targeted marketing through increased use of customer surveys and web-based metrics. The marketing plan should address ribbon cuttings for new amenities and facilities to create energy and attract more visitors. An open house should be

scheduled for opening of the new community center and highlight the partnerships within the community for providing services.

With so many people using social media and accessing the internet for information, it is increasingly important to monitor the Department name and brand on all digital platforms. When newly developed social platforms become available, the department should monitor them and determine if the platform is beneficial for the Department to be involved. Across all platforms the Department should identify the right marketing initiatives and campaigns to increase awareness that require additional capacity. Using technology to assist with scheduling static posts will increase capacity.

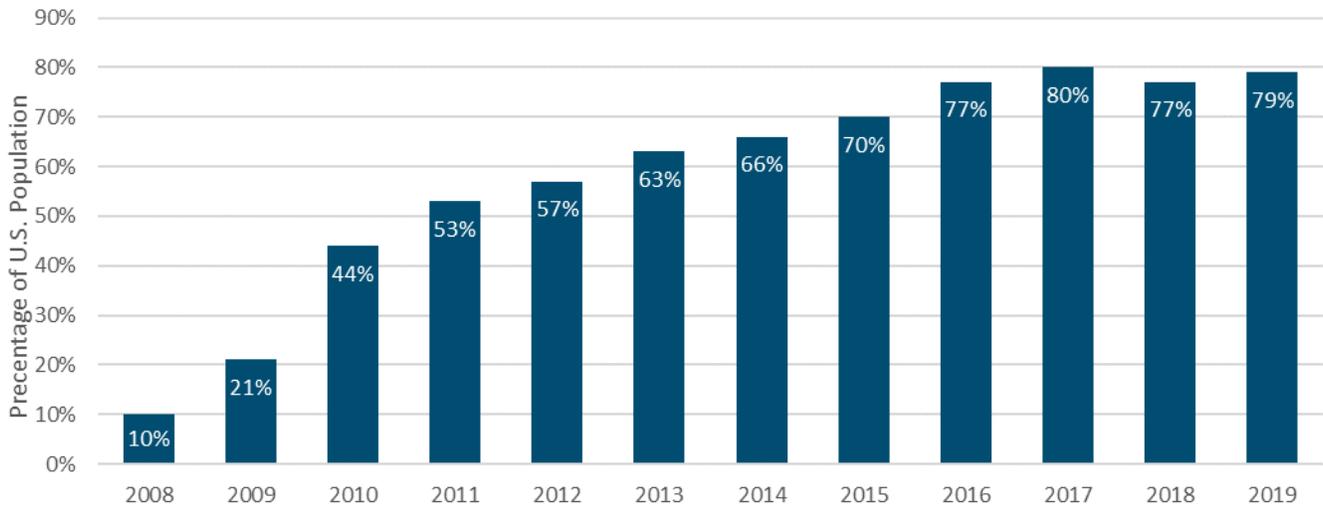
The Department has well developed content for its digital marketing and print materials. Continuing to develop engaging content and contests around the features, advantages and benefits (FAB) will continue the ability of the Department to tell its story. Developing campaigns around vision, mission and core values in combination with the Department FAB will help demonstrating the department living out its purpose and will strengthen the brand.

SOCIAL MEDIA USERS

Over the last decade, social media has become one of the country's fastest growing trends. With only 10 percent of the country using social media in 2008; today, an estimated 79 percent of the U.S. population is currently using some form of social media, as shown in Figure 14. With such a large percentage of the population using these online media platforms in their daily lives, it becomes essential for the Town to take advantage of these

marketing opportunities. Social media can be a useful and affordable tool to reach current and potentially new system users. Such platforms as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter or LinkedIn are extremely popular with not only today's youth but also young and middle-aged adults.

Figure 20 - Percentage of U.S. Population who currently use any social media



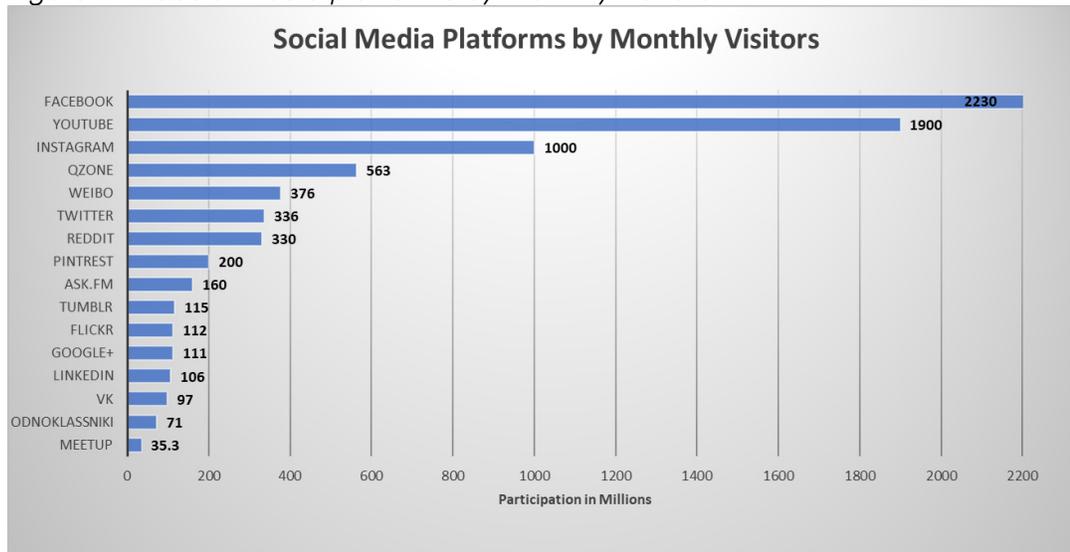
Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/273476/percentage-of-us-population-with-a-social-network-profile/>

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Figure 15 depicts the most frequently used social media sites throughout the world. As of August 2019, Facebook stands out as the most heavily trafficked social media platform, with

an estimated 2.2 billion visitors per month. With YouTube coming in second with 1.9 billion visitors per month.

Figure 21 - Social media platforms by monthly visitors



The Department is delivering marketing and communications services at a high level under the current capacity and there is just a handful of additional best practices that can be developed when capacity has increased. The most important of these is conducting regular messaging meetings to identify upcoming opportunities in operations and service delivery that help reinforce the Department brand. The Department can use the

regularly scheduled meetings to conduct training on photography with available technology, train on the marketing and communications plan, and develop a list of effective examples.

To accomplish this goal the Department should collect data on all marketing efforts and each strategy's return on investment.

Best practice is for organizations to track and evaluate spending and track the conversion rate to ensure maximum return on the investment. While it may be unrealistic to be able to accurately track the return on all marketing spent, it would be useful to establish certain tracking measures that would help the staff make informed decisions. The following outlines the process and provides the ROI template for evaluating marketing initiatives.

The process recommendations to track user information and participation metrics include:

- › Encourage user sign-up for email database: Offer a one-time discount to registrants who sign up for the email list serve. This identifies the effectiveness of the website versus other methods.
- › Short Messaging Service Codes (SMS): Offer unique offers with event or program-specific codes to those who opt-in to receive messages. This method easily tracks the source of information by using unique discount codes.
- › Social Media: Provide incentives via social media challenges to users who share or like a post on Facebook or Instagram.
- › Web analytics (e.g. Google Analytics, Sprout Social, etc.): Google Analytics and Sprout Social can help identify the most popular pages, days and times of visitors and sections or sub-sections that users view. These methods also track information about phrases entered into search engines to locate services and websites driving the most traffic to the site.
- › Track sources of information during registration, special events and at facilities:

Ensure every program registration format asks for the source of information that drove the participant to sign up for the program. Collect data about how attendees learned about special events by using intercept surveys. The Department can partner with local high school classes to train students in data collection and survey administration. Intercept surveys at special events are also effective for collecting economic impact data from visitors.

- › Build database identifying sources of information for participants and revenue generation: The department can identify the most effective marketing methods by maintaining a database documenting the sources of information participants report using and the amount of revenue each information source generates.
- › Document true costs of marketing: Utilize the Cost of Service Model identified in this chapter to track true costs of marketing for a specific activity or program, event, or facility. The true cost of a marketing method includes all direct costs associated with the activity including cost of printing, mailing, buying advertisements etc. It also includes direct and overhead staff time allocated towards it.

Figure 16 depicts sample ROI spreadsheet for email and direct mail marketing. The input variables refer to those that the staff must fill in for each marketing medium. The output variables are driven by the model and will automatically adjust to the input variables when set up with formulas.

A basic formula and a model that will help Department track and calculate ROI is shown in the formula below.

$$\text{Marketing ROI} = \frac{\text{Contribution (\$) generated from externally referred customers}}{\text{(\$) for staff interaction and other costs to manage and engage in the process}}$$

Figure 22 - Sample of Marketing Return on Investment calculation table. Numbers are for illustration purposes only.

Email Marketing		Direct Marketing	
	Input		Input
Total # of Emails Sent	2,500.00	Total # of Postcards Sent	10,000.00
Total Cost (Direct / Indirect)	\$ 500	Total Cost (Direct / Indirect)	\$ 2,500
Response Rate (%)	30.0%	Response Rate (%)	10.0%
Conversion Rate (%)	10.0%	Conversion Rate (%)	10.0%
Average Spending by Buyer (\$)	\$ 20.00	Average Spending by Buyer (\$)	\$ 12.00
	Output		Output
Total # of Emails	2,500.00	Total # of Postcards	10,000.00
Total Cost	\$ 500	Total Cost	\$ 2,500
Cost / Unit	\$ 0.20	Cost / Unit	\$ 0.25
Response Rate (%)	30%	Response Rate (%)	10%
# of Responses	750	# of Responses	1,000.00
Cost / Responder (\$)	\$ 1	Cost / Responder (\$)	\$ 3
Conversion Rate (%)	10%	Conversion Rate (%)	10%
# of Buyers	75	# of Buyers	100
Cost / Buyer (\$)	\$ 6.67	Cost / Buyer (\$)	\$ 25.00
Revenue Generated	\$ 1,500.00	Revenue Generated	\$ 1,200.00
Net Profit / Loss	\$ 1,000.00	Net Profit / Loss	\$ (1,300.00)

Response Rate (% of responses expected from the total list)

Conversion Rate (% of respondents that will make a purchase)

Buyer = Participants

In Departments like Garner with extensive deferred maintenance needs, telling the story of system maintenance becomes essential to building public support and understanding for parks, recreation, and cultural resources. Communicating these issues should be incorporated into the Communications Plan. Best practices include working with the teams that maintain the park system to demonstrate the work needed to maintain the system based on the mission, vision, and values of the Department. Giving the community a glimpse behind the scenes at the work needed to achieve park outcomes strengthens the awareness of the effort spent creating spaces, events, and ensuring that visitors have pleasant experiences at Garner parks.

Meeting regularly to discuss upcoming opportunities to reinforce the brand, developing content together and following up with the results of the story help staff recognize the need to communicate efforts to make Garner a great place to play. These meetings can

address other challenges in communication and ensure follow up with the community is as important as promoting programs and events. One area that has been a challenge is following up with residents who have identified an issue or challenge in the park system. Many residents who observe issues will contact Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources for a resolution, not realizing that the Public Works Department is actually responsible for these needs. Staff should ensure that follow up communication occurs in a timely manner to update residents about the status of improvements and updates. Effective communication with the public will also require better communication with the Public Works Department about project timelines and updates. Staff should be made aware of strategies for communicating with Public Works and telling the community story about maintenance of the parks, recreation, and cultural resources system.

Operations Goal 4: Continue to Train Staff on Best practices to build capacity in achieving operational outcomes

The Department is involved with centralized training through the Town's Human Resources Department. To compliment that, the Department provides orientation and training specific to its operations. The Department conducts training in-house or from a specialized facilitator based on need. As-needed training enhances performance

by filling gaps and selecting areas to improve operational capacity. To achieve this goal, the Department should identify training to increase knowledge and capacity of employees for overall management of responsibilities, expectations, and outcomes.

TRAINING NEEDED

Internally the Department should develop training for software and technology and existing policies and processes. Training materials should be provided for reference if needed. The Department should continue to foster a culture of continued learning by encouraging staff not only to attend

but also share expertise in the field by developing educational sessions for conferences and inhouse training. Continue to encourage staff to sit on boards and committees in areas of interest and expertise. Developing networks and teaching skills builds confidence and capacity within staff.

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Departments should implement regular updates on the master plan implementation, including high-level training regarding priorities, strategies, and best practices. Trainings should include regular updates on implementation and performance measures. These trainings will increase and solidify a shared vision within the organization and reinforce decisions.

will increase buy-in and outcomes will be more easily achieved. As new staff positions are added, Department specific orientation and training will need to begin during onboarding. Update the onboarding process to include all new training on plans, policies and procedures for consistent delivery of service. Establish a schedule for onboarding with sign-off when completed as seen in Figure 17.

Hands on activities and involving staff in the preparation process to launch recommendations

Figure 23 - Sample onboarding timeline

SIX WEEK ONBOARDING TIMELINE				
TOPIC	PRIORITY	STAFF MEMBERS	DATE + TIME	NOTES
Culture and managing fulltime employees				
Master plan and Director’s meeting				
Issue keys				
Town Hall staff meet and greet				
Health insurance and open enrollment				
Phone etiquette and procedures				
Employee handbook				
Email and electronic calendar overview				
Daily/Weekly/Monthly job responsibilities				
Executime training and payroll				
Software training: RecDesk				
Park properties tour				
Recreation Guide overview				
Cash handling procedures				
Key process - check in/out				
Printers and log ins				
Schedule and time off requests				
BASE Business Plan				
Schedule interviews with staff				
Opening and closing procedures				
Shared drive and file structure overview				
Marketing standards				
BASE tours				
StrengthFinder assessment				
Work order procedure				
IT help procedures				
Marketing and communication overview				
General recreation overview				
Purchase order process				
Summer Fall program overview				
Program standards				
Monthly rec reporting				
Mobile stage				
Equipment storage				
Recreation Trailer				
Fitness instructors / programming				
PRIORITY RANKINGS	1 - Urgent (first 2 weeks)	2 - Non-urgent (Weeks 3-4)	3 - Long-term (Weeks 5-6)	4 - As time allows

Maintenance Goal 5: Regularly track and monitor capacity and workload to ensure resources needed are obtained to manage assets to achieve full lifecycle

The Public Works Department is responsible for infrastructure services including streets, parks and grounds, athletics and grounds, Town-owned facilities, waste management, and fleet. Divisions within Public Works will assist accomplishing goals of other divisions, but competing priorities create challenges to completing all responsibilities. Classifying park maintenance functions and services as essential, important, and value added helps staff prioritize immediate needs over less-urgent matters. Each function should also have an identified contact person within Public Works who serves as the coordinator for that task. Operations Goal 1 includes strategies for classifying functions.

Public Works can use the classification of services to manage workloads. Classifying maintenance functions supports workload management, enabling Department staff to make effective decisions as new responsibilities are classified. Conducting a time analysis in conjunction with classifying maintenance functions is recommended. Understanding the amount of time tasks require will support proper staffing levels for the Department and Public Works as parks, recreation, and cultural resources services expand. Identifying the number of hours each task takes will help the Department understand the number of full-time equivalents needed to properly maintain the system. This analysis can be used to forecast needed staff as new parks, facilities, and amenities are added to the system. Contracting services should be considered as an alternative when available staff time is not adequate to meet maintenance function needs. Roles and responsibilities for park maintenance

should be updated as the system expands in coordination with Operations Goal 1. Public Works can evaluate their workload annually to determine capacity, needed resources, and which teams may have the capacity to take on maintenance of new assets.

A Cost of Service analysis ensures the necessary funding is available for asset preservation and routine maintenance. These studies determine the cost to provide services and manage responsibilities. They show the justification for costs, expenditures, additional funding and resources, and manage expectations for outcome delivery. Cost of services is covered in the Finances recommendations below.

The total cost of ownership is similar to the cost of service study with additional expenditures incorporated for initial purchase, development costs, and cost to replace. Forecasting for replacement is part of being prepared for the future needs of the community and ensuring the safety and enjoyment of the assets. Using the total cost of service and total cost of ownership will help forecast needed funding and resources for replacement and new assets being added to the system. This is an area that Garner can easily excel in from previous efforts to define frequency and location of duties and tasks. Using the foundation already established and enhancing it to help forecast future resources needed helps the Town manage expectations from a proactive position. There will almost always be a need for adjustments. However, these adjustments will be smaller in nature and less impactful to the overall budget.

Maintenance Goal 6: Continue to train staff to ensure readiness, responsiveness, and develop new skillsets needed to achieve operational outcomes

Proper training is noted as being a mechanism for improving employee performance, morale, skillsets, consistency, engagement, and productivity. More importantly, it decreases turnover and the cost of training someone new. Investing in training is a best practice and one that the Town is already committed to doing. It is important to view each new responsibility as an opportunity to evaluate the current capacity and expertise of employees and teams. This will ensure that there is support for new responsibilities and staff to achieve outcomes. This includes orienting and training staff on the implementation of the

Comprehensive Plan.

One training that is made available to parks, recreation, and cultural resources professionals is the NRPA Maintenance Management School. This valuable program enhances the knowledge and understanding of the industry and how asset preservation and routine maintenance play an important role in community satisfaction. While the community has identified a high level of satisfaction from the Survey results in Chapter 5, this is an area of operation that must continue to be intentional and driven by data and outcomes.

FINANCES

To establish best practices that increase sustainability as the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department evolves to meet the community needs.

The Garner Forward master planning process identified the community’s unique and desirable traits to guide the provision of services into the future. Managing community expectations is an important part of planning and implementing changes. As the Department grows the parks, recreation, and cultural resources services available to the community, the expectations of funding needed to support the Department’s

activities will also need to change. The Department currently achieves 26 percent cost recovery and has a long history of providing equitable services to residents. This section focuses on allocating appropriate resources to the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department while focusing on cost containment and cost recovery strategies.

Finances Goal 1: Establish strategies for identifying financial resources needed to incorporate new facilities, amenities, and services.

Between 2015 and 2019, the department achieved a significant increase in cost recovery between 9.13 percent and 26.75 percent. Best practice in parks, recreation, and cultural resources departments is between 40 percent and 60 percent. The

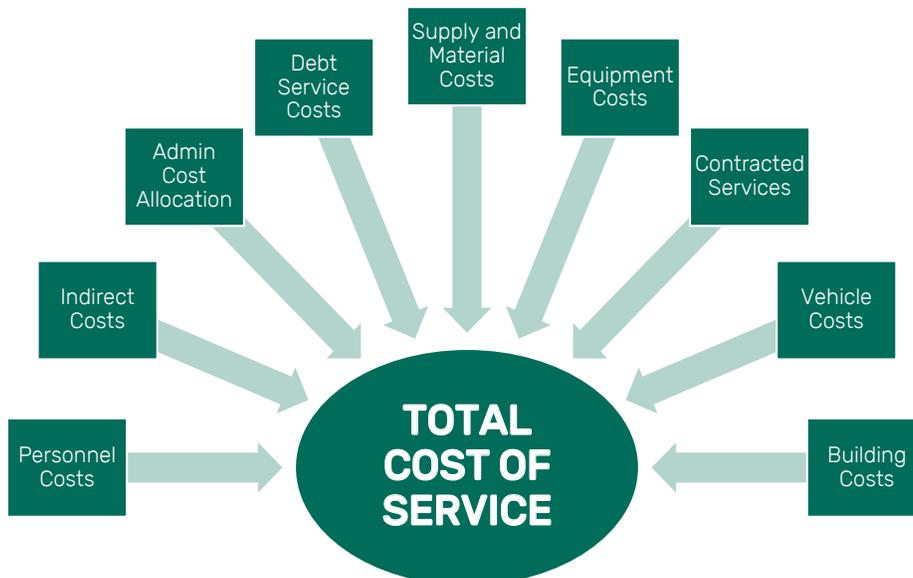
proportion of programs and services classified as essential impacts the Department’s cost recovery since those programs receive a high subsidy and are offered below market value. There is a solid foundation to build upon moving forward.

UNDERSTANDING THE FULL COST OF SERVICE

The Department should establish a strategy for identifying resources needed as the Department and park system evolve. Developing a cost of service assessment will allow the department to determine unit costs per program, program participants, and facilities. Understanding the cost per unit (program, participant, hours, facility, etc.) helps the Department articulate the true need for resources as programs and facilities expand.

Full cost of accounting should be created for each class or program to accurately calculate direct and indirect costs. This baseline understanding will help the department establish specific cost recovery targets. Program staff should be trained on establishing and achieving cost recovery targets based on their program’s total cost of service.

Figure 24 - Total Cost of Service model



vision +
recommendation

DETERMINING TOTAL COST OF SERVICE

A Cost of Service Analysis should be conducted on each program, or program type, that accurately calculates direct (i.e., program-specific) and indirect (i.e., comprehensive, including administrative overhead) costs. Completing a Cost of Service Analysis determines the true and full cost of offering a program and provides information for pricing programs and services based on accurate delivery costs. Figure 18 illustrates the common types of costs included in a Cost of Service Analysis.

The methodology for determining the total Cost of Service involves calculating the total cost for the activity, program, or service, then calculating the total revenue earned for that activity. Costs (and revenue) can also be derived on a per unit basis. Program or activity units may include:

- › Number of participants
- › Number of tasks performed
- › Number of consumable units
- › Number of service calls
- › Number of events
- › Required time for offering program/service.

FULL COST OF OWNERSHIP

Including operational costs associated with materials and equipment creates a comprehensive understanding of operational costs this equipment will generate. A long-term financial strategy with a 5-year budget worksheet can be reviewed and updated annually to capture equipment costs in the fiscal year the purchase or maintenance is completed. This total cost of

Agencies use the Total Cost of Service to determine financial resources required to provide specific programs and services at a certain quality or volume. Results determine and track cost recovery and benchmark different programs provided by the Town between one another. Cost recovery goals are established once Total Cost of Service totals have been calculated. Department staff should be trained on the process of conducting a Total Cost of Service Analysis and conduct the process regularly.

While understanding the full cost of service is important, the need for cost containment is equally important when working to achieve a more sustainable system with cost recovery goals. The Department already develops program and events budgets for cost accounting and can enhance those efforts by setting annual targets for cost recovery based on the Total Cost of Service Analysis. These can be used for developing performance measures and should be monitored through regular financial reviews to see progress.

ownership approach provides leadership with better tools for financial forecasting. Included in the full cost of ownership is upfront costs, long-term maintenance costs, and replacement costs. Simple spreadsheets are the only tool needed for tracking and results. This analysis will be great talking points for communicating the department's needs, priorities and successes.

Finances Goal 2: Continue exploration of varied funding sources and develop business plans to support operations, maintenance, and capital projects

FUNDING STRATEGIES

The Town has an established and intentional process for providing parks, recreation, and cultural resources assets, services, and programs to the community. However, there is always a need to explore alternative dedicated funding streams. The department should work with the Town to explore additional funding sources as it seeks to implement the Garner Forward Plan and the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Comprehensive Plan recommendations. The following funding strategies should be assessed as part of a larger funding strategy evaluation. The Department should explore the following

external funding strategies to diversify the funding sources of the park system.

- › Conservancies and Friends of the Park groups are organized fundraising and operational groups who raise money for individual signature parks and or attractions such as zoos and regional parks. There are over 2,000 conservancies in the United States.
- › Crowdfunding is a web-based source which aggregates funds from a group of people who are willing to support a specific program or facility project. Relevant sites include www.kickstarter.org and www.gofundme.com etc.

Funds are subject to the website's terms of service which may include an administrative fee.

- › The Department can partner with a local nonprofit to accept private donations in the form of funds, land, facilities, recreation equipment, art or in-kind services. The Wake County Community Foundation is one potential group that can accept private donations on behalf of the Department.
- › Sponsorships can fund events, facilities, or equipment. Sponsorship agreements should include detailed terms that spell out expectations for the Department and the sponsoring business or organization.
- › Irrevocable remainder trusts are set up with individuals who typically have more than a million dollars in wealth. They will leave a portion of their wealth to the organization in a trust fund that allows the fund to grow over a period of time and then is available for the organization to use a portion of the interest to support specific park and recreation facilities or programs that are designated by the trustee.
- › Many parks, recreation, and cultural resources agencies hold annual fundraisers to cover scholarships, programs, or capital projects.
- › Capital fees are added to the user fee at revenue producing facilities such as golf courses, pools, recreation centers, hospitality centers and sports complexes and are lifted off after the improvement is paid off.
- › Dedicated development and redevelopment fees are assessed for the development of residential properties with the proceeds to be used for parks, recreation, and cultural resources purposes, such as open space acquisitions, community park site development, neighborhood park development, regional park acquisition and development, etc. Additionally, redevelopment fees are attained from the property tax increase that comes from the development of trails, signature parks and destination facilities. (E.g. Atlanta / Charlotte)
- › Partnership enhancement monetary grant program is administered by the National Tree Trust. Matching grants are available on a 50/50 cost share basis. Funds are available for projects which promote public awareness in support of tree planting, maintenance, management, protection and cultivation of trees in rural, community and urban settings. These are small grants ranging from \$500 to \$20,000.
- › Food and beverage tax support is usually associated with convention and tourism bureaus. However, since parks, recreation, and cultural resources agencies manage many of the tourism attractions, they receive a portion of this funding source for operational or capital expenses.
- › Catering permits and services is a license to allow caterers to work in the park system on a permit basis with a set fee or a percentage of food sales returning to the organization. Also, many organizations have their own catering service and receive a percentage of dollars off the sale of their food.
- › Greenway utilities are used to finance acquisition of greenway trails and development of greenway trails by selling the development rights underground for fiber optic businesses.
- › Many cities and counties are selling naming rights for new buildings or renovation of existing buildings and parks for the development cost associated with improvement.
- › Land leases are a lease agreement that permits the tenant to use a piece of land owned by the landlord in exchange for rent. Land leases work very similarly to the way traditional property leases operate. In the parks, recreation, and cultural resources industry land leases have been entered into for restaurants in destination parks, for an organization to provide services the agency does not have the means to provide, and to compliment a signature facility with recreational retail, health and wellness businesses, and hotels.
- › Easements are available when the Town allows utility companies, businesses or individuals to develop some type of an improvement above ground or below ground on their property for a set period of time and a set dollar amount to be received by the Town on an annual basis.
- › Advertising sales are revenue sources for the sale of tasteful and appropriate advertising on park and recreation related items such as in the Town's program guide, on scoreboards, dasher boards and other visible products or

services that are consumable or permanent that exposes the product or service to many

people.

OPERATIONAL FUNDING

To accomplish this goal, it will be important to provide direction to the staff on how existing funds and alternative funding sources are used and what is needed to supplement these through operational practices. It is best practice to develop strategies to increase revenues from existing sources and new sources. One way to communicate this to the Department is to develop business plans for revenue generating facilities, programs and even by cost centers. The business plan will should identify:

- › Facility or Cost Center Description: Include key details about the facility or cost center and how the services that are provided within each benefit the community.
- › Facilities and Services: Identify the facilities and services within a cost center or the services within the facility.
- › Market Analysis: Include the market for services, the characteristics of the target markets, and specifics of how to reach the market where they are from the existing marketing methods.
- › Marketing and Communications Plan:

These are to be specific to the facility or the cost centers. It should include promotion of services and communication of the management, mission and brand to increase awareness.

- › Similar Provider Analysis: This includes private, public, nonprofits. Identify similar provider services that are in competition with the Department services.
- › Organization and management: This should outline how the Department is set up, how the facility or cost center management is set up, and the responsibilities and necessary skill sets.
- › Financial and Resource Management: This section should include how to make requests, procurement, and more importantly how to manage these resources to identified outcomes.
- › Performance Measures: This section should include the desired outcomes to manage forward including documentation, reporting, financial goals, management goals and resource management outcomes.

Finances Goal 3: Develop strategies and guidelines for management of deferred maintenance and financial documents

The Department's capacity is challenging the Department's ability to manage reporting and documentation. While this has not been an impact to financial management due to the working relationship with the Finance Department, the

growth of services could become an impact. This is where a strategy and guidelines for staff can keep things in order and keep operations from changing beyond what is documented.

DEFERRED MAINTENANCES STRATEGY

To ensure that all assets are managed to their full lifecycle, establishing and documenting a strategy to track and manage facility and asset maintenance is important. The preventative maintenance should be scheduled through an approved process and preferably a workorder system with an asset preservation module. This will allow for annual scheduling and cost accounting for preventative maintenance. This data can be used to justify capital and operational budget requests.

maintenance and improvements through an assessment. The assessment should incorporate the forecasting of costs using the cost of ownership model. This model includes the cost of procurement, the anticipated preventative maintenance costs and the lifecycle replacement costs. Categorize each identified need or future need into two categories and then prioritize the list. Recommended categories are defined below as sustainable and critical.

Sustainable – This category describes the extra services or capital improvement that should be undertaken when additional funding is available.

This includes strategically enhancing existing capital assets in order to enhance services and provide new services that would require additional operational or capital funding.

Critical - The intention of this alternative is to refocus and make the most of existing resources with the primary goal being for the Department to maintain the level of service. The actions associated with this fiscally responsible approach addresses current maintenance needs and anticipated maintenance at existing parks and facilities and will be funded through existing funding sources and alternative funding when available.

As a CAPRA Accredited agency, the Department is focused on documentation to maintain the

FINANCIAL POLICIES

The Department financial analysis identified the opportunity of enhancing donations as a funding strategy. This should be supported with a policy that specifically identifies the philosophy of the donation program, how the funds will be used in operations and capital, and a framework for gifts, bequests, passes, certificates and exchange for services. Update this policy as the needs and priorities for the Department and community needs evolve.

Grants are regularly being looked at as an alternative funding source. A framework should be established to ensure the full benefits to the community and Department. This framework should include the review of requirements, estimated time to develop the grant at a defined cost of service. This will help the Department measure the opportunity by costs. The importance is in the level of grant requirements. Requirements can be substantial and have a potential to stretch resources beyond capacity. Understanding the cost of compliance with grant requirements will help with decision-making. The Department should seek to identify potential partners in grant applications to increase the reach of the outcomes and distribute grant application requirements among partners to establish a teamwork approach at the beginning.

Establish formal partnerships using best practices for public/private partnerships, public/public partnerships, and public/non-profit partnerships.

standard level of service. With new CAPRA Standards regarding document review, the Department will adopt this approach as a standard as well. In doing so, training staff on the strategy to managing these living documents should be conducted.

Approaches to the outcome of updating documents can be done simply by a note in the appropriate section of a document on the adjustment that is to be considered or has been implemented. Then annually the context can be added for full update. Conversely, the full detail can be inserted in at the time adjustments are made or as a recommendation in report form submitted and an updated draft of the document created to distribute for review.

Partnerships can provide a significant value in delivering services. It is always best practice to transition to an equitable agreement. There will be changes in the market for services and adjustments will need to be made. This transition should be at a pace that is appropriate to ensure the outcomes of the partnership are still achieved and services are delivered where they are needed most. The following best practices should be implemented to the fullest application.

The recommended policies and practices for public/private partnerships may include businesses, private groups, private associations, or individuals who desire to make a profit from use of Town facilities or programs. These guiding procedures can also apply to partnerships where a private party wishes to develop a facility on park property, to provide a service on publicly owned property, or who has a contract with the agency to provide a task or service on the agency's behalf at public facilities. These unique partnership principles are as follows:

- › Upon entering into an agreement with a private business, group, association, or individual, Town staff and political leadership must recognize that they must allow the private entity to meet their financial objectives within reasonable parameters that protect the mission, goals, and integrity of the Town.
- › As an outcome of the partnership, The Town must receive a designated fee that may

include a percentage of gross revenue dollars less sales tax on a regular basis, as outlined in the contract agreement.

- › The working agreement of the partnership must establish a set of measurable outcomes to be achieved, as well as the tracking method of how those outcomes will be monitored by the agency. The outcomes will include standards of quality, financial reports, customer satisfaction, payments to the agency, and overall coordination with the Town for the services rendered.
- › Depending on the level of investment made by the private contractor, the partnership agreement can be limited to months, a year, or multiple years.
- › If applicable, the private contractor will annually provide a working management plan they will follow to ensure the outcomes desired by the Town are achieved. The management plan can and will be negotiated,

if necessary. Monitoring of the management plan will be the responsibility of both partners. The agency must allow the contractor to operate freely in their best interest, as long as the outcomes are achieved, and the terms of the partnership agreement are adhered to.

- › The private contractor cannot lobby agency advisory or governing boards for renewal of a contract. Any such action will be cause for termination. All negotiations must be with the Director or his/her designee.
- › The agency has the right to advertise for private contracted partnership services or negotiate on an individual basis with a bid process based on the professional level of the service to be provided.
- › If conflicts arise between both partners, the highest-ranking officers from both sides will try to resolve the issue before going to each partner's legal counsels. If none can be achieved, the partnership shall be dissolved.

PUBLIC - PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The recommended policies and practices for public/public partnerships may include other Town Departments or other governmental entities in or outside of Town. Working together on the development, sharing, and/or operating of parks, recreation, and cultural resources facilities and programs will be as follows:

- › Each partner will meet with the Parks and Recreation Department Director, or his/her designee, annually to plan and share activity based costs and equity invested by each partner in the partnership.
- › A working partnership agreement will be developed and monitored together on a quarterly or as needed basis; partners will establish measurable outcomes and work through key issues to focus on for the coming year.
- › Each partner will focus on meeting a balance of 50% equity for each agreed to partnership and track investment costs accordingly.
- › Each partner will assign a liaison to serve each partnership agency for communication and planning purposes.
- › Measurable outcomes will be reviewed quarterly and shared with each partner, with

adjustments made as needed.

- › Each partner will act as an agent for the other partner, thinking collectively as one, not two separate agencies for purposes of the agreement.
- › Each partner will meet with the other partner's respective governing board or owner annually, to share results of the partnership agreement.

If conflicts arise between both partners, the highest-ranking officers from both sides will try to resolve the issue before going to each partner's legal counsels. If none can be achieved, the partnership shall be dissolved.

The recommended policies and practices for public/non-profit partnerships may include 501(c)3 or (c)4 non-profit/civic agencies. Working together on the development, sharing, and/or operating of parks and recreation facilities and programs will be as follows:

- › The non-profit partner agency or group must first recognize that they are in a partnership with the Department to provide a public service or good; conversely, the Department must manage the partnership in the best interest of the community, not in the best interest of the non-profit agency.

- The partnership working agreement will be year-to-year and evaluated based on the outcomes determined for the partnership agencies or groups during the planning process at the start of the partnership year.
 - At the planning workshop, each partner will share their needs for the partnership and outcomes desired.
 - Each partner will outline their level of investment in the partnership as it applies to money, people, time, equipment, and the amount of capital investment they will make in the partnership for the coming year.
- Each partner will focus on meeting a balance of 50% equity or as negotiated and agreed upon as established in the planning session with the Department.
- Each partner will assign a liaison to serve each partnership agency for communication and planning purposes.
- Measurable outcomes will be reviewed quarterly and shared with each partner, with adjustments made as needed.
- Each partner will act as an agent for the other partner, thinking collectively as one, not two separate agencies for purposes of the agreement.
- Each partner will meet with the other partner's respective governing board or owner annually, to share results of the partnership agreement.
- If conflicts arise between both partners, the highest-ranking officers from both sides will try to resolve the issue before going to each partner's legal counsels. If none can be achieved, the partnership shall be dissolved.



10 action + implementation



CHAPTER 10 >

ACTION + IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

An implementation plan with prioritized action items is outlined below. The recommendations presented in Chapter 9 have been further refined into strategies and prioritized as short-term, mid-term, long-term or ongoing. Action items receiving higher priority are those supported by significant community input or are items that have been delayed or postponed in the past but have significant bearing on achieving the goals of this plan. Each action item indicates a responsible party to foster accountability within the department.

This plan is a working document and Department staff will be addressing the columns titled Group Responsible and Timeline during the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources planning retreat.

GOAL	TIMELINE	TIMELINE CODE
Short-term	1 – 5 years	ST
Mid-term	5 – 10 years	MT
Long-term	10 + years	LT
Ongoing	Continual	OG

PARKLAND

Enhance quality of life for Garner residents by providing quality parks, trails, facilities, and a variety of recreation opportunities.

Goal 1: Build high quality parks for the Growing Garner Community

PARKLAND GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
1.1 Develop between 83.2 acres and 184.3 acres of parkland to maintain a level of service of 10.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents during the next 10 years.	1.1.1 - Develop the Yeargan Property for public recreation use.		
	1.1.2 - Develop Meadowbrook Park for public recreation use.		
	1.1.3 - Acquire land to anticipate future park expansion in accordance with parkland acquisition map.		
	1.1.4 - Use site suitability analysis to inform site selection for park land acquisition		

PARKLAND GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>1.2 Upgrade existing parks to reflect best practices in park design for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Diversity of park amenities › Green infrastructure › Maintenance › ADA + inclusivity › Shade + comfort › Placemaking › Connectivity › CPTED + Safety 	<p>1.2.1 - Complete detailed list of upgrades for individual parks, estimate cost and request funding as part of operational budget or CIP.</p> <p>1.2.2 - Improve overall visual appearance of parks and facilities and improve longevity of equipment and materials.</p> <p>1.2.3 - Coordinate with the Public Works Department to ensure detailed maintenance plans and deferred maintenance lists are routinely updated and implemented and the expectations of Department are met.</p> <p>1.2.4 Ensure ADA Transition Plan is up to date and being implemented by Public Works Department.</p>		
<p>1.3 Implement best practices in park design for future park development using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Diversity of park amenities › Green infrastructure › Maintenance › ADA + inclusivity › Shade + comfort › Placemaking › Connectivity › CPTED + Safety 	<p>1.3.1 - Include requirement for experience with listed best practices in released RFQs for design services</p> <p>1.3.2 Confirm best practices are met throughout planning, design and construction phases</p>		
<p>1.4 Evaluate Unified Development Ordinance and revise as necessary to increase private investment into parks and trails.</p> <p>-</p>	<p>1.4.1 - Assess ordinances of similar jurisdictions to determine best practice for Garner’s context</p> <p>1.4.2 - If revisions are needed, pursue ordinance revision as a partnership between Town and developers.</p> <p>1.4.3 - Pursue a text change amendment for approval by Town Council</p> <p>1.4.4 - Ensure policies are in place to account for parkland and trail provision in newly developed areas.</p>		

PARKLAND GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>1.5 Use results of community engagement and statistically valid survey when identifying amenities for existing park upgrades and future park programming</p>	<p>1.5.1 - Identify opportunities to create the following amenities identified as a high priority through the statistically valid survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Natural trails › Greenway trail system › Paved greenway trails › Splashpad › Outdoor amphitheater and event space › Boathouse and water access › Outdoor basketball courts › Ropes and adventure course › Outdoor classroom › Improved Senior Center › Paved walking trails and benches › Reservable shelter space › Rehearsal space › Larger theater › Black box theater › Indoor active recreation space › Athletic fields › Artificial turf fields › Universally designed playground, parks, and facilities › Outdoor fitness equipment 		

Goal 2: Create a community trail network that connects people to the places they want to go locally and within the regional trail network.

PARKLAND GOAL 2 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>2.1 Maintain a level of service of 1 mile of trail per 1,000 residents during the 10-year planning horizon</p>	<p>1.1.1 - Construct between 33 miles and 42.7 miles of greenway trail.</p>		
	<p>2.1.2 - Hire a park planner to identify sources of funding, manage corridor acquisition and manage projects.</p>		
	<p>2.1.3 - Develop feasibility studies for the following priority trail networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timber Drive Corridor - Education and Recreation Corridor - Vandora Corridor - Garner Road Corridor - U.S. 70 Corridor 		
	<p>2.1.4 - Construct trail segments as funding and resources allow.</p>		
	<p>2.1.5 - In addition to the list in 2.1.3 above, identify trail segments for master planning, corridor studies, feasibility study or project design phases as appropriate.</p>		
	<p>2.1.6 - Complete feasibility study for a fourth corridor alignment for the South Garner Greenway given recent land transactions.</p>		
<p>2.2 Update Unified Development Ordinance to explicitly include greenway acquisition in language for "open space" acquisition.</p>	<p>2.4.1 - Include provision for exactions in the Unified Development Ordinance that require developers to construct greenway sections identified on the greenway master plan or provide easements for future greenway development.</p>		
	<p>2.4.2 - Create fee-in-lieu provision that allows the option of paying a fee to the Town instead of constructing a trail or dedicating an easement.</p>		
	<p>2.4.3 - Adopt trail design standards to create enforceable expectations of design, materials, and quality of developer-designed greenway trails.</p>		

Goal 3: Maintain existing indoor facility space and remain responsive to changing demographic and recreational trends

PARKLAND GOAL 3 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>3.1 Construct additional indoor recreation facility space between 34,600 square feet and 76,800 square feet to maintain a level of service of 4.38 square feet of indoor facility space per 1 resident.</p>	<p>3.1.1 - Construct additional active indoor recreation facility space between 21,900 square feet and 48,600 square feet, at minimum, to maintain a level of service of 2.77 square feet of active indoor recreation space per 1 resident.</p>		
	<p>3.1.2 - Determine facility type based on programming needs and existing space limitations.</p>		
	<p>3.1.3 - Determine if new construction, retrofitting, or expansion is needed and determine that space is adequate to meet demand.</p>		
	<p>3.1.4 - Develop a site and building plan. Create construction drawings and permit the construction, if needed.</p>		
	<p>3.1.5 - Construct, retrofit, or expand the facility.</p>		
<p>3.2 Provide or expand facility space for the following community needs based on community engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - age targeted programs, especially for teens and seniors - refurbished senior center - rehearsal, activity, display and performance space for performing arts, visual arts, and music - fitness and wellness programming space 	<p>3.2.1 - Determine spatial requirements for new teen and senior programs</p>		
	<p>3.2.2 - Based on capacity study identify location to administer new programs</p>		
	<p>3.2.3 - Refer to Programming Goal 1 for recommendations for senior center improvements.</p>		
	<p>3.2.4 - Conduct Gap Analysis to identify need and location for land acquisition, lease, or joint use opportunities to provide program space needs identified here.</p>		

PARKLAND GOAL 3 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
3.3 Reference maintenance plans implemented by Public Works Department to improve overall visual appearance of buildings and facilities.	3.3.1 - Update maintenance plans every 3 years to account for changes in building use and maintenance needs.		
	3.3.2 - Create maintenance plans for new buildings and facilities as created		
	3.3.3 - Meet with public works regularly (twice annually or quarterly) to review maintenance plan implementation.		
3.4 Ensure ADA Transition Plan is up to date and being implemented by Public Works Department.	3.4.1 - Implement needed improvements identified in the ADA transition plan.		
	3.4.2 - Meet with public works regularly (twice annually or quarterly) to review ADA Transition Plan for implementation.		
	3.4.3 - Implement best practices in accessibility and universal design at future facilities beyond ADA compliance.		

Goal 4: Leverage parks and greenway trails as a platform to meet larger community goals

PARKLAND GOAL 4 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
4.1 Create parks people can use to achieve personal health and wellness goals	4.1.1 - Pursue park improvements to improve health equity by prioritizing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Geographic distribution of parks - Financial investment in parks - Physical access to parks 		
	4.1.2 - Participate in Wake County’s health and wellness collaborative.		
	4.1.3 - Use health and wellness metrics to inform planning, design, and construction of parks.		
4.2 Ensure residents have equitable access to high quality parks	4.2.1 - Track park investments to ensure geographically equitable distribution of public investment		
	4.2.2 - Ensure parks are accessible along public transportation routes		
	4.2.3 - Promote park connectivity using strategic greenway connections.		

PARKLAND GOAL 4 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>4.3 Determine, track, and communicate the park system's economic impact and significance on the Town.</p>	4.3.1 - Use this plan's financial analysis as a foundation for a broader economic impact and economic significance study.		
	4.3.2 - Include economic impact results as part of regular reporting to Town Council.		
	4.3.3 - Effectively communicate the indirect impacts of the parks system, such as an increase in property values and a reduction in vehicle miles traveled.		
<p>4.4 Pursue best practices for environmental sustainability for park design, construction, and operation.</p>	4.4.1 - Include green infrastructure elements at parks and facilities		
	4.4.2 - Incorporate bioswales, rain gardens, green roofs into park stormwater plans when possible.		
	4.4.3 - Identify areas in park maintenance plans that can be left unmown or natural to provide wildlife habitat and reduce chemical application.		
<p>4.5 Implement universal design standards to guarantee access and use of parks and amenities regardless of a user's age or disability status.</p>	4.5.1 - Include the 7 Principles of Universal Design into future park, trail, and facility design projects.		
	4.5.2 - Incorporate ADA accessibility upfits into park, trail and facility construction and renovation.		
<p>4.6 Maintain high quality athletic facilities for Department-led and partner- led athletic programming</p>	4.6.1 - Continue providing indoor and outdoor facilities for Town-led and partner-led athletics programming		
	4.6.2 - Consider enhancing the playability and capacity of athletic facilities through conversion to or construction of synthetic turf fields with athletic lighting.		
	4.6.3 - Continue to track participation rates and recreation trends to determine the need for additional athletic fields and facilities		

PROGRAMMING

Continue to provide programs and events that meet the needs of the community while preparing new services as resources allow.

Goal 1: Build capacity to continue existing services and implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

PROGRAMMING GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>1.1 Strategically seek out potential partners or contracted facilitators to build capacity in service delivery as new programming needs and interests are developed.</p>	<p>1.1.1 - Develop private-public partnerships to assist in providing services using best practices as a basis.</p>		
	<p>1.1.2 - Develop interlocal agreements with public service providers that have special training or certifications to provide programs using best practices.</p>		
	<p>1.1.3 - Develop non-profit-public partnership agreements with similar service providers that have special training or certifications to provide programs using best practices.</p>		
	<p>1.1.4 - Use partnership best practices when renewing existing partnership agreements.</p>		
	<p>1.1.5 - Develop a volunteer program and track opportunities, volunteers, hours, expertise, and recognizing volunteers.</p>		
<p>1.2 Develop new recreation positions to meet the needs of the community through cost of service and identified cost recovery to assist in building position salary and capacity.</p>	<p>1.2.1 - Build new positions to manage Garner Recreation Center operations, greet visitors to the Garner Recreation Center, instruct classes at the Garner Recreation Center, develop non-athletic programming, and implement non-athletic programming.</p>		
	<p>1.2.2 - Establish cost of service to identify indirect costs associated with programming.</p>		
	<p>1.2.3 - Set cost recovery goals for programs and services that include indirect cost recovery as a portion of the fees and charges.</p>		
	<p>1.2.4 - Train staff to manage facility and programming to Garner’s standards and expected outcomes.</p>		

PROGRAMMING GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>1.3 Enhance the Senior Center facility, technology and audio-visual capabilities to better provide for security and programming that meets the need of the community.</p>	<p>1.3.1 - Conduct a survey to better define trips, life skills classes, fitness and wellness programs, and events visitors to the Senior Center would like to have.</p>		
	<p>1.3.2 - Seek to renovate facility spaces to support enhanced and new programming.</p>		
	<p>1.3.3 - Identify and design renovated spaces in the Senior Center that will allow for better access and aesthetics in common areas and restrooms.</p>		
	<p>1.3.4 - Invest in audio visual technology that supports new programming, security and visitor needs.</p>		
	<p>1.3.5 - Plan to continue offering programming at the Garner Recreation Center and other facilities in Town until renovations can be completed.</p>		

Goal 2: Develop a program mix that is balanced in lifecycle stages with new creative programming that serves diverse community interests.

PROGRAMMING GOAL 2 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>2.1 Develop quality new programming that aligns with community needs and interests.</p>	<p>2.1.1 - Develop standards for programming that includes logistics, customer service outcomes and cross promotions.</p>		
	<p>2.1.2 - Document and incorporate program standards into the Recreation Program Plan that enhances the quality and consistency of service delivery.</p>		
	<p>2.1.3 - Develop new programming in the areas of outdoor music and concerts, fitness and wellness, special events and festivals, and adult sports.</p>		
	<p>2.1.4 - Conduct interest surveys to further define specific programs within the areas of events, aquatics, art classes, fitness and wellness, and life skills.</p>		
	<p>2.1.5 - Develop sports special events for youth and adults that focus on skills challenges to draw awareness to all athletics. Adult competitions should have a social aspect to the event.</p>		
	<p>2.1.6 - Train staff on the programming plan, program development, and outcomes.</p>		
<p>2.2 Continue to obtain feedback from the community to be responsive as the community evolves.</p>	<p>2.2.1 - Periodically conduct focus groups to gain additional insight on community needs.</p>		
	<p>2.2.2 - Develop surveys for participants that are specific to each core program area and distribute regularly for feedback.</p>		
	<p>2.2.3 - Ensure comment cards are available at each facility to obtain feedback from visitors.</p>		
	<p>2.2.4 - Conduct intercept surveys at facilities to gain insight to visitor's local spending, perceived quality and interests.</p>		
	<p>2.2.5 - Use the surveys to obtain testimonials of services and consent for use in communications and promotions.</p>		
	<p>2.2.6 - Conduct surveys of participants in declining programs to identify interests for developing spin-off programs to continue to meet their needs.</p>		

PROGRAMMING GOAL 2 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>2.3 Continue to evaluate programs annually in participation and effectiveness using key performance indicators from the Program Assessment.</p>	<p>2.3.1 - Continue to collect and monitor the Program Lifecycle key performance indicators for all programs existing and new.</p>		
	<p>2.3.2 - Evaluate programs in each lifecycle stage with the Program Evaluation Matrix.</p>		
	<p>2.3.3 - Define and continue to monitor Legacy Programs that are currently within the saturated and decline lifecycle stages to determine if and when to retire them.</p>		
	<p>2.3.4 - Develop new programs in advance of retiring declining programs, using survey results from current participants as a basis for development.</p>		
	<p>2.3.5 - Develop lost customer surveys to gain input from participants that may not be returning as quality assurance.</p>		

Goal 3: Implement annual collection, analysis, and documentation best practices for recreation programs and services.

PROGRAMMING GOAL 3 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>3.1 Implement program management principles using key performance indicators to ensure consistent delivery of programs and services.</p>	<p>3.1.1 - Track cost recovery to identify achieved outcomes and update the target annually, adjusting to influencing factors that have been encountered from operations.</p>		
	<p>3.1.2 - Annually update similar provider list to limit duplication of services and identify markets where the Town can thrive.</p>		
	<p>3.1.3 - Continue to monitor demographics of the Town as it grows to ensure that needs of the community are being met.</p>		
	<p>3.1.4 - Develop pricing strategies for core program areas, update annually with any new strategies created, and incorporate into the Recreation Program Plan.</p>		
	<p>3.1.5 - Track, analyze and update the age segments analysis and those served annually.</p>		
	<p>3.1.6 - Classify all new programs/events developed to incorporate into the annual tracking, analyzing and updating of the program classifications distribution chart.</p>		
	<p>3.1.7 - Update existing plans, policies, and procedures to reflect recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan and direct staff on management approaches to achieve outcomes.</p>		
	<p>3.1.8 - Incorporate Town outcomes from existing approved plans into the plans of the Department and cite sources.</p>		

PROGRAMMING GOAL 3 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>3.2 Develop miniature business plans for each core program area that will empower staff to manage the services to defined outcomes from all aspects of operations.</p>	<p>3.2.1 - Incorporate Town outcomes and Department outcomes into each business plan to serve as direction for staff.</p>		
	<p>3.2.2 - Define Core Program Area outcomes in the business plan as direction for staff.</p>		
	<p>3.2.3 - Identify the target market and marketing methods to reach key demographics within miniature business plans.</p>		
	<p>3.2.4 - Identify the recreation trends that apply to demographics of each Core Program Area.</p>		
	<p>3.2.5 - Identify the age segments served in the business plan.</p>		
	<p>3.2.6 - Conduct a SWOT Analysis for each core program area to keep focus on internal and external factors that will impact outcomes.</p>		
	<p>3.2.7 - Identify the cost of service for each core program area within the business plan.</p>		
	<p>3.2.8 - Identify cost recovery and tactics for marketing and pricing to incorporate into the business plan.</p>		
	<p>3.2.9 - Define the performance measure for each outcome identified so staff know what constitutes success.</p>		

ARTS + CULTURAL RESOURCES

To continue the protection, celebration and enhancements of valued arts and cultural resources and services contributing to the economic vitality of Garner.

Goal 1: Invest in arts and cultural resources to continue developing the Town’s culture and arts.

ARTS + CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
1.1 Establish sustainability for arts and cultural resources, cultural assets, programming and events.	1.1.1 - Consider establishing an arts and cultural resources funding policy that designates one percent of all capital improvement project budgets be transferred for dedicated funding to future culture and arts projects.		
	1.1.2 - Partner with organizations for grant dollars to demonstrate larger reach.		
	1.1.3 - Partner with similar providers and artist organizations to provide services.		
	1.1.4 - Partner with organizations, use contracted services, and develop a robust volunteer base to build capacity.		
	1.1.5 - Develop a business plan to determine the appropriate sustainable level and provide direction to staff on managing arts and cultural resources moving forward.		
	1.1.6 - Update audio visual technology in GPAC and incorporate new programming needs into the upgrade.		
	1.1.7 - Develop a strategy and timeline to increase the It's Showtime Series budget for national acts with greater recognition.		

ARTS + CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>1.2 Identify additional cultural resources that should be protected and communicate with owners to establish a plan moving forward for preservation and potential procurement.</p>	1.2.1 - Develop a database of potential cultural resources in and around Garner that capture the essence of life in town.		
	1.2.2 - Develop criteria for prioritizing identified additional assets that include local heritage, prominence, adjacent to a trail corridor, potential programming and use.		
	1.2.3 - Work with current owners of potential cultural resources identified to convey the importance of preserving cultural assets and where appropriate develop a plan moving forward to preserve the asset.		
	1.2.4 - Acquire key cultural resources as Town assets to preserve for the future.		
<p>1.3 Capture cultural history to guide the overall direction of arts and cultural resources in Garner.</p>	1.3.1 - Research the history of all cultural assets including stories, pictures and artifacts for helping to develop the Garner arts and cultural resources story.		
	1.3.2 - Use history of asset's prior use, pictures and artifacts for interpretive signage at specific places in the community.		
	1.3.3 - Develop a cultural heritage trail connecting the cultural assets of the community. This can be trail in connecting them for visitors to a fully developed trail connecting them for a self-guide hike and history experience.		

Goal 2: Enhance services to activate spaces and contribute to the Town’s cultural resource services.

ARTS + CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL 2 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>2.1 Establish a public art program to incorporate pieces into the park system.</p>	<p>2.1.1 - Develop the public art program for art in public buildings, art pieces in parks and entrances to facilities, structural art incorporated into new vehicle and pedestrian bridges, and competition event where temporary pieces are displayed after the event.</p>		
	<p>2.1.2 - Develop public art program outcomes and processes for implementation</p>		
	<p>2.1.3 - Promote the public art program when projects have been identified and develop an RFP for artists to submit proposals.</p>		
	<p>2.1.4 - Ensure the Town knows each public art piece’s total cost of ownership including, procurement, installation, annual maintenance, repairs, and replacement (if needed).</p>		
<p>2.2 Continue to nurture appreciation for and participation in the culture and arts of Garner.</p>	<p>2.2.1 - Develop a database of arts and cultural resources that capture the essence of life in Garner. Use the data collected to develop messaging about what Garner has to offer.</p>		
	<p>2.2.2 - Youth Spotlight – using the talent from within the schools, create opportunities where youth performers can display their talents on stage before another performance.</p>		
	<p>2.2.3 - Develop a grant program for programs that foster the arts in youth and can demonstrate increasing the reach of Garner culture and arts.</p>		
	<p>2.2.4 - Provide instruction and an outlet for creative writing in Garner of the literary arts including poetry, short stories and creative artwork using letters and words.</p>		

ARTS + CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL 2 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
2.3 Enhance arts and cultural resources within Garner through partnerships including local similar providers and businesses.	2.3.1 - Partner with similar providers, local artists, and businesses to establish a Culture and Arts Commission that establishes unified encompassing goals.		
	2.3.2 - Partner with similar providers for new programming in the areas of ethnic festivals, art lessons, and art, dance, and performing arts events.		
	2.3.3 - Develop a grant program for initiatives that strengthen the culture and arts outcomes identified in all plans that are driving arts and cultural resources development.		

OPERATIONS

To position the Department's preparedness to achieve operational outcomes and support Town outcomes to move Garner forward.

Goal 1: Build capacity in the organization to deliver quality services to the community.

OPERATIONS GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
1.1 Continue to ensure quality management through updated standards, additional staff, and updated plans that provide direction to achieve the desired outcomes.	1.1.1 - Update maintenance standards as new assets are incorporated into the system and as capacity improves.		
	1.1.2 - Update programs standards as new programs are developed and marketed.		
	1.1.3 - Develop contracted services standards for all recreation program contractors that identifies the quality standards for service delivery, ensuring consistency.		
	1.1.4 - Seek to add staff for administrative support, instructors, front desk, park, recreation specialists and park planning to achieve capacity for continued operations, enhancements, and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.		
	1.1.5 - Ensure all plans identify outcomes and define performance measures for success.		
1.2 Maximize existing technology and research new technology that can help the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department.	1.2.1 - Assign internal staff to become the guru for each operational software, financial systems and digital marketing software to increase effectiveness.		
	1.2.2 - Regularly research new technology through internet searches, national and state association conference sessions on technology, and peer communities.		
	1.2.3 - Develop and provide regular refresher training on software to ensure proficiency and deliver software update training as the Department upgrades versions.		

OPERATIONS GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>1.3 Evaluate existing declining services and new opportunities to determine the workload and departmental capacity.</p>	<p>1.3.1 - Develop a workload management tool to help determine where capacity exists, and new services can be added.</p>		
	<p>1.3.2 - Classify all major functions and services as essential, important or value added to help in workload management.</p>		
	<p>1.3.3 - Evaluate current services annually using the workload management tool to determine if service should be enhanced or retired.</p>		
	<p>1.3.4 - Track and monitor capacity using workload management tool.</p>		
<p>1.4 Use contracted services to build capacity and implement contract management best practices to achieve outcomes.</p>	<p>1.4.1 - Develop standardized approach to contract development using best practices.</p>		
	<p>1.4.2 - Assign contracts to individuals with a focus on delivering and receiving in full the agreed upon terms.</p>		
	<p>1.4.3 - Annually review contracts to determine whether to continue, amend, or discontinue contractual agreements.</p>		

Goal 2: Continue building capacity in facilities that support recreation and cultural arts.

OPERATIONS GOAL 2 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>2.1 Conduct a capacity study to maximize the use of spaces in the Garner Recreation Center, Avery Street Recreation Center and Annex, Senior Center and GPAC.</p>	<p>2.1.1 - Calculate the capacity of use for indoor spaces within the new recreation center, Senior Center, Avery Street Recreation Center and Annex, White Deer Nature Center, and GPAC.</p>		
	<p>2.1.2 - Calculate the capacity of use for all ball diamonds.</p>		
	<p>2.1.3 - Calculate the capacity of use for all multi-purpose fields.</p>		
	<p>2.1.4 - Use the capacity calculations to determine availability of each indoor and outdoor space.</p>		
	<p>2.1.5 - Identify predominant internal uses and external uses in the capacity study.</p>		
	<p>2.1.6 - Regularly track requests for space that cannot be accommodated to find solutions for the community.</p>		

OPERATIONS GOAL 2 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
2.2 Allow for flexibility in capacity to remain agile in responding to changing priorities.	2.2.1 - Identify times for participant use of indoor spaces to allow flexibility in meeting needs.		
	2.2.2 - Develop a list of spaces and times where flexibility exists due to underutilization or seasonal uses.		
	2.2.3 - Identify peak demand for spaces and use pricing strategies to drive demand to light use periods for spaces.		
	2.2.4 - Develop a list of factors that are driving demand or that impede use of the spaces to help address capacity.		

Goal 3: Continue to enhance marketing and communications of services using best practices in the private industry to achieve outcomes increasing awareness.

OPERATIONS GOAL 3 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
3.1 Update the marketing and communications plan for the Department to include recommendations and data developed from the Comprehensive Plan and continue to ensure it is in line with Town standards.	3.1.1 - Include the Market Potential Index, Target Market, Segmentation, and Return on Investment sections of the Marketing Plan.		
	3.1.2 - Regularly review market potential data to ensure services are in line with the primary target market and identified needs.		
	3.1.3 - Regularly review community demographics and target markets.		
	3.1.5 - Incorporate marketing and communications objectives from the Comprehensive Plan within miniature business plans when developed to demonstrate connections.		

OPERATIONS GOAL 3 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>3.2 Identify and include the features, advantages, and benefits of Department programs and services into marketing to increase awareness.</p>	<p>3.2.1 - Continue to develop content with Features, Advantages, and Benefits of programs and services through digital and printed materials.</p>		
	<p>3.2.2 - Capitalize on responses from the System Plan survey on why people participate in Town programs and how they learn of them to develop messaging and determine best marketing method to use.</p>		
	<p>3.2.3 - Develop campaigns and initiatives to create increased reach and awareness of Department Mission implementation and draw attention to the human story and connections.</p>		
	<p>3.2.4 - Seek developing stories in operations from each division of the Department to share with residents that reinforce the mission and brand awareness.</p>		
	<p>3.2.5 - Annually review collateral developed to ensure a best practices approach to marketing and to avoid becoming institutional in messages and materials.</p>		

OPERATIONS GOAL 3 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>3.3</p> <p>Implement additional best practices in Departmental marketing and communications through content development, tracking, reach, and return on investment.</p>	<p>3.3.1 - Build marketing and communication around return on investment to incorporate into key performance indicators.</p>		
	<p>3.3.2 - Conduct messaging meetings to identify upcoming opportunities that should be captured that tells the Department's story.</p>		
	<p>3.3.3 - Train all staff on the marketing plan and how to implement it efficiently and effectively.</p>		
	<p>3.3.4 - Develop a list of examples in operations that can help the Department tell their story.</p>		
	<p>3.3.5 - Implement training across the board to full-time staff and seek assistance in obtaining photos.</p>		
	<p>3.3.6 - Include quick click links in digital marketing where readers can easily find additional content and go to registration pages in RecDesk.</p>		
<p>3.4</p> <p>Work with Public Works Department to enhance communication internally and tell the story of park maintenance to increase community awareness.</p>	<p>3.4.1 - Develop a process for following up with the public on issues and challenges identified by residents.</p>		
	<p>3.4.2 - Meet regularly to discuss issue resolutions and upcoming opportunities to tell the maintenance story.</p>		
	<p>3.4.3 - Train Public Works staff on taking photos of projects, tasks, and Garner Info tickets for increased awareness.</p>		
	<p>3.4.4 - Develop training for Public Works staff on identifying opportunities in parks and facility maintenance that can be developed into content to share with the community on social media.</p>		

Goal 4: Continue to train staff on best practices to build capacity and create new skill sets needed to achieve operational outcomes.

OPERATIONS GOAL 4 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>4.1 Identify necessary training to increase knowledge and capacity of employees for managing duties, responsibilities and outcomes.</p>	<p>4.1.1 - Identify operational outcomes of the new Garner Recreation Center and conduct training for new functions as the facility launches operations.</p>		
	<p>4.1.2 - Identify operational outcomes of the new properties once developed and conduct training for new functions as parks launch operations.</p>		
	<p>4.1.3 - Seek private sector training for business operations and marketing professional development opportunities to increase earned income and funding resources.</p>		
	<p>4.1.4 - Identify employees who would benefit from NRPA Schools and apply for grants to Revenue Management School, Supervisor Management School, Foundation Management School, Event Management School, and Director’s School.</p>		
<p>4.2 Train staff on implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and improved operations for increased efficiency and effectiveness.</p>	<p>4.2.1 - Periodically meet with staff to discuss progress on implementation of the Comprehensive Plan or create an internal newsletter to provide staff as an update.</p>		
	<p>4.2.2 - Develop teams to initiate and manage aspects of the Comprehensive Plan implementation based on strengths and outcomes.</p>		
	<p>4.2.3 - Identify learning objectives associated with training to distribute in advance of training and cover when training is implemented.</p>		
	<p>4.2.4 - Prepare materials needed for training that will help support learning objectives.</p>		
	<p>4.2.5 - Develop an activity that is hands on to help staff practice and implement what is being learned.</p>		
	<p>4.2.6 - Evaluate the training session through participants to make improvements for future training.</p>		

Goal 5: Regularly track and monitor capacity and workload to ensure resources needed are obtained to manage assets to achieve full lifecycle.

OPERATIONS GOAL 5 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>5.1 Classify and prioritize parks maintenance functions and services as essential, important and value added.</p>	<p>5.1.1 - Evaluate current workload and services annually to determine current capacity.</p>		
	<p>5.1.2 - Classify each of the major functions and services as essential, important and value added.</p>		
	<p>5.1.3 - Further define the classifications as either lead or support functions to monitor workloads.</p>		
	<p>5.1.4 - Update these to include new parks, facilities and amenities that are added to the system as it evolves.</p>		
<p>5.2 Evaluate current workload and services annually to determine current capacity.</p>	<p>5.2.1 - Using the Classification of Services, establish weekly tally of hours spent on functions/service by each employee to manage workloads.</p>		
	<p>5.2.2 - Continue to manage capacity by evaluating if functions/services should be done in-house or contracted.</p>		
	<p>5.2.3 - Update defined roles and workload for new functions/services as assets are added to the system to determine if these can be absorbed or if additional resources are needed.</p>		
	<p>5.2.4 - Continue to research and identify updates in technology and software where automation increases capacity.</p>		
	<p>5.2.5 - Determine the appropriate staffing level based on major functions/services, frequency of task, and the hours needed to properly maintain to ensure the capacity to maintain and preserve assets as the system grows and adds new amenities, parks, service areas, and facilities.</p>		

OPERATIONS GOAL 5 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>5.3 Develop a cost of service and total cost of ownership model from maintenance tasks on specific parks, facilities and amenities.</p>	<p>5.3.1 - Conduct a cost of service study to determine the expenses associated with tasks and frequencies of maintenance of a specific park and apply across the system</p>		
	<p>5.3.2 - Conduct a cost of service study of a specific facility to determine the expenses associated with tasks and frequencies of maintenance and apply across the system</p>		
	<p>5.3.3 - Conduct a total cost of ownership study of playground amenities to determine the expenses associated with tasks and frequencies of maintenance and apply across the system</p>		
	<p>5.3.4 - Update the cost of service study as costs increase and amenities are replaced from reaching their full lifecycle.</p>		
<p>5.4 Anticipate resources that will be needed as the Town evolves based off planned development, initiatives and enhancements in Town services.</p>	<p>5.4.1 - Identify and document the anticipated number of hours and frequency of added responsibilities to the overall workload of Parks and Grounds as the system is developed.</p>		
	<p>5.4.2 - Identify and document needed equipment and training to properly maintain new parks, facilities, and amenities as they are added to the system.</p>		
	<p>5.4.3 - Identify additional staffing needed to maintain new parks, facilities, and amenities before they are added to the system.</p>		
	<p>5.4.4 - Identify funding needed to properly maintain assets using the cost of service and workload management for assets that will be added to the system.</p>		
	<p>5.4.5 - Update the Parks Maintenance and Operations Management Plan as new assets are added to the system.</p>		

Goal 6: Continue to train staff to ensure readiness, responsiveness, and develop new skill sets needed to Achieve operational outcomes.

OPERATIONS GOAL 5 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>6.1 Identify necessary training to increase the knowledge and skill sets of employees as new parks, facilities and amenities are added to the park system.</p>	<p>6.1.1 - Budget for leadership positions within Parks and Grounds to attend the NRPA Parks Maintenance Management School and budget for staff to attend.</p>		
	<p>6.1.2 - Identify additional training needed as new parks, facilities, and amenities are being planned to add to the system and incorporate into the training assessments as they are updated.</p>		
	<p>6.1.3 - Develop a succession plan for Parks and Grounds and Facility staff to ensure capacity and opportunities for advancement.</p>		
	<p>6.1.4 - Cross-train Parks and Grounds and Athletics and Grounds staff on essential and important tasks to keep capacity when staff levels are low due to PTO or turnover.</p>		
<p>6.2 Train staff on implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and the desired outcomes for increased efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.</p>	<p>6.2.1 - Assign teams to initiate and manage aspects of the Comprehensive Plan implementation based on strengths and outcomes.</p>		
	<p>6.2.2 - Periodically meet with staff to discuss progress on implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and create an internal newsletter to provide staff as an update.</p>		
	<p>6.2.3 - Identify learning objectives associated with training on Comprehensive Plan implementation to distribute in advance of training and cover when training is implemented.</p>		
	<p>6.2.4 - Prepare materials needed for training that will help support learning objectives.</p>		
	<p>6.2.5 - Evaluate the training session through participants to make improvements for future training.</p>		

FINANCES

To establish best practices that increase sustainability as the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department evolves to meet the community needs.

Goal 1: Establish strategies for identifying financial resources needed to incorporate new facilities, amenities, and services.

FINANCES GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
1.1 Develop a full cost of service assessment for the Department to determine unit costs in parks and cost recovery level goals in recreation programs and facilities.	1.1.1 - Conduct cost of service to determine the direct and indirect costs for services.		
	1.1.2 - Determine the cost of service for providing and managing facilities.		
	1.1.3 - Use cost of service to project costs to provide, maintain, and operate programs and facilities before they are added to the system.		
	1.1.4 - Develop cost recovery goals based on cost of service to ensure sustainability.		
	1.1.5 - Use full cost of service assessment in combination with cost recovery goals to train staff on financial outcomes of operations.		
1.2 Develop a full cost of ownership assessment for the Department assets to determine unit costs in parks and facilities development.	1.2.1 - Identify all costs associated with specific capital projects including purchasing, constructing, maintaining over the lifecycle and replacement costs.		
	1.2.2 - Use full cost of ownership to understand the operational costs, anticipated maintenance costs, and replacement for planning purposes.		
	1.2.3 - Update the lifecycle replacement plan for all amenities and facilities that are added to the system.		
	1.2.4 - Use maintenance standards for parks and facilities to determine total cost of ownership based on maintenance frequency.		

FINANCES GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINE
<p>1.3 Continue cost containment measures to improve the cost recovery of each division and the Department.</p>	<p>1.3.1 - Continue program and event budgets to include indirect cost recovery and define cost recovery targets on an annual basis.</p>		
	<p>1.3.2 - Move to centralize accounts receivable and payable in the Department once the Department has increased capacity in administrative support.</p>		
	<p>1.3.3 - Conduct regular financial reviews with managers overseeing division financials to monitor progress towards goals.</p>		
	<p>1.3.4 - Set financial performance measures to incorporate into the business plans and incorporate into staff goals.</p>		
	<p>1.3.5 - Explore contracted services to determine if services are cost beneficial to do in-house versus outsourcing.</p>		

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11 appendix



APPENDIX CONTENTS

1 > PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

2 > PROGRAM CLASSIFICATIONS

3 > WAKE COUNTY HEALTH AND WELLNESS GOALS

4 > CAPRA REVIEW

5 > STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

6 > BEST PRACTICES

7 > FUNDING SOURCES

8 > GREENWAY SEGMENT PRIORITIZATION

9 > OPEN SPACE CONNECTIVITY SYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS