



Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

F. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

From the time of Raleigh's founding, parks, recreation, and open space have played a central role in City life, and in the City's urban form. Through more than two centuries of growth, these green spaces have enriched the quality of life of Raleigh's citizens. The nature and uses of park lands have evolved to meet community needs. From the City's five original civic squares, to today's athletic fields and nature preserves, green space remains a vital part of the City's infrastructure.

The City of Raleigh has now entered the 21st century as a vibrant community that serves as the nucleus for a growing region. In its current system, Raleigh has over 5,760 acres of park land making up 221 parks and more than 3,760 acres of greenway property including 68 miles of trails (see Map PR-1). As the City continues to develop at a rapid pace, it will need to provide for new parks and to conserve additional open spaces, special landscapes, and natural resource areas for its expanding population. With undeveloped land rapidly disappearing and environmental concerns on the rise, the people of Raleigh must become stewards of the land in order to ensure that future generations will have both recreational opportunities and healthy city parks and natural areas.



The purpose of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element of the Comprehensive Plan is to set a framework of policies and action steps to guide the programming, management, and development of the parks, recreation, and open space system in

Raleigh over the coming two decades. Included within this plan are recommendations for new park development, management, continued renovation of existing parks and facilities, preservation of open space and significant natural resources, and expansion of greenways. Also included are strategies to provide ample recreational opportunities for all citizens, while adapting to recreational trends, significant development opportunities, and Raleigh's growing population. These policies and actions will guide decision-makers to work towards providing parks and recreational facilities that would create a balanced system across the community and that respond to the varied needs of its residents.

This Element addresses the following major issues:

- Maintaining existing passive and active parks and recreation facilities;
- Addressing the need for walkable, neighborhood parks in existing and newer parts of the City;
- Acquiring adequate land for future park development;
- Developing recreational facilities in close proximity to all residents, equitably distributed throughout the City;
- Enhancing access to and awareness of Raleigh's recreation and natural resource opportunities;
- Providing better interconnectivity between the parks, greenways, and open space system locally and regionally;
- Providing best practice management and stewardship of Raleigh's natural resources; and
- Integrating the parks and recreation system into a broader context of green infrastructure to maximize ecosystem conservation.

These issues impact not only this element of the Comprehensive Plan, but have larger impacts on the community's overall growth and development prospects. Park amenities influence the economic prosperity and quality of neighborhoods, land use decisions, growth management efforts, and the health and livability of residents. Therefore, it is vital to realize that addressing these issues in an effective manner will dictate the wellness and welfare of future residents.



For a more in-depth analysis of the City's parks, recreation, and open space inventory and future needs assessment, see the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space chapter of the Community Inventory, the data and analysis companion volume of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition there are several other well-defined and up-to-date documents that offer the City excellent guidance on meeting future park and recreation needs. These include: The Raleigh Parks Plan (2004); The City of Raleigh Aquatic Study (2008); The Senior Center Study (2007); and many other documents that are available for public review through the City's web site. Additional information can be found on the Park and Greenway Planning and Development [website](#).

This element does not repeal or replace adopted Parks planning documents; rather, it provides a forum for coordinating park and open space policies across multiple City departments. The policies and actions in this element are generally consistent with prior Parks plans, but where differences exist, this element provides more up to date guidance. Any Parks plans adopted or revised subsequent to the adoption of this element should be reflected, where appropriate, by future amendments to this element. The 2004 Parks Plan, including subsequent revisions, will be used as a detailed working supplement to the Comprehensive Plan, and the Comprehensive Plan serves to implement the 2004 Parks Plan.

This element also addresses all six of the vision themes that serve as the overarching goals of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. High-quality parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces will provide added value and amenities to the community, which in turn will attract jobs, workers, and greater *economic prosperity* to the area. Evenly distributed park and recreation facilities, accessible to residents throughout the City, further promotes the goal of *equity*.

Consistent with the theme of *Expanding Housing Choices*, Raleigh needs to provide for a variety of housing types at a range of price points to meet the needs of its current and future residents. Parks, recreation and open space opportunities must be developed in tandem with new housing. The issue is particularly important for affordable housing, as many lower-income residents have reduced access

to private vehicles, limiting their ability to travel to distant parks, and making pedestrian, bike, and transit access all the more critical.

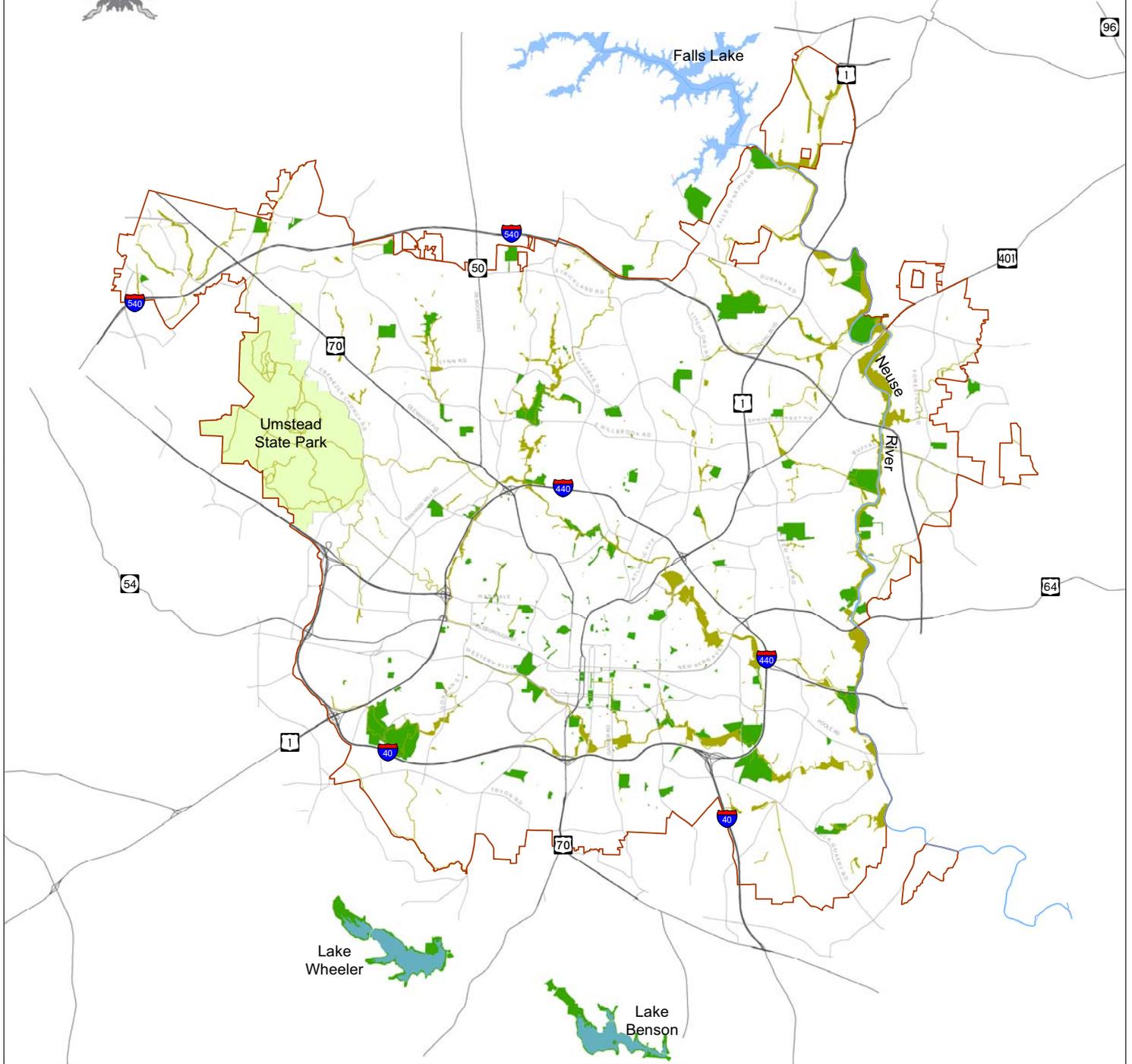
The need for new parks and recreational facilities in the coming decades will require that substantial acreage be acquired by the City for park development. This is part of an overall strategy of *Managing Our Growth*. By planning and identifying future park areas, land can be acquired in advance of development, at lower cost and in appropriate locations, to develop the parks and recreational opportunities that the future residents will require. Further, parks are a significant land use and a source of travel demand, and their location, siting, and design should be coordinated with the City's transportation infrastructure to maximize access by multiple modes and to mitigate impacts on congestion, consistent with *Coordinating Land Use and Transportation*.



Sustainable design and green building is increasingly becoming a part of parks and recreation facilities design. Networks of interconnected parks, greenways, and open spaces (green infrastructure) can direct urban form and guide conservation efforts. Green infrastructure ensures that preserved open spaces and greenways provide greater environmental benefits by maximizing ecosystem conservation, promoting the theme of *Greenprint Raleigh*.



Parks & Greenways



MAP PR-1

-  Lakes/Neuse River
-  Raleigh Greenways
-  Parks
-  State Park

-  ETJ
-  Highway
-  Major Streets





The park and open spaces within Raleigh serve the daily leisure needs of the community, promote the social, cultural, mental, and physical well-being of the community, and are important amenities to achieving better places to live. In a broader sense, they promote a more livable community, a higher quality of life and lend a sense of place and belonging to the community and its residents. They are fundamental to Growing Successful Neighborhoods and Communities.

Polices and actions of this element appear below. Numbers indicate their relationship to the Vision Themes, as follows:

1. Economic Property and Equity
2. Expanding Housing Choices
3. Managing Our Growth
4. Coordinating Land Use and Transportation
5. Greenprint Raleigh
6. Growing Successful Neighborhoods and Communities

F.1 Planning for Parks

Planning is fundamental to every step of the process by which new parks are created, starting with the determination of parks and recreation needs, to the identification and analysis of potential sites for acquisition, to the development of detailed park master plans for specific park sites. Accordingly, the City has developed a variety of park planning tools, methodologies, and processes; and has prepared many planning documents addressing both the entire Parks system as well as specific components. These include the Raleigh Parks Plan, adopted in 2004 and incorporated into this Element by reference, as well as special plans addressing aquatic facilities, City cemeteries, senior centers, and other topics. Each of these documents has been the result of a thorough process of data collection, analysis, and civic engagement.

As public needs and priorities change, plans and the processes used to create them must also evolve to remain current. The 2004 Raleigh Parks Plan contains a recommendation that it be updated every five years, and an update is recommended as Action PR 1.1. The Parks and Recreation Department has commissioned a study that recommends

enhancements to the adopted Parks Master Planning Process, with City Council action on these recommendations expected in 2012. The City intends to keep all park-related planning documents fully current, in the same manner that the Comprehensive Plan and other planning documents will be continually reviewed and updated for currency and consistency.

Policy PR 1.1

Plan Consistency

Maintain consistency among the Comprehensive Plan, the Raleigh Parks Plan, and special purpose plans undertaken to address specific components of the Parks system. (3, 5, 6)

See also Relation to Capital Improvement Planning and Other City Plans in Implementation.

Policy PR 1.2

Plan Currency

Keep the Raleigh Parks Plan and other special purpose park plans current through a regular schedule of updates and re-examinations, including five-year updates to the Park Plan. (6)

Policy PR 1.3

Coordinated Park Planning

Work with interdepartmental and external partners to align siting, land acquisition, co-location, programming design, and construction opportunities with growth projections and demographic information. (3, 5)

Policy PR 1.4

Community Involvement in Special Programs

Where specific or special programs are desired, such as aquatics, skate parks, and off-leash dog areas, involve stakeholders across the entire City to achieve a broad and long range system-wide approach for capital development and replacement. (6)

Policy PR 1.5

Program and Facility Evaluations

Evaluate programs and facilities through community and city-wide surveys, focus groups, evaluations, data regarding programmed and non-programmed usage, and demographic analysis in addition to participation at public meetings. (6)

Action PR 1.1

Parks Plan Update

Update and streamline the Parks Plan every five years to provide the Parks and Recreation Department with current and more detailed guidelines necessary to plan, finance, develop, and manage open space and buildings for both active and passive life pursuits. Data should include, but not be limited to, CAMPO, Park Planning efforts, City and Department programs, and a random scientific survey. Include the updated Park Master Plan and System Integration Plan processes, as well as the recommendations contained in the text box "Natural Areas" in F.2 'Park System and Land Acquisition', as part of this update. Coordinate with Wake County to

identify, acquire and manage natural areas, including Nature Parks and Preserves, countywide.

Action PR 1.2

Reserved

F.2 Park System and Land Acquisition

In order to provide recreation lands and facilities, the City of Raleigh must acquire the rights to develop park property through fee simple ownership, easements providing access, and/or partnerships with agencies or organizations that may share common green space goals, department philosophy, and strategies. In addition to acquiring land as the City continues to expand into unincorporated areas, the City must continue to evaluate property that is undeveloped, suitable for redevelopment, or worthy of maintaining as open space through a systematic evaluation utilizing the latest data and technologies available.

Areas of the City where parks are needed are identified as Search Areas in Map PR-2. The Level of Service (LOS) guidelines, established in the Parks Plan and the Aquatic Study, help predict the need for park land and aquatic facilities in particular areas throughout the City. Opportunities to acquire land outside the City of Raleigh's current jurisdiction should also be pursued to ensure adequate park and recreation facilities for the future. The LOS



guidelines for Neighborhood and Community Parks are used to evaluate where existing park services are not available with reasonable access. Impedances or barriers to citizen access such as major roads and railroads as well as population projections and jurisdictional boundaries are used to determine broad areas to look for available park lands. Search areas guide real estate acquisition efforts and assist the City in evaluation of development proposals.

Table PR-1 is the result of evaluating citywide existing park lands versus the LOS guidelines to meet future population projections. It is intended to be a broad picture of future needs and is dynamic in that acquisitions and growth require the table and search areas to be updated on a regular basis.

- The LOS for Neighborhood Parks is 2.6 acres per 1,000 population. Neighborhood Parks are typically 5 to 25 acres in size and usually include at least basic elements such as playgrounds, a picnic area, and some open space. Additional elements such as tennis, multipurpose or ball fields or small neighborhood center buildings can be included if the site allows. The general service area of a Neighborhood Park is approximately one-half mile; this distance can vary depending on size of the park, population density, barriers to access, and availability of complementary recreation services. The service area is a planning tool for acquisition and development of parks and does not limit access or use of the facility.
- The LOS for Community Parks is 3.1 acres per 1,000 population. Community Parks are typically 30 to 75 acres and usually contain similar basic elements found in Neighborhood Parks. Most Community Parks should also contain facilities that provide opportunities for active recreation programs, both outdoors and indoors, such as a Community Center building. The general service area of a Community Park is approximately 2 miles; this distance can vary depending on size of the park, population density, barriers to access, and availability of complementary recreation services. The service area is a planning tool for acquisition and development of parks and does not limit access or use of the facility.
- Metro Parks with a regional or thematic focus have a LOS of 4.2 acres per 1,000 population. Metro Parks may include natural areas, athletic complexes, as well as parks centered on lakes and incorporating greenways and boat rental facilities.
- Nature Preserves are similar to Metro Parks and have a regional focus. They have been carefully evaluated using adopted criteria and are found to be worthy of protection due to their natural resource attributes. Because of their unique character Preserves do not have a LOS, but due to their regional appeal their acreage is included in the summary of Metro Parks. Further description follows in the text box "Natural Areas".
- Special Parks with a single or unique aspect, such as significant natural features or athletic or performance venues, do not have a LOS guideline. Acquisition and/or development of these parks depend on availability of land, funds and opportunities that may arise. Greenway Corridors, as depicted on Map PR-2, are defined by the corridors of the Neuse River, Walnut Creek and Crabtree Creek and have no LOS. Overland greenway connectors are also depicted where necessary to join with parks, schools, residential or commerce centers. Since the corridors are based on natural stream systems, the opportunity exists to connect to greenway lands and trails provided by other municipal and Wake County jurisdictions. Greenway Corridors are the basis for the City of Raleigh's mandatory dedication of easement on residential properties or reservation of commercial properties.
- Contemporary aquatic planning standards no longer rely on general calculations of pool or pool area-per-resident as a tool in assessing need. Rather, individual needs are evaluated and measured with user-specific aquatic design elements in mind. Such an evaluation is provided in Raleigh's 2008 Aquatic Study.

Some variations in size and elements are expected and this presents opportunities to vary the facilities offered across the City's park system.

Table PR-1 Citywide Current and Proposed LOS Goals and Needs

Classification	Existing Acres	Existing Number of Parks	LOS Standard (Ac/1000 Population)	Additional Needed Acres by 2030	Projected Park Size (Acres)	New Parks Needed to Meet 2030 LOS	Total Parks Needed by 2030
Neighborhood Parks	656 ²	50(5) ¹	2.6	848 ²	15	57	107(5) ¹
Community Parks	1,299	24	3.1	494	60	9	33
Metro Parks	1,730	8	4.2 ³	0 ³	300	0	8
Nature Preserves	851	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4
Special Parks	1,230	135	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	135
Greenway Corridors	3,762	N/A	N/A	1,656	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	9,528	221(5) ¹	N/A	2,998	N/A	66	287(5) ¹

¹ Includes five School Parks that are recognized as currently serving community needs as Neighborhood Parks

² Presumes six acres equivalent for each of five school parks currently functioning as Neighborhood Parks

³ Nature Preserves acreage is added to the Metro Parks acreage when calculating LOS for Metro Parks

Natural Areas

Natural areas in Raleigh’s park system take into account not only the three distinct designations defined below, but also consider the spectrum of natural resource conservation from watershed management at the regional level to landscapes and stream buffers at the individual park-site level. These areas can be entire park units (Nature Preserves), included within the boundaries of other park units (Protected Natural Areas) or a more linear park feature typically associated with a stream or river system (Greenway Corridors). The criteria for Nature Preserves and Protected Natural Areas include the presence of significant species or habitats, size, proximity to other conservation lands, and special considerations such as partnerships and deed constraints. Nature Preserves and Protected Natural Areas should have a site-specific management plan which takes into account the opportunity for public use.

- Nature Preserves are entire park units that contain examples of high quality plant or animal populations, natural communities, landscapes or ecosystems, documented by subject matter experts through local or state programs that contribute to biodiversity and environmental health. The size of a Nature Preserve should be sufficient to buffer, conserve and protect the target element or area. Efforts should be made to protect and manage significant natural resources in these areas through stewardship and best-practice management that do not degrade the resources present. Opportunities for the public enjoyment of natural resource based recreation and environmental education may be provided that are compatible with the protection and enhancement of the Nature Preserve and the nature experience.



- Protected Natural Areas are portions of park units that contain examples of high quality plant or animal populations, natural communities, landscapes or ecosystems, documented by subject matter experts through local or state programs that contribute to biodiversity and environmental health. In the case of existing parks, Protected Natural Areas should be identified as part of an inventory process based on the natural resources, buffers, educational opportunities, and consistency with adopted master plans. Efforts should be made to protect and manage significant natural resources in these areas through stewardship and best-practice management that do not degrade the resources present. The designation of a Protected Natural Area should be differentiated from areas reserved for future development.
- Greenway Corridors are a land use described in more detail in F.3 ‘Greenway System Land and Trails’ and are typically outlined specifically by river, stream, and tributary designations in the Park Plan. Widths of the corridors are recommended to be sufficient to protect the floodplain, consistent with Element C: ‘Environmental Protection’.

Policy PR 2.1

System Integration Plan

Undeveloped parks should be the subject of a System Integration Plan that verifies the park’s classification in the overall park system, identifies features of special interest on the site, and suggests interim management strategies until the new site can be part of a master plan effort. (3, 5)

Policy PR 2.3

Level of Service Achievement

Continue to actively acquire land to meet the appropriate Level of Service (LOS) for additional Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Metro Parks, and aquatic facilities. (1, 3, 5)

Policy PR 2.2

Park Accessibility

Seek to provide reasonable access to a public park or recreational open space to all city residents by 2030, by using the Level of Service and service area guidelines provided in this Plan. (5, 6)

Policy PR 2.4

Acquisition Methodology

Pursue a pattern of acquisition consistent with a search area methodology that analyzes current and projected population and demographic data. (3, 6)

Policy PR 2.5

Acquisition Opportunities

Pursue land acquisition when opportunities arise if the site is suitable for meeting the mission of the Parks and Recreation Department. This is especially pertinent for parks with special environmental or cultural significance or thematic metro parks. (3, 5, 6)

Policy PR 2.6

Acquisition Grants and Partnerships

Seek grants and partnerships with agencies, communities, and/or organizations for land acquisition to maximize the public benefit. (3, 5, 6)

Policy PR 2.7

Acquisition Coordination

Coordinate park land needs assessments, current land acquisition costs, and the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) in order to ensure adequate funding is on hand to react to opportunities and market patterns. (3, 5, 6)

Policy PR 2.8

Creating Recreational Facilities Through Adaptive Reuse

Consideration should be given to opportunities for providing Neighborhood and Community Park elements through innovative and adaptive reuse of underutilized or vacant properties. (3, 5, 6)

Action PR 2.1

Innovative Strategies for Acquisition

Explore innovative strategies such as donations by developers and philanthropists, inter-agency transfer, park improvement districts, partnerships with other government and non-government agencies and tax-defaulted properties to acquire parkland and open space. If acquired properties are not well suited for public recreation use and are not of significant environmental or ecological value, revenue from disposition should revert to the Parks and Recreation acquisition program.

Action PR 2.2

Grant Requests and Partnerships

Submit grant requests and pursue partnerships for land acquisition, especially to agencies that share missions with City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department. Reasonable economic justification and equity of access should be strong considerations in these actions.

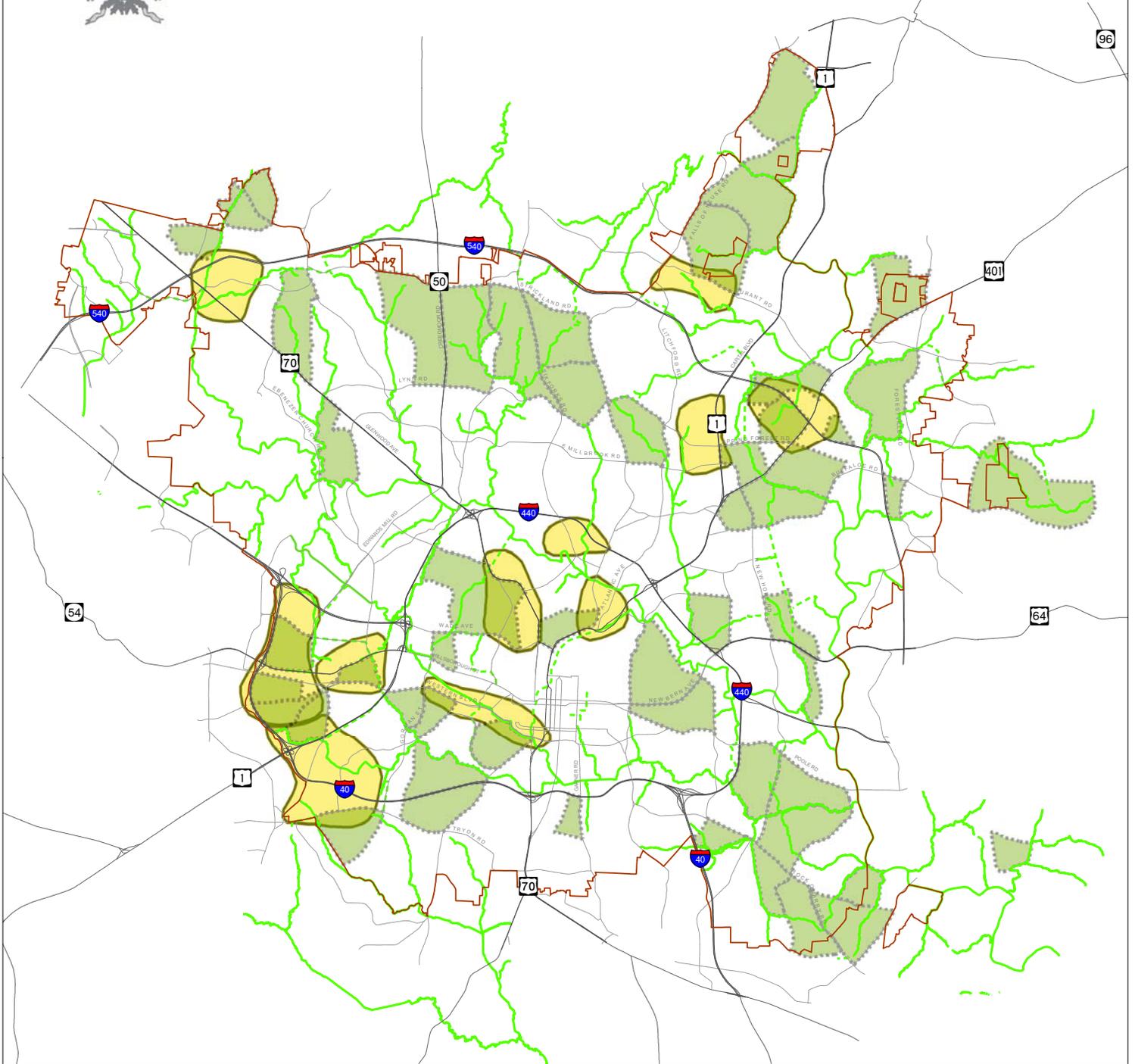
Action PR 2.3

Parkland Search Methodologies

Continue to refine and update search area methodologies to include census data, forecasts, trends, and technology.



Park Search Areas



MAP PR-2

- Greenway Corridors
- Future Greenway Connectors
- Neighborhood Park Search Areas
- Community Park Search Areas

- ETJ
- Highway
- Major Streets



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Map created 10/7/2009 by the City of Raleigh
Department of City Planning & GIS Division

Action PR 2.4

Facility Fee for Acquiring and Developing New Parks

Monitor the effectiveness of the City Facility Fee Program and propose updates if appropriate.

Action PR 2.5

Reserved



F.3 Greenway System Land and Trails

The City of Raleigh is blessed with a Capital Area Greenway program that has preserved over 3,760 acres along stream corridors and tributaries of Walnut Creek, Crabtree Creek, and the Neuse River. These lands are primarily in the floodplain, and as such are managed for conservation of the natural resources found there. These protected lands also provide the opportunity for a nationally known greenway trail system of over 68 miles. Pedestrian and bicycle access to these areas offers a unique opportunity to experience nature in the midst of a city of over 400,000 people. The goals of the Capital Area Greenway program are:

- Preserve natural characteristics of the land;
- Preserve wildlife corridors;
- Preserve riparian buffers as a means of protecting water quality;
- Preserve stream corridors to manage storm water runoff;
- Provide buffers for multiple land uses;
- Provide opportunities for passive recreation; and
- Provide multi-use trails for recreation and safe transportation routes.

Policy PR 3.1

Greenway Trail Expansion

Continue to expand Raleigh's greenway trail network by providing minimum ten-foot wide multi-use paths that follow corridors and connect other greenways, parks, and schools, and that also provide safe integration into on-road facilities. (4, 5, 6)

Policy PR 3.2

Greenway Awareness

Increase public awareness of and facilitate access to links provided by the Capital Area Greenway to nearby communities. (6)

Policy PR 3.3

Riparian Greenways

Acquire parkland along important riparian corridors including the Neuse River and Crabtree and Walnut creeks to create green "fingers" that provide natural and recreational amenities. (3, 5)



Policy PR 3.4

Neuse River Access

Pursue opportunities to provide recreational access to the Neuse River, including both trail and paddling access. (5, 6)

Policy PR 3.8

Pedestrian Links to Greenways

Improve pedestrian linkages to existing and proposed greenway corridors. Development adjacent to a greenway trail should link their internal pedestrian network to the greenway trail where appropriate. (4, 5, 6)

Policy PR 3.5

Stream Open Space Networks

Provide a continuous system of open spaces along designated stream corridors that link neighborhoods and park lands and, where possible, provide links to employment centers, schools, shopping areas, and transit rider facilities. (4, 5, 6)

Policy PR 3.9

Infrastructure Projects and Greenways

Involve the City's greenway planning staff in the planning and design of all infrastructure projects that impact a corridor identified in the Capital Area Greenway Master Plan. (4, 5, 6)

Policy PR 3.6

Greenway Connectivity

Expand the greenway system by connecting existing routes. Provide additional connections between the greenway trails and destinations throughout the City using designated upland routes where necessary. (4, 5)

Action PR 3.1

Capital Area Greenway

Implement the completion of the Capital Area Greenway system with connections to surrounding greenway corridors that are elements of a regional network.

Policy PR 3.7

Flood Plain and Upland Protection

Protect floodplain property or upland connections for greenways or public open space through the site development process of residential and non-residential sites. (1, 5)

See also C.4 'Flood Reduction and Preparedness' in Element C: 'Environmental Protection'.

Action PR 3.2

Neuse River Land Acquisition

Pursue the acquisition of environmentally sensitive and significant property along the Neuse River corridor to protect important natural resources and regional open space.

Action PR 3.3

Reserved

Action PR 3.4

Stream Buffer Acquisition

Develop a program to accelerate greenway acquisition to incorporate at least 100-foot wide vegetative buffers or the entire 100-year floodplain, whichever is greater, along designated streams through additional funding and/or regulations.

See also C.4 'Flood Reduction and Preparedness' in Element C: 'Environmental Protection'.

programs in aquatics, arts, athletics, nature study, summer and track-out camps, and tennis. Programs serve all ages from youth to senior adults, and special populations. Amusement areas and several lakes also offer contact with nature and relief from the stress of everyday life for all generations. To meet these needs, both sufficient indoor buildings and outdoor shelters, open spaces, and high quality natural areas are required. Planning for flexible facilities with opportunities for future expansion is of utmost importance in accommodating future growth.

Raleigh's Parks and Recreation Mission Statement

The mission of the Parks, Recreation, and Greenway program of the City of Raleigh is to actively encourage, provide, promote and protect quality leisure, recreation, and cultural opportunities, facilities, and environments that are essential for the enhancement of the lives of our citizens.

F.4 Recreational Facilities and Programs

In order to maintain itself as a center of wise growth and prosperity, the City of Raleigh must continue to provide a balance of opportunities for citizens to choose both active and passive living pursuits in their daily lives. Facilities for their well-being and physical health include trails, tracks, playgrounds and play fields, as well as a variety of courts, gymnasiums, and activity spaces. The indoor and outdoor facilities that support the programs and informal non-programmed uses available to Raleigh residents and visitors must be available in sufficient quantity, quality, size, design, and geographic distribution to allow full participation for people of all ages and the opportunity for growth. Providing these facilities through a site-specific master plan process should take into account a system-wide approach as well as consideration for individual neighborhoods, adjoining public facilities, and future opportunities. The City's parks and recreation facilities support a broad range of skills and experiences, and exposure to opportunities and

Policy PR 4.1

Flexible Park Facilities

Continue to plan, develop, and operate a variety of flexible indoor and outdoor facilities to support programs, multiple activities, and active and passive lifestyle pursuits across the entire City with respect to sufficient quality, quantity, size, and geographic distribution, and to reserve space for future trends and services. (3, 6)

Policy PR 4.2

Sustainable Park Design

Incorporate sustainable design in the development and management of park sites and recreational facilities. (3, 5, 6)



Policy PR 4.3

Recreational Facility Adequacy

Collaborate with partners in the public and private sectors to develop innovative park arrangements and spaces that help provide a diversity of needed recreational facilities. (3, 6)

Policy PR 4.6

Universal Access

Develop recreational facilities that are universally accessible to all residents. Update existing facilities when new construction is planned, or when renovations are undertaken to, be compliant with new City and federal regulations as they come into effect. (6)

Policy PR 4.4

Park Visibility

Enhance access to and awareness of Raleigh's recreational opportunities by locating and developing some active recreational facilities along major streets near other commercial development and in highly visible areas. (5, 6)

Policy PR 4.7

Joint Use of Schools

Seek and work collaboratively, when feasible, with other municipal, county, and state entities on the joint use of school properties for public recreation. (3)



Policy PR 4.8

Private Parks

Encourage the provision of tot lots, pocket parks, and other privately-held and -maintained park spaces within residential developments to complement public park facilities. (6)

Policy PR 4.5

Child-Friendly Parks

Provide child-friendly parks and open spaces across the City, including downtown. (6)

Policy PR 4.9

Adequate Indoor Facilities

Seek to provide adequate indoor and all-weather facilities for a wide variety of active living choices for all generations. (6)

Policy PR 4.10

Indoor Facility Construction

When in keeping with a System Integration Plan and/or adopted Master Plan, Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks, or Special Parks should be considered for the construction of indoor facilities for recreation, community meetings, social activities, and/or special uses such as arts, aquatics, or environmental education. (6)

Action PR 4.1

Reserved

Action PR 4.2

Sustainable Practice Development

Use nationally accepted sustainable design principles and best management practices in park design.

Action PR 4.3

Reserved

Action PR 4.4

Creating Opportunities for Active Living Choices

Acquire and develop new multi-use fields, trails, and courts as often as practical to support formal and informal opportunities for active living choices by all generations.

Action PR 4.5

Reserved

Action PR 4.6

Comprehensive Aquatics Plan

Implement the City Council-adopted Comprehensive Aquatics Plan by phasing in an equitable geographic distribution of improvements over time. Re-evaluate the plan in 2018.

Action PR 4.7

Senior Center Feasibility Study

Implement the Senior Center Feasibility Study and review the potential for additional centers in the future, including satellite centers.



F.5 Open Space and Special Landscapes

Park lands and open spaces provide the opportunities for organized programs, informal or unprogrammed activities, and the conservation of special spaces for the long-term benefit of the public. A variety of public open spaces contributes to the health and well-being of citizens and visitors, the conservation of wildlife and wild land, and the mitigation of environmental impacts from development. These spaces may include transportation rights-of-way and entrance gateways, stream corridors, public areas of downtown, and a variety of park lands specifically managed to provide flexible and diverse opportunities. Policies should remain flexible to balance the need for investment in spaces with the need for long term flexibility.

The City is in the midst of major developments in the downtown area. This places special pressure on public urban spaces, especially historic Moore Square and Nash Square parks. It also creates opportunities for innovative landscapes currently unavailable in Raleigh, such as rooftop plazas and gardens.

See also C.2 'Design with Nature' in Element C: 'Environmental Protection' for additional policies related to the preservation and use of open spaces and landscapes.

Policy PR 5.1

Protecting Heritage Sites

In addition to acquiring land suitable for park facility development, work with local land trusts to acquire and conserve sites with significant natural heritage that are currently unprotected from development (as defined by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program). (5)

Policy PR 5.2

Unique or Endangered Public Landscapes

Ensure that park planning, facilities, and management respect and conserve resources and landscapes such as Significant Natural Heritage Areas and N.C. Wildlife Action Plan priority habitat areas. (5)

Policy PR 5.3

Interpretive Conservation Activities

Maximize ecosystem conservation and promote interpretive and educational activities in unique ecological areas and habitats in partnership with other governmental and non-governmental agencies. (5)

See also C.9 'Environmental Education, Awareness and Coordination' in Element C: 'Environmental Protection'.

Policy PR 5.4

Improving Park Access

Public spaces should be included in private developments that can connect to and benefit from their proximity to public infrastructure and spaces such as greenway trails, public sidewalks, and plazas. (3, 5, 6)

Policy PR 5.5

Requirements for Accessible Open Space in Partnership Projects

Ensure public access to open space in projects with public financial partnerships, such as downtown parking garages, plazas, and squares.

Action PR 5.1

Mandatory Greenway Dedication

Continue the program of mandatory greenway land dedication from residential development to further the goals of the Capital Area Greenway program, and explore expanding it to non-residential development.

Action PR 5.2

Reserved

Action PR 5.3

Streetscape, Gateway, and Public Space Improvements

Continue to pursue development of, and maintain a link to, the City’s Capital Improvement Program and annual budget process for streetscape, gateway, and other special projects that improve neighborhoods, transportation corridors, and other public spaces.

See also I.3 ‘Appearance and Function of Raleigh’s Corridors’ in Element I: ‘Urban Design’.

Action PR 5.4

Identifying Conservation Lands

Identify lands that can be conserved and managed for their outstanding natural features, landscapes and assets, and cultural heritage values as part of a system of open spaces and green infrastructure.

F.6 Management and Stewardship

As a steward of public land, recreational facilities, and natural resources, the City must manage with a goal of efficiency, equitable quality and access,

and long term public benefit. Management and stewardship of parklands and facilities includes maintenance of existing developed parks as well as proper stewardship and management of undeveloped parklands and natural areas. This requires a commitment from City employees, the public and their elected representatives to plan for the operating funds necessary to maintain sites, structures, and systems for their expected life cycle. Additionally, new capital development, renovation of existing facilities, and replacement of facilities when life-cycles are over should be planned and fully funded.

Promoting citizen involvement in stewardship activities such as clean-ups, minor construction, and landscaping will continue to build community knowledge and support of the parks and greenway system. Numerous partner organizations and agencies exist in the area that can further the mission of the City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department.

Policy PR 6.1

Budget Adequacy

Ensure that capital and operating budget support of the park system keeps pace with growth as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan to provide the quantity and quality of programs, facilities, and facilities maintenance expected by citizens. (1, 3)





Policy PR 6.2

Volunteerism

Encourage citizens to volunteer within the parks and recreation system by offering opportunities to be involved in recreational programming, youth athletic coaching, park clean-up efforts, habitat restoration, special event support, and other supportive activities. (5, 6)

Policy PR 6.3

Park Stewardship

Strive to improve safety, awareness, cleanliness, and neighborhood support at existing parks in part by involving residents in these efforts, partnering with other City Departments such as Public Works, Police, Community Development, and other partner agencies and Park Watch programs that may have a presence on the site. (6)

Policy PR 6.4

Access to Natural Resources

Evaluate the public awareness and knowledge of access to natural resource areas within the Raleigh park system and neighboring communities. (5, 6)

Action PR 6.1

Innovative Maintenance Strategies

Continue to engage the City of Oaks Foundation and expand the reach of the volunteer and Adopt-A-Park program.

Action PR 6.2

Adopt-A-Park/Adopt-A-Trail

Expand the Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Trail programs to encourage individual citizens, neighborhoods, organized groups, partner agencies, non-profits, and Park Watch programs to participate in the establishment and maintenance of facilities and delivery of programs.

Action PR 6.3

System Integration Plan Implementation

Implement System Integration Plans for all newly-acquired properties and for undeveloped park sites and key areas of underdeveloped sites as staff and agency resources allow.

Action PR 6.4

Historic Cemeteries

Implement the *Strategic Plan for the Inventory and Conservation of Raleigh's Historic Cemeteries* and evaluate the plan in 2019.

Action PR 6.5

Awareness of Natural Resource Areas

Implement strategies through traditional methods and emerging technologies to increase public awareness of natural resource areas within the Raleigh Park park system and adjoining communities.

Action PR 6.6

Stewardship Capacity

Provide an assessment of additional staffing and related resources necessary to provide for the appropriate level of management and stewardship of the City's growing inventory of parks and open spaces. Incorporate this assessment into the budget process.