

INDIAN TRAIL PARK AND GREENWAY MASTER PLAN

Submitted to:

The Town of Indian Trail, North Carolina

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Indian Trail will promote a well planned park and recreation system that encourages an appreciation of nature, conservation, and a healthy and safe quality of life for all ages. The Town's park and recreation system will be designed through partnerships to connect our heritage with our future.

-Vision Statement of the Park and
Greenway Master Plan-

Executive Summary

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CHAPTER 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Indian Trail Farmers Market

The Town of Indian Trail has undergone significant changes in recent years, as residents, businesses, and developers have been drawn to its small-town charm and convenient location near the burgeoning Charlotte Metropolitan area. This recent rapid growth has put tremendous pressure on the Town's ability to provide Park and Recreational services for its current and future residents. In spite of this pressure, the Town started to address this important aspect of its quality of life with the initiation of the Comprehensive Plan in 2005. The Comprehensive Plan provided a broad framework for park and greenway facilities. In an effort to begin implementing the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan, the Town took two major steps in 2008. First, the Town Council established a ½ cent park allocation fund, which is to be used for the development of a park and recreation system. Secondly, the Town developed a Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan, which expanded upon the greenway system that was established in the Comprehensive Plan. The Pedestrian Master Plan established a comprehensive pedestrian network that links all the major destinations and the Village Centers that were defined in the Comprehensive Plan. This plan, like the Pedestrian Master Plan, is a continuation of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

BENEFITS

A comprehensive park and greenway system can provide numerous benefits to a community that can positively affect the health, social, environmental, and economic sustainability of the people that live there. One of the largest benefits heard repeatedly during the development of the Comprehensive Plan and Pedestrian Plan is the over-arching theme of **Quality of Life**. This plan complements and supplements the previous planning efforts by recommendations that will improve the overall quality of life of the residents that live in Indian Trail. Other benefits of a comprehensive park and recreation system are:

- Economic Benefits
- Health Benefits
- Environmental Benefits
- Transportation Benefits

“Indian Trail should be a vibrant and self-sufficient town with a unique identity. With a focus on downtown and its connections to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas, Indian Trail can be a place where people live, work and play in a safe environment...”

Part of Vision Statement of the Comprehensive Plan

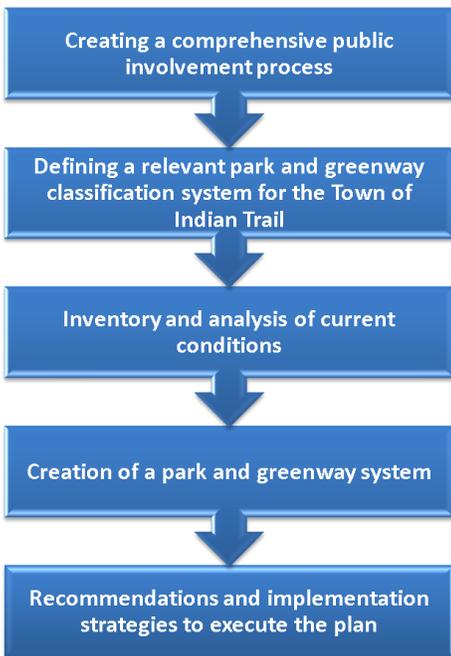
- Preservation of Local History and Culture

THE PROCESS

Adopting the Town of Indian Trail Parks Master Plan is not only an important step in ensuring the implementation of the Vision set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, but also meeting (and exceeding) the current and future park and recreation needs of this growing community. Park and greenway master plans are the means to establish a vision over the next 10 years, but needs to be updated on a regular basis to address changing needs of an evolving community. Such constant review will also allow the Town of Indian Trail to capitalize on unforeseen opportunities as they present themselves in upcoming years.

The Town of Indian Trail Park Master Plan seeks to identify who will be the primary users of the Town’s park and recreation facilities, what will be their needs, and how those needs can be best served. The Plan was developed during an eight month process through a series of public involvement initiatives that included – Steering Committee meetings, Stakeholder Workshops, an online Attitude and Perceptions survey, newsletters, and a series of Public Workshops. The planning process engaged a wide cross-section of its citizens and leaders to garner support and lay a strong foundation for the capital improvement in its park and recreation facilities through this plan. The Plan provides a framework of future parks and greenways locations based on the desires of its citizens and leaders, and presents recommendations and implementation strategies for reaching that vision.

The approach for the creation of the Parks Master Plan consisted of the following key components:



Key components of the approach for the creation of the Parks Master Plan

1. Creating a comprehensive public involvement process,
2. Defining a relevant park and greenway classification system for the Town of Indian Trail,
3. Inventory and analysis of current conditions, creation of a park and greenway system, and
4. Recommendations and implementation strategies to execute the plan.

A series of goals, established in the beginning of this project, guided this approach.

- Promote Indian Trail’s small town heritage by incorporating arts and cultural activities with the development of recreational programs and facilities.
- Preserve wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Develop facilities and programs that are accessible by all users.
- Encourage physical and environmental education opportunities for all age groups.
- Enhance the safety of parks, greenways and other recreational facilities by providing adequate lighting and signage.
- Ensure that all recreational facilities are kept attractive through the development of a comprehensive maintenance program.
- Promote facilities and programs that are inviting to all users and are integrated into the context of the community.

EXISTING PARK AND GREENWAY FACILITIES

The Town of Indian Trail has been rapidly growing over the past 10-15 years. According to the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management, the Town of Indian Trail has grown 121% between April 2000 and July 2006. Due to this phenomenal growth, the building of park and recreation facilities has not kept pace with the development. Currently, the Town does not own or operate any parks or greenways. So how are the recreational needs of the community met? Residents are served by a variety of private and not-for-profit facilities. The role of private facilities is important because they reduce demand for public resources, but does not eliminate the need for such facilities. Town residents also use recreational facilities provided by Union County and other neighboring jurisdictions.

EXISTING PROGRAMS, PLANS AND POLICIES

Over the past several years the Town has developed a combination of programs, plans and policies to help connect existing and future destinations, provide better connectivity for all users, protect and preserve the natural assets of the community and develop a framework for future growth. The Town’s new Unified Development Ordinance has several provisions that require the dedication of open space for new residential



Source: www.charmeck.org

developments, the protection of existing trees and vegetation, and buffer requirements to protect the water quality of creeks and streams.

THE PARK AND GREENWAY PLAN

The current and future needs of the Town of Indian Trail were assessed by using a variety of indicators, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 5. These indicators included an online survey of attitudes and perceptions, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards, evaluation of population projections, and an assessment of the surrounding municipalities.

Based on this assessment, the Park Master Plan recommends that the Town provide 4.75 acres of open space for every 1,000 people. Since this is a 10-year Park Master Plan and based on the 2020 population projects provided by the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Plan recommends that the Town will need approximately 170 acres of parks and open space for its residents. Based on feedback from Town staff and the general public, the 170 acres should be broken down as follows:

- **Mini Parks:** Mini Parks are the smallest unit of a park system and are typically used to address limited and isolated needs of residents within a ¼ mile of the park location. It is usually expected that this facility could be accessed on foot without using an automobile and therefore has limited or no parking. Mini Parks are usually located in higher density areas where accessibility through sidewalks and greenways are present and is therefore vitally important. The size of a mini park will range up to a maximum size of 1 acre. It is recommended that there be a total of 10 Mini Parks totaling approximately 10 acres.
- **Neighborhood Parks:** The Neighborhood Park is the basic unit of a park system and can include both active and passive recreation. Such facilities are much more visible compared to the Mini Park, and therefore should be designed to create a focus for the neighborhood they serve. These facilities typically are between 5-10 acres and serve a geographic area of approximately ½ mile radius. Topography and population density can also influence the location of this park type. It is recommended that the Town provide a total of 80 acres (16 sites) of Neighborhood Parks.
- **Community Parks:** A Community Park serves a community's needs by providing a wider range of recreational amenities. This park type typically is 20-50 acres and serves an area between a ½ mile and 3

miles of the immediate community. A combination of active and passive recreation activities could include basketball courts, tennis courts, ball fields (i.e., baseball and soccer), volleyball courts, play structures, trails, picnic areas, tot lots, open space, seating areas, and restrooms. It is recommended that a total of 80 acres or approximately 4 sites of Community Parks be provided.

- **District/Regional Parks:** –The minimum size for this park classification is 40 acres; however, the optimal size is somewhere between 80 and 150 acres. The Town should coordinate with Union County on the location of future district or regional parks facilities, such as the proposed North District Park that is currently identified in the County’s Master Plan.

Mini Parks are typically incorporated into specific developments and should be coordinated with developers. The location for the Neighborhood and Community Parks was based on several factors including the availability of land, the geographic location, the proximity to residential areas, input from the public and Town staff, and the location of environmentally sensitive areas. The complete Park and Greenway System Map is located at the end of this chapter (Figure 6.4).



RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following is the list of Goals and Recommendations for implementation that are detailed further in Chapter 7.

Goal 1: Promote Indian Trail’s small town heritage.

Recommendation 1A: Foster the Town’s cultural and historical heritage through the creation of recreational facilities.

Recommendation 1B: Coordinate with Carolina Thread Trail (CTT) in the development of trails and greenways within the Town’s limits.

Goal 2: Preserve wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.

Recommendation 2A: Ensure that all future developments within the Town respect the environment and preserve environmentally sensitive areas by establishing regulations that meet the intended goal.

Recommendation 2B: Create a Nature Preserve in the Goose Creek Watershed in the northeast portion of the Town’s planning area.

Recommendation 2C: Design and develop future park and greenway facilities in a sustainable manner that incorporates principles of both environmental and operational sustainability.

Goal 3: Develop facilities and programs that are accessible by all users.

Recommendation 3A: Ensure that as each park and greenway is developed that all users are considered in the planning and design of the facility.

Recommendation 3B: Establish a Park and Recreation department.

Recommendation 3C: Connect Parks and Greenway facilities to existing and future neighborhoods.

Recommendation 3D: Provide amenities and program park facilities for all age groups and interest groups.

Recommendation 3E: Explore opportunities to acquire lands for park and greenway development.

Goal 4: Encourage physical and environmental education opportunities for all age groups.

Recommendation 4A: Incorporate various elements into the planning and design of parks and greenways.

Goal 5: Enhance the safety of parks, greenways and other recreational facilities.

Recommendation 5A: Ensure proper safety measures are implemented for all facilities.

Recommendation 5B: Provide safe crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists on state and local roads, railroads, and creeks.

Goal 6: Ensure that all recreational facilities are kept attractive.

Recommendation 6A: Create a maintenance program for all recreational facilities.

Goal 7: Promote facilities and programs that are inviting to all users and are integrated into the context of the community.



Indian Trail Fun Run

Recommendation 7A: Collaborate with local utility providers to develop greenways and trails.

Recommendation 7B: Develop a Park and Recreation system that provides adequate facilities and services to Town’s current and future residents.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY



The adoption of the Parks Master Plan with its recommendations will initiate the implementation of this plan. Ongoing community support and involvement will also be critical to ensure the implementation of this plan. The Town should frequently review the process and update this plan as needed. A full analysis of how this plan should be implemented is addressed in Chapter 7 titled “Plan Implementation”.

Successful implementation of this plan will require the Town to continue to support the role that the existing Parks, Tree and Greenway Committee serves. This committee will need to work closely with Town staff to implement the recommendations in this Plan. The Committee will prepare and present an annual report to the Town Council on the progress of the plan implementation. This report will serve as a method of accountability to the Town to ensure that the plan is being properly implemented. As funds become available, it is also recommended that the Town establish a separate Park and Recreation Department to oversee the development and maintenance of all park and recreation facilities within the Town. It is also important that the Town staff continue to foster partnerships with adjacent municipalities, Union County, Mecklenburg County and other public and private entities to make this plan a reality.

Introduction

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CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT



Figure 2.1: Context Map



Recent growth has placed a strain on the Town's ability to keep pace with the development of Park and Recreation facilities

The Town of Indian Trail is a rapidly growing community located in the southeastern portion of the burgeoning metropolitan area of Charlotte. It is approximately 15 miles from Uptown Charlotte, and is conveniently connected to other municipalities and major destinations through a network of major and minor arterials. The Town started along the trading route of Native Americans in 17th century, but was not incorporated until 1907. It is located in the northwestern portion of Union County, which was ranked the seventh (7th) fastest growing county in the United States by U.S. Census Bureau (News, 2008)¹. It is also one of the fastest growing counties in North Carolina. The Town of Indian Trail has experienced tremendous growth in last 10-15 years. This small rural farming community, has quickly transitioned into a suburban community of Charlotte, NC, which is one of the fastest growing regions in the country. Based on recent trends and future projections, the Town of Indian Trail is expected to grow even more in the near future.

Even though this plan is the first of its kind for Indian Trail, it is not the first plan to address parks, greenways, and open space needs of the town. The Comprehensive Plan, which was completed in 2005, and the subsequent update of it in 2008, laid out the goals, overall framework, and even the percentages of parks and open space within various villages.

NEED FOR A PARK MASTER PLAN

This unprecedented growth is beginning to place a strain on the Town's resources. It is also posing challenges to meet the needs of its residents to maintain the quality of life that has attracted them to its small town atmosphere. Given the pace and quantity of growth, the Town is committed to excellence in prioritizing its needs and addressing them in a timely fashion. This commitment is evidenced by the recent completion of the Comprehensive Plan (2005) and the Pedestrian Master Plan (2009)Both of

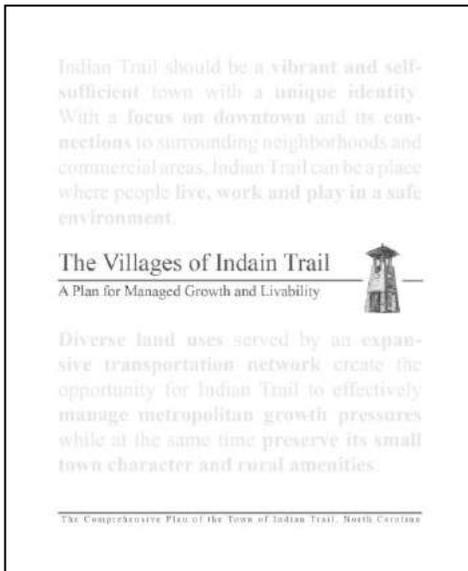
¹ U.S Census Bureau News, released March 20, 2008 (<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/011635.html>)



Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meeting

"To provide additional parks and recreational facilities to support the growing population"

A Goal from the 2005 Comprehensive Plan



The Town completed its first Comprehensive Plan in 2005

these plans were important to address issues raised by residents during the Comprehensive Plan process. Provisions for adequate parks and greenways were among many priorities identified during the Comprehensive Plan process in 2004-2005. One of the top goals of the Comprehensive Plan was - *"To provide additional parks and recreational facilities to support the growing population"*. This was further reinforced by participants in the public meetings during the Comprehensive Plan process where they mentioned "parks and recreation areas" under *Things to change to improve Indian Trail*; and "parks and recreation facilities" under *Things that the Comprehensive Plan should address*.

Recent development has catered to the parks and recreational needs through the provision of private, neighborhood oriented facilities that are usually provided within residential subdivisions. Such facilities are heavily used by the residents and visitors of those communities, and are typically off limits to non-residents of those communities. Other private indoor facilities are also present within the town that cater to professional leagues and organized sports. Such facilities are used by residents of the town and visitors from around the region through membership or other similar programs. Although many park and recreational facilities exist in the town, none are currently provided by the Town itself. As the Town continues to grow, and the diversity of its residents continues to increase, there will be an increased demand for a wide range of services to satisfy the recreational needs of its residents. The Town has recognized this and is addressing it by initiating the Town's first ever Park Master Plan study.

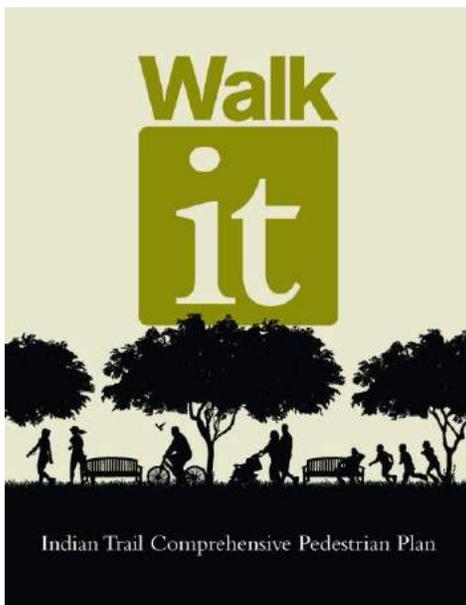
The importance of park and recreational facilities was further highlighted in a recently conducted survey by the Town. In 2008, the Town of Indian Trail hired Research and Training Specialists, Inc. to conduct a town-wide citizen satisfaction survey. The survey was sent to 3,500 of the 16,948 registered voters of the Town. Of those that took the survey, 85.1% felt that the Town should purchase land for parks and greenways and 80.1% said that the Town should create a parks/recreation department. As a result of that survey, the Town hired a national urban planning consulting firm HNTB to assist the Town in developing its first Parks Master Plan.

10 YEAR MASTER PLAN

Creating a Parks Master Plan for the Town of Indian Trail is one step closer towards ensuring that park and recreation opportunities exist for current and future residents of the Town. It also ensures future development and re-development accommodates such recreational facilities. The Parks Master Plan also establishes a long-term vision, typically looking 10 years ahead, to set aside valuable land that could be environmentally precious or relatively affordable at this point in time. It is getting increasingly difficult to accurately predict how much a fast growing town like Indian Trail will grow over a long period of time. Even though a Comprehensive Plan typically looks 20 years ahead, the Town's first Comprehensive Plan also addressed how to manage growth with final build-out in perspective. Creating a 10 year park master plan is fairly typical of such efforts. Since the goal of the Town's planning efforts is to budget for capital improvements (building of park and greenway facilities), doing a 10 year plan provides a realistic framework of the Town's needs and its ability to pay for those needs.

“To provide recreational opportunities for all users.”

A Goal from the 2008 Pedestrian Master Plan



The Town completed their first Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan in 2008

The development of a park master plan has been a focus of the Town's since the sudden growth prompted the Town to undertake a comprehensive look at its future. This is further evident when the Town undertook the first ever Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan in 2008. The focus of this plan was to provide safe pedestrian facilities for its residents and balance the transportation choices, which have been heavily tilted towards automobile use. The pedestrian plan also addressed the need for more greenways that allow for more direct, off-road connections to multiple destinations. Improvement of the quality of life was one of the primary reasons that the Pedestrian Plan was created. The more walkable a community is, the more likely people are to get out and walk their community and meet their neighbors, building lasting relationships and strengthening the overall community spirit. Many goals were identified during the Pedestrian planning process, such as those listed below, are similar to what was heard during the Park Master Planning process.

- To provide **recreational** opportunities for all users, and
- Create a **sense of place** and identity through good planning and design.

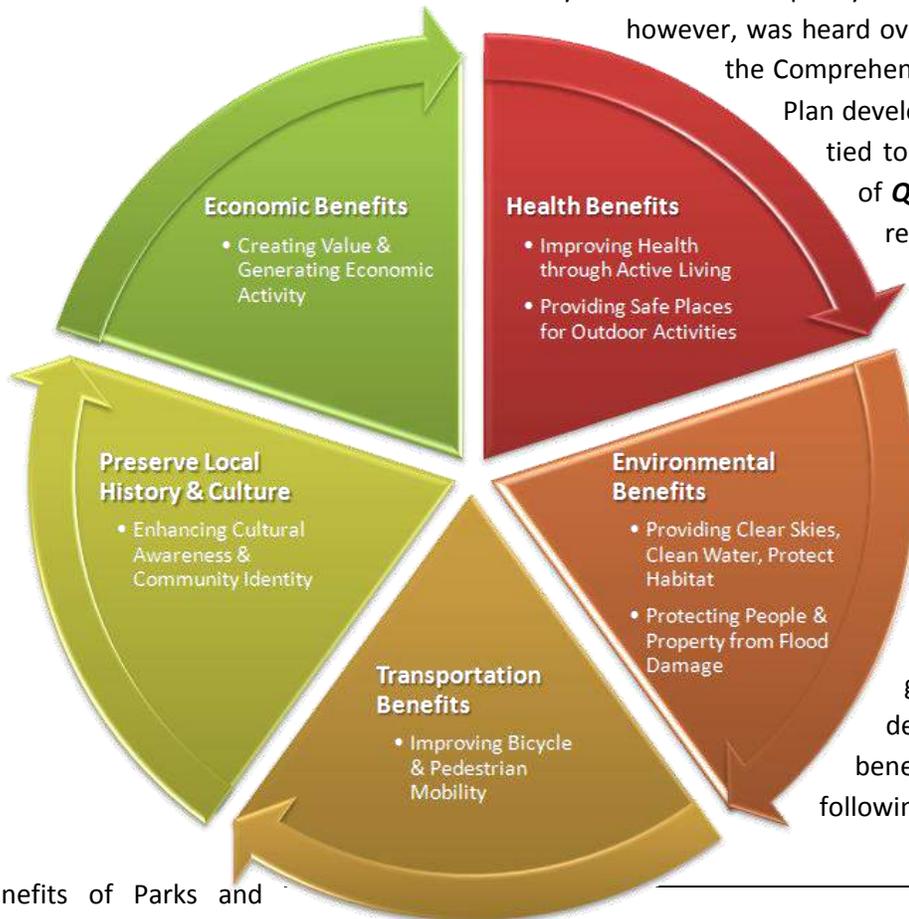
As a result of these goals, now is the time to take some of the recommendations from previous planning efforts and create a detailed park master plan that will provide the Town with a guide for developing park and greenway facilities as well as recreational programs for the next 10 years. This Plan provides recommendations for park and greenway locations that the Town can use to begin to develop recreational facilities for its residents. Although the plan provides recommendations for where different types of park facilities could be built over the next 10 years, it must be reviewed annually and updated at least once every five years to address change in demographic patterns, economic growth, and patterns of development. Ideally, it could become part of an update to the Comprehensive Plan.



Indian Trail Fun Run

PARK AND GREENWAY BENEFITS

Parks and greenways provide numerous benefits that can positively affect a community’s health, social, environmental, and economic sustainability that ultimately create a better quality of life. The biggest benefit,



however, was heard over and over again during the Comprehensive Plan and Pedestrian Plan development process, and it is tied to the over-arching theme of **Quality of Life**. So, in that respect this plan complements and supplements the previous planning efforts such as the Comprehensive Plan and Pedestrian Plan. Figure 2.2 below provides a list of the various benefits of having parks and greenways. A more detailed discussion of each benefit is provided on the following pages.

Figure 2.2: Benefits of Parks and Greenways



Carolina Heelsplitter

Source: www.fws.gov

Health Benefits

Many individuals realize how important exercise and an active lifestyle are to staying healthy. However, lack of convenient choices and over dependence on automobile use has resulted in an increasingly inactive lifestyle in our country. The U.S. Surgeon General estimates (2006) that 60% of American adults are not regularly active and another 25% are not active at all. Accessible parks and greenways could help reduce the amount of individuals who do not currently exercise on a regular basis. Many people simply do not have easy access to parks, greenways or other types of recreational facilities and programs. Providing easy access to these types of amenities is a big step in making an active lifestyle more feasible. Many health experts in our country believe that there is a growing childhood obesity epidemic. Many children today don't get enough exercise, which can be partially due to the lack of access to convenient recreational facilities.

Environmental Benefits

The environmental benefits of parks and greenways are numerous. Greenways can help protect important habitats and provide natural corridors for people and wildlife. Greenways also help improve air and water quality by providing a mode of transportation which reduces the amount of roadway pavement and the number of vehicular trips on the road. They can also help with stream restoration efforts that restore streams back to their natural alignment through their design and coordination. There are many types of greenways; however, most are located along creeks and rivers. Finally, greenways are an excellent tool to teach children and adults about the importance of plants and wildlife. Greenways allow people to interact with nature, helping them understand the importance nature plays in the sustainability of the community. For the Town of Indian Trail, greenways can allow the residents to understand the importance of the Goose Creek and Crooked Creek Watershed areas and the heritage of species found locally in Indian Trail. Greenways and open spaces are wonderful outdoor classrooms that help build an appreciation for nature, especially in young adults. The recent pace of development has dramatically affected the water quality of streams and creeks in Indian Trail, and it is important for everyone to learn about it.



McAlpine Creek greenway

“...preserve the small town character and rural amenities...”

From the Vision Statement of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan



Transportation Benefits

Even though a large percentage of the U.S. population owns or has access to an automobile, there is still a significant portion of people that rely on other means of transportation. This group of individuals is comprised of mostly elderly people who are physically unable to drive, low income residents who cannot afford to own a car, or children who are not old enough to drive. Although no clear statistics are available, anecdotal evidence suggests that roughly one-third of all U.S. residents do not have a driver’s license.

Greenways are not just for recreational use, they also provide opportunities for alternative transportation bicycling routes. According to the Statewide Survey on Bicycling and Walking completed by North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian² in 2000, over 45% of North Carolina households own a bicycle and 80% of households with four or more members own bicycles. The survey also suggested that more than 70% of adults who had ridden in the past 30 days ride at least once a week for fun or exercise.

Greenways help with pedestrian mobility by connecting major destinations and thereby reducing the need to use personal automobiles to make short trips. Trips that are less than one mile could be made on foot within a 20 minute comfortable walk at a normal pace. Furthermore, Federal Highway Administration’s national survey conducted in 2001 has shown that Americans are willing to walk as far as two miles to a destination, and bike as far as five miles³. These short trips (less than one mile) could be made on foot or bike if opportunity is provided. All this points towards a great desire to use alternative modes of transportation if safe facilities are provided and destinations are well connected.

Preserving the Local History and Culture

The Vision Statement was developed during the Comprehensive Plan put an emphasis on - *preserving the small town character and rural amenities*. Both of these themes advance the idea of preserving local history and culture. The Town of Indian Trail has a rich historic past and derived its name from the Native American trading path that

² <http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/default.html>

³ www.nhts.ornl.gov



wound through this area. The town also has strong agricultural roots with the issuance of land grants in the mid 1700s. With the advancement of the railroads in 1874 and the presence of gold in the region the town flourished with easy access to goods and services. Parks and greenways provide an excellent canvas to depict this history and with the new branding package recently developed by Town of Indian Trail this history could be preserved for future generations. Parks and greenways have the ability to connect both residents and visitors to the local heritage of the Town of Indian Trail by preserving historic places and by providing access to them. They can give people a sense of place and a greater understanding of the past events.

Economic Benefits

Nationally and locally there are examples that confirm the positive effects of greenways and trails on property values. Numerous studies have been completed that indicate residential property values will realize a greater gain in value the closer they are located to greenways and parks. Recent growth in Indian Trail has put a premium on open space. New residents are moving to Indian Trail because of high quality of life, which is enhanced by access to parks and open space. Maintaining this high quality of life is important in order to keep an improved tax base.

A study published by the Trust for Public Land in March 2009 called *“Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System,”* studied the economic effects parks and open space have on property values. The study considered seven major factors in order to quantify the value of parks: **property values, tourism, direct use, health, community cohesion, clean water, and clean air.**

According to the study two of the seven provide a city or municipality with *“direct income to its treasury.”* The proximity of a property to a park increases the **property value**, subsequently increasing the property tax that is paid by the land owner. The second is the increased sales tax on spending by **tourists** who visit primarily because of the city’s parks.

Three other factors - direct use, health, and community cohesion - provide residents with *“direct savings”* according to the study. Direct savings means that residents can use the free park system and not



Local history could be told via monuments, plaques, and other displays

The proximity of a property to a park increases the property value.

*From the Trust for Public Land study called **Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System***



Goose Creek in Indian Trail

having to go out into the private market to purchase recreation. Secondly, there is the **health** benefit of accessible parks and open space. The healthier an individual is because of exercise, the lower their medical costs will be on an annual basis. The third factor; **community cohesion**, benefits people by “banding together to save and improve their neighborhood parks.” This “know-your-neighbor” social capital helps ward off antisocial problems that would otherwise cost the city more in police and fire protection, prisons, counseling, and rehabilitation.

The last two factors provide *environmental savings*. Environmental savings can be realized through the reduction in water and air pollution. Parks and open spaces tend to have an abundance of plant species (trees, shrubs, etc.) that help filter water before it is deposited into local streams and creeks. Also, air pollution is reduced by trees and shrubs absorbing air pollutants.

This report evaluated each of the seven factors in depth and concluded a park and open space system increases not only the property values, but also increases the health and environment of the community. A copy of this report and others that document the benefits of parks can be found at the Trust for Public Land website⁴.

⁴ http://www.tpl.org/tier2_cl.cfm?folder_id=725

Public Input Process

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CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



Steering Committee members filling the attitudes and perception survey

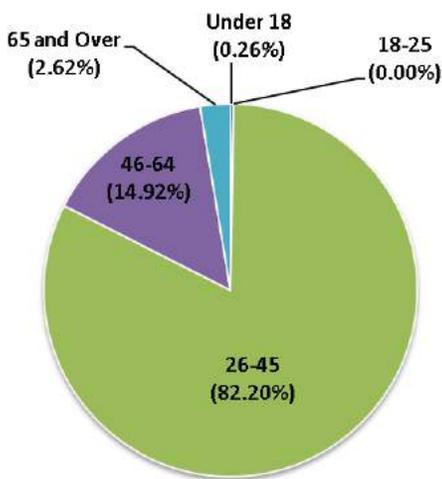


Figure 3.1: Age distribution of survey participants

Public involvement has become increasingly important in the planning process to provide direction to address the critical needs of the community. This is extremely important in a fast growing community like Indian Trail where the influx of diverse residents from all over the country has created varied opinions and viewpoints about how the Town should address the park and recreational needs of its residents. Public input creates consensus by molding the direction of the plan to ensure it truly reflects the wishes of the community as a whole. As part of the Parks Master Plan process, several public input sessions were held to garner support and feedback on the plan. A Steering Committee guided the planning process. The following section provides a summary of those different input sessions and what was heard from the public.

Online Attitudes and Perceptions Survey

Developing a survey was identified early on as a way to provide specific feedback on the types of recreational facilities and programs that people currently use and would like to see in the future. At the onset of the process, an online survey was developed to ask specific questions about:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Types of facilities and programs
- Frequency of use
- Who offers them

The use of an online survey for public input was very successful. A total of 387 people took the survey, which provided valuable information about the recreational habits of those that live in or around Indian Trail. However, it should be kept in mind that the online survey used for this plan was not a Scientific Survey and was therefore not tested for statistical validity. A scientific survey includes a defined sample size (how many people the survey went out to) and how many people sent the survey back. In the end a scientific survey has a confidence figure: something that will say that “the

survey has 98% chance of 95% accurate". For many planning projects, such as the Town of Indian Trail Park Master Plan, doing an Attitude and Perceptions survey is an easier, more cost effective, and efficient way to get the desired results without spending valuable resources on a detailed scientific survey.

The online survey was included on the Town's website and was advertised through various media outlets, like the Town newsletters, Home Owner Associations (HOA) newsletters and websites, and word of mouth. The results of the survey were also posted on the website for review. Some interesting facts and trends were observed based on the responses from the residents. For example, most of the survey respondents had young families (approximately 83% of the respondents are between the ages of 26-45 and have young children), and are relatively new residents of the town (58% of the respondents have lived in Indian Trail for less than 5 years). If the survey participants represent a good sample of town residents, this suggests that the Town has young families that have recently moved to the town. The park and recreational needs of a community with families with young adults are markedly different than the one where median age is high. This information is valuable to not only create facilities that have active uses (ball fields, etc) but also programming of those facilities.

The respondents also answered in favor of having more parks and greenways and are willing to pay for them with taxes or user fees. In fact, approximately 61% said that they would be willing to pay more taxes and 60% said that they would be willing to pay a user fee to help fund recreational facilities and programs. This was also critical since it suggested the willingness of the residents to pay for the services before they are built. Similar information was assessed regarding the types of facilities and programs that survey respondents would like to see in the Town. The following list (not in any particular order) represents the top most desired and/or needed recreational facilities based on the input from the survey:

- Walking and biking trails
- Nature center and trails
- Park shelters and picnic areas
- Playground equipment and play areas
- Youth/teen baseball and softball fields

- Indoor fitness and exercise facilities
- Outdoor swimming pools/leisure pool
- Outdoor amphitheatre

Due to the length of the survey, a complete summary cannot be provided in this chapter; however, a complete breakdown of the survey results can be found in the Appendix. It is also important to note that not each question was answered by every participant.

Newsletters

The information about the plan purpose, its progress, and invitation to various public workshops was communicated to the public at large through various newsletters. *The Monthly Planner* newsletter issued by the Town's Planning Department highlighted the progress of the plan and informed its readers about upcoming events. *The Indian Trail Blazer* newsletter also released similar information on quarterly basis. In addition, the Town staff sent out regular updates about the plan through the Home Owners Association (HOA) contact list. Various Home Owner Associations further communicated the information about upcoming events and workshop through their newsletters and websites.



The Indian Trail Blazer Town newsletter reported the progress of Park Master Plan

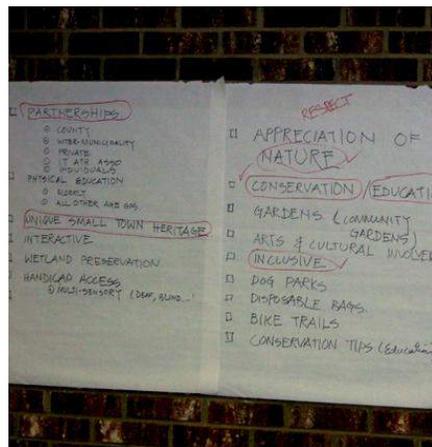
Source: <http://www.indiantrail.org>



Kick-off meeting with the Steering Committee members



Residents filling the attitudes and perception survey



Draft goals from the Kick off meeting with the Steering Committee

Vision Statement

“Indian Trail will promote a well planned park and recreation system that encourages an appreciation of nature, conservation, and a healthy and safe quality of life for all ages. The Town’s park and recreation system will be designed through partnerships with the public, private, and non-for profit agencies to connect our heritage with our future.”

Goals

To achieve the vision a set of goals were identified. These goals not only guided the planning process and outcome of this plan, but will continue to shape the implementation of the Park Master Plan for years to come. These goals needs to be reviewed on a regular basis and addition of new, and refinement of current ones, should be part of the update of this plan.

- Promote Indian Trail’s small town heritage by incorporating arts and cultural activities with the development of recreational programs and facilities.
- Preserve wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Develop facilities and programs that are accessible by all users.
- Encourage physical and environmental education opportunities for all age groups.
- Enhance the safety of parks, greenways and other recreational facilities by providing adequate lighting and signage.
- Ensure that all recreational facilities are kept attractive through the development of a comprehensive maintenance program.
- Promote facilities and programs that are inviting to all users and are integrated into the context of the community.

Finally, the meeting ended with the Steering Committee and staff members dividing into two groups and looking at maps to provide some input on locations of existing recreational facilities and where they thought future recreational facilities could be located.

Stakeholder Workshop

“...encourages an appreciation of nature, conservation, and a healthy and safe quality of life for all ages.”

Part of Vision Statement of the Park Master plan



Stakeholder Workshop

The implementation of the Plan will require the commitment of many different individuals and entities, also known as stakeholders. In order to begin to understand how each of these stakeholders can assist the Town, a Stakeholder Workshop was conducted at the Town’s Civic Building. The primary goal of this meeting was to identify strategies that could be used to implement the plan. Another goal was to identify efforts that are currently underway, or have been completed, that may affect the planning for Indian Trail’s park and recreational facilities. Potential partnership opportunities were also discussed with other public, private, and non-profit agencies.

The meeting began with brief introductions of the participants, and even though a larger group of stakeholders were identified at the beginning of the project a few dropped out due to conflict in schedule. Those who were invited to the workshop represent the following organizations:

(The ones highlighted with bold text attended the meeting)

Public Invitees:

- Town of Indian Trail Council members
- Union County Parks
- County Commissioners
- City of Monroe
- Town of Wesley Chapel
- Town of Matthews
- Town of Lake Park
- Town of Stallings
- Duke Energy
- **Union Power**
- **Union County Sherriff**
- Lindsey Dunevant (State PARTF consultant)
- **Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department**
- Union County Public Schools
- **Union County Public Works**



Stakeholder workshop

- **Union County Urban Forester**
- NCDOT
- Carolina Thread Trail

Private Invitees:

- Extreme Ice
- **Indian Trail Athletic Association**
- **Porter Ridge Athletic Association**
- **HOAs / Neighborhood Leaders**
- Developers
- **Business Owners**
- Union County Master Gardeners
- PTOs/PTAs
- Churches



Kick-off meeting with the Steering Committee members

The participants were divided into two groups to explore potential locations of parks and greenway facilities. Each group spent an hour discussing various opportunities for park locations. Then, each group presented their findings and solicited comments and questions from the other group. This led to a very rough draft of the conceptual plan, which was then taken to the community workshop for further feedback and refinement.

Discussions during this workshop also led to various ideas related to partnerships, programming, and implementation of plan. All these ideas are summarized in Chapters 6 and 7.

Community Workshops

During the months of May and early June, four public workshops were held in various locations throughout the Town in order to solicit feedback from the general public on the future of parks and greenways. The workshops allowed participants to review existing conditions maps, and a conceptual framework plan developed during the stakeholder workshops. Participants were also given the online survey (in hard copy format) to be completed during the workshop. A presentation was given that outlined the needs of

the Park Master Plan, an overview of the Comprehensive Plan and Pedestrian Plan, the process to develop the Park Master Plan, and different examples of park types.

These workshops were both educational and participatory in nature. Residents were given maps to draw potential park and greenway locations, and although they were encouraged to draw such facilities in the entire town, they were asked specifically to address the needs in their portion of the town. They were also encouraged to ask questions related to park and greenway facilities and programming. These workshops were really instrumental in highlighting the park and recreational needs of different parts of the Town and provided a basis for distribution of park facilities on both sides of US 74. The workshops were held on the following dates and locations:

- Thursday, May 7th, 2009 5-8 PM, Bonterra Neighborhood Clubhouse.
- Tuesday, May 12th, 2009 5-8 PM, Hemby Bridge Volunteer Fire Department.
- Saturday, May 16th, 2009 11 AM–2 PM, Brandon Oaks Community Clubhouse.
- Tuesday, June 2nd, 2009 5-8 PM, Brookhaven Community Clubhouse.

Many residents voiced similar issues related to current and future park and recreational needs of the Town. For example, residents of some subdivisions were concerned about the current use of their private facilities by people who do not live in the neighborhood. This led to several discussions about:

- Who might be using the facilities;
- What facilities are most often used;
- Where new facilities would make the most sense to be located

Through those discussions, the participants suggested locations of future parks and greenway connections.

Planning Board and Council Review

The first step towards implementation of this Plan is for the Town Council to adopt the Plan. Once the public workshops were complete, the Town staff held a series of review meetings with the Steering Committee, Planning

Board and Town Council. Comments and feedback from the Steering Committee were rolled into the draft plan that was then presented to the Planning Board. A joint Planning Board and Town Council review of the plan is currently scheduled for _____ 2010. If necessary, the Planning Board will review the Plan again during their _____ meeting. Following that review the Town Council will adopt the Plan in _____. **(Revise it per new schedule)**

Park and Greenway Classification

4

CHAPTER 4: PARK AND GREENWAY CLASSIFICATION



A Town’s park and greenway system should include a wide variety of facilities that caters to all age groups and their varied needs. This does not mean that the Town is primarily responsible for providing all these services. All agencies, including private organizations, non-profit agencies, local (including neighboring municipalities and counties), state, and federal government, can help provide for meeting the many varied interests and needs of a community. However, local government plays a critical role in understanding the unique needs of the community, assessing current services, identifying gaps in services, and recommending means to fulfill those gaps.



A comprehensive park and greenway system has all types of facilities ranging from small neighborhood playgrounds (mini parks) to much larger parks with multiple amenities such as ball fields, community centers, and passive and active recreational facilities. This range of classification is much broader for larger cities and metropolitan areas. For the Town of Indian Trail, the following park classifications are suitable based on - public input, existing conditions, future expectations, and professional judgment:

- Mini Parks (i.e., pocket parks)
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- District/Regional Parks*
- Greenways

**Note: Although such facilities are needed by the Town’s residents, Indian Trail is part of a larger metro area and these types of parks should be handled and coordinated by Union County. Also, proximity to Mecklenburg County’s district park system should be taken into account for future planning of large scale facilities.*

MINI PARKS (“POCKET PARKS”)

This is the smallest unit of a park system and is used to typically address limited and isolated needs of residents within a ¼ mile of its location. It is usually expected that this facility could be accessed on foot without using an automobile and therefore has limited or no parking. Mini Parks are usually located in higher density areas where accessibility through sidewalks and greenways are present and is therefore vitally important.

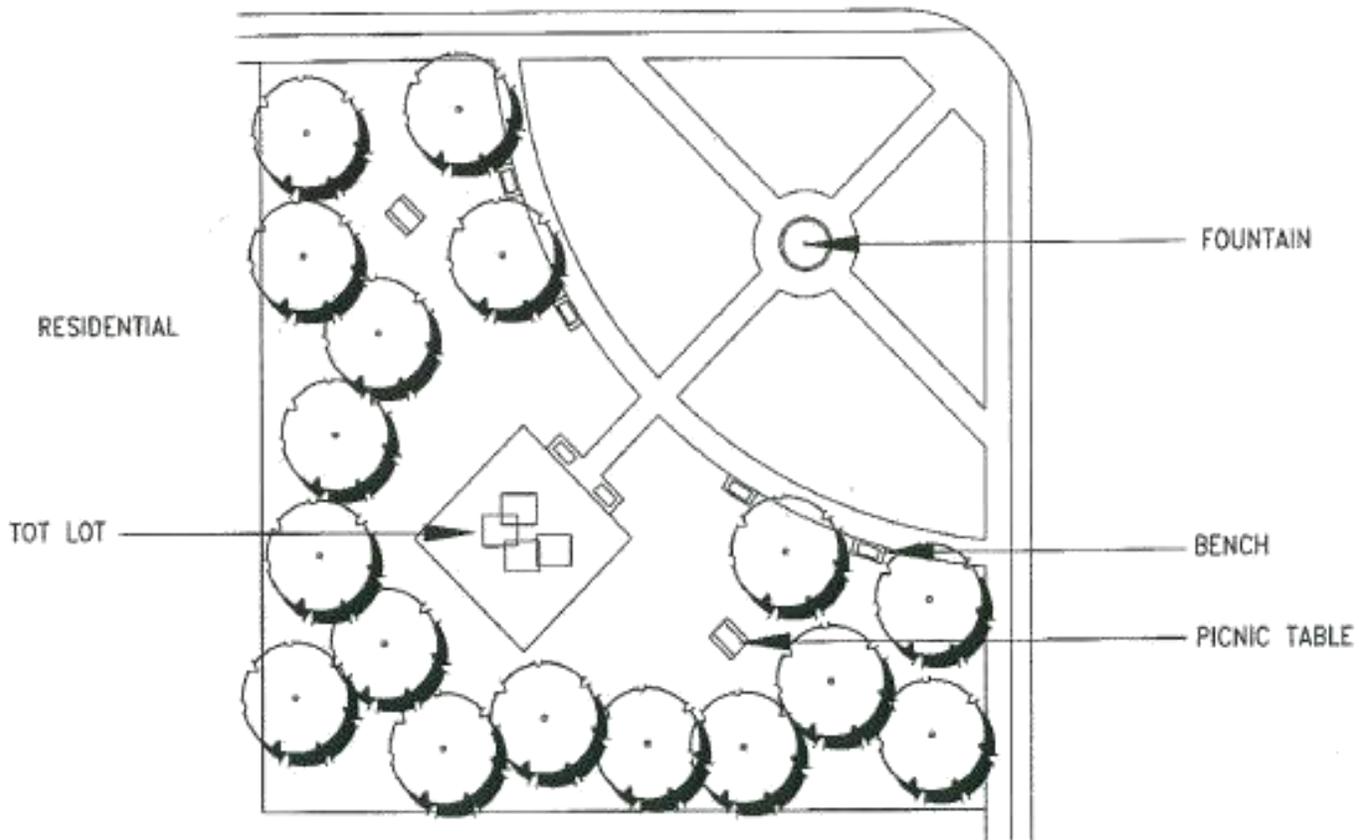


Figure 4.1: Typical Mini Park

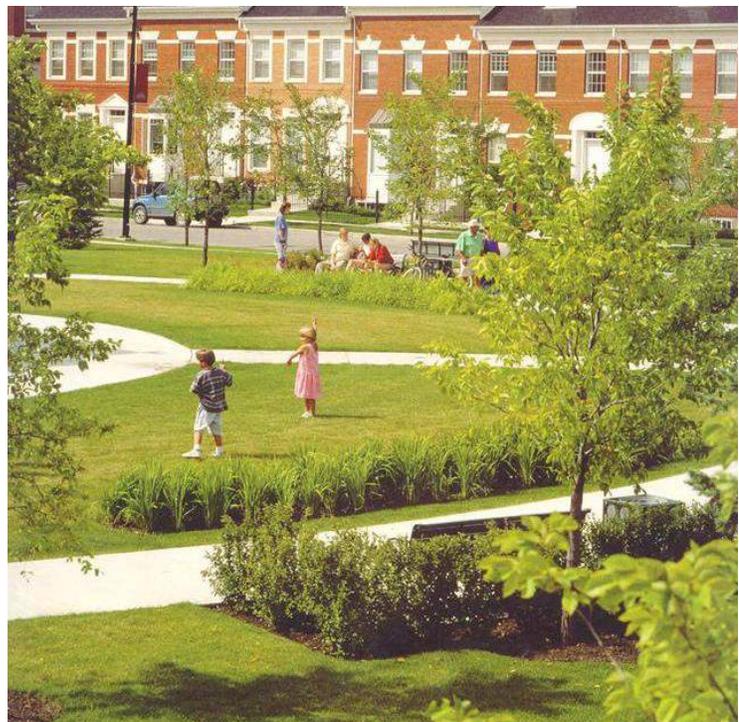


The size of mini parks typically ranges to up to one acre. Input from neighborhood residents, or potential park users, is important for the development of this facility. This park type often includes elements similar to that of Neighborhood park (see next section), but unlike Neighborhood Park there are no specific criteria to guide development of facilities.

The recommended Level of Service (LOS) for such a facility is 1 acre per 1000 people. Mini parks are generally for passive use such as seating, picnicking, and tot lots. These facilities are generally designed for all age groups and are typically incorporated as part of residential, retail, and office development.



Typical Mini Park (1-5 acres)



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

This is the basic unit of a park system and such parks cater to both the active and passive recreation needs at the neighborhood level. Such facilities are much more visible compared to the Mini Parks and therefore should be designed to create a focus for the neighborhoods they serve. These facilities typically serve a geographic area of approximately ½ mile radius, although topography and population density can also influence the location of this park type. The optimal size of a Neighborhood Park could range from 5 to 10 acres, depending on how it fits with the surrounding neighborhood context. Although most of its users will come from surrounding neighborhoods, it is expected that a few may drive to this facility to access its amenities. It is recommended for this purpose that roughly 7-10 off-street parking spots should be provided.

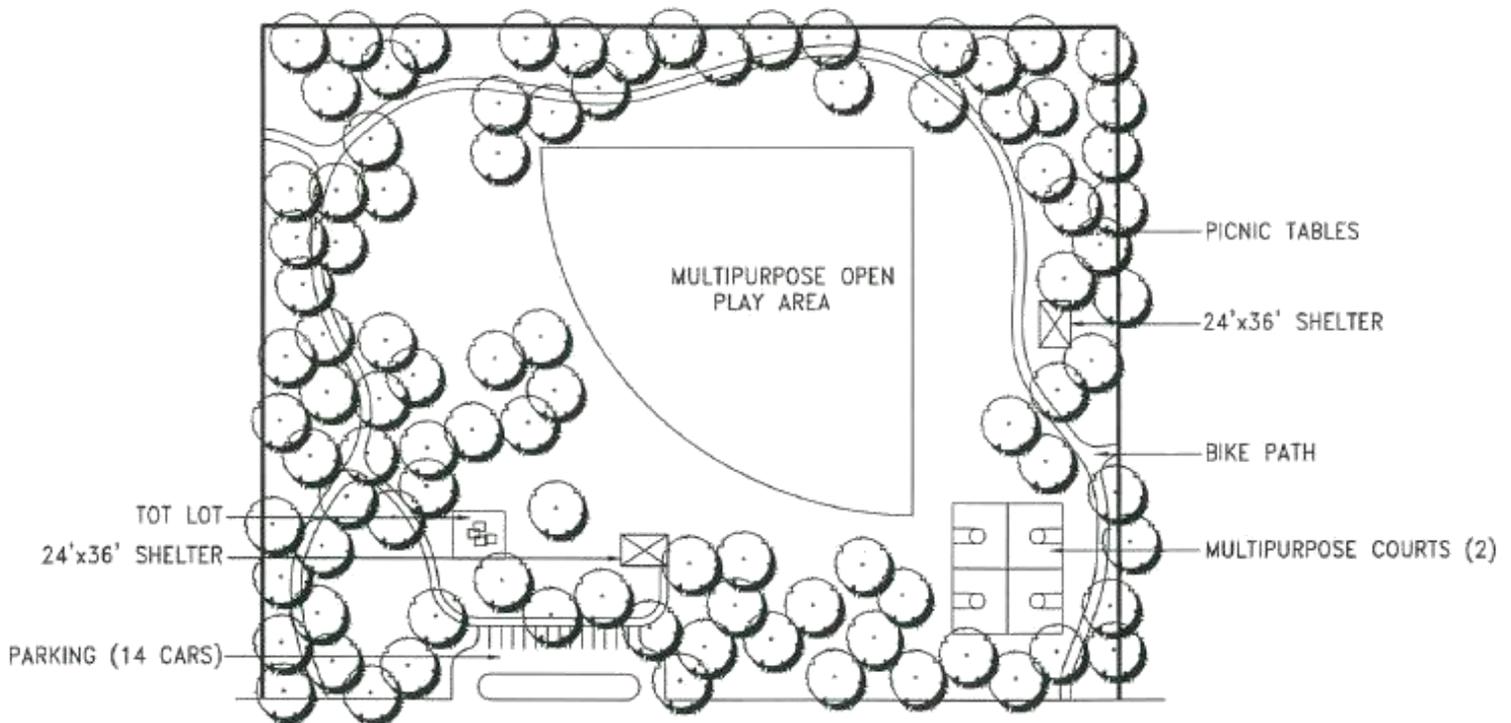


Figure 4.2: Typical Neighborhood Park



A neighborhood park could include active recreational facilities such as tennis courts, volleyball courts, basketball courts, and playground equipment. It could also include passive recreational facilities such as internal trails, tot lots, picnic areas, benches, and general open space.



A school facility, such as an elementary and/or a middle school, could potentially serve as a neighborhood or community park but higher levels of interagency coordination are required between local governments and school districts in order to make this partnership work. Moreover, the needs of a town, how a school facility is designed and how it fits into the surrounding neighborhoods will dictate the use of these facilities as parks. The Town should explore all opportunities to partner with school facilities. In these situations a feasibility study should be prepared to analyze the proposed project. A full reference to the requirements of a feasibility study can be found in Chapter 7 under “Implementation Strategy”.



Neighborhood Park (5-10 acres)

COMMUNITY PARKS



Community Park (20-25 acres)

A Community Park serves a community's needs by providing a wider range of recreational amenities and preserving unique landscapes and open space. This park type typically serves an area between a ½ mile and 3 miles of the immediate community. The size of the Community Park will depend on the topography and how it caters to the surrounding neighborhoods but it could range from 20-50 acres. Since this facility serves a wider general geography, adequate off-street parking should be provided. A combination of active and passive recreation activities could include basketball courts, tennis courts, ball fields (i.e., baseball and soccer), volleyball courts, play structures, trails, picnic areas, tot lots, open space, seating areas, and restrooms.

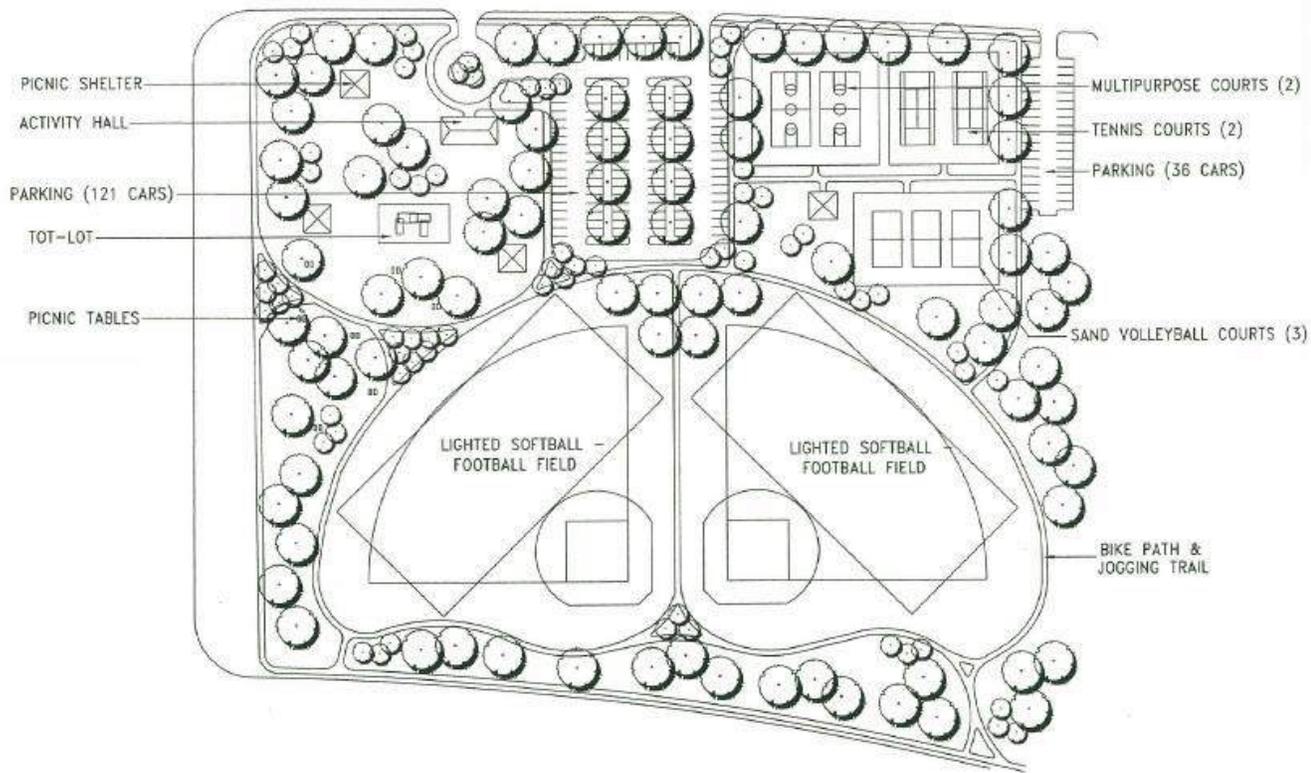


Figure 4.3: Typical Community Park

A school facility, such as an elementary and/or a middle school, could potentially serve as a neighborhood or community park but higher levels of interagency coordination are required between local governments and school districts in order to make this partnership work. Moreover, the needs of a town, how a school facility is designed and how it fits into the surrounding neighborhoods will dictate the use of these facilities as parks. The Town should explore all opportunities to partner with school facilities. In these situations a feasibility study should be prepared to analyze the proposed project. A full reference to the requirements of a feasibility study can be found in Chapter 7 under “Implementation Strategy”.



DISTRICT/REGIONAL PARKS

District and regional parks are much larger in size than the other park classifications and have heavily programmed facilities. Various areas in these facilities have a well defined role. For example, active facilities such as baseball fields and soccer fields will serve their intended purpose and are typically used by leagues and other users for organized sports events.

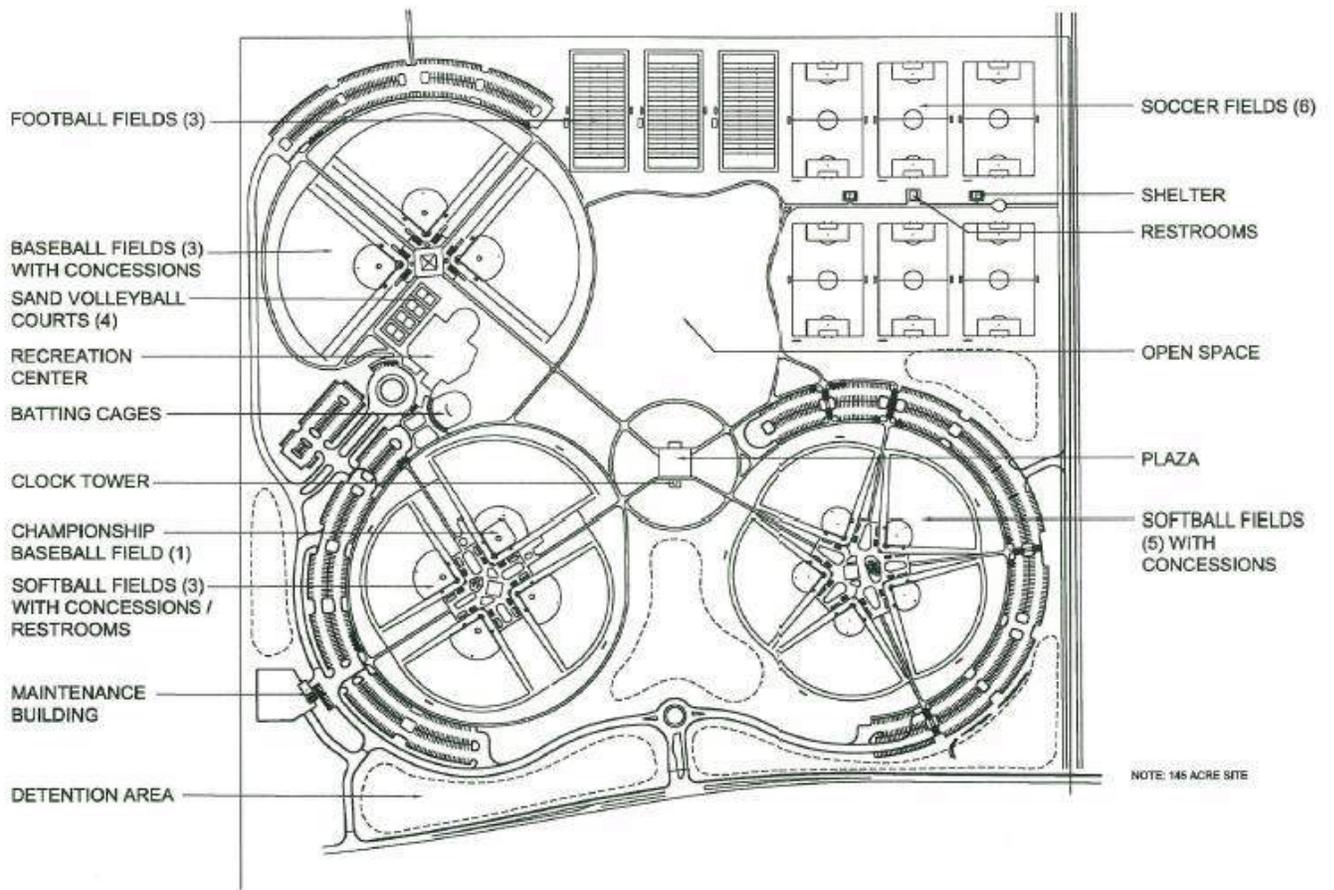
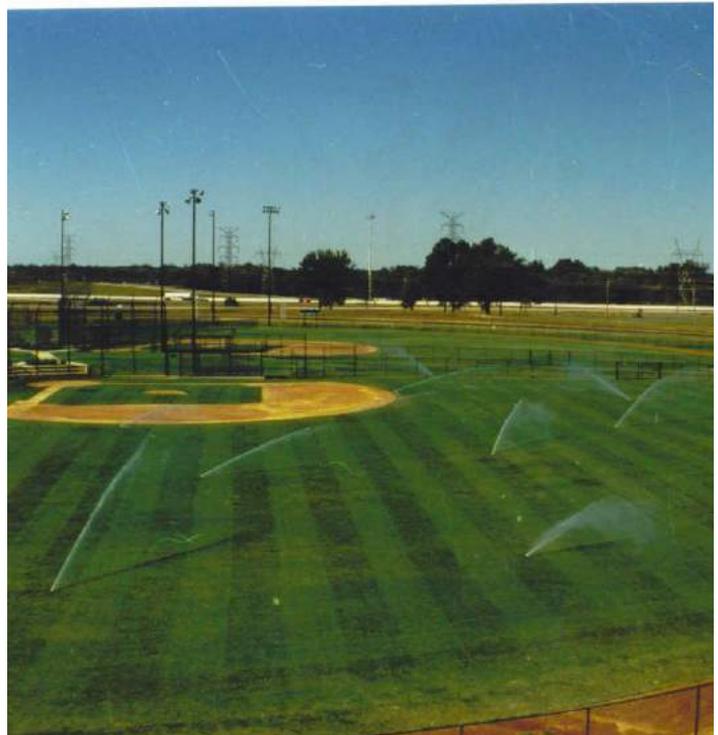


Figure 4.4: Typical District/Regional Park

As the image on previous page illustrates, district and regional parks are comprised of active recreational facilities, such as softball and baseball fields, soccer fields, and football fields, as well as passive recreational amenities such as picnic areas, jogging trails, and lawns. District and regional parks are strategically located to serve a larger population than neighborhood or community parks.

Typically these facilities, when they have significant active facilities, are located nearer to non-residential uses, due to the noise and lighting that are generated from the facility. The minimum size for this park classification is 40 acres; however, the optimal size is somewhere between 80 and 150 acres. The Town should coordinate with Union County on the location of future district or regional parks facilities, such as the proposed North District Park that is currently identified in the County's Master Plan.



District/Regional Park (80-150 acres)

LINER PARKS/GREENWAYS

There are numerous types of greenways/trails, each of which have a specific purpose and help to fulfill a specific need. The following is a list of different types of trails:

- Stream corridors
- Mountain biking
- Multi-use trails
- Equestrian trails
- Rails-to-Trails (*these are multi-purpose public paths created from former railroad corridors. Ideal for many uses, such as bicycling, walking, inline skating, cross-country skiing, equestrian and wheelchair use, rail-trails are extremely popular as recreation and transportation corridors¹*)

Greenways can be paved or unpaved. In a natural setting a trail is typically 10-feet wide, and can connect various destinations together. For safety concerns, there are some minimum clearance zones that must be maintained. Figure 4.5 illustrates what vertical and horizontal clearances should be maintained in order to keep the users safe.

Typical Vegetative Clearing for a 10' Trail

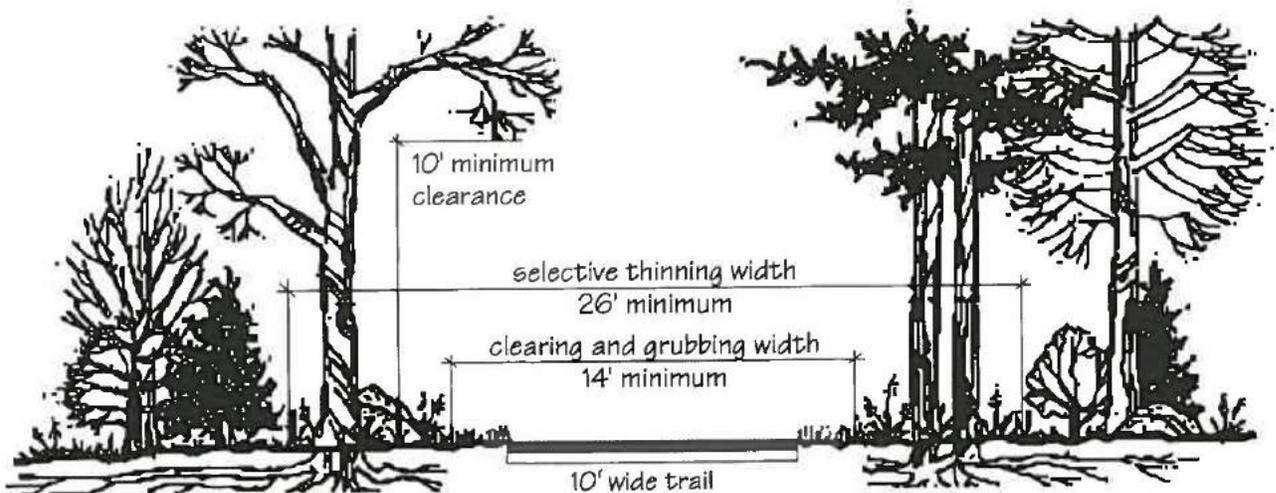


Figure 4.5: Typical Greenway Cross Section

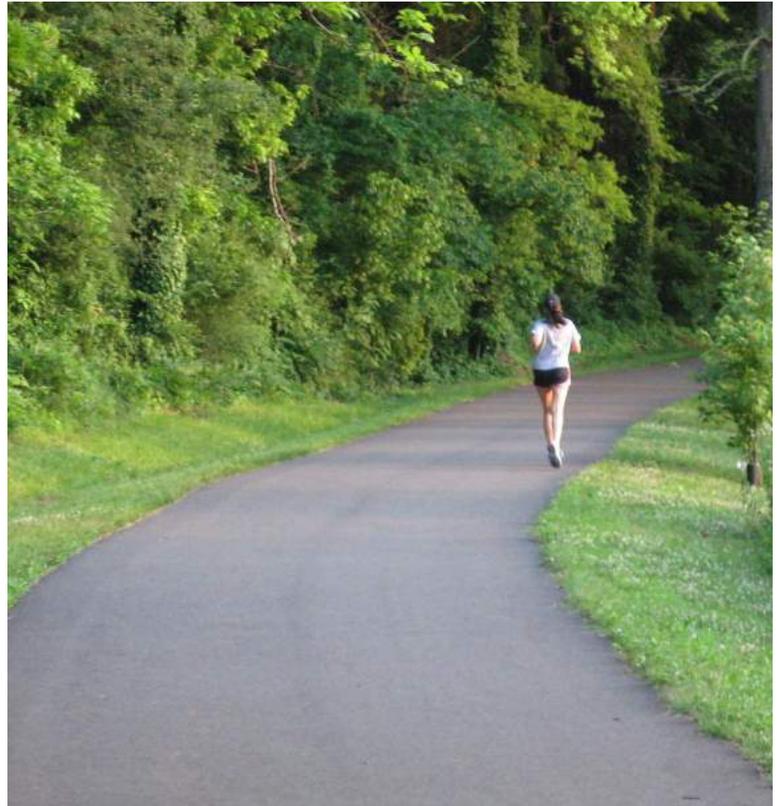
¹ <http://www.railstotrails.org/index.html>



Many examples of greenways and trails exist in the region that are successful. Mecklenburg County has several existing greenways/trails (such as Little Sugar Creek Greenway and McAlpine Creek Greenway) that are very successful and widely used. The Indian Trail Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan outlines various standards and guidelines for linear parks and greenways, including urban off-road connectors. The image below is a typical cross-section of a greenway with standard vertical and horizontal clearance zones. Various greenways identified in this plan should be planned and designed with the same criteria used in the Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan.



Greenway/Trails



RECREATION ACTIVITY MENU



Every community needs to ascertain the range of activities for its residents in various park and greenways facilities it provides. Although the specific range of activities is different for different municipalities they do follow some broad similarities. Identifying recreation demand for a growing community like Indian Trail is further complicated due to the pace of recent growth. Moreover, some recreation activities are more popular than others, for example – according to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) conducted in 2001, walking for pleasure is one of the most common outdoor activities.

So, what recreational activities are more popular in Indian Trail? The Park Master Plan survey conducted in early 2009 offered some insight. Overall, the participants of the survey suggested that they like to see more bike and pedestrian trails; playground equipment and play areas; and park shelters and picnic areas. Most of these activities are passive in nature. This however does not suggest that active facilities are not desired. During public workshops conducted during the plan development process, many residents suggested that the use of basketball courts is very high, especially among young adults (ages 14-20). For more information on the survey, please see the appendix.



To understand the recreation activity needs of the Town comprehensively, the use of various facilities by its residents must be observed. To complete this it will take time and continuous data collection by the Town. Another way to ascertain the recreation activity needs of a community is by reviewing standards. Table 4.1 on the following page represents typical recreation activities for each park classification based on the national standards suggested by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in its publication – Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines – and is applicable to a town the size of Indian Trail.

As Indian Trail builds more public park facilities, and use of its facilities gathers momentum, this table could be refined to include additional activities. Adding additional activities to this table will help the Town in improving the activity mix for future parks. This table will also help in

Walking for pleasure is one of the most common outdoor activities, according to the 2001 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment.

programming different park facilities by reviewing various activities relevant to different park types (such as mini park, neighborhood park, etc). This however, should only be treated as a guide and should not be used for the final programming of park facilities. This table is created by assessing existing conditions and existing park and recreational needs of the Town, and researching the standards from National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

Table 4.1: Typical Recreation Activities by Park Classification

Activity	Mini Park	Neighborhood park	Community Park	Athletic Park
Tot Lot	1	1	1	1+
Open Space	0.5 acres	3 acres	10 acres	NA
Family Picnic	2 tables	5 tables	10 tables	NA
Group Picnic	NA	NA	2 shelters	5 shelters
Outdoor Basketball	NA	1 court	2 courts	4 courts
Indoor Basketball	NA	NA	1 court	2 courts
Outdoor Tennis	NA	1 court	4 courts	8 court complex
Ball Fields	NA	NA	1 softball + 1 Soccer	2 softball + 2 Soccer
Athletic Fields	NA	NA	2 baseball + 1 soccer	4 softball + 2 soccer/football
Skateboard	NA	NA	1	NA
Swimming Pools	NA	NA	1 Community	1 Olympic
Walking/Jogging Trails	NA	1/4 mile	1 ½ mile	2 mile
Indoor Fitness	NA	NA	2 Rooms	4 Rooms
Auditorium	NA	NA	NA	1
Meeting Rooms	NA	NA	1 room	1 room
Concessions	NA	NA	NA	1
Maintenance Yard	NA	NA	NA	1
Parking	NA	7-10 spaces	150 spaces	400 spaces

Inventory and Analysis

5

CHAPTER 5: INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

EXISTING PARK AND GREENWAY FACILITIES



Development of parks and recreational facilities has not kept pace with the recent growth in Indian Trail

The Town has been rapidly growing over the past 10-15 years, and, as of the adoption of this plan in February 2010(?), the Town of Indian Trail does not own or operate any public parks, greenways, or recreational facilities. According to the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management, the Town of Indian Trail has grown 121% between April 2000 and July 2006. This growth rate is expected to be much higher when the new census numbers are released at the beginning of next decade. Due to this phenomenal growth the building of park and recreation facilities has not kept pace with the development. This does not suggest that there are no parks and recreational facilities in the Town. In fact, the residents do enjoy a variety of non-profit and private facilities. The role of private facilities is important because they reduce demand for public facilities. In fact, the amount of recreational facilities provided by private entities is sometimes comparable to the public facilities. This provision of private facilities, however, does not eliminate the need for public facilities. In addition, the Town residents also use recreation facilities provided by other neighboring jurisdictions and Union County.

Private Subdivision Facilities

Like many growing small towns around the Charlotte metropolitan area, many of the residential subdivisions within the Town of Indian Trail have incorporated recreational facilities into the design of the community. The larger subdivisions in the Town, such as the equestrian-oriented subdivision Bonterra approved for 1395 lots (located in the northern portion of the Town) and Brandon Oaks approved for 1226 lots (located off of Old Monroe Road), have tennis courts, swimming pools, biking and walking trails, open spaces, and basketball courts. These subdivisions have different recreation facilities, which largely depend on the size of the subdivision. Although the sizes of recreation facilities vary among various subdivisions, most of them provide mini park and neighborhood park type facilities. The facilities that are located within these subdivisions are only accessible to the individuals who live in them and generally are not open to the public. However, during the public workshops conducted as part of the plan development process, many residents of these large and new subdivisions voiced their concerns





Trail in Villas of Sun Valley subdivision

about the use of their private facilities by non-residents of these neighborhoods. This further reinforced the need to create public facilities that could be used and enjoyed by all residents of the Town. Typically, residential communities like this have a homeowner’s association that charges an annual fee that must be paid in order to use the recreational facilities. The role of these private subdivision recreational facilities is therefore very significant in catering to the burgeoning population of the Town of Indian Trail.

Indian Trail Athletic Association (ITAA)

The Indian Trail Athletic Association (ITAA) is a nonprofit, private, volunteer organization that provides supervised sports year round for youths from five through 18 years of age. Approximately 60 teams are competing at any one time throughout the year in the following sports: baseball, soccer, softball, basketball, football, and cheerleading.

The ITAA was founded in 1972 and officially incorporated in 1973, and is currently governed by a 15-member Board of Directors elected by the general membership. ITAA is dedicated to developing better citizens by providing properly supervised sports, year around. The purpose of ITAA is “to promote and sponsor athletics and recreational activities for the youth of the community of Indian Trail and surrounding area.” (<http://www.itaanc.com/history.html>)

The Indian Trail Athletic Association utilizes Edna Love Park, located off of Park Road near downtown, for these various sports programs. This park is approximately 24 acres in size. Today, it contains about 8 ball fields, most of which are little league fields. Edna Love Park got its beginning when Mr. Cecil Rogers (also known as Mr. Cecil) donated the original piece of property for the first ball field (Field #1-Babe Ruth field). With that initial donation, Edna Love Park was born. The park was named after Mr. Cecil’s wife, Edna Love Boyd Rogers. In 1973, the Indian Trail Athletic Association (ITAA) began purchasing land from Mr. and Mrs. Rogers and their children to expand the park. The park is owned and operated by the ITAA and is self-supported through fees, fund raisers, sponsorships, and concessions. More information about the Indian Trail Athletic Association can be found at the association’s web page: <http://www.itaanc.com/>.



Edna Love Park – Aerial Photo

As mentioned earlier, the Indian Trail Athletic Association supervises the following sports: baseball, soccer, softball, basketball, football, and

cheerleading. The baseball program has five different divisions, for basketball, there are four different age divisions, and cheerleading has three divisions. The Athletic Association also supports the NFL Youth Football and NFL Flag Football programs for both boys and girls. Finally, the Indian Trail Athletic Association supervises softball and soccer for boys and girls at various age groups.

The extensive use of this park clearly demonstrates the enthusiasm within the community towards active recreation uses, which is also underscored by the growing demographic trend of young families calling the Town of Indian Trail as their home. The need for active recreation in the Town was also echoed in the responses from the online survey (see Appendix A).

Carolina Courts, Extreme Ice, and Kate’s Skating Center



Carolina Courts (Photo courtesy of Carolina Courts Web Page)

Carolina Courts is a private for-profit company that provides youth or adult basketball leagues, youth volleyball leagues, and basketball and volleyball camps. The facility located on Stinson Hartis Road is approximately 44,000 square feet and has 5 basketball courts (all High School regulation size), that also double as 10 volleyball courts. This facility also includes a fitness center, which caters to a larger age group (8 yrs old and up). It also offers membership to its clients, which provides priority access to all its facilities. This is a regional facility and draws its clientele from around the surrounding region (and occasionally from around the country). More information about the Carolina Courts could be found on their website at <http://www.carolinacourts.com>.



Extreme Ice Complex (Photo courtesy of Extreme Ice Web Page)

Extreme Ice is a private skating facility that is located on Indian Trail-Fairview Road, and is also in close proximity to the aforementioned Carolina Courts facility. They offer various programs and lessons, including, but not limited to, skating lessons, public skating, hockey leagues, and figure skating for parties and meetings. Extreme Ice has been a hub of various Town events in the past and also hosted the National Pee Wee Hockey Championship. Like Carolina Courts, Extreme Ice has regional and national pull for the range of events organized by them. More information about Extreme Ice can be found on their website at <http://www.xicenter.com/Default.aspx>.

Kate’s Skating Center is another private skating recreation facility in the Town of Indian Trail. It is located on US 74 and provides a wide range of programs for everyone. It is a venue for afterschool programs, summer



Kate's Skating Center (photo from www.katesskating.com website)



Cane Creek Park Camping Facility (photo from Union County Parks and Recreation website)

camp programs, celebrations (such as birthday and private parties), fundraisers, and competitive speed skating events. More information about Kate's Skating can be found on their website at: <http://www.katesskating.com>

Such private facilities cater to even wider demographic groups at the regional level. They draw users from Union and Mecklenburg Counties and are highly programmed recreational facilities. Although this is no substitute for public parks and greenways, these facilities do cater to the organized sports event needs of the overall regional community in and around the Town of Indian Trail itself.

Other Public Parks

Union County currently has two public parks, namely Cane Creek Park and Fred Kirby Park¹. Cane Creek Park is located in the southwestern part of Union County near the state lane with South Carolina. The park encompasses about 1,050 acres of land, all of which surrounds a 350-acre trophy bass lake. The park also has camping and athletic facilities and currently rents one softball field and one soccer field. With 108 campsites, this park provides wide range of facilities for its campers. This includes a camp store, warm shower facilities, playgrounds, an arcade, miniature golf course, beach, and play fields. Also located in Union County are the Fred Kirby Park/ Union County Recreational Complex, which is located on Faith Church Road about a ¼-mile north of Unionville-Indian Trail Road. This park currently has two baseball/softball fields and one soccer field which can be rented out to the general public.

Many residents also use other public parks and greenways in the region that are outside the Indian Trail Town limits and Union County. Due to relative proximity and easy access, many town residents use facilities located in Mecklenburg County. Colonel Francis Beatty Park in Charlotte is one such facility that was mentioned by many residents as their preferred park. Many others mentioned Stallings Park located just northwest of Indian Trail along Stallings Road. Although other park facilities were also mentioned these two stood out more than the others. Residents liked the size and diversity of amenities offered by these two park facilities. For short and passive

¹ <http://www.co.union.nc.us/QualityofLife/ParksRecreation/tabid/361/Default.aspx>



Stallings Park, Town of Stallings, NC

recreational needs they mentioned the use of Stallings Park, and for long and more diverse recreational needs they mentioned Colonel Francis Beatty Park.

Interlinking local system plans with those of adjacent jurisdictions will provide the opportunity for the Town of Indian Trail to significantly expand the size, capacity, and recreational offerings of its own system. It is encouraged that as the Town's parks and greenways come on line that the Town continue the cooperation and outreach to adjacent jurisdictions to help link Indian Trail's network to others. Understanding which facilities outside the Town limits are most used by its residents will also offer insights in their preference and needs. And although many respondents from the survey and participants from the public workshops indicated that they travel to Mecklenburg County and surrounding jurisdictions to use their public

Figure 5.1: Colonel Francis Beatty Park, Mecklenburg County, NC
(Right)



parks and greenways/trails, they all showed a strong desire to have similar facilities within the Town limits.

NATURAL FEATURES ASSESSMENT

A general understanding and assessment of the natural features is important so the public and staff can make educated decisions about the placement of future recreational facilities; such as parks and greenways. Several natural features, such as soils, slope and hydrology, will affect where and how these facilities are built (see Figure 5.1).

Portions of the Goose Creek and Crooked Creek watershed are located within the Planning Area of Indian Trail. The Goose Creek Watershed



Goose Creek watershed contains diverse habitat for aquatic species such as the Carolina heelsplitter.



US 74 is a major arterial in the Town of Indian Trail

contains federal and local development restrictions aimed at protecting the environmentally sensitive habitat, such as the Carolina heelsplitter that lives there. These restrictions prohibit intense urban development and promote more rural, less dense development. The Town’s Unified Development Ordinance provides a detailed description of those restrictions. More information can be found by following the link provided below.

<http://www.indiantrail.org/uploads/IT%20UDO%2027%20JAN%202009.pdf>

A summary of those restrictions, such as Goose Creek Overlay District, can be found later in this chapter. In addition to the environmentally sensitive watersheds, the Town is also home to many creeks and streams where the water from the watersheds drains. Associated with these watersheds are the floodplains. These areas are typically suitable for locating parks and recreational amenities. Floodplains also make excellent linear parks and greenways when planned in conjunction with development. There are over 3,000 acres of floodplains that exist within the Planning Area of the Town of Indian Trail, comprising nearly 13% of the total land area.

In terms of topography, US 74 acts as a separation between the relatively flat land which is located in the northeast part of the Town and the slightly more rolling topography in the southwestern portion of the Town. The more severe topography can be found along the creeks located in the extreme western and northeastern portions of the Town. For the most part, the soils within the Town of Indian Trail’s Planning Area are suitable for development, but are generally considered to be unsuitable for septic tanks due to the poor percolation of the soil. Many of these natural features, especially the floodplains, Goose Creek, and Crooked Creek watershed, provide substantial opportunities for environmental preservation and development of greenways and parks respectively. Such opportunities are explored in subsequent chapters.

POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

Population Projection

The park and recreation needs of the Town of Indian Trail are dependent on the overall existing and projected population of the Town and of the area itself. Since this is a 10 year master plan, population projections for 2020 were needed to assess the current and future needs of the community as a whole. The upcoming decennial census will provide the latest demographic

numbers for the Town of Indian Trail, but that data will not be available for another 2-3 years. Population estimates are available from previous planning efforts such as Comprehensive Plan process, but those estimates are for 2005. Although no current population estimate is available, Mecklenburg Union Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MUMPO) 2005, 2015 and 2025 estimates were used for the developing the estimated park and recreation needs of the Town. The numbers for 2005, 2015 and 2025 were interpolated to arrive at 2009 and 2020 population numbers. This is the most credible source of data that is available and accepted by the Town of Indian Trail. The interpolated (and extrapolated) population number for years 2007, 2009 and 2020 are shown in the table and graph below:

Table 5.1: Interpolated/Extrapolated Population Projects

Source	2005 Pop	2007 Pop	Pop 2009	2015 Pop	2020 Pop	2025 Pop
MUMPO (Town level)	27,161	28,340	29,543	33,131	35,815	38,500

Source: Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization, May 2008 population estimate

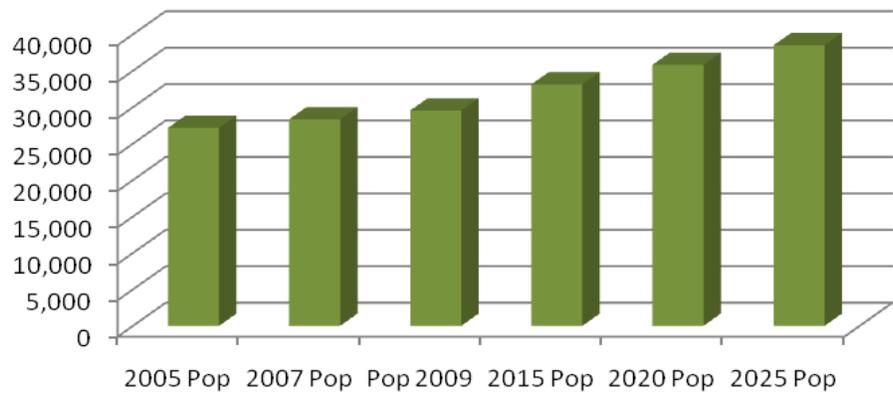


Figure 5.3: Population Projections for the Town of Indian Trail

TOWN ORDINANCE REVIEW



The Town of Indian Trail has taken necessary steps to preserve environmentally sensitive areas through the use of various regulations and ordinances. These ordinances give the Town a certain developmental structure that has a major influence on the development of the park system. Since park and greenway facilities tend to be near areas where natural ecosystem is needed to be preserved, such ordinances influence the creation of park and greenway systems. Some examples of ordinances used by Indian Trail that may affect the development of park and greenway facilities are listed below.

Unified Development Ordinance

According to the Town's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), every applicant who proposes to build a residential subdivision must dedicate a portion of land or pay a fee-in-lieu thereof for public park, greenway, recreation, and open space sites to serve the recreational needs of the residents of the subdivision or development. In the case of active recreation facilities (ball parks, soccer fields, bike paths) and passive facilities such as greenways and trails, the UDO requires that an easement be recorded to allow for public access. The minimum for dedication of land is 1/35 of an acre for each dwelling unit planned or proposed in the subdivision. For detailed requirements of the dedication of Park, Recreation, and Open Space, please reference Chapter 1160 of the UDO.

Many parts of the UDO affect park and recreation aspects and therefore are summarized below -

Goose Creek Overlay District

As mentioned in the Natural Features Assessment previously, the Goose Creek watershed is located in the Yadkin Pee-Dee River Basin. According to the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ), it provides habitat for an aquatic animal species that is listed as federally endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Goose Creek Overlay district has been established by the Town to fulfill the requirements of the NCDWQ. The overlay district is intended to help maintain and recover the water quality conditions required to sustain and recover the federally-listed endangered species, such as the Carolina heel splitter. It will also limit the exposure of Goose Creek to the impacts of development, such as increased storm water

runoff, altered hydrographic conditions, nutrient loading, and pesticide contamination from point and non-point sources. In the Goose Creek Overlay District, undisturbed riparian buffers are required within 200 feet of water bodies within the 100-year floodplain and within 100 feet of water bodies that are not within the 100-year floodplain. This is important to the Park Master Plan because it provides an opportunity to allow the Town to educate the community about the importance of protecting our natural resources. The Master Plan recommends the creation of a Community Park in the Goose Creek Watershed to do just that; educate the community. The proposed park can also be used for passive recreational purposes, such as picnicking, fishing, trails, and bird watching. Additional opportunities exist for the public schools to promote environmental education for students utilizing this geographical area and perhaps others. Information regarding the Goose Creek Overlay District can be found at:

<http://h2o.enr.state.nc.us/csu/documents/15A-NCAC-02B-0601-through-0609-GOOSECRKMGTPLAN-effective1jan&1feb-2009.pdf>.



Flood Plain Protection

According to the Town of Indian Trail Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), no fill operations, dredging or other disturbance shall be allowed within flood plains, as defined on the most recent Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), except for artificial stream banks or shoreline stabilization, water dependent structures and public or private projects such as roads, utilities or greenways where no practical alternatives exist. Permitted activities within designated flood plain areas shall be designed to minimize impacts on the flood plain to the greatest extent practicable by minimizing impervious coverage, maximizing preservation of existing vegetation, minimizing placement of fill materials, directing runoff away from surface waters, and maximizing the utilization of storm water best management practices. The Town of Indian Trail has adopted Post-Construction Ordinance requirements as a Phase II community as required by the State of North Carolina, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Water Quality. Flood plain protection not only prevents damage to real property, but also supports critical habitats that exist at the banks of creeks and streams. These areas of the Town also provide opportunities to create greenways and trails that can

provide alternative mobility to its residents, educate residents, and provide recreational means by having better appreciation of natural features.

Tree Preservation



Earth Day Arbor Day in the Town of Indian Trail

The Town of Indian Trail has also created measures to ensure that the existing tree canopy will be preserved as much as possible as the Town continues to grow. Each development proposal shall provide a tree inventory and tree preservation plan by a certified arborist or a licensed surveyor for submittal. The inventory will provide the Town and applicant with a resource for planning landscaping and aesthetic improvements of the proposed development and a basis for encouraging preservation of existing forests, tree canopies and specimen trees. Tree preservation is an important part of creating a sustainable park and recreation system. Trees are just as important as the facility themselves. Trees and vegetation build character and provide shade for the user, especially in the summer.

The Town has many programs to preserve existing trees. For example, the “I Tree” Program, which was started in 2007, focuses on creating the inventory of existing trees, and the Town is also a recipient of the Tree City USA designation for 2007 and 2008.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Understanding park and recreational standards is a good starting point for a municipality at the beginning of their recreational planning process. All jurisdictions are different and depending on the geographic location, existing landscape, current and projected demographics, and availability of resources, the park and recreational needs may differ significantly. However, having a common understanding of these standards can help in measuring whether or not a municipality is over or under performing.

Why Use a Standard

A standard is simply a benchmark that is established or agreed upon by a group of professionals based on research, professional judgment, observation, and intuition. There is no absolute requirement that a standard is strictly followed as suggested; it is rather encouraged and recommended that it is used as a guideline to measure a jurisdiction’s ability to serve the

park and recreational needs of its population. A community may need this guideline because it may sense the growth of its park and recreation system has not kept up with the growth and change in demographic patterns of the community. If it is perceived by the residents and the leadership of the community that the jurisdiction lacks sufficient park and recreation facilities, then it becomes important to find out how much park space is needed, what type of space is needed, and where these facilities should be located.

One of the most widely used, and accepted, standards in park planning is 3.5 acres per 1000 residents according to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards. During 1960s-1980s it was an accepted practice within park and recreation profession to adopt uniform national standard such as 10 acres per 1000 residents. However, over the past 2 decades (1990s and 2000s) several communities changed the way they approached the planning and development of their park and recreation system. Many communities found achieving 10 acres per 1000 residents impossible. Recently, more emphasis has been put on the utility of parks and recreation systems than the quantity of it, and although a standard of 3.5 acres per 1000 residents is much more realistic in providing an estimate of a community's needs it should only be treated as a guide. The future population projection then becomes critical to assess the needs of a community. The Town's Comprehensive Plan, completed in 2004, projected a build-out population of 80,000 to 90,000 residents. By using the above mentioned standards, this suggests that at build-out, which will extend much beyond the 10 year time frame of this plan, the Town will need roughly 280-315 acres. Here is the summary of findings from the Comprehensive Plan completed in 2004:

- For a build-out population of 80,000 to 90,000 residents, 300 acres of park space is needed.
 - Approximately 1,000 acres of land is dedicated for park and recreation use as part of this Comprehensive Plan.
- There are plenty of acres identified for greenways and trails in the Comprehensive Plan.
 - Approximately 2,000 acres of proposed greenways were identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Table 5.2: Active and Passive Recreation Activity Types

Active	Passive
Tennis	Walking
Basketball	Picnicking
Baseball	Camping
Football	Bird Watching
Skateboarding	Playground

Source: *Outdoor Recreation for the 21st Century*

Recreation planning generally caters to two types of activities: Active and Passive. While labeling them may refer to them as two different kinds of activities, they are not mutually exclusive in resource allocation and geographic distribution. More often they co-exist in perfect harmony with each other. For example: a community park may have walking/jogging trails, open spaces, picnic shelters, and bird watching areas to provide passive recreational activities, but may also have ball fields, tennis, and mini golf course to cater to active recreational needs. Some typical examples of active and passive recreational activities are shown in Table 5.2.

Trends

Understanding national, regional, statewide, and local trends will also help the Town of Indian Trail to make better and more informed decisions for recreational planning. This section will outline national, regional, state, and local trends so that the Town of Indian Trail can wisely allocate their resources to cater to the growing needs of their current and future population.

National Trends

According to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) conducted in 2001, walking for pleasure was the most widely participated outdoor recreational activity. Even though this survey is 8 years old, past surveys, such as the one from 1982-1983, also showed that walking for pleasure was the number one outdoor recreational activity. Although walking is the most widely participated activity, it is not the fastest growing. Between 1982 and 2001, bird watching was the fastest growing recreational activity with a percent increase of 231%, according to the same national survey. The number of people participating in bird watching (73 million) was much lower than the number of people participating in walking for pleasure (191 million). Other fast growing outdoor recreational activities include: day hiking (194%) and backpacking (182%). Although national trends are not applicable as is to any municipality, they do show a general growth trend in more passive recreational activities.

Keeping up with the national trends, the Town's residents also showed more interest for passive recreational activities. In the online survey conducted during the planning process, Town residents were asked (Question #20) to select the top 5 facilities that they would like to see provided by the Town of Indian Trail. Their responses included:

- Walking and biking trails.
- Playgrounds and play areas.
- Park shelters and picnic areas.
- Nature centers.
- Trails.

North Carolina Trends

The state of North Carolina mirrors national trends in outdoor recreation activities since passive recreational activities lead the charts in our state as well.

Indian Trail Trends

Based on the public input that was received from the online survey and the public workshops held throughout the town, the Town of Indian Trail is in line with many communities around the country as well as here in the state of North Carolina. The majority of the people taking the online survey were young to mid-aged adults (more than 80% of the survey respondents are 26-45 years of age) with young children. Most of the respondents said that they want to see more walking and biking trails and would prefer to see more community level parks built over any other park classification. This suggests a desire to have access to both active and passive recreational activities.

When asked to list the top five (5) types of facilities that they would like to see provided by the Town (question # 20), the survey respondents selected walking and biking trails, playground equipment and play areas, park shelters and picnic areas, and nature center and trails. This is in line with the national and state trends where the users of park and recreational facilities showed preference for passive activities ahead of active ones. However, the survey respondents also showed preference for youth/teen sports leagues when asked (question # 21) about the types of *recreation programs* they participate in. This confirms their preference for active recreation activities, which is in line with the demographic makeup of the community (relatively younger families with kids).

Although the online survey was not scientific, it captured the attitudes and perceptions of the Town residents towards their park and recreational needs. For a detailed description of the survey process and the distinction between a Scientific and Attitudes and

Mini Parks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small open space within neighborhoods for tot-lots, simple seating, etc. • ½ acre per 1000 person • About 0.5 acre to 2 acres
Neighborhood Parks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 acres of neighborhood park space • Minimum 5 acres • 16 to 17 neighborhood parks throughout the planning area
Community Parks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 80 acres of community park space • Minimum size of community park 20-25 acres • Roughly 4 community parks throughout the planning area • Two should be north of US-74 and two should be south to provide even access • Should be developed for both active and passive use

Perception Survey, please see chapter 3. A detailed summary of the survey results is outlined in the Appendix section of this plan.

Comprehensive Plan

Three systems were proposed for the Town of Indian Trail in the Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2005 and updated in 2008, to serve the parks and recreation needs in the future for the Town. The following section is a summary of those recommendations, which provided the foundation for the development of the needs analysis in this plan. The three systems proposed in the Comprehensive Plan include parks, greenways and a landscaped boulevard system.

Parks

The Comprehensive Plan identified three park classifications that the Town should concentrate on as it continues to grow. These classifications described in Chapter 4 include: Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks, and Community Parks. Figure 5.4 provides a summary of the needs analysis developed for each park typology during the Comprehensive Plan process.

The Comprehensive Plan also identified and delineated numerous greenways and boulevards throughout the Town. The overall goal of these two types of recreational facilities is to connect Town residents to the major destinations within the Town safely and efficiently.

Greenways

- Roughly 2,000 acres of greenway open space is proposed in the Comprehensive Plan, mainly in the form of floodplains.
- The Trail system recommended by the Comprehensive Plan suggested a minimum of 10-foot wide shared use path for pedestrian and bicycles per American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidelines.

Boulevards

- Boulevard system to provide attractive, convenient, and recreational pedestrian and bicycle routes throughout the Town.
- The network of roads should link downtown Indian Trail with the Town’s Village Centers, downtown itself, and US 74.

Figure 5.4: Needs Analysis Summary

Minimum Park and Recreation Needs

Since this is a 10-year Master Plan, the 2020 population numbers (based on MUMPO’s projections) used for this plan are 35,815 residents. Based on NRPA standards of 3.5 acres per 1000 residents, we arrived at the following Parks and Open-Space Needs for the Town of Indian Trail. Although there are many private recreational facilities provided within subdivisions, by businesses (Carolina Courts, Extreme Ice, Kate’s Skating etc), and by non-profit (Edna Love Park), the following table only discusses the needs for Public Parks that will be provided by the Town itself. Table 5.1 does not imply that there are no park facilities within the Town of Indian Trail; it merely suggests that there is a lack of park facilities provided by the Town.

Table 5.3: Minimum Park and Recreation Needs

	Existing Parks		Park Needs
	Total Acreage (# of Sites)	*Current Population (29,543)	2020 Population (35,815)
Total Acres		103 acres	125 acres
Mini	0 acres (0 sites)	3 acres (3 sites)	5 acres (5 sites)
Neighborhood	0 acres (0 site)	50 acres (10 sites)	60 acres (12 sites)
Community	0 acres (0 sites)	50 acres (2 sites)	60 acres (3 sites)
District	Provided in collaboration with County	Provided in collaboration with County	Provided in collaboration with County
Regional	Provided in collaboration with County	Provided in collaboration with County	Provided in collaboration with County

2020 Population: MUMPO Estimates

***Current Population:** This is extrapolated from MUMPO's 2005 numbers

Total Acres: Minimum acres based on NRPA standards of 3.5 acres per 1000 residents

Recommended Park and Recreation Needs

The minimum standard mentioned in the previous section provides a good foundation for understanding the needs of the Town of Indian Trail. However, due to the rapid growth and anticipated future growth of the Town, combined with the needs that have been identified during the steering committee meeting, stakeholder workshop, online survey, and public workshops, investigating standards used by other fast growing communities were also assessed. Even though no two towns or municipalities are the same and the needs of each community are different, the Towns of Mooresville and Matthews were picked for their similar size and pace of growth. Based on the assessment of their needs, the minimum of 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents was adjusted to 4.75 acres per 1,000 residents.

Table 5.4: Recommended Park and Recreation Needs

	Existing Parks	Park Needs	
	Total Acreage (# of Sites)	*Current Population (29,543)	2020 Population (35,815)
Total Acres		140 acres	170 acres
Mini	0 acres (0 sites)	10 acres (10 site)	10 acres (10 sites)
Neighborhood	0 acres (0 sites)	65 acres (13 sites)	80 acres (16 sites)
Community	0 acres (0 sites)	65 acres (3 sites)	80 acres (4 sites)
District	Provided in collaboration with County	Provided in collaboration with County	Provided in collaboration with County
Regional	Provided in collaboration with County	Provided in collaboration with County	Provided in collaboration with County

2020 Population: MUMPO Estimates

***Current Population:** This is extrapolated from MUMPO's 2005 numbers

Total Acres: Assuming 4.75 acres per 1000 residents

The Plan

6

CHAPTER 6: THE PLAN

BACKGROUND



Indian Trail Fun Run

... promote a well planned park and recreation system that encourages an appreciation of nature, conservation, and a healthy and safe quality of life for all ages ...

Part of Vision Statement from the Park Master Plan

The Town of Indian Trail has recognized the need for a comprehensive parks and greenways system. This desire was expressed in previous planning efforts and surveys, and was also articulated throughout the development of this plan. Currently, the Town does not own or operate any park or greenway facilities. Hence the overarching goal was very clear - create a park and greenway system that currently does not exist. However, there must be clear direction from the community itself about the types of facilities that should be developed, where they should be located and why. When meeting with the public and key stakeholders of the community, it became clear that there were many things that were unique and special to the community that should be celebrated through the park and greenway system. For instance, the Town draws its name from those traders traveling along the "Indian Trail," which ran from Petersburg, Virginia to the Waxhaw Indians home located in this area, along with gold mining. Also the Goose Creek Watershed is partially located within the Town of Indian Trail, which is home to the Federally Endangered Carolina Healsplitter mussel. These are just a couple of examples of the uniqueness of Indian Trail. The community has expressed their desire to promote their heritage, and to preserve all environmentally sensitive features, as well as to ensure all the recreational facilities are created with all age groups of the Town in mind. Out of this historical and contemporary context a vision was created by the people that live, work and play in Indian Trail. This vision is further described in Chapter 7.

THE NEEDS OF THE TOWN

The current and future needs of the Town of Indian Trail were assessed by using a variety of indicators as discussed in Chapter 5. The first indicator was an online attitudes and perceptions survey. The results of the survey provided valuable information about what the Town residents wanted and needed in terms of park and recreation facilities. In particular, Questions 8 through 10 provided insight about what the respondents thought about the

need for more greenways and parks and which of the two they would prefer to see more of. In fact, out of those that answered Questions 8 and 9, approximately 94% said that Indian Trail needed more parks, and 79% said that the Town needed more greenways. Question 10 of the survey showed that 85% of those that answered the question prefer to see more parks than greenways.

Many residents shared a similar desire for active and passive recreational facilities when asked during the public workshops. They voiced their concerns about the use of private facilities provided within the subdivisions by people not living within the subdivision, but also pointed out the need for active recreational amenities such as basketball and tennis based on their observations. Some residents mentioned a need for connecting neighborhoods to nearby school facilities via a network of greenways and trails. Overall, all residents showed a great desire to have public parks facilities within the Town limits similar to ones in surrounding jurisdictions.

The national standards for park and recreation facilities were then evaluated and compared with the Town's current and projected population. Based on the national standard, the minimum standard that is widely used is 3.5 acres of park and open space per 1,000 residents. As mentioned earlier, according to the Town's Comprehensive Plan, the build out population of Indian Trail is 80,000 to 90,000 residents. The build out population suggests that the Town of Indian Trail will eventually need approximately 280 to 315 acres of parks and open space. Based on the current population of 29,543, Indian Trail needs 103 acres of parks and open space to meet the current needs of the community. Since this is a 10-year master plan, the Town of Indian Trail is expected to grow to approximately 35,815 by the year 2020, which equates to about 125 acres of parks and open space. The 125 acres breaks down into (3) 3-acre Mini Parks, (10) 50 acre Neighborhood Parks, (2) 50-acre Community Parks. These numbers are based on the minimum standard of 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the current and future recreation needs of surrounding municipalities were compared against those of the Town of Indian Trail. Based on this analysis and combined with the fact that Indian Trail is one of the fastest growing communities in the country, the recreational needs of the Town were reevaluated and it was determined



Earth Day Arbor Day in the Town of Indian Trail



that the minimum of 3.5 acres per 1,000 people was not sufficient for the projected population. Therefore, it is recommended that a minimum of 4.75 acres per 1,000 people be used to determine the total acreage necessary to meet the recreational needs of the Town of Indian Trail. Based on that minimum standard of 4.75 acres, the Town of Indian Trail will need a total of 170 acres of parks and open space. The 170 acres breaks down as follows:

- (10) 1-acre Mini Parks.
- (16) 5-acre Neighborhood Parks.
- (4) 20-acre Community Parks.

The feedback from the online survey would suggest that the Town should focus its efforts in developing community and neighborhood parks. Of those that answered Question #27, 60% said that community parks were their first choice and 55% said that neighborhood parks were their second choice. An overwhelming 69% said that mini parks would be their third choice. Moreover, during the public workshops that were facilitated in various locations around the Town, the residents consistently mentioned the need for community and neighborhood parks. They also cited surrounding community parks that are located outside the Town of Indian Trail and that they would like to see these facilities provided in the town itself. Also, based on the open space requirements in the Town’s UDO, most mini parks will actually be required to be developed as part of new residential subdivisions. In addition, district and regional parks are capital intensive and are typically used by others in surrounding municipalities.

DISTRIBUTION OF FACILITIES

The landscape of the Town of Indian Trail (both natural and man-made) is such that distribution of these park and open space facilities across the Town to provide equitable services to everybody is critical to meet the Town’s current and future needs. In order to determine the equitable distribution of these recreational facilities, service areas were drawn around each proposed park location. Service areas are lines that are delineated on a map to assist planners in determining the portion of the population that will be able to access a certain recreational facility. The larger the recreational facility, the larger the service area will be and the greater percentage of the

population that will be served by that particular recreational facility. Also, information from the survey uncovered that most respondents use recreational facilities that are located outside the Town limits (except for ball fields and pools). Therefore, by providing community and neighborhood parks, the population that is currently using recreational facilities outside the Town limits, would be more inclined to stay within the Town since they will be served by these new recreational facilities.

Table 6.1: Service Areas for Parks

Park Type	Service Area (miles)
District/Regional	5-10 miles
Community	2-3 miles
Neighborhood	½ mile
*Mini	¼ mile or less

**Note: Typically mini parks are provided as part of a specific development.*

The proposed park locations described in this Plan, and shown on the maps, are general in nature, and are not tied to a particular parcel and property. The actual location of future parks will depend on the availability of land, cost of acquisition, access, and several other factors.

Table 6.1 provides a summary of the standards service areas associated with the different park typologies.

THE PLAN DESCRIPTION

District/Regional Parks

There are district and regional parks currently a large portion of existing population of the Town of Indian Trail. The existing district and regional parks include the Matthews Soccer Complex and Francis Beatty Park in Mecklenburg County and Cane Creek Park in Union County. In addition to these existing park facilities, both Union and Mecklenburg County have proposed district and regional recreational facilities identified in their respective park master plans. For Mecklenburg County, this includes Steven’s Creek Nature Preserve and for Union County, it includes the Northeast Regional Park. This means that all of the Town's future needs as they relate to District and Regional parks will be met by existing and future facilities provided by Union and Mecklenburg County. Also, as mentioned earlier, district and regional parks are typically capital intensive and used by residents of multiple jurisdictions, therefore, it is advisable to coordinate with surrounding municipalities to build these recreational facilities.

Community Parks

To determine the appropriate locations for community and neighborhood parks, a set of criteria was used (see below). These criteria, in combination

with input from the Town staff, the Steering Committee and the general public, helped in determining the best location for each park.

- Availability of land.
- Geographic location.
- Proximity to residential areas.
- Input from the public and Town staff.
- Environmentally sensitive areas.



Town of Indian Trail Downtown

This Plan proposes the creation of four new public community parks within the Town of Indian Trail with an optional park location for the downtown area. To serve the growing population of the Town of Indian Trail, future community park locations are geographically dispersed in the planning area such that a community park could be accessible within three miles. Three miles is the recommended service area for a community park (see chapter 4 for detailed definition). The four recommended locations are evenly distributed to serve both sides of the US 74 corridor. See Figure 6.1 for the distribution of these facilities.

The first of the four community parks is located near the downtown area of the Town. There are two possible locations for this park. The first location is near the future Chestnut Connector, which will provide recreational opportunities for residents living in or adjacent to the downtown area. As the downtown area grows and more residential development is introduced to the area, a community facility will be necessary in this general vicinity. This park could be designed and developed as a destination facility for all age groups and could have good mix of active and passive recreational facilities. Also, since the park is centrally located and close to downtown, it could provide the necessary space for the Town's functions and events. This would draw more residents to downtown Indian Trail and support the general intent of the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Master Plan.

The location and surrounding uses of this park make it slightly more desirable than the second proposed location. The second possible location is bounded by Independence Boulevard to the east, CSX Railroad to the west and Indian Trail Road to the north, respectively.

The second community park location in the vicinity of the future intersection of Old Monroe Road and the Faith Church Road will provide service to the southeast part of the town. Many newer subdivisions have been developed in this part of the Town and more are expected in the next 5-10 years. This park should contain a combination of active and passive recreation uses. The Town should work with the adjacent neighborhoods to determine the types of recreational facilities that are needs for this area of the Town. Many of the subdivisions around this park location already contain some recreational facilities, such as pools, tennis courts and internal trails.

The third community park, which is located near Poplin Elementary School, will serve a portion of the Town of Indian Trail that is expected to grow quickly over the next 10 years. This park is located within the planning area and is very accessible from Poplin and Rocky River Road. This park should have a variety of active and passive recreation uses, including, but not limited to ball fields, soccer fields, basketball and tennis courts, picnic areas, internal trails, restrooms, etc. Again, the Town of Indian Trail should work closely with the adjacent neighborhoods to determine the types of recreational facilities that should be included in this park.

The fourth and final community park is located in the Goose Creek Watershed area in the northeastern portion of the Town. This park will serve a different function than the other three. Since this park is located in the Goose Creek Watershed, it could be developed as a nature preserve where the primary focus will be to conserve environmentally sensitive area from development and its potential impacts. This facility could be predominantly passive in nature with focus on environmental education and stewardship.

Neighborhood Parks

There are a total of 16 neighborhood parks that are recommended in this plan. Figure 6.2 shows the distribution of these neighborhood parks. Two of the 16 are proposed recreational facilities that are in Union County's Park and Open Space Plan. The other 14 locations are all new proposed recreational facilities located in the Town's Planning Area. The proposed locations were equally distributed among the town in order to meet the

existing and future needs of the community. Of the 14 proposed recreational facilities in Indian Trail, 7 are located on the south side of US 74 and 7 on the north side of US 74. The planning and design of these parks should be coordinated with the residents who live within approximately ½-mile of the park in order to understand and facilitate their respective needs.



Greenways/Trails

The greenway/trail system has evolved over the last 4 years. It started with the recommendations made in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2005 by the Town Council. The greenways that were identified in that plan primarily followed all the major creeks and streams in the area. The result was a greenway/trail system that had some connections to major destinations, but overall it did not provide the connectivity the Town needed. In 2008, the Town developed their first Pedestrian Master Plan, which took the greenway recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan and expanded them to include connections to major destinations, such as schools, shopping centers, and residential neighborhoods. They were also expanded to make connections to the Village Centers that were identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Parks Master Plan took the recommendations from the previous plans and extended them to ensure connectivity to the proposed neighborhood and community parks (Figure 6.3). The overall greenway/trail system now includes approximately 48 miles of trails and provides the connectivity that the Town will need as it continues to grow in the future. The concept of the trail system is based on primary and secondary trails. Primary trails will connect the two sides of Indian Trail and overcome the barrier of US 74. This connection can be made through the "Indian Trail Heritage Trail," which extends along South Fork Creek from downtown to Porter Ridge school campus. This particular greenway connection could be achieved by creating an “Indian Trail Heritage Trail” that will celebrate the history and heritage of the Town with historical markers and monumentation.

This primary trail will link the majority of community and neighborhood parks so that residents can enjoy an un-interrupted multi-modal experience with multiple bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Also, secondary trails link other destinations such as schools, Village Centers, and other parks to the

primary trail and those neighborhoods will be connected to primary and secondary trails for easy access to all the park and recreational facilities.

Plan Implementation

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CHAPTER 7: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

VISION AND GOALS



The previous chapters of this report provided a summary of existing conditions, input from the community, park and greenway classifications and recommendations for new park facilities. This chapter provides the Town with recommendations and implementation strategies for making the Plan a reality. Based on the information that was provided during the kick-off meeting, the online survey and the public workshops, the following Vision and Goals were identified. These goals were also derived from the previous planning projects such as the Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Master Plan, and the Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan. The Vision and Goals guided the development of the Plan and will continue to do so throughout the implementation of the Parks Master Plan.

Vision Statement

Indian Trail will promote a well planned park and recreation system that encourages an appreciation of nature, conservation, and a healthy and safe quality of life for all ages. The Town's park and recreation system will be designed through partnerships to connect our heritage with our future.

Goals

- Promote Indian Trail's small town heritage by incorporating arts and cultural activities with the development of recreational programs and facilities.
- Preserve wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Develop facilities and programs that are accessible by all users.
- Encourage physical and environmental education opportunities for all age groups.
- Enhance the safety of parks, greenways and other recreational facilities by providing adequate lighting and signage.
- Ensure that all recreational facilities are kept attractive through the development of a comprehensive maintenance program.
- Promote facilities and programs that are inviting to all users and are integrated into the context of the community.



The Town of Indian Trail Farmers Market

RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Promote Indian Trail’s small town heritage.

Recommendation 1A: Foster the Town’s cultural and historical heritage through recreational facilities.

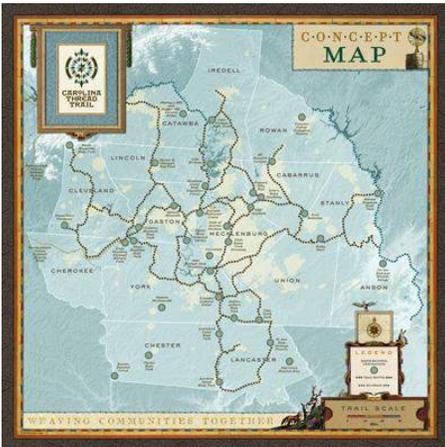
Implementation Strategy 1: Develop the “Indian Trail Heritage Trail” and install elements along the trail that inform the user of the Town’s heritage of being an old Indian trading route.

Implementation Strategy 2: Educate the residents about the Town’s heritage through various recreational programs and events, such as Family Fun Day.

Recommendation 1B: Coordinate with Carolina Thread Trail (CTT) in the development of trails and greenways within the Town’s limit.

Implementation Strategy 1: Identify destinations that could be connected through the CTT’s regional trail networks.

Implementation Strategy 2: Coordinate with CTT staff to identify funding opportunities to design and develop connections via greenways to major destinations.



Carolina Thread Trail Concept Map
Source: Carolina Thread Trail

Goal 2: Preserve wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.

Recommendation 2A: Ensure that all future developments within the Town respect the environment and preserve environmentally sensitive areas by establishing regulations that meet the intended goal.

Implementation Strategy 1: Create an inventory of all wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas and overlay them with the recommended parks and greenways in this plan.

Implementation Strategy 2: Review all site plan submittals for consistency with this plan.

Implementation Strategy 3: Develop buffer requirements that could accommodate greenways in environmentally sensitive areas such as local streams and creeks which can also enhance the water quality.

Recommendation 2B: Create a Nature Preserve in the Goose Creek Watershed in the northeast portion of the Town’s planning area.



Implementation Strategy 1: Identify Nature Preserve Park candidate sites by evaluating various criteria such as environmental constraints, access, size, location, and visual quality of land for various locations.

Implementation Strategy 2: Investigate various funding mechanisms to acquire, master plan, and build the nature preserve.

Notes: Various funding opportunities are identified later in this chapter to assist in this process.

Recommendation 2C: Design and develop future park and greenway facilities in a sustainable manner that incorporates principles of both environmental and operational sustainability.

Implementation Strategy 1: Use natural and local material in the construction of trails and greenways. This includes use of gravel vs. asphalt for trails.

Implementation Strategy 2: Create a management plan for trail and greenway maintenance and identify erosion repair and rehabilitation efforts at regular intervals.

Implementation Strategy 3: Implement sustainable practices for open space and recreational actions as identified in the 2000 American Planning Association Guide on Planning for Sustainability¹.

Goal 3: Develop facilities and programs that are accessible by all users.

Recommendation 3A: Ensure that as each park and greenway is developed that all users are considered in the planning and design of the facility.

Implementation Strategy 1: Create a list of all advocacy groups that currently use, or will use, Indian Trail's park and greenway facilities.

¹ Policy Guide on Planning for Sustainability. Adopted by Chapter Delegate Assembly, April 16, 2000. Ratified by Board of Directors, April 17, 2000, New York, NY. (<http://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/sustainability.htm>)



Creating a park system that is accessible to all users is one of the goals of this Plan. Above, Family Fun Day in the Town of Indian Trail

Implementation Strategy 2: Coordinate with local advocacy groups during the early stages of planning and design for all parks and greenways.

Implementation Strategy 3: Design each facility to comply with state and federal ADA guidelines.

Recommendation 3B: Establish a Park and Recreation department.

Implementation Strategy 1: Create a parks coordinator position that can help in the implementation of this plan.

Implementation Strategy 2: Update the Parks Master Plan every five years to address the changing needs and demographic of Indian Trail.

Implementation Strategy 3: Continue to work with various public and private associations such as Indian Trail Athletic Association and Union County Public Schools to create exciting programming and events for all age groups.

Implementation Strategy 4: Appointed Parks Coordinator should work with Town Council, Parks, Tree, and Greenway Committee, and staff to develop a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to implement this plan and establish minimum standards for the design, operation and maintenance of Indian Trail's parks and recreational facilities.

Recommendation 3C: Connect Parks and Greenway facilities to existing and future neighborhoods.

Implementation Strategy 1: Ensure, through the development regulation process that future development accommodate and provide opportunities for park and greenways and connect such facilities to existing and future development.

Recommendation 3D: Provide amenities and program park facilities for all age groups and interest groups.

Implementation Strategy 1: Coordinate with all residents and interest groups to identify amenities deemed important to them during the park design process. Special outreach to residents within the service area of each park facility is important for successful programming.



Note: For example, basketball courts were constantly identified by residents as the most used facility in public and private parks during the public workshops.

Implementation Strategy 2: Establish recreational projects such as a community garden that appeal to various age and interest groups.

Recommendation 3E: Explore opportunities to acquire lands for park and greenway development.

Implementation Strategy 1: Utilize all means of land acquisition to minimize purchase costs. Such means may include, but are not limited to, land donations, utility easements, fee simple, long term leases, etc.

Implementation Strategy 2: Coordinate the acquisition of park land in conjunction with future urban and suburban development.

Implementation Strategy 3: Aim to acquire park land from a willing seller and avoid the use of eminent domain to obtain land for greenway trails and recreation facilities.

Implementation Strategy 4: Coordinate with public entities such as Union County and Union County School systems for potential park land use or acquisition.

Note: Specially coordinate with Union County Public Schools system to design future school facilities within Indian Trail Planning Area that could provide opportunities for joint use.

Implementation Strategy 5: Coordinate with private health and recreational services provider to explore opportunities to jointly develop public-private recreational opportunities.

Note: For example, coordinate with YMCA, churches, and other civic institutions to jointly develop parks and recreation facilities.

Note: more extensive discussion on land acquisition and funding sources is outlined later in this chapter.

Goal 4: Encourage physical and environmental education opportunities for all age groups.

Recommendation 4A: Incorporate various elements into the planning and design of parks and greenways.

Implementation Strategy 1: Provide interactive exercise stations along greenways/trails for all users and age groups to help educate them about the importance of regular exercise.

Implementation Strategy 2: Incorporate plaques or signage along greenways/trails to educate users about the various plant species and wildlife in the area.

Implementation Strategy 3: Work with Union County Public School System to incorporate environmental education into the curriculum of the students.

Implementation Strategy 4: Create regular events at Town's Park and Recreation facilities to educate students about benefits of land conservation, environmental preservation, health and exercise.

Implementation Strategy 5: Provide public outreach environmental education classes at Town events such as the annual Earth Day Arbor Day festival. Continue to promote community projects that encourage environmental stewardship.

Implementation Strategy 6: Continue to support and participate in Town events such as the annual 5k and Fun Run in order to encourage the physical activity of Indian Trail's residents.



Goal 5: Enhance the safety of parks, greenways and other recreational facilities.

Recommendation 5A: Ensure proper safety measures are implemented for all facilities.

Implementation Strategy 1: Ensure that each park facility has proper lighting.

Implementation Strategy 2: rules and regulations for all greenways at all trailheads and at entrances and concession areas for all parks.



Fourth of July parade in Downtown Indian Trail

Implementation Strategy 3: Create and make readily available greenway maps for each greenway as it is built. Ensure mile markers are identified on the maps and on the trails.

Implementation Strategy 4: Design facilities to eliminate any safety hazards.

Implementation Strategy 5: Implement a park watch program for all greenways and parks.

Implementation Strategy 6: Coordinate with local fire and law enforcement officials for the ongoing safety of future greenway and parks facilities.

Recommendation 5B: Provide safe crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists on state and local roads, railroads, and creeks.

Implementation Strategy 1: Identify greenway and road crossings clearly for both – pedestrians and motorists.

Implementation Strategy 2: Coordinate with NCDOT, North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA), Town Engineers, and local developers to provide critical bike and pedestrian connections through existing and future road facilities.

Implementation Strategy 3: Coordinate and work with North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) to establish connections to both sides of Monroe Bypass with adequate bike and pedestrian amenities.

Goal 6: Ensure that all recreational facilities are kept attractive.

Recommendation 6A: Create a maintenance program for all recreational facilities.

Implementation Strategy 1: Work with Union County and other local municipalities to tailor a maintenance program for the Town of Indian Trail.

Implementation Strategy 2: Create a dedicated funding mechanism for the maintenance program.

Implementation Strategy 3: Work with vendors and possibly other government agencies to develop a trash pick-up schedule for parks and greenways.

Goal 7: Promote facilities and programs that are inviting to all users and are integrated into the context of the community.



A Dedicated Park and Recreation Department will help in the creation of a strong park system.

Recommendation 7A: Collaborate with local utility providers to develop greenways and trails.

Implementation Strategy 1: Coordinate with local utility providers and surrounding municipalities to utilize power easements for recreational trails consistent with guidelines for greenways and trails.

Implementation Strategy 2: Coordinate future expansion of sewer lines with greenway and trail development.

Recommendation 7B: Develop and Park and Recreation system that provides adequate facilities and services to Town’s current and future residents.

Implementation Strategy 1: Strive for 4.75 acres of developed park land per 1000 residents of Indian Trail.

Implementation Strategy 2: Develop activities and programs to encourage the use of recreational facilities.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of Parks Master Plan is the beginning of a complete park system. The implementation process starts with the Town’s adoption of this Master Plan. As recommended earlier in the Plan, the Town should consider increasing the staffing resources or assign a current staff person to help with the implementation of this plan. The Town should also appoint an Implementation Committee to oversee the realization of this plan. The town staff member that is overseeing the implementation of this plan will work closely with this committee on a regular basis to carry out implementation steps. It is recommended that the Implementation Committee provide the Town Council with an annual update of the implementation status of this Plan. Other meetings with the Town Council could be organized on an as needed basis and the town staff can assist the Implementation Committee to prepare for these meetings. The Town staff will also work with the Implementation Committee to secure funding for the acquisition of potential park land and for the development of parks per the recommendations of this plan.

Since this is a long-range vision and policy document, any detailed discussion of a particular site, facility, or program could become obsolete relatively quickly. However, it should be noted that as opportunities present themselves the Town should act on pursuing them in order to achieve the

overall objectives of this plan. To make sure such opportunities are seized, it is recommended that feasibility studies should be conducted as potential park sites are identified during the implementation of the Park Master Plan. These feasibility studies could go in more detail and assess the suitability of a site, program, or facility. The plan implementation committee could advise the Town Council about projects that may require a feasibility study.

The following subsections detail out necessary steps, such as – Staffing, Land Acquisition, Master Planning of specific parks, Programming, Operation and Maintenance, and Funding.

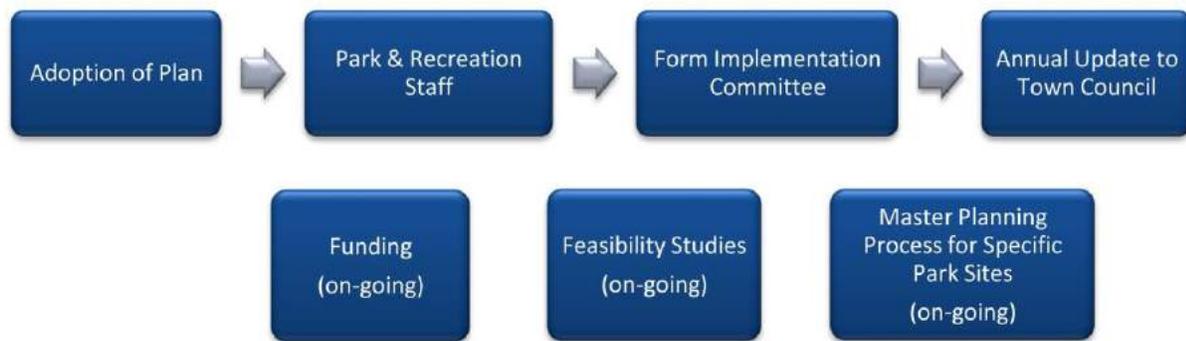


Figure 7.1: Plan Implementation Process

STAFFING

A priority of the Town once the Park and Greenway Master Plan is adopted should be to begin the implementation of a Parks and Recreation Department. To begin the formation of this department the Town should hire a dedicated staff person, at least on a part-time basis, or assign an existing planning staff member to initiate implementation of the plan. This person would be responsible for the implementation of the approved Park and Greenway Master Plan and of the operation and maintenance of park and greenway facilities for the entire town. The responsibilities of this person would include, but not be limited to the following:

- Apply for funding for land acquisition, design and construction of parks and greenways.
- Oversee the planning, design and construction of recreational facilities.
- Lead public outreach.
- Meet on a monthly basis with Town staff and volunteer groups to discuss potential projects, educational opportunities, maintenance issues, and other topics related to the successful implementation of the park and recreation plan.
- Coordinate with the Parks, Tree and Greenway Committee and volunteer groups to implement this plan.



Currently the Town has a Parks, Tree and Greenway committee that is comprised of seven members and the Urban Forester with Union County Cooperative Extension. The members of this committee must be qualified in planning, developing, and the management of parks and greenways, and in deliberating over tree-related issues. The purpose of this committee will evolve over time; however, as the Town begins to establish a park and greenway system, this committee should be responsible for assisting in the implementation of this plan.

LAND ACQUISITION

In order to develop parks and greenways, the Town will need to begin to identify opportunities to acquire land. Currently there are a variety of ways the Town can begin to acquire land, including:

- Purchasing land from private land owners.
- Dedication of land from private land owners or private developers.
- Easements from land owners.
- Easements from local utility companies.
- Public-private partnerships (such as teaming with YMCA, local churches, and public schools).

One of the primary ways for the Town to acquire land is by purchasing land from private land owners; however, this can become very costly. Currently, the Town has a designated revenue stream in their fiscal budget which is called the Park Fund. This Fund is an annually recurring designated revenue stream of the ½ cent ad valorem tax. The money received through this tax is



Figure 7.2: Specific Park Master Planning Process

to be used only for park-related expenses. All expenses for this Fund must be presented and approved by Council. The Town can begin to use this to acquire land for park and greenway development.

Note: This tax was designated for Park Funds by the Town Council and the revenue collected is part of the General Fund for the Town, but can only be used for park related expenses. Such expenses could include but are not limited to, planning, land acquisition, construction, operations, etc. The Town Council at any time can choose to reverse or change the intended use of these funds.

The second way the Town can acquire land is through the requirements detailed in the UDO. The Town’s UDO provides specific requirements for either dedicating open space for parks and greenways or pay a fee-in-lieu of dedicating the land. Since this plan will provide an overall vision for the Park and Greenway development within the Town, it will be critical for the Town to coordinate future dedication of land. Each development application that comes in should be closely reviewed for consistency with this plan so that the dedication of land can be used for parks and greenways. The alternative of paying a fee-in-lieu, land dedication, is good way for the Town to set aside money for future land acquisition.

MASTER PLANNING OF SPECIFIC PARKS

The master planning of parks and greenways is not always a straight forward process. Most municipalities work with private consultants to assist in designing the facilities and to oversee the construction of them. For instance, once the Town has identified a specific property that they want to develop for recreational purposes and they have either secured the property or have an agreement with the property owner to develop the site for recreational use, the Town would then need to hire a consultant to develop a master plan for that particular site. The master planning process begins with a very detailed analysis of the site conditions. During this phase the project team will identify and map soils, slopes, water features such as wetlands, floodplains, streams, lakes and ponds. Mapping all of these elements together will provide a better understanding of the constraints as well as the opportunities that exist on the property.

The next step will be to identify the park program, which will include the types of facilities and amenities as well as the percentage of active and

passive recreation. Once the park program has been clarified, various concepts for the park will be developed. These concepts are then taken to the public to obtain feedback on the concepts and to have them choose a preferred concept. Once the preferred concept is chosen, a more detailed park master plan is developed and preliminary cost estimates are derived. By the end of the process, the Town has a preferred concept that the community supports and a cost estimate in which they can begin to find funding to construct the park.

It's important to note that as the Town begins to acquire land and go through the master planning process that consideration is given to the surrounding residential neighborhoods and schools. If a proposed park location is adjacent to 2-3 subdivisions that already have tennis courts, perhaps the design of the park should consider other amenities, such as basketball courts or volleyball courts. The Town should coordinate with these subdivisions to ensure that they are proposing facilities that the residents will use. The goal here is to provide park and recreation facilities that they do not have access to.

PROGRAMMING

Once the master planning process for each park has been completed, the need for programming various events becomes important. Parks are typically used by all residents and visitors and are open during their normal hours to everybody. However, many recreational events in the community are organized by different agencies and organizations. These events have a certain purpose and are organized within a fixed time period. They could range from organized Sports Leagues to Movies in the Park, along with Nature Camps to various Festivals.

The design of the park facility should suit the needs of these programs and therefore should be flexible in incorporating the programming of potential events. If the park contains active recreation, such as softball, baseball or soccer fields, there will be the need for organized tournaments or leagues that need to be programmed and developed. Mini parks and Neighborhood parks are not typically programmed since they are smaller in size and have fewer amenities than Community, District, and Regional parks.

CONSTRUCTION

The construction process will be specific to each site. Some parks, such as a Neighborhood or Community Parks require more site work than a smaller park, such as a Mini Park. The construction plans for a park will be designed and approved during the “Master Planning of Specific Parks” phase.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Like anything else, proper maintenance of the park and recreation facilities is essential to the sustainability of the overall system. If parks and greenways are not maintained properly they will fall into disrepair and residents will not want to use them, which could lead to the abuse of the facilities for crime and other illegal activities. If the Town is going to invest the time and money in developing a comprehensive recreation system, it must have an operations and maintenance program in place before it places the first shovel into the ground.

FUNDING SOURCES

Funding Park and Recreation facilities is challenging, especially in today’s budgetary constraints faced by many municipalities. However, there are a number of resources which makes it feasible for local governments to build these facilities. Such sources range from private, State, and Federal institutions that provide a variety of in-kind donations of land, funds, grants, and finances. The Town of Indian Trail should devise a creative and innovative funding mechanism that leverages its local funds to generate additional revenues from public and private institutions.

This section outlines a range of commonly used funding resources to build park and greenway facilities in the state of North Carolina.

The benefits of parks and greenways go beyond the traditionally viewed needs of recreation. Local governments could therefore tap into a variety of federal and state programs that address issues of, and provide funding for:

- Water Quality.
- Air Quality.
- Alternative Transportation.
- Wildlife Protection.
- Community Health.



Park maintenance is a critical part of strong park system

- Hazard Mitigation.
- Economic Development.

Although the long term success of Indian Trail Parks and Greenways Master plan will depend on the Town's commitment in the form of local revenue stream, the Plan's future is implicitly linked with how the Town utilizes other funding sources:

Federal Funding Sources:

SAFETEA LU

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into a law on August 10, 2005. This law provides opportunities for non-motorized transportation under its Environmental Stewardship Program. *A total of \$370 million is provided through 2009 to continue this program to develop and maintain trails for recreational purposes that include pedestrian, equestrian, bicycling and non-motorized snow activities as well as off-road motorized vehicle activities. New eligibilities are provided, including construction and maintenance equipment, real estate costs, educational program costs, State administration costs, and assessment of trail conditions².*

Surface Transportation Program:

Transportation Enhancement Activities

Recreational Trails Program

Recreational Trails Program was created by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as an assistance program to provide funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities. Such facilities could be utilized for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The funds for these programs come from Federal Highway Trust Fund and are distributed to the States by legislative formula where half the funds are distributed equally among all states, and the other half is distributed proportionally to the estimated amount of non-highway recreational fuel use in each State. For the state of North Carolina, roughly \$1.7 million is

² <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/summary.htm>

apportioned for FY 2009. To gain more understanding of RTP here is the contact information of NC RTP:

Administrator –
State Trails Coordinator
NC Division of Parks & Recreation
MSC 1615
Raleigh NC 27699-1615
Phone: (919) 715-8699
Fax: (919) 715-3085

Darrell.McBane@ncdenr.gov

Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a federal program that enables and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school by examining conditions around schools and implement projects that work to improve safety; reduce traffic and congestion; and reduce air pollution in the vicinity of schools. Various types of projects could receive federal funding under this program. Some examples of project types include – infrastructure improvement, non-infrastructure improvement, combined infrastructure/non-infrastructure, and planning/start-up. Although the program is federally funded it is managed and administered by each State Department of Transportation (DOT). A large number of North Carolina communities have taken advantage of this funding to improve bike and pedestrian connectivity, and implement programs to encourage kids to walk to school. Roughly, \$5 million is projected to be included for FY 2009 for NC. Although no authorization is made for subsequent years, many believe that federal government will continue this program in its new authorization bill. For further information please contact:

Interim Safe Routes to School Coordinator
Division of Transportation Mobility and Safety
North Carolina Dept. of Transportation
1561 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1561
Phone: (919) 515-8703
Fax: (919) 771-2745
Email: skworth@ncsu.edu

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)

This program Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) is jointly administered by the FHWA and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and provides funding to MPOs, Transit Agencies, and State DOTs to invest in projects that reduces air pollutants regulated from transportation-related sources. Like other federal programs this program has funding mechanism identified till 2009, the new authorization bill will map out the funding and its requirement beyond 2009. For further information please visit www.fhwa.dot.gov or contact:

Administrator
Enhancements Unit
Department of Transportation
1534 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 2766-1534
Phone: (919) 733-2039

EPA's Environmental Education Grants Program

The purpose of this grant is to increase the awareness about environmental issues among public by providing seed money to support environmental education projects. These projects could range from Air quality to biodiversity/ecosystem/habitat/species to water and general environmental literacy. This type of grant will be suitable for initiatives in the Goose Creek basin to educate residents about open space preservation and habitat protection.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants/index.html> or contact:

U.S. EPA, Region 4
Environmental Education Grants
Office of Public Affairs
61 Forsyth Street SW
Atlanta, GA 30303
chastain.alice@epa.gov

Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF)

A program administered through the National Park Service, Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) provides matching grants to local and state government for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Under this program, a local municipality can obtain a matching grant to preserve, develop, and assure accessibility to outdoor recreation resources including, but not limited to, parks, trails, wildlife land, and other lands and facilities desirable for individual active participation.

The municipality must provide 50% matching funds in either cash or in-kind contributions with the grants to be evaluated based on:

- Technical merit
- Public/private partnership
- How the project addresses the needs and priorities of a statewide comprehensive or strategic plan

For more information please visit <http://www.nps.gov/lwcf> or contact:

Division of Parks and Recreation
Dept. of Environmental and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 27687
Raleigh, NC 27611-7687
Phone: (919) 733-4181

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) - Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Municipalities with population less than 50,000 are identified as non-entitlement area by Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for these areas are administered by the State, which is in contrast to the Entitlement areas where CDBG funds are directly received by major cities and counties (population greater than 50,000 and 200,000 respectively) from the HUD. The HUD's North Carolina website suggests that Indian Trail is a non-entitlement town, which means that any CDBG funding will be administered by the State. Under this program the State must ensure that at least 70 percent of its CDBG grant funds are used for activities that benefit low and moderate income persons over a one, two, or three-year period. Many activities are eligible to receive

CDBG funds, but the ones affecting park and recreation needs of a community includes:

- Acquisition of property for public purposes.
- Construction of recreation facilities.
- Public services.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/stateadmin/> or contact:

Field Office Director
Asheville Building
1500 Pinemcroe Road
Suite 401
Greensboro, NC 27407

State Funding Sources:

Park and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)

This funding source from North Carolina State Parks has been in place since 1994 when NC General Assembly established the Park and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) to fund, among many other things, grants for local governments. This program provides dollar-for-dollar grants to local governments to acquire land and/or to develop parks and recreational projects that serve the general public. 30 percent of the total fund is used for grants to the local government for parks and recreation purposes. For more information on this program, please visit:

http://www.ncparks.gov/About/grants/partf_main.php or contact:

Manager, CAMA Local Planning & Access Program

252-808-2808

Email: john.thayer@ncmail.net

NC Adopt-a-trail Grant Program (AAT)

This program awards \$108,000 annually to government agencies for trails projects and requires no local match or in-kind services. The maximum funds available through this grant cannot exceed \$5,000.00. The funds from this grant could be used for trail building, trail signage and facilities, trail maintenance, trail brochure and maps etc. For more information on this program, please visit:

http://www.ncparks.gov/About/grants/trails_grant.php or contact:

Division of Parks and Recreation

1615 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-1615

Phone: (919) 715-1846

Fax (919) 715-3085

Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program

This program from U.S. Department of Agriculture provides opportunity for funding program that addresses the stewardship of urban natural resources. The main focus of this program is to respond to the maintenance, restoration, and health of urban trees, forests, and green spaces. For more information, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/ucf/> or contact:

USDA Forest Service
1720 Peachtree Road, NW
Suite 850S
Atlanta, GA 30367
Phone: 404-347-1647
Fax: 404-347-2776
Email: emacie@fs.fed.us

NC Natural Heritage Trust Fund

This Trust Fund was established in 1987 to provide supplemental funding to select state agencies for the acquisition and protection of important natural areas, to preserve ecological diversity and cultural heritage, and to inventory the natural heritage resources of the state. This trust fund has contributed more than \$265 million since its inception through over 400 grants for the conservation of more than 272,500 acres. For more information, please visit - <http://www.ncnhtf.org/pages/aboutnhtf.htm> or contact:

Executive Director
512 N. Salisbury St.
Raleigh, NC 27604

North Carolina Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF)

This program makes grants available to local governments, state agencies and conservation non-profits to help finance projects that specifically address water pollution problems. It was created in 1996 and its 21 member, independent, board has full responsibility over the allocation of monies from the fund. This fund will give grants to projects that (1) enhance or restore degraded waters, (2) protect unpolluted waters, and/or (3) contribute toward a network of riparian buffers and greenways for

environmental, educational, and recreational benefits. For more information, please visit <http://www.cwmtf.net> or contact:

Western Piedmont Field Representative
(336) 366-3801
bschumak@surry.net

NC Division of Water Quality – 319 Program Grants

NC Conservation Income Tax Credit Program

This program promotes conservation efforts by private landowners by providing incentives to voluntarily conserve their land. When such land owners donate a conservation easement or fee simple deed to a qualified recipient (State government, local government, qualified non-profit organization), they may receive a tax credit to apply against their state income taxes. Such donations must serve specific public purpose. This program has conserved more than 180,000 acres, valued at more than \$750 million, since the program inception in 1983. For more information, please visit - <http://www.onencnaturally.org/pages/ConservationTaxCredit.html> or contact:

N.C. Department of Revenue
(919) 733-4684 for individual income taxes
(919) 733- 3166 for corporate income taxes.

NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program

Clean water, clean air and thriving natural habitats are fundamental indicators of a healthy environment. Protecting North Carolina’s ecosystems is critical to maintaining the state’s quality of life, continuing its economic growth and ensuring the health and well-being of its citizens. According to the three-party memorandum of agreement that established the initiative’s procedures in July 2003, the mission of the Ecosystem Enhancement Program is to “restore, enhance, preserve and protect the functions associated with wetlands, streams and riparian areas, including but not limited to those necessary for the restoration, maintenance and protection of water quality and riparian habitats throughout North Carolina.”EEP provides:

- High-quality, cost-effective projects for watershed improvement and protection.
- Compensation for unavoidable environmental impacts associated with transportation-infrastructure and economic development.
- Detailed watershed planning and project implementation efforts within North Carolina’s threatened or degraded watersheds.

For more information, please visit - <http://www.nceep.net> or contact:

MAIN OFFICE
 2728 Capital Blvd, Suite 1H 103
 Raleigh NC 27604
 (919)715-0476

Governor’s Highway Safety Program (GHSP)

The GHSP provides funds for pedestrian and bicycle related initiatives upon approval. This is an annual program and the amounts of the funds vary from year to year, according to the specific amounts requested. The following information is located on the GHSP web page.

The general guidelines are as follows:

- All funding from the GHSP must be for highway safety purposes only. We cannot fund anything else.
- All funding must be NECESSARY and REASONABLE.
- All funding is performance-based. Substantial progress in reducing crashes, injuries and fatalities is required as a condition of continued funding.
- All funding is passed through from the Federal government and is subject to both federal and state regulations.
- Funding cycles run from October 1st to September 30th (the Federal fiscal year).
- All funding is considered to be “seed money” to get programs started. The grantee is expected to provide a portion of the project costs and is expected to continue the program after GHSP funding ends.
- Projects are only approved for one full or partial federal fiscal year at a time. However, projects may be funded for up to three consecutive years.

- Funding cannot be used to replace or supplant existing expenditures, nor can they be used to carry out the general operating expenses of the grantee.
- All funding is on a reimbursement basis. The grantee must pay for all expenses up front and then submit a reimbursement request to receive the funds.

The Funding Process is as stated below:

- The funding process starts with a concept statement. Forms with instructions on how to complete the forms are listed on the web page.
- For funding requests that include personnel costs, use Form GHSP-01.
- For funding requests for other highway safety equipment only, use Form GHSP-05.
- All concept statement forms are due to the GHSP by March 31st for the next funding cycle that begins October 1st.
- All concept statements are reviewed and evaluated for their impact on local and statewide highway safety problems.
- If a concept is considered for funding, you will be requested to submit an application contract.

More information about this program can be obtained from

<http://www.ncdot.org/programs/GHSP/>.

Local Funding Sources:

Park Fund

Local Option Sales Tax (Half-Cent Sales Tax)

Since 2008, the Town has in place an annually recurring designated revenue stream of ½ cent ad valorem tax. The money received through this tax is to be used only for park-related expenses. All expenses for this fund must be presented and approved by Council.

Dedication of Land or Fee-In-Lieu

The Town's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) requires that any applicant who proposes a subdivision of land for residential purposes shall dedicate a portion of land or pay a fee-in-lieu for public park, greenway, recreation, and open space (1160.010 Dedication of Land). This section of the UDO also states that at least 1/35 of an acre shall be dedicated for each dwelling unit planned or proposed in the subdivision development. The requirements suggest that where feasible, areas with environmental limitations shall be dedicated as open space and the Town may require these areas to be dedicated in excess of the minimum standard provided in this Section provided that reasonable economic use of the property is permitted. Designated wetland areas must be identified and reserved on the plat of subdivision and such areas must be posted with warning signs to prevent any future alteration or damage to these natural areas. Two-thirds of the dedicated land shall be usable for active recreation. Furthermore, only 50% of lakes and streams may be included in computing any of the dedicated land

The fee-in-lieu shall be a product of the number of the following requirements as identified in the UDO:

- The number of acres to be dedicated, as required by Section 1160.010B above;
- The assessed value for property tax purposes of the land being subdivided, adjusted to reflect its current fair market value at the time such payment is due to be paid.

General Obligation Bonds (GOB)

This is a common way for municipalities to generate funding for capital improvement projects such as open space acquisition and/or park and greenway construction. General obligation bonds are issued with the underlying belief that the municipality will be able to repay its debt obligation through taxation or revenue from the projects. A GOB requires a referendum approval before being issued.

Carolina Thread Trail

The Carolina Thread Trail is a regional effort of 15 counties around Charlotte to link people, places, cities, towns and attractions. This program is funded through a private capital campaign that will then be leveraged with local, state and federal funds. The Town of Indian Trail can request funding for trail planning and design as part of this program. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.carolinathreadtrail.org/index.html> or contact:

Carolina Thread Trail Community Coordinator
704.376.2556 ext. 216
travis@carolinathreadtrail.org

Mecklenburg Union Metropolitan Planning Organization - CPWP

The Unified Planning Work Program (CPWP) is managed by MUMPO as an instrument to coordinate transportation planning in the Charlotte metropolitan region. It is partially funded by FHWA and FTA, and its intent is to assist local municipalities with funding for small projects that help in improving the surface transportation system. Various categories could help the Town of Indian Trail to secure funding for greenways if such improvements help in bike and pedestrian mobility. Such categories are – Continuing Transportation (Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities Inventory) and

Long-Range Transportation Plan (Bicycle and Pedestrian Element). For more information, please visit:

[http://www.mumpo.org/Plans_Programs\(UPWP\).htm](http://www.mumpo.org/Plans_Programs(UPWP).htm) or contact:

600 E. Fourth Street
8th Floor
Charlotte, NC 28202-2853
(704) 336-2205

Corporate donations and sponsorships

Such funding, although inconsistent, could come in variety of forms ranging from liquid investments such as cash, bonds, and stocks, to, illiquid form such as land. Municipalities generally create funds to facilitate and simplify a transaction from corporate donation to the public entity. Donations are mainly received when a widely supported capital improvement program is implemented.

Corporate sponsorships, on the other hand, are often received in the form of services, personnel volunteers, and in-kind donations of supporting amenities. This helps corporations in their marketing efforts by improving their image and is often thought to benefit both organizations.

Fundraising / Campaign Drives

By clearly defining a stated purpose, and how it will benefit the Park and Recreational needs of the community, a municipality can rally support and financial backing by raising funds and awareness. This activity helps in public education and fundraising simultaneously.

Duke Energy Foundation – Cinergy Foundation

The Cinergy Foundation places special emphasis on projects that help communities help themselves. Both foundations support local community, civic and leadership development projects. The Cinergy Foundation also views community foundations as positive vehicles for sustaining the long-term health of a community and promoting philanthropic causes. Infrastructure needs by a community will not be considered.

The Cinergy Foundation supports health and social service programs which promote healthy life styles and preventative medical care. United Way campaigns are included in Health and Social Services funding.

For more information, please visit

<http://www.cinergy.com/foundation/categories.asp> or contact:

Manager
Cinergy Foundation
(513) 287-2363
(800) 262-3000 x 2363
The Cinergy Foundation
139 E. Fourth St.; EA029
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

PARTNERSHIPS

During the Kick-off meeting for the Park Master Plan, many steering committee members, greenway committee members, and stakeholders suggested Partnerships as a vehicle to bring this plan into fruition. Many public and private agencies were cited during the course of plan development to build partnerships. The Town of Indian Trail will have to forge new, and strengthen existing, partnerships to provide long term support for this park master plan. The Town can accomplish this by building:

- Programming partnerships of various events that will utilize existing and future park and recreation facilities. One common partnership could be the co-sponsorship of events and sport leagues.
- Operational partnerships, which allows for the sharing of responsibility for access and use of facilities.
- Development partnerships of park and greenway facilities by purchasing land, or, to build recreational facilities.
- Management partnerships that allows for maintenance of these facilities.

Potential partners include:

- Union County Parks and Recreation Department.
- Union County Public Schools.
- Union County Public Works.
- The Town of Stallings.
- Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department.
- Duke Energy.
- Catawba Lands Conservancy.
- Tarheel Trailblazers.
- North Carolina Department of Transportation.
- Public-Private Partnerships.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of the Indian Trail Parks Master Plan would not have been possible without the dedication and support of several individuals. These individuals include members of the Park Master Plan Steering Committee, Town Council and Planning Board, Town staff, and the citizens of Indian Trail. The following is list of individuals that supported and provided continuous input throughout the Park Master Plan process.

TOWN COUNCIL

John J. Quinn, Mayor
Jeffrey L. Goodall, Mayor Pro Tem
John A. Hullinger, Council Member
Gary J. D’Onofrio, Council Member
Robert Allen, Council Member
Darlene Luther, Council Member

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS

Russell Whitehurst
Patricia Cowan
Kathy Broom
Vincent Howard
Robert Rollins
Gary Vaughn
Robert Wilber
Brian Elias
John Simulcik
Larry Miller

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John J. Quinn, Mayor
Edward Dubisz

David Grant

Gary Vaughn

Mike Lunsford

Jessica Gilmore

David Hogue

Audra Loughren

Roger J. Fish

TOWN STAFF

Shelley DeHart, AICP – Planning Director

Hillary Pace – Project Manager, Environmental Planner/Grant Writer

Katie Reeves- Senior Planner

Luke F. Fawcett- GIS Administrator

CONSULTANTS

Padam Singh, AICP, LEED AP – Principal-in-Charge (HNTB)

Kevin Walsh, LEED AP – Project Manager (HNTB)

Donal Simpson, FAIA, AICP, ASLA

Appendix

C

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Indian Trail Park and Greenway Master Plan Survey Results

Appendix B

Union County Board of Education Policy Manual, Section 2-49: Use of School Facilities

Appendix C

Index of Key Terms

Appendix

A

APPENDIX A

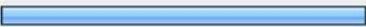
Indian Trail Parks and Greenway Master Plan Survey

1. What is your age?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Under 18	0.3%	1
18-25	0.0%	0
26-45	82.2%	314
46-64	14.9%	57
Over 65	2.6%	10
<i>answered question</i>		382
<i>skipped question</i>		5

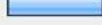
2. What is your gender?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	32.6%	125
Female	67.4%	259
<i>answered question</i>		384
<i>skipped question</i>		3

3. What is your ethnic background?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
African American	3.4%	13
Asian	1.1%	4
Hispanic	3.4%	13
Native American	1.1%	4
Pacific Island American	0.0%	0
White	91.0%	345
Other (please specify)		4
<i>answered question</i>		379
<i>skipped question</i>		8

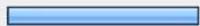
4. How many in your household are in the following age brackets?				
		Response Average	Response Total	Response Count
	Under 6	1.28	236	184
	6-12	1.48	390	263
	12-17	1.20	134	112
	18-30	1.03	70	68
	31-45	1.72	481	279
	46-55	1.01	76	75
	56-65	0.75	27	36
	65 and over	0.74	25	34
		<i>answered question</i>		380
		<i>skipped question</i>		7

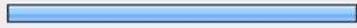
5. Do you currently live in Indian Trail?				
		Response Percent	Response Count	
	Yes 	86.2%	324	
	No 	13.8%	52	
		<i>answered question</i>		376
		<i>skipped question</i>		11

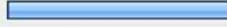
6. If Yes, which subdivision do you live in?					
Subdivisions					
	Alexis Pointe	Annandale	Arbor Glenn	Ashecroft	Ashland
Please select one of the subdivisions from the dropdown menu.	0.3% (1)	0.3% (1)	2.8% (9)	0.3% (1)	0.3% (1)
	<i>answered question</i>				
	<i>skipped question</i>				

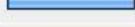
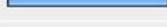
7. How long have you lived in Indian Trail?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 1 year		5.1%	17
1-5 years		54.5%	183
6-9 years		22.9%	77
10-15 years		12.2%	41
16-20 years		2.4%	8
Over 20 years		3.0%	10
answered question			336
skipped question			51

8. Indian Trail needs more parks.			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree		69.0%	260
Agree		25.2%	95
Neutral		4.2%	16
Disagree		0.5%	2
Strongly Disagree		1.1%	4
answered question			377
skipped question			10

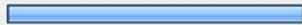
9. Indian Trail needs more greenways.			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree		46.3%	174
Agree		33.2%	125
Neutral		16.8%	63
Disagree		2.1%	8
Strongly Disagree		1.6%	6
answered question			376
skipped question			11

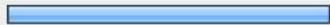
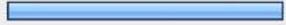
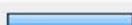
10. Which would you prefer to see more of? Parks or Greenways?			Response Percent	Response Count
Parks		85.1%	315	
Greenways		14.9%	55	
			<i>answered question</i>	370
			<i>skipped question</i>	17

11. How many hours per week do you participate in recreational activities?			Response Percent	Response Count
0-5 hours		21.1%	80	
6-10 hours		53.8%	204	
11-15 hours		15.8%	60	
Over 15 hours		9.2%	35	
			<i>answered question</i>	379
			<i>skipped question</i>	8

12. What time of day would your household find most convenient for recreation?			Response Percent	Response Count
Morning (6am-11am)		8.2%	31	
Lunch time (11am-1pm)		1.3%	5	
Afternoon (1pm-5pm)		14.5%	55	
Evening (6pm-11pm)		30.5%	116	
Saturday		38.9%	148	
Sunday		6.6%	25	
			<i>answered question</i>	380
			<i>skipped question</i>	7

13. Do you prefer activities that are indoors or outdoors?		
		Response Percent Response Count
Indoors		1.6% 6
Outdoors		38.6% 145
Both, indoors and outdoors		59.8% 225
		answered question 376
		skipped question 11

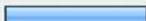
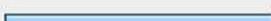
14. Where would you most likely look for information for recreational activities: (Check all that apply)		
		Response Percent Response Count
Friends and neighbors		72.1% 271
Newspapers		46.0% 173
Internet		63.8% 240
Brochures/flyers		35.6% 134
TV		16.8% 63
Radio		11.2% 42
		Other (please specify) 13
		answered question 376
		skipped question 11

15. What types of recreational facilities do you have access to?		
		Response Percent Response Count
Playgrounds		78.5% 296
Ball fields		67.1% 253
Pools		68.7% 259
Gyms		34.7% 131
Indoor courts (basketball, racquetball, etc.)		22.5% 85
Multi-purpose trails		30.0% 113
Equestrian trails		3.7% 14
None		3.4% 13
		Other (please specify) 21
		answered question 377
		skipped question 10

16. How often do you use them?							
	Every day	Twice a week	Once a week	Once a month	Less than once a month	Never	Response Count
Parks	5.2% (17)	26.2% (85)	26.2% (85)	24.4% (79)	14.8% (48)	3.1% (10)	324
Playgrounds	8.2% (26)	25.6% (81)	30.6% (97)	17.0% (54)	11.7% (37)	6.9% (22)	317
Ball fields	17.3% (55)	49.4% (157)	7.5% (24)	5.0% (16)	6.9% (22)	13.8% (44)	318
Pools	16.7% (53)	34.1% (108)	18.3% (58)	9.8% (31)	11.0% (35)	10.1% (32)	317
Gyms	14.7% (39)	20.3% (54)	11.3% (30)	7.1% (19)	9.4% (25)	37.2% (99)	266
Indoor courts (basketball, racquetball, etc.)	2.5% (6)	3.3% (8)	11.1% (27)	9.5% (23)	16.9% (41)	56.8% (138)	243
Multi-purpose trails	4.4% (12)	12.2% (33)	14.0% (38)	17.7% (48)	15.5% (42)	36.2% (98)	271
Equestrian trails	0.4% (1)	1.3% (3)	1.3% (3)	1.3% (3)	5.2% (12)	90.4% (207)	229
Other (please specify the type of facility and frequency of use)							26
<i>answered question</i>							373
<i>skipped question</i>							14

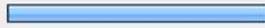
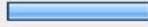
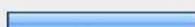
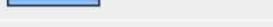
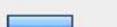
17. Are these facilities located inside or outside the Town limits?			
	Inside the Town limits	Outside the Town limits	Response Count
Playgrounds	48.6% (159)	51.4% (168)	327
Ball fields	80.1% (250)	19.9% (62)	312
Pools	59.6% (174)	40.4% (118)	292
Gyms	22.1% (47)	77.9% (166)	213
Indoor courts (basketball, racquetball, etc.)	21.1% (36)	78.9% (135)	171
Multi-purpose trails	28.9% (59)	71.1% (145)	204
Equestrian trails	6.2% (6)	93.8% (91)	97
None	8.0% (2)	92.0% (23)	25
<i>answered question</i>			371
<i>skipped question</i>			16

18. Are these facilities located inside or outside the Union County?			
	Inside Union County	Outside Union County	Response Count
Playgrounds	85.8% (278)	14.2% (46)	324
Ball fields	88.4% (267)	11.6% (35)	302
Pools	85.1% (252)	14.9% (44)	296
Gyms	64.2% (140)	35.8% (78)	218
Indoor courts (basketball, racquetball, etc.)	65.3% (109)	34.7% (58)	167
Multi-purpose trails	60.5% (121)	39.5% (79)	200
Equestrian trails	58.4% (52)	41.6% (37)	89
None	37.5% (9)	62.5% (15)	24
answered question			364
skipped question			23

19. Who offers these facilities? (Check all that apply)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Indian Trail Athletic Association		61.9%	231
Mecklenburg County Parks & Recreation		34.3%	128
Union County Parks		39.4%	147
YMCA		21.7%	81
Churches		12.3%	46
North Carolina State parks		14.2%	53
Private clubs		20.6%	77
Homeowners Associations/apartment complexes		65.1%	243
School District facilities		20.6%	77
Parks and recreation facilities in class		4.6%	17
Private youth sports leagues		9.7%	36
Boys and Girls Club		0.5%	2
Porter Ridge Athletic Association		5.6%	21
None (don't use any organizations)		1.6%	6
Other (please specify)			25
answered question			373
skipped question			14

20. From the list below, please select (5) five types of facilities that you would like to see provided by the Town?
(Check only 5)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Walking and biking trails		68.7%	257
Nature center and trails		36.6%	137
Park shelters and picnic areas		54.8%	205
Playground equipment and play areas		61.5%	230
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities		28.1%	105
Outdoor tennis courts		12.6%	47
Outdoor swimming pools/leisure pool		24.9%	93
Camping		13.1%	49
Disc/Frisbee golf		10.2%	38
Outdoor amphitheatres		24.9%	93
Small (less than 2 acres) pocket parks		21.1%	79
Mountain biking trails		16.0%	60
Youth/teen baseball and softball fields		30.7%	115
Youth/teen soccer fields		17.9%	67
Outdoor basketball courts		13.1%	49
Youth/teen football fields		10.2%	38
Indoor basketball/volleyball courts		13.1%	49
Off-leash dog park		14.4%	54
Adult softball fields		11.0%	41
Adult soccer fields		6.1%	23
Skateboard park		16.8%	63
	Other (please specify)		21
	answered question		374
	skipped question		13

21. What types of recreation programs do you participate in? (Check all that apply)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Special events/festivals		63.3%	233
Adult fitness and wellness programs		34.2%	126
Family recreation/outdoor adventure programs		45.9%	169
Nature Education programs		12.0%	44
Education/Life skills programs		5.2%	19
Water fitness programs		12.8%	47
Adult sports leagues		15.5%	57
Tennis lessons, clinics and leagues		10.3%	38
Youth/teen sports leagues		65.5%	241
Youth learn to swim programs		21.7%	80
Adult art, dance, performing arts		6.5%	24
Senior programs		1.9%	7
Youth/teen summer camp programs		26.6%	98
Adult swim programs		3.0%	11
Youth/teen art, dance, performing arts		15.5%	57
Youth/teen fitness and wellness programs		6.3%	23
Before and after school programs		16.6%	61
Martial arts programs		5.2%	19
Pre-school programs		19.8%	73
Gymnastics and tumbling programs		13.3%	49
Programs for people with disabilities		1.6%	6
None (don't participate in any recreation program)		2.4%	9
	Other (please specify)		18
	answered question		368
	skipped question		19

22. How often do you use them?							
	Every day	Twice a week	Once a week	Once a month	Less than once a month	Never	Response Count
Special events/festivals	0.7% (2)	1.1% (3)	4.6% (13)	34.4% (98)	52.6% (150)	6.7% (19)	285
Adult fitness and wellness programs	16.6% (37)	21.1% (47)	4.9% (11)	12.6% (28)	12.1% (27)	32.7% (73)	223
Family recreation/outdoor adventure programs	3.1% (8)	12.2% (31)	16.5% (42)	27.6% (70)	22.4% (57)	18.1% (46)	254
Nature Education programs	0.0% (0)	1.0% (2)	2.6% (5)	7.7% (15)	35.6% (69)	53.1% (103)	194
Education/Life skills programs	0.6% (1)	1.7% (3)	1.7% (3)	6.1% (11)	22.9% (41)	67.0% (120)	179
Water fitness programs	3.1% (6)	8.7% (17)	6.6% (13)	6.6% (13)	16.3% (32)	58.7% (115)	196
Adult sports leagues	1.1% (2)	10.2% (19)	15.1% (28)	7.0% (13)	8.1% (15)	58.6% (109)	186
Tennis lessons, clinics and leagues	1.1% (2)	6.1% (11)	10.1% (18)	2.2% (4)	6.7% (12)	73.7% (132)	179
Youth/teen sports leagues	23.8% (67)	50.4% (142)	7.1% (20)	2.8% (8)	2.5% (7)	13.5% (38)	282
Youth learn to swim programs	1.6% (3)	10.1% (19)	13.8% (26)	6.3% (12)	12.7% (24)	55.6% (105)	189
Adult art, dance, performing arts	0.6% (1)	2.3% (4)	4.7% (8)	3.5% (6)	7.0% (12)	81.9% (140)	171
Senior programs	0.0% (0)	0.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5.6% (9)	93.8% (152)	162
Youth/teen summer camp programs	11.9% (23)	4.6% (9)	6.2% (12)	4.6% (9)	21.1% (41)	51.5% (100)	194
Adult swim programs	0.0% (0)	2.4% (4)	2.4% (4)	0.6% (1)	7.7% (13)	87.0% (147)	169
Youth/teen art, dance, performing arts	0.0% (0)	8.2% (15)	14.7% (27)	2.7% (5)	6.0% (11)	68.5% (126)	184
Youth/teen fitness and wellness programs	2.3% (4)	5.2% (9)	5.2% (9)	7.5% (13)	9.2% (16)	70.5% (122)	173
Before and after school programs	25.0% (47)	1.6% (3)	2.7% (5)	0.5% (1)	4.3% (8)	66.0% (124)	188
Martial arts programs	0.6% (1)	6.8% (12)	1.7% (3)	1.7% (3)	2.8% (5)	86.4% (152)	176
Pre-school programs	20.2% (39)	8.8% (17)	6.7% (13)	2.1% (4)	3.6% (7)	58.5% (113)	193
Gymnastics and tumbling programs	1.7% (3)	6.9% (12)	14.3% (25)	0.6% (1)	5.1% (9)	71.4% (125)	175

Programs for people with disabilities	1.2% (2)	0.6% (1)	1.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.8% (3)	94.6% (159)	168
Other	0.0% (0)	2.5% (2)	3.7% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.2% (1)	92.6% (75)	81
Other (please specify the type of facility and frequency of use)							13
answered question							349
skipped question							38

23. Are these programs located mostly inside or outside the Town?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Inside the Town limits		40.7%	145
Outside the Town limits		59.3%	211
answered question			356
skipped question			31

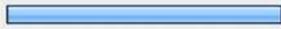
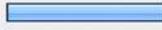
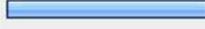
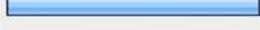
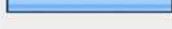
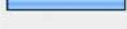
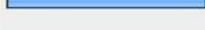
24. Are these programs located mostly inside or outside the Union County?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Inside Union County		69.9%	248
Outside Union County		30.1%	107
answered question			355
skipped question			32

26. From the list below, please select the (5) five programs that you would like to see provided by the Town? (Check only 5)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Special events/festivals		68.9%	239
Adult fitness and wellness programs		25.4%	88
Family recreation/outdoor adventure programs		67.7%	235
Nature Education programs		21.9%	76
Education/Life skills programs		8.1%	28
Water fitness programs		13.8%	48
Adult sports leagues		23.3%	81
Tennis lessons, clinics and leagues		11.0%	38
Youth/teen sports leagues		38.3%	133
Youth learn to swim programs		16.4%	57
Adult art, dance, performing arts		9.2%	32
Senior programs		9.2%	32
Youth/teen summer camp programs		39.8%	138
Adult swim programs		4.0%	14
Youth/teen art, dance, performing arts		16.4%	57
Youth/teen fitness and wellness programs		20.5%	71
Before and after school programs		14.7%	51
Martial arts programs		5.2%	18
Pre-school programs		11.5%	40
Gymnastics and tumbling programs		13.5%	47
Programs for people with disabilities		7.8%	27
	Other (please specify)		10
	answered question		347
	skipped question		40

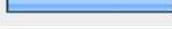
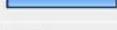
27. From the list below, please rank the types of parks you would like to see in the Town of Indian Trail					
	1st	2nd	3rd	Rating Average	Response Count
Community parks (30-50 acres with active and passive recreation)	60.5% (219)	20.2% (73)	19.3% (70)	1.59	362
Neighborhood parks (5-10 acres with some active and passive recreation)	34.1% (121)	54.9% (195)	11.0% (39)	1.77	355
Mini parks (1-acre or less and usually passive in nature)	6.7% (24)	24.4% (87)	68.9% (246)	2.62	357
<i>answered question</i>					365
<i>skipped question</i>					22

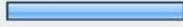
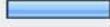
28. From the following, please indicate how supportive you are of the various actions the Town could take to improve the parks, recreation and greenway/trail system.					
	Very Supportive	Somewhat Supportive	Neutral	Not Supportive	Response Count
Develop new and connect existing walk/biking trails	64.2% (230)	22.3% (80)	11.2% (40)	2.2% (8)	358
Purchase land to preserve open/green space	45.6% (161)	30.9% (109)	17.6% (62)	5.9% (21)	353
Develop new nature trails/nature centers	50.6% (176)	31.6% (110)	13.8% (48)	4.0% (14)	348
Purchase land to develop athletic fields/recreation facilities	59.3% (211)	27.8% (99)	8.7% (31)	4.2% (15)	356
Develop new indoor recreation centers	46.0% (159)	30.1% (104)	17.3% (60)	6.6% (23)	346
Purchase land to protect environment	36.6% (126)	29.4% (101)	24.4% (84)	9.6% (33)	344
Develop new off-leash dog parks	18.9% (66)	17.5% (61)	33.5% (117)	30.1% (105)	349
Develop skate parks	20.2% (70)	20.8% (72)	30.9% (107)	28.0% (97)	346
Other (please specify)					22
<i>answered question</i>					363
<i>skipped question</i>					24

29. From the following list of actions, please select (4) four that you would be most willing fund with your Town tax dollars. (Check only 4)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Develop new and connect existing walk/biking trails		66.9%	234
Purchase land to preserve open/green space		38.6%	135
Develop new nature trails/nature centers		48.9%	171
Purchase land to develop athletic fields/recreation facilities		61.7%	216
Develop new indoor recreation centers		40.0%	140
Purchase land to protect environment		28.6%	100
Develop multi-purpose indoor athletic/activity centers		48.3%	169
Develop new off-leash dog parks		14.0%	49
Develop skate parks		19.1%	67
	Other (please specify)		20
	answered question		350
	skipped question		37

30. I would be willing to pay more taxes that would go towards developing recreational facilities and programs for the Town of Indian Trail.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree		19.9%	73
Agree		40.3%	148
Neutral		26.4%	97
Disagree		7.4%	27
Strongly Disagree		6.0%	22
	answered question		367
	skipped question		20

31. I would be willing to pay a user fee that would go towards developing recreational facilities and programs for the Town of Indian Trail.			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree		16.8%	62
Agree		43.1%	159
Neutral		24.7%	91
Disagree		7.6%	28
Strongly Disagree		7.9%	29
		<i>answered question</i>	369
		<i>skipped question</i>	18

Appendix

B

APPENDIX B

2-49

Use of School Facilities

Statement of Purpose

The Board endorses community use of facilities for purposes that contribute to the school program, community affairs, or the goals of the Community Schools Act. The use of school facilities should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Board and school district and must not conflict with the educational program.

Additionally, UCPS seeks to develop partnerships with other governmental entities and community and parks and recreation groups for the planning of or use of school athletic and recreation facilities during non-school use times as part of the Union County Public Schools “Building Cost Savings Principles,” as well as to provide a means for land acquisition and to upgrade, enhance, and/or maintain athletic fields or recreation facilities for Union County Public Schools.

Use of school facilities will not be approved for activities that do any of the following:

- violate federal, state or local laws;
- violate Board of Education policies or regulations;

- discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, medical conditions, religion, age, disability or any other legally protected category;
- advocate governmental change by violence;
- damage or have the potential to damage school buildings, grounds or equipment,
- conflict with school activities; or
- conflict with the mission of the Board of Education.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative guidelines, including a reasonable fee structure, to implement this policy.

Scheduling and Fees (Short Term Usage Agreement)

Scheduling is to be made through the principal's office of the school involved. Priority in the use of school facilities and the fee structure will be in accordance with the following user categories:

School sponsored groups, including student organizations

Fees: None

1. School related groups (organizations formed to support the school in some manner, such as the PTA, PTO, teachers and principal's organizations and booster clubs
2. Fees: Fees for providing use of cafeteria kitchens will be charged to cover costs. The principal may require custodial, other supervisory services, and/or

contracted services (i.e. auditorium house manager) at a fee.

3. Local government

4. Fees: Utility fees for the use of facilities may be charged. The principal may require custodial, other supervisory services, and/or contracted services (i.e. auditorium house manager) at a fee.

5. All other non-profit and for-profit groups (all groups not included in the other categories

Fees: Rental and utility fees will be charged. The principal may require custodial, other supervisory services, and/or contracted services (i.e. auditorium house manager) at a fee.

The superintendent annually will set the fees to be charged. All fees and applications will be submitted to the principal and forwarded to the appropriate assistant superintendent's office. Checks are to be made payable to Union County Public Schools.

The Superintendent may also approve "Extended Use/Joint Use Agreements" with other governmental entities and community and parks and recreation groups consistent with this Policy. The Superintendent may determine appropriate agreement terms, including appropriate fees, charges or other consideration to be paid by the proposed user. Such agreements shall be in writing and approved and executed by the Superintendent. Copies of all agreements entered into pursuant to this Section shall be kept on file in the Superintendent's office.

Additionally, the Board of Education may approve “Extended Use / Joint Use Agreements” that involve governmental entities and community and parks and recreation groups seeking to enhance school facilities through large school capitalized projects such as playing fields.

Contracted/other services approved by the Superintendent or appropriate Assistant Superintendent do not fall within the parameters of this policy.

Responsibility of School System for Rental of Facilities

1. Provide clean facilities for use.
2. Provide an adult employee or principal’s designee, at renter’s expense, during the use of a facility if required by the principal. Hourly wage employees are to be paid time and one half plus fringe benefits for the hours worked.
3. Arrange facility for use.
4. Report any damages to the office of the Superintendent of Schools and to the individual in charge of the persons using the facility.

Insurance

All user groups, except school sponsored groups, may be required to furnish a certificate of insurance for general liability coverage with a total limit coverage of \$1,000,000 for each claim made if requested by the Principal. Additionally, the Superintendent or the appropriate

Assistant Superintendent may require the user group to execute a waiver of liability which states that no liability will attach to the Board of Education, individually or collectively, for personal injury or personal property damage by reason of use of the school property. All non-school groups using school facilities will be responsible for 100% of the damages to board property and equipment as a result of the activities for which they rented the facility.

Authority

The Principal, in his or her sole discretion, may accept or reject the application if the proposed use or activity is determined by the Principal to be an extraordinary risk to person or to property or is inconsistent with this Policy or applicable guidelines. Additionally, the Superintendent or the appropriate Assistant Superintendent of the Union County Public School System has the authority to accept or reject the application of any person or group for the same reasons.

Right of Review

Any applicant whose request is refused in accordance with these regulations has the right of review of the principal's decision by the Superintendent or the appropriate Assistant Superintendent.

Legal Reference

NCGS 115C-523,-524
NCGS 115C ART. 13: 115C-524 (b)
Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C.A. 4071-4074

Lamb's Chapel v. Center Moriches School District, 508
U.S. 384 (1993)
Good News Club v. Melford, 121 S. Ct. 2093 (2001)

Union County Board of Education

Approved

07/01/2008

Revised

11/13/2007

05/06/2003

09/02/1997

http://boe.ucps.k12.nc.us/policy_manual/policy_show.php?policy_id=63

Appendix

C

APPENDIX C

Index of Key Terms and Concepts

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