

# 2021 - 2031 COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN



September 7, 2021  
**EDGECOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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## PARKS AND RECREATION TASK FORCE MEMBERS

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Dervin Spell-Senior Planner/Edgecombe County  
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Special thanks to Nyreke Peters (Edgecombe County Government Fellow) and RRS (Recreation Resource Services) / NC State University

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the winter of 2019, Edgecombe County initiated plans to develop a comprehensive master plan for parks and recreation in the County. These efforts were coordinated by a Task Force made up of government and non-profit organizations, including the health department, libraries, park and recreation departments from Edgecombe municipalities, county planning, and extension. The Task Force was chaired by Yvonne Murphy, Health Matters Associate with Edgecombe County Cooperative Extension, and supported by Eric Evans, Edgecombe County Manager. The Task Force met monthly from February 2019 - September 2021 to plan and execute this report. They provided regular updates to County Commissioners through the County Manager, and sought input from residents at several points in the process, through presentations and surveys. The Task Force determined, based on these conversations and data, that a comprehensive master plan was necessary to support the creation and funding of a park and recreation department for the entire county.

Several themes emerged in this process of data collection and conversation. First, a county park and recreation department would need to serve all residents of the county, with a focus on areas of the County that lack access to park and recreation services (both Tarboro and Rocky Mount have their own park and recreation departments). Second, the Task Force recognized that the County possesses significant assets that can be harnessed to support parks and recreation services in the area, including existing parks and infrastructure, a mini-grant program that funds

innovative recreation projects, vital and collaborative government and non-profit organizations that support health, and a school system that promotes shared use of its physical activity facilities. Finally, the Task Force recognized that the county possesses many unique opportunities to expand access to places to walk and active transportation methods, and so drew on resources and support from the North Carolina Division of Public Health to both audit and promote walkability in several areas of the County.

As noted above, many residents took part in the process, completing surveys, attending information sessions, and sharing feedback on what should be included in a parks and recreation plan for the County. This report summarizes their feedback, which was overwhelmingly in support of the creation of a park and recreation department for the county.

This report outlines the steps that were taken to create the recommendations for parks and recreation planning for the next ten years in Edgecombe County. In section one, we provide an inventory of the existing park

and recreation resources in the County, including an audit report of all of the public parks in the County, an overview of the school resources available through shared use, and reports of three walk audits that were conducted in municipalities (Pinetops, Speed and Princeville) to gauge walkability. Section two outlines the demographics of the County, and reports on resident input in this process, including a resident survey completed by 438 people, an information session, and a feedback report from that session. Section three provides information about state and county standards for level of services in parks and recreation, in order to help the County determine guidelines for service development that meet Edgecombe County's needs. All of these findings are utilized to create the recommendations that are put forth in Section Four which outlines a plan for the next ten years for the County's park and recreation planning and implementation. Finally, Section Five offers concrete guidance and budget information for the implementation of these recommendations, providing an action plan for the County's next ten years.

# PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

## **1. Create a permanent parks and recreation advisory board.**

The Parks and Recreation Task Force has been a vital component in creating this plan and moving forward park and recreation programming in Edgecombe County. This Task Force can be a starting point for the board, but this board should be permanent and established by the County Commissioners.

Recreation Resources Services (RRS), an organization through NC State University, offers guidance and training for counties to establish an Advisory Board. RRS staff should be consulted to assist staff and elected officials in determining:

- Board size and composition
- Structure of Board appointment
- Roles and authority over Advisory Board
- Organizational and reporting structure of Board

In addition to providing guidance on Board structure, RRS consultants can provide assistance with training and education of both staff and board members.

**2. Create a permanently funded Parks and Recreation Department, including a Director position.** Based on the findings in this report, the Task Force recommends that the County create a permanently funded Parks and Recreation Department, with a Director position. The Director would be tasked with developing partnerships throughout the County to create new opportunities for park and recreation programming and facilities, securing grants and funds to develop new parks and programming, overseeing the County's successful Park and Recreation mini-grant program (currently funded through the County budget), and creating new opportunities for recreation programming throughout the County.

## **3. Continue and increase funding for the Park and Recreation mini-grant program.**

Currently, the County funds the Park and Recreation mini-grant program at \$20,000/year. These funds are vital to support local organizations as they offer park and recreation opportunities for individuals and families throughout the County. These programs meet the needs of local communities and empower local organizations to implement programs and services that build on the assets they possess to improve the health of the people they serve. Although small in size, these mini-grants have had a large impact in Edgecombe County. To date, the County has provided \$50,000 in funding for over fifty non-profit organizations in Edgecombe County. Due to the many innovative and successful proposals for recreation/physical activity programming, the County increased the original amount from \$10,000 a year to \$20,000 for the 2020 grant period. The goal for funding for this program from the County is \$50,000 per year.

#### **4. Expand access to walking trails and places to walk throughout the county.**

As noted in the walk audit reports included here, it is often difficult to find opportunities to walk in small, rural communities. The Parks and Recreation Task Force recommends that the Parks and Recreation Director and Advisory Board work with local organizations, county planners, and DOT officials to improve access to places to walk in the County. This includes things like improving sidewalks in communities where issues are identified, creating temporary or permanent crosswalks across busy streets where people are trying to commute from one place to another (ex: at a school crossing, or to get to the post office or town hall), and installing signage to encourage people to bike or walk from place to place.

Additionally, the Parks and Recreation Director and Advisory Board should work with municipal and county officials to expand access to walking through new and refurbished walking trails and tracks. This could include:

- Promoting shared use of school or faith community facilities to walk - including walking trails and tracks - by installing signage and creating programs to encourage people to use these free, accessible spaces,
- Enhancing current walking trails or tracks and encouraging people to use them by developing innovative programming (ex: walking challenges),
- Creating new walking tracks and trails throughout the County, with a focus on small, rural areas that have limited sidewalk access, parks, or other places to walk and be active.

#### **5. Encourage wider use of free and open facilities by promoting shared use opportunities in schools and faith communities.**

Edgecombe County School playgrounds are currently open for use by the public. The Parks and Recreation Director and Advisory Board should work closely with the Edgecombe County School Board and School System to promote shared use for the community, by

- Training school staff on shared use standards, so that they are aware of the shared use policies and welcome families and community members to their school properties,
- Installing signage at schools that notifies the community that they are open for usage, including the times that the facilities are open, Enhancing playground and other recreation facilities in schools, through grants and other funding mechanisms, to create opportunities to play and be active for all residents of the County. This could include installing new accessible equipment and facilities for people of all abilities, or creating walking tracks/trails around playgrounds so that parents can walk while their children play.

# SECTION 1: INVENTORY

## INTRODUCTION

In a Parks and Recreation process, understanding the resources and assets that a county and its municipalities possess is a critical first step to understanding how the County can grow park and recreation opportunities in an equitable way across the County. In Edgecombe County, parks are located throughout the County. The Parks and Recreation departments of Tarboro and Rocky Mount have written grants and carried out improvement plans to enhance the parks in these cities; this model can be adapted by the County to enhance county parks in municipalities in more rural areas.



To conduct this inventory, the Parks and Recreation department conducted three types of audits of parks and recreation facilities in the community. The first was an audit of the public parks serving county residents. To conduct this audit, the Parks and Recreation Committee used the Community Park Audit Tool (CPAT), developed in 2010 in Kansas City, Missouri by the University of Missouri's Kansas City Parks and Recreation Project. This tested tool contains four sections: Park Information, Access and Surrounding Neighborhood, Park Activity Areas, and Park Quality and Safety. The second audit was developed in partnership with the Edgecombe County School System. Because schools in Edgecombe County are open for community use outside of school hours, the school system's recreation facilities are included in this report, with information about their location as well as the types of facilities available in each. And finally, through a partnership and grant with the NC Division of Public Health, Edgecombe County Cooperative Extension staff have carried out walk audits in partnership with three municipalities, to examine walkability and connectivity for active travel to everyday locations in three communities: Pinetops, Speed, and Princeville. The walk audit reports are included and were implemented to help the County better understand active transportation to physical activity locations like parks and recreation facilities in rural communities.

# Public Parks Serving County Residents

In 2019 and 2020, Edgecombe County Parks and Recreation Task Force Members conducted audits of parks and recreation facilities operated by the County or town parks and recreation departments. To conduct this audit, the Parks and Recreation Committee used the Community Park Audit Tool (CPAT), developed in 2010 in Kansas City, Missouri by the University of Missouri's Kansas City Parks and Recreation Project. This validated tool contains four sections: Park Information, Access and Surrounding Neighborhood, Park Activity Areas, and Park Quality and Safety.



Twenty-eight parks were identified in this process and audited using the CPAT tool. As noted in the tables below, there are parks and recreation facilities across the County, but there are issues of access with these facilities, including a lack of sidewalks, signage noting hours and whether the facility is open, and various safety concerns. Table one offers an overview of the parks and recreation facilities in aggregate, noting some of these issues of access. Table two presents a list of all county facilities audited, with information about the types of recreation facilities available at each of these sites. Finally, a map is included, to provide insight to the location of these parks and issues around disparity of access, particularly for more rural areas of the County.

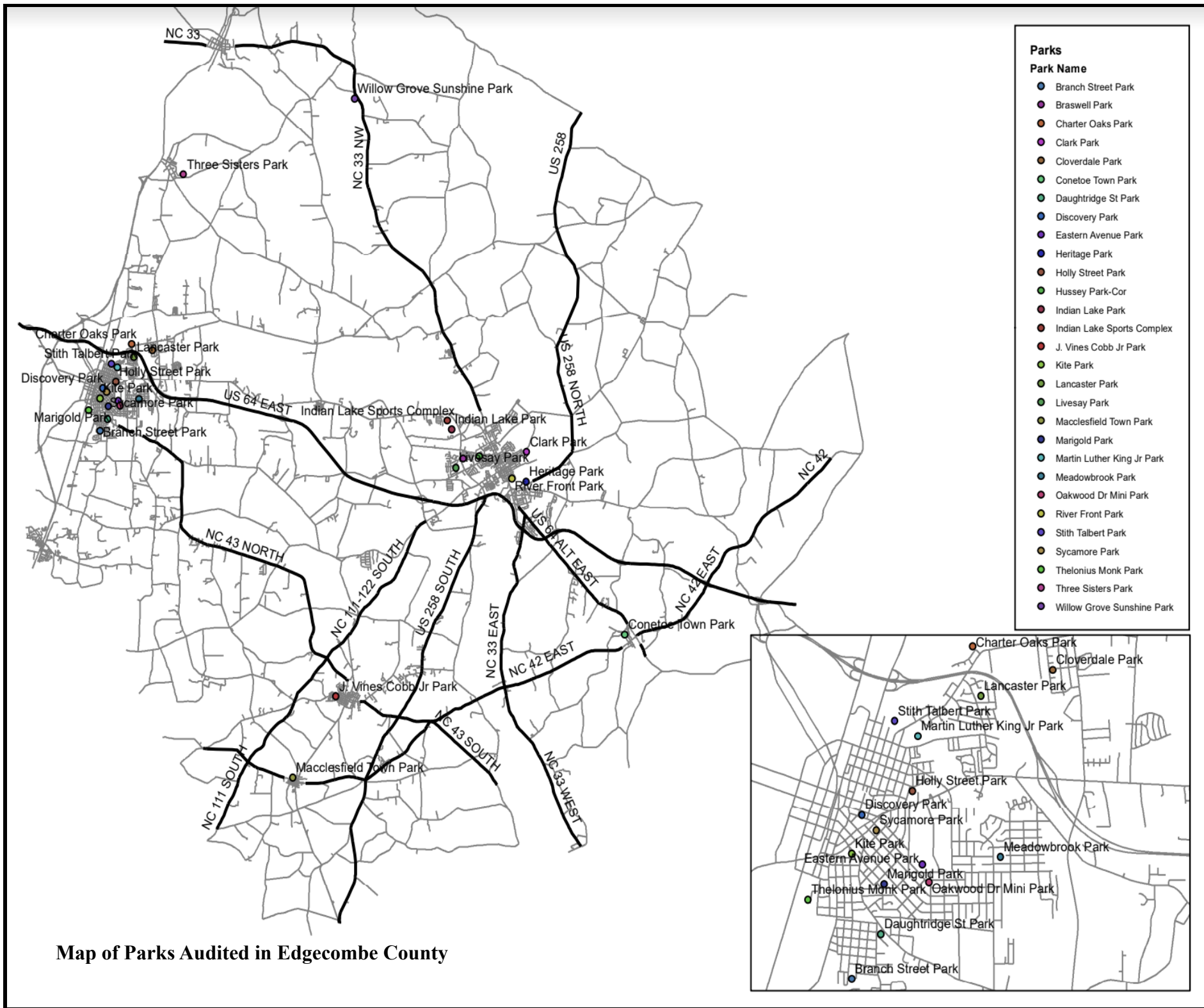
**Table 1: Park Characteristics Across the County**

<b>Audit Item</b>	<b>Response Across Edgecombe County</b>
Can the park be accessed for use? (e.g., not locked/fenced, available for activity, etc.)	No = 4 (14.29%) Yes = 24 (85.71%)
Are there signs that state the following (could be same sign)? (check all that are present)	None present = 3 (4.84%) Park name = 25 (40.32%) Park hours = 11 (17.74%) Park contact information = 5 (8.06%) Park/facility rental information = 1 (1.61%) Park rules = 13 (20.97%) Park map = 2 (3.23%) Rental equipment information = 1 (1.61%) Event/program information = 1 (1.61%)
Is there a public transit stop within sight of the park?	No = 20 (71.43%) Yes = 8 (28.57%)
What types of parking are available for the park? (check all that are present)	None = 1 (2.50%) Parking Lot = 18 (45.00%) On street parking = 17 (42.50%) Bike racks(s) = 4 (10.00%)
Are there sidewalks on any roads bordering the park? (could be on opposite side of road)	No = 17 (60.71%) Yes = 11 (39.29%)
Are there bike routes on any roads bordering the park? (check all that are present)	None = 22 (73.33%) Marked bike lane = 0 (0.00%) Bike route sign = 6 (20.00%) Share the road signs/markers = 2 (6.67%)
Are there nearby traffic signals on any roads bordering the park? (e.g., crosswalk, stop light/sign)	No = 0 (0.00%) Yes = 28 (100.00%)
What are the main land use(s) around the park? (check all that apply)	None present = 0 (0.00%) Residential = 28 (34.15%) Commercial = 12 (14.63%) Institutional (e.g., school) = 8 (9.76%) Industrial (e.g., warehouse) = 20 (24.39%) Natural = 82
Which of the following safety or appearance concerns are present in the neighborhood surrounding the park?	Poor lighting (e.g., low or not lighting on surrounding neighborhood streets) = 6 (8.96%) Graffiti (e.g., markings or paintings that reduce the visual quality of the area) = 2 (2.99%) Vandalism (e.g., damaged signs, vehicles, etc.) = 5 (7.46%) Excessive litter (e.g., noticeable amounts of trash, broken glass, etc.) = 3 (4.48%) Heavy traffic (e.g., steady flow of vehicles) = 11 (16.42%)

	<p>Excessive noise (e.g., noticeable sounds that are unpleasant or annoying) = 3 (4.48%)</p> <p>Vacant or unfavorable buildings (e.g., abandoned houses, liquor store) = 6 (8.96%)</p> <p>Poorly maintained properties (e.g., overgrown grass, broken windows) = 14 (20.90%)</p> <p>Lack of eyes on the street (e.g., absence of people, no houses or store fronts) = 0 (0.00%)</p> <p>Evidence of threatening persons or behaviors (e.g., gangs, alcohol/drug use) = 6 (8.96%)</p> <p>Other= 0 (0.00%)</p> <p>None present= 4 (5.97%)</p> <p>Comments on Access or Surrounding Neighborhood Issues = 7 (10.45%)</p>
Was the park easy to find onsite?	<p>No = 0 (0.00%)</p> <p>Somewhat = 8 (28.57%)</p> <p>Yes = 20 (71.43%)</p>
Are there public restrooms(s) or portable toilet(s) at the park?	<p>No = 18 (64.29%)</p> <p>Yes = 10 (35.71%)</p>
Are there drinking fountains(s) at the park?	<p>No = 23 (82.14%)</p> <p>Yes = 5 (17.86%)</p>
Are there bench(es) to sit on in the park?	<p>No = 5 (17.86%)</p> <p>Yes = 23 (82.14%)</p>
Are there picnic table(s) in the park?	<p>No = 7 (25.93%)</p> <p>Yes = 20 (74.07%)</p>
Are there trash cans in the park?	<p>No = 3 (11.11%)</p> <p>Yes = 24 (88.89%)</p>
Are there rules posted about animals in the park? (e.g., dogs must be leashed)?	<p>No = 22 (84.62%)</p> <p>Yes = 4 (15.38%)</p>
Are there lights in the park? (not including neighborhood street lights)	<p>No = 5 (18.52%)</p> <p>Yes = 22 (81.48%)</p>
Is the park monitored? (e.g., volunteer or paid staff, patrolled by police, cameras, etc.)	<p>Unsure = 17 (60.71%)</p> <p>Yes = 11 (39.29%)</p>
Are there any emergency devices in the park? (e.g., phone, button, emergency directions)	<p>No = 25 (89.29%)</p> <p>Yes = 3 (10.71%)</p>

Table 2: Park Facilities Across the County

Name	Playground	Sport Field (football/soccer)	Baseball Field	Swimming Pool	Splash Pad	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court	Trail	Fitness Equipment/Stations	Skate Park	Off-Leash Dog Park	Open/Green Space	Lake	Public Restrooms/Portable Toilet	Drinking Fountains	Benches	Picnic Tables	Picnic Shelter	Grill/Fire Pit	Trash Cans	Recycling Containers	Food/Vending Machines
Branch Street Park	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No		Yes	No			Yes		No
Braswell Park	1	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Charter Oaks Park	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Clark Park	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Cloverdale Park	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Conetoe Town Park	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Discovery Park	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Eastern Avenue Park	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Heritage Park	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Holly Street Park	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	No	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Hussey Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	No		No	No		No	No		No
Indian Lake Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Indian Lake Sports Complex	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
J Vines Cobb Jr. Park	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	No		Yes	No	No		Yes		No
Kite Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	No		No	No			No		No
Lancaster Park	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No		Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Livesay Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	No		Yes	No		No	Yes	No	No
Macclesfield Town Park	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			No
Marigold Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No		No		Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Meadowbrook Park	1	1	1	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
MLK JR. Park	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Oakwood Drive Mini-Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	No		Yes	No			Yes		No
River Front Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Slith-Talbert Park	2		1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Sycamore Street Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	No		No	No			No		No
Thelonus Monk Park	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Three Sister's Park	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Willow Grove Sunshine Park	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		No



## Schools Offering Shared Use For Residents

Joint/Shared Use Agreements can be defined as formal agreements between two or more entities such as schools, government, private and non-profit organizations that outline conditions for joint/shared use of property or facilities. On April 20, 2015, a joint use agreement was entered into between the **COUNTY OF EDGECOMBE** and the **EDGECOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**. This agreement is for the joint use of certain school property by opening outdoor facilities for use during non-school hours. Schools identify the outdoor facilities such as fields, playgrounds and walking tracks that will be open for use by community members. Physical activity is an important part of good health for everyone. For the past 30 years, there has been an increase in childhood obesity. The rate has more than tripled in children and adolescents. Joint/Shared Use Agreements can be an effective approach to increasing access, especially in rural communities, to provide opportunities to be physically active.

Below is a full listing of the public schools in Edgecombe County, with information about the recreation facilities available to the community at these schools, as well as a map of the schools.

**G.W. Bulluck Elementary School**  
**3900 Bulluck School Road,**  
**Rocky Mount, NC 27801**



- Adaptive Playground
- Pre-K Playground
- Two (2) Regular Playgrounds
- Butterfly & Community Garden
- Basketball Court
- Walking Track

**G.W. Carver Elementary School**  
**700 East Hamlet St.**  
**Pinetops, NC 27864**



- Adaptive Playground
- Regular Playground
- Walking Track

**Coker-Wimberly Elementary**  
**1619 NC Hwy 97 West**  
**Battleboro, NC 27809**



- Playground
- Basketball Court
- Raised Bed Garden
- Walking Track

**Edgecombe Early College High School**  
**2009 West Wilson Street**  
**Tarboro, NC 27886**



- Greenhouse / In Progress
- Green / Open Space
- Walking Trail

**Martin Millennium Academy**  
**400 East Johnston Street**  
**Tarboro, NC 27886**



- Pre-K & Kindergarten Playground
- Indoor Basketball Gym
- Greenspace / Open Field
- Raised Bed Garden

**North Edgecombe High School**  
**7589 NC Hwy 33 Northwest**  
**Tarboro, NC 27886**



- Baseball Field
- Football Field
- Raised Beds & Greenhouse
- Walking Track

**W. A. Pattillo Middle School**  
**501 East Avenue**  
**Tarboro, NC 27886**



- Exercise Area / Pull Up Bar
- Funnel Ball
- Raised Bed Garden
- Open Field Space
- Walking Track

**Phillips Middle School**  
**4371 Battleboro-Leggett Road**  
**Battleboro, NC 27809**



- Baseball Field - 2
- Basketball Court
- Open / Green Space
- Pollinator Garden

**Princeville Elementary School**  
**306 Walston Street**  
**Princeville, NC 27886**



- Playground Ground - 2
- Open / Green Space

**South Edgecombe Middle School**  
**230 Pinetops-Crisp Road**  
**Pinetops, NC 27864**



- Baseball Field - 2
- Football Field
- Soccer Field
- Basketball Court / Out & Indoor

**Southwest Edgecombe High School**

**5912 NC Hwy 43 North**

**Pinetops, NC 27864**



- Basketball Court- Indoor
- Baseball Field- 2
- Football Field
- Greenhouse / Raised Bed Garden
- Soccer Field
- Raised Bed Garden
- Tennis Courts- 2
- Track & Field Area
- Walking Track

**Stocks Elementary School**

**400 Hope Lodge Street**

**Tarboro, NC 27886**



- Playground- 3
- Baseball Field
- Raised Beds / Pollinator Garden
- Walking Track

**Tarboro High School**

**1400 Howard Avenue**

**Tarboro, NC 27886**



- Basketball Court- Indoor
- Football
- Open/Green Space
- Tennis Courts- 3
- Soccer Field
- Walking Track

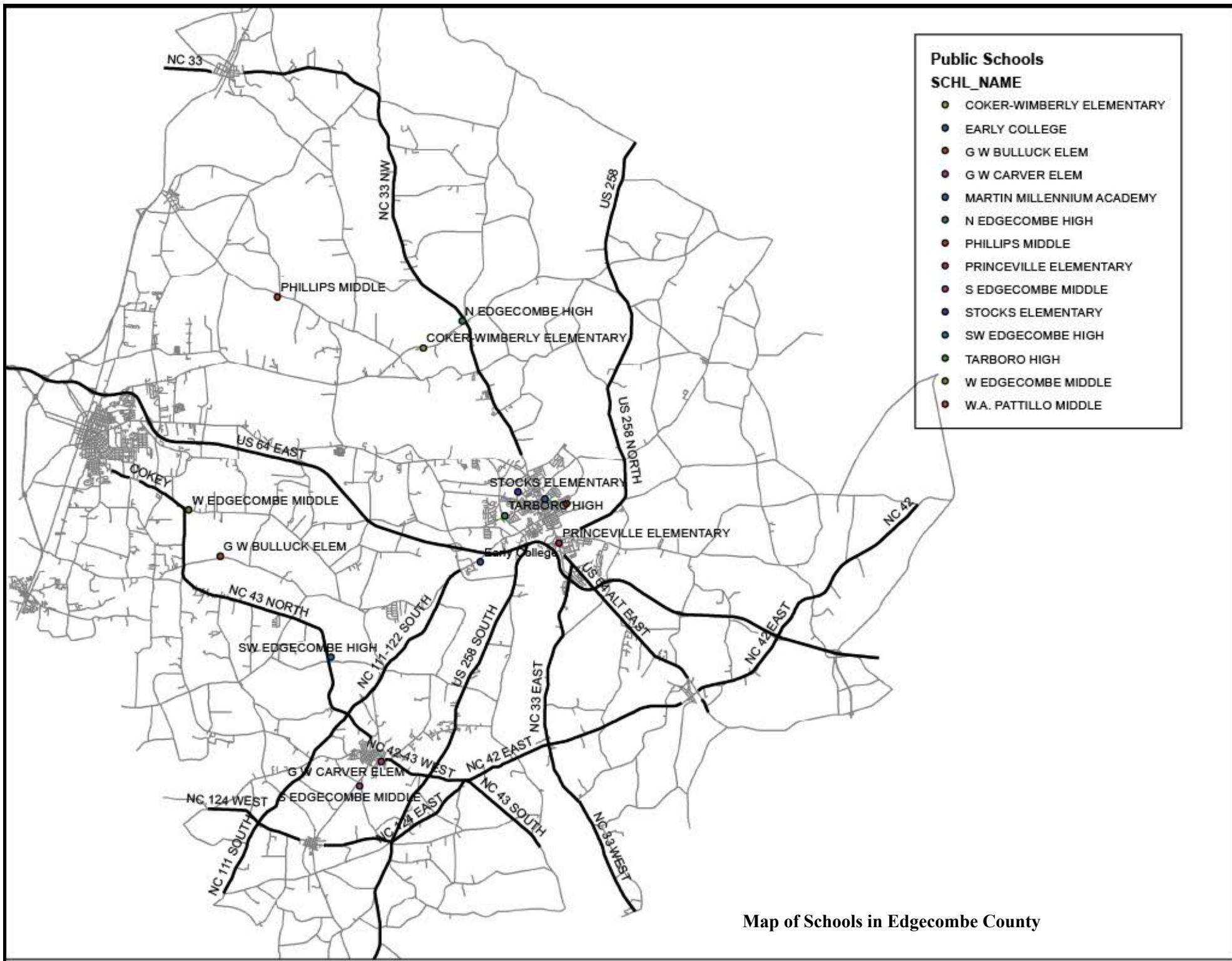
**West Edgecombe Middle School**

**6301 Nobles Mill Pond Road**

**Rocky Mount, NC 27801**



- Basketball Court - Indoor
- Baseball Field- 2
- Football Field
- Open/Green Space



# WALKABILITY OF COMMUNITIES

In addition to auditing the county parks and recreation facilities that are publicly available, Edgecombe County Cooperative Extension staff, in partnership with the NC Division of Public Health and local municipal officials carried out walking audits in three rural Edgecombe County communities, to determine whether people are able to walk to everyday destinations - including parks and places to be active - in their communities. These three communities were: Princeville, Speed and Pinetops.

The results of these audits are noted below.

## Pinetops Walking Audit

The Town of Pinetops is a small but quaint municipality in the southern corner of Edgecombe County. The population is around 1,347 (2017). Edgecombe County, where Pinetops is located, currently ranks 97 out of 100 counties in the state for health disparities. The Town is governed by a Mayor and a five-member Board of Commissioners who are charged as elected officials to provide strong leadership and representation for all Pinetops residents. This includes providing opportunities for residents to have safe spaces to engage in physical activity, which includes promoting walkability to local destinations. The Mayor and Board of Commissioners seek to improve and promote healthy options for all residents to be physically active within the town.

On June 11, 2019, Town and County officials, residents, and key stakeholders (18 participants) carried out a walk audit to assess walkability in key places downtown. Representatives at the audit included: **Town Council of Pinetops, Department of Public Health, Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization, Edgecombe County Health Department, Edgecombe County Cooperative Extension, Edgecombe County Public Schools and Edgecombe County Government.** The group used the “Walkability Checklist” available from Move More Walk Now NC to assess walkability in the community. Two walking routes were audited (see maps).



The average walk audit scores given by the 18 individuals was 16, which indicates that there are several areas around town that need some work to create safe and easy walking conditions for Pinetops residents to be more physically active. Specific issues are detailed below with representative photos.

100% of auditors found problems with sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not continuous</li> <li>• Cracked/broken</li> <li>• Blocked by poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc.</li> <li>• No sidewalks</li> </ul>
73% of auditors noted some problems with road crossings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road was too wide</li> <li>• Traffic signal cycles were too long or too short for safe crossing</li> <li>• No striped crosswalks or traffic signals</li> <li>• Parked cars obstructing views</li> <li>• Missing curb ramps or curb ramps in need of repair</li> </ul>
7% of auditors recorded concerns with driver behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speeding</li> <li>• Speeding to make it through traffic lights or driving through traffic lights</li> </ul>

**Key points of concern included Town Hall down to West Hamlet/Vidant Family Medicine, Town Hall to Pinetops Baptist Church – NC 42 & Hamlet Street, and Vann Drive to South Sally Jenkins Street and W. Burnette.**

### Key Points of Concern



#### **Town Hall down to West Hamlet/Vidant Family Medicine**

- Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
- Sidewalks broken and cracked
- Need pedestrian crosswalks and/or pedestrian crossing signage
- Need school crossing sign and crosswalk at GW Carver Elementary School

### **Town Hall to Pinetops Baptist Church – NC 42 & Hamlet Street:**

- No crosswalk or pedestrian signs at Town Hall/ NC 42 & Hamlet St. Intersection x2
- Street sign issues with sidewalk transition
- Broken sidewalk (water meter) in front of Shell Gas Station
- Broken sidewalk in front of Shell Gas Station x2
- Street sign issues along with sidewalk transition



### **Vann Drive to South Sally Jenkins Street and W. Burnette**



- Ground settling needs repair
- Park signage needs upgrade
- work needs to be completed
- Road Sidewalks cracked and broken
- Sidewalks and paths started and stopped
- Trumpet Creeper needs removal at baseball park
- Walking trail issues (not defined /needs to be weeded)
- Walking trail signage needed

### **Solutions**

After conducting the walking audit, the team met to debrief and brainstorm short and long-term goals based on the audit findings.

#### **Short-Term Goals (Within 1 Year)**

- **Provide education for the Pinetops community about walking and walkability. This could include:**
  - Encouraging walkers and bikers to utilize the right side of the street (with sidewalks)
  - Recruiting residents to participate in future walk audits and efforts to promote walkability in Pinetops
  - Educating homeowners to use proper waste management strategies (ex: avoiding putting trash or debris on streets, location of landfills, garbage facilities)
  - Encourage beautification efforts in neighborhoods

- **Install signage at key points along regular walking routes. This could include:**
  - Installing signage at local parks to let residents know people might be walking or biking nearby (ex: Children at Play signs at crossing locations)
  - Installing signage to direct residents to local parks and other points of interest (“wayfinding”)
  - Upgrading/replacing current park signage
  - Creating park maps to provide directional routes for ADA accessible areas, routes accessible for strollers/wagons, and information about other important park locations (ex: closest bathrooms)
- **Work with Town and County officials on key maintenance issues along walking routes**
  - Work with town maintenance staff to ensure that debris, grass, and weeds are removed on a regular basis
  - Partner with maintenance staff in Town of Pinetops to install signage for parks and wayfinding projects
  - Partner with Town, County, and State staff to remove obstructions in roads and sidewalks that are unsafe and hazardous for walking



### **Long-Term Goals (1-5 Years)**

- **Partner with DOT and other regional partners to address long-term infrastructure needs, including:**
  - School Crossing Sign and crosswalk at GW Carver Elementary School
  - ADA compliant sidewalks (non-existent throughout town)
  - High visibility pedestrian crosswalks at Town Hall & other busy intersections
  - Light signals at busy intersections
  - Sidewalk repairs throughout the town (see audit photos)
  - Additional sidewalks to allow connectivity throughout the town primarily on W Hamlet towards school and clinic

# Speed Walking Audit

The Town of Speed is a “tiny community” in Edgecombe County that was founded by Andrew Jackson Parker Sr. in 1894. It was named for the town doctor Eugene Travis Speed, Sr. in 1901. This very small town boasts vast farmlands and fields. It was once home to a thriving lumber plant in the first quarter of the century. The current population (2020) is 84 residents. Despite the many challenges of the devastating floods of 1999 and 2016 (which led to loss of leadership in the town are committed to more



opportunities to be physically active safely in their community. The Mayor and a five member board of commissioners are committed to providing opportunities for all Speed's residents to participate in physical activity and recreational activities that promote health and wellness.

On November 21, 2020, Town officials and residents (12 participants, 8 adults and 4 youth) carried out a walk audit around the Town of Speed to assess the walkability of key areas of town. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all participants wore masks and socially distanced before, during, and after the walk audit was completed. The group used the “Walk Audit Checklist” from the Communities Moving Together Walk Audit Guide.

The walking route is noted on the map above. The average walk audit score given by the 8 individuals was 12.85, which indicates the

APPENDIX C. Walk Audit Checklist

WALK AUDIT Checklist

LOCATION OF WALK AUDIT

DATE

Rating  
Scale

1 2 3 4 5  
many problems some problems good very good excellent

For each question listed below, please check the appropriate rating. At the end of the checklist, add up each of the ratings and see how walkable your community is.

1. Did you have room to walk?

☐ Yes ☐ No, please check all problems you saw:

- ☐ Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
- ☐ Sidewalks were broken or cracked
- ☐ Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc.
- ☐ No sidewalks, potty, or shoulders
- ☐ Too much traffic
- ☐ Something else \_\_\_\_\_

Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (check one) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. Was it easy to cross streets?

☐ Yes ☐ No, please check all problems you saw:

- ☐ Road was too wide
- ☐ Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross
- ☐ Needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals
- ☐ Parked cars blocked our view of traffic
- ☐ Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic
- ☐ Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair
- ☐ Something else \_\_\_\_\_

Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (check one) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. Did drivers behave well?

☐ Yes ☐ No, please check all problems you saw:

- ☐ Backed out of driveways without looking
- ☐ Did not yield to people crossing the street
- ☐ Turned into people crossing the street
- ☐ Drove too fast
- ☐ Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through traffic lights
- ☐ Something else \_\_\_\_\_

Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (check one) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. Was it easy to follow safety rules?

Could you...?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Stop and look left, right and then left again before crossing street? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic where there were no sidewalks? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Cross with the light? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (check one) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. Was your walk pleasant?

☐ Yes ☐ No, please check all problems you saw:

- ☐ Needed more grass, flowers, or trees
- ☐ Scary dogs
- ☐ Scary people
- ☐ Not well lighted
- ☐ Dirty, lots of litter or trash
- ☐ Dirty air due to automobile exhaust
- ☐ Something else \_\_\_\_\_

Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (check one) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

How does your neighborhood stack up?  
Add up your ratings and decide.

1.	21-25	Celebrate! You have a great neighborhood for walking.
2.	16-20	Celebrate a little. Your neighborhood is pretty good.
3.	11-15	Okay, but it needs work.
4.	6-10	It needs lots of work. You deserve better than that.
5.	1-5	It's a disaster for walking!

Total

**Steps to Health**  
A partnership between the American  
Public Health Association and the  
National Physical Activity Council

**FAITHFUL  
FAMILIES** Thriving  
Communities

**NC STATE**  
EXTENSION

**NCSTU**  
North Carolina State University  
Division of Extension and Outreach  
Sustaining the Community

**NE SUPPORT OF**  
The National Endowment for the Arts  
The National Endowment for the Humanities  
The National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities

Communities Moving Toward

need for some work to create safe and easy walking conditions for Speed residents to be more physically active. Specific issues are detailed below with representative photos.

100% of auditors reported that they did not have room to walk (average score of 1.75 - between many and some problems)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants noted the need for a crosswalk at Highway 122 and Mill Pond Road</li> </ul>
100% of auditors reported that it was not easy to cross streets (average score of 2.25 - some problems)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants noted the need for a crosswalk at Highway 122 and Mill Pond Road</li> </ul>
38% of auditors recorded that drivers were not behaving well, but most auditors recorded some issues with drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drove too fast</li> <li>Did not yield to people crossing the street</li> </ul>

**Key points of concern included Post Office to Fire Department and New Town Hall Site.**

After conducting the walking audit, the team met to debrief and brainstorm short and long-term goals based on the audit findings.

### **Short-Term Goals (Within 1 Year)**

**→ Provide education for the Speed community about walking and walkability. This could include:**

- ◆ Encouraging walkers and bikers to utilize the right side of the street (with sidewalks)
- ◆ Recruiting residents to participate in future walk audits and efforts to promote walkability in Speed
- ◆ Educating homeowners to use proper waste management strategies (ex: avoiding putting trash or debris on streets, location of landfills, garbage facilities)
- ◆ Encouraging beautification efforts in the community

**→ Install signage at key points along regular walking routes. This could include:**

- ◆ Installing signage at proposed walking track site (when completed)
- ◆ Installing signage to direct residents to points of interest (“wayfinding”)
- ◆ Creating maps to provide directional routes for ADA accessible areas, routes accessible for strollers/wagons, and information about other important locations.

→ **Work with town and county officials on key maintenance issues along walking routes**

- ◆ Work with Town maintenance staff to ensure that debris, grass, and weeds are removed on a regular basis.
- ◆ Partner with maintenance staff in Town of Speed to install signage for walking track and wayfinding projects.
- ◆ Partner with Town, County, and State staff to remove obstructions in roads and streets that are unsafe and hazardous for walking.



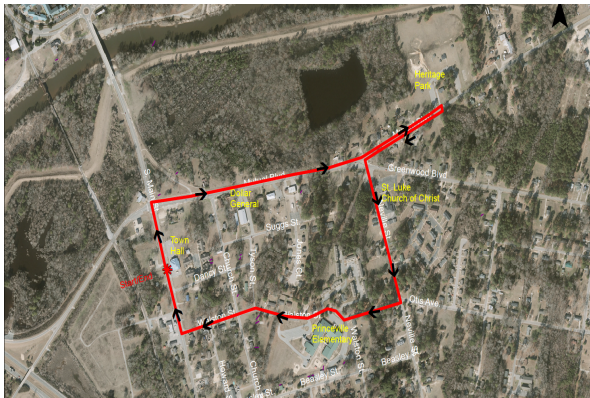
**Long-Term Goals (1-5 Years)**



→ **Partner with DOT and other regional partners to address long-term infrastructure needs, including but not limited to.**

- ◆ ADA compliant sidewalks (non-existent throughout town)
- ◆ High visibility pedestrian crosswalks at Post Office & Mill Pond Road
- ◆ Install sidewalks and crosswalks
- ◆ where needed throughout the town

## Princeville Walking Audit



The Town Of Princeville is a municipality in Edgecombe County with a population of 1,902 (2021). Princeville is the Oldest Town Chartered by Blacks in America, being chartered in 1885. Formerly known as Freedom Hill, the forefathers petitioned the legislators to incorporate Freedom Hill and renamed it Princeville after one of its leaders, Turner Prince. Through perseverance, hardwork and dedication, Princeville was established. It has a rich history of “pride” “resilience” and “survival” from racial and economic disparities to major catastrophic floods, most recently hurricanes Floyd (1999) and Matthew (2016). The town is continuing to rebuild, recover and is currently governed by a Mayor and a four member Board of Commissioners that seek to provide strong leadership, spacing growth, economic opportunity and commitment to the residents to improve existing infrastructure and promote new opportunities to provide safe

and walkable areas in the Town to historic / local destinations.

On May 22, 2021, town and county officials and residents (11 participants, 2 youth) carried out a walk audit around the Town of Princeville to assess walkability of key areas of town. The group used the “Walk Audit Checklist” from the Communities Moving Together Walk Audit Guide.

The walking route is noted in the map above.

The average walk audit score given by the 12 individuals was 12, which indicates the need for some work to create safe and easy walking conditions for Princeville residents to be more physically active. Specific issues are detailed below with representative photos.

Most auditors reported that they did not have room to walk (average score of 2 - between many and some problems)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants noted several issues on Mutual Boulevard, Walston, and Neville Streets</li> <li>Several participants noted that there were no sidewalks along parts of the route, including near Princeville Elementary</li> </ul>
Most auditors reported that it was not easy to cross streets (average score of 2.2 - some problems)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants noted the need for sidewalks in neighborhoods.</li> <li>Many participants noted difficulties crossing streets on Mutual Boulevard, Walston, and Neville streets, including the need for a walking signal at several places along the route.</li> </ul>
Most auditors recorded that drivers were not behaving well (average score of 2.5 - some problems/good)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drove too fast</li> </ul>
Several participants felt that the walk could improve in terms of how pleasant the experience was (average score of 2.8 - good)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One participant noted there was litter along the walk</li> <li>Participants continued to note issues for improvement on Mutual Boulevard, Walston, and Neville Streets</li> </ul>

### **Key Points of Concern**

Participants noted several key points of concern along the walking route, including:

- Difficulties crossing the street and lack of sidewalks on key streets like Mutual, Walston, and Neville
- Lack of sidewalks in neighborhoods leading to Princeville Elementary and Town Hall
- Crossing signal for pedestrians not functioning at S.Main Street and Mutual Blvd.
- Cracked and uneven sidewalks, uncovered holes pose tripping/safety hazards for walking

There are also areas of potential in the community, including a new walking trail that is being constructed through the town (the Princeville Heritage Trail), and potential connections between Princeville Elementary, local neighborhoods, the new Senior Center, Town Hall, and local businesses like the Dollar General.

Additionally, the walk audit identified several places the town and county could leverage to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Heritage Park is currently being used as a COVID testing site, and the new senior center (across from the Town Hall) will include a large outdoor deck that could be utilized for programming for older adults that is socially distanced and COVID-safe. Additionally, the new Heritage Trail will provide vital connectivity through the town, and connect with the history of the community,

offering another outdoor space for families to experience during and after the pandemic. Creating better connectivity between Princeville and Tarboro could aid people who need to walk to the health department for COVID-19 vaccines - but to do this, the crosswalk signal at South Main Street and Mutual Boulevard should be addressed.



Mutual Blvd.  
Cracked and uneven sidewalk  
Vegetation growth in sidewalk



Mutual Blvd. and South Main  
Uneven sidewalk and overgrown grass  
Cracks in sidewalk



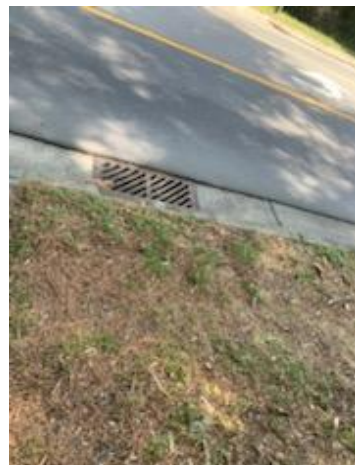
Corner of Mutual Blvd. and South Main St.  
Signal at crosswalk not functioning properly



Neville St.  
Storm drain needs screen



Walston St.  
Hole in the ground needs  
inspection and cover



South Main and Walston  
Grid over the storm drain  
needs to be replaced



Walston St.  
Needs a speed bump or a form of speed restriction near school  
No sidewalks near school or leading to the school  
Crosswalk and signage needed

## Solutions

After conducting the walking audit, the team met to debrief and brainstorm short and long-term goals based on the audit findings.

### Short-Term Goals (Within 1 Year)

- Provide educational materials for the Princeville Community about walkability and future walking audits
- Install signage for directional and historical places within the town
- Work with the Town, County and State officials on key maintenance and infrastructure issues along walking routes (see points of concern above)

### Long-Term Goals (1-5 Years)

- ➔ Partner with DOT and other regional partners to address long-term infrastructure needs, including but not limited to:
  - ◆ Need for ADA compliant sidewalks
  - ◆ School Crossing signs and crosswalks at Princeville Elementary School
  - ◆ Sidewalk and street repairs throughout the town
  - ◆ Repair and/or replace light signals at S. Main and Mutual Blvd.



## SECTION 2: THE PEOPLE OF EDGECOMBE COUNTY

### INTRODUCTION

Edgecombe County has a rich history, starting in 1741 when it was originally organized from Bertie County. The County was named after Richard Edgcumbe, who became the first Baron of Mount Edgcumbe in 1742. Like many other counties in North Carolina, Edgecombe County experienced border changes until the mid-nineteenth century. Surrounding counties, Granville, Halifax, Nash, and Wilson, all incorporated a small portion of Edgecombe County.



Tarboro, the county seat, was often used as a prosperous inland port. Similarly, the Tar River was used for trade and transportation up until the Civil War. Tarboro is home to a charming historic district and many homes from the 1700s are still located in the district. Rocky Mount is the largest city in Edgecombe County-- so large, that half of the city is located in Nash County. Rocky Mount is known for industrial productivity and thriving businesses. Surrounding towns in Edgecombe County include Conetoe, Leggett, Macclesfield, Pinetops, Princeville, Sharpsburg, Speed, and Whitakers.

Edgecombe County is one of the oldest counties in North Carolina, located in the Coastal Plain region of the eastern part of the State. Tuscarora Indians historically inhabited the County in the mid-1700s, and many Tuscarora still reside in the area. With 505 square miles, the county is known for its low population density, rural lifestyle, natural vistas, and warm sense of

community. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of July 2018, the population estimate of Edgecombe County was 52,005 residents. In the last eight years, the county has experienced a slight 8% decline in population. Based on the population trend, it is anticipated that the population in Edgecombe County will experience a continued decline, or at best remain stable.

The U.S. Census Bureau not only looks at the population density, but it also highlights many socioeconomic factors. To give these numbers some meaning, the Census Bureau can compare counties to their corresponding state. For the purpose of this document, Edgecombe County was compared with the State of North Carolina. Out of the estimated 52,005 residents of Edgecombe County, 53.8% are female, which is slightly higher than North Carolina at 51.4%. The largest difference when looking at age demographics is seen in the population that is 65 years and older. 19.7% residents of Edgecombe County are 65 years and older, whereas North Carolina has slightly fewer individuals 65 and older(16.3%). A unique trait of Edgecombe County is the fact that many residents are born and raised in the

County, and many people stay and contribute to the County far into adulthood. Between the years of 2013-2017, only 2.1% of residents were born outside the United States, whereas 7.8% of North Carolina residents were foreign born. It is also interesting to note that Edgecombe County has fewer residents for whom English is not the dominant language spoken in the home (4.1%) in comparison to North Carolina residents overall (11.4%).

Edgecombe County reported a slightly lower rate of high school graduates (78.5%) between the years 2013-2017 than the state of North Carolina (86.9%). However, the difference in the percentage of people with a bachelor's degree was striking. 11.6% of Edgecombe County residents have a bachelor's degree, compared to 29.9% of North Carolinians. The average education level of Edgecombe County naturally correlates to the median income of the County.

The median income in Edgecombe County is almost \$33,000 per year, considerably lower than the median income in North Carolina of \$50,000. 25.5% of county

residents live in poverty, as opposed to 14% in North Carolina. Even more striking is the percentage of families with children under five living in poverty. 45% of families in Edgecombe County with children under five live below the poverty line, compared to the county average in North Carolina of 23%. Related to the lower income in Edgecombe County is the median price of homes. During the years of 2013-2017, the median price of owner-occupied housing units was \$84,000, substantially lower than the median price of homes in North Carolina, averaging \$161,000. Similarly, the median rent in Edgecombe County was \$659, notably lower than North Carolina's median rent of \$844.

Regarding race, the largest difference between Edgecombe County and North Carolina is the percentage of Black or African American residents. Over half of the population of Edgecombe County is Black or African American (57.8%), as opposed to the average in North Carolina of 22.2%, and even the national average of 13.4%. Similarly, North Carolina has a higher percentage of white residents of 70.6%, in comparison to Edgecombe County

at 39.8%. Finally, Edgecombe County has a smaller percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents (4.8%), compared to the state of North Carolina at 9.6%.

Switching gears to look at health outcomes, Edgecombe County reported a high percentage of residents who lack consistent access to a reliable food supply. North Carolina reported an average of 16% of residents that lack a reliable food supply, whereas Edgecombe County reported 26%. Similarly, Edgecombe County reported that 31% of adults do not engage in physically active behavior (i.e. running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise), slightly higher than North Carolina residents as a whole.





**To summarize, below is a quick review of Edgecombe County demographics:**

- Edgecombe County is a small county of 52,005 residents.
- 19.7% residents of Edgecombe County are 65 years and older, whereas North Carolina has a slightly younger overall population.
- 11.6% of Edgecombe County residents have a bachelor's degree, compared to 29.9% of North Carolinians.
- The median income in Edgecombe County is almost \$33,000 per year, considerably lower than the median income in North Carolina of \$50,000.
- Over half of the population of Edgecombe County is Black or African American (57.8%), as opposed to the percentage in North Carolina of 22.2%.

## RESIDENT INPUT

One of the key first steps in developing a park and recreation plan is to understand the perspective of residents. As part of this planning process, the following initiatives have been taken to gather resident input:

- **Community Survey** - In 2019 and early 2020, the Park and Recreation Task Force worked with park and recreation researchers, as well as Recreation Resources Service, to develop a resident survey. The survey was implemented in person and online between June 27, 2019 and February 14, 2020. 438 residents completed the survey. The questionnaire is included as an appendix, but includes questions asking for input on current park use, conditions of existing parks, interest in various recreational activities, priorities for park improvements and funding options for parks.
- **Community Resident Information Session and Survey** - On April 8, 2021, the Parks and Recreation Task Force held an information session to share information with residents about the park and recreation planning process, and to gather input on the work to date and priorities for future planning. A survey was included with the information session, which was conducted on Zoom due to COVID-19, and shared via Facebook and YouTube through the County and park and recreation task force members' websites and social media. A total of 20 people viewed the presentation live, 117 people viewed the presentation on YouTube and 59 people completed the survey.

## Community Resident Survey

The first task of the park and recreation task force was to develop a survey to assess community interest in, and priorities for, a parks and recreation department in Edgecombe County. Building on similar surveys conducted in other counties across the state (provided by staff at RRS), the team developed a comprehensive survey to assess citizen input and priorities (see Appendix A for survey). The survey was delivered in hard copy and online formats. A total of 438 surveys were completed.



Hard copies of the survey (with a lock box to ensure confidentiality) were available at: Edgecombe County Memorial Library, Pinetops Library, Pinetops Town Hall, EL Robinson Senior Center, MA Ray Center, Pender Square Apartments (Section 8), Health Department, Speed Town Hall, Down East Partnership for Children, and Michael's Angels (mentoring program).

At the Health Department (HD), the survey was distributed as:

- Email to all HD staff.
- Posted survey flyer in Rocky Mount Office; on the 1st, 4th, and 6th floors, as well as the client elevator in the main building (Human Services Building).
- Hard copies were distributed to the following departments to ask clients/community members to fill out – WIC in Tarboro and Rocky Mount.

Yvonne Murphy (Edgecombe County Cooperative Extension) also conducted surveys in person in several locations throughout the County.

The survey was also distributed online, using Qualtrics. A flier advertising the survey opening and closing date, as well as the web address was created and shared on Edgecombe County and county agency social media pages.

The survey was open from June 27, 2019 - February 14, 2020. At the midpoint of data collection, the park and recreation team assessed the data collected to ensure that it represented the County demographics related to race, ethnicity, and geography. Recognizing that some towns and cities were under-represented, the task force carried out the survey in targeted areas of the county to ensure representation. Survey data was analyzed by NC State University staff with training in health statistics and quantitative analysis. A total of 438 residents completed the survey.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Decision-Maker's Gender	N = 438
Men	21% (93)
Women	70% (306)
Prefer not to answer	1% (4)
Missing	8% (35)
Age of Persons in Household	N = (438)
Under 5	36% (159)
5-9	28% (121)
10-14	21% (91)
15-18	20% (88)
19-30	31% (134)
31-40	23%(102)
41-50	30% (132)
51-60	29% (126)
61-70	24% (106)
70+	11% (50)
Race	N = 438
Black or African-American	52% (229)
White	34% (148)
Latino or Hispanic	1% (5)
Asian	0% (0)
Native American	0% (5)
Other	1% (6)
Prefer not to answer	3% (11)

Missing	9% (38)
Ascribed Income	N = 438
Under \$20,000	8% (37)
\$20,000-\$39,999	25% (111)
\$40,000-\$69,999	16% (70)
\$70,000-\$99,999	12% (53)
\$100,000-\$129,999	7% (32)
\$130,000 and over	2% (9)
Prefer not to answer	19% (84)
Missing	10% (42)
Municipality	N = 438
Tarboro	41% (178)
Rocky Mount	15% (64)
Pinetops	11% (48)
Missing	10% (45)
Princeville	6% (28)
Conetoe	4% (17)
Macclesfield	4% (19)
Leggett	3% (15)
Speed	3% (15)
Whitakers	2% (8)
Sharpsburg	0% (1)

## SURVEY FINDINGS

A table with all survey findings is included in Appendix X, but below we summarize several key questions in narrative form.

### **1- “In your opinion do you believe there is a need for more parks and recreation facilities/programs in Edgecombe County? Please check yes or no.”**

- Eighty-one percent of residents in Edgecombe County believe that there is a need for more parks and recreation facilities/programs in Edgecombe County.
- When the residents were asked what type of existing or potential park they would be most interested in, 83% responded positively for walking trails/greenways and outdoor event/performance areas. This was followed closely by 81% of respondents highlighting picnicking areas and playgrounds. A skateboarding/BMX park was not high on the list, with 45% of respondents responding negatively to a potential skateboarding/BMX park.

### **3- 1-”How often do you or other members of your family use the following Edgecombe County parks, trails, sports fields or other recreational facilities? Please select one response for each location.”**

- Out of the 14 highlighted parks, trails, sports fields or other recreational facilities in Edgecombe County, the two most visited parks were Braswell Park and Recreation Center (49% of participants stated that someone in their family ‘occasionally’ uses the park), and Indian Lake Sports Complex/Kids in Park Walking Trail (43% of participants stated that someone in their family ‘occasionally’ uses the park). Answer choices ranged from ‘regularly’ use the park to ‘never’ use the park.
- It is interesting to note, however, that when asked about the frequency of existing park use among family members (answer choices ranging from ‘regularly’ uses the park to ‘never’ uses the park), 12 of the 14 parks showed the highest percentage of respondents ‘never’ utilizing the park (percentages range from 38% to 82%).
- When survey respondents were asked whether anyone in their family had ever visited any of the listed Edgecombe County parks, the following four parks were the most popular: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park (50%), Clark Park & Recreation Center (59%), Braswell



Park & Recreation Center (88%), and Indian Lake Sports Complex/Kids in Park Walking Trail (83%). More than 50% of the respondents reported that no one in their family had ever visited the remaining ten parks.

- It is also interesting to note that when respondents were asked to report the reasons of why members in their family did not use Edgecombe County parks, recreation facilities, or recreation programs, the top reasons were: facilities are not well maintained (38%), too far from home (25%), and facilities I want or need are not available (23%).

**6- “If the community had money to invest in THREE programs and facilities, which three would you like to see the county invest in? Please select THREE options below.”**

- Survey respondents were also asked, if the community had money to invest in three community programs and facilities, what would they be? 409 respondents said they would like Edgecombe to invest in a splash pad, 358 respondents stated they would like to see an indoor recreation center, and 200 respondents stated they would like volleyball courts and play areas for children with disabilities.
- The respondents were also given a list of existing and potential parks and recreation facilities and programs and were asked to respond positively or negatively to the park. Over 50% of respondents reported positively to all 25 parks and facilities except Skateboard/BMX park (41% of respondents reported positively, 45% of respondents reported negatively). The top four parks/facilities listed were: playgrounds (81%), picnicking areas (81%), walking trails and greenways (83%), and outdoor events/performance areas (83%).

**7 - Switching gears to how parks and recreation programs and facilities should be funded, 85% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed when asked if it's a good idea for Edgecombe County to partner with other organizations and agencies to deliver park and recreation services.** Similarly, 84% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Edgecombe County needs a Countywide supported parks and recreation department that provides facilities and programs for a wide range of participants. When looking at the percentage of respondents who reacted positively regarding the various funding options, the percentages ranged from 54% to 84%. Conversely, 16% of survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed when asked if they would be willing to pay a fee for the use of certain recreation facilities in Edgecombe County.

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS

On April 8, 2021 a Virtual Community Input Meeting was held. This meeting was developed to help share with the community what the Edgecombe Parks and Recreation task force have been working on since the formation of the task force. The meeting was also held to get feedback from community members about their needs for a county parks and recreation department. The meeting was planned to be held virtually due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. ZOOM was the platform used to host the meeting and it allowed for several panelists to present. The purpose of the meeting was to allow community members to hear from panelists about work the task force has done, opportunities currently available, and long term goals of the task force.

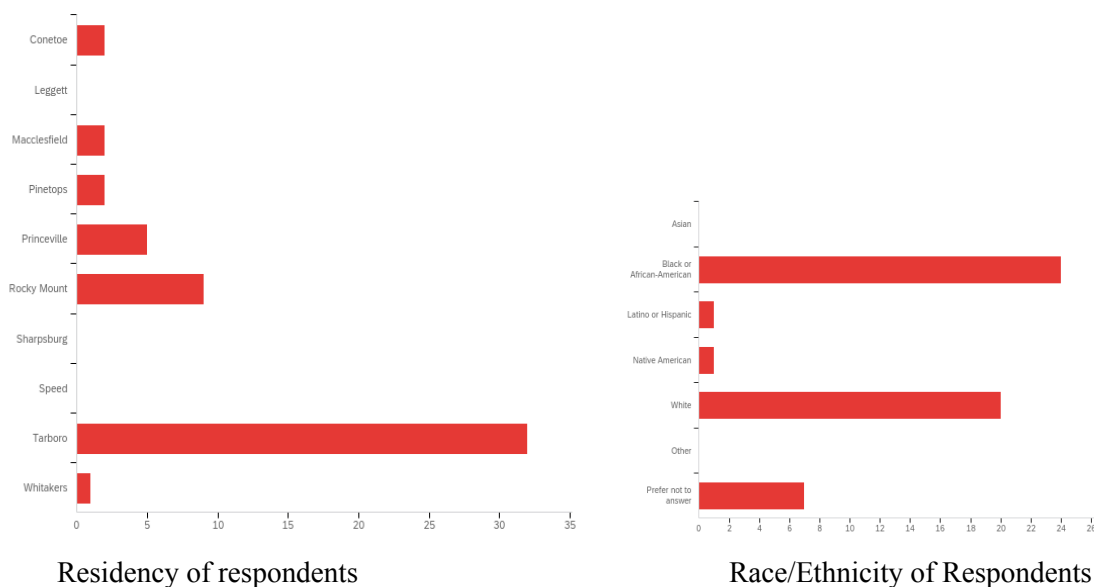


The meeting was hosted by Yvonne Murphy, Edgecombe County Health Matters Associate. Yvonne welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the panelists. She also moderated the session by reading the panelist questions, and relayed viewer questions to the panelists. The panelists consisted of Eric Evans, Edgecombe County Manager, Dervin Spell, Senior Planner/ Edgecombe County, and Travis Stigge, Director of Tarboro Parks and Recreation. Each panelist gave a brief presentation and responded to questions. Eric Evans' presentation was “We want to hear from you”. He asked participants how they felt about the recreation opportunities the County currently offers, what we can do to improve them, and what else Edgecombe County citizens would like to see in reference to a parks and recreation department. Mr. Evans also discussed the importance of recreation in response to health and wellness, quality of life, and how it can attract tourists. Dervin Spell presented on projects Yvonne has already completed. He highlighted the work at Willow Grove Sunshine Park in Whitakers. In partnership with Lowe’s of Tarboro, materials were donated i.e. (trash cans, benches, picnic tables and landscaping to upgrade the existing walking track). This park has been maintained by a community citizen and the Health Matters program was able to assist with bringing some much needed updates to this community park.(walking track signage, carport shelter and screening materials for walking track). He also discussed the work that has been done through the task force and Yvonne on helping the town of Speed to get a walking track. Travis Stigge discussed the opportunities the Town of Tarboro has to offer to promote physical activity and recreation. He also discussed projects that the Town of Tarboro Parks and Recreation Department is hoping to accomplish such as providing a dog park.

After the presentations, panelists were asked a series of questions from the host. Some questions were: What does a parks and recreation program look like to you in Edgecombe County? The panelists also addressed questions from the viewers. The meeting lasted about 1 hour.

## OVERVIEW OF SURVEY RESPONSES

After the community resident feedback session, the Parks and Recreation Task Force distributed a short survey (see appendix C) to hear feedback from residents about priorities for action related to parks and recreation programming and facilities. The survey was posted on the county and partner organizations' social media pages for approximately three weeks in May of 2021. 59 residents completed the brief survey, which asked them to think about what they liked best about parks and recreation opportunities in Edgecombe County, what should be improved or changed, and how they would prioritize revitalization projects and facilities. Most respondents (n=33) had lived in Edgecombe County for 30 years or more, and only 4 respondents had lived in the county for less than five years. Residents were from across the County, although Rocky Mount and Tarboro had the greatest participation. Most respondents were Black/African American or White.



Residents started by sharing what they liked and appreciated about Edgecombe's current parks and recreation services and facilities. They noted that facilities are clean, accessible, and free. They also appreciated the variety of spaces, with some mentioning the quiet and serene locations to walk and others talking about playgrounds and the variety of activities for children and families.

However, residents also shared some drawbacks to county facilities, including a lack of coordinated information about the facilities and resources available, the need for more accessible facilities for people with disabilities, the lack of programs or facilities in minority and rural communities, and issues of access and transportation. They shared:



- Not enough and need to be more far reaching. I do understand that it is a large area.
- Not enough done for the minority areas, such as pools and playgrounds, water parks
- No area for does? with disabilities or children area
- Transportation to these parks in some towns is hard to get to.
- I did not know we had any, only familiar with Braswell & Indian lake in Tarboro
- We need more and better access for citizens in unincorporated areas of the County.

Some residents (n=2) were concerned about safety or misuse of facilities. One resident stated that this would need to be addressed by funding and staffing, noting, “As for the parks, older kids do not respect the property. Equipment gets destroyed and then it sits there because there is no funding to repair or clean up what was destroyed.”

Overall, most residents (n=57) were excited about the prospect of a parks and recreation department for the County, noting that it would have several benefits for the County and its residents, including opportunities to improve health and physical activity, bring needed resources to rural communities, and encourage growth in the county by supporting new residents and parents.

They shared:

- It would enable people from all parts of the county to work together to develop and maintain resources for all, it would enable staff to support one another and share knowledge & skills.
- It would give parents more opportunities to do things with their children.
- Having an Edgecombe County parks and recreation department would be beneficial for county residents because it would make more county residents aware of what is already

available to them. Also, the County may think of ways to incorporate sports teams into its own department. It will hopefully encourage more residents to be physically active.

- Hopefully, they would help in maintaining and improving already established town parks. The department could also be beneficial in establishing sports recreational programs for non-city limit residents of Edgecombe.
- I believe it would enrich the lives of citizens and may draw new citizens from neighboring areas to reside in Edgecombe while working elsewhere.
- It can help to support all the municipalities in Edgecombe County, especially those more rural areas with no or limited access to recreation.

Despite this, some residents (n=2) expressed concerns about costs of a new department, as well as misuse of county property:

- Unless they are maintained with those who have authority to keep it safe, it's a waste of taxpayers money
- I'm afraid it would just be another expense that tax paying residents would be responsible for.

Residents were asked to prioritize spending for new facilities in the community related to parks and recreation. Overwhelmingly, they listed a splash pad as their top choice for a new facility in the community (n=12 residents listed this first, with 5 residents listing it as their second and third choices, respectively). A close second was facilities for children with disabilities (n=5 residents listed this first, with 11 and 3 residents listing it as their second and third choices respectively). A full list of the priorities is below.



**Table 3: Priorities for new parks and recreation facilities in Edgemcombe County**

Field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	Total
1 Splash pad Play areas for children with disabilities	21.82% (12)	10.91% (6)	9.09% (5)	5.45% (3)	7.27% (4)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	55
2 Dog park	9.09% (5)	20.00% (11)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	7.27% (4)	9.09% (5)	3.64% (2)	9.09% (5)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	55
3 Walking trails and greenways	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	5.45% (3)	5.45% (3)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	7.27% (4)	3.64% (2)	7.27% (4)	7.27% (4)	5.45% (3)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	7.27% (4)	0.00% (0)	55
4 Picnicking areas	9.09% (5)	3.64% (2)	12.73% (7)	9.09% (5)	3.64% (2)	5.45% (3)	5.45% (3)	7.27% (4)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	10.91% (6)	5.45% (3)	5.45% (3)	7.27% (4)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	55
5 Playgrounds	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	7.27% (4)	3.64% (2)	10.91% (6)	7.27% (4)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	12.73% (7)	7.27% (4)	10.91% (6)	3.64% (2)	5.45% (3)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	55
6 Community gardens	12.73% (7)	7.27% (4)	12.73% (7)	0.00 (0)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	9.09% (5)	9.09% (5)	9.09% (5)	9.09% (5)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	55
7 Fishing lakes and piers	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	5.45% (3)	5.45% (3)	9.09% (5)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	10.91% (6)	14.55% (8)	10.91% (6)	1.82% (1)	5.45% (3)	3.64% (2)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	55
8 Natural areas and wildlife habitats	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	5.45% (3)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	5.45% (3)	9.09% (5)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	16.36% (9)	16.36% (9)	3.64% (2)	7.27% (4)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	5.45% (3)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	55
9 River access for fishing	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	5.45% (3)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	14.55% (8)	20.00% (11)	1.82% (1)	7.27% (4)	9.09% (5)	3.64% (2)	5.45% (3)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	55
10 Outdoor fitness equipment	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00 (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00 (0)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	16.36% (9)	16.36% (9)	7.27% (4)	5.45% (3)	7.27% (4)	1.82% (1)	9.09% (5)	9.09% (5)	0.00% (0)	55
11 Skateboard/BMX park	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	7.27% (4)	16.36% (9)	10.91% (6)	9.09% (5)	5.45% (3)	7.27% (4)	0.00% (0)	7.27% (4)	0.00% (0)	55
12 Biking trails	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	7.27% (4)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	7.27 (4)	5.45% (3)	10.91% (6)	5.45 (3)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	12.73% (7)	5.45% (3)	7.27% (4)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	7.27% (4)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	55
13 Football fields	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	5.45% (3)	5.45% (3)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	5.45 (3)	9.09% (5)	0.00% (0)	9.09% (5)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	18.18% (10)	9.09% (5)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	5.45% (3)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	55
14 Signage to help you walk or bike more	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00 (0)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	7.27% (4)	5.45% (3)	7.27% (4)	5.45% (3)	7.27% (4)	5.45% (3)	9.09% (5)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	9.09% (5)	9.09% (5)	7.27% (4)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	55
15 Soccer fields	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	5.45% (3)	5.45% (3)	5.45% (3)	5.45% (3)	7.27% (4)	7.27% (4)	9.09% (5)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	5.45% (3)	9.09% (5)	7.27% (4)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	55
16 Sports programs for youth	1.82% (1)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	5.45% (3)	5.45 (3)	5.45% (3)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	29.09% (16)	9.09% (5)	9.09% (5)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	55
17 Baseball or softball fields	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	7.27% (4)	9.09% (5)	5.45% (3)	3.64% (2)	9.09% (5)	9.09% (5)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	7.27% (4)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	7.27% (4)	0.00% (0)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	55
18 Sports programs for adults	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00 (0)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	5.45% (3)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	9.09% (5)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	5.45% (3)	7.27% (4)	34.55% (19)	9.09% (5)	7.27% (4)	0.00% (0)	55
19 Tennis courts	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	5.45% (3)	10.91% (6)	12.73% (7)	1.82% (1)	9.09% (5)	7.27% (4)	9.09% (5)	1.82% (1)	5.45 (3)	7.27% (4)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	9.09% (5)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	5.45% (3)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	55
20 Arts & cultural programs for youth	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	7.27% (4)	0.00 (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	40.00% (22)	7.27% (4)	1.82% (1)	55
21 Volleyball courts	0.00% (0)	3.64% (2)	7.27% (4)	9.09% (5)	9.09% (5)	5.45% (3)	3.64% (2)	12.73% (7)	10.91% (6)	1.82% (1)	5.45% (3)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	7.27% (4)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	5.45% (3)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	55
22 Arts & cultural programs for adults	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	10.91% (6)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	38.18% (21)	1.82% (1)	55
23 Indoor recreation center	7.27% (4)	16.36% (9)	10.91% (6)	9.09% (5)	10.91% (6)	9.09% (5)	9.09% (5)	9.09% (5)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	55
24 Other, please list:	1.82% (1)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	90.91% (50)	55
25 Outdoor event/performance areas	7.27% (4)	5.45% (3)	9.09% (5)	9.09% (5)	1.82% (1)	5.45% (3)	3.64% (2)	0.00% (0)	10.91% (6)	7.27% (4)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	10.91% (6)	9.09% (5)	5.45% (3)	1.82% (1)	3.64% (2)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	1.82% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	55

When residents were asked which facilities they would prioritize for renovation, Braswell Park and Indian Lake were listed as the top two choices. The remaining rankings are listed below:

**Table 4: Priorities for parks and recreation revitalization projects**

#	Field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
1	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park (Rocky Mount)	6.25% (3)	10.42% (5)	2.08% (1)	4.17% (2)	14.58% (7)	16.67% (8)	2.08 (1)	4.17% (2)	10.42% (5)	6.25% (3)	4.17% (2)	6.25% (3)	10.42% (5)	2.08% (1)	48
2	Clark Park & Recreation Center (Tarboro)	12.50% (6)	12.50% (6)	22.92% (11)	20.83% (10)	6.25% (3)	8.33% (4)	4.17% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	2.08% (1)	2.08% (1)	8.33% (4)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	48
3	Braswell Park & Recreation Center (Tarboro)	20.83% (10)	16.67% (8)	8.33% (4)	14.58% (7)	10.42% (5)	2.08% (1)	2.08 (1)	0.00% (0)	2.08% (1)	8.33% (4)	4.17% (2)	0.00% (0)	6.25% (3)	4.17% (2)	48
4	Indian Lake Sports Complex/Kids in Park Walking Trail (Tarboro)	25.00% (12)	8.33% (4)	16.67% (8)	8.33% (4)	6.25% (3)	8.33% (4)	4.17% (2)	2.08% (1)	2.08% (1)	4.17% (2)	2.08% (1)	4.17% (2)	2.08% (1)	6.25% (3)	48
5	Conetoe Family Life Center Walking Trail	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	8.33% (4)	6.25% (3)	12.50% (6)	8.33% (4)	20.83% (10)	14.58% (7)	12.50% (6)	8.33% (4)	2.08% (1)	6.25% (3)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	48
6	Stith-Talbert Park (Rocky Mount)	2.08% (1)	2.08% (1)	4.17% (2)	0.00% (0)	6.25% (3)	4.17% (2)	8.33% (4)	16.67% (8)	12.50% (6)	8.33% (4)	10.42% (5)	8.33% (4)	4.17% (2)	12.50% (6)	48
7	Princeville Heritage Park	16.67% (8)	8.33% (4)	6.25% (3)	6.25% (3)	2.08% (1)	0.00% (0)	8.33% (4)	6.25% (3)	25.00% (12)	8.33% (4)	4.17% (2)	6.25% (3)	2.08% (1)	0.00% (0)	48
8	Shiloh Landing (Princeville)	4.17% (2)	16.67% (8)	6.25% (3)	6.25% (3)	10.42% (5)	8.33% (4)	4.17% (2)	4.17% (2)	8.33% (4)	18.75% (9)	4.17% (2)	6.25% (3)	2.08% (1)	0.00% (0)	48
9	J. Vines Cobb Park (Pinetops)	2.08% (1)	6.25% (3)	6.25% (3)	18.75% (9)	2.08% (1)	6.25% (3)	8.33% (4)	10.42% (5)	2.08% (1)	2.08% (1)	27.08% (13)	4.17% (2)	4.17% (2)	0.00% (0)	48
10	Macclesfield Town Park	4.17% (2)	6.25% (3)	4.17% (2)	0.00% (0)	12.50% (6)	8.33% (4)	2.08% (1)	2.08% (1)	4.17% (2)	6.25% (3)	2.08% (1)	37.50% (18)	4.17% (2)	6.25% (3)	48
11	Willow Grove Sunshine Park (Whitakers)	4.17% (2)	4.17% (2)	4.17% (2)	2.08% (1)	4.17% (2)	4.17% (2)	6.25% (3)	2.08% (1)	0.00% (0)	6.25% (3)	6.25% (3)	2.08% (1)	52.08% (25)	2.08% (1)	48
12	Discovery Park (Rocky Mount)	0.00% (0)	4.17% (2)	6.25% (3)	4.17% (2)	2.08% (1)	12.50% (6)	12.50% (6)	6.25% (3)	8.33% (4)	8.33% (4)	14.58% (7)	6.25% (3)	8.33% (4)	6.25% (3)	48
13	Three Sisters Park (Battleboro)	0.00% (0)	2.08% (1)	2.08% (1)	2.08% (1)	4.17% (2)	4.17% (2)	4.17% (2)	4.17% (2)	2.08% (1)	2.08% (1)	8.33% (4)	4.17% (2)	0.00% (0)	60.42% (29)	48
14	Conetoe Town Park	2.08% (1)	2.08% (1)	2.08% (1)	6.25% (3)	6.25% (3)	8.33% (4)	12.50% (6)	27.08% (13)	10.42% (5)	10.42% (5)	8.33% (4)	0.00% (0)	4.17% (2)	0.00% (0)	48

# SECTION 3: ESTABLISHING A COUNTYWIDE LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

## INTRODUCTION

The level of service standard is a metric used to determine deficits or surpluses of parkland, funding, staffing, and amenities in a park system based on the population of a county. The analysis begins with a review of other North Carolina counties and the Level of Service (LOS) they use to provide parks and recreation opportunities to their constituents.



It should be noted that the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), in its 1995 report “Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines”, determined there are no “national standards” for park development. Instead, the latest NRPA study recommends that each community is unique, and that standards reflecting the local “uniqueness” should be established. This section utilizes a variety of methods to develop LOS specifically for Edgecombe County.

This study looks specifically at two types of levels, staffing and budget. It is important to note that Edgecombe County does not currently have a parks and recreation department. Facilities in Edgecombe County are those included in a joint use agreement with the school system.

The initial phases of the park and recreation development in the County should first focus on developing an advisory board and department, the development of County on facilities? should be part of the next phase of implementation.

### **Staffing**

Presently Edgecombe County does not have staff devoted solely to recreational programming or facilities. The maintenance, programming and staffing for parks and recreation resources is provided by other municipal governments in the County, private organizations and the school system.

**Table 5: Distribution of recreation employees within Edgecombe and comparable counties**

County	Full Time Employees	Part Time Employees	Seasonal Full Time Employees	Seasonal Part Time Employees
Warren	3	0	0	13
Franklin	6	4	1	1
Edgecombe <sup>1</sup>	0	0	0	0
Halifax <sup>1</sup>	0	0	0	0

*Halifax and Edgecombe Counties do not have a county-wide recreation department*

**Table [x]: Funds allocated for recreation expenses within Edgecombe and comparable counties**

County	Operating Budget	Capital Budget
Warren	428,000	297,540
Franklin	668,330	15,000
Edgecombe <sup>1</sup>	20,000	0
Halifax <sup>2</sup>	0	0

<sup>1</sup> Edgecombe County does not have a county-wide recreation department, but provides mini-grants for community partners engaging in recreation projects

<sup>2</sup> Halifax County does not have a county-wide recreation department, but provides mini-grants for community partners engaging in recreation projects, but this program was suspended or FY20-21 due to COVID-19

## Parks and Recreation Task Force

The Parks and Recreation Task Force has worked hard to develop the parks and recreation system wide comprehensive plan, conduct needs assessment surveys, participate in citizen input meetings and provide input on a variety of other recreation related items. The Task Force is composed of a variety of members from other organizations in the County including, but not limited to, the Library, Planning Department, School System and Health Department.

## SECTION 4: PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

Most of North Carolina's counties have a Parks and Recreation department to coordinate recreation and park activities, programs, and facilities for the County. In Edgecombe County, two municipalities have Parks and Recreation Departments: Tarboro and Rocky Mount. However, the smaller, more rural municipalities in the county do not have access to the coordinated services and programs offered by these departments. A fully operational parks and recreation department that can serve the entire County would benefit Edgecombe County residents from a health and economic development perspective. Because there is not a countywide Parks and Recreation department, residents do not have access to many needed services, facilities and programs that could address some of Edgecombe County's key health concerns - the rise in preventable chronic diseases and mental health challenges being two.



The County has a strong history of partnerships that can bolster these efforts, and the Parks and Recreation Task Force is a strong indicator of these collaborations at the county level. The Health Department, Library System, Cooperative Extension, and local parks and recreation departments have come together - with other County partners and organizations - to develop programs and systems-level changes that have had a real positive impact on the residents of Edgecombe County. These include initiatives like:

- **Countywide Walking Challenges** were implemented in 2020 to assist with physical activity restrictions due to the pandemic. The walking challenges were virtual and allowed the community to connect virtually. These challenges allowed participants to safely walk and increase their physical activity level during the pandemic. The challenges were so successful that we are offering them again in 2021.

- **Shared Use Training with Edgecombe County Public Schools and area Churches.**  
This training will provide ECPS and area churches with the information needed to assist in making all ECPS schools and churches with playgrounds or walking tracks accessible during non-school or service hours to the public. The training will equip the staff with the knowledge of Shared Use.
- **Senior Produce Boxes** are being distributed weekly to County citizens over the age of 60. In partnership with the Nash County Farmers Market and the Area Council on Aging, Edgecombe County receives 35 produce boxes each week to distribute to seniors. This project will run through the end of September impacting over 900 County seniors.
- **The Twin Counties Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Education Trailer** with 20 bikes sized for youth in kindergarten through 8th grade is now available for schools and organizations in Edgecombe to check out at no cost. Edgecombe County Cooperative Extension manages the bike trailer signups and houses the bike trailer. Edgecombe County Government maintains the costs for liability insurance, registration, and licenses.
- **Kids Parks Track Trail/Indian Lake-** The County worked with local partners to apply for a grant funded through Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation to develop more spaces for children and youth to be physically active outside. Funds were used to enhance an existing trail with self-guided activities for individuals of all ages. 1783 residents are within walking distance of the enhanced trail, which was the 100th track trail in NC.
- **Town Of Tarboro Parks and Recreation and Edgecombe County Memorial Library collaborated on the “Story Walk Project” at the Clark Park** walking track in Tarboro. The “story walk” combines healthy activities of walking and movement with the healthy activity of reading a book. This partnership will help to promote reading and physical activity. The cost to provide a new book quarterly will be shared by ECML and the Town of Tarboro Parks and Recreation.

These innovative and successful projects can help to promote and expand park and recreation services in the county, and should be harnessed in the creation of a park and recreation department.

### **COVID-19 Trends impacting Parks and Recreation**

This parks and recreation plan was developed both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has reshaped life and community in many places. During the pandemic, park facilities had to shut down for a short period of time, however as we understood more about how the virus spreads, parks, trails, and other outdoor recreation spaces became vitally important to support

people's physical, social, and emotional health during the pandemic. While the County and Country is emerging from the pandemic, it is important to take into consideration some lessons learned during this time for the future.

In addition to prioritizing citizen feedback and the Task Force priorities, it is important to consider relevant trends in parks and recreation. As with many organizations, the parks and recreation profession was forced to adapt many of its programs and services during the Covid-19 pandemic. As communities begin to return to a sense of normality, NC park and recreation departments should consider the following trends in order to best serve their residents.

1. One of the strongest emerging trends is the focus on health and health equity. This was accentuated by COVID-19. However, data collected by the National Recreation and Parks Association showed that departments have focused on meeting the social needs of communities. For example, recent NRPA Snapshot surveys showed that up to 60 percent of agencies are supporting food distribution, food pantries, COVID-19 testing, daycare for children of essential workers and first responders, and safe places for learning. Thus, there are opportunities for park and recreation centers to become community wellness hubs, to maximize use particularly in more under-resourced communities.
2. Systematic research reviews have shown that enhancing features of rural environments such as investment in playgrounds and parks and recreation facilities both diminish barriers and are key to improving active living in rural communities. However, one of the key differences between rural and urban communities is access to public transportation. Thus, many active living plans in rural communities need to consider ways to create more opportunities for walking and biking.
3. Data showed that visits to parks increased during the pandemic as citizens sought healthy opportunities to be physically active. However, access to parks also exposed inequities between communities as access to the safe and healthy outdoor recreation is considered a privilege when, given the mental and physical benefits, some argue it should be a right. Rural communities often have less funding than urban communities which often have different sources of revenue to leverage.
4. Parks and recreation can be an engine of substantial economic activity in communities and will continue to be post-COVID. For example, data has shown that park and recreation amenities can shape perceptions of a community and overall quality of life, which are often critical in recruiting both employers and employees to an area. Partnering with economic development entities in these communities will be essential.



## County Growth and Opportunity

Economic development is essential in supporting the County's efforts to grow and create thriving employment. Currently, Edgecombe County's unemployment rate is 10.6% compared to the State rate of 6.5%. Economic growth is a vital necessity for strengthening rural communities. Corning opened a warehouse and distribution center this year in Tarboro.

It is expected to be fully operational by the end of December 2020. The full investment will be \$86 million with 150- full time jobs. Additionally, CSX railroad intermodal site is under construction in Rocky Mount and expected to be operational by Q4 2021. The investment is \$118 million with 100 jobs. The indirect impact is estimated to be up to 1,300 jobs. Focus Services, LLC opened a call center in April of 2020. It created 200 jobs with a \$1 million dollar investment. Kingsboro Industrial Park located between Tarboro and Rocky Mount is marketed as a premier industrial park in North Carolina. There are approximately 1,200 acres of land still available with all the necessary infrastructure in place including rail. There are a number of active projects considering the Kingsboro Industrial Park that include: Making the first cut for a manufacturing facility that will build a 1 million square foot facility, \$480 million investment and 350 jobs. We are currently the only site in North Carolina being considered. The county just approved an offer to purchase from a developer to buy 8 acres to build a convenience store with a restaurant to accommodate increasing truck traffic. Active negotiations for agreement are ongoing with an investor to build a mixed use development that will include housing, commercial and institutional development. In conclusion, Edgecombe County, although often at the bottom of county health ranking reports or county economic development indicators, demonstrates what can happen when communities work together to build resilience, work across sectors, and focus on health equity and structural change.

## Parks and Recreation Task Force

In early 2019, the County Manager and staff from Edgecombe County Cooperative Extension met to discuss the need for a comprehensive approach to parks and recreation in Edgecombe County. Supported by a grant from the North Carolina Division of Public Health, County Manager Eric Evans asked Health Matters Associate with Edgecombe County Extension,

Yvonne Murphy, to lead the creation of a Parks and Recreation Task Force for the County. The Task Force held its first meeting in February of 2019, and met monthly throughout creation of this master plan (February 2019 - September 2021). This Task Force is made up of a diverse group of members, from many sectors of the County, including public health, parks and recreation, extension, libraries, planning, local nonprofits and private entities working in the area of parks and recreation. In addition, the Task Force has been supported by technical expertise from faculty at NC State (Dr. Annie Hardison-Moody, NC State Extension Specialist and Dr. Jason Bocarro, Professor in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management) and Recreation Resources Service (Dr. Charlyne Smith and Brittany Shipp).

The Task Force has drafted and administered the county resident surveys and feedback sessions, as well as drafted and edited this report. They have also developed a list of proposals and recommendations, based on this feedback.

## PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on input from residents, community surveys, and an inventory of existing parks and recreation facilities in the county, the Parks and Recreation Task Force has developed the following recommendations for action to move forward park and recreation services in Edgecombe County.

- 1. Create a permanent parks and recreation advisory board.** The Parks and Recreation Task Force has been a vital component in creating this plan and moving forward park and recreation programming in Edgecombe County. This Task Force can be a starting point for the board, but this board should be permanent and established by the County Commissioners.

Recreation Resources Services (RRS), an organization through NC State University, offers guidance and training for counties to establish an Advisory Board. RRS staff should be consulted to assist staff and elected officials in determining:

- Board size and composition
- Structure of Board appointment
- Roles and authority over Advisory Board
- Organizational and reporting structure of Board

In addition to providing guidance on Board structure, RRS consultants can provide assistance with training and education of both staff and board members.

2. **Create a permanently funded Parks and Recreation Department, including a Director position.** Based on the findings in this report, the Task Force recommends that the County create a permanently funded Parks and Recreation Department, with a Director position. The Director would be tasked with developing partnerships throughout the county to create new opportunities for park and recreation programming and facilities, securing grants and funds to develop new parks and programming, overseeing the County's successful Park and Recreation mini-grant program (currently funded through the County budget), and creating new opportunities for recreation programming throughout the county.
3. **Continue and increase funding for the Park and Recreation mini-grant program.** Currently, the County funds the Park and Recreation mini-grant program at \$20,000/year. These funds are vital to support local organizations as they offer park and recreation opportunities for individuals and families throughout the county. These programs meet the needs of local communities and empower local organizations to implement programs and services that build on the assets they possess to improve the health of the people they serve. Although small in size, these mini-grants have had a large impact in Edgecombe County. To date, over fifty organizations have been funded through the mini-grant program with a total of \$70,000 in grant funds awarded since 2015. The goal for funding for this program from the County is \$50,000. In 2020, the Board of Commissioners increased the initial funding from \$10,000 (\$2,000 maximum award amount) to \$ 20,000 based on the successful and innovative proposals received.



4. **Expand access to walking trails and places to walk throughout the county.** As noted in the walk audit reports included here, it is often difficult to find opportunities to walk in small, rural communities. The Parks and Recreation Task Force recommends that the Parks and Recreation Director and Advisory Board work with local organizations, county planners, and DOT officials to improve access to places to walk in the county. This includes things like improving sidewalks in communities where issues are identified, creating temporary or permanent crosswalks across busy streets where people are trying to commute from one place to another (ex: at a school crossing, or to get to the post office or town hall), and installing signage to encourage people to bike or walk from place to place.

Additionally, the Parks and Recreation Director and Advisory Board should work with municipal and county officials to expand access to walking through new and refurbished walking trails and tracks. This could include:

- promoting shared use of school or faith community facilities to walk - including walking trails and tracks - by installing signage and creating programs to encourage people to use these free, accessible spaces,
- Enhancing current walking trails or tracks and encouraging people to use them by developing innovative programming (ex: walking challenges),
- Creating new walking tracks and trails throughout the county, with a focus on small, rural areas that have limited sidewalk access, parks, or other places to walk and be active.

**5. Encourage wider use of free and open facilities by promoting shared use opportunities in schools and faith communities.** Edgecombe County School playgrounds are currently open for use by the public. The Parks and Recreation Director and Advisory Board



should work closely with the Edgecombe County School Board and School System to promote shared use for the community, by

- Training school staff on shared use standards, so that they are aware of the shared use policies and welcome families and community members to their school properties,
- Installing signage at schools that notifies the community that they are open for usage, including the times that the facilities are open,
- Enhancing playground and other recreation facilities in schools, through grants and other funding mechanisms, to create opportunities to play and be active for all residents of the county. This could include installing new accessible equipment and facilities for people of all abilities, or creating walking tracks/trails around playgrounds so that parents can walk while their children play.

## SECTION 5: ACTION PLANNING

### INTRODUCTION

The intent of this effort is to not simply document the recreation needs of our County and the recommendations of those who participated in the process, but to create a road map that will lead to an improved quality of life for our citizens. Therefore, following the adoption of the Parks and Recreation Plan by the Board of Commissioners, we will immediately proceed with implementing the plan. We anticipate initial actions steps to include:



#### **1. Create a permanent Parks and Recreation Advisory board.**

The Parks and Recreation Task Force will present for the Board of Commissioners' consideration the creation of a permanent Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The Taskforce will consult with Recreation Resources Services (RRS) on the Advisory Board's size, composition, structure, roles, and authority. Once the Advisory Board is created and appointed, RRS consultants will provide assistance with training and education of both staff and board members.

**2. Create a permanently funded Parks and Recreation Department, including a Director position.** In consultation with the County Manager, the Advisory Board will develop a job description and proposed budget to present as a recommendation for the creation of a Parks and Recreation Director position. The Director will be tasked with developing partnerships throughout the County to create new opportunities for park and recreation programming and facilities, securing grants and funds to develop new parks and programming, overseeing the County's successful Park and Recreation mini-grant program, and creating new opportunities for recreation programming throughout the County. The goal is to add this position by Fiscal Year 2022-2023.



### **3. Continue and increase funding for the Park and Recreation mini-grant program.**

Currently, the County funds the Park and Recreation mini-grant program at \$20,000/year. Although small in size, these mini-grants have had a large impact in Edgecombe County. To date, the County has provided \$50,000 in funding for over fifty non-profit organizations in Edgecombe County.

Due to the many innovative and

successful proposals for recreation/physical activity programming, the County increased the original amount from \$10,000 a year to \$20,000 for the 2020 grant period. The goal is to increase funding for this program to \$50,000 annually, including with grants from outside sources, by Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

### **4. Expand access to walking trails and places to walk throughout the county.**

The Parks and Recreation Director and Advisory Board will work with local organizations, county planners, and DOT officials to improve access to places to walk in the County, with an emphasis on areas where safe and accessible places for citizens to walk is limited. Work will include improving sidewalks, creating temporary or permanent crosswalks across busy streets where people are trying to commute from one place to another (ex: at a school crossing, or to get to the post office or town hall), installing signage to encourage people to bike or walk from place to place. In addition, the goal is to work with community partners to create at least three new walking trails/tracks in strategic locations as recommended by the Advisory Board.

### **5. Encourage wider use of free and open facilities by promoting shared use opportunities in schools and faith communities.**

To capitalize on existing parks and recreation assets located at the Edgecombe County School facilities, the Parks and Recreation Director and Advisory Board will work closely with Edgecombe County Schools to promote the shared use agreement that was executed in 2015. We will also partner with community and faith-based organizations to create shared use opportunities. The goal is to prepare and promote at least five schools and three community/faith-based shared use facilities for public use.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Parks and Recreation Resident Survey

### Edgecombe County Parks and Recreation Survey

*The following information is being gathered to assess the parks and recreation interests, needs, of people in Edgecombe County. As a county resident, your responses to the following questions are important to us. The information that you provide will assist in establishing priorities and a strategic direction for parks and recreation services in Edgecombe County. Please read each question carefully before responding, and please answer each question to the best of your ability. You can be assured that all individual responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for your thoughtful responses to the following questions.*

- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not Sure
2. Have you or other members of your household visited any of the following Edgecombe County parks, trails, sports fields or other recreational facilities?  
(YES or NO for each)
- a. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park (Rocky Mount)
  - b. Discovery Park (Rocky Mount)
  - c. Stith-Talbert Park (Rocky Mount)
  - d. Clark Park & Recreation Center (Tarboro)
  - e. Braswell Park & Recreation Center (Tarboro)
  - f. Indian Lake Sports Complex/Kids in Park Walking Trail (Tarboro)
  - g. Conetoe Family Life Center Walking Trail
  - h. Conetoe Town Park
  - i. Princeville Heritage Park
  - j. Shiloh Landing (Princeville)
  - k. J. Vines Cobb Park (Pinetops)
  - l. Macclesfield Town Park
  - m. Willow Grove Sunshine Park (Whitakers)
  - n. Three Sisters Park (Battleboro)
  - o. I have not visited any Edgecombe County parks, trails, sports fields or other recreation facilities in the past year.

3. Which of the following Edgecombe County parks, trails, sports fields or other recreational facilities do you (or other members of your family) use? Do you use these facilities:

*Choices: Frequently (more than 20 times/year), Regularly (10-20 times/year), Occasionally (1 to 9 times/year), or Never? If you never use the facility, are you aware that it exists? YES OR NO*

- a. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park (Rocky Mount)
  - b. Discovery Park (Rocky Mount)
  - c. Stith-Talbert Park (Rocky Mount)
  - d. Clark Park & Recreation Center (Tarboro)
  - e. Braswell Park & Recreation Center (Tarboro)
  - f. Indian Lake Sports Complex/Kids in Park Walking Trail (Tarboro)
  - g. Conetoe Family Life Center Walking Trail
  - h. Conetoe Town Park
  - i. Princeville Heritage Park
  - j. Shiloh Landing (Princeville)
  - k. J.Vines Cobb Park (Pinetops)
  - l. Macclesfield Town Park
  - m. Willow Grove Sunshine Park (Whitakers)
  - n. Three Sisters Park (Battleboro)
  - o. I have not visited any Edgecombe County parks, trails, sports fields or other recreation facilities in the past year.
4. How would you rate the overall quality of ALL the Edgecombe County parks, trails, sports fields or other recreational facilities you have visited?
- a. Excellent
  - b. Very Good
  - c. Good
  - d. Fair
  - e. Poor
  - f. N/A – I have not visited any Edgecombe County parks, trails, sports fields or other recreation facilities

5. For the following list of existing and potential parks and recreation facilities and programs please let us know if you or any member of your household has a desire/want for these facilities or programs by checking YES or NO:

- a. Splash pad
- b. Indoor recreation center
- c. Volleyball courts
- d. Tennis courts
- e. Baseball or softball fields
- f. Soccer fields
- g. Football fields
- h. Skateboard/BMX park
- i. Playgrounds
- j. Play areas for children with disabilities
- k. Dog park
- l. Walking trails and greenways
- m. Picnicking areas
- n. Outdoor event/performance areas
- o. Community gardens
- p. Fishing lakes and piers
- q. Natural areas and wildlife habitats
- r. River access for fishing
- s. Outdoor fitness equipment
- t. Biking trails
- u. Signage to help you walk or bike more
- v. Sports programs for youth
- w. Sports programs for adults
- x. Arts & cultural programs for youth
- y. Arts & cultural programs for adults
- z. Other, please list:

6. If the community had money to invest in THREE programs and facilities, which three would you like to see the county invest in:

- a. Splash pad
- b. Indoor recreation center
- c. Volleyball courts
- d. Tennis courts
- e. Baseball or softball fields
- f. Soccer fields
- g. Football fields
- h. Skateboard/BMX park

- i. Playgrounds
- j. Play areas for children with disabilities
- k. Dog park
- l. Walking trails and greenways
- m. Picnicking areas
- n. Outdoor event/performance areas
- o. Community gardens
- p. Fishing lakes and piers
- q. Natural areas and wildlife habitats
- r. River access for fishing
- s. Outdoor fitness equipment
- t. Biking trails
- u. Signage to help you walk or bike more
- v. Sports programs for youth
- w. Sports programs for adults
- x. Arts & cultural programs for youth
- y. Arts & cultural programs for adults
- z. Other, please list:

7. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding Edgecombe County parks and recreation facilities.

*Options: Strongly Agree /Agree/Neither Agree nor Disagree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree* a. I would be willing to pay a fee for the use of certain recreation facilities in Edgecombe County.

b. I would be willing to pay a fee to participate in recreation programs and activities in Edgecombe County.

c. I believe that some portion of a resident's property tax should be used to offset the costs to build and maintain park and recreation facilities in Edgecombe County. d. I believe that some portion of a resident's property tax should be used to pay to run recreation programs and activities in Edgecombe County.

e. I believe that it's a good idea for Edgecombe County to partner with other organizations and agencies to deliver park and recreation services.

f. I believe Edgecombe County needs a County-wide supported parks and recreation department that provides facilities and programs for a wide-range of participants. g. I believe Edgecombe County needs a full-time parks and recreation director to manage recreation facilities and programs.

8. If an additional \$100 were available for parks, trails, and recreation facilities, how would you allocate the funds among the categories of funding listed below?
- a. Maintain/renovate existing facilities
  - b. Build new facilities
  - c. Acquire open space for park and recreational facilities (examples: Green space: parks, community gardens, & cemeteries; playgrounds; schoolyards; vacant lots, & public seating areas)
  - d. Create new programs
  - e. Funding for staff
  - f. Other, please list:
9. Please check all of the reasons you or other members of your household have chosen not to use Edgecombe County parks, recreation facilities, or recreation programs:
- a. Facilities are not well maintained
  - b. Facilities I want or need are not available
  - c. Safety concerns
  - d. Concerns about quality of facilities
  - e. Too far from home
  - f. Don't have transportation to get to facilities
  - g. Not accessible for people with disabilities
  - h. We use other services/programs
  - i. Inadequate information/signage
  - j. Just not interested
  - k. Other, please list:
10. Which of these destinations can you walk or bike to and from your home within 10 minutes? Check all that apply.
- ☐ Restaurants
  - ☐ Coffee Shops
  - ☐ Grocery stores
  - ☐ Shopping
  - ☐ Parks
  - ☐ Schools
  - ☐ Health Services
  - ☐ Cultural and Religious Services
  - ☐ Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

11. What would make it easier for you or your family to walk or bike more often?
- a. Better sidewalks/Access to sidewalks
  - b. Owning a bicycle/I don't own a bicycle
  - c. Bike lanes
  - d. Directional signage/Knowing where I can walk or bike
  - e. More/Better pedestrian crosswalks
  - f. Support for children to walk or bike to school
  - g. Education about bicycle and pedestrian safety
  - h. More trails or parks close to my home
  - i. Other:
12. What else do you think we need to know as the county considers developing new park and recreation programming and facilities? [open ended]

### **Demographics**

13. How many persons in your household (counting yourself) are:
- a. Under 5
  - b. 5-9
  - c. 10-14
  - d. 15-18
  - e. 19-30
  - f. 31-40
  - g. 41-50
  - h. 51-60
  - i. 61-70
  - j. 70+
14. What is your gender?
- a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Prefer not to answer
15. How many years have you lived in Edgecombe County?
- a. 5 or less
  - b. 6-10
  - c. 11-15
  - d. 16-20
  - e. 21-30
  - f. 30+

16. What municipality do you live in?
- a. Conetoe
  - b. Leggett
  - c. Macclesfield
  - d. Pinetops
  - e. Princeville
  - f. Rocky Mount
  - g. Sharpsburg
  - h. Speed
  - i. Tarboro
  - j. Whitakers
17. Which of the following describes your race/ethnicity?
- a. Asian
  - b. Black or African-American
  - c. Latino or Hispanic
  - d. Native American
  - e. White
  - f. Other
  - g. Prefer not to answer
18. What is your total yearly household income:
- a. Under \$20,000
  - b. \$20,000 - \$39,999
  - c. \$40,000 - \$69,999
  - d. \$70,000 - \$99,999
  - e. \$100,000 - \$129,999
  - f. \$130,000 and over
  - g. Prefer not to answer
19. What best describes your highest level of education?
- a. Less than High School
  - b. High School Graduate
  - c. Associate or Technical Degree
  - d. Bachelor's Degree
  - e. Master's Degree
  - f. Professional Degree
  - g. Doctorate

***\*\*If you would like to be entered into a drawing to receive a fitbit, please provide your name, phone number, email, and address here:***



# YOUR VOICE IS IMPORTANT!

Edgecombe County is carrying out a survey to learn about interests in parks and recreation programming in our community. Please fill out this survey and drop it in the box below!

**IN ADDITION TO SHARING YOUR OPINION, YOU WILL BE ENTERED INTO A DRAWING TO WIN A FITBIT!**

**PLEASE FOLD THE SURVEY AND PLACE COMPLETED SURVEYS IN THE LOCK BOX**



You can also take it online - scan this code to take the survey!



## Appendix C: Parks and Recreation Resident Input Form (Community Event)

**Thank you for watching the Edgecombe County Parks and Recreation Task Force Presentation. We'd like to get your feedback on priorities for action for parks and recreation in the county. Please complete this brief survey to help us understand your thoughts and opinions.**

Tell us a bit about what you like about Edgecombe County parks and recreation services, resources, and facilities:

---

---

In your opinion, what are some of the main drawbacks of parks and recreation services in Edgecombe County?

---

---

In your opinion, how would having a parks and recreation department for the county benefit residents?

---

---

If the community had money to invest in new programs and facilities, which would you like to see the county invest in? Please rank the options below in order of priority, with #1 being the most important. Please click on the option and move them with your #1 option at the top, and your last option at the bottom. You can click on your options and move them to the order you would like.

- ☐ Splash pad
- ☐ Indoor recreation center
- ☐ Volleyball courts
- ☐ Tennis courts
- ☐ Baseball or softball fields
- ☐ Soccer fields
- ☐ Football fields
- ☐ Skateboard/BMX park
- ☐ Playgrounds
- ☐ Play areas for children with disabilities Dog park
- ☐ Walking trails and greenways Picnicking areas
- ☐ Outdoor event/performance areas Community gardens
- ☐ Fishing lakes and piers
- ☐ Natural areas and wildlife habitats River access for fishing
- ☐ Outdoor fitness equipment
- ☐ Biking trails
- ☐ Signage to help you walk or bike more Sports programs for youth
- ☐ Sports programs for adults
- ☐ Arts & cultural programs for youth Arts & cultural programs for adults
- ☐ Other, please list:

If you could enhance or renovate existing parks and recreation facilities in Edgecombe County, which would you prioritize? Please rank in order of priority. Please click on the option and move them with your #1 option at the top, and your last option at the bottom. You can click on your options and move them to the order you would like.

- ☐ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park (Rocky Mount)
- ☐ Discovery Park (Rocky Mount)
- ☐ Stith-Talbert Park (Rocky Mount)
- ☐ Clark Park & Recreation Center (Tarboro)
- ☐ Braswell Park & Recreation Center (Tarboro)
- ☐ Indian Lake Sports Complex/Kids in Park Walking Trail  
(Tarboro) Conetoe Family Life Center Walking Trail
- ☐ Conetoe Town Park
- ☐ Princeville Heritage Park
- ☐ Shiloh Landing (Princeville)
- ☐ Shiloh Landing (Princeville)
- ☐ J. Vines Cobb Park (Pinetops)
- ☐ Macclesfield Town Park
- ☐ Willow Grove Sunshine Park (Whitakers)
- ☐ Three Sisters Park (Battleboro)

## Demographics

How many persons in your household (counting yourself) are:

Note: Please include all people who live at your home.

- ☐ Under 5
- ☐ 5-9
- ☐ 10-14
- ☐ 15-18
- ☐ 19-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ 51-60
- ☐ 61-70
- ☐ 70+

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

How many years have you lived in Edgecombe County?

- ☐ 5 or less
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-15
- ☐ 16-20
- ☐ 21-30
- ☐ 30+

What municipality do you live in?

- ☐ Conetoe
- ☐ Leggett
- ☐ Macclesfield
- ☐ Pinetops
- ☐ Princeville
- ☐ Rocky Mount
- ☐ Sharpsburg
- ☐ Speed
- ☐ Tarboro
- ☐ Whitakers

Which of the following describes your race/ethnicity?

- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African-American
- ☐ Latino or Hispanic
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

What is your total yearly household income:

- ☐ Under \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000 - \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 - \$69,999
- ☐ \$70,000 - \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 - \$129,999
- ☐ \$130,000 and over
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

What best describes your highest level of education?  
Please check one.

- ☐ Less than High School
- ☐ High School Graduate
- ☐ Associate or Technical Degree
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Professional Degree
- ☐ Doctorate

## Appendix D: Parks and Recreation Community Forum Feedback Form Responses

Tell us a bit about what you like about Edgecombe County parks and recreation services, resources, and facilities:	In your opinion, what are some of the main drawbacks of parks and recreation services in Edgecombe County?	In your opinion, how would having a parks and recreation department for the county benefit residents?
Lots of variety; quiet and peaceful settings	We need more and better access for citizens in unincorporated areas of the County.	It would help us to grow our Parks and Rec assets <sup>1</sup> and services.
Tarboro has a good recreation program.	The county itself doesn't have an organized recreation program for the county.	It would help with increase in physical activity and possible lower health disparities.
Awesome crosstail and opportuinties	Awareness and communications throughout the county	Improved health and wellness immediately; possibly reduces <sup>1234561</sup> crime
I like the that they are clean, and well kept with good parking at some of the parks.	Transportation in rural areas of the county create access issues.	It can help to support all the municipalities in Edgecombe County, especially those more rural areas with no or limited access to recreation.
Lots of nice parks I think that most of the parks and recreation services, resources and facilities are a plus for the residents of Edgecombe County. They have adequate playground equipment and walking trails but I don't recall a dog park at any of them. There are plenty of resources.	transportation to these parks in some towns are hard to get to.	It will help for people to go to these areas and not be expensive. Parks are free! Children can play and families can walk and watch their kids.
I am not aware of opportunities in the county.	The parks and recreation services charges a higher fee for activities if you are not a resident in the city of Tarboro. access to facilities, and programs across the county	It would benefit anyone living in Edgecombe County vs those people living in the city limits of Tarboro. access to leisure activity resources
I am not aware of opportunities in the county.	The county does not provide very much opportunity outside of the municipalities of Tarboro, Pinetops, and Rocky Mount.	I believe it would enrich the lives of citizens and may draw new citizens from neighboring areas to reside in Edgecombe while working elsewhere.
They are clean and have a lot of playground equipment for children. They have different types of recreation available.	Some areas of the county do not have a park or recreation area. Transportation to get to some of the parks and recreation areas.	Yes! Yes
Indian lake sports complex I actually rent Sunset Park every year and visit almost every wknd when its my turn to babysit as i feel it has a nice playground w/much needed safety material for the kids.	They need more adult sports, softball leagues, basketball leagues	If the department takes on more of the sports programs that already exist in the county, there is a big opportunity for growth with county funding where the parents are having to fund most things now. The parents are doing field maintenance and you can tell when you watch the games. The fields in pinetops for instance, the games start at 6 and the field is not in the best shape at game time.
clean, accessible to all, safe spaces The parks are spacious and usually clean! Nice land, great equipment etc.	No serious drawbacks, maybe not enough staff on ground to attend needs	Parks and Recreation would be great with the intentions of creating activities for the county, so the locals can stay local
I like the parks and centers! I think we can do so up grades to enhance the whole area. not a lot. they need work	need to be more inclusive to Princeville, and other rural towns I believe the parks could use more fun and up to date equipment for the children. Not enough parks	More residents on the outer parts of the county will be more involved. It would be extremely beneficial to help maintain the health and reputation of the parks tremendously. Exercise promotes mental and physical well being I would bring a recreation center to the county to fix the amenities of all the citizens this would be very beneficial
they are nice but needs more shade for play areas the play surfaces get too hot for little one or anyone to get on them	Not a lot of activities and fun things for kids and adults to explore. upkeep is not so great and most not safe	It would greatly help Edgecombe County because you could open up more opportunities for Recreation programs. Possibly integrating with the Town of Tarboro
There are prgroams for the youth to keep them engaged and out of trouble	Mostly just walking tracks  not enough swings...nothing for the handicap to enjoy	greatly it would help get more people outside in the fresh air Edgecombe County residents can go directly to those within the parks and recs. Having a deparment for soley the purpose of Parks and Recs will help with paying attention to details that may be over looked by Committe memebers who may not know much a bout Parks and Recs.
There are prgroams for the youth to keep them engaged and out of trouble	Funding for some great programs have been stopped	

My family enjoys visiting Braswell park & Indian lake.	The public restrooms at Indian lake seem to never be open. Even at times when they were supposed to be.	Hopefully they would help in maintaining and improving already established town parks. The department could also be beneficial in establishing sports recreational programs for noncity limit residents of Edgecombe.
Accessibility Indian Lake is an asset to the Town	Not enough done for the minority areas, such as pools and playgrounds, water parks N/A	I think it would be beneficial because it will inform citizens of the area about all the services available to them as well as provide activities for the surrounding areas for the citizens. More family oriented activities - more things for kids to do
Edgecombe county has nice flowers to spruce up the town streets.	I feel as if there could be more available to the kids. Different activities especially since schools are letting out.	I think to the growing economy and work forces that has been coming in to Tarboro will bring more residents with children.
Indian Park is the only one I really use. I enjoy the parks I have visited in Edgecombe County. Activities I have participated in other counties, have made resources of small towns more enjoyable.	Costs of maintenance. Could Edgecombe County partner with Tarboro City for shared facilities (pool, rec center, etc.)?  I don't see any drawbacks of parks and recreational services in Edgecombe County.	fitness, wellness, recreational opportunities  Having a parks and recreation department would improve life for residents giving them things to enjoy outside or related to recreation.
ITS SOME PLACE YOU CAN GO TO WORK OUT AND LINE DANCE.	THE AIR IS NOT ALWAYS WORKING ESPECIALLY NOW WITH THE PANDEMIC WE NEED THE AIR CONDITIONER WORKING.	AS STATED ABOVE IT IS SOME PLACE TO WORKOUT AND THAT WILL ENHANCE YOUR OVERALL HEALTH.14
I'm not familiar with what Edgecombe has. Outdoor access, Free The landscaping is maintained pretty good, however the garbage cans are always running over and smell.	I don't know. No organized opportunities. Lack of Facilities. They are misused with people using them for a hangout to do drugs, and play loud music.	It would give the Edgecombe County residence something to do. Organization and Maintenance Unless they are maintained with those who have authority to keep it safe, its a waste of tax payers money Get people outside away from the TV and decrease obesity, type II diabetes, etc.
Great parking, low or free use of facilities, and several choices.	Closing times	
Where is Edgecombe county parks, familiar with the city parks and recreations. There are limited opportunities for all citizens	I don't know, did not know we had any, only familiar with Braswell & Indian lake in Tarboro Not sure, but supervision by qualified personnel would be a priority	it would be a place for families to go to get exercise, see events have family outings It would provide safe1 varied opportunities for all ages
it give people something to do	Some of the disadvantages however could be that there is a social exclusion and a self aimed delusion for mistakes made.	Parks attract homebuyers, increase property values and attract businesses. Increase tourism and generate sales activity. It benefits our health because it will give people so where to walk and meet others.  Having Parks and recreation within county will allow residences to remain in the county for for various events. It would be nice to have a county park, with walking trails, baseball and softball complex, a greenway, organized fitness programs. A Culture Art Center with local art and information about the origin of Edgecombe County. Capitalized on Tar River with a river walk, boat rides, canoe rides, paddle boats, etc. Convert the National Army into a basketball complex for young people, similar to AAU organization. This organization would teach team sports and develop academic skills of young people. Tarboro High has a super record for training football players, why not provide county football camps. People would come from miles to be a part of that type program.
I'm not familiar with Edgecombe County Parks and recreation services, etc		
I have utilized some of the facilities in Rocky Mount. It is nice to be able to visit the parks and even rent some of the spaces for special family events.	The main drawback is Edgecombe County does not have its own parks and recreation department. I've noticed Rocky Mount, Tarboro, and Nash County have their own departments. It is beyond time for Edgecombe County.	Having an Edgecombe County parks and recreation department would be beneficial for county residents because it would make more county residents aware of what is already available to them. Also, the county may think of ways to incorporate sports teams into its own department. It will hopefully encourage more residents to be physically active.

I like the update work complete on the Braswell Park!	The Recreation services does not have many amenities.	I believe it would promote family structure which has decreased over the last couple of years.
Before covid, places for adults to gather, meet, fellowship, have meals together, so you did not feel alone, were you could gather information that makes your life better. If you look you can find places and activities that you enjoy, walking, sports, etc.	Having buses that are easy to get in & out.	You would have all your people and resources in one place. They would be able to stay on top of issues and changes and hopefully would not have a lot of repeat activities and to make sure that all the parks, etc are used to the fullest and an area is not sitting there not being used.
I think the services we have are good just need more.	Not enough and need to be more far reaching. I do understand that it is a large area.	It would give parents more opportunities to do things with their children.
I like that Edgecombe Co. is trying to provide these services. Not sure as many will use them just because everyone seems to be busy with something else outside of our area.	As for the parks, older kids do not respect the property. Equipment gets destroyed and then it sits there because there is no funding to repair or clean up what was destroyed.	Rural communities are not going to travel across the county to walk or play on the equipment more than likely. Summer months are just to hope for kids to get out. Lots of playsets in people back yards now but no kids on them.
Staff is helpful and grounds are kept up well	Not enough for entire county. Some have to pay to play.	We need something similar to a YMCA!
Wide open spaces; not crowded yet. Clean areas. Maintained and well-kept.	Don't know what is available...no centralized agency to promote would like to see more available for our community	Share information and network with the community provide unity in our community and promote healthy living
They all seem to be well maintained	I have not seen any. Only recently have I learned about some of our county's resources. I live in Macclesfield.	Wow. We would have a department solely dedicated to making parks and recreation a priority for Edgecombe County residents/citizens.
	None at this time	Availability of activities for youth and outdoor places to play
Free and Open to the public	No area for those with disabilities or children area	To make sure take turns for those with disability to attend in certain times and able to play rest or swing instead going to Rocky Mount or other counties
Always nice to have outdoor facilities to use for kids such as parks. The ball fields being available are great for church and recreational events!		I feel as the county may have more connections/resources to collaborate and make areas better for the communities.
Availability of a large multi-use park like Indian Lake (I realize it's in Tarboro) or Clark Park for athletic activity, varied types of recreation such as frisbee, touch football, Sunday school class youth recreation activity and picnics. Long and varied walking trail. The chance to be out in nature (I almost stepped on a copperhead, while looking at some birds a few years ago). A community gathering place.		Make sure that all the county communities are being considered.
I like safe walking trails, places & equipment for kids to play on and for kids & adults to enjoy games & sports, green areas that preserve wildlife and provide green areas for humans and allow opportunity to learn about environmental issues, and outdoor areas with pavilions or other covered spaces that families or other groups can use for gatherings	I believe the county is doing well and improving access to park and recreation resources to all residents across the county, but I would like to have a bike trail that is separate from automobile traffic to provide safe places for bikers of all ages to learn to ride and to get out and exercise without worry about safety	It would enable people from all parts of the county to work together to develop and maintain resources for all, it would enable staff to support one another and share knowledge & skills
Not much to like.	Limited parks and limited activities at parks. Those that have playgrounds look like they've been forgotten by the county government.	I'm afraid it would just be another expense that taxpaying residents would be responsible for. We have to get more benefits from the parks that we do by having an overpaid deputy county manager.
I really don't know because I have not been there	I am going to guess because I don't know by me not going to any of them that some kids would be at the park unattended, fights may occur	It would benefit for families to go to the park with their kids and let them have a little outlet to get out of the house

# 2020 ENGAGEMENT WITH PARKS REPORT





A child climbs on the newly renovated playground at Catherine Street Park in Baltimore, Maryland, during the 2019 Parks Build Community event.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NRPA

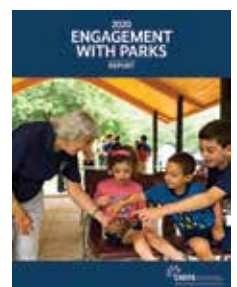
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**COVER IMAGE:**

During the opening of a multi-use shelter at Hidden Pond Nature Center in Springfield, Virginia, a Fairfax County Park Authority volunteer shows local children a turtle from the center.  
*Photo courtesy of Fairfax County Park Authority*



# INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreation touches the lives of millions of people every day. Parks, trails, public open spaces and recreation facilities are places where people can improve their physical and mental health, gather with family and friends, and reconnect with nature. With vast, diverse offerings, parks and recreation provides a unique, personal experience for every member of a community.

With their goals of advancing community health and well-being, developing climate-ready parks and providing equitable access to their many benefits, the more than 10,000 local park and recreation agencies across the country help make our cities, towns and counties vibrant communities. In turn, the public recognizes parks and recreation's innate ability to improve the lives of every member of a community. When deciding where they want to reside, people seek places that feature well-maintained parks, vast trail networks, pools and other recreation facilities.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has demonstrated the essential value of local parks and recreation. Thanks to the tireless efforts of park and recreation professionals, most parks, trails and other public spaces have remained open and safe during the pandemic. Even at the peak of stay-at-home edicts, parks and trails largely remained open, and frequently served as the sole recreation opportunity available to the public. Many park and recreation agencies also have been vital contributors to their communities' pandemic responses by delivering nutritious meals to community members in need, offering their spaces as emergency shelters for people experiencing homelessness or expanding classroom capacity for schools, and providing childcare and services for families of emergency first responders and essential workers.

Each June since 2016, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Research team has surveyed 1,000 U.S. adults to better understand how people connect with parks and recreation; the results of these surveys are the basis for the annual *Engagement with Parks Report*. This report provides park and recreation professionals and advocates, policymakers and other key stakeholders with insights about the impact that local parks and recreation facilities have on the lives of every person in our nation.



In 2020, NRPA conducted a shorter-than-typical *Engagement* survey because of the dynamic nature of life during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020 study focused on a few key questions:

- How frequently do people visit parks, trails and recreation amenities?
- How has the pandemic affected park usage?
- Do adults in the United States see public parks as an essential government service?
- Are people more likely to vote for political leaders who support funding for parks and recreation?

## **Key findings of the 2020 *Engagement with Parks Report* include:**

- Eighty-two percent of U.S. adults agree that parks and recreation is essential.
- Seventy-seven percent of survey respondents indicate that having a high-quality park, playground, public open space or recreation center nearby is an important factor in deciding where they want to live.
- U.S. residents visit local park and recreation facilities more than twice a month on average.
- Three in five U.S. residents — more than 190 million people — visited a park, trail, public open space or other recreation facility at least once during the first three months of the pandemic (mid-March through mid-June 2020).
- Seventy-two percent of U.S. adults are more likely to vote for local political leaders who make park and recreation funding a priority.

# 2020 ENGAGEMENT WITH PARKS REPORT

## Key Statistics

**3 in 5**

U.S. residents visited a park, trail, public open space or other recreation facility at least once during the first three months of the pandemic (mid-March through mid-June 2020)



**2x per month**

U.S. residents visit local park and recreation facilities more than twice a month on average



**82%**

of U.S. adults agree that parks and recreation is essential



**77%**

of survey respondents indicate that having a high-quality park, playground, public open space or recreation center nearby is an important factor in deciding where they want to live



**72%**

of U.S. adults are more likely to vote for local political leaders who make park and recreation funding a priority



# KEY FINDINGS

## PARKS AND RECREATION IS ESSENTIAL

While parks and recreation may be one of many services delivered by local city, town and county governments, it is second to none in bringing our communities together. It provides places for people to increase their physical activity, meet with friends and family, reconnect with nature or help a neighbor in need.

People from all walks of life have a personal connection with their local park and recreation agency. Some may walk on a trail, take a fitness class at the community center, access a nutritious meal, gain a new skill or hobby, or reap the benefits of clean air and water because of preserved open spaces. The tireless efforts of park and recreation professionals are critical contributors to the quality of life in our communities.

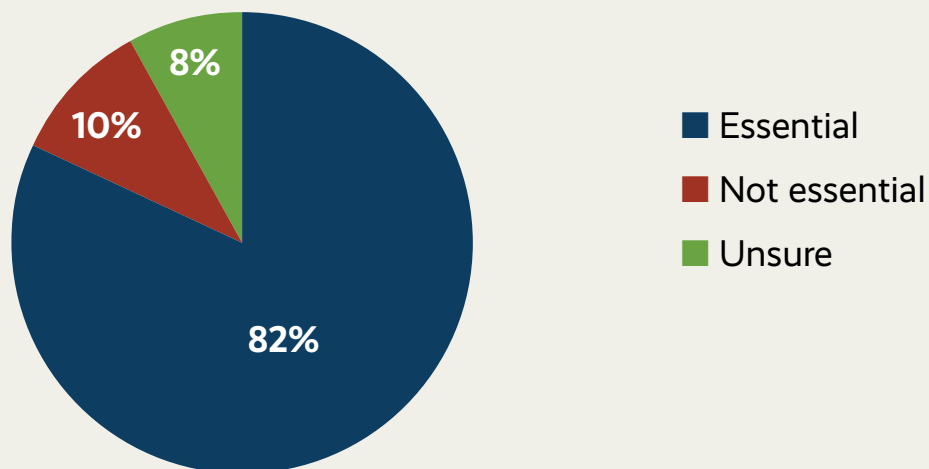
People recognize the essential nature and value of parks and recreation. Eighty-two percent of survey respondents say that parks and recreation is essential to their lives. This sentiment holds true for all segments of the population, but it is particularly robust for Gen Xers and millennials (both at 86 percent) as well as parents (88 percent).

People of all ages and all racial, ethnic and political backgrounds agree that parks and recreation is essential. In addition, access to quality amenities and services is a key determinant in where people choose to live. Nearly four in five survey respondents indicate that having a nearby park, playground, open space or recreation center is an important factor in deciding where they want to live. Nearly all segments of the U.S. population seek easy access to high-quality parks and recreation opportunities, but this is particularly the case for millennials, Gen Xers, those who identify as Hispanic/Latinx and parents.

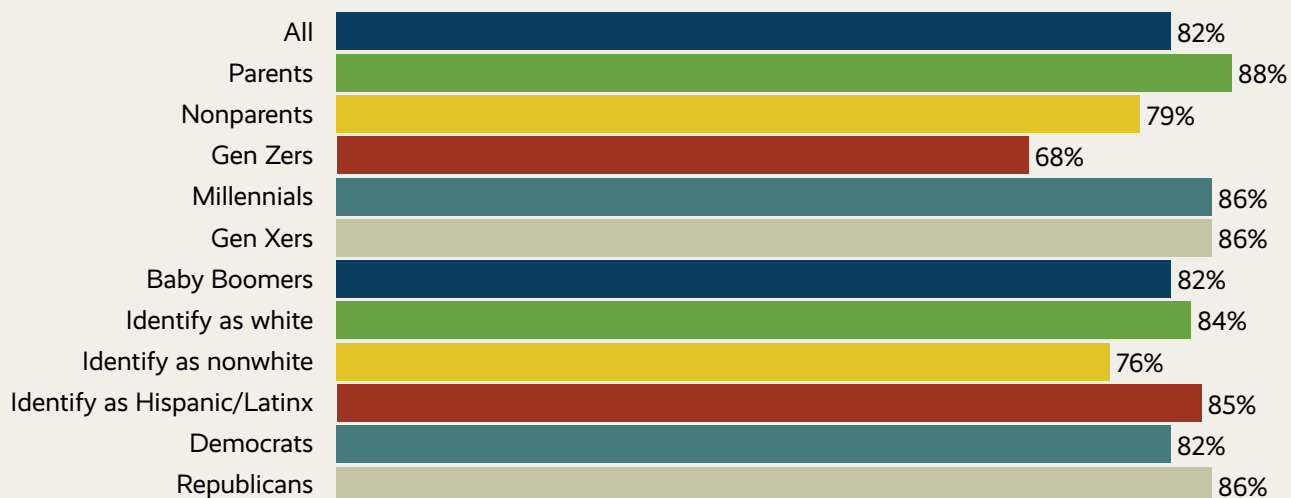
Having access to great parks and relevant recreation opportunities is a fundamental right for all. Indeed, everyone should have at least one park, open space, recreation center or other amenity nearby that they can walk to and from safely. It is especially critical that everyone should be able to walk to and from well-maintained parks and recreation amenities in just a few minutes without having to cross heavily traveled roads or navigate other pedestrian hazards.

Most — but not all — people benefit from having at least one park or other recreation opportunity within a walkable distance of where

**Four in Five Adults Say that Parks and Recreation Is Essential**  
(Percentage Distribution)



## People Across the United States Agree that Parks and Recreation Is Essential (Percent of Respondents)



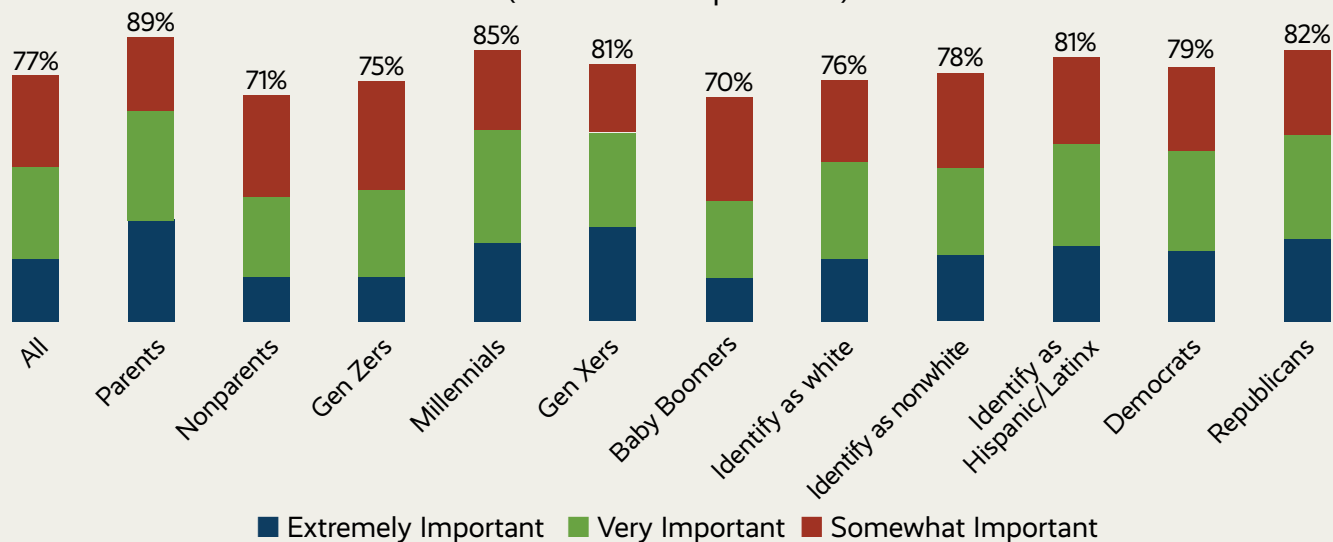
they live. More than seven in ten U.S. residents have at least one local park, playground, open space or recreation center within walking distance of their homes, and 39 percent of survey respondents have one or more nearby park and/or other recreational opportunity. Unfortunately, 26 percent of people are not within walking distance of at least one park or recreational opportunity.

The percentage of survey respondents who indicate they live near a park or other recreational opportunity, however, varies significantly by region and respondent demographics. For example, of the survey respondents, 82 percent in the Northwest and 80 percent in the West report that they can

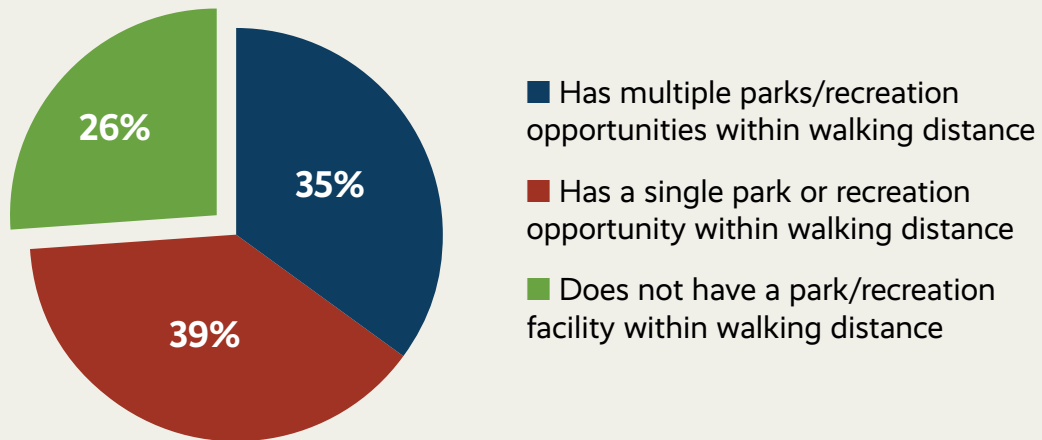
walk to a local park, while 75 percent of Midwesterners and 66 percent of those in the South report the same.

Hispanic/Latinx (84 percent) and nonwhite (81 percent) survey respondents indicate they live within walking distance of a park. Furthermore, Gen Zers (83 percent), millennials (82 percent) and Gen Xers (73 percent) are significantly more likely than baby boomers (65 percent) to report having a park and/or recreation facility that is within walking distance. Parents also are significantly more likely than nonparents to report they reside within a walkable distance of at least one park: 84 percent compared to 68 percent, respectively.

## Access to High-Quality Parks and Recreation Is an Important Factor When People Choose a Place to Live (Percent of Respondents)



## More than Seven in Ten U.S. Residents Live within Walkable Distance of a Local Park or Other Recreational Opportunity (Percentage Distribution)



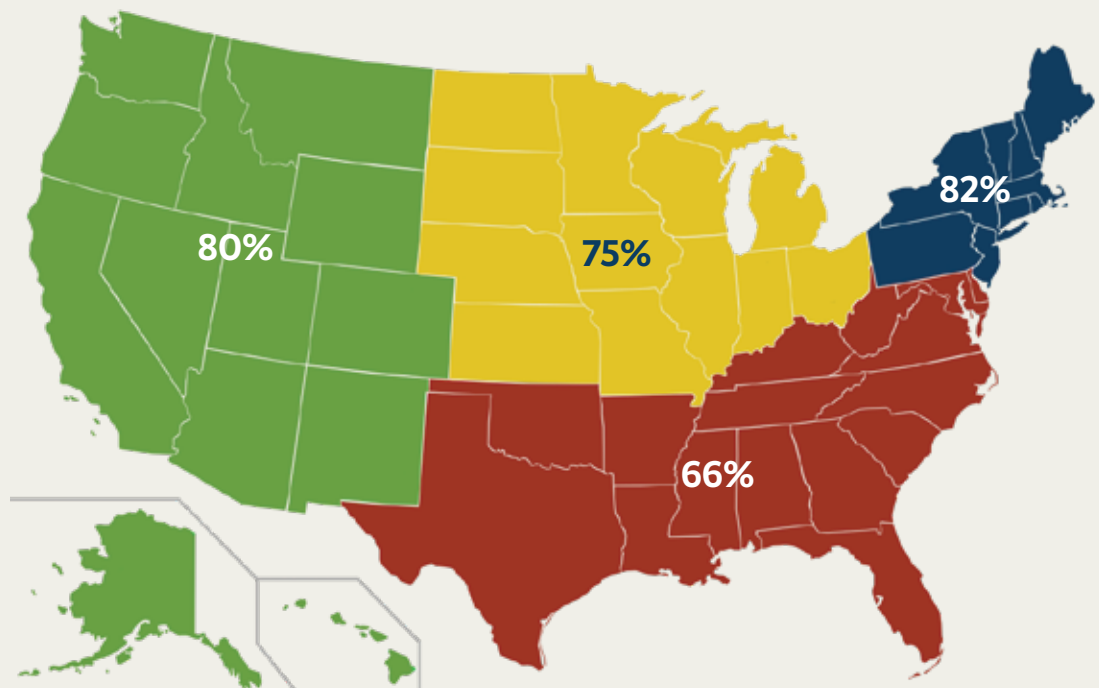
Even with at least one park or recreational opportunity only a short, walkable distance away, a majority of people continues to travel to those locations by automobile. Sixty-three percent of survey respondents indicate that driving is one of the ways they get from their home to a park, playground, open space or recreation center.

Aside from driving, many people utilize an “active” transportation method — walking, jogging, biking, rollerblading — to reach their favorite park, trail or open space. The most common active transportation method is walking — cited by 54 percent of survey respondents. In

addition, one in five U.S. residents bike to a local park or to other recreational areas, while 18 percent either jog or run and five percent rollerblade or skateboard.

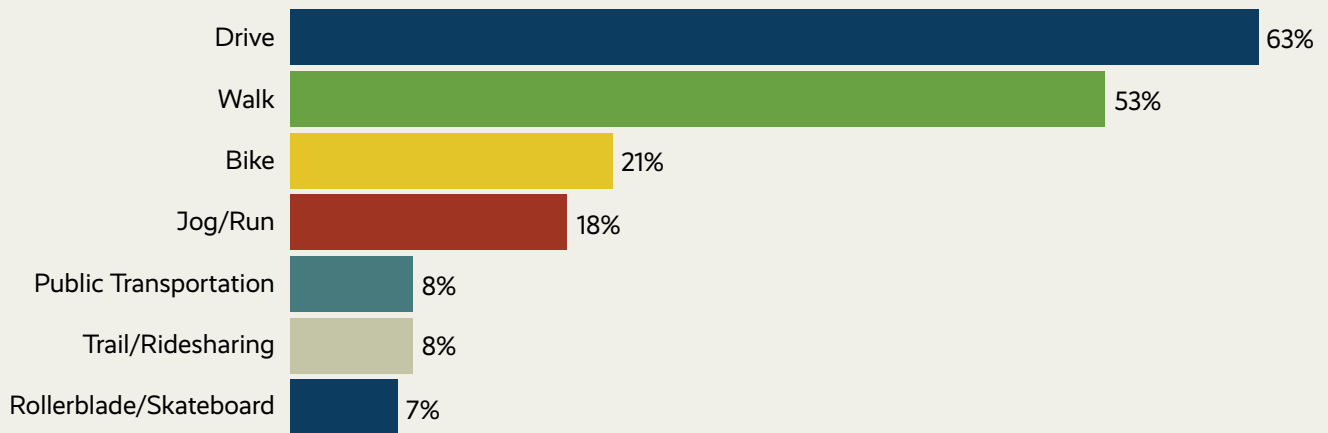
Not surprisingly, people who live within a walkable distance of a park *choose* to walk to the park. The percentage of those who *do* walk to a park or another recreation amenity differs little across major age cohorts, although baby boomers are more likely to drive to a park than are members of other generations. Biking, jogging and rollerblading are more popular transportation options for Gen Zers, millennials, Gen Xers and people who live near a park.

## Percentage of U.S. Residents Living within Walking Distance of a Park or Recreational Opportunity, by Region



## Driving and Walking Remain the Top Two Ways People Travel to Their Local Parks

(Percent of Respondents Who Have Visited a Park in the Past Year)

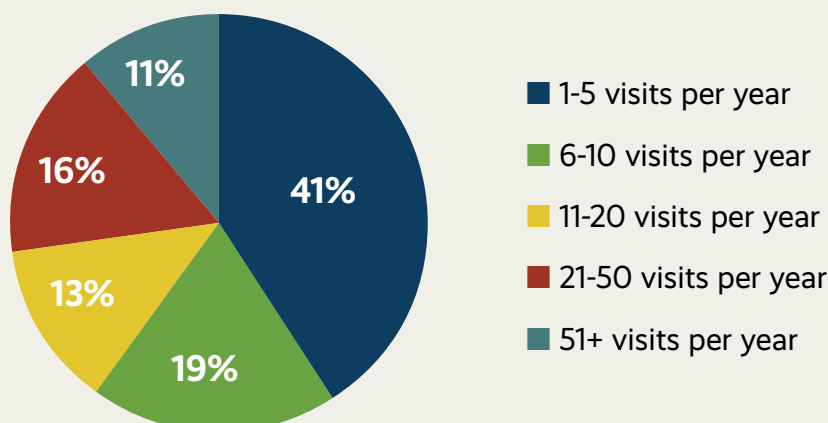


People play in the water at the Northeast Creek Park Splash Pad in Jacksonville, North Carolina.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN REOPELLE

## People Frequently Visit Their Local Park and Recreation Facilities

(Percentage Distribution of Respondents Who Have Visited a Park/Recreation Facility During the Past Year)



Aaron Watson, executive director of Mercer County (New Jersey) Park Commission, holds an owl.

## PARK USAGE AND THE PANDEMIC

On average, U.S. residents visit local park and recreation facilities a little more than twice a month. But the frequency of these visits varies significantly. Nineteen percent of survey respondents report that they visited a local park facility between six and ten times within the past 12 months; another 13 percent made between 11 and 20 visits. Sixteen percent visited their local park and recreation facilities between 21 and 50 times during the past year, while 11 percent did so at least 51 times. Forty-one percent of survey respondents who visited a local park and/or recreation facility within the past 12 months report having visited those facilities between one and five times.

Proximity and access to multiple nearby park and recreation options are critical to higher parks and recreation use. Of those survey respondents who went to a park at least 51 times during the past year (i.e., weekly), more than half (52 percent) have access to multiple parks within a 10-minute walk. Another 36 percent of weekly park users live within a 10-minute walk of a single park. Of the people who make parks and recreation a weekly or more frequent habit, 12 percent do not live within a walkable distance to a park.

## People Visit Their Local Park and Recreation Facilities on Average Twice a Month

(Average and Median Number of Visits During the Past Year)

	All	Parents	Gen Zers	Millennials	Gen Xers	Baby Boomers	Identify as Hispanic/Latinx	Identify as white	Identify as nonwhite
Average number of visits	27.7	25.4	34.6	25.6	23.9	34.0	28.3	29.3	22.6
Median number of visits	8	8	10	8	8	10	10	8	7

Viewed another way — people with walkable access to multiple park and recreation facilities enjoyed these amenities an average of 33.7 times during the past year. At the other end of the spectrum, people who do *not* live within a walkable distance of any park visited such amenities an average of 17.4 times during the past year.

The essential nature of parks and recreation has been on full display since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. In many communities across the nation, parks, trails and other public open spaces have been crucial resources available to people seeking a brief respite from the public health crisis. As businesses shut down operations during the spring, many parks and trails remained open, providing people with opportunities to safely enjoy outdoor physical activity with its many attendant physical and mental health benefits. According to NRPA Parks Snapshot Survey data ([nrpa.org/ParksSnapshot](https://nrpa.org/ParksSnapshot)), 83 percent of park and recreation agencies kept some/all of their parks open during the initial wave of COVID-19 infections in April 2020, while 93 percent did the same with some/all of their trail networks.

Consequently, people flocked to their local parks, trails and other public open spaces. Three in five U.S. residents —



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEREA COLLEGE

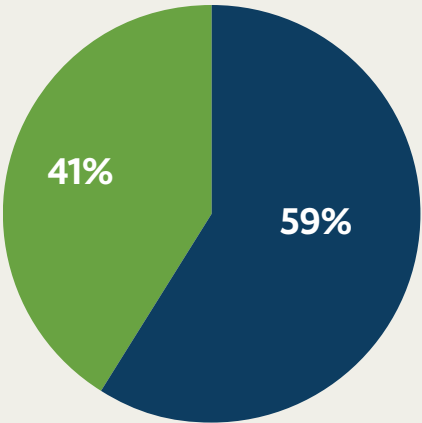
### Proximity to Parks and Recreation Facilities Drives Usage

(Average and Median Number of Visits over the Past Year)

	All	Walkable Access to Multiple Parks	Walkable Access to a Single Park	Walkable Access to No Parks
Average number of visits	27.7	33.7	27.4	17.4
Median number of visits	8	10	7	6

### Three in Five U.S. Residents Visited a Park or Recreation Facility at Least Once During the First Three Months of the Pandemic

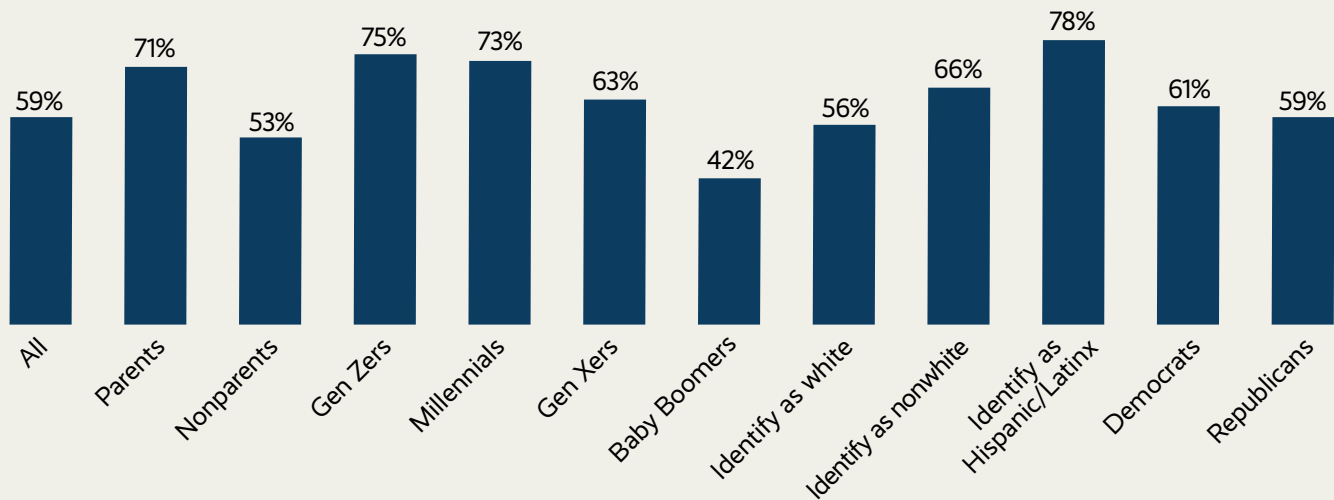
(Percentage Distribution)



- Have visited a park or recreation facility at least once between March 15 and June 15, 2020
- Have not visited a park or recreation facility between March 15 and June 15, 2020

## Parks and Recreation Has Been a Vital Respite for People During the Pandemic

(Percent of Respondents Visiting a Park or Recreation Facility at Least Once Between Mid-March and Mid-June 2020)



more than 190 million people — visited a park, trail, public open space or other recreation facility at least once during the first three months of the pandemic — from mid-March through mid-June 2020. Parks and recreation usage was particularly strong among Gen Zers, millennials, Gen Xers, parents, people who identify as Hispanic/Latinx and those who identify as nonwhite.

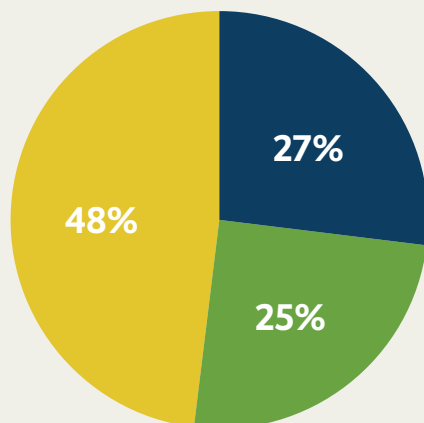
As has been the case with virtually every aspect of life, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the frequency with which most people engage with their local park and recreation amenities. Still, slightly more than half of people have been visiting parks, trails and other public open space amenities as often — if not more often — since the start of the pandemic

than they had during the same period in 2019. Twenty-seven percent of U.S. residents report that their use of parks, trails and other public open spaces increased during the first three months of the pandemic relative to the same period in 2019. A quarter of survey respondents indicates their parks and recreation usage during the period from mid-March to mid-June 2020 matched that of the same three months in 2019. Forty-eight percent of people report that their usage of parks, trails and public open spaces declined during the early months of the pandemic.

Parks and recreation usage either held firm or increased among Gen Zers, Gen Xers, millennials, people who identify as Hispanic/Latinx and those who identify as nonwhite.

## Over Half of U.S. Residents Maintained or Increased Park, Trail and Open Space Usage During the First Three Months of the Pandemic

(Percentage Distribution)



■ Increased usage of parks, trails and open space between March and May 2020 relative to the same three months in 2019

■ Same usage of parks, trails and open space between March and May 2020 relative to the same three months in 2019

■ Decreased usage of parks, trails and open space between March and May 2020 relative to the same three months in 2019

## Gen Zers, Millennials, Gen Xers and People Who Identify as Hispanic/Latinx or Nonwhite Are Most Likely to Have Maintained or Increased Park Usage During the First Three Months of the Pandemic

(Percent of Respondents)

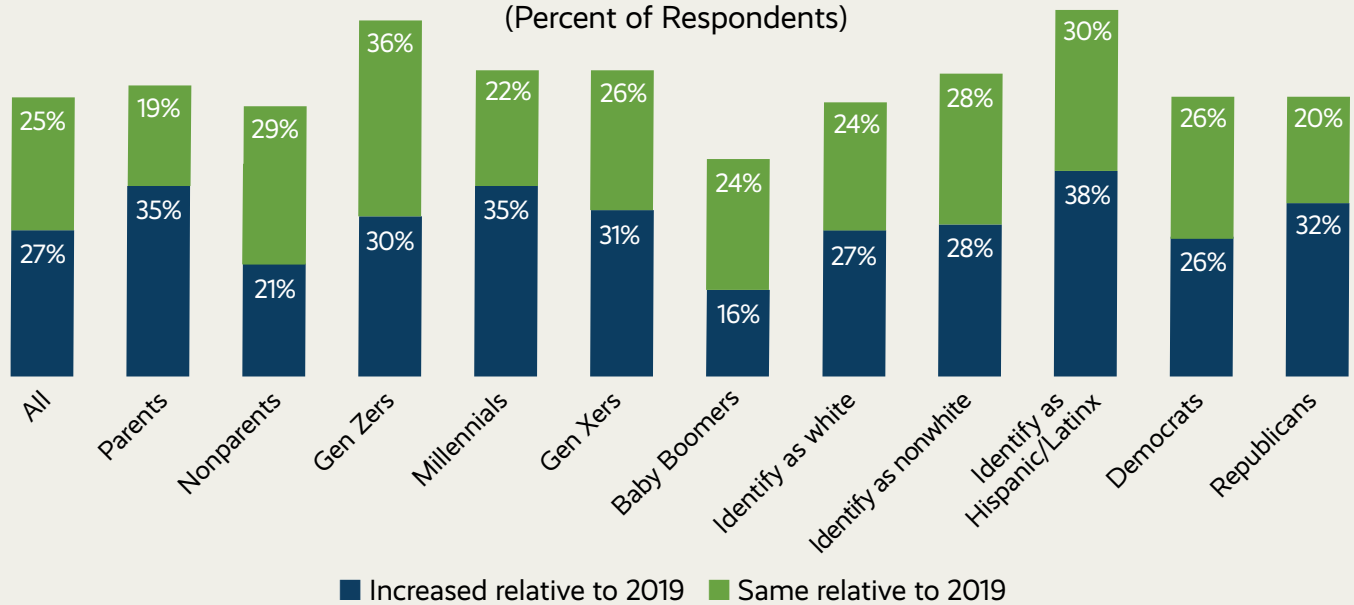


PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMES WISEMAN

## COMMUNITY AND POLITICAL SUPPORT

Despite broad public agreement that parks and recreation is an essential service, many agencies face tight budget constraints that make it difficult for park and recreation professionals to deliver on their vital mission. Local governments are challenged with meeting the many needs and desires of their constituents in a tight fiscal environment. This is even more true now as most jurisdictions face increased demand for public services and depressed tax revenues in the wake of the pandemic. As political leaders make tough decisions on how to allocate shrinking tax revenues, local government policymakers must understand parks and recreation's mission and the level of importance that constituents place on it.

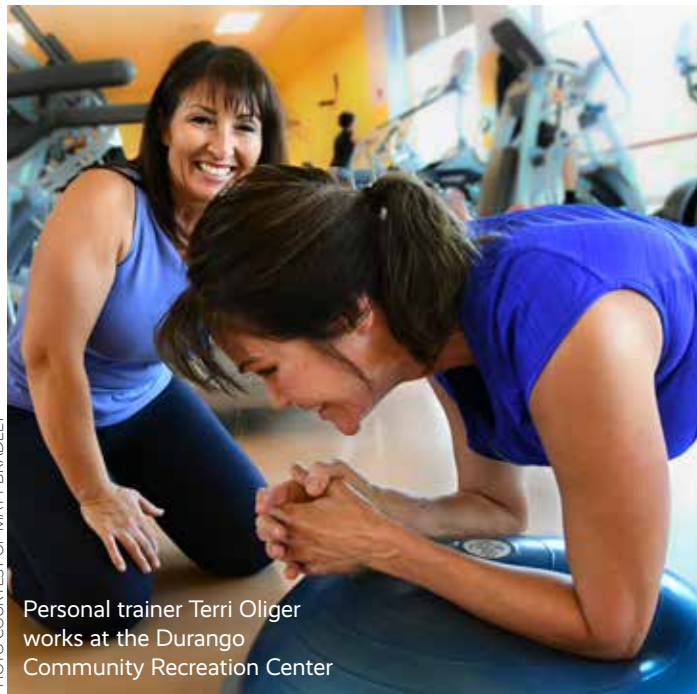


PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT BRADLEY

Personal trainer Terri Oliger works at the Durango Community Recreation Center

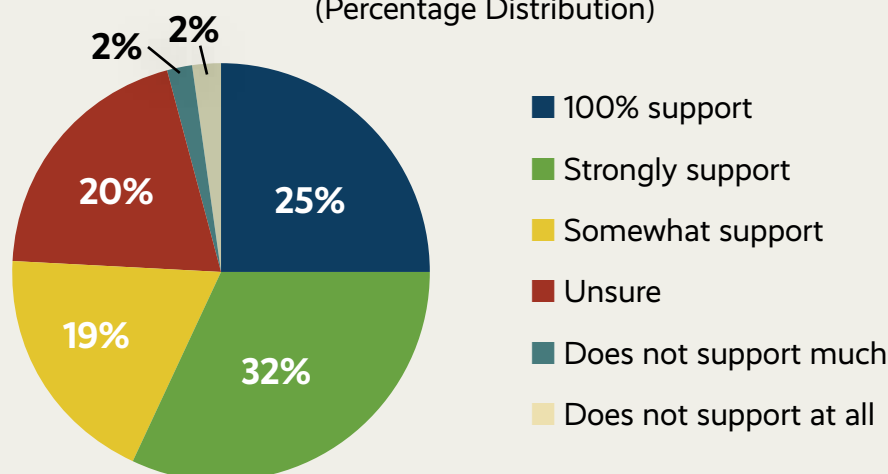
The success and growth of community park and recreation agencies hinge on the support of mayors, county executives and council members. Three-quarters of U.S. adults believe their highest-ranking local political leaders support local parks, with 57 percent of survey respondents describing this support as very strong. These percentages are up sharply from those in NRPA's *2018 Engagement with Parks Survey*, in which 68 percent of respondents perceived their high-ranking local political leaders as supporting parks.

Local political leaders who make parks and recreation a cornerstone of their agendas are likely to be rewarded at the ballot box. Seventy-two percent of U.S. adults are more likely to vote for a local politician — a mayor, county executive or a member of a local council — if that politician makes park and recreation funding a priority. Only 16 percent of survey respondents indicate that a local politician's views about parks and recreation play no role in whether they would vote for the candidate.

It is noteworthy that voters' preference for local politicians who support park and recreation funding is robust across nearly every segment of the population:

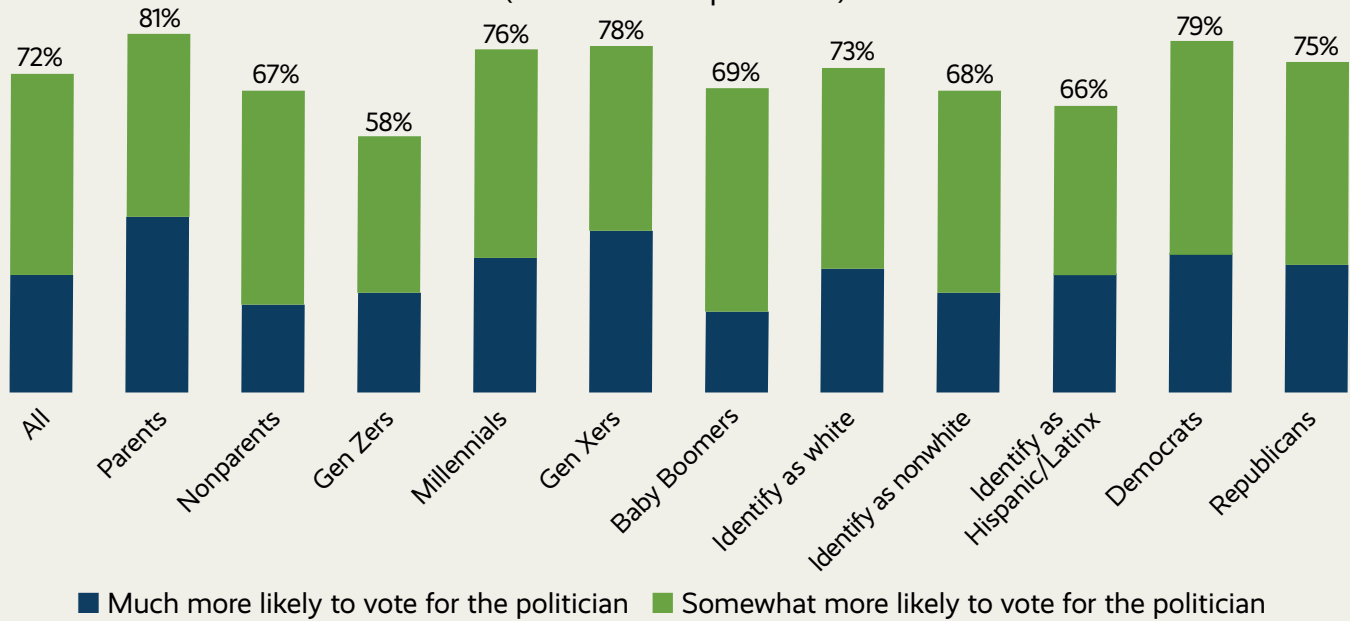
- **Generation:** Millennials (76 percent) and Gen Xers (79 percent)
- **Household formation:** Parents (81 percent) and nonparents (67 percent)
- **Political affiliation:** Democrats (79 percent) and Republicans (75 percent)
- **Location of Residence:** Near a park (75 percent) and not near a park (64 percent)

**Three-Quarters of U.S. Adults Believe Their Local Political Leaders Support Parks and Recreation**  
(Percentage Distribution)



## U.S. Adults Are More Likely to Vote for Local Politicians Who Make Park and Recreation Funding a Priority

(Percent of Respondents)



A Paint Night participant creates a painting at Plaza de Cesar Chavez in San Jose, California.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPH HIGARES

# CONCLUSION

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Parks and recreation is essential — essential for healthy communities, essential for climate resiliency and essential for equity. People on average visit local park and/or recreation facilities more than twice a month, with many making parks and recreation a more frequent habit. It is little wonder that when searching for a new place to live, people seek locations that offer high-quality park and recreation amenities and programming.

The COVID-19 pandemic has extracted a high cost in both human and economic terms. But thanks to the dedication of hundreds of thousands of full-time, part-time and seasonal park and recreation professionals working for more than 10,000 local park and recreation agencies, most parks, trails and public spaces have remained open and safe for all to enjoy. This not only makes life a bit more bearable during these challenging times, but also helps boost the physical and mental health of millions of people.

Even without tabulating the final economic numbers, it is already clear that the pandemic-fueled recession will be devastating on park and recreation agency funding, rivaling the damage inflicted by the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009. Falling tax revenues and rising expenses are putting extraordinary fiscal pressures on governments across the nation, and political leaders are having to make many difficult decisions.

The *2020 Engagement with Parks Report* makes this point clear: It would be myopic for political leaders to put an over-weighted burden on park and recreation budgets. People across the United States have been swarming to their local parks, trails and public open spaces to remain physically active, decompress and reconnect with nature during these challenging times. People value the work that park and recreation professionals and their agencies do. They expect their local political leaders to provide the financial support needed to ensure these essential services remain available to all in the future.



John DeKemper, assistant director of Cornelius (North Carolina) Parks, Arts, Recreation and Culture works with children to plant saplings at an Earth Day event.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NRPA

Kids play on the newly renovated playground during the grand opening of Catherine Street Park in Baltimore, Maryland at the 2019 Parks Build Community event.

## ABOUT NRPA

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is the leading not-for-profit organization dedicated to building strong, vibrant and resilient communities through the power of parks and recreation. With more than 60,000 members, NRPA advances this mission by investing in and championing the work of park and recreation professionals and advocates — the catalysts for positive change in service of equity, climate-readiness, and overall health and well-being.

NRPA brings strength to our message by partnering with like-minded organizations, including those in the federal government, nonprofits and commercial enterprises. Funded through dues, grants, registrations and charitable contributions, NRPA produces research, education and policy initiatives for our members that ultimately enrich the communities they serve.

NRPA places immense importance on research and data to raise the status of parks and recreation and conducts research with two goals. First, NRPA creates data to help park and recreation agencies make optimal decisions on operations, programming and spending. Second, NRPA generates data and insights that support park and recreation professionals in making the case for greater and more stable funding to policymakers, key stakeholders, the media and the general public. The NRPA research team works closely with internal subject matter experts, respected industry consultants and members of the academic community to develop its reports and data resources. Learn more at [nrpa.org/Research](https://nrpa.org/Research).

# ABOUT THE SURVEY & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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In the spring/summer of 2020, NRPA commissioned Wakefield Research to conduct a survey of 1,000 U.S. adults, the results from which are the basis of findings presented in the *2020 Engagement with Parks Report*. Wakefield Research collected the survey data through an email invitation and online survey between June 8 and June 18 2020, using quotas to ensure a reliable and accurate representation of the U.S. adult population 18 and older. NRPA designed the survey instrument, conducted the data analysis, wrote the report findings, and is fully responsible for the content.

Thank you to Kevin Roth, Gina Mullins-Cohen, Vitisia Paynich, Roxanne Sutton, Melissa May, Lindsay Hogeboom, Jennifer Fulcher-Nguyen, Kim Mabon and Kate Anderson for making this report possible. Also, thank you to those who contributed the photos included throughout.

A park patron mountain bikes in the Boise (Idaho) Foothills.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT COOPER

Christie Bruner (right), community engagement supervisor at City of St. Petersburg (Florida) Parks & Recreation - Healthy St. Pete, helping an AARP board member change the resistance on a hand bike machine.



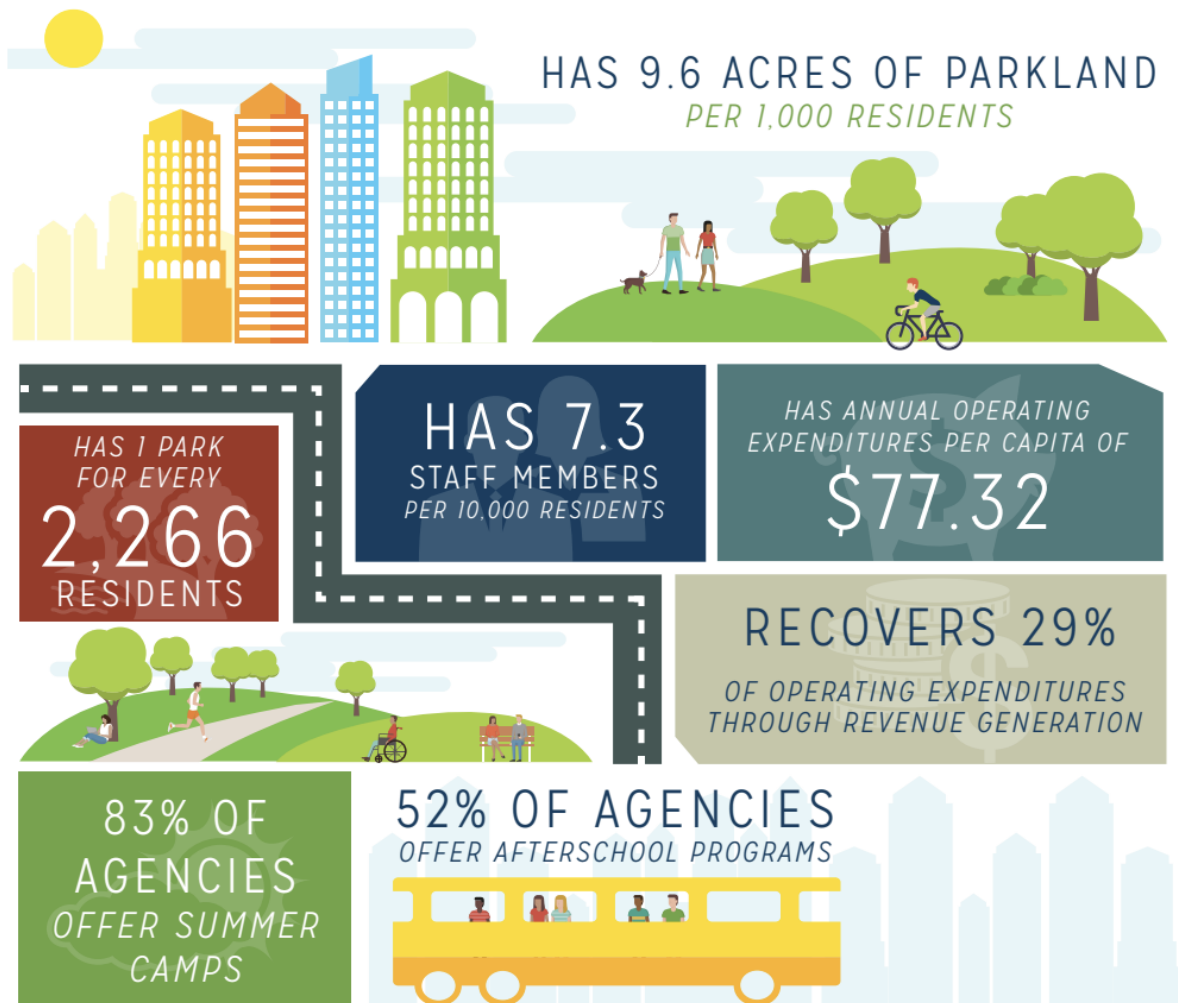


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## AGENCY PERFORMANCE REVIEW AT A GLANCE

### THE TYPICAL PARK AND RECREATION AGENCY...



# NRPA Facility Market Report: Community Profile

Analysis of:  
**Willow Grove Sunshine Park**  
**14625 Hwy 33 NW**  
**Whitakers, NC 27891**

Park and recreation agencies offer a diverse set of offerings and program activities to meet the needs of their communities. But the offerings that work well for one agency, or even one part of an agency's service area, may not be the best fit elsewhere. As a result, park and recreation professionals seek information and insights that empower them to make decisions on the optimal program and service offerings for their communities.

In your hands is the **NRPA Facility Market Report** for the Willow Grove Sunshine Park. This report offers an array of data that provides your agency with a greater understanding of the residents served by the facility, with a particular focus on their habits and interests.

## Key Findings About the Willow Grove Sunshine Park:

# 1,134

Number of residents living within a ten-minute drive of the facility per Census 2021 estimates

# 43.8

Median age of residents living within a ten-minute drive of the facility per Census 2021 estimates

# 26.8%

Percentage of adult population living within a ten-minute drive of the facility that exercise at least seven hours per week

**Figure 1: Map of Five, Seven and Ten Minute Drives from the Facility**

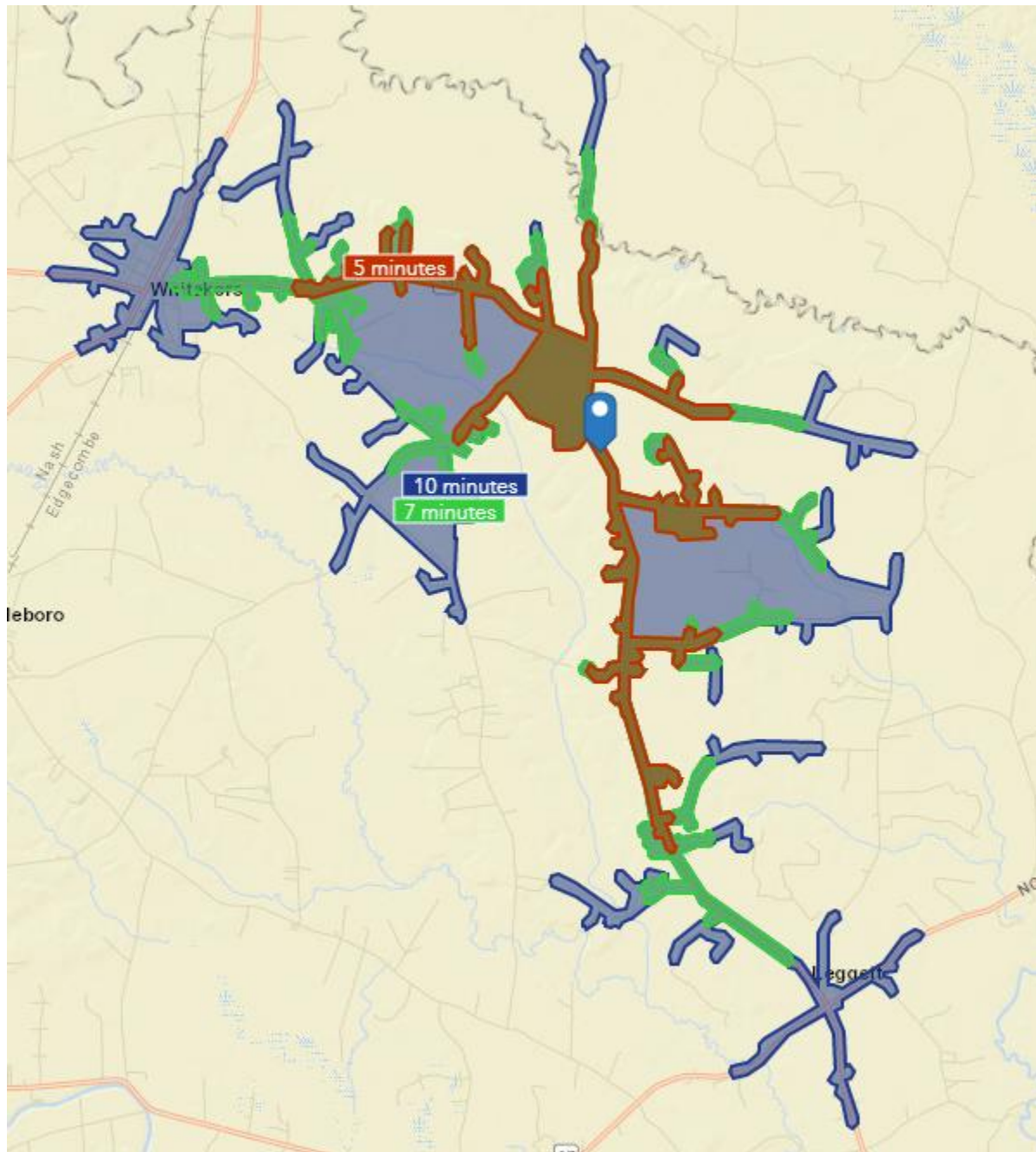


Figure 1 illustrates the physical accessibility, in terms of driving times, of the Willow Grove Sunshine Park. The highlighted areas show the driving times of the facility, broken down into three (brown), five (green) and ten (blue) minute estimated drive time intervals. Although usage and constituent population will vary by the facility type, the ten-minute drive time area is presented as a *general* guideline on the size of the population most likely to visit the facility. That is, those residing within the area shaded blue may represent the most likely users of common facilities such as recreation and community centers, athletic fields, playgrounds, tennis courts, senior centers and aquatic facilities.

## About the Residents Who Live Within a 10 Minute Drive of the Facility

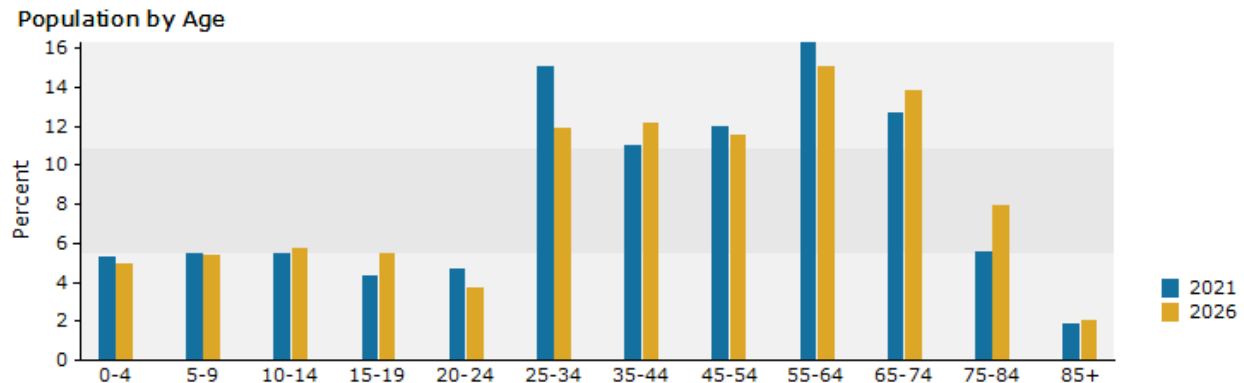
**Figure 2: 2010 Census Data and 2021 & 2026 Forecast Data of People Residing Within a 10 Minute Drive of the Facility**

Summary	Census 2010	2021 Forecast	2026 Forecast
<b>Population</b>	1,131	1,138	1,134
<b>Households</b>	448	457	458
<b>Families</b>	309	308	307
<b>Average Household Size</b>	2.52	2.49	2.47
<b>Owner Occupied Homes</b>	330	331	333
<b>Renter Occupied Homes</b>	118	126	124
<b>Median Age</b>	42.3	43.8	45.4
<b>Median Household Income</b>		\$44,411	\$52,502

Race and Ethnicity	Census 2010		2021 Forecast		2026 Forecast	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>White Alone</b>	355	31.4%	307	27.0%	287	25.3%
<b>Black Alone</b>	717	63.4%	752	66.1%	756	66.7%
<b>American Indian Alone</b>	5	0.4%	6	0.5%	8	0.7%
<b>Asian Alone</b>	2	0.2%	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
<b>Pacific Islander Alone</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Some Other Race Alone</b>	30	2.7%	40	3.5%	45	4.0%
<b>Two or More Races</b>	22	1.9%	31	2.7%	36	3.2%
<b>Hispanic Origin (Any Race)</b>	42	3.7%	58	5.1%	66	5.8%

Figure 2 summarizes Census data of the residents living within a ten-minute drive of the facility, including population, household formation and home ownership status. The 2010 data represents actual United States Census data, while the 2021 and 2026 figures are projections developed by Esri. The projections are based on forecasts for births, deaths, international and domestic migration and other factors that influence population shifts. These projections, which naturally are subject to revision, assist your agency in its planning of future programming at the facility over the coming years.

**Figure 3: Forecasted Age Trends of People Residing Within a Ten-Minute Drive of the Facility**



**Figure 4: Census 2010 Data and Forecasted Age Trends of People Residing Within a Ten-Minute Drive of the Facility**

Population by Age	Census 2010		2021 Forecast		2026 Forecast	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 - 4	64	5.7%	60	5.3%	57	5.0%
5 - 9	57	5.0%	63	5.5%	61	5.4%
10 - 14	72	6.4%	63	5.5%	66	5.8%
15 - 19	98	8.7%	49	4.3%	62	5.5%
20 - 24	69	6.1%	53	4.7%	42	3.7%
25 - 34	113	10.0%	172	15.1%	135	11.9%
35 - 44	133	11.8%	125	11.0%	138	12.2%
45 - 54	192	17.0%	137	12.0%	130	11.5%
55 - 64	157	13.9%	185	16.3%	171	15.1%
65 - 74	98	8.7%	145	12.7%	158	13.9%
75 - 84	60	5.3%	64	5.6%	90	7.9%
85+	18	1.6%	22	1.9%	24	2.1%

Figures 3 and 4 provide an age distribution of the population living with a ten-minute drive of the facility by age groups, as reported in United States Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data.

Note that the age ranges are not of equal size. The age groups ranging from birth to 24 years old are grouped into five-year increments, ages 25 to 84 are grouped into ten-year increments and individuals 85 years and older are placed into a single age group.

From a recreation programming and planning perspective, the classification of youth and young adults into small age groups aid your agency with programing decisions for children and young adults. Whereas adults within a ten-year age range (e.g., ages 35 to 44) may likely share similar recreation interests, the similarly large size age groups may not make as much sense for children and young adults. For example, recreation interests of five year olds have few similarities of those of 15 year olds. Hence, the five-year age ranges for the younger age groupings provide your agency with more valuable insights about the relative size of the youth population when considering their recreation needs.

## Personal Interests, Activities and Spending Habits

Figures 5 - 8 summarize the personal interests, activities, and spending habits of residents living within a ten-minute drive of the facility. These tables include predictors of recreation activity and spending that better inform programming decision making for your facility.

Pay particular attention to the Market Potential Index, or MPI. The MPI represents the relative likelihood of adults living near your facility to engage in a particular activity in comparison to the U.S. average. This measure is indexed to 100, so that an MPI greater than 100 indicates a greater than average likelihood (relative to the whole U.S.) to participate in the activity while an MPI less than 100 suggests a less than average likelihood to engage in the activity.

**Figure 5: Weekly Exercise Habits of People Residing Within a Ten-Minute Drive of the Facility**

	<b>Expected Number of Adults</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>MPI</b>
<b>Spends 7+ hours exercising per week</b>	247	26.8%	113
<b>Spends 4-6 hours exercising per week</b>	150	16.3%	81
<b>Spends 1-3 hours exercising per week</b>	110	11.9%	58

Figure 5 shows the weekly exercise habits for people within a ten-minute drive of your facility. The percentages are the proportion of adults living within a ten-minute drive of the facility that exercise one to three, four to six or seven-plus hours a week. An MPI value greater of 100 indicates a greater percentage of the adult population living within a ten-minute drive of the facility exercises one to two, three to five or six-plus hours a week versus the U.S. as a whole.

**Figure 6: Participation Rates of Select Recreation Activities of People Residing Within a Ten-Minute Drive of the Facility**

	<b>Expected Number of Adults</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>MPI</b>
<b>Participated in aerobics in last 12 months</b>	39	4.2%	58
<b>Participated in basketball in last 12 months</b>	66	7.2%	93
<b>Participated in yoga in last 12 months</b>	48	5.2%	58
<b>Participated in weight lifting in last 12 months</b>	55	6.0%	56
<b>Participated in tennis in last 12 months</b>	18	2.0%	52
<b>Participated in soccer in last 12 months</b>	22	2.4%	56

Figure 6 presents data on the level of adult participation in select recreation activities among residents living within a ten-minute drive of the facility. Using this data, you can estimate the interests of residents in your facility's service area, helping inform programming planning decisions.

**Figure 7: Social Media Usage of People Residing Within a Ten-Minute Drive of the Facility**

	<b>Expected Number of Adults</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>MPI</b>
<b>Facebook</b>	566	61.5%	95
<b>YouTube</b>	464	50.4%	93
<b>Twitter</b>	80	8.7%	57

Figure 7 shows the level of social media usage of adult residents that reside within a ten-minute drive of your facility. Understanding the social media habits of the residents living near the facility informs your agency on the potential efficacy of social media channels in supporting marketing strategies for the facility's programming and services.

**Figure 8: Spending Habits on Recreation Activities of People Residing Within a Ten-Minute Drive of the Facility**

	<b>Spending Potential Index</b>	<b>Average Annual Amount Spent</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total Spent on Entertainment/Recreation Fees and Admissions</b>	46	\$341.87	\$156,235
- <b>Tickets to Theatre/Operas/Concerts</b>	44	\$35.60	\$16,270
- <b>Tickets to Movies</b>	47	\$26.03	\$11,897
- <b>Tickets to Parks or Museums</b>	65	\$22.01	\$10,057
- <b>Admission to Sporting Events</b>	54	\$34.62	\$15,820
- <b>Fees for Participant Sports</b>	44	\$51.01	\$23,313
- <b>Fees for Recreational Lessons</b>	37	\$52.09	\$23,806
- <b>Membership Fees for Social/Recreation/Civic Clubs</b>	48	\$120.02	\$54,851

Figure 8 summarizes the spending habits of nearby residents on recreation activities by presenting the Spending Potential Index (SPI) and average annual spending on select recreation and leisure activities. Similar to the MPI, the SPI is indexed such that a reading of 100 represents average spending among all U.S. households. Hence, a reading above 100 means residents living within a ten-minute drive of the facility spends more on average on the particular activity relative to the U.S. as a whole.

While all of the leisure activities presented in the table may not be relevant to your facility, these data provide your agency with guidance on the leisure interests of your patrons, as well as their ability/willingness to pay for those experiences. For example, a population that has a higher than average SPI for "Fees for Recreational Lessons" may indicate a significant opportunity—and/or a greater willingness to pay—for high quality fee-based recreation programs at your facility.

## Final Thoughts

While the information within this report is not intended to be indicative of the entire population served by Willow Grove Sunshine Park, it gives your agency insights on the potential market for the facility with a particular focus on those living within a ten-minute drive. One note of caution: the analysis provided within this report is meant to be for informational purposes only and does not represent a recommendation by NRPA for the facility's operations.

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