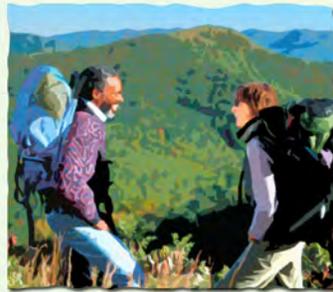




CITY OF ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA PARKS, RECREATION, CULTURAL ARTS, & GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN



FEBRUARY 2009



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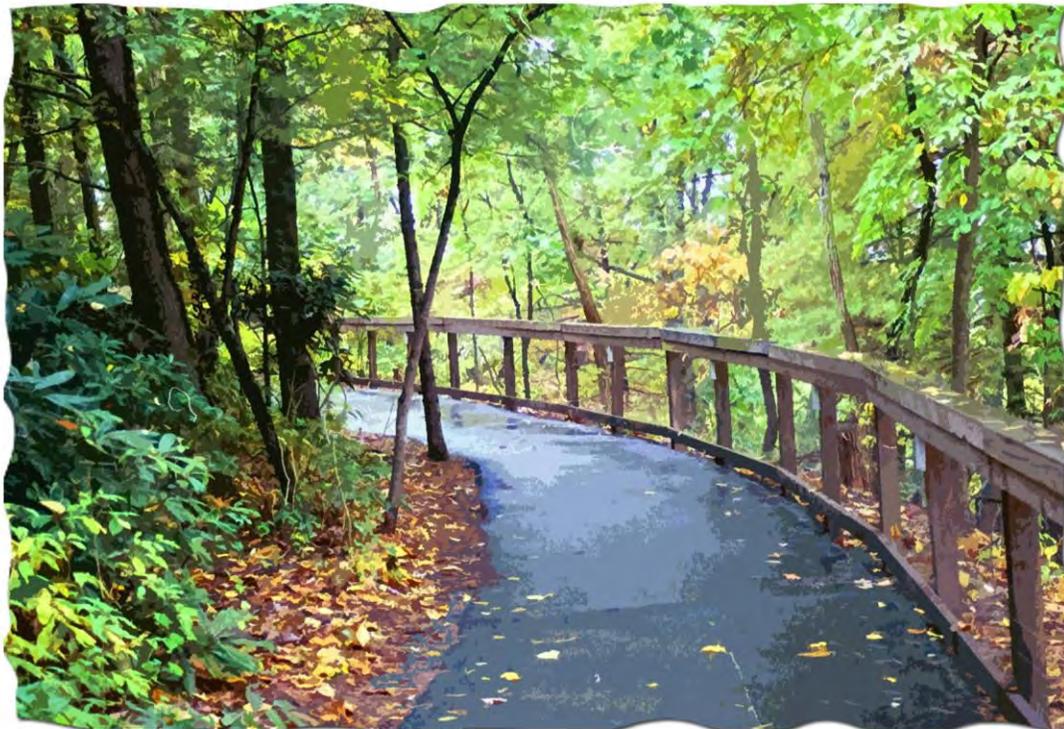


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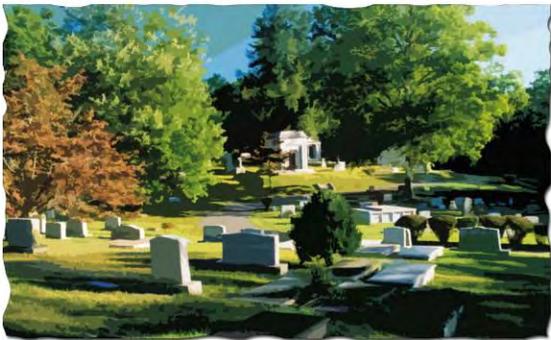
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I. Past, Present, and Future – The Planning Context

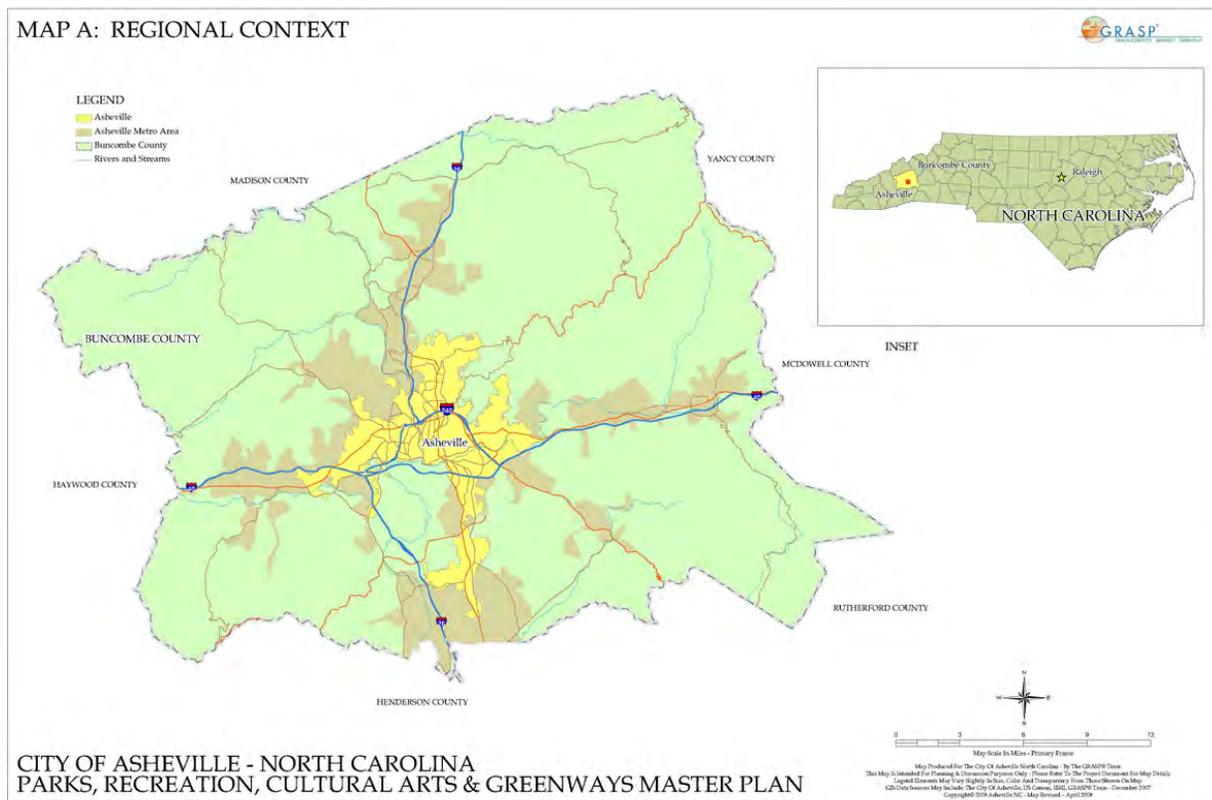
A. The City of Asheville

Nestled in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Asheville is a city rich in history and culture with emerging art and outdoor sport communities. With a population of roughly 75,950 people, Asheville is the largest city in Western North Carolina and covers approximately 40 square miles of land. The City acts as the county seat for Buncombe County and according to the city’s website, serves as the region’s central location for business, health and human services, arts, shopping, dining, and other community amenities.

Asheville is marked by the confluence of the Swannanoa River and the French Broad River. The City takes pride in its historical, cultural, and natural landmarks such as the Biltmore Estate, University of North Carolina, Thomas Wolfe House, and the Blue Ridge Parkway. The city’s architectural legacy is present in many of the downtown buildings with a mix of Art Deco, Beaux Arts, and Neoclassical styles.

Community and visitor participation in outdoor recreation is a major factor in the city’s growth due to many local and surrounding hiking, biking, and outdoor recreational opportunities, including local access to the Blue Ridge Parkway, Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Pisgah National Forest. Map A provides a regional context. A larger version of the map can be found in **Appendix VI**.

Map A: Regional Context



B. Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Mission, Vision and Values

MISSION

The Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department is dedicated to enhancing your quality of life by providing diverse cultural and recreation experiences.

VISION

To be a national leader in the parks, recreation and cultural arts profession by utilizing a qualified, professional, and dedicated staff to provide multi-dimensional, innovative recreation opportunities in a safe, nurturing environment while preserving traditional recreation values.

VALUES

Continuous Improvement

Asheville employees are trained professionals who improve service delivery by balancing needs, resources and innovation.

Integrity

Asheville employees demonstrate character with courage, honesty and pride.

Diversity

Asheville employees value and respect a diverse community, workforce, and ideas.

Safety and Welfare

Asheville employees value the safety and welfare of our employees and the citizens we serve.

Excellent Service

Asheville employees strive to address needs with courtesy, compassion, timeliness, efficiency, and commitment.

C. Purpose and Vision of this Plan

The Asheville Parks, Recreation, Cultural Arts and Greenways Master Plan is intended to help meet the needs of current and future residents by positioning Asheville to build on the community's unique parks and recreation assets and identify new opportunities. The citizen-driven plan establishes a clear direction to guide City staff, advisory committees, and elected officials in their efforts to enhance the community's parks, recreation and cultural arts programs, services and facilities.

The vision for the City of Asheville's parks and greenways system is an interconnected system of parks and greenways. The goals of the vision are to:

- Provide a diversity of parks and greenways.
- Ensure all parks and greenways meet the City's high standards for level of service.
- Create a system of interconnected local and regional parks and greenways, including trails, paths, and walks.
- Preserve and celebrate unique cultural, historical, and natural features within the City of Asheville throughout the system.

The vision for the City of Asheville's recreational facilities and programs is one that works in collaboration with other providers to deliver core services at the neighborhood and community level. The goals of the vision are to:

- Assure high quality facilities by concentrating facility improvement efforts on bringing older facilities up-to-date as neighborhood centers before adding new community-wide center elements to the system.
- Maximize the use of the capacity of each facility by designing for multiple, simultaneous uses, flexible spaces, appropriate support spaces and minimization of other non-activity space.
- Centralize new facility components to serve the entire community while enhancing access through collaboration with public transit.
- Assure high quality services through centralized expertise in programming areas providing a resource for facility managers.
- Employ a pricing philosophy conveying the value of the experience through an equitable fee structure that encourages participation.
- Create a cohesive and comprehensive connectivity system for all geographic areas of the city.

To accomplish the goals of the vision it is important to ensure that all parks, greenways, recreational facilities, programs and cultural arts meet the City's high standards for level of service. This involves improvements to existing, as well as the development of new, parks, greenways, public art, and facilities. Preserving and celebrating the unique cultural, historical and natural features of the City of Asheville throughout the system will create an image or brand helping connect the user to the system, as well as enhancing the experience of its use.



Implementing a master plan can bring about a positive impact on the community as a whole. Of the proposed capital improvements, \$40 million will be spent in the community. Local contractors using local labor will likely perform most of the proposed work. These dollars and proposed maintenance dollars have a compounded impact as they hit local markets. The new positions noted in the plan may provide jobs for local residents or may bring new employees into the community. The new projects and improvements proposed in this plan are likely to impact Asheville by making it a more desirable destination for businesses, tourists and citizens.

D. History of Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department

The City of Asheville began providing parks and recreation services in the late 1890s with the construction of Riverside, Montford, and Aston Parks. Shortly after, Recreation Park, McCormick Field, and the Municipal Golf Course were added to the system. With a growing park system, the City created the Parks and Playgrounds Division in the Public Works Department.

The Parks and Recreation Department came into its own in 1956. For the next 15 years significant progress occurred in delivering recreation programs to the community, but little to no development occurred in establishing facilities in which to house the services. The City relied on using public schools, the YMCA, and local churches to house programs.

During the 1970s and 1980s the Department experienced tremendous growth due to the abundance of federal funds to support public parks and recreation facilities throughout the United States. In all, over \$5.2 million of non-city funds renovated existing recreation facilities and built new ones in Asheville.

In 1994, Asheville Parks and Recreation became the first municipal recreation department to receive national accreditation from the Commission for the Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies, and was reaccredited in 1999 and 2004.

In the late 1990s, the City began upgrading Asheville's parks and recreation system by developing the first long-range comprehensive master plan and a greenway master plan. These documents have served as the guide to improve existing facilities and to build new facilities, develop greenways, land acquisitions, expansion of services and staff, and development of funding opportunities.

The National Recreation and Parks Association named Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department the Gold Medal winner in 2002 in recognition of comprehensive and quality programs, services and operations. Top-notch departments from around the country vie for the award each year based on population size.

After a long period of operation, the City of Asheville took over the operations of the Municipal Golf Course, Western North Carolina Nature Center, McCormick Field, Aston Park, and Recreation Park in 2005 resulting in a significant increase in land, facilities, programs, staff, and overall operations.

E. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department Overview

Department Description

Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts is a department within the City of Asheville that is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all Asheville citizens by providing diverse cultural and recreational experiences. The Department maintains over 50 public parks, 6 miles of greenways, 11 community centers, numerous programs for all ages, public art programs, a comprehensive athletic program, and many facilities that provide resources for a wide range of activities. Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts receive funding authorized by the City Council through budget appropriations. Additional funding is provided through fundraising. Through these means parks, recreational programs and cultural arts services are provided and maintained for the citizens of Asheville.

F. Related Planning Efforts and Integration

The City of Asheville has undertaken several planning efforts in recent years that have helped inform the planning process for this Parks, Recreation, Cultural Arts, and Greenways Master Plan. These plans and studies include:

- Asheville Greenway Master Plan (1998, updated 2003, 2005)
- Park and Recreation 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan (1998, updated 2003)
- Public Art Master Plan (2001)
- 2025 Comprehensive Development Plan
- Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan
- Asheville Comprehensive Bicycle Plan (2008)
- Downtown Master Plan (in progress)

G. Methodology of this Planning Process

This project has been guided by a project team, made up of City staff, the Greenway Commission, the Public Art Board, and the Recreation Advisory Board. These teams provided input to the GreenPlay consulting team throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort creates a plan that fully utilizes the consultant's expertise and incorporates the local knowledge and institutional history that only community members can provide. The project consisted of the following tasks:

Needs Assessment and Public Involvement

- Review of previous planning efforts and a considerable amount of city historical information.
- Consideration of the profile of the community and demographics, including anticipated population growth.
- Extensive community involvement efforts including many focus groups, meetings with key stakeholders, attendance at board meetings, communitywide public meetings, and a direct mail survey.
- Research of trends and statistics related to American lifestyles to help guide the efforts of programming staff.



Level of Service Analysis

- Interviews with staff to provide information about parks and recreation facilities, public art, cultural arts, festivals, services, and greenways, along with insight regarding the current practices and experiences of the City in serving its residents and visitors.
- Analysis addressing parks, recreation, cultural arts, public art, festivals, greenways, and related services.

Inventory

- Inventory of parks, greenways, and facilities using existing mapping, staff interviews, and on-site visits to verify amenities and assess the condition of the facilities and surrounding areas.

Assessment and Analysis

- Review and assessment of relevant plans
- Organizational SWOT Analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats)
- Measurement of the current delivery of service using the GRASP® Level of Service Analysis and allowing for a target level of service to be determined that is both feasible and aligned with the desires of citizens as expressed through the citizen survey. This analysis is also represented graphically in GRASP® Perspectives.
- Exploration of finance and funding mechanisms to support development and sustainability of the system.

Recommendations: Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

- Identification and categorization of recommendations into themes with goals, strategies, and an action steps for implementation.
- Development of an action plan for capital improvements including cost, funding source potentials, and timeframe to support the implementation of the plan.

H. Timeline for Completing the Master Plan

Start-up	November 2007
Needs Assessment and Public Involvement	January - May 2008
Inventory and Assessment of Existing Assets and Services	January - June 2008
Findings Compilation Report	June - July 2008
Standards and Recommendations	July - August 2008
Financial Resource Analysis	July - August 2008
Recommendations and Action Plans	September-October 2008
Final Plan and Presentation	November 2008
Asheville City Council Adopt Plan	February 2009

II. What We Want- Our Community and Identified Needs

Identification of current park resources, as well as recreation trends, community demographics, and needs help us better understand future recreational opportunities and identify the unique niche of the City of Asheville.

A. Community Profile and Demographic Information

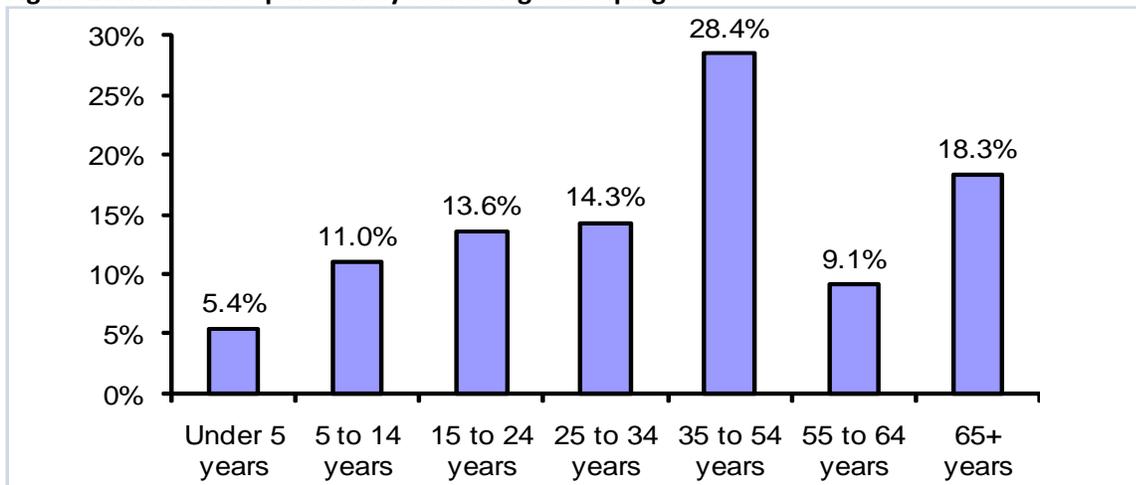
Asheville is a progressive city focusing on quality of life issues and attracting the creative class. The City's success in this pursuit is supported by the ranking of Asheville as one of the Country's "Best Places for Business and Careers" by Forbes Magazine (Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce). In an effort to better strengthen the parks, recreation and cultural art amenities for the City, the demographic makeup should better be understood.

The 2007 Asheville Economy Outlook states: "Asheville is continuing to experience stable economic growth. A balance of forces, centered on the area's quality of life amenities, supports this durable pattern." Furthermore, the economic strength of Asheville is led by "record-setting professional services growth, stable tourism activity, a resilient housing market, and baby-boom population growth."

To enhance the quality of life for residents, communities often devote their efforts towards strengthening parks, recreation and cultural arts amenities, a crucial piece of the puzzle for a healthy community. To better understand citizen needs for this public good, it is important to assess the demographic makeup of the population.

Figure 1 illustrates how the population in the City of Asheville breaks down by age groupings. This is important when looking at user groups and the ability to adjust to future age-sensitive trends. For a closer look at the City of Asheville's demographics, a detailed report is located in **Appendix I**.

Figure 1: Asheville Population by Census Age Groupings



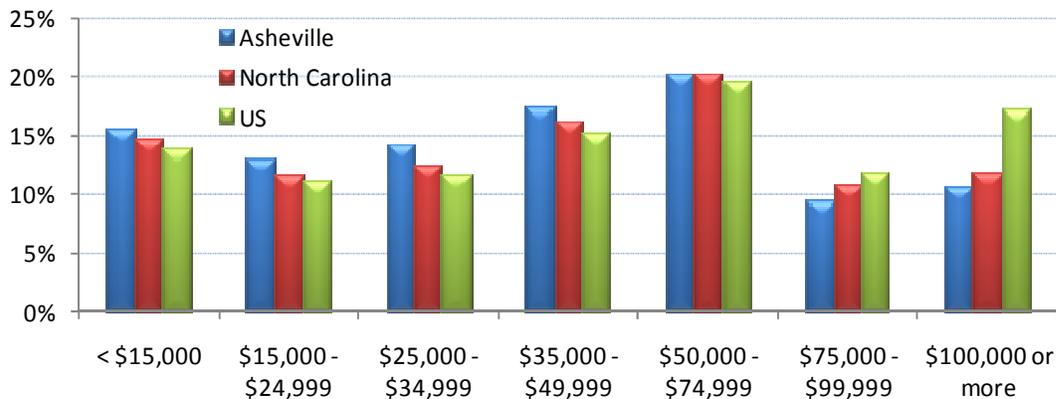
Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Summary Market Profile and Demographics for Asheville

This market profile is based upon information from ESRI, the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, and the United Health Foundation.

- According to ESRI, the population of Asheville is 72,623 for 2007.
- Median age is 40.8 years, with the largest age cohort being 35 to 54 years old.
- 47.2 percent of the population is male and 52.8 percent is female.
- The majority of citizens are white, at 76.1 percent in 2007. Those identifying themselves as being of Hispanic origin of any race increased from 3.8 percent in 2000 to 5.0 percent in 2007.
- Of the population 25 years and older, 41.5 percent have only a high school education or less; 28.2 percent of the population’s highest level of educational attainment was some college or an associate degree; and 30.4% of the Asheville population has either a Bachelor’s, a Master’s, a Professional degree, or a Doctorate.
- Key industries in Asheville include Services (54.2%), Retail Trade (12.5%), Manufacturing (9.0%) and Construction (7.3%).
- The median household income is \$37,018 in 2007, lower than the state and nation. At the bottom of the income scale, the percentage of households making less than \$25,000 in Asheville is higher, (28.5%), than both North Carolina and the United States. **Figure 2** provides a closer look at household income comparisons.
- Average household size is 2.09 persons, lower than the state and nation.
- In 2007, 52.5 percent of housing units are owner occupied, 38.6% are renter occupied, and 8.9 percent are vacant. Owner occupied units constitute a lower percentage than both the North Carolina and national rates, at 62.1 percent and 61.3 percent respectively.
- Obesity rates continue to climb, up from 25.9 percent of the population in 2006 to 26.6 percent in 2007, ranking North Carolina at 39th in the nation.

Figure 2: 2007 Asheville Household Income Compared to North Carolina and US



Source: Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce: Income Report

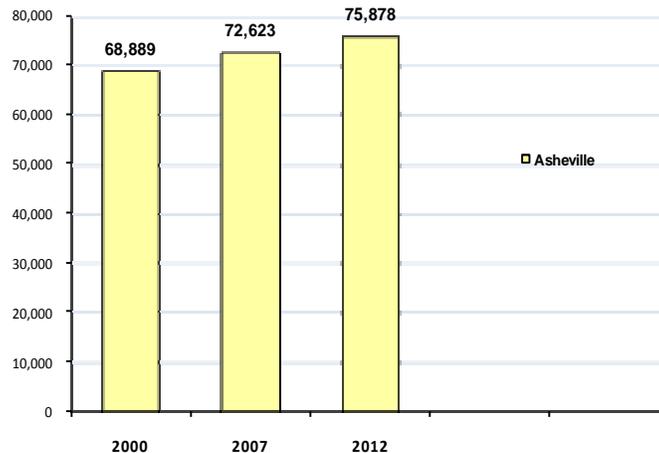
Population Forecast

Although we can never know the future with certainty, it is helpful to make assumptions about it for planning purposes. **Figure 3** details the population projections for Asheville estimated by ESRI Business Information Solutions.

This study indicated the following:

- From 1990-2000, the percentage growth in the Asheville population was substantially lower (11%) than growth in Buncombe County as a whole (18%)
- Average annual growth for the City of Asheville population is slightly higher between 2000 and 2006 (1.7%) than Buncombe County population (1.2%)
- City of Asheville population increases are largely due to annexation
- Buncombe County population increased substantially by 18 percent from 1990 to 2000, though this remained below the statewide growth rate of 21 percent
- Since 2000, the population of Buncombe County is estimated to be growing at a slower rate (7%) than over the previous 10 years, though growth continues
- Most population growth in the county is due to net migration, rather than to natural growth (excess of births over deaths)

Figure 3: Asheville Population Projections 2000 - 2012



Source: Buncombe County Population Projections for the Asheville Water Resources Master Plan

B. Current Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Trends

In order to plan and manage effectively, it has become essential to stay on top of the current trends impacting the field of parks and recreation management. Some of the national trends that are most pertinent to the City of Asheville are:

General Population Trends

- America is aging and it is estimated that by 2010 the median age will be 37 years, and by 2030 the median age will be 39 years. This is in line with the City of Asheville's highest age cohort, 35-54 years.
- The National Sporting Goods Association's (NSGA) latest information suggests that the top three sports activities for persons 65 years and older in 2004 were: exercise walking, exercising with equipment, and swimming.

- Baby Boomers are made up of adults born between 1946 and 1964. This generation makes up approximately 25 percent of the total United States population.
- In a study by American Association of Retired Persons 80 percent of Boomers believe they will continue to work either full-or part-time into their retirement years.
- According to the International, Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA), 80 percent of Millennials, and almost 90 percent of Generation X feel the need to make sure their health will be good when they get older. There is a growing trend in adult populations of a need for more drop-in programming within recreation facilities, and less structured classes.

Programming Trends

Programming trends include a shift from a long 6-8 week class session to a one or two day workshop. Drop in programs are growing in popularity as well. There is an increasing demand for self-directed activities, with less reliance on instructors and more flexible scheduling. Recreation Management magazine's 2008 State of the Industry Report listed the top 10 program options most commonly planned for addition over the next three years include:

- Programs for active older adults
- Day camps and summer camps
- Nutrition and diet counseling
- Educational programs
- Holidays and other special events
- Fitness programs
- Environmental education
- Sports tournaments and races
- Mind-body balance
- Individual sports activities

Cultural Arts Trends

According to a survey published in the 2007 Statistical Abstract of the United States from the 2002 National Endowment "Participation in the Arts Survey", the highest percentage of persons visiting historic sites was in the 45-54 age group (38.0%), followed by the 35-44 age group (35.8%). The highest percentage of persons visiting art museums and galleries was in the 45-54 age group (32.9%) followed by the 55-64 age group (27.8%).

- The Southeast region of the U.S. has the lowest participation in the arts.
- Those with incomes less than \$29,999 enjoy arts/craft fairs and festivals. Individuals with income levels between \$30,000 and \$74,999 enjoy art museums, galleries, arts/craft fairs, festivals and historic sites. More than 50 percent of those with incomes over \$75,000 visit historic sites. (2007 Statistical Abstract)
- Organized events held in public parks (arts festivals, athletic events, food festivals, musical and theatrical) often bring substantial positive economic impacts to their communities, filling hotel rooms and restaurants, and bringing customers to local stores. (Trust for Public Land)
- In 2007, Buncombe County participated in the Americans for the Arts economic impact study. The results found that the arts generated \$65.1 million to the community in revenue, taxes, jobs, etc.

Sports Trends

Highlights from the National Sporting Goods Association participation survey shown in **Table 1** include:

- Tennis participation led sports growth in 2007 at 18.7%.
- Exercise walking made the number one sports and recreation activity with 89.8 million participants. It grew 2.7% in 2007.
- Among fitness activities, only aerobic exercising, with 30.3 million participants in 2007, showed a significant decline (-9.9%). Some of the decline may have come from the inclusion of yoga in the survey for the first time. Yoga attracted 10.7 million participants in 2007.
- Other sports and recreation activities showing less than 5 percent growth in 2007 include skateboarding (4.2% to 10.1 million participants); in-line skating (2.1% to 10.7 million participants); weightlifting (0.9% to 33.2 million participants); and exercising with equipment (0.8% to 52.8 million participants).

Table 1: Top 10 Activities & Sports Measured by Participation Growth from 2006 to 2007

Activity	Total Participation In millions	Percent Change 2006 - 2007
Tennis	12.3	18.7%
Scooter Riding	10.6	11.4%
Target Shooting	20.9	9.7%
Boating (Motor/Power)	31.9	8.9%
Volleyball	12	8.7%
Target Shooting - airgun	6.6	7.9%
Running/jogging	30.4	5.5%
Bicycle Riding	37.4	5.0%
Skateboarding	10.1	4.2%
Exercise Walking	89.8	2.7%

*Source: National Sporting Goods Association
Participated more than once, for persons seven (7) years and older.*

Trails and Specialty Parks

- Trails, parks and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home, according to a 2002 survey of recent homebuyers by the National Association of Home Builders and National Association of Realtors. (Pack & Schunuel). More recent surveys across the country continue to support this finding.
- Two of the emerging specialty parks include skate parks and dog parks. (Van Der Smissen et al.) The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association estimates there are about 1,000 skateboard parks in the United States.

Facilities

According to Recreation Management's 2007 State of the Industry Report, the current national trend is toward a "one-stop" facility to serve all ages. Large, multipurpose regional centers help increase cost recovery, promote retention and encourage cross-use. Agencies across the U.S. are increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Amenities that are becoming "typical" as opposed to alternative include:

- Multipurpose, large regional centers (65,000 to 125,000+ sq. ft.) for all ages/abilities with all amenities in one place. This design saves on staff costs, encourages retention and participation, and saves on operating expenses due to economies of scale.
- Leisure and therapeutic pools
- Interactive game rooms
- Nature centers/outdoor recreation and education centers
- Regional playground for all ages of youth
- Skate parks
- Partnerships with private providers or other government agencies
- Indoor walking tracks
- Themed décor

Amenities that are still considered “alternative” but increasing in popularity:

- Climbing walls
- Cultural art facilities
- Green design techniques and certifications such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).



Parks & Recreation Administration Trends

- Park and Recreation professionals face many challenges including:
 - Doing more with less, requiring partnership development.
 - Partnering between non-profit and public forms of service.
 - Increasing the quality and diversity of services.
 - Moving toward a more business-like model while not competing with private sector.
 - Increasing parks and open space versus decreasing ability to maintain it.
 - Providing support for the socially and economically disadvantaged through programs in areas such as childcare, nutrition, etc...
 - Increasing responsibility for measurement and evaluation. (*van der Smissen et al.*)
- The trend in park and recreation management is toward outcome-based management, reflecting the effect on quality of life of those who participate or benefit from parks and recreation opportunities. Outcome-based management is useful in establishing the benefit to the community and to individuals. (*van der Smissen et al.*)

More detailed information on trends can be found in **Appendix I**.

C. Community and Stakeholder Input

The following is a synopsis of issues that were identified in meetings held during January 2008. Over 540 community members, as well as Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department staff, participated in eight stakeholder meetings, seven public focus groups, and seven staff led public meetings. Consultants received input from over 280 participants; staff convened seven additional meetings with 260 participants.

Meeting the diverse needs of the community

Many residents commented on how much the Department was able to accomplish with little resources, yet had concerns regarding the City's ability to take care of its existing facilities and to provide programming and facility amenities to the diverse population of Asheville. The following are key issues that were identified from the meetings. For a complete summary, see **Appendix II**.

Strengths

Staff

- Responsive and creative

Funding

- More Aggressive support by City Council in last 3-4 years
- Department can do a lot with a little

Programming

- Diversity of opportunity for all ages, multi-ethnic
- Nice blend of athletics and the arts
- Appreciation for new emphasis on the arts, quality instruction
- Good variety of festivals

Facilities

- Good quality, many well-maintained parks
- Many multiuse areas, nice greenways
- Flexibility among centers, variety of activities
- Many specialty facilities
- North Carolina flavor in parks

Image

- Good presence in the community, good job of advertising
- National Accreditation, award winning
- Park seen as an economic engine
- Programs promoted for health benefits

Partnering

- Builds community
- Engages other providers of facilities and services

Areas for Improvement

Administration and Funding

- Need adequate funding for existing facilities and to support new
- Need to direct staff responsibility for greenways, marketing, and fundraising
- Need internal cross-training and basic
- Need to improve many processes
- Recycling program needs improvement

Budgeting

- Need dedicated land acquisition fund
- Need new resource to support growth
- Need pricing and cost recovery policy
- Need to separate non-parks and recreation costs from department budget
- Soft costs for projects should be included in capital budget
- Need more program funding; need to fund financially struggling programs
- Concern about who is using and paying for the system regarding nonresidents and part-time visitors; need to review agreement with County

Facilities and Equipment

- Increase capacities and upgrade existing facilities
- Provide better access and connections
- Increase safety at centers
- Improve perception of senior centers
- Replace/provide equipment and vehicles that are lacking or old

Programs

- Provide intergenerational offerings and increase outreach to minorities
- Engage community members for program instruction and volunteer efforts

Planning

- Develop a strategic plan and a business plan
- Take leadership role in regional open space planning
- Improve public transit, accessibility, and connectivity to affordable housing
- Provide safe, easily identifiable connecting bike paths/sidewalks/greenways
- Review and clarify existing policies, develop new policy to provide sustainable operations
- Keep neighborhood focus for centers, repurpose where appropriate, prepare for growth, comply with ADA; more equitable distribution of facilities

Additional Facilities Desired

Indoor and outdoor aquatic center, athletic complex for baseball, athletic fields, greenspace in urban core, community gardens, cultural arts center, dance facility, disc golf at Richmond Hill Park, more special event areas, indoor ice rink, multigenerational indoor large recreation center, recreation center in west Asheville with indoor pool, river amenities, roller derby, spraygrounds, indoor tennis courts

Additional Programs Desired

Social recreational programs, non-sports programming, health and wellness, arts, more athletics, teen and youth programming, gang education, senior programming

Potential Funding Opportunities

Develop requirements and incentives with County buy-in for unincorporated areas, revitalize bond referendum, include trails in sidewalk fund, fee increases, advertise donation opportunities, increase citizen advocacy, teen employment, volunteers, increase taxpayer support

Potential Partners

School district and colleges, Chamber of Commerce, economic development, churches, developers, other government agencies, neighboring cities, public health, public transit, housing authority, utility companies, medical community, YMCA/YWCA, nonprofit organizations, neighborhood associations, sports associations, private groups and individuals



D. Statistically Valid Community Survey Findings

Overview of the Methodology

The City of Asheville conducted a Master Plan Survey through a direct mail methodology. The survey was originally sent to 5,000 randomly selected households located in the City of Asheville and the ZIP codes associated with it, which may include households outside the city limits. A net estimated 4,754 surveys were actually delivered out of which a total of 481 completed surveys were returned. This represents an average response rate of approximately 10.1%. Based upon the total sample size of 481 responses received, overall results have a margin of error of approximately +/-4.5 percentage points calculated for questions at 50% response. Also, note that the resultant database is weighted by age of respondent, ethnicity, and household income to ensure appropriate representation of City residents across different demographic cohorts in the overall sample.

The following summarizes key findings:

Current Parks, Recreation, Cultural Arts, and Greenway Facilities and Amenities

- Festivals in Asheville were visited by the greatest proportion of respondents (74% visited at least one festival in the last 12 months)
- Paved recreational paths (greenways), the Nature Center, picnic areas and playgrounds followed festivals for number of respondents who had visited once in the last 12 months
- Approximately 50-51 percent have viewed public art or visited designated open space areas at least once in the last 12 months
- Respondents indicated the highest number of average visits per year to playgrounds, paved recreational paths and Carrier Park
- 85% of respondents rated the Nature Center as “very important”
- 82% rated recreational paths, and playgrounds “very important”
- Least important to the community were the municipal golf course (44% rated it “not at all important”) and the skateboard park (34%)
- Overall, most parks, facilities and amenities available in Asheville received relatively positive satisfaction ratings
- Festivals and the Nature Center were meeting the needs of the community the most, followed by Carrier Park, playgrounds, ball fields and picnic areas.
- Approximately 24% of respondents cited Aston Park as not meeting the needs of the community.

Future Recreation Facilities and Amenities

- Respondents indicated that a teen activities center and the Nature Center would be the most important to add, expand or improve (73% of respondents indicated it as “very important”)
- A recreation center, indoor walking and jogging track, indoor pool with lap lanes for fitness swimming and competition and cultural arts center are also relatively important (66-69% of respondents indicated they are “very important”)
- The Cultural Arts Center was the most important indoor facilities to be added, expanded or improved (19% of respondents indicated it as their top priority and 34% as one of their top three priorities)
- Unpaved/natural trails, open space/natural areas, more trail connections, playgrounds, paved recreational paths and community gardens are the most important to add, expand or improve (all rating above 70% “very important”)
- Least important to add, expand, or improve was in-line hockey facility, disc golf amenities and a skateboard park
- Restrooms were the top priority when asked what amenities would be most important to respondents when expanding and improving outdoor park areas. (70% of respondents indicated it as one of the three most important amenities to be included.

Future Direction and Use of Specific Facilities

- Overall, respondents preferred multipurpose centers to “magnet centers” by a margin of 60% vs. 40%
- Overall, 48% of respondents preferred “fewer but larger regional centers,” 43% preferred “more but smaller neighborhood centers” and 10% indicated “neither.”

Programs, Activities and Special Events

- Individual activities such as biking and hiking (55% of respondents), special events such as concerts and festivals (54%) and cultural/arts programs (40%), were indicated to have the highest participation rates among responding households
- Special events (40%), individual activities (36%) and youth athletic leagues (32%) were the most frequently identified as potentials for expansion or improvement
- Respondents indicated that they would like to see environmental education (39%), general skills education such as computer or cooking classes (37%) and individual activities (36%) added in the Asheville area
- The majority (62%) of respondents indicated that they did not know to what degree and what the appropriate level is for spending on programs. Twenty-one percent of the respondents said the City was spending too little on programs and 13% thought the spending on programs was about right. Only 4% of the respondents thought the City was spending too much on programs.

Most important concerns for the City of Asheville to address through the Master Plan Update

- Top priorities indicated by respondents include more greenway trails (40% of respondents), better pedestrian/bike access (31%) and awareness of programs (25%)

Financial Choices

- 43% of respondents indicated that they would definitely or probably vote “yes,” to a property or sales tax increase or other financial method in order to allow the City to issue bonds in support of building, renovating, and operating these facilities
- Respondents were asked how they would allocate \$100 to city services. Residents distributed the greatest share to law enforcement (\$22), followed by parks, trails, greenways and open space (\$19), fire and emergency services (\$17), recreation/aquatics/cultural arts (\$15), code enforcement (\$10), sidewalks/street maintenance/street lighting (\$8) and public administration (\$7).
- Respondents were also asked how they would allocate \$100 to parks, recreation, cultural arts and greenways. Respondents indicated greenways as the top priority (\$18), followed by parks (\$17), environment (\$15), community centers (\$12), recreation activities (\$12), athletic fields (\$11), cultural arts (\$10) and others (\$4).



III. What We Have Now- An Analysis of Programs

A. Recreation Programming

City of Asheville Recreation Programs

The City of Asheville has an array of recreation programs that seeks to meet the needs of its diverse community. Programming consists of adult and youth athletics, outdoor recreation, community center programs, summer youth programs, therapeutic recreation, senior programs, school age care (licensed after school and day camps) and aquatics.

Table 2 provides financial and participation data for each of the programs areas discussed.

Table 2: Program Financial Information and Participation

Program Financial Analysis										
Program Area	FY 2005-2006			FY 2006-2007			FY 2007-2008			
	Revenue	Expenditures	# Participant	Revenue	Expenditures	# Participants	Revenue	Expenditures	Cost Recovery	# Participants
Adult Athletics	\$ 114,247	\$ 89,960	51,640	\$ 129,787	\$ 93,262	50,300	\$ 133,254	\$ 92,300	144%	50,940
Youth Athletics	\$ 6,985	\$ 4,500	279,632	\$ 7,200	\$ 5,000	291,870	\$ 7,600	\$ 4,500	169%	287,654
Outdoor	\$ 18,858	\$ 11,577	6,712	\$ 18,067	\$ 11,078	7,793	\$ 18,965	\$ 18,599	102%	8,837
School Aged Child Care	\$ 243,847	\$ 192,005	16,684	\$ 237,046	\$ 180,091	17,519	\$ 274,683	\$ 254,232	108%	19,805
Summer Youth	\$ 32,423	\$ 96,976	11,448	\$ 32,428	\$ 121,304	12,162	\$ 44,944	\$ 144,055	31%	13,768
Therapeutic Rec	\$ 2,054	\$ 4,790	1,052	\$ 1,690	\$ 5,003	1,171	\$ 1,100	\$ 4,700	23%	828
Senior Programs	\$ 61,661	\$ 270,384	33,797	\$ 79,611	\$ 293,994	40,974	\$ 53,241	\$ 305,113	17%	37,510
Center Programs	\$ 45,970	\$ 1,036,075	286,653	\$ 67,074	\$ 1,129,261	314,392	\$ 86,257	\$ 928,147	9%	305,493
Aquatics	\$ 32,046	\$ 60,459	16,988	\$ 83,230	\$ 141,680	35,978	\$ 94,652	\$ 139,940	68%	42,814
Total	\$ 558,091	\$ 1,766,726	704,606	\$ 656,133	\$1,980,673	772,159	\$ 714,696	\$1,891,586	38%	767,649

Note: Attendance is a cumulative count for each time a person attends a program.

Adult Athletics

The City offers adult softball, basketball, volleyball and flag football and recovers approximately 144% of the cost of providing the program through fees and charges. Total revenues have steadily increased from 2005- 2008 although the current cumulative participation level of approximately 50,940 adults has remained steady with minor fluctuation from year to year. The YMCA, churches, Buncombe County and the Towns of Black Mountain, Fletcher and Hendersonville also provide adult athletic programs. Challenges for the programs include limitations in field maintenance and inconsistent access to school gymnasiums.

Youth Athletics

The City offers youth programs and partners with organizations to provide football, cheerleading, baseball, softball, track and field, hockey and soccer. Youth athletics is primarily supported via city subsidy but receives revenue from various sports registration fees and the Junior Hi Neighbor Volleyball Tournament. With the exception of the High School Basketball League no other revenues are derived from youth athletics from either participant fees or athletic field rental fees. Participation levels have been consistent from 2005-2008. Other providers of youth athletics include the YMCA, YWCA and Buncombe County. Program limitations include lack of field space and limitations in field maintenance.

Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor Recreation opportunities include adventure camps, home school programs, senior treks, family adventures, ski programs and teen programs. From 2005-2007 outdoor recreation programming recovered 150% of its direct costs and is currently budgeted on a breakeven basis. Participation grew by almost 25% during this time period, reaching close to 9,000 for 2007-2008. Many other private sector providers of outdoor recreation also exist. Challenges for the program include a lack of resources to accommodate waiting lists and transportation issues.

School – Age Care Program

Two four-star licensed sites can accommodate up to 90 children, ages 5 years to 12 years, per site. The program provides a supervised safe haven for youth during after school, on non-school days and in the summer. Transportation is provided by Asheville City Schools from five elementary schools and one middle school to the two sites. Youth engage in both recreational and enrichment activities, homework assistance, special events and fieldtrips. School-aged programs recover approximately 108% of the direct program costs. From 2005 to 2008, participation levels have steadily risen a total of 16%. Other School-age Care Programs providers include the YMCA, YWCA, Jewish Community Center and recreation center afternoon programs. Program challenges include an increasing strain on the budget as participation numbers increase, unreliable transportation due to an ageing fleet and other costs, and occasional displacement due to school functions.

Summer Youth Programs

Affordable summer programs for youths and teens are provided at nine neighborhood sites. Daily organized and supervised activities include weekly field trips, positive role modeling, and a safe haven for participants. Participation jumped almost 150% from 2005-2006 to 2007-2008 showing this program area is very popular. More than 50% of all participants receive scholarship funding. The summer programs recovered 33% of costs in 2005-2006, but in 2007-2008 it dropped to 31%. Other providers of summer programs include the YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, and the Salvation Army. Program challenges include transportation for field trips, and the significant number of non-resident participants coming to program due to closing of county programs, and the capacity of the scholarship program.

Therapeutic Recreation

People with disabilities are able to participate in special events, adaptive baseball, adaptive bowling, socials, and summer camps. Therapeutic recreation programs serve approximately 1000 citizens. The programs operate on a very limited budget of approximately \$5,000, and currently recover 23% of their costs. This program has a high reliance on donations and sponsorships. Challenges include limited transportation for field trips, and poor parking and accessibility accommodations.

Senior Programs: Senior Opportunity Center and Harvest House

The senior centers and programs provide meals, recreational activities, trips, social assistance, and health and wellness opportunities. Participation grew by almost 18% from 2005-2006 to 2006-0007 and decreased slightly in 2007-2008. Overall cost recovery for the senior programs is currently 17%. Several other agencies within the community offer senior recreation services including Buncombe County, Black Mountain, and the University of North Carolina- Asheville. Challenges for the program include the ability to attract qualified volunteers, sustaining funding for the nutrition program, meeting the needs of the “new” older adult population and access to affordable transportation.

Community Centers

Eight recreation centers provide neighborhood programming opportunities and recover approximately 9% of the cost of providing the programs. **Table 3** shows that attendance grew by 9% from 2005-2006 (286,653) to 2006-2007 (314,392) but dropped by 3% in 2007-2008 (305,493).

Staff noted a recent increase in numbers and variety of programs offered at the centers as well as increased program partnerships, particularly for youth. Programming challenges include the need to increase after school activities and the ability to have affordable snacks for participants; equipment in need of repair or replacement; facilities not designed for recreational activity, or for multiple activities to occur simultaneously; the perception of safety and security issues; lack of parking; and the need for more comprehensive marketing, outreach, and sponsorship efforts.

Table 3: Center Programs Financial and Participation

Center	FY 2005-2006			FY 2006-2007			FY 2007-2008		
	Revenue	Expenditures	# Participants	Revenue	Expenditures	# Participants	Revenue	Expenditures	# Participants
Burton Street	\$3,062	\$116,208	48,548	\$2,906	\$127,560	52,974	\$2,011	\$88,113	40,410
East Asheville	\$5,223	\$117,577	13,927	\$2,319	\$114,131	19,782	\$3,743	\$65,957	20,615
Montford	\$500	\$125,024	22,786	\$4,790	\$144,020	25,642	\$4,264	\$111,068	22,133
Oakley	\$13,278	\$101,891	27,647	\$19,700	\$116,466	46,981	\$26,832	\$80,530	38,410
Shiloh	\$1,798	\$174,090	68,174	\$913	\$186,864	67,678	\$737	\$114,432	68,392
Stephens-Lee	\$15,953	\$145,238	48,581	\$24,732	\$173,705	42,042	\$16,015	\$119,245	61,552
West Asheville	\$6,133	\$123,989	24,326	\$11,536	\$134,917	20,850	\$15,271	\$95,420	25,266
W.C. Reid	\$23	\$132,058	32,664	\$178	\$131,598	38,443	\$730	\$129,500	28,715
Total:	\$45,970	\$1,036,075	286,653	\$67,074	\$1,129,261	314,392	\$69,603	\$804,265	305,493

Note: Attendance is a cumulative count for each time a person attends a program.

Aquatics Facilities

Three public pools, Malvern Hills Pool, Walton Street Pool and Recreation Park Pool provide programming opportunities including quality free swim lessons. Participation has increased dramatically over the last several years especially with the addition of Recreation Park Pool in the summer of 2006. Participation for Walton Street Pool is dramatically lower than the other two pools. Cost recovery for all pools was 53% in 2005, 59% in 2006, and 68% in 2007. Walton Street Pool individually is only recovering around 15% of its cost on average. Challenges include the age and condition of the facilities and water costs.

Recreation Program and Spaces Analysis

The recreation staff produces diverse, affordable recreation programs to the community in a positive and safe environment. With a primary focus on youth opportunities, participation has grown in most program areas to a point where additional or improved venues are needed to meet future demands.

The Facilities

To a great extent programs are neighborhood based as opposed to being designed to attract participants from a citywide perspective. As the GRASP™ analysis show, only about 50% of those within the City's corporate boundary have adequate access to indoor recreation components and 77% have

adequate access to outdoor recreation facilities. This makes it challenging to respond to additional neighborhood programming opportunities desired by the community.

The indoor facilities that do exist vary in types of amenities. Most provide multi-purpose space suitable for youth (under 10 years) activities. However there are only four full size gyms to support the entire recreation programming system. Other amenities that can be found in the recreation centers are game rooms (4), computer lab (1), ceramics rooms (2) and a dance room (1).

Another issue facing the Department is the perception or reality of facilities being in unsafe (crime, drugs, gangs) parts of the city. This has a negative effect on potential program user willingness to travel into a neighborhood they feel is unsafe to participate in an activity in which they are interested. Youth and family programming is more effected by these perceptions than adult sports programming.



Program Development

Understanding core services in the delivery of parks and recreation services will allow the City to improve upon those areas while developing strategies to assist in the delivery of other services. The basis of determining core services should come from the vision and mission developed by the City and what brings the greatest community benefit in balance with the competencies of the Department and the competitive market position (other providers).

Staff program area experts should be assigned to develop and oversee specific program areas in order to ensure consistent program characteristics, instructor qualifications, training and evaluation, instructor pay scales and fees. Experts will also be charged with program research and development. This centralized programming service can be made available to community center directors so that they can offer comprehensive, yet excellent, programs at the centers. Programs areas, at a minimum, should include: fitness and wellness, aquatics, cultural arts, sports, outdoor recreation and therapeutic recreation.

The Department should pursue program development around the priorities identified by customer feedback, program evaluation process, and research. The following criteria should be examined when developing new programs:

- **Need:** outgrowth of a current popular program, or enough demonstrated demand to successfully support a minimal start (one class for instance)
- **Budget:** accounting for all costs and anticipated (conservative) revenues should meet cost recovery target established by Department
- **Location:** appropriate, available and within budget

- **Instructor:** qualified, available and within budget
- **Materials and supplies:** available and within budget
- **Marketing effort:** adequate and timely opportunity to reach intended market, within budget (either existing marketing budget or as part of new program budget)

New facilities and improvements should focus on the defined core services of the City and what would provide the greatest benefit to the community. Examples include indoor aquatics, gymnasiums, arts and crafts space, youth dedicated space and athletic fields. Once priorities are determined a funding plan should be developed. All new facility development and improvements should be examined to be sure they are sustainable under current and/or future conditions of the General Fund.

Additionally, it is important that all supporting divisions such as maintenance, administration, and recreation staff be involved as necessary in new program and facility development. Engaging all who are associated with a new program, both directly and indirectly, in the decision making process will help ensure a quality experience for the customer.

The citizen survey lightly touched on program areas that the community would like to see created or expanded. Further research into what types of programming would be successful needs to be done. Successful programs come from continuous creative assessment, research, and planning. The Department should create a process that evaluates the success of current program offerings and criteria to determine if new program ideas should be instituted or if changes should be made to current programs.

Moreover, new leisure and recreation trends may drive different needs. It is very easy to focus on programs that have worked for a number of years, especially if they are still drawing enough interested participants to justify the program's continuation. Starting new programs, based on community demand and/or trends, can be risky due to the inability to predict their success. If the program interest seems great, as with those identified in citizen survey, then the programs should be expanded. Available space may hinder new or expanded opportunities in some cases.

Using historical participation levels to determine program popularity and participant feedback can be helpful in deciding if programs should be continued. In addition, utilizing citizen surveys and participant feedback, and researching trends in parks and recreation programming are useful tools in determining future program needs and desires. Sources for trends information include:

- State Parks and Recreation Associations and Conferences
- National Recreation and Parks Association
- International Health, Racquet & Sports Association
- Parks and Recreation Trade Publications

Program Evaluation

Annually all current programs should be evaluated to determine if they should be continued, changed (market segment focus, time/day offered, etc.) or discontinued. A few simple questions should be asked about each program that includes:

- Is participation increasing or decreasing? If participation is increasing then it could clearly mean that the program should be continued. If participation is decreasing are there any steps to take to increase interest through marketing efforts, change the time/day the program is offered and change the format or instructor? If not, it may be time to discontinue the program.

- Is there information contained in the participant feedback that can be used to improve the program?
- Are cost recovery goals being met? If not, can fees be realistically increased?
- Is there another provider of the program that is more suitable to offer it? If yes, the Department could provide referrals for its customers for the program it does not or is not willing or able to offer.
- Is this program taking up facility space that could be used for expansion of more popular programs or new programs in demand by the community?

Financial Sustainability

It is important for the City to develop a Resource Allocation and Pricing Philosophy that reflects the values of the community and the responsibility it has to the community. This philosophy will be especially important if the City moves forward in the development of new programs, additional and/or expanded facilities, and as it strives for sustainability and determines how much it is willing to subsidize operations with tax dollars.

One means of accomplishing this goal is applying a process using an industry tool called the “Pyramid Methodology.” This methodology develops and implements a refined cost recovery philosophy and pricing policy based on current “best practices” as determined by the mission of the agency and the program’s benefit to the community and/or individual.



Critical to this philosophical undertaking is the support and understanding of elected officials and ultimately citizens. Whether or not significant changes are called for, the agency wants to be certain that it is philosophically aligned with its residents. The development of the core services and cost recovery philosophy and policy is built on a very logical foundation, using the understanding of who is benefiting from recreation services to determine how the costs for that service should be offset.

Recreation programs and services are sorted along a continuum of what delivers the greatest community benefit to what delivers the greatest individual benefit. The amount of subsidy for each level (not necessarily each individual program) is then determined to create an overall cost recovery philosophy.

Developing effective ongoing systems that help measure success in reaching cost recovery goals and anticipate potential pitfalls are dependent on the following:

- Understanding of current revenue streams and their sustainability

- Tracking all expenses and revenues for programs, facilities, and services to understand their contribution to overall department cost recovery
- Analyzing who is benefiting from programs, facilities, and services, and to what degree they should be subsidized
- Acknowledging the full cost of each program (those direct and indirect costs associated with program delivery) and where the program fits on the continuum of who benefits from the program or service to determine appropriate cost recovery targets
- Defining direct costs as those that typically exist purely because of the program and change with the program
- Defining indirect costs as those that are typically costs that would exist anyway (like full-time staff, utilities, administration, debt service, etc.)
- Program fees should not be based on ability to pay, but an objective program should be in place that allows for easy access for lower income participants, through availability of scholarships and/or discounts. In many instances qualification for scholarships and /or discounts can mirror requirements for free or reduced cost for lunch in schools

For a detailed overview of the Pyramid Methodology, please review the contents in **Appendix III**.

B. Festivals

Overview

During 2008 the City of Asheville will produce five festivals/events, co-sponsor over 100 additional festivals/events with 34 different event organizers, and authorize permits for other requested festivals/events that are held on City property. Festivals are defined as an event, usually staged by a local community, which centers on some unique aspect of that community¹. The responsibility for the administration of festivals and events falls under the Festivals staff in the Cultural Arts Division within the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department.

Role of City

The City of Asheville is committed to providing festivals and special events that recognize the diverse heritage of the community and contribute to the economic impact of the region. City events require the efforts of many City departments including but not limited to: Administration, Finance, Fire, Police, Legal, Public Works, and Risk Management. The Outdoor Special Event Task Force was created in an effort to unify city efforts when planning for these festivals and events. The City is committed to providing the finances, staffing, and expertise to plan and implement City produced festivals as well as providing support to co-sponsored and other events on City properties.

The City has established the “Asheville City Council 2008-09 Strategic Plan” which is supported through activities of the Parks and Recreation Department. Each festival and the combination of all festivals and events supported by the City should work together to support the direction set by City Council.

Role of the Festivals Program

The direct responsibility for the operation of all festivals and special events falls under the Festivals staff within the Cultural Arts Division of the Department. The staff is comprised of the Program Supervisor, three full-time Event Specialists, one part-time Event Specialist, and one Administrative Secretary.

¹ Wikipedia on Festivals 5.12.08, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Festival>

Currently, the group is directly responsible for the production and facilitation of Bele Chere, Asheville Film Festival, Memorial Day Commemoration, Downtown Countdown and July 4th Celebration. The Festivals staff also provides administration and permitting responsibility to other events happening within city limits.

The Festivals staff works with volunteer Boards and Committees to produce Bele Chere and the Asheville Film Festival.

Role of Festivals in the Community

Both City-produced and co-sponsored festivals and events offer diverse cultural and recreational experiences to citizens and visitors while providing a strong economic impact on the region. Hotels, restaurants, retail shops and convenience stores all benefit from the thousands of people that attend these events. City-produced festivals also provide opportunities for sponsorship and booth space, which helps to promote local businesses, merchants, and non-profit organizations. Through co-sponsored events, the City has the opportunity to have a presence at each of those events.

Many local, non-profit organizations help with many of the aspects of Bele Chere and the Asheville Film Festival. Each participating organization received a percentage of proceeds from the sale of beverages and merchandise in exchange for their volunteerism. Many local non-profits rely on this support each year as part of their annual fundraising.

The City produced festivals should work to support the local community through involvement of the community in several other ways including: input to the operations of the events themselves; direct involvement along the lines of providing opportunity for local artists/exhibitors and non-profit organizations; consideration of local businesses; and minimizing negative impact to the local community.

Economic Impact of Festivals

In the context of urban development, from the early 1980's there has been a process that can be characterized as 'festivalization', which has been linked to the economic restructuring of cities, inter-city competitiveness, and the drive to develop cities as large-scale platforms for the creation and consumption of 'cultural experience'.² The City of Asheville, however, finds itself with the challenge of directing money to a variety of activities to fund its own festivals as well as co-sponsored festivals, all of which can indirectly benefit the community through tourism.

'Festivalization' in the City of Asheville began 30 years ago in the Planning Department when Bele Chere was introduced as a means of showing off the beauty of Asheville, serving as an economic driver for the City. Now staff must address challenges of growth in the City through abundant community, art, outdoor and holiday festivals.

City Council requires that the cost of festivals be covered through sponsorships and other cost recovery methods such as permit applications, merchandise sales and beverage sales. Cost recovery is challenging to forecast and has proven problematic. The cost of festivals is intensive as each is a logistically complex

² AEA Consulting, *Thundering Hooves Maintaining the Global Competitive Edge of Edinburgh's Festivals, Full Report May 2006*

undertaking that relies on multiple stakeholders with diverse expectations and dedicated time from several other City departments. Economic impact studies will be important to evaluate outcomes of identified success factors.

Research indicates the success rate for festivals tends to be evaluated simplistically on the basis of profit (sales), prestige (media profile), size (numbers of events), often translated into numbers of visitors. Research from the European Festival Research Project (EFRP) ³ indicates there is evidence of local and city government supporting and even instigating and managing particular festivals themselves to achieve local or regional economic objectives, often defined very narrowly (sales, jobs, tourists). There is also a growing number of smaller more local community-based festivals and events in cities, most often supported by local councils that have been spawned partly as a reaction to larger festivals that have become prime economic-drivers. Such community-based festivals often try to re-claim cultural ground based on their social, educational, and participative value.

It is important to recognize the financial impact that drives economy. When the cost of travel is more expensive, it will be more difficult to draw people from further distances. As people travel less due to a tightened economy, Asheville residents will come to rely on community attractions such as Bele Chere, the Film Festival, Memorial Day Commemoration, 4th of July Celebration, and other co-sponsored festivals, to entertain their families.



City Co-Sponsored Festivals/ Events and Permitting

Along with the general issuing of special event permits, each year, the City of Asheville invites event organizers to apply for co-sponsor support for their festival and event which can range from a large-scale street festival, to a walk-a-thon, to a weekend musical event, all of which take place on City property. Depending upon the type of event, applicants can receive a variety of in-kind City services ranging from permit waivers, to police and fire support, to water access, but does not include cash support. The Festivals staff works with other effected City departments to determine the necessary level of services required.

Any other event or festival that takes place on City property works with the Festivals staff to coordinate its application and permit requirement.

³ European Festival Research Project (EFRP), <http://www.efa-aef.eu/newpublic/?p=home&q=efrp&-session=s:40CF22090c8d02CC88HWRq50579F>, 5/14/2008

The sheer number of festivals/events may well be overwhelming the community and City staff, yet there is no ability to determine if the mission and values established by Council are being fulfilled. Analysis will allow the City to change, combine, eliminate, or encourage the addition of festivals/events to better serve the community, and to determine which ones should be supported by the City.

Festival Financial Resources

The Department currently deals with approximately 100 festivals/events annually. Most fall into an undefined “co-sponsored” category which provides no direction as to why a festival/event would be supported by the City, nor to what level.

Under current budgeting procedures and timing, the City is often not able to confirm funding for festivals/events during the “season” until after the current year budget is approved and funding becomes available in June. This leaves uncertainty up until several weeks before an event is scheduled for events that require a minimum of a year of planning and making financial commitments.

Event sponsorship is a heavily used and worthy concept within the City of Asheville. It is important to have a coordinated strategy, not only among the festivals/events, but also for other needs of the Department and the City as a whole so as to avoid multiple requests to potential sponsors, and/or requests that do not maximize the potential opportunity.

Opportunities may exist to coordinate regional festivals on a statewide basis maximizing the potential to attract additional promotional efforts and grant funding, by working with the North Carolina Arts Council and State Department of Tourism to benefit from their promotion and funding opportunities. Other opportunities may come to light by working with other North Carolina cities that offer similar festivals to coordinate schedules, discuss mutually beneficial promotional strategies and state level financial support.

Festival Evaluations

In order to ensure the long-term sustainability of festival offerings in Asheville, and to ensure that all festivals are working together to support overall City goals, an ongoing evaluation of festivals should address the following areas:

- Content – review the inventory of festivals and events offered by the City and outside agencies to determine if there is a duplication of events, or a gap in types of events. If duplications are present, the City should look at cooperative efforts to combine offerings. The City could also explore combining several independent events into one longer event as a means to maximize resources within the city or sponsorships.
- Demographic – analyze what population is benefiting from the events and to what degree they should be supported financially or by other City resources
- Geographic – evaluate where events are held in consideration of appropriateness, capacity issues, and sustainability of the physical resource. Map location of festival inventory to ensure services go beyond the downtown area and don’t exceed the physical resource capacity of the downtown area.

Festival Volunteer Boards and Committees

There is lack of clarity regarding purpose and inconsistency regarding the leadership, procedures, and decision-making authority of existing festival committees and boards. In many instances, Board and Committee members are directing staff and the allocation of City funds.

This inconsistency has led to confusion and a lack of understanding among volunteers, community members, and other City staff as to who is responsible for decisions and actions pertaining to festivals.

Staff should consider the role of the Recreation Advisory Board and work more closely with it when appointing volunteers to various boards and committees. The Recreation Advisory Board could also help to determine the exact role that volunteer boards and committees play within the entire department, including festivals.

Conclusions

- Growth in five years has doubled; too many festivals and increased participation is creating stress on physical assets.
- Locals are leaving; festivals are attracting fewer of the intended audience of Asheville, but are attracting primarily tourists, raising the issue of tourists driving residents away from events.
- Co-sponsorship is a policy issue; the matrix scoring process to determine the City's role as a potential sponsor may not be working as intended.
- There is a long range concern regarding the realistic magnitude of events that is sustainable for Pack Square Park.
- The expected cost recovery level for festivals is unclear
- Role of the committees and boards is varied and unclear

C. Public Art & Cultural Arts

Overview

The Public Art Board as an administrative body was created in 1999 by municipal ordinance; its members are appointed by the City Council and the Board is staffed by the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Department. The Public Art Board is charged, in part, with providing public art in public buildings and public spaces, promoting Asheville as an arts destination, and raising matching funds for public art projects. The Public Art Board and the Public Art Policy identify possible public art projects for approval or modification by the City Council.

The ordinance obligates the Public Art Board to raise funds for specific projects, which may be matched with City funding. In 2000, the City proclaimed that funding for public art would be included in the General Capital Project Reserve Fund for use at the discretion of the City Manager. One percent of the Capital Project Reserve Fund may be allocated for public art with the stipulation that it is matched on a 1:1 basis with private financial support but that such supplemental funds must first be deposited into the Public Art account held by the City. It is important to note that the City Council has the right and the option to change this policy at any time.

The Public Art Program sponsors public and cultural arts programs that include Public Artist of the Year, and projects including the City's public art collection highlighted by the Urban Trail. There has been discussion about collaborating with the Greenways Commission to develop programs of mutual interest, which would recognize and integrate two areas of community support. The Public Art Master Plan references the benefits of projects located along the greenways, community centers, and infrastructure, all of which would support this ambition.

The success of any public and cultural arts program relies, in part, from the ability to plan for current and future projects. In particular, public art projects take several years to progress from ideation to

installation and cultural arts programs may take longer than two years to cultivate an audience interested in participating and eventually volunteering to realize the project. The City Council, City Manager, and Cultural Arts staff should collectively review and discuss both short-term fiscal needs and long-term programs and projects to create sustainable funding sources to guarantee public satisfaction.

To this end, it is important to build public and organizational capacity as a critical step in the growth and development of the cultural arts in Asheville. Public capacity is defined as an educated and informed citizenry, and organizational capacity is advanced through depth of expertise and skills as well as ability to both create and respond to existing and proposed programming.



There are approximately 4,000 people in Asheville who state that they are artists; there are approximately 70,000 people in Buncombe County who consider themselves to be artists; this represents a significant number of individuals who are actively interested and engaged in the field, informed about the process of creating art, and are a reason why visitors are attracted to the city.

There is interest and commitment among arts organizations to work together rather than in competition. Nonprofit organizations, artists, and arts benefactors have repeatedly expressed the desire and need to work together to advance access to art and arts programming. Furthermore, area nonprofits have expressed a willingness to share facilities and administrative resources that could save money and time, and increase public and patron attendance and participation.

Trends and Benchmarking Against Other Public Art Programs

There are approximately 450 public art programs across America. Some are housed in municipal government or function as nonprofit organizations and others are associated with larger cultural arts entities. The Federal government is the largest public arts organization, administered through the General Services Administration. Half of these programs operate with a percent for art ordinance, and others have policies for public art projects in public spaces or in private development. In North Carolina, there are five distinctive percent for art ordinances: City of Asheville, Town of Chapel Hill, Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, Charlotte Area Transit System, and the Triangle Transit Authority. In addition, 22 communities in the State have voluntary programs to sponsor public art projects or are planning public art initiatives, including Durham, Greensboro, Raleigh, and Winston-Salem.

Most public art programs have a policy for public art in private development. Although a majority of these programs facilitate a voluntary percent for public art in private development, several municipalities in California lead the country with a mandated two percent appropriation for public art in private development.

Analysis of the Asheville Public Art Program

Three primary constituencies were interviewed about the public art program in Asheville: City staff; cultural arts organizations, including advocates and artists; and residents. Not surprisingly, each responded differently to questions about their impressions of the Asheville public art program and its projects.

Surveys, focus groups, and meetings with interested and active residents and arts professionals identified the desire and need for a transparent and equitable process to select public art projects and fund public art initiatives. Public reception of public art is a reciprocal relationship between programs responding to defined needs and projects that excite residents because they have never been seen or experienced elsewhere. Achieving public support for the cultural arts, including public art, should not be too difficult among Asheville residents because the public perception is that the City has arts assets that are respected and beneficial to a quality of life. It is therefore important to maintain and enhance public commitment to art as the Department grows and expands the types and kind of work it presents and encourages. It is also necessary to educate and inform the community about art with which it is unfamiliar and how artists work with community in the field of public art. These objectives are best accomplished when the community is actively and directly engaged in the process.

The May 2008 Survey indicated that public art is appreciated and desired by city residents, although few residents are aware that the City has a percent for art ordinance that partially supports new works of art. Among the most familiar public artworks and installations are the Urban Trail and Pack Square Park, which suggests that a public education campaign might be helpful to the program.

It would also be advantageous to allocate a portion of the operating budget for public education about public art in general: publish public art walking tours; sponsor lectures and temporary public art exhibitions; hold public design reviews and forums as a project advances from conceptual design through installation; design and distribute e-newsletters; and, maintain websites, listservs, artist registries, and mailing lists.

The success of the current structure of the public art program is vulnerable because of the following conditions:

- Unstable and minimal level of funding.
- Political and financial support dependent upon leveraged funding.
- The Public Art Program does not accentuate the regional resources (ie: Penland School of Crafts, Black Mountain, and UNC Asheville) that underlie its artistic strength and bring visitors to Asheville.
- The Public Art Board lacks written procedures for review and consideration of public art: determination of originality, when to review proposed projects, who to review proposed projects, who to approve proposed projects, and who to manage approved projects.
- The Public Art Board does not have a defined role with regard to its responsibility and authority: is it a project manager, a step in an approvals process, the voice of the public, or seven individuals? Should it assist artists with specific projects and/or provide resources and information? It would be helpful to rewrite Section 2-185.8 "Purposes, Responsibilities, and Powers" of the Public Art Board; once this is defined, artists' contracts for public art projects should specify the role of the Public Art Board and City staff.

- There are no written guidelines to distinguish between initiating a public art project and responding to proposals for artworks in public spaces, nor any formal procedures to trigger public art through the land development policy. Although the Board and the City Council have each identified opportunities for public art, which are to enhance neighborhood identity, cultural tourism, local economic development, recreation and open space, visual appearance, pedestrian experiences, and creating attractive and distinctive spaces, places, and objects, there is no process through which to make decisions toward accomplishing these objectives.
- Among the most prominent and familiar public artworks and installations are the Urban Trail and Pack Square Park. The existing collection of public artwork is more historical than artistic and more sculptural than integral. It would be advantageous to consider a variety of permanent and temporary works including original works of public art that can offer and provide a variety of medium, context, content, experience, and location.
- Public art programs should be structured to be transparent in decision-making and recognize the roles of the public and the art professionals in every public art project. The Public Art Board, which publicly represents the public art program for the City, seems to internally work well with staff and among its members. It reaches consensus in its deliberations, which is an important attribute of the program. However, it is less cohesive when interacting with the broader community, which is a mandate for most municipal public art programs because public art relies on public advocacy and support to realize its objectives.
- The Board has the authority to draft requests for qualification to commission artists for specific projects. There is community enthusiasm to site temporary and permanent public art along the greenways, in large and pocket parks, along the river, along unpaved trails, and in playgrounds, which suggests that the Program could partner with the Asheville Parks and Greenways Foundation, Asheville Arts Council, Asheville Art Museum, Asheville City Schools, Convention and Visitors Bureau, and regional artists and galleries to advance an appropriate project. The hurdle the Board and the Program must overcome is to determine when, where, and how to engage the public about specific projects.
- The Program would benefit from greater coordination between City and County public art initiatives, quarterly meetings with Greenways Commission, Recreation Advisory Board, Planning staff, Public Works staff, and Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts staff. It would benefit from directly soliciting information about future and potential public art projects through meetings and reviews with relevant city departments and the City Council.



Conclusions

In summary, since its inception almost a decade ago, the Asheville Public Art Program has not assumed or been awarded the authority to initiate and direct percent for art projects; rather, it has been tasked with creating ideas, energy, enthusiasm, and visibility for public art, or serving as a coordinator for other projects. Its efforts have been weakened because it does not currently have strong relationships with complementary institutions and artists, and its informal processes overly extend project and program deadlines. Furthermore, without sufficient funds to develop projects or to share resources with partner organizations, the Public Art Board is rendered less consequential because active programs can directly petition the City Council for support.

The Public Art Program is not perceived as providing the level of service that its key constituents expect because it is not able to take advantage of opportunities to create public places that are site specific and site sensitive to the built and natural environments. Specifically, there is community enthusiasm to site temporary and permanent public art along the greenways, in large and pocket parks, along the river, along unpaved trails, and in playgrounds, which suggests that the Program could take advantage of multiple sites and artistic orientations to assemble a vibrant and thriving public art collection. Staff and curators should collaborate to develop a plan to complement the existing collection and the City should serve as the curator of the public art collection with the built and natural environments as the gallery context.

The Program should also integrate "place-making" artworks throughout public spaces in addition to downtown. This would respond to expected levels of service and enhance the City's reputation as an arts destination, and affirm the City's dedication to enhance neighborhood identity; cultural tourism; local economic development; recreation and open space; visual appearance; pedestrian experiences; and, the creation of attractive and distinctive spaces, places, and objects.

Finally, the Department should develop a five-year plan for the arts in Asheville that identifies community need and aligns these goals against current resources, future grant requests, the development of public task forces, and building sites.



IV. What We Have Now- An Analysis of Spaces

A. Introduction to GRASP® Level of Service (LOS) Analysis

The following sections describe the process and results of the GRASP® LOS Analysis for the City of Asheville. The first step in the GRASP® LOS Analysis process is to conduct an inventory of all outdoor facilities, greenways and indoor facilities. Maps and Perspectives are then generated to evaluate the level of service. Recommendations are based on the results of the LOS analysis and for this plan are outlined in the **Section VII – Great Things to Come –Recommendations and Action Plans**. More detailed explanations about the GRASP® process and history can be found in **Appendix IV**, as well as in the Level of Service section of this plan.

B. Inventory and Existing Infrastructure

The complete inventory for the City of Asheville was conducted in January 2008. This was accomplished by visiting each property and facility, talking with appropriate personnel, and recording the quantity and functionality of each component. For the purposes of this master plan, the inventory focused only on components at sites that are maintained for public use by the City of Asheville. Several parcels are owned by other providers, but are maintained by the City, and therefore included in this analysis. It is recognized that other providers exist, and that the facilities they provide are part of the overall level of service enjoyed by people in Asheville. However, the purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of the City-provided services and to create a complete inventory of those things that the City takes the responsibility for providing.

Each component was located, counted, and assessed for the functionality of its primary intended use. A GRASP® score was assigned to the component as a measure of its functionality as follows:

- *Below Expectations (BE)* – The component does not meet the expectations of its intended primary function. Factors leading to this may include size, age, accessibility, or others. Each such component was given a score of 1 in the inventory.
- *Meeting Expectations (ME)* – The component meets expectations for its intended function. Such components were given scores of 2.
- *Exceeding Expectations (EE)* – The component exceeds expectations, due to size, configuration, or unique qualities. Such components were given scores of 3.

If the feature exists but is not useable because it is unsafe, obsolete, or dysfunctional, it may be listed in the feature description, and assigned a score of zero (0).

Components were evaluated according to this scale from two perspectives: first, the value of the component in serving the immediate neighborhood, and second, its value to the entire community.

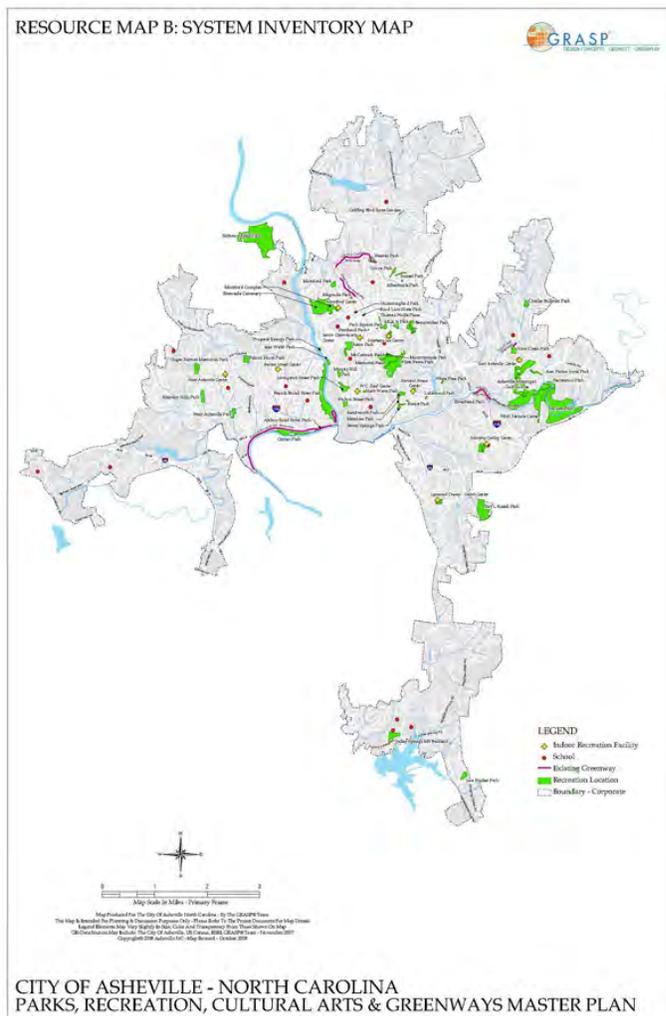
Next, amenities that relate to and enhance the component were evaluated. The setting for a component and the conditions around it affect how well it functions, so in addition to scoring the components, each park site or indoor facility was given a set of scores to rate its comfort and convenience to the user. This includes such things as the availability of restrooms, drinking water, shade, scenery, etc.

Lastly, the overall design and ambiance of the facility or park was recorded as a part of the inventory. Characteristics such as overall layout, attention to design, and functionality inform the design and ambiance score.

The assessment findings from each location were entered into a master inventory database/spreadsheet (See **Appendix V**). A GRASP® Atlas containing a visual of each park site, although not attached to this document, has also been provided to the City electronically. The database serves as a record of the inventory and was also used to perform the GRASP® LOS analysis that follows the inventory sections of this document. The following sections present the results of the inventory by describing the existing infrastructure of Asheville’s outdoor facilities, greenways and indoor facilities.

Existing Outdoor Facilities Infrastructure

As stated above, one essential part of this project is to establish a complete and accurate database of indoor and outdoor amenities related to the provision of recreation by the City of Asheville. The following sections describe the existing infrastructure of the system. Thumbnails of maps are shown here for convenience only – the reader should refer to the full maps in **Appendix VI** for complete information and clarity.



Map B: System Inventory Map

The thumbnail of Map B shows where the existing parks, greenways, and open spaces are located within the City of Asheville. In addition, schools, landmarks, and barriers to pedestrian access are shown for reference. (Larger maps and GRASP® Perspectives can be found in **Appendix VI** Maps and GRASP® Perspectives.)

The parks and recreation system in the City of Asheville can be thought of as an infrastructure that serves the health and well-being of people. This infrastructure is made up of parts and pieces that are combined in various ways to provide service.

Overall the park system in Asheville is a mature and moderately well maintained park system containing over 50 existing parks, including the Asheville Municipal Golf Course and the Western North Carolina Nature Center. The City also has designated land for an additional six parks in the future as funds are available. Recreational opportunities within the park system are both passive, such as seating areas, and active, such as ball fields. A majority of the developed parks are less

than 10 acres in size; however there are a few larger and more developed parks over 35 acres. A majority of the smaller parks function as neighborhood parks, while the larger parks are designed to be community/regional destinations or designed to provide large tracts of open space.

The parks are dispersed mainly throughout the Central and East sub-areas of the city. A typical park in Asheville includes a small playground, a multiuse field and/or ballfield, and a small open turf area. If a park includes a playground, a majority include at least one ADA accessible piece of play equipment. Basic park amenities including parking and other facilities such as concessions, restrooms, and picnic shelters are adequately provided within the park system. Overall Asheville's park system provides an adequate amount of drinking fountains, seating, restrooms, parking spaces, and picnic tables. The parks are also well shaded and easily accessed. Lights are provided on some of the sports fields for nighttime games and events. In general, the park system is lacking in comfort and convenience features such as BBQ grills, dog pick-up stations, security lighting, bike parking, trail connections, seasonal planting and ornamental plantings. The City also provides and maintains 10 community centers, seven of which have adjoining parks or small playgrounds. There are also greenways within Asheville's system which are in various stages of completion, categorized as: Complete, Under Development, and Proposed. A more detailed description of Asheville's greenway system can be found in the next section, *Existing Greenway Infrastructure*. As a whole, Asheville's system has great potential to become a connected network of parks and greenways that weave throughout the city providing a quality level of service to its population.

Several of the parks within the system provide unique experiences for visitors, such as access to open water by a providing fishing dock, a developed water edge, or by providing a trail that meanders along a river. There are also several special facilities within Asheville's park system, such as the WNC Nature Center, Asheville Municipal Golf Course, Aston Park Tennis Center, Carrier Park, McCormick Field, and the Food Lion Skate Park, which act as neighborhood, community, and regional destinations. These special facilities are described below. For a general description of each park, please refer to **Appendix V**. As a part of this planning effort, additional inventory information has been provided in digital format to the City in the form of a GRASP® Atlas.

Carrier Park

This park is located on the former site of an old motor speedway and airstrip. The design of the park respects this history and has preserved the old banked track, which is now a velodrome. Considered one of Asheville's premiere parks, Carrier Park is a unique place with a wide variety of amenities including lawn bowling, a velodrome, volleyball courts, a roller-hockey rink, a paved trail, a destination playground, and a sports field. The park is situated along the French Broad River creating a unique place for educational and interpretive signage and experiences. The park is a destination for the neighborhood and community and is a great space for larger recreational events and festivals. However, the floodplain along the river does create difficulties for building structures such as restrooms.

Azalea Park

Including over 155-acres, this park is one of Asheville's newest recreational destination parks. Located on Azalea Road and along the Swannanoa River in east Asheville, the park includes the John B. Lewis Soccer Complex, as well as a dog park, trails, and a lake. Only about one third built at this time, the park is poised to become regional destination within Asheville.

McCormick Field

Built in 1924, McCormick Field is the home stadium and field for the Asheville Tourists professional baseball club, which is an affiliate of the Colorado Rockies. The stadium, located a short distance from downtown provides concessions and stadium seating for over 4,000 people. Other events held at the stadium include music concerts and festivals.

Pack Square Park

Currently under renovation, Pack Square Park, downtown's premiere park, will provide spaces for events, water play, gardens, fountains, seating areas, and public art. The park's historical and cultural significance makes it the center of city life and activity. The City has a unique relationship with the Pack Square Conservancy that has raised the funds for the design and construction of the park. The high level of development will require significant resources to maintain. It is anticipated that the City will be responsible for maintenance of the park. The maintenance plan and funding plan is currently under discussion.

Recreation Park

Situated along the Swannanoa River, and near Azalea Park and the WNC Nature Center, this park features an outdoor swimming pool, a playground, and picnic shelters. Historically, the park was used as an amusement park with a carousel and a working train. Today, the park includes several volleyball courts, picnic areas, a swimming pool, and a local playground.

Riverside Cemetery

Riverside Cemetery is a beautiful and historic cemetery located in the Montford Historic District on Birch Street. The cemetery is over 87 acres and is the final resting place for many of Asheville's notable citizens, including Thomas Wolfe and O. Henry. Neighborhood residents walk and run on the paved roads in the cemetery.

WNC Nature Center

The WNC Nature Center covers about 40 acres and allows the visitors to view regional and local animals in their natural habitats. The center provides educational opportunities through interactive exhibits, a gift shop, concessions, and a multipurpose room. It is open to the public and draws visitors from the neighborhood, community, and region.

Asheville Municipal Golf Course

One of the oldest golf courses in Western North Carolina, this 18-hole golf course was designed by the Hall of Fame golf architect Donald Ross. The course is open to the general public daily, weather permitting. The course also includes a clubhouse, which includes a concession area and a pro shop.

Food Lion Skate Park

Located at the intersection of Flint and Cherry Street and across from the Civic Center, this skate park offers 17,000 square feet of concrete surfacing for skateboarding. The park offers three unique areas for each level of skating including a beginner bowl, intermediate street course and an advanced vertical bowl.

Aston Park Tennis Center

Aston Park Tennis Center includes 12 lighted clay courts and is considered one of the finest clay courts in the United States. Open to the public, the Center offers youth and adult programs and also features

tournaments. The Tennis Center is adjacent to Aston Park which offers additional recreational opportunities.

Swimming Pools

Asheville has three outdoor pools, Malvern Hills, Recreation Park, and Walton Street. All of the pools are adjacent to public parks which offer picnic tables, tennis courts, ball fields, and walking trails. The public can participate in swim lessons, water games, and exercise classes. The Walton Street pool has structural issues that require further analysis and evaluation to determine the future for the facility at this site.

Existing Greenway Infrastructure

Through the current greenway master plan process, the City of Asheville desires to evaluate the development potential for a portion of the greenway corridors (priority greenways) identified in the 1998 Greenway Master Plan and the 2003 and 2005 Greenway Master Plan Update and Addendum. The criteria used for this evaluation are observations from site visits made by the City of Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts staff and Site Solutions, recent planning efforts performed by other agencies and partners, input from the Asheville Greenways Commission, GRASP® methodology, and cost.



Currently the City has 3.5 miles of greenway developed, 1.5 miles of greenway under development and 85 miles of greenway for possible development. The majority of developed greenways are geographically distributed in the Central and North sub-areas of the city and are located along the French Broad River and Glens Creek. A typical Asheville greenway is off-road, paved, less than a mile in length, and connects to a park. The City of Asheville's greenway system provides dependable recreation opportunities for a majority of citizens and has a solid foundation to expand upon in the future.

The Asheville Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts staff selected 17 proposed greenway corridors (priority greenways) to visit from the 1998 Greenway Master Plan and the 2003 Greenway Master Plan update. Greenway corridors with finalized alignments or greenways that were fully-funded or under development were not included on the tour. Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts staff and Site Solutions conducted a field inventory of the proposed corridors in January 2008. The conceptual alignments for each of the 17 greenway corridors were evaluated on criteria such as development, surrounding area, property ownership, terrain, pedestrian and vehicular crossing points, length, obstacles for development, and connectivity characteristics.

Based on observations during site visits the conceptual alignments for the greenway corridors were adjusted on GIS mapping to more accurately match the terrain, roads, streams, adjacent developments, and other physical features. Non-city owned lands needed for greenway development were also identified.

In addition to the Greenway Master Plans a number of planning documents have been produced in the past five years by other agencies and partners providing insight and information relevant to greenway development. These documents are the City of Asheville Comprehensive Bicycle Plan dated December 20, 2007, the Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan, and the Downtown Master Plan (currently being conducted). These plans positively impact greenway development. The Bicycle Plan parallels the Greenway Master Plan by proposing improvements to existing roads in the same location as the Greenway Master Plan proposes on-road greenways. See **Table 4** for a list of impacted on-road greenway corridors.

Table 4: Primary Greenway Corridors Overlap City of Asheville Comprehensive Bicycle Plan Improvements

Primary Corridor	Length/Mile
Asheland Ave./A.B. Tech (bike lane on 5 yr. bike plan)	2.86
Beaverdam Creek (shared road on bike plan)	5.15
Biltmore Avenue (bike lane on 10 yr. bike plan)	2.76
Brevard Road (shared road on 10 yr. bike plan)	6.10
Emma Rd./Chestnut St. (shared road on 5 yr. bike plan)	3.74
(New) Haw Creek (shared road/on-bike plan)	4.86
Haywood Rd. (bike lane on 5 yr. bike plan)	3.30
Hendersonville Rd (striped shoulder on 10 yr. bike plan)	6.56
Kimberly Ave. (shared road on 10 yr. bike plan)	3.00
Reed Creek./Broadway-(bike lane on 5 yr. bike plan)	0.60
Sweeten Creek Rd.(striped shoulder on 10 yr. bike plan)	10.39
Swannanoa River Rd.(bike lane on 10 yr. bike plan)	8.36
Town Mountain Rd. (shared road on bike plan)	9.68
Total:	18.75

Similarly, the Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan serves as a guide for development of Asheville’s signature greenways, the French Broad River and the Swannanoa River corridors.

Furthermore, the GRASP® methodology was utilized to measure Levels of Service. See Perspective E in **Appendix VI** for additional information.

Using the criteria described in this greenway inventory section as a backdrop, the following findings are made:

- Greenways are established, well utilized, and very popular to the Asheville community. The City has been successful with forming public-private partnerships.
- The majority of development has been off-road and occurred along the French Broad River, Glenn’s Creek, and Reed Creek (Central and West sub-areas).

- There is a shortage of City controlled land. Land acquisition needs to be a high priority. Begin assimilating parcels with willing landowners.
- Greenway development in South Asheville will be challenging because the City's investment in land acquisition has not kept pace with existing developments and the railroad. The railroad parallels Sweeten Creek Road and is a physical barrier between potential connection points and destinations. Connection points are limited to at-grade crossing points such as Lee Street.
- There will be a need in the future to develop additional greenways as the population increases, if the City of Asheville desires to increase access to greenways for Asheville citizens, and as demand for alternative transportation resources increases.
- Consistent funding for greenways needs to be a priority.

The following is a summary of the proposed priority greenway corridors visited in January 2008. Please note the summary describes only the inventoried areas of each proposed greenway corridor and not the entire corridor.

Ashland Avenue/Erskine Street-Southern Segment

The southern section begins at the west end of the proposed Choctaw Street Greenway, near the intersection of Livingston Street and South French Avenue and travels east following Livingston Street on-road. Near the Reid Center, the greenway heads south towards the A-B Tech Campus. The connecting alignment between Livingston Street and the A-B Tech campus has not been decided. There are four potential on road and off road alignments, most of which include cutting through the Erskine Street public housing property, making the connection to the campus. Further investigation is needed to determine the most reasonable option. This section connects to Livingston Street Park, the Reid Center, public housing, A-B Tech and will potentially link to Asheville High School and Mission Hospital.

Ashland Avenue/Erskine Street-Northern Segment

The northern section of Ashland Avenue Greenway begins at the east end of the proposed Town Branch Greenway at Choctaw Street Park, follows Town Branch off-road for a short distance, crosses Choctaw Street and runs off-road along old Ashland Avenue through the City right-of-way, continues alongside the Hart Funeral home and proceeds across Ashland Avenue, and continues north off-road between commercial parcels on Federal Alley (an existing narrow road right-of-way), and ends at the Transit Center. There is connection potential to the Transit Center, post office, commercial areas, and Town Branch Greenway. This greenway corridor is in close proximity to the Ashland Avenue (on-road) corridor and has the same service area. Terrain and access through commercial parcels such as Asheville Art and Sign, the Brewing Company, and Wachovia Bank may be challenging.

Beaucatcher Mountain Greenway

This corridor will have commanding views of downtown Asheville and connects Beaucatcher Park and White Fawn Reservoir. A site visit can be performed in the future to evaluate development suitability and constraints.

Beaverdam Creek Greenway

This section begins near the east side of Beaver Lake at the intersection of Dover Street and Merrimon Avenue, heads east approximately 1500 feet, and connects with Beaverdam Road. This short section may be challenging to develop due to the close proximity of the Asheville Country Club. There is a steep grade with limited site distance at the intersection of Beaverdam Road and Dover Street that makes it difficult for bikers to make a left turn in traffic. The Asheville Bicycle Plan proposes improvements to the area on Merrimon Avenue, Beaverdam Road, and Kimberly Avenue.

Brevard Road Greenway

The northern end of this section begins at I-26 and Brevard Road near the Biltmore Square Mall and travels south ending at the North Carolina Arboretum. The 1998 Greenway Master Plan proposes an on-road greenway by the mall that turns into an off-road greenway near Sardis Road. Land acquisition will be the biggest challenge for this section if it goes off-road. The Asheville Bicycle Plan proposes improvements to Brevard Road serving this area. Connections are planned to commercial, retail, numerous residential areas, the North Carolina Arboretum, and Blue Ridge Parkway.

Clingman Forest Greenway

This northern section begins at Aston Park at Hilliard Avenue and follows an existing sewer line and stream down to Clingman Avenue extension. Portions of the trail have challenging terrain but there appears to be an old roadbed on the lower part of the corridor where the trail could be located. Land acquisition may pose a challenge as well. There are potential connections to Aston Park, Asheville Middle School, YWCA, residential areas, and to the French Broad River Greenway to the Clingman Avenue road section.



French Broad River Greenway-Northeast Segment

This section begins at Jean Webb Park, under the RiverLink Bridge, follows the French Broad River on the east side adjacent Lyman Street, and ends at Amboy Road. As this area of the city continues to re-develop there is potential for this section to develop into a high profile signature greenway. This greenway should be developed in conjunction with private partners.

French Broad River Greenway-Northwest Segment

This section begins at French Broad River Park on the west side of the French Broad River and is a continuation of the existing greenway network. This section ends at RiverLink Bridge. This section connects with the Haywood Road on-road section, and has commanding views of the river. Through the existing sidewalk system there is potential connectivity to the proposed Clingman Forest Greenway.

Glenns Creek Greenway- Eastern Segment

The short section begins at Weaver Park and ends less than one-tenth of a mile to the east at Kimberly Avenue where an on-road greenway is proposed. The greenway is routed along the creek, in an existing sewer right-of-way, and in close proximity to residences on both east and west sides of Glenns Creek. If negotiations with property owners are not successful there is an existing sidewalk system which can be used to make the connection to Kimberly Avenue.

Haw Creek Greenway

The section begins at the intersection of Beverly Road and New Haw Creek Road and follows Haw Creek north to the Sondley Parkway subdivision. Land acquisition and existing development in a few key areas along the greenway are the biggest obstacles. This section offers connections to numerous residential developments.

Hominy Creek Greenway-Eastern Segment

The section begins at Hominy Creek Park (Buncombe County facility) located on the west bank of the French Broad River and winds west along Hominy Creek below the I-40 West, Brevard Road, and I-240 West overpass. This section ends at the old Brevard Road bridge and the Waller property, a large track of land under option by the Trust for Public Land. There are potential connections to the Farmers Market, North Carolina National Guard (slated for re-development by the City of Asheville), and Rhododendron Creek Greenway. The majority of land is publicly controlled.

Hominy Creek Greenway-Western Segment

The section is a continuation of the Hominy Creek Greenway-Eastern Segment. The corridor begins near the old Brevard Road bridge, winds west along Hominy Creek, crosses Bear Creek Road, continues to the creek bend at I-40 West and heads west to Sand Hill Road. This section has potential connections to numerous residential areas and existing sidewalk systems. The greenway could follow the alignment of an existing sewer system to minimize disruption of the corridor. This greenway extends access to West Asheville.

Montford Greenway

The eastern section begins at Gudger Street below the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Visitors Center and Randolph Learning Center and follows an existing sewer line and stream down to Hill Street. The section continues west along Hill Street underneath I-26 and ends at Riverside Drive. Portions of the greenway have challenging terrain. This section offers connections to Isaac Dickson Elementary School, Randolph Learning Center, Chamber of Commerce, public housing, and residential areas.

Reed Creek Greenway-Northern Segment

The east section begins at W.T. Weaver Blvd. beside the Botanical Gardens at Asheville and follows Reed Creek to Riverside Drive. This extension faces a potential issue with obtaining access through the Botanical Gardens at Asheville property and I-26 West. A more practical connection route for Riverside Drive is to terminate the Reed Creek section at W.T. Weaver Blvd. and instead use the existing sidewalk system and proposed bike lane planned for Broadway Street.

Rhododendron Creek Greenway

This southern section begins at Hominy Creek and heads north across Shelburne Road, runs through the former National Guard property (slated for redevelopment by the City) and becomes a shared road with Talmadge Street. At West Asheville Park the greenway goes off-road heading northwest and ending at Sand Hill Road. This section will increase greenway access for a significant amount of residential area, West Asheville Park, and indirectly utilizing the existing sidewalk system to Vance Elementary School. A significant easement, through the Davenport Road development, has already been granted to the City for a portion of this greenway.

Swannanoa River Greenway

The section begins at the confluence with the French Broad River near Biltmore Village, follows the Swannanoa River heading east and ends near Azalea Park. This section has the potential to become a

signature greenway similar to the French Broad River Corridor. Land acquisitions and existing development will be a challenge. This greenway is part of the Wilma-Dykeman Riverway Plan, a major transportation plan being spearheaded by RiverLink.

Sweeten Creek Greenway

Located in south Asheville, the northern section begins at I-40, travels south on Sweeten Creek Road and ends at Lee Street. This section is most suitable as an on-road greenway. A narrow creek channel, railroad right-of-way, and numerous commercial and residential development will make an off-road greenway challenging. The Asheville Bicycle Plan proposes improvements to Sweeten Creek Road serving this area. There are connections to residential and retail areas and a retirement community.



Town Branch Creek Greenway

Located on Choctaw Street 500 feet south from the intersection with McDowell Street, the northern end of this section heads west along Town Branch and ends near the northern tip of Livingston Street Park. The entire corridor falls within City-owned land. This section provides connections to the A.B. Tech Greenway or Ashland Avenue bike lane (future), Choctaw Park, Livingston Street Park, Reid Center, transit system, and public housing areas.

The following greenway corridors were not visited since their alignments have been finalized by staff: Azalea Park Greenway, Reed Creek Greenway-Southern Segment

Existing Indoor Facilities Infrastructure

The following generally describes the functionality of each indoor facility, including programming, components, and other amenities. Refer to the park inventory data report in **Appendix V** for a detailed listing of facility amenities.

Burton Street Center

This facility includes three multipurpose rooms used as a lounge, TV room, stage, and game room. Currently, a large portion of the facility is under renovation. The facility also provides a fitness room, kitchen, and arts and crafts room. All rooms were scored as meeting expectations, or a score of 2. The overall design and ambience also meet expectations, as does site access, aesthetics, building condition, restrooms and office space. Missing from the facility was a front entry desk and overall storage. These missing features may not be necessary for the facility to function and should be evaluated by the department. This center is not ideally designed for recreation, and it is not conducive to multiple programs taking place simultaneously. Facility equipment is in need of repair or replacement. There is a lack of parking and some security issues.

East Asheville Center

This facility includes one and a half multipurpose rooms used for general programming and as a TV room. The room was scored as meeting expectations, or a score of 2. The overall design and ambience also meet expectations, as well as site access, aesthetics, building condition, overall storage, restrooms and office space. Missing from the facility was a front entry desk. This missing feature may not be necessary for the facility to function and should be evaluated by the department. It is important to note that this building has an unique and distinct entry architecture. Facility equipment is in need of repair or replacement. There are some security issues.

Harvest House

This facility includes an outside deck, three craft rooms, three multipurpose rooms, kitchen, and a lobby. All rooms were scored as meeting expectations, or a score of 2. The overall design and ambience also meet expectations, as does site access, aesthetics, building condition, restrooms overall storage, entry desk and office space. There is a lack of parking.



Shiloh Center

This facility includes one and a half multipurpose rooms, gymnasium, locker rooms, library, arts and crafts room, and a fitness/cardio room. All rooms were scored as meeting expectations, or a score of 2. The overall design and ambience also meet expectations, as does site access, aesthetics, building condition, restrooms, overall storage, and office space. Although overall storage is meeting expectations, it is recommended that additional storage be provided within the facility. This center is not ideally designed for recreation, and there are significant security issues.

Montford Center

This facility includes two and a half multipurpose rooms, gymnasium, and climbing wall. All rooms were scored as meeting expectations, or a score of 2. The overall design and ambience also meets expectations, as does site access, aesthetics, building entry, restrooms, and office space. Overall storage, entry aesthetics, building condition did not meet expectations and should be evaluated by the department. Facility equipment is in need of repair or replacement. There are some security issues.

Murphy – Oakley Center

This facility includes one and a half multipurpose rooms and an arts and crafts room. All rooms were scored as meeting expectations, or a score of 2. The overall design and ambience also meet expectations, as does site access, aesthetics, building condition, overall storage and office space. Missing from the facility was a entry desk. This missing feature may not be necessary for the facility to function

and should be evaluated by the department. It is important to note that the capacity of the restrooms is not adequate for this facility. There is a lack of signage and some security issues.

Senior Opportunity Center

This facility includes a greenhouse, two multipurpose rooms, arts and crafts room, lobby, and a kitchen. All rooms were scored as meeting expectations, or a score of 2. The overall design and ambience also meet expectations, as does site access, aesthetics, building condition, restrooms, overall storage, and office space. Missing from the facility was a front entry desk. This missing feature may not be necessary for the facility to function and should be evaluated by the department. It is important to note that the greenhouse is a unique and well-used feature within this facility.

Stephens-Lee Center

This facility, renovated over 10 years ago, includes a fitness room, gymnasium, locker rooms, fitness/cardio room, two and a half multipurpose rooms, and an arts and crafts room. All rooms were scored as meeting expectations, or a score of 2. The overall design and ambience also meet expectations, as well as site access, restrooms and office space. Missing from the facility was a front entry desk. This missing feature may not be necessary for the facility to function and should be evaluated by the department. It is important to note that the building condition and entry aesthetics were scored as exceeding user expectation. Facility equipment is in need of repair or replacement. There are some security issues.

WC Reid Center for Creative Arts

This facility includes a film studio, weight room, auditorium, gymnasium, library, four multipurpose rooms, dance studio, and ceramics room. The only rooms that were scored as meeting expectations, or a score of 2, included the film studio, library, three multipurpose rooms, and the dance studio. Not meeting expectations and requiring removal, replacement or improvements included the weight room, auditorium, gymnasium, ceramics room, and the offices. The overall design and ambience also did not meet expectations, as well as aesthetics, building condition, and restrooms. Missing from the facility was a front entry desk, overall storage, and locker rooms. These missing features may not be necessary for the facility to function and should be evaluated by the department. This center has had a significant renovation plan under consideration for the past several years and a fundraising effort has begun. Neighborhood input indicates a strong desire to continue a variety of programs for local youth at this site, regardless of the direction to create a destination cultural arts center. With the exception of the gymnasium and auditorium, this facility was not built for recreational purposes. As a major renovation has been anticipated, repairs and renovations for the most part have not taken place in the past several years leaving the facility with urgent need of renovation. Public input highlighted the need for the continuation of neighborhood service in this part of the city.

West Asheville Center

This facility includes two multipurpose rooms. All rooms were scored as meeting expectations, or a score of 2. The overall design and ambience also meet expectations, as does site access, aesthetics, building condition, restrooms, overall storage, and office space. Missing from the facility was a front entry desk. This missing feature may not be necessary for the facility to function and should be evaluated by the department. This center is not ideally designed for recreation and facility equipment is in need of repair or replacement. There is a lack of parking and some security issues.

WNC Nature Center

This facility includes one multipurpose room available for public use as a rental space. The room was scored as meeting expectations, or a score of 2. The overall design and ambience also meet expectations, as does site access, aesthetics, building condition, and restrooms. However, ADA accessibility is lacking. Missing from the facility was overall storage and office space. These missing features may not be necessary for the facility to function and should be evaluated by the department.

Conclusions for Indoor Recreation Facilities

The City has a relatively large number of indoor facilities, many of which were not originally designed for the types of recreational uses desired today. Several community centers, originally designed as school buildings, have a large square footage, but much of that space is not conducive to activity (wide, long corridors for example) yet requires ongoing maintenance and repair as well as heating and cooling, rendering these buildings as quite inefficient. The anticipated renovation of the Reid Center is a step in the right direction. In addition, many facilities are missing a clearly delineated welcome reception area conveying a clear sense of control, organization and security.

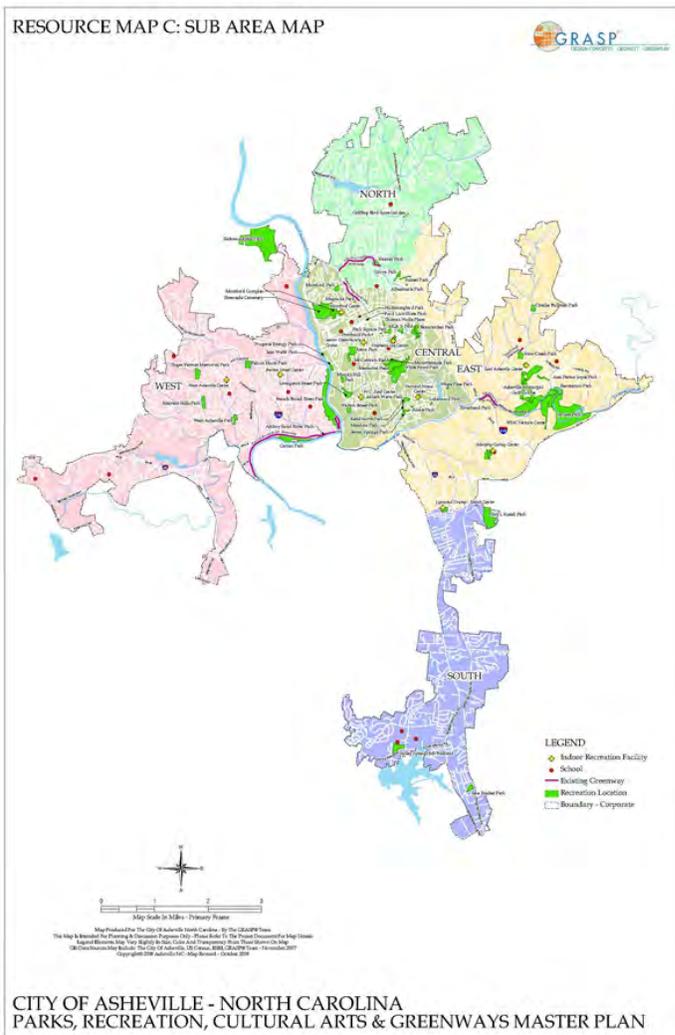
Even with the large number of facilities, the GRASP® Level of Service analysis shows only 50 percent of residents have access to indoor facilities in their neighborhoods. Due to the aging infrastructure of the existing recreation facilities much effort needs to be placed on major renovations to address the current and future needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. However, with the demand for high quality facilities which are not reasonable to accommodate at the neighborhood level, consideration should be given in the future to larger centralized facilities that focus on the future needs of the entire community. These new communitywide centers should include such components as an indoor aquatic center with leisure pool and a fitness area and equipment to meet the ever-growing needs of the aging adult population. These types of components have the capacity to generate revenues to significantly offset their operating costs.

Building maintenance is a significant current issue for the Department, and will continue to be an issue in the future. Additional resources will be necessary to maintain renovated and new facilities to the standards desired by the community. Asset management will be a crucial aspect in the future for the upkeep of all recreational facilities.

C. Level of Service

As part of the City of Asheville Parks, Recreation, Cultural Arts, and Greenways Master Plan, two methods were used in the examination of Levels of Service (LOS). The methods allow for analysis of the inventory, quantity, location, distribution, and access to recreation components. Levels of Service (LOS) are typically defined in parks and recreation plans as the capacity of the system's components to meet the needs of the public. One method uses a traditional capacities approach that compares quantity to population. The other analysis uses the GRASP® method which records quantity, quality, and location information about the components and displays it in chart and map form. A more detailed description of the history of GRASP® and its relationship to National Recreation and Parks Association standards can be found in **Appendix IV**.

The following sections described the GRASP® LOS Analysis findings. These findings measure the level of service for the system and are described below. Thumbnails of maps are shown here for convenience only. Larger maps can be found in **Appendix VI**.



Map C: Sub-Area Map

This thumbnail of Map C shows the sub-areas of the City: North, South, Central, East, and West. These sub-areas are based on existing planning areas used by the City. The Central sub-area contains the downtown section of the City. The findings of the GRASP® LOS Analysis are presented for each sub-area, as well as for the entire City area. (Larger maps and GRASP® Perspectives can be found in **Appendix VI**).

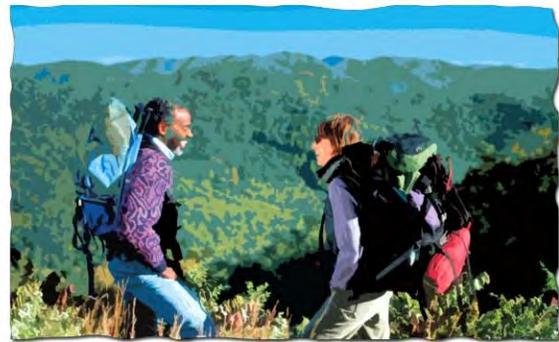
D. The GRASP® LOS Analysis

GRASP® methodology is a unique way of looking at LOS because it considers not only the quantity and distribution of parks and facilities but also quality, comfort and convenience, and overall design and ambiance. It is also unique in that it applies to individual recreation components to create a component-based model for evaluating LOS.

After scoring each component as outlined in the inventory description, GIS software was used to create graphic representations that allow for easy visual and numerical analysis of the recreation system. Some of the representations show raw data collected through the inventory process or received from other sources. These are referred to as resource maps. Other representations emerge from the processing of data within the GIS using composite values analysis. These analyses can look at both general and specific aspects of the system. Each of these representations is called a GRASP® Perspective. The following maps and Perspectives were prepared for this report and can be found in **Appendix VI**.

- Map A: Regional Context
- Map B: System Inventory Map
- Map C: Sub-Area Map
- Perspective A: Neighborhood Access to All Components
- Perspective B: Walkable Access to All Components
- Perspective C: Neighborhood Access to All Indoor Facilities
- Perspective D: Neighborhood Access to Outdoor Components
- Perspective E: Neighborhood Access to Trails/Greenways

For each GRASP® Perspective, each inventoried component shows its GRASP® score as applied to a service area (or buffer) based on a radius from the component. The Neighborhood Perspective applies the components’ qualitative score to both one-mile and one-third mile buffers. One-mile buffers represent a distance from which convenient access to the component can be achieved by normal means such as driving or bicycling. The one-third mile buffer shows the distance that a resident can reasonably walk in ten minutes. Scores are doubled within the one-third mile buffer to reflect the added accessibility of walking, since almost anyone can reach the location on their own by walking, even if they don’t drive or ride a bicycle.



When buffers with associated scores are plotted on a map, a picture emerges that represents the cumulative LOS. Where buffers for multiple components overlap, a darker shade results and indicates locations that are “served” by a combination of more components and/or higher quality ones. In other words, where there are darker shades, the level of service is higher for that particular Perspective. It is important to note that the shade overlaying any given point on the map represents the cumulative value offered by the surrounding park system to an individual situated in that specific location, rather than the service being provided by components at that location to the areas around it.

GRASP® Target Scores Analysis

Within the GRASP® Perspectives, the buffers and associated scores are presented in two ways – with infinite tone ranges (orange) and in two tones based on target values (purple and yellow).

The larger scale map in each of the Perspectives shows the GRASP® buffers with an infinite tone range that portrays the nuances of service that are being provided to the community. At this scale it is easier to see the differences in services provided by parks and individual components. The complete Perspective series is set to the same tone scale so the different Perspectives can be compared side-by-side.

The inset map shows the GRASP® score ranges grouped into categories that represent the following service: Below Target Minimum Score or Above Target Minimum Score. In the inset, you can see clearly which areas fall into each of the categories for a summarized look at the service that is being provided. Different score breaks were used on the inset maps so that each set of components is being evaluated based on what the target minimum score is for each Perspective. For this reason, these maps cannot be compared but are specific to each Perspective. For each Perspective, an explanation of the target minimum score is explained. For further information on how target scores are established please refer to the history of GRASP® in **Appendix IV**.

The Maps and Perspective section reviews the Perspectives and highlights where higher and lower levels of service are being provided from a given set of components.

City Comparison Chart for Perspective Results

Table 5 is a summary of several cities comparable to the City of Asheville. The values in the table are used to compare the interpretations of Asheville’s GRASP® analysis to those of other cities.

Table 5: GRASP® Inventory Summary Report

GRASP® Inventory Summary Report
Updated: 04/24/08

State	City	Total Population	# of Park Parcels	# Components (outdoor)	Average number of components per site (calc)	% Area w/LOS	Study Area Size (acres)	Components Per Person (calc)	GRASP Score Per Person (calc)	Average GRASP LOS per acre with LOS	Average GRASP LOS - Walkable area served
CO	Fort Collins	130,681	45	486	10.8	83.30%	33,388	0.004	0.020	217.0	NA
CO	Lakewood	144,369	105	738	7.0	99.80%	27,494	0.005	0.045	295.1	83.4
FL	Ft. Lauderdale	181,095	91	483	4.5	97.80%	23,230	0.003	0.015	221.4	69.7
FL	Winter Haven	100,000	31	230	7.4	37.20%	42,191	0.002	0.003	174.9	70.6
IN	Bloomington	72,032	45	258	5.7	99.20%	15,001	0.004	0.030	197.4	71.6
IA	Iowa City	62,220	50	806	16.1	98%	16,332	0.013	0.032	285.6	83.9
NC	Asheville	75,948	53	378	7.1	77%	27,027	0.005	0.021	322.9	175.5

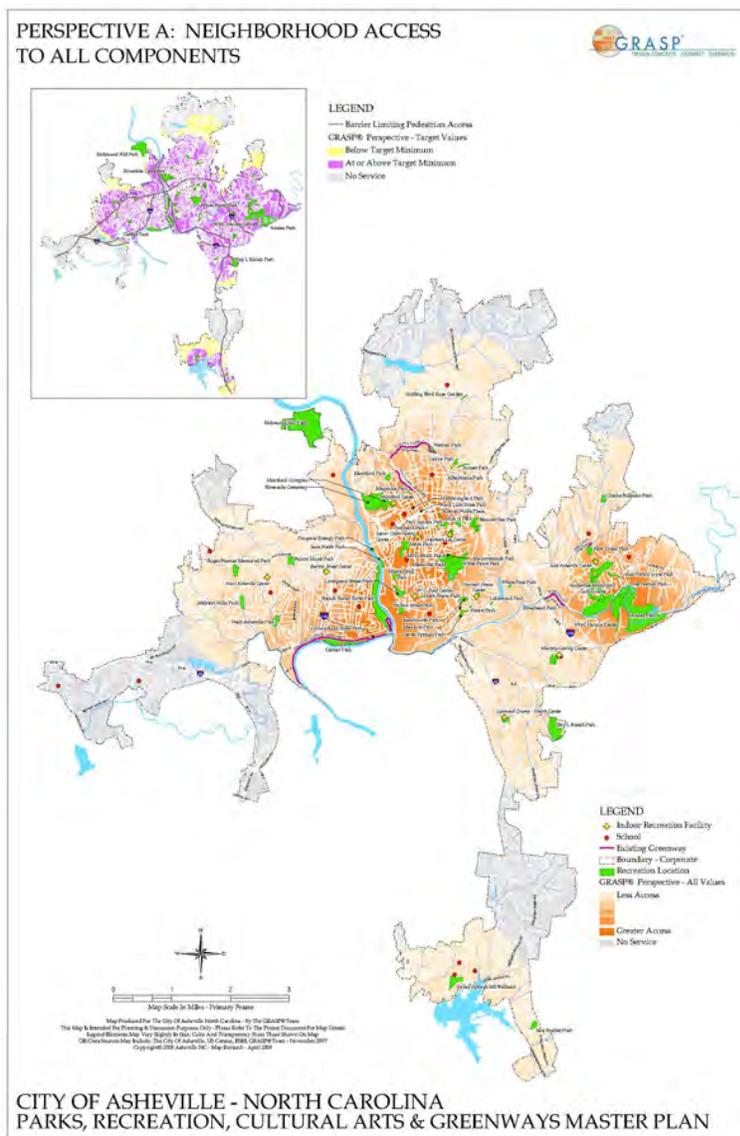
Compared to the cities in the **Table 5**, Asheville’s number of park parcels and number of components is typical for a city of its size and population. The average number of components per park is also typical. However, compared to other cities, Asheville has a lower percentage of area with service (percent area w/LOS). Reasons for a lower percentage of service may be the geography of the city’s boundary, physical features of the land that prevent development, barriers of access, or the gaps may indicate industrial areas of the city. The number of components per person and GRASP® score per person is comparable to other cities. This indicates that a high quality of service is being provided to those with access to service. Another indication that the quality of service is high is the number for the Average GRASP® LOS per acre with LOS and the Average GRASP® LOS-Walkable area served which are the highest in the table.

E. Maps and Perspectives for City of Asheville

Thumbnails of the target scores inset and excerpts from some of the maps and Perspectives are shown here for convenience only – the reader should refer to the full maps in **Appendix VI** for complete information and clarity.

Perspective A: Neighborhood Access to All Components

This thumbnail of Perspective A shows how the City is providing service at a neighborhood level. This is defined by having services within one-mile radius from your home with a higher value placed on the services that are available within walking distance, or one-third mile. For this perspective, the *target value* is a score that represents a resident who has access within one-third mile of their home to four recreation components and one recreational trail. Larger maps and GRASP® Perspectives can be found in **Appendix VI**.



A majority of residents have neighborhood access to some services. Asheville has concentrations of service in the Central sub-area, as well as the eastern section of the city. Large contributors to the concentration of services in the Central sub-area include Pack Square Park, McCormick Field, and Memorial Stadium. The Stephens-Lee Recreation Center and the other numerous small parks in the Central area also contribute to services. Contributing to service in the East sub-area of the city is Azalea Park, Recreation Park, and the Asheville Municipal Golf Course.

Service decreases further from downtown, which generally corresponds to a decreased population density, development pattern, or as a function of the geography of the city's boundary. Gaps in services are found between the North and South sub-areas, as well as within the outlying areas of the city. Barriers to service include Smokey Park Highway, I-40, I-240, Sweeten Creek Road, and the Blue Ridge Parkway and may contribute to the lack of service to these areas. Additionally, the area between the North and South sub-areas includes

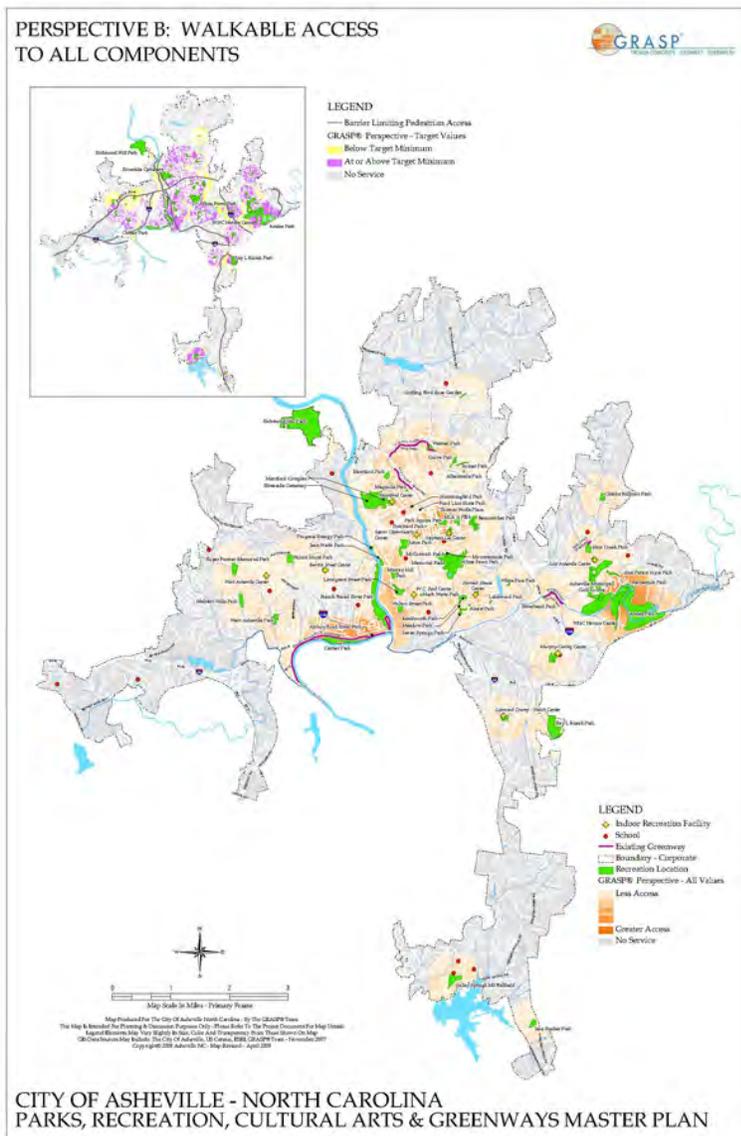
tracts of land within the Biltmore Forest and is bisected by the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Table 6 provides a numeric summary of GRASP® Perspective A showing percentages of areas that either have no service, service that is below the target level, or service that meets or exceeds targets that correspond to residential service models. In this analysis, residents that have access to the equivalent of a park with four components and a multiuse trail or greenway within a one-third mile from their home are receiving service at residential target levels.

Within the city limit, the City of Asheville provides service at a neighborhood level to 77% the area contained within that limit. Of the area with service, 83.8% meets or exceeds target residential levels. The Central sub-area of Asheville provides 100% of its area with service that meets or exceeds the target minimum score. Within the North sub-area, 44.8% of the area being served is below the target levels and within the South sub-area, 47.5% of the area being served is also below target levels. Improvements can be made to increase the overall level of service within all sub-areas by adding a greater variety of components within each park to diversity functionality. Other methods of increasing the level of service include: creating master plans for individual parks, celebrating themes such as art, water, or local history, as well as increasing safety, sense of arrival, and signage.

Table 6: Perspective A - Neighborhood Access to All Components in the City of Asheville

Zone	Total Acres	Acres With LOS	Percent of Area With LOS	Average LOS Per Acre Served	Acres W/O LOS	Percent Total Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent Total Area Above Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Above Target Minimum Score
Asheville (All)	27027	20809.6	77.0%	322.9	6217.1	12.5%	16.2%	64.5%	83.8%
North	4137	2233.4	54.0%	161.2	1903.7	24.2%	44.8%	29.8%	55.2%
South	4056	2490.6	61.4%	85.3	1565.4	29.2%	47.5%	32.2%	52.5%
East	7245	6976.8	96.3%	313.0	267.9	8.2%	8.5%	88.1%	91.5%
West	7639	5158.7	67.5%	292.2	2480.0	7.7%	11.4%	59.8%	88.6%
Central	3950	3950.1	100.0%	621.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Perspective B: Walkable Access to all Components

This thumbnail of Perspective B shows the level of service provided to the community at a walkable level. All components are shown and each has only a one-third mile buffer which equates to about a ten-minute walk. These buffers have been truncated at the primary barriers. Scores within the buffers are equal to the base score for the components, calculated as described in **Appendix IV**, and doubled to reflect the walkable access, as was done on Perspective A. In a sense, this is Perspective A with the one-mile buffers removed.

Like Perspective A, **target scores** for residential areas reflect the equivalent of a park with four components and a trail within a one-third mile from each home. (Larger maps and GRASP® Perspectives can be found in **Appendix VI**).

In this Perspective, more gaps in service appear, even in areas that are well covered in the first Perspective. Like Perspective A, concentrations in service are located around the Central and Eastern sub-areas of the

city. In addition, the affect of the barriers is highlighted in this Perspective. The presence of safe and comfortable routes to parks can increase recreation opportunities dramatically. Walkability is especially important to consider as the City looks to providing service to youth and elderly, as these are the parts of the community that often do not have access to cars.

Although gaps in walkable service do appear, Table 7 shows that 41.3% of the corporate boundary has access to parks and recreation facilities within a one-third mile of their homes. Additionally, 71.5% of the area with walkable service meets or exceeds the target minimum score. The sub-area with the highest percentage of walkable service below the minimum target is the West sub-area.

Overall improvements are needed in the city to increase walkability; however, focus should also be placed on the sub-areas where improvements need to be made to the parks to provide the minimum target LOS. The North and South sub-areas have the lowest percentage of area being served within a walkable distance. The West and North sub-areas have the highest percentages of service area below the target score. Improvements can be made to these sub-areas by removing barriers to pedestrian access, improving existing facilities, adding components within parks, and even adding additional parks and greenways/trails.

Table 7: Acres and Percentages of Walkable Service in the City of Asheville

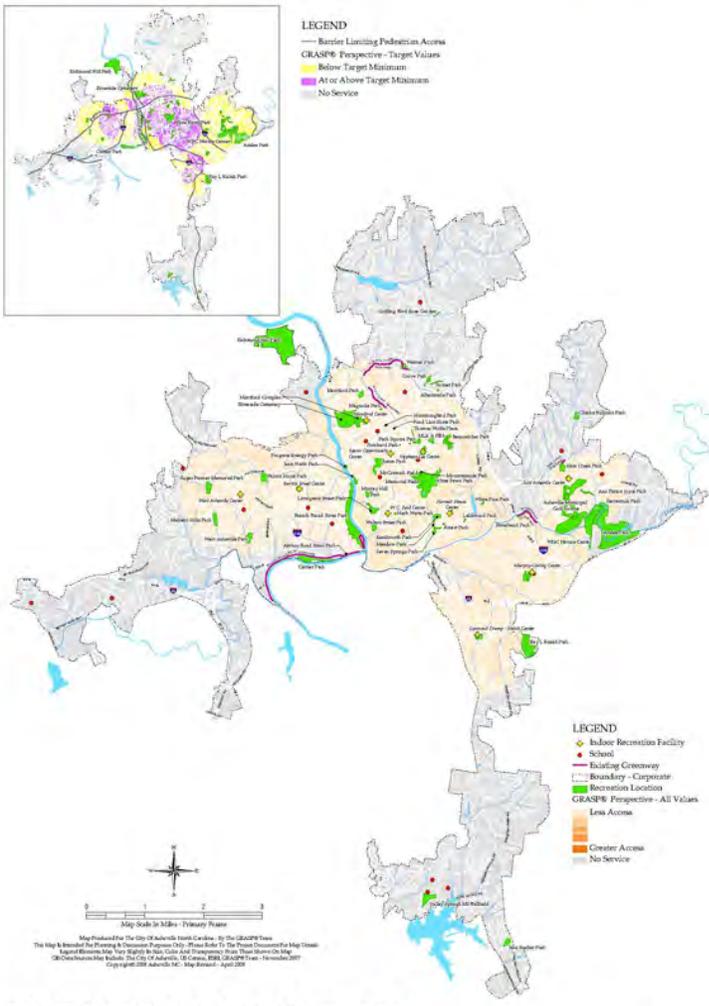
Zone	Total Acres	Acres With LOS	Percent of Area With LOS	Average LOS Per Acre Served	Acres W/O LOS	Percent Total Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent Total Area Above Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Above Target Minimum Score
Asheville (All)	27027	11159.1	41.3%	175.5	15867.6	11.8%	28.5%	29.5%	71.5%
North	4137	937.9	22.7%	144.0	3199.3	7.8%	34.6%	14.8%	65.4%
South	4056	806.0	19.9%	90.9	3250.0	5.7%	28.9%	14.1%	71.1%
East	7245	3141.9	43.4%	191.5	4102.9	10.4%	24.0%	33.0%	76.0%
West	7639	2744.1	35.9%	154.8	4894.7	15.4%	42.9%	20.5%	57.1%
Central	3950	3529.3	89.3%	204.9	420.7	17.4%	19.5%	71.9%	80.5%

Perspective C: Neighborhood Access to Indoor Facilities

Indoor recreation components that provide both active and passive recreation opportunities are shown in this Perspective. Typical components used on this Perspective include: gyms, fitness and meeting rooms, and other specialized facilities. Buffers used are the same as those used in Perspective A.

The *target score* is based on the indoor facility having at least four components. (Larger maps and GRASP® Perspectives can be found in **Appendix VI**).

PERSPECTIVE C: NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS TO INDOOR FACILITIES



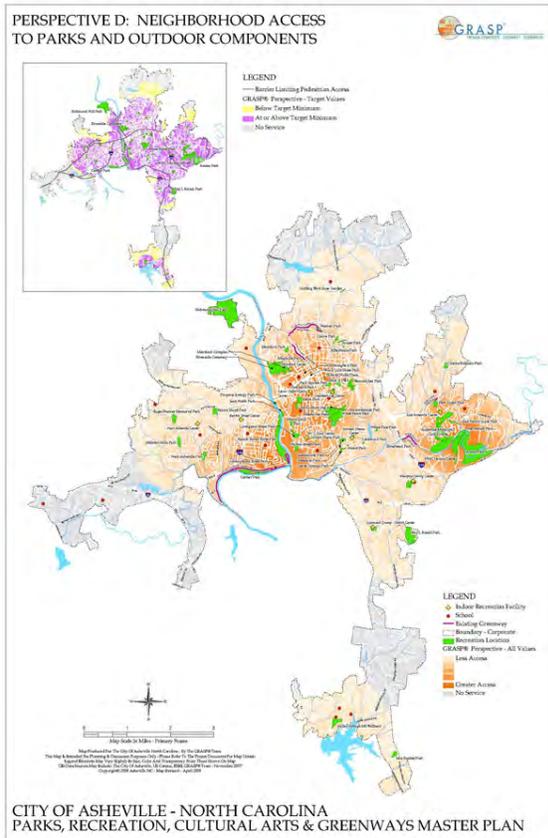
CITY OF ASHEVILLE - NORTH CAROLINA
 PARKS, RECREATION, CULTURAL ARTS & GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN

The Perspective shows that the outlying areas of the city’s corporate boundary are beyond the walkable or short-drive distance of indoor recreation facilities. This may or may not be a problem, depending upon the expectations of residents and the philosophy of the City. Current trends are towards providing fewer indoor centers with a greater variety of components in each one.

As shown in **Table 8**, currently 49.2% of the city has access to at least some indoor service with a majority or 59.9% of the service below the target minimum. Most of the areas without service are located outside the core of the city. These areas include the North and South sub-areas, which only have 6.2% and 14%, respectively, of the sub-area receiving service.

Table 8: Acres and Percentages of Access to Indoor Service in the City of Asheville

Zone	Total Acres	Acres With LOS	Percent of Area With LOS	Average LOS Per Acre Served	Acres W/O LOS	Percent Total Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent Total Area Above Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Above Target Minimum Score
Asheville (All)	27027	13300.8	49.2%	19.9	13725.9	29.5%	59.9%	19.7%	40.1%
North	4137	256.2	6.2%	11.0	3880.9	6.1%	99.3%	0.0%	0.7%
South	4056	568.9	14.0%	15.5	3487.1	11.6%	82.4%	2.5%	17.6%
East	7245	5219.1	72.0%	10.1	2025.7	58.7%	81.5%	13.3%	18.5%
West	7639	3329.8	43.6%	15.7	4309.0	28.4%	65.1%	15.2%	34.9%
Central	3950	3926.9	99.4%	37.6	23.2	20.8%	21.0%	78.6%	79.0%



Perspective D: Neighborhood Access to Outdoor Components

This thumbnail of Perspective D shows neighborhood access to parks and other outdoor recreation components. Like Perspective A, this Perspective looks at neighborhood service and uses the one-third mile and one-mile buffers. By comparing this perspective and Perspective C which shows indoor facilities, the results show that the City is providing a majority of its recreational services and opportunities through parks and outdoor components.

Like Perspective A, **target scores** for residential areas reflect the equivalent of a park with four components and a trail within a one-third mile from each home.

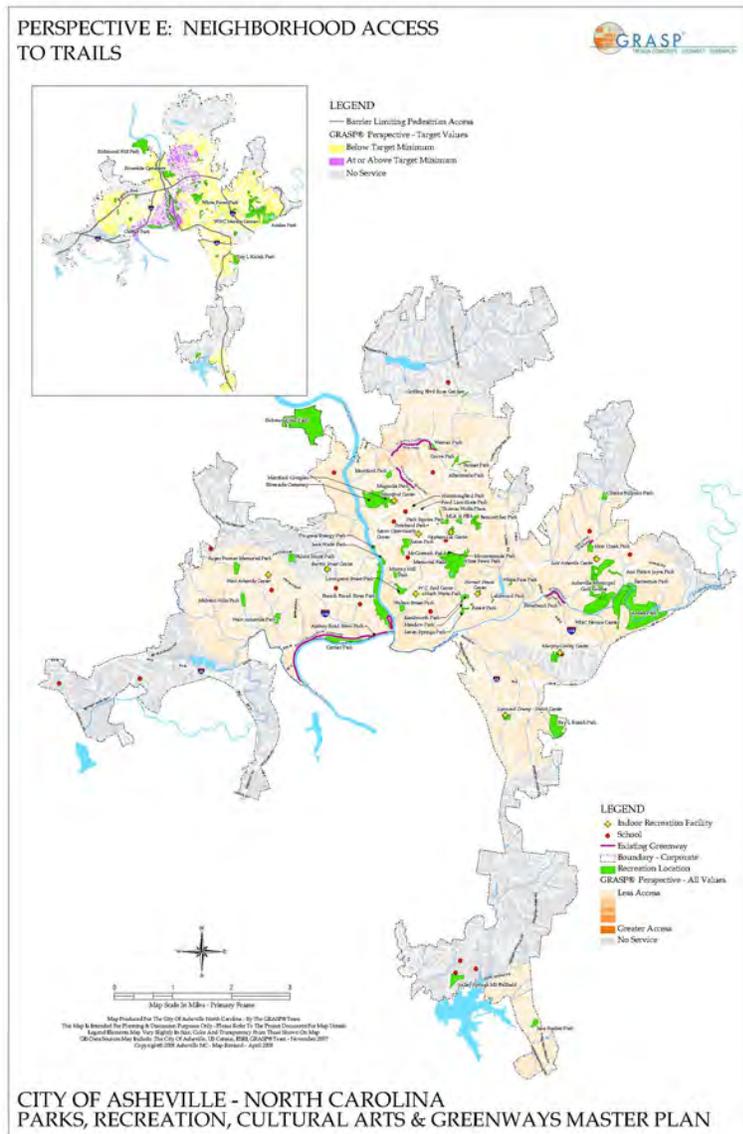
Higher levels of service for parks and outdoor components are being provided to residents living in the Central sub-area, as seen in previous Perspectives. Like the other Perspectives, this one shows that, service coverage is lower within the outlying areas of the city's boundary, and a gap appears between the South and North sub-areas. (Larger maps and GRASP® Perspectives can be found in **Appendix VI**).

Table 9 provides a numeric summary of the GRASP® Perspective showing percentages of area that either have no service, service that is below the target level, or service that meets or exceeds targets that correspond to residential service models. **Table 9** shows that 77% of the corporate boundary has access to parks and outdoor components at a neighborhood level. Additionally, 82.2% of the area with service meets or exceeds the target minimum score. This indicates that the City's number, distribution, and quality of parks and outdoor components are meeting the needs of the people with service. A closer look at **Table 9** reveals there are sub-areas of the city that have a significant percentage of service that does not meet the target minimum. The same improvements suggested for Perspective A can be applied to this Perspective to increase the amount of area being served and the quality of the service being provided.

Table 9 : Acres and Percentages of Access to Parks and Outdoor Components in the City of Asheville

Zone	Total Acres	Acres With LOS	Percent of Area With LOS	Average LOS Per Acre Served	Acres W/O LOS	Percent Total Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent Total Area Above Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Above Target Minimum Score
Asheville (All)	27027	20809.6	77.0%	305.8	6217.1	13.7%	17.8%	63.3%	82.2%
North	4137	2233.4	54.0%	147.6	1903.7	24.2%	44.8%	29.8%	55.2%
South	4056	2490.6	61.4%	81.8	1565.4	29.2%	47.6%	32.2%	52.4%
East	7245	6976.8	96.3%	305.4	267.9	10.5%	11.0%	85.8%	89.0%
West	7639	5158.7	67.5%	277.7	2480.0	10.0%	14.8%	57.6%	85.2%
Central	3950	3950.1	100.0%	573.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Perspective E: Neighborhood Access to Trails/Greenways



Within the City of Asheville trails are referred to as greenways. Within this document the words are used interchangeably. In this Trails Perspective there are several types of trails that are shown:

- Multiuse trails that accommodate multiple user types and extend outside of individual parks to create a community-wide network
- Trails within parks that are geared toward multimodal use or provide specific access to natural areas
- Loop walks within parks that may not accommodate multiple user types and are used primarily for circuit walking
- Not included in this perspective are sidewalks that provide access to components and do not form a loop appropriate for circuit walking.

The *target score* for trails and greenways is equivalent to a trail or greenway consisting of 3 components including one active component, one passive component, and the parcel itself.

(Larger maps and GRASP® Perspectives can be found in **Appendix VI**).

Loop walks are considered in the trails perspective but are not multiuse trails. Loop walks may not accommodate more than one user group (walkers) where multiuse trails generally do (bikes, walkers, rollerbladers, equestrian etc.) Each trail type has a different benefit to the community and is scored and buffered appropriately.

Multiuse trails are highly valued by the community and have a wide range of uses; therefore they are scored as three components - active, passive, and the parcel itself, and receive modifiers for comfort and convenience, and design and ambiance. They are given a one-third mile buffer which represents the distance that people will generally travel without a car to begin their recreational experience, which may include destinations miles away. The buffers are applied to the entire length of the trail.

Trails and loop walks within parks are scored as a component within that park much the way that a playground is scored. They receive a single score and receive modifiers for comfort and convenience and design and ambiance. Because they do not extend outside of the park and provide no other destination, they are given a one-mile buffer and a one-third mile buffer just as the other components in the park receive in the neighborhood perspective. The buffers are applied to a point that represents the location of the trail or loop walk.

Perspective E shows that Asheville has a developing network of greenways. However, at this time, significant gaps in service still occur, particularly between the North and South sub-areas. The trails do not form a consistent connected network, but instead exist as fragmented segments. This will be mitigated somewhat when the greenways, categorized as Under Development and Proposed, are completed and incorporated into the greenways network.

To improve Asheville’s neighborhood access to greenways, the City can establish priorities for the network’s development. By selecting greenways that provide the greatest connectivity, Asheville can establish which greenways will increase not only the city’s neighborhood access, but also access within those sub-areas with lower accessibility.

Table 10 provides a numeric summary of the GRASP® Perspective showing percentages of area that either have no service, service that is below the target level, or service that meets or exceeds the minimum target score. **Table 10** shows that 58.8% of the corporate boundary has access to trails/greenways at a neighborhood level. However, 81.9% of the area with service is below the target minimum score. This indicates that although there is service, the quality of the service is below user expectation. Expectations for greenways include an easily accessible parcel, active and passive recreational opportunities, as well as comfort and convenience features. However, where there is service, there is opportunity for the City to improve the level of service by adding wayfindings, plantings, trailheads, additional seating, creating better connections between greenways, or adding new greenways within all sub-areas.

Table 10: Acres and Percentages of Access to Trails in the City of Asheville

Zone	Total Acres	Acres With LOS	Percent of Area With LOS	Average LOS Per Acre Served	Acres W/O LOS	Percent Total Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent Total Area Above Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Above Target Minimum Score
Asheville (All)	27027	15900.7	58.8%	24.8	11126.0	48.2%	81.9%	10.6%	18.1%
North	4137	1217.2	29.4%	57.5	2919.9	16.0%	54.4%	13.4%	45.6%
South	4056	1238.3	30.5%	5.3	2817.7	30.5%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
East	7245	5568.5	76.9%	10.6	1676.3	76.3%	99.2%	0.6%	0.8%
West	7639	3932.7	51.5%	24.3	3706.0	39.8%	77.3%	11.7%	22.7%
Central	3950	3944.0	99.8%	41.3	6.1	64.9%	65.0%	35.0%	35.0%

F. Other Tools for Measuring Level of Service (LOS)

Besides the GRASP® Perspectives and associated LOS numbers, this plan also uses capacities based analysis tools. One tool determines capacity by comparing GRASP® scoring to population, and the other

tool models traditional methods of determining LOS by using straight quantity as compared to population.

Communitywide LOS

The Community Components GRASP® Scores and Population Ratios in **Table 11** show numerical indices for LOS that accounts for both quantity and quality of components in Asheville. The table shows the community GRASP® Index for each component, as well as the number of GRASP® points needed to maintain the current indices as the population grows.

Table 11: Community Components GRASP® Index

Asheville

Community Components GRASP® Index

	Current Population	75,948	Projected Population (2012)	83,011
	Total GRASP® Community Score per component type	GRASP® score per 1000 population (GRASP® Index)	Total GRASP® score needed at projected population	Additional GRASP® score needed
Ballfield	141.8	1.87	155.0	13.2
Basketball	94.8	1.25	103.6	8.8
Disk Golf	6.6	0.09	7.2	0.6
Dog Park	13.8	0.18	15.1	1.3
Event Space	29.4	0.39	32.1	2.7
Garden, Community	9.6	0.13	10.5	0.9
Golf	4.4	0.06	4.8	0.4
Loop Walk	72.2	0.95	78.9	6.7
MP Field, all sizes	63.3	0.83	69.2	5.9
Open Turf	77.7	1.02	84.9	7.2
Playground, all sizes	126.9	1.67	138.7	11.8
Shelter, Group (with and without restrooms)	64.2	0.85	70.2	6.0
Tennis	179.4	2.36	196.1	16.7
Recreational Trails	46.2	0.61	50.5	4.3
TOTAL	1043.20	13.74	1140.22	97.02

The first part of the Community Components GRASP® Index, shown in **Table 11**, shows the total GRASP® scores for that component when all of the components in the dataset are included. During the inventory process, two sets of scores were assigned to each component, a Neighborhood score and a Community score. The Community scores are used to create this table.

The second column in the table shows the index that results when the GRASP® score is divided by the current population of Asheville, in thousands. This is the GRASP® Index for that component. The third column in the table shows the total GRASP® score that must exist to achieve the same GRASP® Index at the projected population, and the fourth column shows the additional number of GRASP® points needed to achieve that score.

This information can be used to plan for future improvements to the parks and recreation infrastructure to accommodate growth. Because GRASP® scores are a blend of quantity and quality; it is possible to increase them by either adding components or improving the quality of existing ones. In most case, a combination of the two will be recommended. Used in conjunction with the Capacities LOS **Table 12**, the best combination of quantity and quality can be determined for planning purposes. The GRASP® Indices also allow the community to benchmark its combined LOS for quality and quantity of service over time and measure its progress.

The Community Components GRASP® Index indicates that Asheville’s current system is providing an adequate quantity and quality of components listed, including ballfields, basketball courts, and tennis courts for the city’s current population. The GRASP® Index (current population) is highest for ballfields, playgrounds, and tennis courts. This indicates that a high quality of service is being provided by these components to the current population. Components, such as disc golf, golf, dog parks, and event spaces may have a lower index because each individual component provides service to a large amount of people, such as golf courses. As the population increases within the city, the demand for new components, as well as the need for improvements to the quality of existing components will increase. The index above indicates that by the year 2012, ballfields, basketball courts, loop walks, playgrounds, and tennis courts will require improvements or additional components added into the system to maintain the existing LOS.

Capacities Level of Service

For some components, the quantity needed is proportional to the population that will be served by that component. This is a fairly easy calculation when components are programmed for use. The programming determines how many people will be using the facilities over a period of time. Sports fields and courts fall into this category. For other components, the ratio of components to the population may vary, depending upon the size or capacity of the component and the participation levels within the community for the activity served by the component. Skate parks and group picnic facilities fall into this category.

Table 12 represents the current level of service and projected needs for community components for Asheville. This table closely resembles a traditional LOS analysis and shows how the quantities of certain park and recreation components compare to population. For each component, the table shows the current quantity of that component on a “per-1000 persons” basis (referred to as the Capacity LOS) and the pro-rata number of persons in the community represented by each component. This kind of analysis can be used to show the capacity of the current inventory – in other words, how many people are potentially being served by park components.

Table 12: Capacities LOS

Capacities LOS for Community Components

Asheville, North Carolina **Draft: April, 2008**

	Acres	Ballfield	Basketball	Disk Golf	Dog Park	Event Space	Garden, Community	Golf	Loop Walk	MP Field, all sizes	Open Turf	Playground, all sizes	Shelter, Group (with and without restrooms)	Tennis	Recreational Trails (in miles) Primitive and Multi-use.
INVENTORY															
Components	822	25	19	1	2	4	2	1	14	7	20	27	11	30	5
CURRENT RATIO PER POPULATION															
CURRENT POPULATION 2006	75,948														
Current Ratio per 1000 Population	10.82	0.33	0.25	0.01	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.18	0.09	0.26	0.36	0.14	0.40	0.07
Population per component	92	3,038	3,997	75,948	37,974	18,987	37,974	75,948	5,425	10,850	3,797	2,813	6,904	2,532	15,190
PROJECTED POPULATION - YEAR 2012	83,011														
Total # needed to maintain current ratio of all existing facilities at projected population	898	27	21	1	2	4	2	1	15	8	22	30	12	33	5
<i>Number that should be added to achieve current ratio at projected population</i>	76	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	1	3	0

Table 12 provides the total number of components needed to maintain the current ratio of all existing facilities at the projected population, as well as the number of components that should be added to achieve the current ratio at projected population. With a projected population of 83,011, Asheville will need to add 76 acres of parks and greenways to achieve the current ratio of 10.82 acres per 1,000 people. Additional components will be needed to meet the recreational demands at current LOS of the projected population, including ballfields (2), basketball courts (2), open turf areas (2), playgrounds (3), and tennis courts (3). Existing components that will meet the demand of the existing population and the projected population include disk golf, dog parks, event space, a community garden, and golf. However, as the population increases, as well as the popularity of the city, the demand or need for these components may increase.

It is important to note that this table is simply one tool that is used to make final recommendations and establish budgets. The numbers of facilities shown on this table may differ from the final recommendations due to availability of land, ability to upgrade existing facilities, and the possibility of partnerships.

Conclusion

The City of Asheville is providing a high level of service by providing quality and moderately maintained parks at a neighborhood level. Based on the GRASP® level of service analysis, a majority of the City has some level of service and only a few gaps appear. Some areas of the City do have a low level of service, which indicates that these are areas of opportunity, where small improvements to a park can greatly increase the level of service. Although gaps in service appear, there exists a strong infrastructure of existing parks, both small and large. It is not necessary or possible to add new parks to every sub-area of the City. Priorities may differ between sub-areas due to planning restrictions, geography, or difference in

community needs. Therefore the priority becomes improving what exists, adding parks when possible to gaps in service, and then ensuring that it works as an interconnected system.

Another high priority for the City is to focus on creating, improving, and strengthening connectivity between parks, greenways, and indoor facilities, especially in the downtown area and to the West and East sub-areas. Connecting parks through greenways, bike lanes, and signage will increase not only the walkability of the city, but provide an increased level of service throughout the system. Creating a network of urban parks in the downtown area is also a high priority for Asheville. Greenways recommendations will provide further information on how to increase walkable level of service.



Developing designated future park sites, such as Beaucatcher Park, and strengthening the regional significance of the parks in the East/West sub-area is also a priority. A regional focus should also be placed on the McCormick Field/Memorial Stadium/Mountainside Park/ White Fawn Park area within the Downtown area/Central sub-area. Developing a new site master plan for this area will create a strong network of parks and outdoor amenities in a central location.

A lower priority for the City of Asheville is adding park parcels in areas where gaps in service appear as shown in Perspectives A-E, as well as highlighted in the Recommendation Map in **Appendix VI**. As parkland is added, the City should ensure the land meets specified criteria for new parkland. It is suggested that the criteria be developed by staff, landscape architects, and planners. A suggested list of criteria for new park land includes the following:

- Connections to trails/greenways/sidewalks
- Connections with public transportation
- Connection with other existing parks
- Walkable access at a neighborhood level
- A potential maximum slope
- Preferred street frontage
- Minimum acreage

Creating a maintenance plan to ensure that park components and amenities are added, maintained, replaced, or improved is also critical to ensuring a continued high level of service. To help the City determine priorities for park components and amenities, a Park Matrix was generated. (See **Appendix XI** for the Park Matrix) The Park Matrix was created by using a target score for the Total Neighborhood GRASP® score, which is different from any of the target minimum score for the Perspectives. The target score for the Total Neighborhood GRASP® score does not account for proximity to other parks or trails, but is similar in that it is equivalent to a park having 4 components, meeting design and ambience

expectations (score of 2), and having 7 out of 14 comfort and convenience features (target score = 19.2) that are meeting expectations. The priority for updates and improvements is then given to parks with a lower Total Neighborhood GRASP® score.

The Park Matrix includes owner, GIS acreage, sub-area, type, Total Neighborhood GRASP® score, and number of components, #comfort and convenience features, components scoring below expectations, recommendations, and priority levels for each sub-area. General and specific recommendations are given for each park within the Park Matrix as well. If the recommendation is to add components, it is suggested that these additional amenities comprise of a loop walk, a small shelter, and/or a local playground. If these amenities are present, seek community input on what additional amenities are needed in that neighborhood.

V. Funding

Asheville Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Department currently uses a variety of traditional funding sources to fund operations. The following is a description of funding sources currently used by the Department.

Fees/Charges

The plan has documented that the Department is far undervalued and 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 lower than national and regional trends relating to public park and recreation agencies.

Ticket Sales/Admissions

This revenue source is on accessing facilities for self-directed activities such as pools, nature centers, ballparks and entertainment activities. These user fees help offset operational costs. Currently these funds are not designated for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts although a portion of the revenue could fund the operation and maintenance of parks and recreation services and/or facilities.

Membership and Season Pass Sales

The City sells memberships to specific types of amenities to offset operational costs. These membership fees can apply to recreational and fitness centers, tennis centers, golf courses, pools, ice-rinks, etc. Currently these funds are not designated for Parks and Recreation.

Grants

A variety of special grants either currently exist through the Federal and State governmental systems and foundations, or will be established through the life of current and proposed facilities and services. Utilizing grants as a funding source is a huge opportunity although very time consuming. It takes dedicated staff time for research, applications, implementation, and tracking of grants. Planning and timing of grant funding to fit a project timeline is critical. New grants continually become available as well as constant changing of guidelines and procedures.

Inter-modal Transportation and Efficiency Act

This funding program, commonly called TEA-21 was authorized by the Federal Government in 1991. Funds are distributed through the state. There are several million dollars in enhancement revenues available for transportation related projects, including bicycle and pedestrian trails, rail depot

rehabilitation, landscaping, and beautification projects. Currently the funds are not all designated for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

These funds are awarded for acquisition and development of parks, recreation, and supporting facilities through the National Park Service and State Park System.

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. Currently they are not designated for Parks and Recreation although a portion of the fees could assist in-kind usage and/or funding of parks and recreation services.

Cost Avoidance

The Department must be driven by the market and stay with the Department’s core businesses. By shifting its role as direct provider, the City will experience savings by deciding whether or not to provide that facility or program. This is cost avoidance. Savings could be realized through partnering, outsourcing, or deferring to another provider in the provision of a service and/or facility.



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 and could assist in funding of parks and recreation services and/or facilities.

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 type of facilities for a special activity. Currently these funds are not designated for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts although a portion of the revenue could fund the operation and maintenance of parks and recreation services and/or facilities.

Volunteerism

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

Equipment Rental

This revenue source is available on the rental of equipment used for recreation purposes. Currently these funds are not designated for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts although a portion of the revenue could fund the operation and maintenance of parks and recreation services and/or facilities as well as equipment replacement.

Dedication/Development Fees

These fees are assessed for the development of residential and/or commercial properties with the proceeds to be used for parks and recreation purposes, such as open space acquisition, community park site development, neighborhood parks development, regional parks development, etc. Currently they are designated for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts for land acquisition and development of parks and greenways.

Foundation/Gifts

These dollars are raised from tax-exempt, non-profit organizations established with private donations in promotion of specific causes, activities, or issues. They offer a variety of means to fund capital projects, including capital campaigns, gifts catalogs, fundraisers, endowments, sales of items, etc.

Friends Associations

These groups are formed to raise money typically for a single focus purpose that could include a park facility or program that will better the community as a whole and their special interest.

Merchandising Sales

This revenue source comes from the resale items from gift shops and pro shops for either all of the sales or a set gross percentage. Currently these funds are not designated for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts although a portion of the revenue could fund the operation and maintenance of parks and recreation services and/or facilities.

Concession Management

Concession management is from retail sales or rentals of soft goods, hard goods, or consumable items. The City either contracts for the service or receives a set of the gross percentage or the full revenue dollars that incorporates a profit after expenses. Currently these funds are not designated for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts although a portion of the revenue could fund the operation and maintenance of parks and recreation services and/or facilities.

Land Trust

Many cities 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 is a good source to look to for acquisition of future lands. Currently the City of Asheville contracts with land trust for services.

Naming Rights

Many cities 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. Asheville has utilized this funding mechanism and has many additional opportunities.

Surplus Sale of Equipment by Auction

Cities and counties have surplus auctions to get rid of old and used equipment that generates some income on a yearly basis. Currently these funds are not designated for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural

Arts although a portion of the revenue could fund the capital, operation and/or maintenance of parks and recreation services and/or facilities.

Security and Clean-Up Fees

Cities typically charge groups and individuals security and clean-up fees for special events other type of events held in parks. Currently these funds are not designated for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts although a portion of the revenue could fund the operation and maintenance of parks and recreation services and/or facilities.

Land Swaps

This source is where the city trades property to improve their access of protection of resources. This could include property gain by the city for non-payment of taxes or where a developer needs a larger or smaller space to improve their profitability. The city or county typically gains more property for more recreation opportunities in exchange for the land swap. Currently these funds are not always designated for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts although a portion of the revenue could fund the operation and maintenance of parks and recreation services and/or facilities.

Patron Cards

This allows patrons of a specific recreational facility to purchase patron cards for a month or a year that allows them special privileges above the general public. These privileges include having rights to early tee times, reservations, and special tours, shows, or events. The patron cards typically range in price from \$15.00 a month to \$150.00 a year.

Life Estates

This source of money is available when someone wants to leave their property to the City in exchange for them to live on their property until their death. The City usually can use a portion of the property for park purposes and then all of it after the person's death. This revenue source is very popular for individuals who have a lot of wealth and their estate will be highly taxed at their death and their children have to sell of their property because of probate costs. This allows the person to receive a good tax deduction yearly on their property while leaving a life estate. It is good for the City because they do not have to pay for the land.



The following are traditional funding sources that *could easily* be used by the City of Asheville Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Department to create the existing budgets for capital and operational expenditures.

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 City department, or a private business and a City agency. 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.

Special Fundraisers

Many park and recreation agencies have special fundraisers on an annual basis to help cover specific programs and capital projects.

Advertising Sales

This revenue source is for the sale of tasteful and appropriate advertising on park and recreation related items such as in the City's program guide, on scoreboards, outfield fences, and other visible products or services that are consumable or permanent that exposes the product or service to many people.

Capital Improvement Fees

These fees are on top of the set user rate for accessing facilities such as golf, recreation centers and pools to support capital improvements that benefit the user of the facility.

Gift Catalogs

Gift catalogs provide organizations the opportunity to let the community know on a yearly basis what their needs are. The community purchases items from the gift catalog and donates them to the city.

Funding Summary

The Asheville Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Department utilizes the traditional funding sources in the first list above and has an opportunity to easily implement the additional traditional funding sources identified in the second list. By implementing additional funding sources, the Department can expand the resources to diversify the reliance on existing traditional funding sources to create new revenue streams as well as utilizing other existing community resources.

To successfully implement this long range master plan, the City of Asheville will need to accomplish several funding strategies. The strategies listed below recognize the most favorable means to fund this master plan for the City of Asheville.

Funding Strategies

- Reassign existing City resources including the General Fund and the CIP Fund
- Expand existing Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Department resources such as grants, sponsorships, volunteerism, inter-local agreements, fees and charges, development fees, foundation gifts, concession and merchandise sales, and friends associations (defined above)
- Implement new traditional funding sources (listed above) particularly partnerships, advertising sales, fundraisers, foundation gift catalog, and capital improvement fees

- Pass a bond referendum for general obligation bonds for new improvements
- Research the potential of implementing alternative funding sources (listed in **Appendix VII**) such as a sales tax (.125 - .5%) dedicated to Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts; a hotel, motel, restaurant tax (.5 - 1%) with a portion funding the Department; a volunteer utility roundup program; real estate transfer fees; and maintenance endowments

To successfully implement long-range master plans it takes many combined sources of revenue beyond the traditional taxes and fees. The above strategies indicate the diverse funding sources that have been successful trends around the country that the City of Asheville is capable of pursuing for the successful implementation of this long-range master plan.



VI. Great Things to Come – Recommendations and Action Plans

Administration and Planning

Goal 1: Maximize the planning effort

Strategy: Incorporate the action items of this plan into the City’s annual work plans to achieve the recommendations of this plan and to enhance effectiveness of staff effort.

Action Step

- Assign responsibility and time frame, and allocate resources necessary to complete each action identified in annual work plans.

Strategy: Assure that all levels of staff are informed of and are set up to work together to implement the recommendations and strategies of the plan.

Action Steps:

- Inform all levels of staff of the direction of the Plan, allow for staff input, encourage buy-in, and encourage input from all staff members.
- Provide cross-departmental staff teams/team members, as appropriate, with education development opportunities, necessary equipment, and supplies.

Strategy: Involve the entire community in supporting and planning the recommendations of this plan and to enhance effectiveness of the City’s effort.

Action Steps:

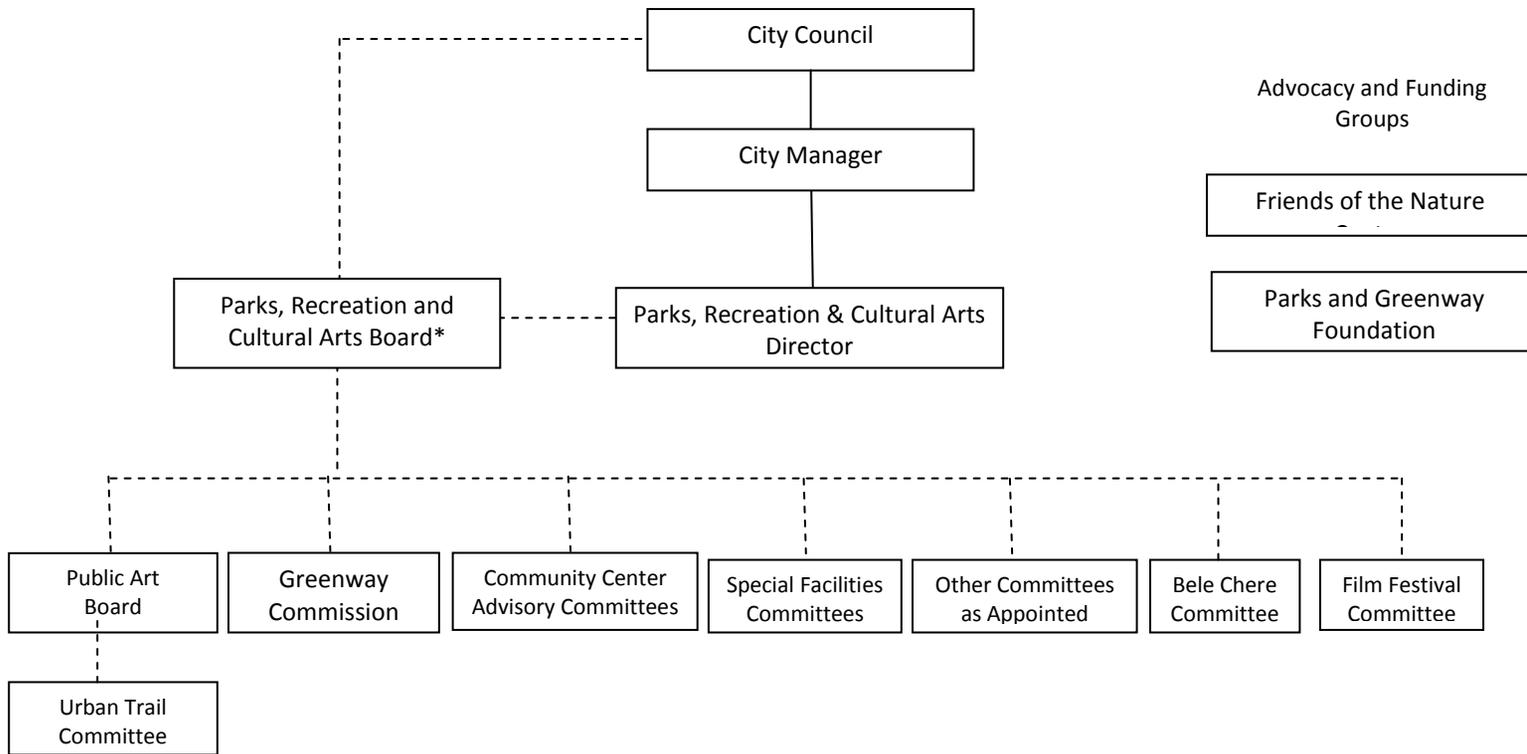
- Educate the public through marketing of the Master Plan to gain support, solicit volunteers to assist in the implementation and seek community buy-in to accomplish the goals.
- Incorporate the overall themes of the Master Plan in each implementation step. These themes include: connectivity, integration, comprehensiveness, continuity, sustainability and safety.

Goal 2: Improve administration effectiveness and transparency

Strategy: Clarify role of Boards, Commissions, their relationship with staff and with each other, and relationship with City Council

Action Steps:

- Establish the Recreation Advisory Board as the umbrella advisory board for the department to be supplemented by the Public Art Board, Greenways Commission and committees. The organizational chart below demonstrates a proposed boards and committees reporting flow chart.
- Review and update the authorizing resolutions or ordinances for the Board and Commissions to more accurately identify, describe make-up, eligibility, appointment processes, charge, relationship to City Council, role of staff in supporting the entities and as liaison to City Council,



Propose changing *Recreation Advisory Board* to the *Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Board*, to more accurately reflect the intended role of the board.

relationship with other Boards and Commissions, and other time enduring characteristics of the entities.

- Consider a name change for the *Recreation Advisory Board* to the *Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Board* to more accurately reflect the intended role of the board. The name change should occur formally when the authorizing documents are revised.
- Create consistent operating procedures for each entity addressing officers and duties, agenda format, public input protocol, etc. Other entity-specific procedures may be adopted by each board.
- Establish protocol between Board and Commissions, staff and City Council for dealing with citizen requests or items that fall outside of approved budget. Any item deemed worthy by City Council should be referred to the Recreation Advisory Board and staff for review and make recommendation to City Council before final disposition.
- Provide initial formalized training for all members of Recreation Advisory Board and supporting boards and committees on an annual basis, thereafter, as new members are appointed.
- Create a system of staff led advisory committees for each area of department operations to replace the current inconsistent approach that exists today.

Strategy: Clarify the role of citizen groups established to support community centers, City produced festivals/events and all other areas of the department as specified by the Recreation Advisory Board and staff.

Action Steps:

- Change name of these groups from “boards” to “committees.” The committees should be staff led, but could provide policy recommendations to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.
- The committees should be advisory and can also be working committees or establish sub-committees for this purpose on an annual basis.
- Develop written committee membership selection provisions and operating procedures.

Strategy: Establish continuity within the Department to clarify processes and procedures of operation, budgeting and financial targets.

Action Steps:

- Create business plans for special facilities, recreation program areas and centers and other appropriate areas within each division of the Department.
- Separate the budget that supports the non-parks and recreation functions of the department so that the true costs of the parks and recreation system are more transparent and cost recovery expectations are not applied to non-parks and recreation services.
- Include soft costs for capital projects in the capital budgets so that the parks and recreation operating budget is not negatively impacted by these unanticipated costs.

Partnerships

Goal 3: Maximize the level of service available to the community by using partnerships to take advantage of existing facilities, share new facilities, and provide additional programming and services to the community.

Strategy: Strengthen existing partnerships through a formalized partnership policy

Action Steps:

- Formalize existing partnerships through adoption of a Partnership Policy (see Sample Partnership Policy in **Appendix VIII**) supplemented with equity agreements that are reviewed annually.
- Strengthen and expand Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) with schools and Buncombe County for use of fields, gyms, and multipurpose spaces.

Strategy: Use community partnerships to promote pride and “ownership” of park system elements

Action Steps:

- Explore the possibilities of promoting adopt-a-park/trail program to help with maintenance, beautification, safety, and civic pride.
- Create a “Park Ambassador” program where residents living adjacent to parks are trained to inspect parks and then file a weekly report in exchange for a nominal fee or pass.



Strategy: Enhance relationships with other governmental entities, community non-profits, and other service providers, both locally and regionally as a way to expand parks and recreation offerings

Action Steps:

- Strengthen partnerships with funding partners, such as Friends of the Nature Center and Asheville Parks and Greenways Foundation, through comprehensive memorandums of understanding (MOU).
- Build partnerships within the community to take advantage of existing facilities, share new facilities, and provide additional programming and services to the community.

- Investigate partnerships with local medical and health organizations to increase fitness and health programming particularly for the aging population and youth population within the community.
- Strengthen and expand intergovernmental agreements (IGA) with schools for use of the fields, gyms, and multipurpose spaces on a more consistent basis.
- Investigate partnerships with organizations suggested by the Asheville community to further facility development, programming, and promotion.

Management

Goal 4: Create management resources to increase efficiency, continuity, and sustainability in critical focus areas needed in the Department.

Strategy: Develop a system of data collection and analysis to provide an accurate basis for decisions and management of parks, natural areas, and facilities.

Action Steps:

- Develop inventory and assessment information for the park and public facility systems city wide.
- Develop a 10-year infrastructure master plan that will identify all park and recreation facility system needs, estimate capital costs, identify the city's existing ability to fund current capital needs and identify multiple and specific funding strategies to close the gap between the system's needs and the Department's current ability to meet them.

Strategy: Create standards for all activities and services.

Action Steps:

- Establish service standards for all community services activities. Suggested criteria for service standards include:
 - Programs: participation levels, revenue, instructors, customer satisfaction, cost per unit of experience, customer retention
 - Instructors: experience, knowledge, friendliness, recruiting, rewarding, training,
 - Volunteers: experience, knowledge, friendliness, recruiting, rewarding, training,
 - Facilities: cleanliness, aesthetics, comfort, security
 - Staff: experience, knowledge, friendliness, rewarding, training, trends
 - Park and Facility Maintenance: turf, plantings, restrooms, sidewalks, irrigation, litter control, equipment, etc.

Strategy: Designate or add staff to organize, integrate, coordinate, and manage organizational needs within the Department

Action Steps:

- Hire or designate a staff member dedicated to facility asset management to determine and track facility life cycle conditions, needs, and upgrades as well as coordinate priorities for annual CIP budget.
- Hire or designate a staff member as a greenways coordinator dedicated to implementation of the greenways recommendations.

- Hire or designate a staff member dedicated to the organization and coordination of all aspects for a comprehensive program including volunteers, sponsorships, fundraising, and partnerships for the Department.
- Hire or designate a staff member dedicated to the organization and coordination of all aspects for a comprehensive marketing program for the Department.
- Hire or designate a staff member as a cultural arts coordinator dedicated to the organization and coordination of all aspects for a comprehensive cultural arts program for the Department.
- Develop a park security program that will focus on quality of life issues by patrolling city parks and providing assistance to park visitors concerning the proper use of park facilities, and deter acts of vandalism and destruction within the parks by providing necessary security procedures.

Strategy: Maximize the use of volunteers throughout the department

Action Steps:

- Create a department wide list of current projects and opportunities available for volunteers.
- Develop a comprehensive volunteer management program addressing recruitment, training, evaluation, appreciation and retention.
- Track and report volunteer hours annually.



Funding Options

Goal 5: Increase parks, recreation, and cultural arts department funding

Strategy: Research potential traditional funding opportunities.

The City has the ability to use these mechanisms to enhance the quality of life in Asheville and expand recreation, park, trails, programs, and services to the community.

Action Steps:

- Work with City Council, Recreation Advisory Board and supporting boards and committees, residents, and partners to establish additional revenue through a combination of funding sources, located in **Section VI** and in **Appendix VIII** of this report, to implement the recommendations of the Master Plan.
- Further investigate support for an education campaign for a ballot initiative to pass a bond referendum for future capital improvements identified in this Master Plan.

Strategy: Pursue alternative funding to implement the Master Plan.

The City of Asheville has experienced challenging times in the recent past, with limited funding and staffing levels, and the Department should explore the best means of achieving its funding goals. Alternative funding methods may be instrumental to the operations of the City’s park and recreation facilities and services on an ongoing basis. Allocating resources (assigning staff time, matching funds, etc.) to pursue alternative funding should be considered an investment in the future, with an outlined and expected positive rate of return.

Action Steps:

- Identify opportunities to increase community support and revenue opportunities such as grants, partnerships, sponsorships, volunteers, fundraising, and earned income (See **Section V** for Funding Sources).
- Assign staff resources and/or investigate the possibility of utilizing volunteer efforts to research alternative funding sources.
- Develop a “Wish List” to identify philanthropic opportunities that align with these needs. Once identified, aggressively apply for grant funding.
- Organize, plan, and coordinate fundraising with project timelines.
- Expand and formalize a volunteer program to include standards, recruiting, training, retaining, and rewarding volunteers in all program areas.
- Create new and formalize existing sponsorships (see Sample Sponsorship Policy in **Appendix IX** with agreements that are reviewed annually).
- Create an annual “Sponsorship Manual” listing all the opportunities for the year and distribute within the community in a menu format that creates a sense of urgency within the business community.

Marketing

Goal 6: Marketing, communications, and credibility

Strategy: Generate awareness and credibility about Asheville Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts offerings and needs as expressed by the public.

Action Steps:

- Formalize an evaluation and annual in-house benchmarking program to solicit participant feedback and drive programming efforts. In addition to traditional evaluation tools, consider those that directly evaluate services at the delivery level such as “Mystery Shopper.”
- Collect feedback data that supports the expressed desire for improvements to programs and activities.
- Prepare an annual report providing information to the public about parks and recreation funding, stewardship of tax dollars and fees and charges, and distribute the report as widely as possible.
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce and the local relocation organizations to develop information packets that promote city services to tourists and new residents.
- Create an annual Marketing and Communications Plan for the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Department.

- Create a consistent brand of departmental and city logos for recognition by community.
- Develop an evaluation process for marketing media such as newspaper, seasonal brochures, website, direct mail, targeted e-mails, radio, and television advertising to continuously determine effectiveness of marketing dollars.
- Create seamless product delivery for park and recreation services that delivers from a consumer vantage point.

Strategy: Promote the social, personal, environmental, and economic benefits of parks and recreation.

Action Steps:

- Highlight the individual health benefits of participating in recreation programs and using parks and recreation facilities in all program descriptions and Department marketing materials.
- Establish the Department as the model for environmental awareness by providing educational tips and literature regarding trees, native vegetation, local wildlife, recycling, etc.
- Provide an annual report of facilities and activities of the Department contributing to a high quality of life, attracting visitors, and encouraging both residential and business relocation to the area.



Recreation Program and Services

Goal 7: Strategically increase recreational programming level of service

Strategy: Regularly solicit community input in program and facility operations planning efforts

Action Steps:

- Broaden programming market to include more members of the community of various income levels, ethnicity, age, geographic distribution.
- Develop a standard practice for program customer feedback, program evaluation and program development.
- Include ongoing opportunities to solicit youth input.
- Establish relationships between each community center director and the City's Neighborhood Coordinator to maximize the ability to respond to local neighborhood needs.
- Formalize an effective staff-led community advisory committee for each community center to provide outreach and input to programming and facility operations.

Strategy: Seek ways to respond to identify programming priorities

Action Steps:

- Implement new programs based on research and feedback.
- Evaluate the development of new programs based on community interests
 - Special events, individual activities and youth athletic leagues were identified as potentials for expansion or improvement in the citizen survey.
 - Environmental education, general skills education (computer, cooking classes) and individual activities were identified in the survey as those citizens would like to see added.
 - Social recreational programs, more athletics, health and wellness, dance, and the arts were identified in focus groups.
 - Job training, leadership development opportunities, and resource and referral center was identified for middle school youth and teens.
 - One-stop shopping and resource and referral center was identified to meet the needs of senior citizens.
- Evaluate the development of new programs related to trends in parks, recreation and cultural arts
 - Focus on the enhancement of fitness and wellness programming at community centers
 - Prepare for the fitness and wellness desires of the aging Baby Boomers
 - Provide concurrent youth and adult programming as a way to increase participation
- Involve all supporting divisions including maintenance, administration, and recreation staff, as necessary, in new program and facility development. Engaging all who are associated with a new program, both directly and indirectly, in the decision making process will help ensure a quality experience for the customer.

Strategy: Define core programs and services for the Department

Action Steps:

- Perform a Services Assessment to define the City's core services as they relate to vision and mission of the department and to community benefit.
- Create intentional, outcomes focused programming and programming to engage neighborhood pride and address gang activity.
- Staff program area experts should be assigned to develop and oversee specific program areas in order to ensure consistent program characteristics particularly in the areas of fitness and wellness; cultural arts; youth sports; environmental education; aquatics; summer/before and after school programming, youth at risk, gang intervention and prevention, and therapeutic recreation.
- A menu of core services should be available to community center directors to include in center offerings.

Strategy: Create a seamless and cohesive customer service delivery system for the provision of all parks, recreation, and cultural arts programs and services.

Action Steps:

- Develop a comprehensive cross training program for all staff and instructors including knowledge of all program areas as well as customer service.

- Develop program evaluation criteria and annual process.
- Use program tracking and evaluation tools to capacity by designing reports to readily identify life cycles of programs, identify programs not meeting minimum capacity (review all program minimums for cost effectiveness), identify waiting lists, etc.
- Continue to support and build on partnership with the Asheville Police Department to address the safety and security issues present at some of the community centers.

Strategy: Reach out to those with financial need

Action Steps:

- Review the existing financial assistance program to maximize use.
- Research transportation accessibility issues and work with other community groups and private entities (such as public transit or the school bus system) to develop options to address needs.

Strategy: Assure financial sustainability within the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Department

Action Steps:

- Clarify the Department’s Resource Allocation and Pricing Philosophy and Policy and update as necessary using the Pyramid Methodology to establish categories of services.
- Determine to what level different categories of City recreation programs and services should be subsidized.
- Use market based fee structure for appropriate programs.
- Develop fee schedules that provide cost recovery balanced against needed services. Continue to subsidize certain programs that serve populations with a demonstrated need.
- Provide services to City tax-paying residents at lower costs than non-tax-paying users.

Strategy: Use volunteers to expand programming

Action Steps:

- Seek volunteer effort to support expansion of programming into opportunities to connect people to nature.
- Use evaluation methods to hold volunteer-led programming to high departmental standards and outcomes.
- Harness the energy of seniors and the retiring Baby Boomer generation as instructors and program leaders.

Festivals

Goal 8: Assure administrative policies promote effective provision of community festivals and events

Strategy: Clarify responsibilities of the festivals within of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department

Action Steps:

- Create a “statement of purpose” for the Festivals staff clarifying its roles as coordinator of all festivals/events taking place on city property; producer of a limited number of specific festivals/events; permitting entity; supporter of eligible festivals/events through in-kind services

per adopted policy parameters (see other strategies below); and developer and enforcer of policy adopted by City Council regarding festivals/events.

- Establish City policy that refers any direct request from an outside group or individual regarding the holding of, or the City’s financial or in-kind support of, a festival/event to the Parks , Recreation and Cultural Arts Department for evaluation and recommendation prior to any action by City Council. The Department should review all requests for funding/support and program/project approvals in consultation with its appointed Boards and Commissions prior to recommending action to the City Council. In turn, the City Council should expect Department staff and appointed Boards and Commission members to report back to Council with their recommendations regarding funding and/or implementation of a project or program within 60 days.



Strategy: Create consistent and coordinated fiscal year planning

Action Steps:

- Work with the Finance Department to align festivals and event budget structure with the City’s fiscal year to have festival funding on a cycle to allow adequate planning through encumbering of allocated funds as necessary.

Strategy: Coordinate potential sponsorship resources

Action Steps:

- Create criteria or research methods to develop a sponsorship guide for all festival/event/program options operated by the Department to include mission statements, sponsorship levels, and benefits for each festival/event/program in order to efficiently solicit sponsorships.

GOAL 9: Analyze festivals/events based on the mission and values established by council and the Department

Strategy: Review and analyze events and festivals

Action Steps:

- Develop criteria or performance measures to evaluate all festivals and events within the City.

Strategy: Measure the Return on investment for all City supported categories of festivals/events

Action Steps:

- Develop an evaluation matrix for festivals/events to include such information as mission, attendance, total cost, total revenues and sources, financial support from City, cash value of in-kind support from City
- Define and recognize intangible benefits
- Work with Western Carolina University and the Convention and Tourism Bureau to perform visitors' studies.
- Work with the city's Economic Development Department to create and implement a tool of measurement for financial impact to business districts.

Strategy: Establish criteria by which festivals/events would be considered for in-kind support from the City

Action Steps:

- Align criteria with City Council annual statement of mission and goals.
- Determine annual allocation of value of in-kind services available.
- Establish consistent "request for support" process and schedule on an annual basis with identified maximum support levels.
- Establish an orientation program to educate potential applicants to the application and allocation process.

Goal 10: Develop a rationale for festivals/events produced by the City

Strategy: Align mission and goals of each City produced festival/event with the vision established annually by City Council

Action Steps:

- Establish clear, attainable, goals and objectives for City-produced festivals and events.
- Determine what function and impacts large festivals/events have for the City of Asheville and local business.
- Explore management structure options for festivals/events produced by the City of Asheville including consideration of non-profit or professional promoters as well as the City continuing to produce the festivals/events.

Strategy: Promote community involvement and acceptance for City produced festivals/events

Action Steps:

- Allow more collaboration with the community for entertainment, food, vendors, etc.
- Provide a communication tool for feedback on what the City of Asheville needs/wants from festivals and events.
- Engage the local business community in the evaluation of the downtown events.
- Evaluate community feedback on the negative connotation associated with the large size that some festivals/events have become. Create a balance accommodating local needs as well as tourism benefits. Evaluate if some festivals/events could be moved or cut back to a single focus.
- When allowing alcohol at events, review the locations and times that alcohol is permitted.

Cultural and Public Art

Goal 11: Enable sustainable funding for permanent and temporary public art

Strategy: Support public expectation for public art of the highest quality with public engagement

Action Steps:

- Rewrite the current Percent for Art Ordinance to eliminate the requirement that all funds for public art be matched dollar for dollar with private support and guarantee a full one-percent from municipal capital improvement project budgets for the inclusion of public art at the project site (if funds are allocated from bond revenue) or elsewhere (when pooled from non-bond and accumulated allocations.) Simultaneously, formally define which CIP projects are eligible for a percent for art allocation and which CIP expenditures are ineligible for public art appropriation.
- Create a public art fund for special public art projects (artist residencies, temporary commissions, non-CIP projects, or projects with matching State, County, Municipal, and/or private funds), and to be used for annual maintenance and long-term conservation of public art.
- Implement a payment-in-lieu for public art in private development whereby private interests are requested to contribute one-percent of the valuation of the development to a fund to realize public art on site, at a designated site elsewhere in the City, or to be allocated toward an already approved public artwork. The first step is to draft a resolution for review by the City Council.
- Explore a “round-up” program that allows for residents to round-up their tax (and utility) bills to support a fund for the public and cultural art.
- Identify CIP and public art projects that affirm and contribute to existing, approved master plans and strategies including: RiverLink; the RiverWay Plan; the Riverfront Plan; and, transportation, open space, and land use goals cited in the City Development Plan 2025.



Goal 12: Enhance public confidence for and appreciation of the arts

Strategy: Maintain and enhance Asheville as an arts destination

Action Steps:

- Change the governing ordinance of the Public Art Board to redefine its role and responsibility to maximize its efficacy of project approval processes and realize new public artworks. The revised ordinance should be written such that professional Department staff has the ability and authority to serve as liaison between and among project interest groups and representatives.

- New ordinance language should address how the public can actively participate in decision-making whether through the Board or as a consequence of the Public Art Board taking the initiative to invite the public into its annual evaluation of projects.
- Rewrite public art implementation procedures to clarify who shall review and approve public art projects, when these project reviews should occur, who selects public art project sites and artists, who manages public art projects, and how to conduct public outreach and education about the artists and the project. Rewritten text should state that the Department should review all requests for funding and program/project approvals in consultation with its appointed Boards and Commissions prior to recommending action to the City Council. In turn, the City Council should expect Department staff and appointed Boards and Commission members to report back to Council with their recommendations regarding funding and/or implementation of a project or program within 60 days.
- Implement a biannual progress report regarding the status of all public art projects and programming activities to be given to the City Council and the public.
- Attend to current and future development plans and master plans throughout the City and identify opportunities for the integration of public art and funding for public and cultural arts projects, including changes to the Land Use Ordinance.
- City Council should take under advisement the recommendations of Department staff when considering appointments to the Public Art Board and other cultural arts commissions and task forces.
- Organize independent public art selection committees for each public art project.
- Identify collaborative arts projects with complementary arts organizations such as the Pack Square Conservancy; Asheville Art Museum; Asheville Area Arts Council; Center for Craft, Creativity and Design; Handmade in America; UNC-Asheville; Black Mountain; West Carolina Arts; Penland School of Crafts; among others. Discuss and develop collaborative public art projects with appropriate City Boards and Commissions as well as City Departments.
- Affirm through municipal policy that public art projects will take advantage of sites approved through CIP appropriations and be sited to complement these priorities, which are affirmed by residents and taxpayers.
- Develop an outreach and educational campaign targeted to the general public about public art. Specific educational approaches could include invited lectures, workshops, regional conferences, and roundtable discussions.
- Create a marketing and communication plan that strengthens communications with constituent organizations and the public through both top-down and bottom-up dialogues, and utilizes technology to communicate with artists, arts organizations, residents, and visitors about events and programs of interest. Specifically, establish a listserv to reach artists to solicit and inform about public art opportunities and issues of mutual concern and interest; create an e-newsletter and arts blog with area artists; and, regularly schedule podcasts of interviews with artists and event organizers.

Goal 13: Develop and expand the public art collection

Strategy: Create a coherent, comprehensive, and exciting municipal collection of public art

Action Steps:

- Create a list of additional and alternative sites for public art beyond the geography of downtown Asheville. New and proposed sites should be able to create “place” for a developed and renewed sense of Asheville, referencing existing locations where public art can already be found as well as planning documents of City and County greenways and parks systems.
- Identify City-owned properties as potential sites for permanent and/or temporary public art in response to citizen interest for an arts park as a community resource.
- Develop an inventory of interior and exterior public spaces, including community centers, in which to receive temporary public art, as facilities for artists-in-residence, for cultural arts exhibitions, and public review of design proposals for public art and other public and cultural arts projects.
- The City should be responsible for the annual maintenance and long-term conservation of the works of art.
- Invest in a portable public art collection organized by the City and selected by a rotating independent public art advisory committee. The Department should convene an independent public art task force to offer formal analysis and curatorial review of the existing public art collection with the goal of developing a list of complementary types of works (scale, material, content, location). The Department could offer residents the opportunity to recommend their preferences prior to the final selection.

Goal 14: Enhance facilitation and resources among arts interests

Strategy: Lead and direct arts programming by promoting partnerships across artistic disciplines

Action Steps:

- Allocate a percentage of staff time devoted to serving as a liaison between and among arts organizations to enhance efficiencies and create more comprehensive and developed programs and projects, including a database of volunteers interested in working on public and cultural arts projects.
- Provide direct facilitation services and technical assistance to artists and arts organizations seeking information, funding, and counsel regarding proposed programs and projects to foster collaborations, mentor relationships, and create joint ventures.
- Conduct a cultural assessment and regional inventory of arts organizations and facilities that can be viewed against a cultural market analysis of Asheville. This effort would require the compilation of a list of cultural organizations and an inventory of their programs squared off against market, tourist, and local and regional demographic data.
- The Public Art Program should explore partnerships and promote collaborations with the Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Foundation; Asheville Area Arts Council; Asheville Art Museum; Asheville City Schools; Convention and Visitors Bureau; Tourism Development Authority; regional artists and galleries; Pack Square Conservancy; Asheville Community Theater; NC Stage; Living Tree Foundation; Quality Forward; Riverlink; UNC-Asheville; Mars Hill College; Warren Wilson College; Penland School of Crafts; and Black Mountain to advance appropriate projects.

- Clearly define policies and procedures for public art programs and projects, cultural arts programming and projects, and festivals.
- Cultivate public-private partnerships, including consideration of a special tax district overlay to develop live-work housing for artists and rehearsal / exhibition space for artists.
- Explore and develop City and County funding that links the arts to economic development initiatives and tourism advertising.

Goal 15: Build public and organizational capacity for the arts

Strategy: Take advantage of existing strengths in public and cultural arts organizations

Action Steps:

- Appoint an Arts Task Force supplemented with membership from the Public Art Board, the Recreation Advisory Board, and the Greenways Commission to identify leadership in the cultural sector and work toward developing regional approaches to program delivery and project development.
- Invite arts professionals from the community to participate on a grants review panel to select annual awards for specific programs or projects that enhance collaborations among more than three arts organizations and/or venues.
- Partner with cultural arts organizations that can offer programs and opportunities for youth and adults in City-owned and operated facilities.
- Strengthen and sustain the networks among City and County facilities and organizations that can deliver arts programming locally (within neighborhoods) and regionally (across western North Carolina) including arts in educational contexts such as schools and universities.



- Forge working relationships among the 500 non-profit organizations in Asheville - combine and create programs to provide cultural arts education and integrate specific arts disciplines into public education, community centers, after school programs, and at senior centers, as well as reduce redundant expenses borne by individual organizations.
- Develop public spaces for public and cultural arts programming within private development, including environmentally sustainable and energy efficient works of art.
- Take advantage of the diversity of cultural arts venues across the city, throughout the county, and at regional sites in the western part of the state to encourage participation in the arts and target populations without primary access to the arts. This approach could be implemented through municipal transit and/or reduced admissions.

- Offer public interventions to maximize public participation: grow website of event listings, install highway and wayfinding signage, and accommodate free parking for selected arts events.
- Pilot cultural arts programming and temporary public art programming in municipal parks, open space, greenways, and walking trails.
- Conduct an economic analysis to determine the feasibility of establishing designated Arts Districts (in addition to river arts) taking advantage of tax incentives, redistricting, and artist live-work designations, among other zoning overlays.
- Consider artists first when hiring cultural arts program instructors at community centers and other public facilities.

Goal 16: Strengthen the organizational structure of public and cultural arts delivery

Strategy: Realign the strategic goals of the public and cultural arts to generate additional community goodwill and accurate annual budgeting

Action Steps:

- Hire a temporary or part-time Cultural Arts Outreach Coordinator who is charged with soliciting ideas for public art from artists, constituent arts organizations, private interests, and relevant non-profit organizations. This temporary and part-time employee would develop a database of residents, arts organizations, artists, and others interested in the arts, to initiate a listserv, targeted e-blasts and mailings about programs and projects of interest to the community based on geography and demography. Within six to twelve months, this information would be disseminated to and coordinated with the City Neighborhood Liaison.
- Create an artists' and fabricators' registry.
- Through revised implementation policies and procedures for the Public Art Board and its Department staff, determine when to review proposals for public art, who has responsibility and authority to approve proposed projects and make recommendations regarding design modifications, and who is charged with project management for municipal percent for art projects.
- Rewrite "Section 2-185.8: Purposes, Responsibilities, and Powers" of the Public Art Board to clarify the role of the Board and Department staff in artists' contracts. Department staff should serve as the project manager for all public and percent for art projects; contracts should be written between the artist(s) and the City with the responsibility and authority for successful project completion with the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Department.
- Create a biannual review of public art projects and programs across America to inform the Public Art Board and the public about new definitions of public art; lectures, tours, and conferences to attend; and articles and books to read about the field.
- Infuse and embed public and cultural arts projects when planning and developing capital projects and other public expenditures.
- Provide greater coordination between City and County to develop public art and cultural arts funding and program initiatives; meet quarterly with the Recreation Advisory Board, Planning staff, Public Works staff, and Parks and Recreation staff; and, solicit information about future and potential public art projects through meetings and reviews with relevant City departments and the City Council.
- Establish an annual summit on the arts to receive input and feedback about public art and cultural arts programming in advance of an annual budget presentation and request to the City Council.

- Broaden arts programming geographically, demographically, and through content.
- Increase professional development opportunities for members of the Public Art Board and staff.

Facilities and Parks

Goal 17: Ensure a continued high level of service in parks

Strategy: Develop maintenance plans across department boundaries for efficient and effective maintenance service delivery

Action Steps:

- Assess, evaluate and then develop a park and recreation facilities maintenance plan that provides for:
 - Ongoing care and maintenance of park grounds, facilities and infrastructure
 - Equipment and park component replacement schedule
 - Performance measurements
 - Number of employee hours necessary to carry-out plan
 - Level of maintenance required before and after an event or festival
 - An estimate for the potentially required increased level of maintenance due to increasing tourism in the City. (Further study and/or analysis may be necessary to complete this section.)
 - An increased effort to maintain athletic fields to increase current level of service and to maximize use of those fields.



Strategy: Assess staff structure and duties to maximize overall Department performance and delivery of maintenance services.

Action Steps:

- Develop a maintenance delivery system to track the staff hours and equipment/supplies needed to provide the established level of service and to ensure adequate facilities and resources for efficient park maintenance service provision. Assure adequate staffing and funding to maintain the level of service.
- Evaluate and develop a scoring system for each task to meet desired and consistent service levels. Involve staff in the development of the standards and scoring system. Conduct maintenance standards training for all staff.

- Apply appropriate maintenance standards and define set up/tear down requirements for all special events, tournaments, or other activities that currently stress resources. Assure adequate staffing and funding to take on the task, prior to making a commitment.

Strategy: Create site-specific maintenance plans for developing parks and assure funding is in place to support the plan.

Action Steps:

- Articulate the maintenance plan required to support the development or redevelopment of any park site and define associated annual cost. Secure funding source to support the plan.
- If a maintenance funding partner is involved, a specific agreement for service should be negotiated and reviewed annually. If the City is funding maintenance services, it shall be the sole determiner of maintenance service levels.

Strategy: Address capital maintenance of existing parks to continue to meet community standards

Action Steps:

- Develop long and short-term funding plans to stabilize park funding and provide the money needed for renovations, acquisitions, and improvements.
- Update the department's Capital Improvement Project budget with each department budget cycle.
- Update the GRASP® Atlas (provided to the City Landscape Architect in digital format) annually to provide an accurate basis for decisions and management of existing parks, natural areas and indoor facilities.
- Continue to provide comfort and convenience features in existing parks, such as shade, drinking fountains, restrooms, and plantings. (Refer to the GRASP® Atlas [provided to the City Landscape Architect in digital format] for a complete inventory of comfort and convenience features for each park.)
- Replace equipment as it becomes old or outdated with high quality equipment which will be easy to maintain and have a long lifespan.
- Conduct an inventory and survey of all historic park features, such as the train depot at Recreation Park.
- Formalize good communication between City landscape architects and field crews for maintenance, repairs, and the implementation of park designs.
- Maintain and improve special facilities including, Riverside Cemetery, WNC Nature Center, Asheville Municipal Golf Course, Food Lion SkatePark, Aston Park Tennis Center, McCormick Field and the swimming pools at Malvern Hills, Recreation Park, and Walton Street Park.
- Assess feasibility of Walton Street Pool for repairs, operations, return on investment, best use of facility, etc.
- When renovate existing facilities or build new, assess facility location to best serve the community, enhance access, community needs, etc.
- Improve wayfinding and signage to and between existing parks, greenways, and indoor facilities for pedestrian and bike navigation. Information, such as park maps, can also be placed on-line for the community to access and use.

Strategy: Address ongoing maintenance of parks to meet community expectations

- Increase funding and staffing for park maintenance as needed when new amenities are added. For example, Pack Square Park will add new amenities to the park system, increasing the need for funding and staffing.

Strategy: Develop design standards for new and existing parks and greenways.

Action Steps:

- Develop a team to create citywide park, greenway, and blueway design standards that include unifying standards for site furnishings, colors, entry gateways, signage, and potential themes unique to Asheville. It is suggested that the team include staff, landscape architects, and planners, as well as community leaders.
- Establish a design process to support the design standards, to include:
 - How a project is initiated
 - How the design is implemented
 - The persons or departments involved in the process.
- Look for opportunities to include sustainable design practices during the development of the design standards such as LEED standards.
- Incorporate design standards for blueways and greenways that include requirements for park amenities such as seating nodes, plantings, shade, developed water access, public art and signage that can be incorporated along the length of the greenway or blueway. Refer to the information in the Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan's "RiverWay Landscape Design Palette" when developing the blueway design guidelines and standards.



Strategy: Allow flexibility in design standards

Action Steps:

- Develop an "urban" and a "rural" aesthetic for the design of parks and greenways within the design standards.
- Allow variation to occur within these design standards to reflect the character of specific neighborhoods.
- Allow variation to occur within these design standards to reflect the character of the neighborhood as well as the city in parks and greenways outside of the inner city.
- Allow variation to occur within these design standards to reflect the unique character of the downtown area.

- Develop and integrate a Park Development Menu list within or in conjunction with the design standards. This list will ensure a continued high level of service for parks by establishing park component and amenity requirements. (Refer to **Appendix X** for Example Park Development Menu List.)

Strategy: Improve design and theming (place-making) of new and existing parks.

Action Steps:

- Design new parks and enrich existing parks according to developed design standards mentioned in the previous strategy. Implement themes that reflect the history of the site, the diversity of the community, or other unique themes, such as the importance of water to Asheville. Public art, interpretive signage, and unique elements in the park details and design should be explored.
- Create site plans for all new and existing parks and greenways or hire qualified professional landscape architects as needed. The site plans will require site survey data for boundaries and topography. In addition to a site survey, large community and regional parks will require formal master plans which will require a public process.
- Regional and community parks should be given priority when implementing theming because the parks are positioned to have a greater impact on a larger amount of people than neighborhood parks. The following is a suggested list of existing parks that require a new or updated formal site master plan (including a new survey), listed by priority:

High Priority (parks listed play an important role not only at a neighborhood level, but at a regional level)

- Recreation Park
- Carrier Park
- Amboy Road River Park
- French Broad River Park
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Park
- McCormick Field/Memorial Stadium/Mountainside Park

Medium-to-Low Priority (parks listed play an important role at a neighborhood level)

- Grove Park
- Haw Creek Park
- Jake Rusher Park
- Kenilworth Park/Seven Springs Park
- Montford Complex
- Ray L. Kisiah Park
- For parks not requiring formal master plans, such as smaller neighborhood parks, develop a park development menu list for park amenities and component requirements, as stated in the strategy above. This menu will help ensure that all smaller parks meet a standard and are providing an adequate level of service. (Refer to **Appendix X** for an Example Park Development Menu List.) This list can be developed and used for all types and sizes of parks as well.
- Include a strong public process in the development or redevelopment of parks and facilities. The master planning and design processes should include a strong outreach component to the surrounding neighborhood to solicit ideas and to ensure that the new master plan reflects the needs and desires of the people who will most likely use the park.

Strategy: Identify and develop facilities for new trends in parks and recreation

Action Steps:

- Look for opportunities to add special features to an existing park such as a “destination playground” or a “boundless playground” (fully accessible) that include play features or themed elements.
- Consider adding a “sprayground” or water feature as well as a destination playground to Recreation Park as part of the site master plan. Its adjacency to the WNC Nature Center creates a regional destination.
- Highlight and market unique parks and park features, such as the velodrome, WNC Nature Center, and Food Lion Skatepark. These features will not only appeal to users within the City, but will also draw people from the region. These parks should be considered community/regional destinations.
- Explore local and regional partnership opportunities to support and invest in regional destination facilities such as the WNC Nature Center.



Strategy: Address safety concerns in parks.

Action Steps:

- Create a security plan for the park and greenway systems that will establish park rules, park hours, deter vandalism, implement methods of locking and unlocking facilities, and establish regularly scheduled patrols by police or park rangers.
- Increase visibility into problem parks by removing dense vegetation or relocating components to more highly visible areas.
- Establish an “Adopt-a-Park Program” to foster pride and sense of ownership in all of Asheville’s parks.
- Add safety lighting to problem parks.
- Develop a park patrol to patrol parks to enhance safety and deter vandalism.
- Provide opportunities for youth to interact with police officers via recreational programming.

Goal 18: Increase level of service for parks

Strategy: *Look for opportunities to add parks or amenities to each sub-area*

Action Steps:

Citywide

- Acquire fee simple or through easements, key parcels and complementary land for future facilities and for preservation of significant natural and cultural resources.
- Ensure that public parks and greenways are provided in new residential developments by requiring a specified amount of land, .5 acres for example, to be dedicated or maintained as park land. If development is adjacent to a greenway, land could also be dedicated to add acreage to greenway.
- Increase park acreage in expanding areas and as opportunities arise. According to the GRASP® LOS Analysis, gaps (gray areas) appear between the East and South sub-areas as well as along the fringes of the North and West sub-areas. (Refer to Perspectives A-E.) These gaps are highlighted on the Recommendation Map in **Appendix VI**. It is recommended that the City increase park acreage within these gaps as opportunities arise.
- Asheville has several parcels of land designated as future park sites. These future parks should be developed as planned and funded projects. White Fawn Park and Beaucatcher Park are priorities due to the proximity to the downtown area and potential to link to existing parks and greenways.

Future park sites include:

- Beaucatcher Park
 - Falconhurst Park
 - Jean Webb Park
 - Hummingbird Park
 - Progress Energy land donation
 - White Fawn Park
 - White Pine Park
- Coordinate plans for acquisition and location of new parks with the City of Asheville Development Plan 2025.
 - Look for opportunities to add parkland within the River Arts District as outlined in the Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan.

Central Sub-Area

- Maintain focus for this sub-area to develop and maintain a network of urban parks.
- Seek land acquisitions in the Central sub-area of the City to create an urban network of parks and greenways in the downtown area and to improve connections to outlying-sub-areas. Due to the expansion of the downtown area and the increasing demand for land and parks, it is suggested the land acquisition in the downtown and Central sub-area be a high priority. Work in collaboration with the Downtown Master Plan. (Refer to **Appendix VI** for the Recommendation Map).
- Jointly develop White Fawn Park, Memorial Stadium, McCormick Field, and Mountainside Park into a centrally located regional park.

- Refer to the Park Matrix in **Appendix XI** for park priority according to sub-area in which it is located.

East Sub-Area

- Maintain focus for this sub-area to develop and maintain regional and community parks.
- Place a focus on maintaining and enhancing existing regional parks in the East sub-area, such as the WNC Nature Center, and Azalea Park.
- Develop Recreation Park into a regional park. The location of the park and its proximity to the WNC Nature Center and Azalea Park, as well as the site's rich history will create a lively regional destination in Asheville.
- Improve outdoor ADA accessibility at the WNC Nature Center. Most trails do not allow for ADA access. Further study is needed to determine the extent of the improvements.
- Look for opportunities to add new parks to the north end of the East sub-area along the proposed greenway.
- Refer to the Park Matrix in **Appendix XI** for park priority according to sub-area in which it is located.

West Sub-Area

- Maintain focus for this sub-area to develop and maintain regional and community parks.
- Create and maintain connections to downtown area and nearby regional parks (Carrier Park, Amboy River Park) through the use of greenways, sidewalks, and bike lanes.
- Improve and develop existing regional and neighborhood parks by adding amenities and additional components.
- Look for opportunities, where possible, to add park acreage to the outlying west area of this sub-area. Due to pedestrian barriers in this region of the West sub-area, it may be difficult to add park acreage, therefore, it is a priority for this sub-area to update and improve existing parks and greenways. Pedestrian barriers can be crossed by adding connectors, such as pedestrian bridges and underpasses. Potential pedestrian connections should be reviewed where feasible.
- Refer to the Park Matrix in **Appendix XI** for park priority according to sub-area in which it is located.

North Sub-Area

- Maintain focus for this sub-area to develop and maintain neighborhood parks.
- Continue to maintain and improve existing parks, such as Weaver Park and Grove Park.
- Look for opportunities to add additional park components and comfort and convenience features to existing parks as a priority. A gap in service does appear in the north end of this sub-area, however adding park acreage will be difficult due to large lot sizes within developments.
- Refer to the Park Matrix in **Appendix XI** for park priority according to sub-area in which it is located.

South Sub-Area

- Maintain focus for this sub-area to develop and maintain neighborhood parks.
- Continue to maintain and improve existing parks, such as Valley Springs Middle School Ballfield and Jake Rusher Park.
- Look for opportunities to add new neighborhood parks within this sub-area. Any new park land should meet specified criteria for park land as stated above.

- Add neighborhood parks, if possible, to this sub-area. A gap in service does appear in between this sub-area and the East sub-area, however adding park acreage may be difficult due land restrictions in this region, such as Blue Ridge Parkway and industrial lots.
- Refer to the Park Matrix in **Appendix XI** for park priority according to sub-area in which it is located.

Strategy: Improve existing parks to meet community standards.

Action Steps:

- Use the Park Matrix in **Appendix XI** in conjunction with a Park Development Menu List as a starting point for updating and improving existing parks. (Refer to **Appendix X** for an Example Park Development Menu List.)
- Review components that scored below expectations (score of 1) when updating parks. Quick Reference List-A in **Appendix XI** contains a list of park amenities that scored 1 for Neighborhood Score and Community score according to the GRASP® process. There may be instances where a score of a 1 is acceptable; please review the context of each component.
- Update parks over time to reflect changing community needs. When updating or replacing equipment in parks, consider replacing the equipment with new components which might better serve the needs of the community. For example, a sandbox might be replaced with new modular play equipment. It is important to request community input during this process to discover the needs of the community.



- Add 2 ballfields, 2 open turf areas, 3 playgrounds, and 3 tennis courts to meet 2012 identified needs suggested in the Capacities LOS for Community Components **Table 12** in Section V of this plan. This section recommends adding specific components to meet the demands of the population in 2012 based on capacity.
- Add comfort and convenience features to parks where missing, such as benches, drinking fountains, and restrooms. It is recommended that at least 7 out of the 14 listed comfort and convenience features listed in the park inventory data report be provided in each park. Quick Reference List-B in **Appendix XI** contains a list of parks that have less than 7 out of 14 comfort and convenience features as well as a cost list for these features.
- Create smaller seating areas along greenways, particularly at the water's edge.
- Identify parks where events or festivals can be held and develop the park or area within the park as a designated event space.

- Continue to develop access to the water, either developed or undeveloped. Developed water access includes fishing docks or overlooks and undeveloped water access includes a simple boulder edge or an unpaved path.
- Improve river access to Jean Webb Park as recommended by the Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan.
- Update playgrounds that are out-dated or do not meet current ADA and safety guidelines for replacement. Further study may be necessary to identify playgrounds and parks that are not ADA accessible. (Refer to the **Quick Reference List-A** in **Appendix XI** for playgrounds scoring a 1.) There are several parks in the list that require the addition of playground equipment or new playgrounds. The following is a suggested priority list (from high to low) of the playgrounds by park:
 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Park
 - French Broad River Park
 - Montford Complex
 - Haw Creek Park
 - Meadow Park

Strategy: Improve walkable access to parks and recreation facilities.

Action Steps:

- Strive to provide parks, greenways, or indoor facilities within one third mile of residents to increase walkability.
- Partner with community groups to conduct walkability workshops. The walkability checklist, as shown in **Appendix X**, is a tool to be filled out by residents in all areas of the community to assess the walkability of the community as a whole. These workshops could be led by the department and focus on access to a park and recreation facilities.
- Address walkability issues as identified in the community walkability analysis. Work with other City departments to address issues that are identified.
- Work with other City departments and community groups to ensure safe pedestrian access across physical barriers to parks and recreation facilities. Incorporate traffic calming strategies at access points to parks, open space, and trailheads. Incorporate traffic calming design techniques into design guidelines, as appropriate.
- Create walking maps with routes and mileages for park and trail routes. Make these available online and in printed form.
- Work with the other City departments to provide safe and enjoyable sidewalks or sidepaths as routes to parks.

Strategy: Create and develop designated blueways.

Action Steps:

- Design and maintain the French Broad River and the Swannanoa River as linked blueways. Refer to the Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan for further information and design guidelines.
- Blueways should be approached as linear parks and include park amenities such as seating nodes, public art, and wayfinding and signage.
- An inventory of all existing water-related park amenities should be conducted to count and assess the condition of existing kayak courses, water-access points and other developed water-sport amenities and features.

Strategy: Increase the urban network of parks and greenways in the downtown area.

Action Steps:

- Coordinate park development and land acquisition with the Downtown Master Plan.
- Continue to identify parcels in the downtown region that can be developed into parks or green spaces. Focus on parcels that are located near an existing or proposed greenway, other parks or bike or mass transit systems.

Greenways

Goal 19: Create greenway priorities and identify development timeline.

The vision for the Asheville greenway system is a network of off-road trails utilizing natural corridors to connect people and places within the city. Asheville greenways will provide transportation, environmental, health, recreation, economic, educational, cultural, water quality, air quality and habitat preservation benefits.

The City needs to establish a bold and efficient greenway development plan in order to keep pace with other regional cities such as Cary, Raleigh and Chattanooga and to meet the expectations of citizens who consistently rate greenways as a high priority. Asheville has lagged behind other cities in greenway development mainly because of a limited land inventory, the high cost of land acquisition in a rapidly growing city and the exceptional costs of greenway development in a mountainous region.



Strategy: Develop a bold and efficient greenways development plan by refocusing the City's current greenway strategies.

Action Steps:

- Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should return to the original definition of a greenway and focus solely on off-road development in natural corridors. Many of the corridors identified in the current Greenways Master Plan are in essence bike lane and sidewalk projects that can be more effectively managed by transportation agencies such as North Carolina Department of Transportation and Asheville's Transportation and Engineering Department. In fact, most of the on-road greenway corridors have been included in the 2007 Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and 2005 Pedestrian Plan. However, Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should continue to advocate for bike and pedestrian facilities because of their potential to tie into the greenway system. Therefore the Asheville greenway system should not include on-road greenway corridors,

which are in essence bike lanes and sidewalk projects identified in the 2007 Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and 2005 Pedestrian Plan:

- Asheland Avenue/Erskine Street-Southern Segment
 - Asheland Avenue/Erskine Street-Northern Segment
 - Beaverdam Creek
 - Brevard Road
 - Haw Creek
 - Haywood Rd.
 - Hendersonville Rd.
 - Reed Creek, Northern Segment
 - Sweeten Creek Rd.
- The City of Asheville should take the initiative to develop numerous partnerships with private and public agencies to continue the development of the French Broad River Greenway and Swannanoa River Greenway corridors since both overlap with the Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Plan, a massive initiative, which will take many shapes and partners before implementation. Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should continue its momentum towards greenways while the Dykeman plan unfolds and the major development players are in place.
 - Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should target its resources on strategic connectivity instead of sporadic, piecemeal development.
 - Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should engage in proactive land acquisition in undeveloped parts of the City where future growth is projected. Land costs are lower in undeveloped areas and a large inventory will allow flexibility in the alignment and connection of future corridors. It is challenging to retrofit greenways into pre-developed areas where little buildable land is available. The retrofit approach is necessary to establish import connections, but often results in expensive easement acquisition and interrupted corridors. Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should transition to a position of leading planned development around pre-identified greenway corridors.



- Due to the limited number of resources that can be allocated towards greenway development, Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should focus the majority of its resources on land acquisition of greenway corridors.
- Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should return to its original intent of naming each corridor after an associated natural feature when possible, i.e. mountain, river, creek, etc.

- Classify all greenway corridors as either “Primary,” “Secondary,” or “Spur.” The Primary category designates corridors that provide a cross-city connection, linking neighborhoods and quadrants of the city. The Secondary category designates corridors that are neighborhood specific and sometimes link into Primary corridors. The Spur category designates short connections within neighborhood corridors to certain points of interests such as a park, a river or stream, etc. to a greenway corridor.

Strategy: Revise and prioritize the greenway corridor list.

After omitting all on-road greenways that overlap with the 2007 Comprehensive Bicycle Plan as suggested in the refocusing strategy, the list of city-wide and neighborhood greenways will be reduced to the following corridors:

Primary Greenways

French Broad River Greenway

Because much of the French Broad River Greenway falls within the Dykeman Plan, Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should not put resources towards its development at this time. Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should instead play a support role for the project. Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should pursue development of the northwest segment because it is separate from the Dykeman Plan and will compliment it in the future.

The French Broad River Greenway system is Asheville’s major north-south alternative transportation corridor and overlaps with a portion of the Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Plan, a major urban waterfront redevelopment project. The Dykeman plan calls for a 10’ wide greenway trail along Riverside Drive, Lyman Street, Meadow Street and Swannanoa River Road. The trail will be separated from the road by a grass strip and will at times meander in and out of various riverfront parks. The French Broad River Greenway is broken into two segments:

- *French Broad River Greenway-Northeast Segment*

Length: 3.2 miles

Trail Type: 10’ wide asphalt

Description: This segment begins at the corner of Amboy Road and Lyman Street (confluence of Swannanoa and French Broad Rivers) and runs north up Lyman Street and Riverside Drive to Broadway. The City owns a few parcels of land along Riverside Drive (Jean Webb Park, Progress Energy Park), which are suitable for pieces of greenway development. However, connectivity will be a problem and it is advisable to coordinate the development of these few parcels with the Dykeman plan.

Connections: Connect a series of proposed riverfront parks on Riverside Drive and the River Arts District to the Amboy Road river park system.

- *French Broad River Greenway-Northwest Segment*

Length: 0.8 miles

Trail Type: 10’ wide asphalt

Description: This segment begins at the French Broad River Park and travels north along the French Broad River bank to Haywood Ave at the RiverLink Bridge. Progress Energy owns this property and has offered to donate it to the City for greenway development. This corridor has commanding views of the river and is lush with tall riparian grasses.

Connections: Connect the French Broad River Park to West Asheville and the River Arts District.

Swannanoa River Greenway

The Swannanoa River Greenway system is Asheville’s major east-west alternative transportation corridor and overlaps with a portion of the Dykeman Plan that calls for greenway trail along Riverside Drive, Lyman Street, Meadow Road and Swannanoa River Road. The trail will be separated from the road by a grass strip and will at times meander in and out of open space parks. Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department developed a small segment of the Swannanoa River Greenway at RiverBend Park and acquired a number of adjacent parcels to the east via funding after the most recent floods. The Azalea Park Greenway is part of the Swannanoa River Greenway system and should be developed by Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department independently of the Dykeman Plan.

- **Azalea Park Greenway**

Length: 1.75 miles

Trail Type: 10’ wide asphalt

Description: This corridor begins at the intersection of East Hawthorne Drive and Swannanoa River Drive at Anne Patton Joyce Park, travels south on Swannanoa River Road, east onto Azalea Road, crosses over the Gashes Creek bridge and follows the Swannanoa River around Azalea Park. The corridor ends at the Blue Ridge Parkway. This corridor largely passes through riparian woods with serene views of the Swannanoa River and park properties. The greenway will have one short on-road segment on Azalea Road. This corridor largely passes through riparian woods with serene views of the Swannanoa River and park properties, and will have one short on-road segment on Azalea Road.

Connections: This greenway corridor will connect the Beverly Hills community to the Swannanoa River, Asheville Municipal Golf Course, Recreation Park, Nature Center and Azalea Park.

Secondary Greenways

Beaucatcher Mountain Greenway

Length: 1.25 miles

Trail Type: 10’ wide Asphalt

Description: This corridor begins at Memorial Stadium, travels north along the west slope of Beaucatcher Mountain to the abandoned Ardmion Road Right-of-Way, then travels east on-road on South Beaumont Street to College Street. The corridor ends at the old Beaucatcher Reservoir. This wooded corridor will have commanding views of downtown Asheville and connects Beaucatcher Park and White Fawn Reservoir. The greenway will be a paved asphalt trail with brief on-road segments in the form of bike lanes and/or sidewalks.

Connections: This corridor will connect Beaucatcher Park and White Fawn Reservoir to the old Beaucatcher Reservoir near the intersection of College Street and Windswept Drive. There are potential connections to Memorial Stadium/Mountainside Park, McCormick Field and the Asheland Avenue greenway corridor.

Beverly Hills Greenway

Length: 0.5 miles

Trail Type: 10' wide asphalt and concrete sidewalk

Description: This greenway winds itself through the rolling and beautifully wooded Beverly Hills neighborhood that was developed around a notable Donald Ross golf course.

Connections: This segment would connect the Haw Creek Greenway to the Swannanoa River Greenway via Ann Patton Joyce Park and the Asheville Municipal Golf Course and new neighborhood sidewalks.

Clingman Forest Greenway

Length: 0.5 miles

Trail Type: 10' wide Asphalt

Description: This wooded corridor begins at Aston Park at Hilliard Avenue and follows an existing sewer line and stream down to Clingman Avenue.

Connections: There are potential connections to Aston Park, Asheville Middle School, YWCA, future affordable housing complex at the corner of Hillard and Clingman Avenue, Owens Bell Park and surrounding residential areas.



Glenns Creek Greenway

This trail extends from Weaver Park to the Botanical Gardens of UNC-Asheville for a length of one mile. It is a paved trail mostly 10' wide and connects the Norwood, Montford and University neighborhoods.

- ***Glenns Creek Greenway-Eastern Segment***

Length: 0.09 miles

Trail Type: 10' wide asphalt

Description: This short section begins at Weaver Park and ends at Kimberly Avenue where an on-road greenway is proposed. The greenway is proposed along the creek, in an existing sewer right-of-way, and in close proximity to residences on both east and west sides of Glenns Creek. Due to the close proximity of the greenway to adjacent properties and unsuitable topographical issues, this segment of the Glenns Creek Greenway should be routed via sidewalk or bike lane from Murdock Avenue to Evelyn Place to Kimberly Avenue.

Connections: Will connect Glenns Creek Greenway to the Reed Creek Greenway.

Reed Creek Greenway

The Reed Creek Greenway is Asheville's highest profile greenway. It stretches from W.T. Weaver Blvd. to Starnes Avenue, parallel to Broadway Avenue. The southern segment is broken into various phases totaling 1.0 miles, more than half of which are completed or fully funded or under development.

- **Reed Creek Greenway- Southern Segment**

Length: 0.2 miles

Trail Type: 10' wide asphalt

Description: The last phase of the southern segment will stretch from Magnolia Avenue to Starnes Avenue. The trail will meander along the bank of Reed Creek and hug the back property lines of high-density residential and commercial developments. The corridor is wooded and has an urban feel due to its close proximity to Broadway Avenue and the Montford neighborhood.

Connections: Connect to Glenn's Creek Greenway, UNC-Asheville, the future Health Adventure facility and the Montford neighborhood to downtown Asheville. Greenway will also connect into the high density residential and commercial developments that are proposed along Broadway Avenue as part of the neighborhood corridor district re-zoning.

Hominy Creek Greenway

The Hominy Creek Greenway is a fundamental corridor that will link the West Asheville community to the French Broad River Greenway system. It is approximately 2.6 miles long.

- **Hominy Creek-Eastern Segment**

Length: 0.8 miles

Trail Type: 10' wide asphalt

Description: The section begins at Hominy Creek Park (Buncombe County facility) located on the west bank of the French Broad River, travels north on-road along Hominy Creek Road, crosses the road near the transfer station entrance and winds northwest along Hominy Creek, below the I-40 West, Brevard Road, and I-240 West overpasses. This sections ends at the old Brevard Road bridge and the Waller property, a large track of land under option by the Trust for Public Land.

Connections: Potential connections to the Farmers Market and the North Carolina National Guard (slated for re-development by the City of Asheville). The majority of land is publicly controlled.

- **Hominy Creek Greenway-Western Segment**

Length: 1.8 miles

Trail Type: 10' wide asphalt

Description: The section is a continuation of the Hominy Creek Greenway-Eastern Segment. The corridor begins near the old Brevard Road bridge, winds west along Hominy Creek through the Waller Tract, crosses Bear Creek Road, continues to follow the creek until it bends at I-40 West and then heads west away from the creek to Sand Hill Road. There is an option to have a second trail run along the opposite side of Hominy Creek from the Waller Tract, but it would require a significant easement from the West Asheville Assembly of God Church.

Connections: This section has potential connections to numerous residential areas and existing sidewalk systems. The beginning of the corridor offers a direct connection to the Rhododendron Creek Greenway. The greenway could follow

the alignment of an existing sewer system to minimize disruption of the corridor. This greenway extends access to West Asheville.

Haw Creek Greenway

Length: 0.75 miles

Trail Type: 10' wide asphalt

Description: The section of greenway will link into the proposed bike lane and sidewalk facilities on New Haw Creek Road.

Connections: Will connect East Asheville Center and East Asheville Park to New Haw Creek Road and Haw Creek Elementary School.

Montford Greenway

Length: 0.8 miles

Trail Type: 10' wide asphalt

Description: Begins at Gudger Street below the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Visitors Center and Randolph Learning Center and follows an existing sewer line and stream down to Hill Street. The section continues west along Hill Street underneath I-26 and ends at Riverside Drive. Portions of the greenway have challenging terrain.

Connections: Potential connections to Isaac Dickson Elementary School, Randolph Learning Center, Chamber of Commerce, public housing, residential areas and the Wilma Dykeman RiverWay.

Rhododendron Creek Greenway

Length: 0.75 miles

Trail Type: 10' wide asphalt

Description: This corridor begins at Shelburne Road directly across the street from the North Carolina National Guard (slated for re-development by the City of Asheville), runs through the former National Guard property and becomes a shared road with Talmadge Street. At West Asheville Park the greenway goes off-road, runs behind the Davenport co-housing development for which an easement has been granted to the City, heads northwest and ends at Sand Hill Road near Vance Elementary School.

Connections: This section will increase greenway access for a significant amount of residential area, West Asheville Park, and indirectly utilizing the existing sidewalk system to Vance Elementary School.

Town Branch Creek Greenway

Length: 0.6 miles

Trail Type: 10' wide asphalt

Description: Begins at Choctaw Park, 500 feet west from the intersection with McDowell Street, travels west along Town Branch Creek and ends near the northern tip of Livingston Street Park. The entire corridor falls within City-owned land.

Connections: This section provides connections to the Asheland Avenue bike lane (future), Choctaw Park, Livingston Street Park, transit system, and public housing areas.

Strategy: Focus on greenway development based on priorities in five-year segments.

Action Steps:

- Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should focus on development of the following priority greenways during the first five-year segment:
 - Beaucatcher Mountain Greenway
 - Clingman Forest Greenway
 - Town Branch Creek Greenway
 - Reed Creek Greenway-Southern Segment
- Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department should focus on development of the following non-priority greenways during the second five-year segment:
 - Rhododendron Creek Greenway
 - Montford Greenway
 - Haw Creek Greenway
 - Hominy Creek Greenway-Western Segment
 - Hominy Creek-Eastern Segment
 - French Broad River Greenway-Northwest Segment
 - Azalea Park Greenway



Goal 20: Increase the level of service and access for greenways

Based on community input and survey results Asheville expects a high level of service. Greenways are well used in Asheville with 68% of the community using existing greenways. There is strong support for greenway development with 82% of the community believing greenways are important.

Strategy: Extend existing and develop new greenways.

Action Steps:

- Extend existing greenways by starting construction on greenways, which are currently funded.
- Design site plans for new greenways on assimilated tracts of publicly owned or controlled land.
- Construct greenways, which are designed.
- Explore a new greenway corridor from an existing or currently planned greenway to connect with Beaucatcher Park.

- Prioritize construction to make the most impact that lists greenway development in order of priority.
- Prioritize and evaluate greenway development for connectivity after five years.

Goal 21: Increase resources for greenways

Finding adequate resources for greenway development is a difficult task in this period of unstable construction cost and land values. This uncertainty places an even greater value on plan implementation.

Strategy: Develop and implement a consistent funding and management strategy for land acquisition, design, and construction.

Action Steps:

- Add staff to provide full time greenway planning to manage land acquisition, design, administration, and project management.
- Continue to pursue grant funding with North Carolina Department of Transportation, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, and other local, state, and federal public and private sources.
- Budget \$1 million per year for greenway development. Allocate 25% of the budget for land acquisition and design, and the remaining 75% for new construction.

Goal 22: Increase land acquisition efforts for greenways

Strategy: Begin the process of finding land while it remains available and affordable to expand the greenway system in the future.

Action Steps:

- Watch for, identify parcels to be obtained, and begin assimilation of land from willing property owners for all off-road greenway corridors as it becomes available. Focus on land along Sweeten Creek and Hendersonville Road in South Asheville, New Haw Creek Road in East Asheville, north of Brevard Road in West Asheville where gaps in service exist.
- Work with current non-profit partners to purchase land along the French Broad and Swannanoa River greenways.
- Investigate zoning ordinance changes to encourage greenway development through the subdivision development process.
- Explore land acquisition opportunities for greenways when the City acquires property for other non-recreation public facilities (Fire Station, Utilities, Libraries, etc.).
- Evaluate and prioritize land within City control after five years to determine constructible segments.

Goal 23: Expedite greenway development

In order for the City of Asheville to provide needed greenways, it must work in conjunction with other partners in the community. The Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Department has worked well with non-profit partners in the past and needs to continue to rely on these organizations and lead the collaboration to achieve a higher level of service sooner.

Strategy: Facilitate a multi partner approach to greenway development.

Action Steps:

- Non-profit partners to provide assistance with land acquisition, funding, or other pertinent rules determined by the City staff to focus on off-road greenway development.
- Aggressively advocate for other governmental agencies to begin implementation of the Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan for Asheville’s signature greenways, the French Broad River and Swannanoa River Greenway. Other government agencies should assume a leadership, management, acquisition, design, and construction roles. The City and non-profit partners should play an advisory role.
- Reassign on-road greenway development to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force and City of Asheville Department of Transportation to develop a bike lane for Ashland Avenue, Haywood Road, and Broadway Street, and shared road for Emma Road within the next five years. Within the next ten years bike lanes, shared roads, and striped shoulders are proposed for Biltmore Avenue, Brevard Road, Hendersonville Road, Kimberly Avenue, Sweeten Creek Road, and Swannanoa River Road. Beyond ten years shared road facilities are proposed for Beaverdam Road, New Haw Creek Road, and Town Mountain Road.
- Pursue a joint use agreement with Beaver Lake homeowners association to allow public use of the existing trail system around Beaver Lake.

Goal 24: Increase connectivity to parks and greenways

Strategy: Create a cohesive and comprehensive greenway and parks connectivity system for all geographic areas of the City.

Action Steps:

- Prioritize development of greenways
 - Swannanoa River Greenway
 - French Broad River Greenway – Northwest Segment
 - Beverly Hills Greenway
 - Clingman Forest Greenway
 - Montford Greenway
 - Town Branch Greenway
 - Rhododendron Creek Greenway
 - Hominy Creek Greenway – Western Segment
 - Hominy Creek Greenway – Eastern Segment
 - Glenss Creek Greenway – Eastern Segment
 - Reed Creek Greenway – Northern Segment
- Work with City planning and other departments to accomplish goals as established by the City’s most current Downtown Master Plan, Public Arts Master Plan, and any planned bike and pedestrian improvements to coordinate greenway development and to develop an interconnected trail system for Center City.
- Distribute greenway development in all regions of the City including neighborhood connector greenways. Focus on finding new off-road routes in north, south, and east Asheville where there are gaps in service.

- Collaborate and coordinate greenway connections with Buncombe County and the Town of Woodfin.
- Work with UNC Asheville, A.B. Tech, public and private schools, transit system, and future neighborhoods to develop on-site trails which connect to greenway system.
- Add bicycle parking at all park access points, prioritizing parks that connect to side paths, multi-use trails, or greenways.
- Make connectivity a priority in park and greenway construction in the City to make connections to:
 - Existing multiuse trails and greenways
 - Parks
 - Recreation facilities
 - Other city services and businesses
 - Downtown area
- Coordinate park development with other planning studies such as the Downtown Master Plan and the Public Arts Master Plan.
- Improve wayfinding and signage between parks and greenways. Physical connections, such as bike lanes are extremely important, however, visual connections such as streetscapes, unique signage, or other wayfinding techniques can help people navigate the park system.
- Focus on connecting parks, either physically or visually that are within a close proximity to each other. A physical connection could be a trail or a loop walk that meanders between parks. A visual connection could be public art pieces or signage. The following is a list of parks where connections are a priority: (Refer to **Appendix VI** for the Recommendation Map)
 - Memorial Stadium/McCormick Field/White Fawn Park(future park)/Beaucatcher Park(future park)
 - Meadow Park/Seven Springs Park/Kenilworth Park
 - Grove Park/Sunset Park/Albemarle Park
 - French Broad River Park/Jean Webb Park



Strategy: Increase recreational and fitness walking opportunities for residents.

The direct mail survey revealed that residents want more walking and biking trails. Improving or adding amenities in existing parks that encourage recreational and fitness walking will increase the level of service throughout Asheville’s system while providing a popular and desired recreational amenity to residents.

Action Steps:

- Look for opportunities to add loop walks or nature trails to new and existing parks, either paved or unpaved. The following is a list of existing parks where the addition of a loop walk or nature trail is suggested:
 - Montford Complex
 - Murray Hill Park
- Provide signs with route maps and mileage in parks with loop walks, nature trails, and connector trails.

Goal 25: Integrate public art into parks and greenways

Strategy: *Continually search for opportunities to integrate public art into parks and greenways.*

Action Steps:

- Identify parks that will continually showcase or focus on public art, such as French Broad River Park.
- Continue to integrate public art into the design of existing and new parks and greenways, such as benches, gateways and passive nodes.
- Coordinate and partner with a liaison from the Public Art Board and/or local artists when developing design standards or creating new master plan for parks and greenways.

Goal 26: Increase level of service for indoor facilities

Strategy: *Increase level of service for existing indoor facilities.*

Action Steps:

- Bring older facilities up to date as neighborhood community centers before building new communitywide facilities.
- Create a facility assets management and long-term maintenance plan. This effort should involve all necessary departments and establish priorities, responsibilities, and a preventative maintenance program. Regular inventory and condition updates should build upon the inventory created as a part of this master planning effort.
- Create or designate staff to a Facility Asset Manager position in order to place appropriate focus and attention on this issue.
- Pursue major facility renovation or new construction urgently needed at the WC Reid Center. This facility scored below expectations in several major areas. In addition, improve the design and ambience of the WC Reid Center by enhancing the entry aesthetics, building condition, and capacity/condition of restrooms.
- Pursue other major facility renovations or new construction as an aggressive search for funding allows including the Burton Street Center, the Harvest House, Murphy-Oakley Center and the Stephens- Lee Center as priorities.
- Pursue an aggressive funding campaign to design and construct new community-wide mega centers as funding allows.
- Improve entry aesthetics, building condition, and overall storage at the Montford Center

Recommendation Cost Estimates and Timetables

Recommendations presented in **Table 13** take into consideration: vision, community programming needs, geographical distribution, public comment, costs, and planning processes. The visions are presented in three timetables. Capital cost observations are in 2008 rates and do not reflect exact cost estimates.

Initial Connectivity Vision

These projects represent the first five years of development during 2009-2013. They emphasize the connectivity of vital park and community center resources that surround the heart of Asheville which are shared by the entire community. This critical mass of improvements will be the initial model to manifest connectivity of recreation resources in the various sub-areas of Asheville.

Neighborhood Resources Vision

These projects represent the second five years of development during 2014-2018. They emphasize filling in the gaps of services in Asheville by enhancing existing centers and constructing new parks and greenways in all of the sub-areas of the City of Asheville. These facilities will provide key resources and destinations in future connectivity plans. A secondary area of connectivity is being developed in east Asheville as the second model.

Future Connectivity and Neighborhood Vision

These projects represent development that will occur after 2019. It is not realistic to delineate the priorities of costs for these projects at this time due to the rapid changes transpiring in the Asheville community. These projects will further fill in service gaps and provide connectivity within the sub-areas of Asheville and eventually linkages between the sub-areas. Concentrations of connected parks, recreation centers, special facilities and greenways will be developed in each of the five sub-areas of the city and these will be ultimately connected through primary greenway corridors.



Table 13: Cost Estimates and Timetables

RECOMMENDATION 2009-2013: Initial Connectivity Vision	CAPITAL COST OBSERVATION	ANNUAL OPERATING COST OBSERVATION
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT		
New WC Reid Community Center	\$3,000,000	
Land Acquisition for Parks and Greenways	\$2,000,000	
Livingston Street/Walton Park/Pool Improvements	\$2,000,000	
Beaucatcher Park	\$1,500,000	
Clingman Forest Greenway	\$1,250,000	
Reed Creek Greenway-South Segment	\$750,000	
Town Branch Creek Greenway	\$1,250,000	
Beaucatcher Mountain Greenway	\$1,250,000	
New Senior Opportunity Center	\$6,000,000	
Neighborhood Parks Improvements	\$1,000,000	
OPERATIONS		
<u>Maintenance & Repair</u>		
Recurring routine maintenance (community center and recreation facility improvements such as roof replacement, restroom/concessions, athletic fields, sport courts resurface, landscape/amenities replacement, ADA compliance, paint facilities, graffiti removal, etc. Significant facility renovation or new construction begins after first 5 years.)		\$2,000,000
Park Maintenance Equipment		\$200,000
<u>Cultural & Public Art</u>		
Regional Art Organization/Facilities Assessment & Inventory		\$30,000
Artists & Fabricator Registry		\$500
Annual Summit on Arts (\$2,500/year)		\$12,500
Bi-Annual Public Art Projects Review (\$1,000/year)		\$3,000
Cultural Arts Programs (\$50,000/year)		\$250,000
<u>Staff</u>		
Park & Greenway Planner (\$45,000/year)		\$225,000
Fundraiser & Resource Director (\$45,000/year)		\$225,000
Marketing Director (\$55,000/year)		\$275,000
Cultural Arts Coordinator (\$40,000/year)		\$200,000
Recreation Programmer (2) (\$35,000/year)		\$350,000
Park Patrol Unit (\$600,000/year)		\$3,000,000
Park Maintenance Crew Staff (10) (\$35,000/year)		\$1,750,000
SUB-TOTAL	\$20,000,000	\$8,521,000
TOTAL 2009-2013	\$28,521,000	

RECOMMENDATION	CAPITAL COST	OPERATING COST
2014-2018: Neighborhood Resources Vision	OBSERVATION	OBSERVATION
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT		
Western North Carolina Nature Center	\$2,750,000	
Land Acquisition for Parks and Greenways	\$1,000,000	
Jake Rusher Park and Splash Pad	\$1,250,000	
Charlie Bullman Park	\$1,250,000	
Carrier Park	\$3,000,000	
Richmond Hill Park	\$500,000	
Roger Farmer Memorial Park	\$1,500,000	
New District Park-North Asheville	\$2,500,000	
Recreation Park	\$1,750,000	
French Broad River Greenway-Northwest Segment	\$1,250,000	
Haw Creek Greenway	\$500,000	
Hominy Creek Greenway-East Segment	\$2,000,000	
Neighborhood Parks Improvements	\$750,000	
OPERATIONS		
<u>Maintenance & Repair</u>		
Recurring routine maintenance (roof replacement, restroom/concessions, athletic fields, sport courts resurface, landscape/amenities replacement, ADA compliance, paint facilities, graffiti removal, etc)		\$1,000,000
Park Maintenance Equipment		\$200,000
<u>Cultural & Public Art</u>		
Public Art Outreach & Educational Campaign		\$5,000
Sustain Arts Programming Facilities & Organizations Network		\$10,000
Arts Website Event List, Highway & Wayfinding Signs		\$10,000
Cultural Arts Programs (\$10,000/year)		\$50,000
Economic Analysis: Feasibility of Designated Arts Districts		\$10,000
Portable Public Art Collection	\$25,000	
<u>Staff</u>		
Recreation Programmer (5) (\$35,000/year)		\$875,000
Park Maintenance Crew Staff (10) (\$350,000/year)		\$1,750,000
SUB-TOTAL	\$20,025,000	\$3,910,000
TOTAL 2014-2018	\$23,910,000	

RECOMMENDATION 2019+: Future Connectivity and Neighborhood Vision	CAPITAL COST OBSERVATION	OPERATING COST OBSERVATION
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT		
Burton Street Community Center with New Gym		
Harvest House Senior Center		
Montford Community Center		
Murphy-Oakley Community Center with New Gym		
Malvern Hills Pool		
Asheville Municipal Golf Course		
Food Lion Skate Park		
Riverside Cemetery		
Stephens-Lee Community Center		
Memorial Stadium/Mountainside Park		
New Shiloh Community Center		
New North District Community Center with Pool		
Recreation Park Pool Convert to Indoor Pool		
New East District Community Center-Recreation Park		
Aston Park Tennis Center		
John B. Lewis Soccer Complex		
New West District Community Center-Former National Guard Site		
Land Acquisition for Parks and Greenways		
Malvern Hills Park		
Martin Luther King, Jr. Park		
Montford Complex Park		
Montford Park		
Azalea Park		
Amboy Road River Park		
Jean Webb Park		
Kenilworth Parks (Seven Springs, Meadow, Forest, Kenilworth)		
Magnolia Park		
Pritchard Park		
Ray L. Kisiah Park		
Weaver Park		
West Asheville Park		
Falconhurst Site		
River Bend Park		
Progress Energy Site		
New District Park-South Asheville		
New Regional Park-Mills River Site		
Aston Park		

Montford Greenway		
Beverly Hills Greenway		
Neighborhood Parks Improvements		
TOTAL 10-YEAR CIP		\$40,025,000
TOTAL 10-YEAR OPERATIONS		\$12,431,000
TOTAL		\$52,456,000

Funding Strategies

To successfully implement this long-range master plan, the City of Asheville will need to accomplish several funding strategies. The strategies listed below recognize the most favorable means to fund this master plan for the City of Asheville.

- Reassigning existing City resources including the General Fund and the CIP Fund
- Expanding existing Asheville Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Department resources such as Grants, Sponsorships, Volunteerism, Inter-local Agreements, Fees and Charges, Development Fees, Foundation Gifts, Concession and Merchandise Sales, and Friends Associations (defined above)
- Implement new traditional funding sources (listed above) particularly Partnerships, Advertising Sales, Fundraisers, Foundation Gift Catalog, and Capital Improvement Fees
- Pass a Bond Referendum for General Obligation Bonds for new improvements
- Research the potential of implementing alternative funding sources (listed in **Appendix VII**) such as a Sales Tax (.125 - .5%) dedicated to Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts; a Hotel, Motel, Restaurant Tax (.5 - 1%) with a portion funding the Department; a volunteer Utility Roundup Program; Real Estate Transfer Fees; and Maintenance Endowments.

Table 14 demonstrates estimated budget amounts and percentage of the funding sources spread out over ten years that could be utilized to successfully implement this long-range master plan. Amounts are based on the feasible capacity each funding source can be expected to deliver during that time.

Table 14: Potential Sources of Funding as Percentage of Overall Budget

Funding Source	Percentage of Overall Budget	Amount
General Fund	3.79%	\$1,988,083
CIP	18.85%	\$9,887,956
Bonds	57.74%	\$30,288,094
Partnership, Grants, Donations	10%	\$5,245,600
Other Funding Options	9.62%	\$5,046,267
Total	100%	\$52,456,000