

2014-2024 RECREATION AND PARKS COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN



Adopted January 6, 2014

City of Mebane
Recreation and Parks Department

Acknowledgements



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Lake Michael is Mebane's largest park

Section One

Inventory

INTRODUCTION

The first step in the master planning process is to inventory and assess the parks and facilities that are currently serving the citizens of Mebane. In this time of economic concerns and limited budgets, it is extremely important to utilize existing facilities to their fullest potential. This section identifies the City's existing parks, categorizes parks into classifications based on size/function, and inventories the existing facilities found in each of these parks. In Section Three this existing facility information will be used to establish an assessment for future park and recreation needs.

The City currently offers its residents parks and recreation facilities at several parks, covering approximately 250 acres of land. The City's park system offers parks of almost every park classification. These include several large facilities (Lake Michael and the athletic facilities at Mebane Arts and Community Center), as well as smaller facilities (Holt Street Park and Mebane Recreation Center Complex). These parks offer a wide variety of active and passive recreation opportunities.

REGIONAL PARKS

Lake Michael **200 acres**

Lake Michael provides an outstanding opportunity for water based recreation, passive recreation, and open space preservation. The recreation facilities were partially funded from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Recent improvements to the park have expanded parking, added restrooms and increased park use.

The center of the park is the 59 acre lake, which offers excellent opportunity for fishing and boating. Park users may launch their own boats or rent boats (john boats, paddle boats, and pontoon boat rides). Lake Michael is a “no wake zone” lake. Speed boats, skiing, and jet skies are not allowed.

Fishing is allowed from boats or from three fixed piers. The lake is stocked with bass, crappie and bream. Those fishing must possess a valid NC fishing license. A feeding program through the North Carolina Wildlife Commission enhances the fish population in the lake.

Fees are charged for fishing (\$2.00/day), boat rental or launch (\$4.00/day) and boat rides (\$1.00/hour). Picnic shelters are rented for \$10.00/4 hours. Fees are set to help offset operational cost, but are not high enough to generate revenue.

In addition to the lake activities, the park offers two playgrounds, a sand volleyball court and miles of walking/biking trails.

Much work has been done to improve facilities at Lake Michael in the past few years. There are still issues with ADA accessibility. Picnic shelters, playground and fishing docks should be fully accessible. Likewise, the trail system could be improved and expanded to further enhance opportunities for walking/jogging and biking.



Existing Facilities

- Boat Ramp
- 3 Fixed Piers
- Volleyball Court (sand)
- 2 Playgrounds
- 3 Picnic Shelters
- Trail/Greenway 1.8 miles
- Mountain Bike Trails 1.25
- Water access
- 2 Restroom
- Park Office Building

COMMUNITY PARKS

Mebane Arts & Community Center Complex 46 acres

The sports complex at the Mebane Arts and Community Center is the center of Mebane athletic programs and serves as home to Mebane Youth Soccer Association (MYSA). The complex provides athletic fields for the majority of the sports programming offered by the City.

The ball field complex behind the Mebane Arts and Community Center provides a wide variety of athletic field programming. The four field complex is the location of all city baseball and softball programs. The outfields of the two larger fields are used for football.

Complex amenities also include a paved walking trail, (2) tot lots, and (2) shelters.

The soccer complex was developed in 2005. It provides four soccer fields with lights. Two of the fields are full size and two of the fields are smaller and used for U5-U12 small sided games.

As with most community soccer facilities, each field can be divided into smaller fields for youth play. The two larger fields (U13-U18) provide a good playing area, but the field of play (when two games are going simultaneously) limits sideline areas for players and spectators.

A restroom/concession building and paved parking support players and visitors during games.

Existing Facilities

- 2 Men's Softball Fields (lights)
- 2 Youth Ballfields (lights)
- 4 Soccer Fields (lights)
- 2 Playgrounds
- 2 Picnic Shelters
- Trail/Greenway .6 miles
- Restroom/Concession Building
- Football Field (in outfield)
- 2 Soccer Fields (in outfields)



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Holt Street Park

3 acres

Holt Street Park is a neighborhood park serving Mebane's west end. Park facilities are oriented toward group and family picnicking. Two large picnic shelters can accommodate groups of 40-50. Outdoor recreation activities include a playground, volleyball net, and open play areas.

One of the picnic shelters has a restroom with men's and women's facilities. Paved parking is not provided, but a gravel drive from Holt Street provides vehicular access and grass parking.

The older picnic shelter provides a unique "rural" image for the park and the built in serving tables along the sides provide a functional serving and dining surface.

The park does not offer accessible parking or accessible routes to any of the facilities.

The open grassed areas with large trees provide a very nice area for picnicking and passive recreation. Additional park benches would enhance use. Likewise, there is enough space in the park for additional recreation activities.

Existing Facilities

Volleyball Court (grass)

2 Horseshoe Pits

Playground

2 Picnic Shelter

Restroom



SPORT COMPLEX

Walker Field/Mebane

Youth Field 4.43 acres

Originally the site of Mebane High School's football field, the Walker Field Complex provides valuable field space for a variety of youth athletics. These fields are programmed for "public" play.

Two ball fields with skinned infields are used for youth baseball and softball. In 2010 the infield for Walker Field was improved through a "Diamonds and Dreams" building grant from Chevrolet and Scotts.

In addition to the two ball fields, a large multi-purpose field provides space for football and soccer practice.

Support facilities include a restroom/concession building and storage building.

Parking for the field is located on a gravel parking area across Second Street on property owned by the City. Walker Field is located diagonally across Second Street from the Mebane Recreation Center and Mebane Historical Museum.

Walker Field is located in a residential area of the city and in close proximity to a number of single family residences.

Existing Facilities

- 2 Youth Baseball Fields 200' lighted
- Soccer Field (practice)
- Restroom/Concession
- Storage Building



MINI PARKS

Mebane Recreation Center

Complex 2.7 acres*

This small park provides a variety of recreation activities in a small space. Located adjacent to the Mebane Recreation Center and across the street from Walker Field, this small park is a hub of community recreation.

With only three tennis courts, tennis programming is limited. Expansion of courts to six or eight could increase opportunities for lessons, leagues, etc. Design studies have been developed to see if courts could be fit on Walker Field. Ultimately it was decided the tennis court expansion would impact existing fields too much. Additional consideration for expanding the courts should be considered.

Existing Facilities

- 3 Tennis Courts
- Volleyball Court (sand)
- Playground
- Picnic Shelter
- Restroom

*2.7 acres includes the indoor facility (Mebane Recreation Center) and parking lot. Actual outdoor recreation areas cover just over 1 acre. Making the outdoor components of the Mebane Recreation Center Complex function as a mini park.



SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

Mebane Recreation Center

The Mebane Recreation Center is a community treasure that has served the citizens for many decades. Located in the former Mebane High School, the Mebane Recreation Center once was the very center of the Recreation and Parks Department. This building once served as the offices of the Recreation and Parks Department and housed the City's only public gymnasium. The building also provided indoor recreation programming opportunities with several meeting rooms. In 1995 the City constructed the Mebane Arts and Community Center (see inventory sheet for additional information). With the construction of the community center, the department moved much of the indoor programming to the new facility. The recreation and parks offices also moved to the new community center.

In 2010, the Mebane Historical Society opened the Mebane Historical Museum in portions of the former high school/recreation center. Recently, the City offered a large meeting room in the building to serve as a model train room. This room houses a wonderful display of model trains (donated to the City) and is open to the public for viewing on Saturdays. The building also currently houses the office for the City's tennis pro and provides storage for the Recreation and Parks Department

The only part of the building currently being used for recreation programming is the gymnasium. The gymnasium contains a single basketball court with cross play goals. The gymnasium has a parquet floor and is in relatively good condition. The building width is relatively small and offers limited spectator seating. This gymnasium is used for practice, but not games.

Existing Facilities

Museum

Train Room

Tennis Office

Gymnasium

Storage



Mebane Arts & Community Center

Constructed in 1995, the Mebane Arts and Community Center is an outstanding facility that offers a wide variety of recreational and cultural opportunities.

A large (100'x150') multi-purpose room with stage and two full size basketball courts provides space for:

- Basketball
- Concerts
- Theatrical Performances
- Receptions/Parties/Reunions
- Proms
- Concerts
- Exercise Classes
- Sport Events

A Community Room (46'x26'), which can be divided into two smaller rooms, can accommodate up to 80 people and provides opportunities for arts and crafts, recreation classes/programs, and smaller functions (receptions, reunions, etc.).

A smaller, Civic Room (27'x36') can accommodate up to 60 people and provides space for meetings, training, small parties, etc. The Civic Room can also be divided into two separate rooms.

The building's spacious lobby also doubles as an exhibit space for local artist.

In addition to serving local programming needs, the Arts and Community Center provides a space for special events that create regional attraction.

While approaching its 20th year in operation, the Mebane Arts and Community Center is well run and maintained at the highest level. Facilities are in relatively good shape and serve the community well, but center renovations would give the facility a newer, fresher look and enhance use. The City recently replaced the gymnasium flooring. Improvements to the building's lobby and entrance should also be considered.

Existing Facilities

- Gymnasium
- 2 Meeting Rooms
- Lobby
- 2 Restrooms
- Locker Room
- Kitchen
- 2 Storage Rooms
- Gallery
- Performance Stage
- Dressing Rooms



MEBANE RECREATION & PARKS DEPARTMENT

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Mebane Recreation and Parks Department

...to provide the best park and recreation services and facilities for its residents.

...in accordance with existing statutory authority, to preserve open space, provide quality leisure service and maintain park facilities and programs that are available to all our residents.

...to provide wholesome recreation for the entire family of all races and creeds. Consistent with this purpose and objective, every opportunity shall be afforded, within financial limits, to plan, procure, develop and maintain park and recreation resources and to provide leadership for the wise and satisfactory use of leisure time.

Lifetime enjoyment. The Mebane Recreation and Parks Department exists to provide opportunities for the enjoyment of residents and visitors, particularly those opportunities that people cannot supply for themselves.



Current Programs

Athletics

The Mebane Recreation and Parks Department offers a wide variety of youth athletic programs. These include:

Youth Football

- 3 Teams (Pee Wee, Mite, and Midget)
- ±90 Participants
- 9 Coaches
- ±75 Cheerleaders

Youth Basketball

- 40 Teams
 - Beginner Pee Wee
 - Pee Wee Boys
 - Mite Boys
 - Midget Boys
 - Intermediate Boys
 - Pee Wee Girls
 - Mite Girls
 - Midget Girls
- ±400 Participants
- ±80 Coaches

Spring and Fall Youth Soccer

- ±1,000 Participants in spring soccer
- ±1,000 Participants in fall soccer

Youth Baseball (Girls & Boys)

- ±37 teams
 - Beginner Pee Wee
 - Pee Wee
 - Mite
 - Midget
 - Intermediate
 - Pee Wee Girls
 - Mite Girls
 - Midget Girls
- ±450 Participants
- ±74 Coaches



Summer Youth Camps

Baseball

- 85 Participants & 15 Instructors

Football

- 62 Participants & 11 Instructors

Tennis

- 15 Participants & 4 Instructors

Tennis

- Men & Women Leagues (March-November)
- Youth Workshops

The City's tennis programs have approximately 70 youth and 50 adult participants.

Co-ed Volleyball

- 9 Teams
- ±90 Participants

Tournaments

The Recreation and Parks Department is very active in promoting tournament play at their facilities. During 2012 the Department hosted four tournaments (baseball/softball 2, basketball 1, volleyball 1).

Special Events

The Mebane Recreation and Parks Department promotes and manages over a dozen special events through the average calendar year. These include:

- Youth Night at Eastern High School Football Game
- Mebane Sports Hall of Fame Gala
- Annual arrival of Santa Clause
- Mebane Christmas Parade
- Easter Rock Hunt
- Mountains to Coast Bike Tour
- Dogwood Festival
- 4th of July Family Music Festival and Fireworks
- Winter Wonderland Craft Show

PRIVATE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The private sector provides the citizens of Mebane with a wide variety of recreational opportunities. A number of private gyms, fitness centers, and health clubs are available to citizens. These include:

- New Millennium Fitness
- Fitness Playground
- Novan Vitam
- Curves
- Zanshin Karate & Fitness Center
- Champions Martial Arts and Fitness
- Xtreme Dance Academy
- Triangle Sports Plex (Hillsborough)

These facilities are provided to Mebane citizens on a “pay for play” basis (club membership, tuition/class fee, or daily use fee).

In addition to health, fitness and dance facilities, there are a variety of other private or quasi-public recreation opportunities offered to Mebanites. These include:

- Buffalo Lanes Bowling
- Ace Speedway
- Quaker Creek Golf Course
- Mill Creek Golf Club
- Mebane Community Garden
- Mebane Historical Museum
- Dogwood Swimming Pool
- Thompson Heights Swimming Pool



Hundreds of citizens attend Clay Street After Work

Community Events

There are a number of community events happening in Mebane in addition to the special events put on by the Recreation and Parks Department. These community events make up an important part of life in Mebane. These special community celebrations bring people together to enjoy the hometown feel of Mebane.

- Mebane Dogwood Festival
- Mebane on the Move Festival
- Autumn Fest
- Mebane Fall Festival
- First Thursdays
- Clay Street After Work
- Farmers Market
- Hometown Holiday Celebration

PLANNED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS WITH RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Many of Mebane’s new subdivisions and planned communities have been developed with recreational amenities. These amenities include swimming pools, tennis courts, playground, picnic shelters and walking trails. The following communities provide some form of recreational amenities:

- Mill Creek
- Mill Run*
- Ashbury
- Arbor Creek*
- Manorfield
- Collington Farms
- Fieldstone Farms
- Arrowhead*

*Communities with amenities planned, but not constructed.

COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

The City of Mebane is in the unique position of being located in two counties. The western portion of the City is in Alamance County while portions of eastern Mebane is located in Orange County. Both Alamance and Orange Counties have parks and recreation departments.

Orange County's Department of Environmental Parks and Recreation offer a wide variety of sports venues. Unfortunately, the County's major parks are located in other areas of the County. The closest county park is Efland-Cheeks Park located adjacent to Efland-Cheeks School. While the park offers a variety of recreational facilities (ball fields, basketball courts, playground, community center), its location is so far from Mebane, few Mebanites use these facilities. In the past Orange County offered the City some financial assistance in the operation of Lake Michael since many Lake Michael users are county residents not residents of Mebane.

Alamance County Recreation and Parks Department also provides a wide variety of parks and recreation facilities, but like Orange County, most of these facilities are too far from Mebane to have a significant impact. Pleasant Grove Community



Saxapahaw Mill Race Paddle Access

Center is one of the county park facilities closest to Mebane. This park offers a community center and other park amenities. In addition to the Community Center, Alamance County also offers two paddle access sites on the river. Saxapahaw Lake Paddle Access and Saxapahaw Mill Race Paddle Access are within relatively easy driving distance for Mebane residents.

While neither county provides facilities that have significant impact on Mebane residents, it is important for the City to stay engaged with both county parks and recreation departments. As their departments develop, there may be opportunities for collaborative efforts on parks and greenways. Likewise in the future, there may be opportunities for collaboration on park development and/or operation.



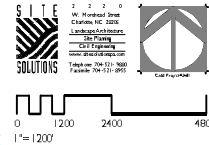
City of Mebane
Inventory of Existing Facilities

Type	Name	Size	Adult Baseball Fields	Youth Baseball Fields	Men's Softball Fields	Women's Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Football Fields	Multi-purpose Fields	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Shuffleboard Courts	Horseshoe Pits	Booce Ball Courts	Playgrounds	Picnic Shelters	Trail/Greenway (Miles)	Mountain Bike Trail (Miles)	Water Access	Amphitheatre	Community Garden	Camp Sites	Swimming Pool/Splash Pad	Dog Park	Skate Park	Grass Area/Open Space	Restroom/Concession Building	Picnic Area	Gardens/Passive Areas	Golf Course	Disc Golf Course	Gymnasium	
Regional Parks																																		
	Lake Michael	200										1				2	3	1.8	1.25	1								2						
Regional Parks Totals			200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	1.8	1.25	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Community Parks																																		
	Mebane Arts & Community Center Complex	46		2	2		4	1								2	2	0.6										1						
Community Parks Totals			46	0	2	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Neighborhood Parks																																		
	Holt Street Park	3										1		2		1	2											1						
Neighborhood Parks Totals			3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Mini Parks																																		
	Mebane Recreation Center Complex	2.7									3	1				1	1											1						
Mini Parks Totals			2.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Special Use Facilities																																		
	Mebane Recreation Center																																1	
	Mebane Arts & Community Center																											2					1	
Special Use Facilities Totals			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Sport Complex																																		
	Walker Field/Mebane Youth Field	4.3		2			1																					1						
Sport Complex Totals			4.3	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Totals			256.00	0	4	2	0	5	1	0	0	3	0	2	0	6	8	2.4	1.25	1	0	1*	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	2	

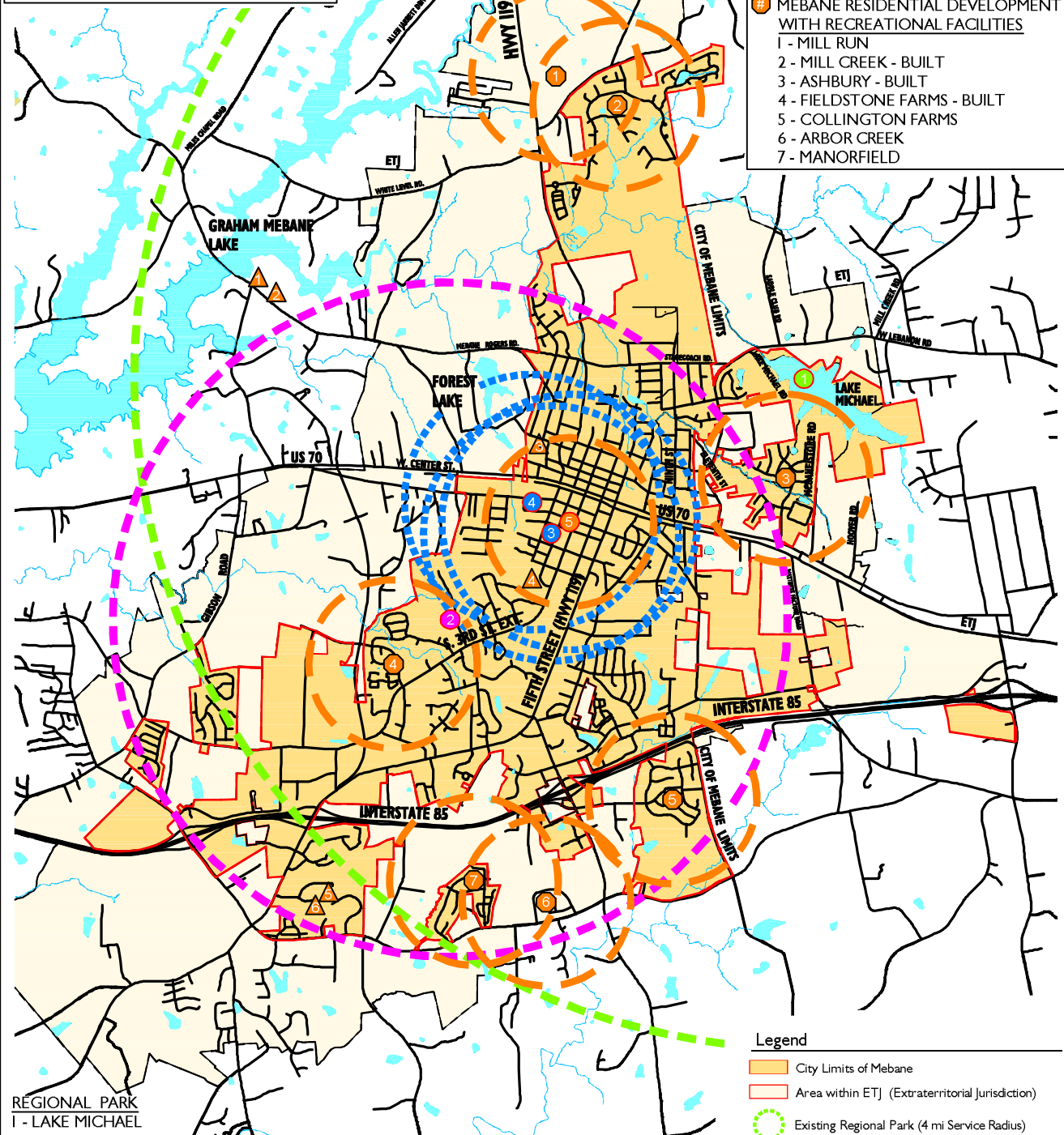
*Mebane Community Garden is provided by Mebane Woman's Club behind the main fire station.

*Mebane Community Garden is provided by Mebane Woman's Club behind the main fire station.

- MEBANE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
- 1 - WOODLAWN MIDDLE SCHOOL
 - 2 - EASTERN ALAMANCE HIGH SCHOOL
 - 3 - E.M. YODER ELEM. SCHOOL
 - 4 - SOUTH MEBANE ELEM. SCHOOL
 - 5 - A.W. GARRETT ELEM. SCHOOL
 - 6 - HAWFIELDS MIDDLE SCHOOL



- MEBANE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**
- 1 - MILL RUN
 - 2 - MILL CREEK - BUILT
 - 3 - ASHBURY - BUILT
 - 4 - FIELDSTONE FARMS - BUILT
 - 5 - COLLINGTON FARMS
 - 6 - ARBOR CREEK
 - 7 - MANORFIELD



REGIONAL PARK
1 - LAKE MICHAEL

COMMUNITY PARK
2 - MEBANE ARTS AND
COMMUNITY CENTER COMPLEX

SPORTS FIELDS
3 - WALKER FIELD/MEBANE
YOUTH FIELD

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
4 - HOLT STREET PARK

MINI PARK
5 - MEBANE RECREATION
CENTER COMPLEX

Recreation and Park Department
City of Mebane
Existing Parks Map

November 15, 2013

Legend

- City Limits of Mebane
- Area within ETJ (Extrajurisdictional Territory)
- Existing Regional Park (4 mi Service Radius)
- Existing Community Park (2 mi Service Radius)
- Existing Neighborhood Park (3/4 mi Service Radius)
- Existing Mini Park (1/2 mi Service Radius)
- ▲ School Location
- # Recreational Facility
- # Mebane Residential Development With Recreational Facilities



Members of Mebane Running Club participate in the Leapin' Lizard Run

Section Two

The People of Mebane

INTRODUCTION

An important step in understanding the park and recreational needs of Mebane is to develop an understanding of the people that make up the community. Section Two includes a review of the City's population and demographics and looks at changes that are occurring in the community.

In addition to reviewing the City's projected growth and demographic changes, the Needs Assessment included several exercises to engage the public to gather information on public demand/expectations for future parks. These initiatives included:

- Community Surveys
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Public Workshops

Through these efforts, considerable insight was gained regarding the public's desire for parks and recreation programs and facilities. This section discusses the information gathered in preparation of this Comprehensive Master Plan.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

History

Mebane (named for Brigadier General Alexander Mebane) began with the establishment of a post office in 1809. Community development began in 1855 with the arrival of the railroad. In 1881 the City was incorporated under the name of Mebanesville. The name was officially changed to Mebane in 1883. In 1987 its charter was amended to the City of Mebane.

Mebane has historically been a place of manufacturing. The City's first major manufacturer, the White Furniture Company (Hickory-White), was founded in 1881. Two decades later Mebane Bedding Company (Hickory-Whites) and Ridgeville Telephone Company (Mebet) were established.



White Furniture Company was one of Mebane's first major employers

The City began providing public services (water and wastewater treatment) in 1921. The City's first reservoir, Lake Michael was completed in 1953. The City's streets were paved in 1922. Sidewalks were included in this early development of street infrastructure.

The City's attractive rolling piedmont landscape, strategic location (between the Triad and Triangle regions), abundant water and sewer capacity, and

excellent railroad and highway access allowed the City to enjoy slow, steady growth from 1940-1980. During that period the City's average growth rate was less than one percent.

Since 1980, its growth rate has increased. From 1990 to 1997 the City's population grew by 1,500 residents. The City's population in 2000 was $\pm 6,500$. The City's 2012 population (11,966) is roughly double the 2000 population.

From 2010 to 2012 the City grew in population by 11.6%; five times the growth rate of North Carolina's general population. If the City continues to grow at a 3-4% annual rate, the 2024 population would be over 18,000. This projected population is somewhat greater than the 2020 projected population (15,000) used in 2001 when the City completed its 2010 Land Development Plan.

The planning horizon for this comprehensive plan is ten years. Based on the City's best estimate for projected population growth, the population for Mebane will grow to 18,500 by 2024.

Mebane has not only grown in population, but from 1980-1997 the City's jurisdictional limits expanded from 1.4 square miles to 4.6 square miles. Since 1997, the City's jurisdictional limits have grown to 8.36 square miles. There are no projections for annexation growth incorporated into this planning study. It is assumed that the increase in population discussed in the previous paragraph will occur within the existing city limits.

The People of Mebane

The 2010 U.S. Census Report listed Mebane's population at 11,373 and estimated the 2012 population to be 12,685. The Office of State Budget and Management listed the City's 2012 population by county as:

Alamance County	10,062
Orange County	<u>1,904</u>
	11,966

Based on the 2010 census, the majority of the City's population is female (53.8%). The City's female population is slightly more than the State's

female population percentage (51.3%). The City's population is also slightly younger than North Carolina's general population. Persons over 65 represent only 10.8% of the City's population, while the State's senior population is almost 13%. Likewise, persons under 18 years make up 26.6% of Mebane's population, while the State's younger population is only 23.9%. Similarly, the City's youngest population (those less than 5 years old) make up 7.7% of the overall population while the State's youngest segment of the population comprise only 6.6% of the total population.

Mebane's population is more homogenous than the State's. Almost three fourths (73.5%) of Mebane's population is white. North Carolina's general population is significantly less white (68.5%). The City's percentage of black or African American is approximately the same as the State's (20.4% in Mebane versus 21.5% for the State). Mebane has a significantly lower Asian (1.2% versus State's 2.2%) and Hispanic (6.0% versus State's 8.4%) population than the rest of the state.

The people of Mebane are well educated. Almost 90% of the City's population has a high school education or higher degree. This percentage of people with a high school education is $\pm 5\%$ greater than the percentage of high school graduates in North Carolina's general population. Likewise, almost one third (32.2%) of persons over 25 years of age in Mebane hold a bachelor degrees; significantly higher than the State's general population (26.5%).

This higher level of education is reflected in a higher median household income. Mebane's median income from 2007-2011 was \$51,328; significantly greater than North Carolina's median household income of \$46,291 ($\pm 10\%$ less). This higher median household income is reflected in the value of the median owner occupied housing. Mebane's median value of owner occupied housing from 2007-2011 was \$162,200 approximately 6% greater than the State's median household value of \$152,700.

Almost 40% (38.2%) of Mebane's $\pm 6,000$ employed population over 16 listed their

occupation as management, business, science and arts. The next largest occupation listed (29.4%) was sales and office work. Service (14.5%), construction/maintenance (10.7%) and production (7.2%) were significantly less than management and sales.

Education, health care and social assistance is the largest industry in Mebane; employing 28.5% of the City's working population. Other significant industries include retail (14.6%), manufacturing (11.3%), and professional/scientific/management/administrative (10.3%).

The review of population and demographic information from the 2010 census provides several factors that could impact the demand for parks and recreational facilities:

- Mebane currently has a relatively young population. Over one fourth of the City's population are under the age of 18. This would indicate a community where active recreation is important.
- The majority of Mebane's homes are family occupied indicating a need for family based recreation opportunities with facilities for youth and adults.
- Mebane's population is well educated and is employed in occupations that afford relatively good salaries. Higher salaries often allow people expanded opportunities to have their recreational needs met through private providers and/or may be willing to pay for recreational programs through higher taxes and/or user fees.

PUBLIC INPUT

Perhaps the most important step in the planning process is gathering input from city residents with regard to their desires for public recreation. As part of the master plan process, the following initiatives were taken to gather public input:

Community Survey (controlled)

A telephone survey of city residents was conducted to gather public input on parks and recreation needs. Two hundred completed telephone

interviews were made. A random sample of local telephone numbers was used.

Community Survey (on-line)

The written survey was also posted on the City's website to allow the general public an opportunity to voice their opinions on parks and recreation. A total of 55 people responded to the survey.

Stakeholder Interviews

One on one interviews were held with key community stakeholders to learn more about park needs.

Public Workshops

Two public workshops were held to allow citizens to discuss community park needs and review preliminary recommendations. Over 70 citizens attended these workshops and provided valuable input on recreational needs.

Staff Meetings

The Planning Consultant met with Recreation and Parks Department staff to discuss facilities, programming and operation.

The following is a summary of findings from each of the public input initiatives:

Community Survey (controlled)

In September 2013 the City's research consultant (Clark & Chase Research) telephoned randomly selected residents located in the city limits. The questionnaire contained seven questions asking for input on current park use, conditions of existing parks, interest in various recreational activities, priorities for park improvements and funding options for parks.

Methodology

This survey was conducted September 7 - September 22, 2013 by Clark & Chase Research, Inc. A total of 200 telephone surveys were conducted with households in the City of Mebane.

Due to the difficulty of conducting a representative telephone survey in a small geography like Mebane, two sources of phone numbers were used. A random sample of Mebane registered voter

households, including both landline and wireless phone numbers, was obtained from Aristotle. This sample was supplemented by listed landline phone numbers in ZIP Code 27302 provided by Marketing Systems Group. Households were screened to ensure they were located within the targeted geographic area.



Interviewers attempted to reach each selected phone number at different times of day and on different days of the week. The targeted respondent was the person who is most likely to be familiar with the household's recreational activities.

An iterative weighting procedure was used to ensure that various groups were represented in the survey according to their true proportions. The survey data was balanced by race, annual household income, and presence of children in the household to match parameters from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 Census and the 2007-2011 American Community Survey. The weighting procedure also adjusts for differential patterns of landline and cell phone usage based on the most recent state-level estimates from the National Health Interview Survey (released October 12, 2012).

The maximum sampling error for the total sample of 200 interviews is plus-or-minus 6.9 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The sampling error for any subgroup will be larger because it is based on fewer interviews. For example, the sampling error for 100 completed interviews is plus-or-minus 9.8 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

In addition to sampling error, the difficulties involved in conducting public opinion surveys may introduce other forms of error that cannot be measured.

Caveat

It is important to interpret results with caution when there are less than 100 interviews. Typically results for sub-populations or segments are not reported when the number of interviews is below 100. The reason for this is that the margin of error is high for small samples (as noted above).

However, in the case of this project, it is understood that there may be interest in the opinions of certain demographic groups, despite their smaller numbers. As a result, some of the differences in responses by demographic categories cited in this report and displayed in tables may not be statistically significant*. Thus, where the number of interviews is small, the findings should be used merely as directional indicators, and conclusions should be drawn thoughtfully and with caution.

*For example, racial comparisons were taken out of this report unless they were statistically significant. There are only 30 non-whites interviews and with a sample so small, it is difficult to draw conclusions from this sample unless they are statistically significant.

Demographic Profile

Gender

Men	31%
Women	69% *

Age

18 to 44	27%
45 to 64	36%
65+	35%

Race

White/Caucasian	71%
Black/African American	20%
Hispanic	1%
Multiracial/Other	5%

Household income

Below 25K	24%
\$25K to < \$50K	25%

\$50K to < \$75K	21%
\$75K to < \$100K	13%
\$100K or more	17%

Phone usage

Wireless Mostly	37%
Dual User	25%
Landline Mostly	35%

Children in household

Yes	33%
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*This telephone survey was a household survey. The person conducting the survey asked to speak to the person most familiar with the household's recreational activities. The person responding to these types of questions on recreational preferences is more likely to be women.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding, and because refusals are not shown.

Key Findings

Q1 – “Have you or any members of your household visited the following parks or recreation centers in the past year?”

- The Mebane Arts and Community Center was visited by seven of ten households within the past year. The Athletic Complex at Mebane Arts and Community Center and the Mebane Recreation Center Complex were each visited by about half of all households.
- All reported park visitors:

Mebane Arts & Community Center	70%
Athletic Complex at Mebane Arts & Community Center	54%
Mebane Recreation Center	52%
Lake Michael Park	40%
Walker Field and/or Youth Field	33%
Holt Street Park	17%

Q2 - Respondents were asked which City park or recreation facility they visited most.

- The recreation facility listed most often by residents as their most used facility was Mebane Arts and Community Center. Almost 40% of respondents listed this facility.
- Households without children are more likely to

say they visit the Mebane Arts and Community Center most often (43%, vs. 30% of households with children).

- The facility receiving the second highest responses was the Mebane Recreation Center Complex.

Q3 – Respondents were read a list of facilities that might be available at a park and recreation area. They were then asked whether someone in the household has great interest, some interest, or no interest in that type of facility? (Note: the list was randomized to address any order bias.)

- Among the thirteen facilities tested, nine recorded levels of interest on a top two-box basis (Great/Some Interest) of more than fifty percent.
- The facilities that resonated most positively were “open space or natural areas” (83%), “walking or biking trails” (81%), “indoor exercise and fitness facilities” (77%), and “picnic shelters” (75%).
 - It is interesting to note that three of the four facilities receiving the highest levels of interest are outdoor facilities.
 - For each of these four activities, more interest was shown among households with children and respondents younger than 54 years of age.

FACILITY	GREAT/SOME INTEREST	GREAT INTEREST
Open Space or Natural Areas	83%	40%
Walking or Biking Trails	81%	41%
Indoor Exercise & Fitness Facilities	77%	32%
Picnic Shelters	75%	31%
Aquatic Facility	72%	44%
Playgrounds	65%	34%
Athletic Fields	61%	29%
Fishing Areas	56%	23%
Basketball Courts	52%	27%
Dog Parks	44%	23%
Tennis Courts	43%	11%
Disc Golf	29%	9%
Skateboard Park	17%	8%

- Non-white respondents indicated a greater interest than whites in indoor fitness facilities, picnic shelters, playgrounds, athletic fields, fishing areas, basketball courts, and tennis courts.
- Respondents were much less interested in disc golf and a skateboard park than other facilities. Among those who registered interest in these two activities, the highest levels came, as might be expected, among respondents under the age of 55 and from households with children.
- Respondents were also asked if they were interested in “athletic fields,” and if so, what kinds of athletic fields.
 - Six in ten households have at least some interest in athletic fields.
 - The specific types of fields that were most favored were soccer and baseball fields (35% and 27%, respectively, of all households).

Q4 – As a follow-up, respondents who expressed great interest or some interest in a facility were asked: “What percent of your needs for that facility are already being met?”

- Overall, a review of the responses to this question suggests strongly that existing park and recreation facilities are not meeting the needs of all residents in the City of Mebane (see table below).
 - The greatest unmet recreational needs are for dog parks (87% unmet need), aquatic facilities (81%), and skateboard parks (81%). Households with interest in these types of facilities currently have few options.
 - For the three types of recreational facilities receiving the most interest (open space or natural areas, walking or biking trails, and indoor exercise/fitness facilities), five or six of every ten interested households say their needs for these facilities are not being met.
 - The need for additional athletic fields seems to be a lower priority than the need for other types of facilities. Only one in three interested households say they have unmet needs for athletic facilities – the lowest percentage of all measured items.

- A comparison of the responses for facility interest level (top two-box) and unmet need appear below:

FACILITY	INTEREST (TOP TWO BOX RATING)	% UNMET NEED (AVERAGE)
Open Space or Natural Areas	83%	54%
Walking or Biking Trails	81%	55%
Indoor Exercise & Fitness Facilities	77%	62%
Picnic Shelters	75%	52%
Aquatic Facility	72%	81%
Playgrounds	65%	46%
Athletic Fields	61%	32%
Fishing Areas	56%	55%
Basketball Courts	52%	53%
Dog Parks	44%	87%
Tennis Courts	43%	54%
Disc Golf	29%	76%
Skateboard Park	17%	81%

Q5 – Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the public park and recreation areas in Mebane. A scale of “1” to “7” was used where “7” was Very Satisfied and “1” was Very Dissatisfied ... They could also use any number in between.

- On a top two-box basis (ratings of a “6” or “7”), about three in ten respondents (31%) indicated that they are satisfied or very satisfied with park and recreation areas in Mebane.
- Households without children, and higher income households (\$50,000 or more per year), appear to be more satisfied with the Mebane parks compared to other groups.
- Another one-third of households (36%) rated their level of satisfaction a “5” indicating that they are likely to be at least somewhat satisfied with park and recreation areas in Mebane.
- One in 10 rated their level of satisfaction a “4” indicating that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- Overall, about one in five households (22%) indicated at least some level of dissatisfaction with Mebane Parks, with 8% of respondents

indicating higher levels of dissatisfaction (a “1” or “2” rating).

Q6 – “Would you say there is a great need, some need, little need, or no need for additional park and recreation areas in Mebane?”

- More than a third of households (37%) said there is a “great need” for additional park and recreation areas in Mebane.
 - Women (41%), younger adults (42%), non-whites (46%), lower income households (45%), and households with children (53%) are more likely to feel there is a “great need” for additional parks.
- Only one in eleven households say there is little or no need for additional park and recreation areas.

Q7 – “If taxes needed to be raised to pay for additional park and recreation areas in Mebane, would you support or oppose a tax increase?”

- Interestingly enough, fifty-three percent of households said they would support a tax increase.
 - Households with children (70% vs. 45%) and younger respondents (59% vs. 49%) favor a tax increase to pay for parks if necessary.
- A little more than one-third of households (36%) would oppose a tax increase to fund additional park and recreation areas. Another one in ten households (8%) said it would depend on the circumstances. While 4% said they don’t know or refused to answer the question.

Summary Remarks

A couple of items stand out in these survey results. First, given the current seemingly strong opposition to additional taxes both locally and across the country; it was surprising that more than half of the Mebane households would support a tax increase to fund additional parks. Another takeaway is that Mebane households indicate a need for open spaces, trails and picnic areas greater than their need for specific sporting facilities.



Community Survey (on-line)

In an effort to ensure all citizens had an opportunity to voice their opinions on the City's park and recreation facilities, an online survey was posted on the City's website. The survey conducted through a Survey Monkey instrument, asked the same questions that were asked on the telephone survey. The survey was posted on the City's website for approximately three weeks. Fifty-five citizens responded to the survey. Forty-three of those responses were City residents, see Appendix B. The following response were given:

Have you or any members of your household visited the following parks or recreation centers in the past year?

	Yes	No
Mebane Arts & Community Center	42	8
Athletic Complex at Mebane Arts & Community Center	28	20
Lake Michael Park	31	19
Walker Field and/or Youth Field	15	33
Holt Street Park	9	40

Which do members of your household visit most often?

Mebane Arts & Community Center	42%
Athletic Complex at Mebane Arts & Community Center	22%
Lake Michael Park	18%
Walker Field and/or Youth Field	2%
Holt Street Park	2%
Don't Know	14%

Below is a list of facilities that may be available at a public park or recreation area. For each, please tell us if you or someone in your household has great interest, some interest, or no interest in that type facility.

FACILITY	GREAT	SOME	NO
Open Space or Natural Areas	50%	40%	6%
Walking or Biking Trails	76%	20%	4%
Indoor Exercise & Fitness Facilities	40%	36%	22%
Picnic Shelters	24%	52%	24%
Aquatic Facility	50%	38%	12%
Playgrounds	48%	22%	30%
Athletic Fields	28%	48%	20%
Fishing Areas	10%	46%	42%
Basketball Courts	18%	42%	38%
Dog Parks	28%	34%	38%
Tennis Courts	26%	34%	36%
Disc Golf	8%	28%	54%
Skateboard Park	8%	12%	76%

If you expressed an interest in athletic fields on the list above, what type of athletic fields is your household interested in?

The following fields were noted (some multiple times), soccer was the overwhelming favorite.

soccer (15)
 football (5)
 baseball (8)
 t-ball fields (1)
 softball (3)
 basketball (1)
 fields for use by general public (1)
 lacrosse (1)

Is there another type of facility you would like to see offered at a public park or recreation area? Please choose one.

Some of the comments noted were:

- More basketball courts. Practice time is currently limited.

- A summer splashground
- DOG PARKS
- Splash park
- Pool and gym that isn't so expensive
- Water spray park for the hot summer months
- Covered playground equipment
- N/A
- Spray grounds
- Track
- Spray ground, play grounds
- Bike Trail
- Tennis
- Outdoor exercise: chin-up bars, etc.
- Ice skating rink
- Rec area
- Spray ground (ie: Keely Park in Kernersville/ Gboro)
- Volleyball, bocce
- Tennis Courts
- More Tennis Courts
- Paddle boats at lake facilities

What percent of your needs for each of the facilities listed below are already being met? Please use a numerical response from 0 to 100 percent. Your best estimate is fine.

FACILITY

Open Space or Natural Areas	37
Walking or Biking Trails	40
Indoor Exercise & Fitness Facilities	24
Picnic Shelters	52
Aquatic Facility	13
Playgrounds	51
Athletic Fields	66
Fishing Areas	55
Basketball Courts	45
Dog Parks	20
Tennis Courts	49
Disc Golf	33
Skateboard Park	40

Using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 7 is very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the public park and recreation areas in Mebane?

+50% of the respondents rated their satisfaction at 5 or higher.

Would you say there is a great need, little need, or no need for additional park and recreation areas in Mebane?

65.91% of the respondents said there is great need for additional parks.

If taxes are needed to be raised to pay for additional park and recreation areas in Mebane, would you support or oppose the tax increase?

Support	45.45%
Oppose	9.09%
Depends on Circumstances	43.18%

Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews were held with the following community stakeholders:

Jim Melvin, Tennis Instructor, Long Time Resident
 Chip Foushee, Mebane Youth Soccer
 Angie Bartis, Recreation and Parks Advisory Board
 Annie Martinee, Mebane on the Move
 Rebecca Brouwer, Mebane on the Move
 Patty Philipps, Mayor Pro-Tem
 Everett Greene, City Council
 Jill Auditori, City Council

One on one interviews were held with several key stakeholders to discuss issues relevant to recreation and parks in the city. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was formatted around an open ended discussion of ten questions related to the community's perspective of the city's current recreation programs and parks, and desires/expectations for the next ten years. The following is a summary of the interview responses:

1. What do you like most about living in Mebane?

Almost everyone's first comment was the city's small town feel and friendly people. Most stakeholders also mentioned the walkability of the city as a major asset. Several people talked about the visual character of the city; clean and well maintained. Several people also mentioned easy access to larger cities for arts and entertainment. Several people mentioned neighborhood diversity and sense of community. The city's clean attractive downtown area was also a plus for the community. Someone suggested it was like living in Chapel Hill; without the high taxes and bureaucracy.

2. What do you like least?

Many of the stakeholders had to really think about this question to come up with an answer. It was noted that even Mebane has areas that are threatened with urban sprawl, and the city should focus on development standards that will minimize suburban clutter. It was also noted that there are divisions between different areas of the city. Limited choices in restaurants and entertainment, and lack of bicycle routes/lanes were also mentioned.

3. What role do local parks and recreation facilities play in the quality of life of this community?

Everyone interviewed felt that Mebane Recreation and Parks are an important component of the quality of life of the community. Most everyone felt the City offers outstanding facilities and staff. One interviewee ranked the City's park system a 9 on a scale of 10. Many people felt the Mebane Arts and Community Center and Sports Fields are an important part of life in the city. The Recreation and Parks Department provides affordable facilities and programs.

The general consensus was the City's parks and recreation facilities provide a valuable community amenity.

4. What role should they be playing?

Several people felt that active recreation needs are being met, but there is a need for passive/non athletic recreation opportunities. Someone also expressed a need for additional small "walk to" parks to serve neighborhoods. Someone also noted that youth programs are adequate, but there is a need for programs for adults. Someone mentioned expanding hours of operation/access to parks.

Specific facility needs were also listed under questions 6 and 7.

One interviewee felt the department is doing an outstanding job. Therefore, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

5. What parks and recreation facilities do you think are serving the community well?

Several people mentioned the Mebane Arts and Community Center and the adjacent athletic fields. Likewise several people mentioned the water access and trails of Lake Michael.

6. What parks and recreation facilities could be improved?

Several people mentioned making improvements to Holt Street Park. Several people said there was a need to give the park a "facelift". Someone suggested purchasing adjacent property and building a dog park.

Almost everyone mentioned a need for additional tennis courts. Several people said the city needs a 6 or 8 court complex. This issue has obviously been discussed previously. There have been discussions about building new courts at Walker Field and possibly improving the courts at Mill Creek. There was also discussion about improving existing courts; providing amendments and places for people to sit. No resolution or decision has been made about how to expand courts, but it seems most people believe there is a need for additional courts.

The city's growth will likely be toward the south. Future park development should take this growth into account.

Some suggested the City might consider a new Arts/Civic Center in the future; fully dedicated to visual and performing arts.

Several people mentioned the need for additional soccer fields. The fields at the Mebane Arts and Community Center Athletic Complex are outstanding, but there is a need for soccer field expansion. The most apparent need is one additional full size field for older players. Currently teams can find limited space for practice, but there are not enough fields for scrimmage practices.

Someone suggested making changes at the Mebane Recreation Center by expanding the train room into the area currently serving as the tennis office. Build new tennis courts (6-8) and new pro shop for the tennis instructor.

Someone suggested the City review its current rental rates on facilities and the fees charged for classes.

7. What new parks and recreation facilities should the City consider?

- Several people mentioned a need for an additional basketball court.
- Several people suggested there may be a need for a swimming pool.
- Several people mentioned the need for park and recreation facilities in southern Mebane.
- Several people mentioned Old Kate's Pickle Farm as a potential future park site. Trails on this site could be linked to the trails at Lake Michael.
- One person suggested a municipal golf course.
- Developing a park at the Turner Road property was mentioned by several people. It would provide acres of additional park land. It would greatly increase the City's park land and also provide opportunities for additional trails, picnicking, and passive recreation. The property is probably not suited for ball fields.

- Several people mentioned developing a dog park.
- Consider acquiring the Old McLeod property (1/4 mile from downtown) for a new park.
- Use the old gymnasium and storage space for youth activities.
- Build a rock climbing wall.

8. What role should Alamance-Burlington Schools play in providing facilities that offer opportunities for recreational activities?

Most everyone interviewed felt there should be joint use of the schools, but felt there is work to be done in this area. It was noted that some schools allowed soccer practice and there is a 5K training program offered through the school. The high school allows the public to use the tennis courts, but there is not a lot of other public use on the high school campus. Several people felt that the school's superintendent is open to allowing public use of some schools. There are probably more opportunities for use of elementary facilities than middle schools or high schools. The most important thing is to keep open communication with the school system.

9. What role should the Counties (Orange and Alamance) play in providing parks and recreation facilities?

The Counties should be involved in working with the City to provide some facilities and services. One area of potential collaboration would be in developing greenways along utility easements throughout the counties.

In the past there has been more dialogue with Orange County than Alamance County, but both counties should be partners.

Mebane should stay in constant contact with the County agencies and the Parks and Recreation Departments of nearby towns and cities. Alamance County is currently developing a greenway plan. Burlington and Graham are working on comprehensive plans.

10. Are there other thoughts or comments you would like to share with regard to this plan?

- Getting the word out on programs and facilities is very important. The department should look for ways to expand its visibility and presence through the City's website, Facebook, and monthly newsletter.
- Mebane has an outstanding Recreation and Parks staff. They are doing a great job.
- Mebane Sports Hall of Fame should be moved to the Mebane Museum.
- Do not build any new facilities unless the budget for staff and operation are taken into consideration.
- The City should consider greenway development/obtain easements along utility routes.
- Consider building mini parks in several underserved neighborhoods.
- Lake Michael trails need to be improved.
- Hours of park operation need to be expanded.
- Consider developing mountain bike trails.
- Design any future multi-purpose fields to accommodate lacrosse.

Public Workshops

First Public Workshop

Tuesday September 10, 2013

Mebane Arts and Community Center

The first public workshop to invite citizen participation on the development of the City's Recreation and Parks Master Plan was held at the Mebane Arts and Community Center. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting to learn about the planning process and voice their opinions on current and future park and recreation needs.

Dean Ray, Recreation and Parks Director, opened the meeting by thanking those in attendance for participating. He stressed the significance of the meeting and the planning process by stating that this is the first comprehensive master plan for parks and recreation ever completed by the City.

Following a brief overview of the importance of the plan, Dean introduced Park Planner, Derek Williams to facilitate and lead the meeting.

The presentation began with a description of the planning process to be utilized in developing the Master Plan. The planning process will include the following:

- Inventory
- Public participation
- Development of park/recreation standards
- Needs assessment
- Plan of action

Following a discussion of the planning process, attendees were asked to participate in a group survey. Several questions were asked regarding current park use and participants were then asked to identify their level of interest (great interest, some interest, no interest) in a list of typical recreation activities. They were then invited to list additional activities they felt should be developed or considered by the City as it plans for the future.



Approximately 50 Mebanites attended the first public workshop

The results were recorded based on attendees raising their hands to cast their votes.

Have you or any member of your household visited the following parks or recreation centers in the past year?

Holt Street Park	8
Lake Michael Park	22
Mebane Arts and Community Center Athletic Complex at Mebane Arts & Community Center	32
Walker Field & Youth Field	25
Mebane Recreation Center/Park	16
Hawfield Community Park	31
Tanger Playground	6
	2

Fishing areas	4	22	22
Equestrian*	4	22	22
Skateboard park	3	10	33

*These items were discussed after several attendees had left the meeting.

The survey process provided positive opportunities for people to express their desires for the plan. Following the survey questions, the meeting was opened up for general comments. The following items were discussed:

- It was noted that a large contingent of tennis players attended, many of them wearing their Mebane Tennis Amigos tee shirts. In addition to expressing their desire for additional courts through the survey voting process, several people spoke to the need for additional courts. There are many tennis players in the City of Mebane. The three existing courts at the Mebane Recreation Center Complex are not adequate to handle the demand. At least six courts are needed; eight would be preferable.
- Several people suggested the importance of providing parks and recreation facilities that will encourage people to stay in town to meet their recreational needs. This requires providing a wide variety of recreation opportunities and making sure facilities are top quality.
- Walking trails rated very high on the survey that was conducted during the meeting. The importance of walking trails and sidewalks was also discussed by several people during the open comment portion of the meeting. The City, in conjunction with Burlington Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization (BGMPO), is developing a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan. It was mentioned that it is important for recommendations from this recreation and parks master plan to be linked and reinforced in the pedestrian plan. Likewise, it is important for the park plan to reference the pedestrian plan.
- Several people mentioned the importance of working with the school system to seek opportunities to use school facilities for park and recreation programs. It was noted that joint

Which park do members of your household visit most often?

Holt Street Park	2
Lake Michael Park	2
Mebane Arts and Community Center Athletic Complex at Mebane Arts & Community Center	7
Walker Field & Youth Field	16
Mebane Recreation Center/Park	2
Hawfield Community Park	21
Tanger Playground	1
	1

Does someone in your household have great interest (GI), some interest (SI), or no interest (NI) in the following activities?

The following activities are listed in the order of popularity.

	GI	SI	NI
Walking or biking trails	41	5	3
Indoor exercise & fitness facilities	22	22	3
Open space or natural areas	21	22	3
Tennis courts	24	14	9
Athletic fields	13	30	3
Dog parks	18	18	8
Public civic parks & gardens*	15	20	0
Volleyball	8	33	7
Aquatic facility	13	22	10
Amphitheater*	14	13	3
Picnic shelters	1	35	11
Basketball courts	7	22	18
Disc golf	5	25	18
Sprayground	5	25	16
Playgrounds	6	19	20

use of facilities is an excellent way to conserve resources, but it cannot be accomplished unless the school board is agreeable and only if joint use agreements are used.

- Someone suggested that Hawfield Community Park is another park that serves the residents of Mebane. It should be taken into consideration as this plan is developed.
- Several representatives from Mebane on the Move attended the meeting. A primary concern of this group was development of trails, sidewalks and greenways that will help make Mebane a walkable community and provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles.
- Several people mentioned that the Town of Cary has outstanding parks and recreation facilities. It was suggested Mebane should look at the facilities Cary has developed as a guide for future park improvements. Overall, this comment was received with positive reaction from those in attendance. It was noted that Mebane is a unique community, and should not strive to become a clone of Cary.
- Someone spoke about the importance of looking at this plan from a broad perspective and understanding that the plan should include all community needs. Priorities for improvements can be established once the overall vision for parks and recreation has been determined.
- Someone asked about the City's timeline for developing projects. It was stated that there is no definite timeline for park improvements. The first step is to develop a plan. This step should be completed by early 2014. Once the plan is finalized, individual projects will be identified and priorities set. While the plan is a ten year plan, implementation of all the recommendations could take longer than ten years.
- Someone asked why develop a ten year plan; why not a twenty year plan. In addition, will this plan identify future city growth? The response to the question was that most parks and recreation master plans are ten year plans because it is difficult to project community needs beyond ten years. The city, as well as park and recreation needs, will change significantly in the next decade. Planning

beyond that time horizon is very speculative. It was also noted that the plan would be based on population/growth projections that will be provided by the City's Planning Department and the State of North Carolina

After almost two hours of discussion and with all questions answered and comments made, the meeting was adjourned.

Overall, this was a very positive meeting. Having 50 people attend a public workshop for a comprehensive plan indicates there is strong interest in the community for parks and recreation. Likewise, everyone's positive comments and attitude indicates there is a strong support for the City to invest in parks and recreation facilities.

Second Public Workshop

Monday October 14, 2013

Mebane Arts and Community Center

The second public workshop was held in the Community Room of the Mebane Arts and Community Center. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the draft recommendations of the Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Master Plan. Approximately 20 people attended the meeting to hear the consultant's recommendations on the park plan and to provide input for the final document. Over half of those in attendance participated in the first public workshop in September.

Dean Ray, Recreation and Parks Director, opened the meeting by thanking those in attendance for participating. As in the first workshop, Dean stressed the importance of having the public voice opinions on the recommendations and invited everyone's input. Following his brief comments, he introduced Derek Williams, the park planner for the project.

Acknowledging that some people attending the meeting had not attended the first workshop, Derek briefly summarized the planning process. As part of his presentation on the planning process, he shared input that was received from the telephone survey, the website survey, and from the partial

survey that was conducted during the first public workshop.

Based on the public input that has been provided as part of the planning process, a needs assessment was developed for the City. Following a brief discussion of the needs assessment process, Derek identified approximately 20 recommendations for future park development. These recommendations included:

Park Needs

- **Regional Parks.** Lake Michael meets Mebane's needs for a Regional Park.
- **District Parks.** Mebane does not currently have a District Park. Development of the Agriculture Foundation property on Turner Road would meet this need and will provide an important park for the southern portions of the city.
- **Community Parks.** The outdoor recreation facilities associated with the Mebane Arts and Community Center provide an excellent Community Park for City residents.
- **Neighborhood Parks.** Holt Street Park is Mebane's only Neighborhood Park. Several additional Neighborhood Parks are needed.
- **Mini Parks.** The outdoor recreation facilities (playgrounds, volleyball court, and picnic shelter) located at Mebane Recreation Complex serve as the City's only Mini Park. Several additional Mini Parks are needed.
- **Open Space/Trails.** Interest in open space/natural areas and walking and biking trails ranked very high in the telephone survey and in comments made at the first public workshop. Mebane should consider development of a Greenway Master Plan to identify opportunities for a citywide trail system. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan currently being developed by the BGMPO should provide information and recommendations that will support greenway development.
- **Potential Park Sites.** Several sites have been discussed as future parks. These include the Old Kate's Pickle Farm site (potential open space and trails) and the McLeod property.

Facility Recommendations

- **Tennis Courts.** There is a current need for three additional courts. By 2024, the need will increase to six.
- **Soccer Fields.** There is a current need for one additional soccer field. By 2024, the need will increase to four. Developing several fields with synthetic surfacing will increase playability.
- **Baseball/Softball, Football Fields.** Currently the need for these fields is being met. By 2024, there will be needs for additional fields.
- **Playgrounds.** There is a current need for several additional playgrounds. By 2024, the need will increase to six.
- **Picnic Shelters.** Four additional picnic shelters will be needed by 2024.
- **Swimming Pool.** Currently the City does not offer a public swimming pool. Most communities with a population over 15,000 provide a public pool. Another aquatic option is a splashpad.
- **Amphitheater, Dog Park, Skate Park and Disc Golf Course.** The City does not offer any of these facilities. There may be demands for these activities in the future.
- **Fitness Center, Indoor Fitness and Exercise Facilities.** These ranked very high in both the survey and the public workshop. The City should investigate the expansion of the Mebane Arts and Community Center to include a fitness facility.

Following a presentation and description of all recommendations the meeting was opened for comments and questions. The following comments were made:

- Development of multi-purpose fields is important because there is strong demand for soccer and a number of other sports that use similar fields. Fields should be developed to allow multi-use play.
- Activities for teenagers are important. There seem to be programs for adults and young children, but adolescents and teenagers are harder to reach with programs. Others in the audience suggested that teens participate in tennis, disc golf, and skate park.

- Following up on the teen needs, someone suggested there may be a need for a skateboard park, even though that activity did not rank high in the scoring.
- Someone from the Hawfield community suggested that the athletic and support facilities at Hawfield Presbyterian Church could be used for community recreation. The City and Church could develop an agreement where the City would support maintenance and operational cost in exchange for public use of the facilities. It was noted that these types of public/private partnerships have worked in other communities.
- Someone asked about lighting along trails and greenways; noting that some people do not feel safe walking on trails in isolated areas. This comment lead to a discussion about trails and the need for a variety of trail types. Some walking trails (like the walking trail at the Mebane Arts and Community Center) are paved and located in well lit open areas. These trails provide a more secure setting for walking. There is also demand and interest in more natural trails as well, but they are typically used by different groups of people. The department should provide both types of trails.

Following approximately 45 minutes of general discussion, everyone who had a question or comment had spoken.

In closing the meeting Derek Williams asked the group if the recommendations that were presented addressed the majority of the park and recreation facility needs and if there was general consensus that the plan was moving in the right direction. Everyone seemed in general agreement with that conclusion. No one expressed a need to change any of the draft recommendations.

With this final wrap up, everyone was thanked for their participation and the meeting was adjourned.

Informal Input

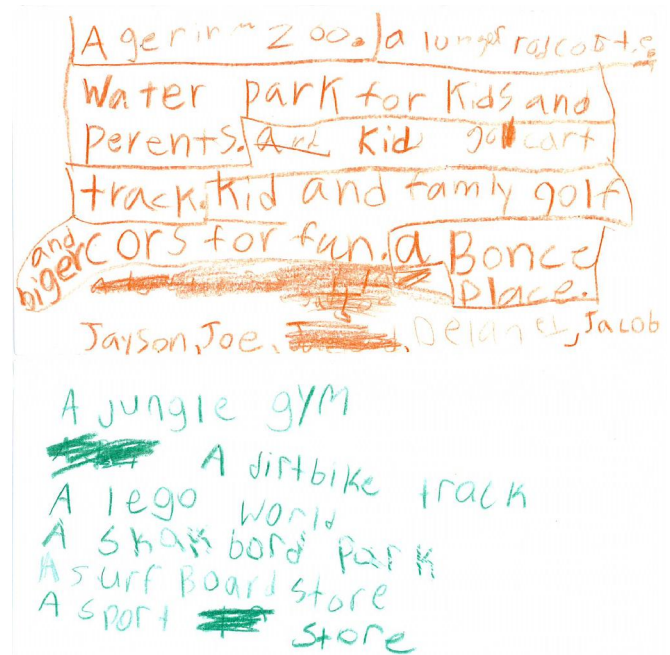
E.M. Yoder Elementary School 3rd Grade

The third graders at E.M. Yoder Elementary School were invited to make suggestions for recreation activities/facilities to be included in future development of the park system. Students were asked to write a list of new facilities they would like to see built. Fourteen responses were given.

There was a wide range of activities, facilities and programs suggested, but there were several ideas that were repeated by many students. These included:

- Water park, swimming pool or water slide*
- Dog park*
- Additional playgrounds
- Dirt bike trail
- Skateboard park
- Tennis courts

*Several students suggested the swimming pools and dog park should be combined.



3rd grade students provided lists of recreation needs



Lake Michael has 1.25 miles of bike trails

Section Three

Recreation Standards & Needs Assessment

INTRODUCTION

This section contains the analysis and assessment on which the recommendations of this Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Master Plan is based. It begins with a brief review of previous community planning efforts relevant to the City's parks. Next, we review how other communities are working to provide park and recreation facilities to their constituents, and national and state trends in park and recreation preferences (Appendices C and D) . This review of previous planning studies and similar agencies is followed by a description of the park types that typically make up a park system (Appendix E). Using these park types as a backdrop, we develop standards for park and recreation facilities specifically for the City of Mebane. These standards are then used as a basis for establishing a park and recreation facility needs assessment for the City.

It should be noted that the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), in its 1995 report "Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines", determined there are no "national standards" for park development. Instead, the latest NRPA study recommends that each community is unique, and that standards reflecting the local "uniqueness" should be established.

This study looks at two types of development standards. The first analysis looks at total acreage of parkland within the system and how this acreage is broken into park types. From this study it is possible to see how Mebane's existing parks compare with other communities, both in overall park acreage and park types within this overall acreage.

The second analysis looks at recreation activities and the facilities required to program these activities. By establishing a population-based standard for various recreation activities, this study establishes the type and quantity of facilities the Department should develop in the future.

The design standards used in this study were derived from citizen input and input from the Recreation and Parks Department staff. The development of these standards is perhaps the most important step in this planning process.

PREVIOUS PARK PLANNING EFFORTS

The City of Mebane has not completed a comprehensive plan for recreation and parks previously, but there have been two community based plans that relate directly to parks. These include:

Mebane on the Move: Community Health Assessment

In 2006 a group from the Mebane Women's Club came together to brainstorm ideas on establishing an annual event to promote community activity. That meeting led to the Mebane on the Move Family Fitness Festival – a family activity day with a 5k race and health and fitness expo. The event was a tremendous success and has evolved into a major community event.

Mebane on the Move (MOTM) has become a community agent for healthy lifestyles far beyond an annual family fitness festival. Since its beginnings in 2006, MOTM has been instrumental

in developing a community garden, promoting the farmer's market, and developing several walking trails along city sidewalks to promote active lifestyles. In addition to promoting the development of healthy lifestyle facilities, MOTM has developed programs of healthy lifestyles through MEBFIT classes, organizing walks and bike rides, and classes on healthy eating/cooking.

From the summer of 2010 to the spring of 2011, members of MOTM conducted a community health assessment to better understand the local community health. Over 200 people responded to a written survey.

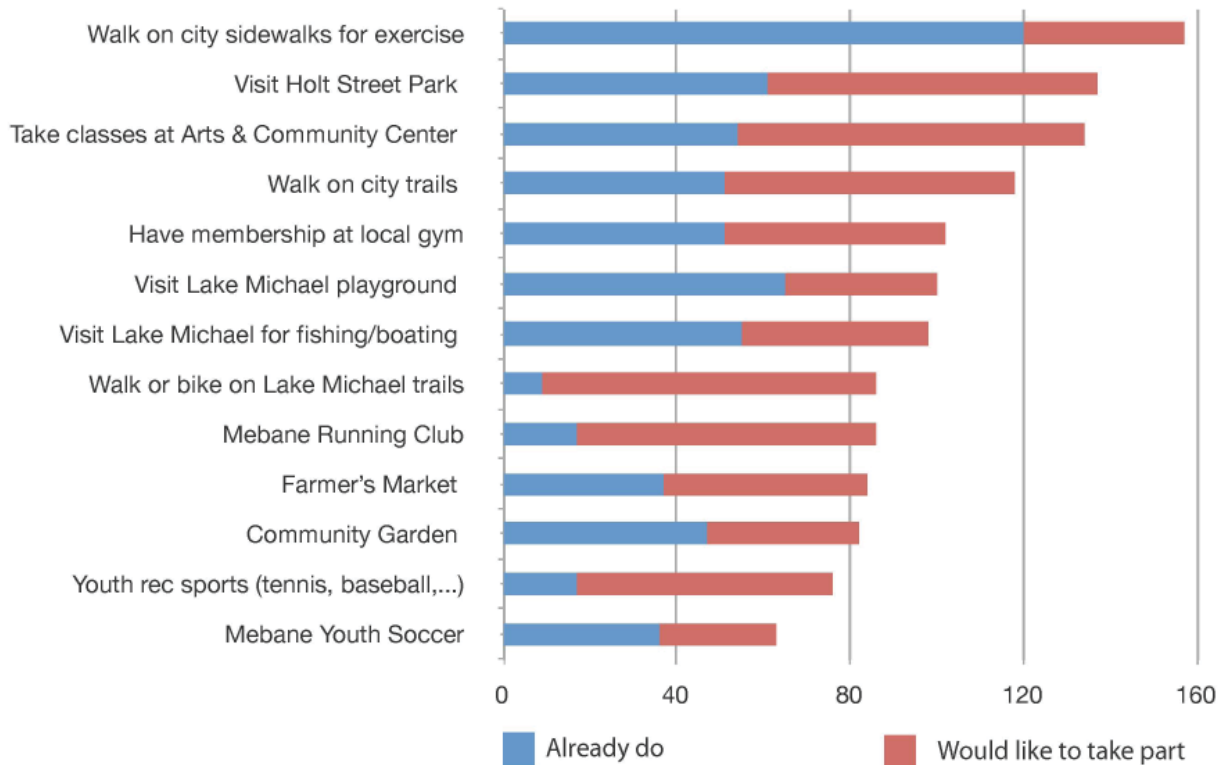
The findings from the survey indicated that a majority of those surveyed were overweight or obese and were not getting the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity per week. The survey also found there was a high consumption of fast food and low consumption of fruits and vegetables.



Mebane on the Move promotes the Mebane Farmer's Market

As part of the Community Health Assessment, people were asked what they did or wanted to do for physical activity. By far most respondents said walking on city sidewalks was their primary form of physical activity. Visiting Holt Street Park and taking classes at the Arts and Community Center were the second and third most listed responses. Visiting Lake Michael was listed by many of the respondents. Youth sports were also listed as activities people participate in to stay active. Two-thirds of the thirteen activities listed in the survey are directly related to Mebane's Recreation and Parks Department.

What are people doing or wanting to do for physical activity?



When asked what barriers prevented people from taking part in local opportunities for activities, the number one reason given was lack of information on facilities or trails.

When asked what can Mebane do to support its citizens in adopting and maintaining healthier choices, the following responses seem directly related to this planning study:

- Improve walking/running trails
- Develop bike trails and lanes
- Improve lighting on sidewalks and trails
- Enhance city parks
- Develop a community park
- Access to exercise classes at AACC
- Increase city fitness events
- Classes for healthy eating and cooking
- Reduce expenses of city programs
- Transportation to city programs

Findings from the entire Community Health Assessment can be found in Appendix A.

The City of Mebane 2010 Land Development Plan, May 2001

In 2001, the City undertook a major planning study to establish a ± 10 year vision for community growth. Just as the Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan will establish a ten year vision for parks and recreation, the 2010 Land Development Plan (LDP) established a vision for the City's community development.

As noted in the LDP Executive Summary, the plan has served "as a guide for the community in making land development decisions and providing for the orderly growth and development of the City." While the primary focus of the plan was on land use and infrastructure (transportation, utilities, etc.), almost every component of the plan included recommendations on the preservation of open space, protection of riparian corridors, and the development of parks.

The LDP was organized around goals and guidelines in six general categories. The following goals/guidelines specifically address parks, greenways, or open space:

Community Appearance Goals

- The City will encourage land development to preserve the natural features of the site whenever practical, including existing topography, significant vegetation and specimen trees, wetlands, and riparian buffer corridors along creeks and streams.
- The City will encourage pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods with an abundance of street trees, sidewalks, greenways, neighborhood parks and open spaces, and with narrower streets where appropriate.

Environmental Stewardship Goals

- Discourage land development in sensitive natural areas, especially in floodplains, along creeks and streams, in wetland areas, and in areas with very steep (>20%) slopes or severe soil limitations.
- Consider developing a Citywide Parks and Recreation Master Plan, to provide the community with abundant parks, recreational opportunities, open space, and natural areas, and to connect them with sidewalks, greenways, jogging trails, and bike lanes.
- The City will strongly encourage the dedication of open space and greenway easements, especially along creek and stream corridors, as an integral part of the land development process.

Transportation System Goals

- Locate commercial, office, institutional, and residential uses closer to one another and connect them with sidewalks, greenways, and bikepaths.
- Include alternative transportation modes (sidewalks, greenways, bikepaths) in all new developments.
- Encourage retro-fitting existing neighborhoods with sidewalks, bike lanes, and greenways.
- The City will require the inclusion of pedestrian amenities (such as sidewalks with curb and gutter, bikeways, and greenways) in all new urban and suburban land development projects, and will strongly encourage these pedestrian-oriented transportation alternatives be added to existing land development throughout the City.

The plan's Growth Strategy Map included conservation corridors which were described as "Areas located throughout the study area, primarily along creeks, streams, and rivers, and within areas containing floodplains, steep slopes, and/or severe soil limitations." These areas were recommended to be maintained as open space, recreation or greenways.



Mebane on the Move developed a walking trail system based on exiting sidewalks

Specific recommendations for almost every "Small Area" plan included recommendations regarding parks and greenways. Recommendations included:

Central Planning Area

- Designate a Park along the remaining undeveloped portion of Eastside Creek corridor (south of Stagecoach Road), to serve the recreation needs of surrounding neighborhoods, to preserve natural resources, and to protect water quality and floodplain functions.
- Designate a network of Greenway corridors along various streams and creeks, and along some roads throughout the planning area, to connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, and activity centers with safe, pedestrian access, to

preserve wildlife habitat, and to protect water quality and floodplain functions.

North Planning Area

- Designate the southern third of the Cates Farm property as permanently protected Open Space.
- Designate a network of Greenway corridors along various streams and creeks, and along some roads throughout the planning area, to connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, and activity centers with safe, pedestrian access, to preserve wildlife habitat, and to help protect water quality.

West Planning Area

- Designate a Park around the existing City-owned lake, as an integral part of the Village Center.
- Designate a network of Greenway corridors along various streams and creeks, and along some roads throughout the planning area, to connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, and activity centers with safe pedestrian access, to preserve wildlife habitat, to help protect water quality.
- Designate a Greenway connection (e.g. pedestrian tunnel) under the proposed NC119 By-Pass, to maintain vital pedestrian links between this planning area and the rest of the community.

South-West (Hawfields) Planning Area

- Designate the existing Church ballfields as a Park, and a network of Greenway corridors to provide safe pedestrian connections and recreational opportunities for the Hawfields Community.

Overview

In summary, the 2010 Land Development Plan identified the importance of parks, open space and greenway corridors as part of the City's Development pattern. There was particular emphasis on the development of greenway corridors to connect activity nodes within the City with pedestrian trails and preserve drainage corridors to reduce environmental impacts.

As the City considers updates to the 2010 Land Development Plan and other community planning initiatives, it should incorporate recommendations from this comprehensive plan. While the 2010 LDP stressed greenways and riparian corridors, future plans should include the importance of neighborhood and community parks. As the City grows and becomes more urban, provisions should be made to ensure the public has access to a variety of park types.

National and State Studies on Outdoor Recreation Demand

Surveys designed to determine the demand for outdoor recreation have been conducted on the Federal level by the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, the State of North Carolina, and various other organizations and associations.

Findings from these studies can be found in Appendices C and D: National and State Studies on Outdoor Recreation Demand and National Sporting Goods Association Survey.

Classifications for Parks, Open Spaces & Greenways

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) establishes guidelines for parks, recreation, open space and greenways. These guidelines provide information on the various park types that make up a community park system. This general classification of parks is used in developing recommendations for Mebane's park system. These guidelines are provided in Appendix E.

STANDARDS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The first step in developing a recreation and park needs assessment is to establish standards for park and facility development. Tables 3A-Park Acreage (PA) on page 3-8 and 3A-Facilities (FAC) on page 3-9 provide an overview of standards used for both park acreage (PA) and facilities (FAC). Each of these tables provide standards used by other North Carolina municipalities in establishing park and recreation needs. The final column on each of these tables indicates the standard of development recommended specifically for Mebane. These recommended standards are based on input received from the survey, public workshops and stakeholder interviews.

It should be noted that the standards for development established for City of Mebane are (in most cases) similar to other communities in North Carolina. Likewise, the needs that are identified in the plan will lead the City to develop parks and facilities comparable to many other communities of similar size.

PARK NEEDS

Mini Parks

A standard of .25 acres for every 1,000 people in the service population has been established for mini parks. This standard of development is consistent with the standard used by many North Carolina communities. Based on this standard, the City will need over 4 acres of mini park in the next ten years. The outdoor recreation facilities at Mebane Recreation Center are the City's only public mini park. In addition to this public park, several residential communities offer private facilities similar to a mini park.

There are several neighborhoods within the city limits that are not served by a neighborhood or mini park. The City should consider development of mini parks in underserved neighborhoods and should work with developers to ensure future

residential developments have access to mini parks or neighborhood parks.

Neighborhood Parks

Most communities develop neighborhood parks on a standard of 2.5 acres of park land per 1,000 people. Utilizing this study of development, there will be a need for over 40 acres of neighborhood parks in ten years.

The City of Mebane has one neighborhood park, Holt Street Park. In addition to this publicly used park, several residential communities provide small parks for their residents. Based on standards similar to other small communities (2.5 acres per 1,000), there is a need for several new neighborhood parks. This park need may be met by a combination of public and private involvement.

There are several neighborhoods that may be underserved by either a mini park or neighborhood park. As noted in the previous section on mini parks, the most economical means of serving these underserved neighborhoods will be the expansion/development of mini parks or neighborhood parks in those areas.

Community Parks

Based on a park land/population ratio of 5.0 acres per 1,000 population, citizens of Mebane have a current need for approximately 62.5 acres of community park. Since community parks are typically in the 30-50 acre range, that would imply one community park meets citizen's current needs for this park type. Mebane Arts and Community Center Complex meets this need. By 2024, Mebane's population will increase to 18,500. Applying the 5 acres per 1,000 population ratio to the future population, there will be a need for an additional community park.

District Parks

Mebane is not currently served by a district park. Based on the surrounding counties' offerings, it is highly unlikely that either county will build a district park in the immediate area. Utilizing a standard of 5 acres per 1,000 for district park development (a standard utilized by most

communities) there is a need for one district park to serve the citizens of Mebane.

Regional Parks

Lake Michael serves as a regional park for Mebane and Orange County. The former reservoir is an outstanding water resource and low impact recreation resource for the region. The park currently offers park users water access, walking trails, picnic facilities, playgrounds and volleyball courts. A master plan was developed in 2006 that recommended many of the improvements recently constructed at the park. The City should continue to make improvements to the park based on the master plan. These improvements should include continuation of the trail system to provide walking/jogging access completely around the lake.

FACILITY NEEDS

Minimum standards for recreational facilities (i.e., ballfields, courts, picnic shelters, etc.) proposed for the Department were developed from a review of standards used by other communities similar to Mebane, and from input gained during the public input process. These standards, identified in Table 3A-FAC Facility Standards, and discussed in greater detail in Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations, are the minimum recreation facility standards for the City.

Based on these standards, the number of public facilities needed in the park system through the planning period (2014 to 2024), are identified in Table 3B-Facilities (FAC), “Current/10 Year Facility Needs” (page 3-11) and summarized on the following chart.

The “Existing Facilities” column indicates the number of existing recreation facilities the City currently provides. The “2024 Need” column identifies the total number of additional facilities needed by 2024 (ten year need). The “Current Need” column further refines the City’s recreation facility needs by identifying the number of new

facilities currently needed (this number is included in the “2024 Need” column).

As an example of how the needs assessment is presented; consider playgrounds. Currently the City has 6 existing playgrounds. Based on the Standards for Facility Development that have been recommended for the City (one playground for every 1,500 people in the service population), there is a current demand for 8 playgrounds ($12,500 \div 1,500 = 8$); therefore the City needs to construct 2 additional playgrounds (demand of 8 – 6 existing playgrounds) to meet the current demand. By 2024, with the increase in population, the demand will grow to 12 playgrounds ($18,500 \div 1,500 = 12$); therefore by 2024, the City will need to build 6 new playgrounds.

	Existing Facilities	Current Need	2024 Need
Adult Baseball Fields	0	1	1*
Youth Baseball Fields	4	-	2
Softball Fields	2	-	1*
Football Fields	1	-	1
Soccer Fields	5	1	4
Basketball Courts	0	2	4
Tennis Courts	3	3	6
Volleyball Courts	3	-	1*
Horseshoe	2	-	-
Shuffleboard Courts	0	1	2*
Playground	6	2	6
Picnic Shelters	8	-	4
Hiking/Jogging Trails (miles)	2.4	2.4	5.0
Amphitheater	0	1	1
Community Garden	1	-	-
Outdoor Swimming Pool	0	-	1
Rec. Center w/Gym	2	-	-
Rec. Center w/out Gym	0	1	1
Dog Park	0	-	1
Skate Park	0	-	1*
Disc Golf	0	-	1*

*Based on public input, these facilities would be lower priority for development.

Table 3A-Park Acreage (PA)
City of Mebane
Standards for Acreage by Park Classification

Comparison of Standards

Park Types	Town of Chapel Hill	Town of Matthews	Kernersville	NRPA	Mebane 2014 Proposed Standards
Mini Parks	1-4 Acres/Park (.1 Acres/1,000)	1-3 Acres/Park (.25 Acres/1,000)	NA	.25-1 Acres/Park (.25-.5 Acres/1,000)	1-2 Acres/Park (.25 Acres/1,000)
Neighborhood Parks	5- 20 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/1,000)	7-15 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/1,000)	2-15 Acres/Park (2.0 Acres/1,000)	5-10 Acres/Park (1-2 Acres/1,000)	5-10 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/1,000)
Community Parks	20-50 Acres/Park (4 Acres/1,000)	40-100 Acres/Park (5 Acres/1,000)	40-80 Acres/Park (4 Acres/1,000)	30-50 Acres/Park (5-8 Acres/1,000)	40-80 Acres/Park (5 Acres/1,000)
District Parks	50 -100 Acres/Park (2 Acres/1,000)	±200 Acres/Park (5 Acres/1,000)	200-400 Acres/Park (5 Acres/1,000)	+75 Acres/Park (5-10 Acres/1,000)	±100 Acres/Park (5 Acres/1,000)
Regional Parks	+100 Acres/Park (5 Acres/1,000)	100-250 Acres/Park (10 Acres/1,000)	+1,000 Acres/Park (10 Acres/1,000)	NA	±200 Acres/Park (10 Acres/1,000)

Table 3A-Facilities (FAC)
City of Mebane
Recreation Facilities Standards

Comparison of Standards

	NRPA Guidelines	State Standard	Town of Chapel Hill	Town of Matthews	Kernersville	Mebane 2014 Standards
Fields						
Adult Baseball	1/20,000	1/15,000	1/20,000	1/15,000	1/20,000	1/20,000
Youth Baseball	N/A	N/A	1/6,000	1/10,000	1/2,500	1/3,000
Softball	N/A	N/A	1/20,000	1/5,000	1/2,500	1/6,000
Football	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/30,000	1/20,000	1/2,500	1/10,000
Soccer	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/3,000	1/10,000	1/2,500	1/2,000
Courts						
Basketball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/5,000
Tennis	1/2,000	1/2,000	1/2,000	1/4,000	1/ 2,000	1/2,000
Volleyball	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/15,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/5,000
Shuffleboard	1/2,000	N/A	1/15,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/10,000
Horseshoe	1/5,000	N/A	1/15,000	1/10,000	1/2,000	1/10,000
Outdoor Areas						
Picnic Shelter	1/ 2,000	N/A	1/2,500	1/3,000	1/2,500	1/1,500
Playground Activities	N/A	1/1,000	1/3,000	1/1,000	1/2,000	1/1,500
Trails						
Hiking/Fitness/Jogging	1/region	.4 mile/1,000	.4 mile/1,000	.4 mile/1,000	1 mile/3,300	.4 mile/1,000
Specialized						
Rec. Center w/Gym	1/ 25,000	N/A	1/15,000	1/20,000	1/25,000	1/15,000
Rec. Center w/out Gym	1/10,000	N/A	1/20,000		1/10,000	1/15,000
Outdoor Pool	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/10,000	1/20,000
Golf Course	1/25,000	1/25,000	1/50,000	N/A	1/25,000	1/25,000
Bicycling/Urban	1 mile/2,000	1 mile/1,000	1 mile/2,000	1 mile/1,000	1 mile/2,000	1 mile/2,000
Amphitheatre	1/20,000	N/A	1/20,000			1/10,000
Disc Golf	N/A	N/A	1/25,000			1/20,000
Skateboard Park	N/A	N/A	1/50,000			1/20,000
Dog Park	N/A	N/A	1/12,000			1/20,000
Community Garden	N/A	N/A				1/15,000

Table 3B-Park Acreage (PA)
City of Mebane
Park Sites and Acreage Needs Assessment
Current and 10 Year Needs

Park Types	2014 Existing Facilities	Standard for Development	Current Demand 12,500	Current Need 12,500	2024 Demand 18,500	2024 Need 18,500
Mini Parks	1 Park 2.7 acres	1-2 Acres/Park (.25 Acres/1,000)	3 Parks 3.125 Acres	2 New Mini Parks	4 Parks 4.6 Acres	3 New Mini Parks
Neighborhood Parks	1 Park 3 Acres	5-10 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/1,000)	3 Parks 31.5 Acres	2 New Neighborhood Parks	4 Parks 46.25 Acres	3 New Neighborhood Parks
Community Parks	1 Park 46 Acres	30-50 Acres/Park (5 Acres/1,000)	1 Park 62.5 Acres	Needs Met	2 Parks 92.5 Acres	1 New Community Park
District Parks	—	100-200 Acres/Park (5 Acres/1,000)	1 Park 62.5 Acres	1 New District Park	1 Park 92.5 Acres	1 New District Park
Regional Parks	1 Park 200 Acres	±200 Acres/Park (10 Acres/1,000)	1 Park 125 Acres	Needs Met	1 Park 180 Acres	Needs Met

Existing parks

Mini Park: Mebane Recreation Center Complex (playground, picnic shelter, volleyball court)

Neighborhood Park: Holt Street Park

Community Park: Mebane Arts and Community Center Complex

Regional Park: Lake Michael

Table 3B-Facilities (FAC)
City of Mebane
Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment
Current and 10 Year Needs

	2014 Standard	Existing Facilities	Current Demand (12,500)	Current Need	2024 Demand (18,500)	2024 Need (18,500)
Fields						
Adult Baseball	1/20,000	0	-	-	1	1
Youth Baseball	1/3,000	4	4	-	6	2
Softball	1/6,000	2	2	-	3	1
Football	1/10,000	1	1	-	2	1
Soccer	1/2,000	5	6	1	9	4
Courts						
Basketball (outdoor)	1/5,000	0	2	2	4	4
Tennis Court	1/2,000	3	6	3	9	6
Volleyball	1/5,000	3	2	-	4	1
Horseshoes	1/10,000	2	1	-	2	-
Shuffleboard	1/10,000	0	1	1	2	2
Outdoor Areas						
Playgrounds	1/1,500	6	8	2	12	6
Picnic Shelter	1/1,500	8	8	-	12	4
Trails						
Hiking/Fitness/Jogging	.4 miles/1,000	2.4 miles	4.8 miles	2.4 miles	7.4 miles	5.0 miles
Specialized						
Amphitheater	1/10,000	0	1	1	1	1
Community Garden	1/15,000	1	1	-	1	-
Swimming Pool	1/20,000	0	-	-	1	1
Recreation Center w/ Gym	1/15,000	2*	1	-	1	-
Recreation Center w/o Gym	1/15,000	0	-	-	1	1
Dog Park	1/20,000	0	1	-	1	1
Skate Park	1/20,000	0	-	-	1	1
Disc Golf	1/20,000	0	1	-	1	1

*Includes Mebane Arts and Community Center and Mebane Recreation Center



Walker Field Complex

Section Four

Proposals & Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

Mebane's parks and recreational facilities have been an important part of the City's fabric for decades. The City's commitment to public recreation is evidenced by the financial commitment made to construct the Mebane Arts and Community Center over two decades ago; when the City's population was only $\pm 5,000$.

Currently the City offers its citizens over 250 acres of park land and a wide variety of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. As the Needs Assessment in Section Three indicates, these parks are meeting many of the recreational needs of the citizens.

Even with +250 acres of park land and several outstanding parks, there are areas where improvements are needed. There are some neighborhoods that do not have immediate access to parks, there are deficiencies in some recreational facilities, there is a need for some form of aquatics facility, and there are missed opportunities with regard to walking trails and greenway connections between parks.

Identification of these recreational needs/opportunities come at a time when Mebane (like most communities in North Carolina) is attempting to grow out of the nation's worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Finding the revenue to improve its parks must be balanced with the reality of the current economic conditions; therefore, it will require a balanced Plan of Action (discussed in Section Five) that seeks partnerships with other community agencies.

Mebane is not alone in its mission to provide parks and recreational facilities to its citizens. There are a number of public and private agencies and organizations in the community that share in that role.

Alamance-Burlington Schools offer its students a wide range of athletic facilities. Some of those facilities are currently being used by the City for non-school recreational purposes. While there is currently some joint use of facilities, the exploration and expansion of joint use opportunities would benefit taxpayers.

Alamance and Orange Counties offer programs and facilities through their Recreation and Parks Departments. Several county parks are relatively close to the citizens of Mebane, but neither of these departments are primary providers of recreation facilities to the citizens of Mebane.

Another major player with the mission of improving community health and quality of life is Alamance Regional Hospital. The City should look for opportunities to partner with the hospital in the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

Finally, the private sector plays an important role in providing recreational opportunities in the community.

A number of fitness clubs, neighborhood swim clubs, churches, and other private or quasi-private organizations provide valuable recreation opportunities to the citizens of Mebane. The facilities and programs these private sector



Boys & Girls Club of Alamance County provides a variety of programs for the youth

organizations provide should be considered as Mebane plans development of future facilities.

To determine specific park and recreation recommendations for Mebane, it is essential to clearly understand how the City will interface with the other recreational providers in the community. This cooperative effort will eliminate duplication of facilities and services. The proposals in this Master Plan are based on what each recreational provider is anticipated to offer through the ten year planning period (2014-2024).

State of North Carolina

Several state parks (Eno River State Park, Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area and Falls Lake State Park) are within a relatively short drive of Mebane. It is anticipated that the State of North Carolina will continue to maintain and operate all state parks within the region. The City, along with other nearby government agencies, should express their interest to see these parks enhanced to their utmost potential. This may include the expansion of facilities and recreational opportunities. The State should continue to offer a variety of recreational facilities and programs on a regional basis. In addition, the State should be the provider of regional state parks that include opportunities for camping, fishing, biking, and special facilities of regional and statewide interest.

Surrounding Park and Recreation Agencies

The Mebane Recreation and Parks Department is not the only municipal recreation provider in the area. The City of Burlington has a Parks and Recreation Department and offers park and recreation programs through both indoor and outdoor facilities. Likewise, the City of Graham also provides municipal recreation facilities and parks. Currently the City of Graham is planning and developing a park west of the Hawfield Community area. This park will likely serve some Mebane residents in that area of the City.

All park and recreation agencies operating within the region should meet annually to communicate

with each other in an effort to minimize duplication and maximize cooperative planning.

Alamance-Burlington School System

The Recreation and Parks Department has a tradition of collaborating with other agencies and organizations in the delivery of quality leisure experiences and the development and management of parks and recreation areas and facilities. The City has not partnered with Alamance-Burlington Schools to develop outdoor facilities that serve the needs of both the schools and citizens as public park facilities, but does collaborate with the local schools on some programs and use of facilities.

At this time, the relationship between the City's Recreation and Parks Department and schools seem to be meeting everyone's needs. In the future cooperative efforts could be expanded if desirable.

Alamance Regional Medical Center

Citizens of Mebane have access to an outstanding medical facility in Alamance Regional Medical Center. This facility provides residents of Mebane and the surrounding area with excellent health care. Recent studies on obesity and healthy lifestyles have made it apparent that a community's health is linked to regular physical activity. Many of these activities are offered by the City's Recreation and Parks Department.

The Hospital and Recreation and Parks Department should explore opportunities to work together to assist citizens in achieving a more active lifestyle.



Mebane Youth Soccer Association provides a variety of soccer programs to youth in Orange and Alamance Counties

CITY OF MEBANE PROPOSALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The City, through its Recreation and Parks Department, currently affords its citizens a variety of recreation opportunities through its parks and recreational facilities. These parks provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation.

The City's park system is primarily oriented toward larger parks (community and regional). Currently there are only two small parks (Holt Street Park and Mebane Recreation Center Complex) included in its park system.

The City's existing parks provide a solid foundation of recreation facilities and green space, however, there are a number of areas where expansion and improvements are needed.

The Recreation and Parks Department must work with other agencies in the community to provide the park land and facilities that will be required. This collaborative effort should include working with the local school board, the surrounding counties, and adjacent municipal departments to minimize duplication of facilities by developing and maintaining joint use agreements wherever possible.

Through the planning and public involvement process, standards for park acreage and recreation facilities have been developed. These standards were defined in Section Three: Standards and Needs Assessment and identified in Table 3A- Park Acreage (PA) and Table 3A- Facilities (FAC).

Utilizing the standards for development and applying them to the City's current and projected population, a needs assessment for both parks and recreation facilities was developed. The summary of this needs assessment is found in the tables at the end of Section Three.

While the tables provide “the numbers” of the needs assessment, this section will define the reasoning behind the numbers and a description of how the numbers are used to provide recommendations that will ultimately guide the Department in the coming decade.

We begin with a overview of the different park types found in the City’s system, and how these parks will be developed in the future.



Buckquarter Creek Trail at Eno River State Park

Regional Parks

Regional parks are typically large, passive oriented parks that highlight, utilize and protect a unique feature. These parks, as the name implies, serve people from across a region; therefore, most people have to travel to enjoy these park types. As noted in Section Three, regional parks are typically offered by national, state, or county agencies. Occasionally municipalities will provide a regional park.

The City of Mebane has a unique public property at Lake Michael. The former reservoir offers a valuable water resource with opportunities for trails and water access. Expansion and improvement of walking trails could greatly increase the use of this facility. Likewise, connecting this site with neighborhoods and other points of interest along a greenway would make an outstanding regional attraction. Improvements made to Lake Michael Park should be made in conjunction with Orange County. Much of the park’s current use is by county residents.

In addition to Lake Michael Park, the State of North Carolina operates two state parks within easy driving distance of the citizens of Mebane. Oconeechee Mountain State Natural Area and Eno River State Park provide nature trails, camping, fishing and picnic facilities.

Lake Michael Park, in combination with the area’s state parks, provide regional park opportunities for the citizens of Mebane. Development of an additional regional park should not be a priority for the City.

District Park

District Parks are another large park type often provided by county agencies or larger municipalities. These parks are typically in the 100 acre range, and provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities.

The development of this type facility often falls to county agencies. Unfortunately none of the park facilities offered by either county are close enough to Mebane to meet the City’s needs for a district park.

The City is currently negotiating with the NC Agriculture Foundation to lease 152 acres off Turner Road. This site has great potential to serve as a district park for both Mebane residents and the residents of Orange County.

The City should move forward with this important project. Once lease agreements are in place, the next step in the development of this park should be a master plan to determine public needs and to better understand the development opportunities for this site.

Community Parks

Community parks are an important component in most municipal park systems. These parks are usually large enough (30-50 acres) to provide both valuable active recreation opportunities and preservation of undeveloped open space and passive recreation areas.

Mebane has one community park. Mebane Arts and Community Center Complex is the City's "Central Park". The park, which was constructed in the 1990's, has continuously been improved and expanded. It provides a wide variety of active recreation (ball fields, soccer fields, playgrounds, etc.), but very little low impact recreation (trails, picnicking, etc.), and open space.

This complex has adequate size and facilities to meet the current community park needs of the City. With that said, there are improvements that could be made to the park that would expand its use and provide additional recreational opportunities. Some of the ideas that have been discussed in stakeholder interviews and staff discussions include:

- Conducting an ADA accessibility audit and making recommended improvements
- Opening the complex up with extended operation hours
- Providing additional picnic shelters
- Introducing outdoor exercise equipment

A site specific master plan should be developed for Mebane Arts and Community Center Complex.

By 2024 the City will need a second community park based on the increase in population. The need for a second community park is further validated when one looks at the recreational facilities that will be needed by 2024. While the property on Turner Road (see section on District Parks) will provide valuable passive recreation, site features will not allow athletic fields and active recreation. A second community park will allow development of additional active recreation facilities.

One option for meeting the future needs of one additional community park would be working with the City of Graham as it develops the park on Jim Minor Road.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks play an important role in providing both active and passive recreation in most municipal park systems. These parks,



Holt Street Park could be improved to provide a wider variety of activities

usually in the 5-10 acre range, are large enough to include both active and passive recreation opportunities. Most community parks also serve as a neighborhood park to those citizens living within a mile radius.

Mebane has only one neighborhood park; Holt Street Park. Typically smaller community park systems rely more on neighborhood parks. Additional neighborhood parks would provide opportunities for people to visit parks for activities like playgrounds, walking, picnics, etc. within their neighborhoods. With the excellent sidewalk system in Mebane many people would actually be able to walk to these parks. This concept is consistent with the initiatives promoted by Mebane on the Move and the City's Land Development Plan.

Mini Parks

Mini parks are the smallest of the park types. These parks typically are less than an acre and provide a limited range of activities (playground, picnic shelter, benches, etc.). The City currently has only one mini park; the outdoor recreation facilities at Mebane Recreation Center Complex.

Mini Parks, like neighborhood parks, provide relatively limited recreation facilities, but are located in close proximity to the service population they serve.

As noted under neighborhood parks, the development of several smaller mini parks would provide “walk to” opportunities in many neighborhoods.

Several of Mebane’s planned residential communities have park and recreational facilities similar to mini parks and neighborhood parks. These facilities provide recreational opportunities to residents living within the community. These existing facilities provide valuable opportunities for recreation and should be taken into consideration when planning future parks.



The outdoor facilities at Mebane Recreation Center Complex serve as a mini park.

Civic Parks

Civic parks are community spaces that often provide a sense of place for a town or city. The size and form of civic parks may vary considerably. Likewise, how the spaces are used and programed vary. Civic parks may include urban plazas, community green spaces and lawns, memorials, etc.

Mebane already has several small civic places in its downtown area. There may be other opportunities for the development of civic parks as part of downtown improvements.

Greenways

The most popular form of outdoor recreation in the nation is walking. This popularity was reflected in the surveys that were conducted as part of this planning study and in comments made during the public meetings. Greenway trails are typically off-

road trails that meander through neighborhoods and natural areas providing transportation corridors and recreational opportunities for walkers, joggers, roller bladers, and cyclists. The trail surface can either be natural or paved. Paved trails are normally eight to ten feet in width. Natural surface trail widths can vary based on conditions.

In addition to providing environmental protection and recreation opportunities, greenways can produce economic development. The North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation recently conducted a study on a bicycle trail constructed along the northern Outer Banks region. This study determined that a \$6.7 million investment in off-road bike paths and shoulder improvements produced an estimated \$60 million annually in economic benefit. In addition, the study found that:

- Bicycle facilities in the area are an important factor to many tourists visiting the region.
- Investments in the bicycle facilities improved the safety of the area’s transportation system.
- Bicycle activities include the benefits of health, fitness, quality of life, and the environment.

Greenways also offer a valuable alternative to automotive transportation. A greenway trail often provides a linkage between communities, schools, churches, businesses, and parks.

The City does not currently have any greenways, but in the future there should be consideration given to developing this type of community amenity. The first step in that process will be development of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This process is currently underway through the Burlington Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization. The next step will be the development of a community wide greenway master plan.

Greenways should be developed in conjunction with other park and recreation providers in the area (Alamance and Orange County, Graham, Burlington, etc.) to ensure they are coordinated with other planning efforts and that there is continuity between plans.

Bikeways

The need for bikeable roads and the development of greenways for biking was mentioned in many of the interviews and in the public meeting. With the focus on healthy lifestyles, the environment, and alternative transportation, there is a great need to develop and implement a bike plan.

The City, in conjunction with the Burlington Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization (BGMPO), is currently developing a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Findings from this plan should make recommendations that will improve bike routes throughout the City.

The City should encourage the State to include bike lanes whenever roadway improvements are made or new roads constructed. The City should also address their subdivision process to ensure developers provide bicycle (and pedestrian) routes in the roadway improvements they construct as part of the development process.

The City should consider applying for federal SAFETEA program non-vehicular transportation funds that encourage alternative means of transportation. These funds have been used to construct bike lanes and greenway trails in communities throughout North Carolina.



The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will provide valuable direction on making the City more bikeable and walkable

RENOVATION & EXPANSION OF EXISTING PARKS

While the focus of the previous recommendations has been on the acquisition and development of new parks, there is also a need to improve and expand facilities at many of the City's existing parks. As part of the ongoing planning and budgeting process, the City's Recreation and Parks Department annually establishes a list of capital improvement projects. This list of capital improvement needs is then used by the Department and elected officials to establish yearly capital improvement budgets.

Important renovation projects which should be considered include:

- Improvements to Mebane Arts and Community Center
- Expansion of trails at Lake Michael
- Improvements to Holt Street Park

MASTER PLANS FOR FUTURE PARK IMPROVEMENTS

As noted in previous sections, master plans should be developed for several of the City's existing parks and future parks. Parks and facilities that warrant special study include:

- Mebane Arts and Community Center Complex
- Holt Street Park
- Mebane Recreation Center Complex
- Turner Road Property
- Future Community Park
- Citywide Greenway

FACILITY PROPOSALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This report recommends the City should construct a new district park, community park, several smaller parks, and make improvement to its exiting parks

by the year 2024. The improvements that will be made as part of these renovations and expansions will add many new facilities to the parks inventory. The City should consider the list of facility needs established in Section Three and described in greater detail as follows:

Adult Baseball

Over the past five to ten years, the popularity of adult baseball has waned, both locally and across the nation. Based on this trend a standard of one field per 20,000 people for the development of adult baseball fields is recommended. Utilizing this standard of field development, the City does not have a pressing need for an additional adult baseball field, but may need one in the future.

Youth Baseball

Youth baseball is a very popular sport in North Carolina and that popularity is evident in Mebane. The City has four youth baseball fields, which are meeting current needs. As the City grows in population there will be a need for additional fields.



Softball

Men's adult softball has traditionally been a popular sport in North Carolina. NRPA and NCDENR standards (one field per 5,000 people) reflect that popularity. While the sport is still popular in some areas, there has been a shift in demand of men's adult softball in many communities. This plan recommends a standard of development of one field per 6,000 people

(comparable to other North Carolina communities). Based on this standard, the City does not currently have a need for additional softball fields. City growth could result in the need for an additional field in the future.

It should also be noted that changes in demand have now placed additional emphasis on women's softball. In the future, softball fields should be designed to accommodate this new area of play, or some of the existing fields should be retrofitted to allow for women's play.

Football

Football's popularity as a community based youth sport has been reduced by the emergence of soccer and (most recently) lacrosse. With that said, demand for football was heard at the public workshop. With this understanding, the standard for development of football fields is one field for every 10,000 people within the service community. This new standard results in the need an additional field in the future.

Soccer

Soccer is one of the fastest growing sports in America. Local demand for the sport was expressed in the survey and during one on one interviews. This master plan reflects this demand by establishing a standard of one field for every 2,000 people within the service population. Utilizing this standard for development, the City needs one additional field immediately and will need several additional fields by 2024.

The City wisely decided to light its soccer fields, which effectively doubles their use. Likewise, the development of synthetic turf fields could greatly increase playing time on existing fields and reduce the number of fields needed.

A final note on soccer, the demand for multi-purpose fields will be made more intense by the new interest in lacrosse. Played on a field very similar to a soccer field (they are slightly larger than soccer fields), lacrosse will likely increase in popularity and should be considered as the City

reviews its soccer field needs. This new sport should be taken into consideration since play for both sports can be programmed on similar fields. One method to accommodate the variety of field games (soccer, lacrosse, rugby, football) is to develop larger multi-use fields that can be used for a variety of field games.

Basketball (Outdoor)

Basketball remains an extremely popular sport in the United States. Played by a variety of ages, and increasingly by females, this sport can be played either indoors or out. Currently the City provides two gymnasiums with indoor basketball, but does not provide any outdoor courts. Based on national and state standards of development of one outdoor basketball court per 5,000 people, the City currently has a need for several outdoor courts; however, there is not a need for an indoor basketball court.

See the section on Community Centers and Gymnasiums for the community's need for indoor courts.



Tennis

Based on input received in stakeholders interviews and the public workshops, tennis is a very popular sport in Mebane. Currently the city has only three public courts. These courts are not adequate to meet current demand.

Utilizing a standard of facility development matching the national and state standards (one court per 2,000 people) there is a current need for three additional courts. By 2024, with the growth in population, the need will increase to four new courts. Everyone attending the public workshop speaking on behalf of the need for additional tennis courts spoke to the importance of building six to eight courts in one location.



Volleyball

The City has three outdoor volleyball court. These courts are meeting current demand. Courts could be constructed in the future if demand is expressed. Volleyball courts are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.

Shuffleboard

There has been no expressed demand for outdoor shuffleboard courts from citizens of Mebane; therefore, the City does not have any courts. This activity provides a recreational outlet and opportunities for social interaction, particularly for older citizens.

The City may consider building shuffleboard courts in parks if there is a demand for this activity in the future. Like volleyball courts, shuffleboard courts are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.

Horseshoes

There has been limited demand for horseshoe pits in the community; therefore, the City has two pits in its park system. This activity provides a recreation outlet for social interaction, particularly for older citizens. The City may consider building horseshoe pits if there is additional demand for this activity in the future. Like shuffleboard courts, horseshoe pits are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.

Picnic Shelters

Picnicking was one of the most popular recreational activities listed by respondents in the City's survey (75% expressed interest in picnicking). Mebane currently has eight shelters in its park system. Based on a standard of one shelter per 1,500 people, there is not a need for additional shelters at this time, but there will be a need in the future.

Playgrounds

The City has six playgrounds in its parks. As new parks are developed, Mebane should look for locations for additional playgrounds. Larger parks may warrant more than one playground. Safety inspections and ADA accessibility audits should be conducted at all existing playgrounds.



As new playgrounds are completed and existing playgrounds renovated, the department should replace wood fiber and sand surfaces with poured in place (PIP) safety surfacing. PIP surfaces provide wheelchair accessibility and

reduces maintenance and lifecycle costs of the playgrounds.

Pedestrian Trails

Walking is the number one outdoor recreational activity in the United States. Walking or biking trail use scored high in the public survey ($\pm 81\%$ indicated they are interested in using trails). Over half (55%) stated their need for trails were not being met.

With this level of public demand, the development of walking trails should be a priority for future park development. A priority should be placed on walking trail development in all existing and future parks. A paved walking trail is an important component of all park types, and should be provided in all neighborhood, community parks and district parks.

In the future, the City should consider developing a citywide greenway master plan. The concept of connecting parks and other points of interest with walking trails utilizing underdeveloped property along the City's creeks was discussed in the public workshop and in one on one interviews. It was also listed as an important initiative in the City's 2010 Land Development Plan.

The City, through the Burlington Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization, is currently developing a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This plan will provide valuable information about community connectivity and can serve as a beginning step in developing a greenway master plan.

Biking Trails

As noted above, the Burlington Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization is currently funding a bicycle and pedestrian plan. This plan will provide valuable recommendations on improving bike routes within the City.

Biking is a rapidly growing outdoor recreational activity. The City should expand opportunities for biking through the development of a greenway

trail system, including paths suitable for biking in existing and future parks, and through encouraging NCDOT to develop roads with bike lanes or wider shoulders to accommodate bikers. The Recreation and Parks Department should work with other stakeholders to help promote and facilitate new bikeways throughout the City.

Amphitheaters and Neighborhood Performing Areas

Currently the City does not have an amphitheater or outdoor performance area. Several stakeholders identified the desire for creating economic impact through festivals and community events. The development of an outdoor performing arts area could support this recommendation.

The City should also make provisions for smaller, neighborhood gathering places for plays, small concerts, and other special events. These facilities would provide a small stage and space for gathering in a more informal manner when compared to a large amphitheater.

SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

Community Centers and Gymnasiums

The City of Mebane has outstanding indoor recreation facilities. The Mebane Arts and Community Center is an excellent indoor facility that provides opportunities for a variety of indoor recreation activities and programs. The facility, which was constructed in 1995, is well designed and operated. Based on the telephone survey it is the recreation facility most widely used by Mebane citizens.

The Mebane Recreation Center, has been the center of community activity for many decades. The building was originally built as a school, then converted to a recreation center and now houses the Mebane Historical Museum, a practice gymnasium, train room and tennis pro office. While most of the building is currently being used for non-recreational activities, the gymnasium is still used for basketball practices.

Future plans for the building are being discussed. The train room will likely be expanded into storage space being used by the Recreation and Parks Department.

The current indoor facilities Mebane offers are adequate for a community with less than 20,000 people. Building a new recreation center with gymnasium does not seem to be a priority based on other needs identified in this planning report.

One indoor component that seems to be missing in the City's two indoor facilities is an exercise room or fitness facility. An indoor exercise and fitness facility ranked very high in the survey (77% expressed interest in this activity). In the future, the City may consider expanding the Mebane Arts and Community Center to include workout space.



Another comment that was expressed with one on one interviews was the desire to expand the “arts” component in the Mebane Arts and Community Center. It was noted that while the center provides valuable gymnasium and meeting space, there was little opportunities for the display, promotion and education of art in this facility. Development of spaces/facilities for visual and performing arts would greatly expand the athletic programming offered in this building.

Another important component of the Mebane Arts and Community Center that was discussed in stakeholder interviews and in the public workshops was updating the 20 year old center and enhancing

art space within the center. The City is currently working on plans for center improvements. These improvements will enhance the look and use of this important facility.

Swimming Pools and Spraygrounds

In the past, NRPA and NCDENR provided a standard for pool development of one pool for every 20,000 people. This standard was based on the concept of multi neighborhood or community pools. Today, with the high cost of operation and construction of swimming pools, very few agencies develop neighborhood/community pools to that old standard. Instead municipalities typically provide more centralized facilities where one pool may serve a greater population.

The City currently does not provide any aquatic facilities or programs. There are several private swim clubs in the area, but no public swimming pool. For a city of Mebane's population, this is somewhat unusual. The demand for an aquatic facility was expressed in the survey. Almost three fourths (72%) of those interviewed expressed interest in an aquatic facility. Eighty-one percent said their aquatic needs are not being met. Even with the high cost of construction and operation, many communities with populations over 10,000 offer a public swimming facility. Based on the response from the public workshop and survey there appears to be community demand for a public pool.



Splashpads provide an alternative to the high cost of swimming pools

The development of a swimming pool would allow swim lessons and courses on water safety. A pool would also allow an opportunity for lap swim, water aerobics and other healthy life style activities.

In the past there have been community discussions about the development of a YMCA in Mebane. While these discussions did not come to fruition, development of a local YMCA could be considered in the future. A family YMCA facility could be one avenue for meeting both indoor fitness and aquatics facility needs.

The final decision on an aquatic facility should be worked out in future planning studies, but the City should take the initiative to carefully considered providing some form of aquatic facility.

Spraygrounds are growing in popularity across the country. In addition to offering a water-based play experience, the play structures, sprays, etc. afford children of all ages a total play environment and are much more economical to operate than a standard swimming pool. A properly designed, large water park sprayground can serve as a regional draw, provide revenue to the Department, and provide a beneficial economic impact to the surrounding areas.

TRENDS IN PARK & RECREATION FACILITIES

The list of recreational activities developed for this Comprehensive Plan is based on national and state standards that have been used in park planning for decades. As noted earlier in this section, these standards are used as a point of reference, with the understanding that each community should develop standards that are unique to their specific needs.

One of the downsides of the national and state guidelines is that they are not updated often and fail to incorporate newer trends and activities. In the past decade, several new activities have been growing in popularity and should be considered in future park development. These activities include:

Skateboard Parks and Extreme Sports

Skateboarding has been popular for several decades. In the past decade, many communities have recognized its popularity and have tried to provide a safe and vandal resistant setting for this creative sport. There was some interest in a skateboard park expressed in the survey and public workshops, but this activity ranked relatively low in priority. While not an immediate priority, a skateboard park may be considered as a future amenity.

Disc Golf

Disc golf did not receive significant demand in the survey, but nationally the popularity of the sport continues to grow. The City does not currently have a disc golf course. Disc golf courses are inexpensive and have minimal impact on the land. The City may consider development of a disc golf court in the future park on Turner Road.

Off-leash Dog Areas

Off-leash dog areas are one of the newest trends in park development. The popularity of these facilities (also known as dog parks), is a response to the nation's love of pets. Communities throughout North Carolina are now constructing dog parks. Several people spoke in favor of a dog park at the public workshop.



Man's best friend at play

Dog parks take many forms, but are primarily a place within a park where park users can bring their dogs to run, walk, and recreate. They usually include a fenced open area where dogs, accompanied by their owner, are allowed to run

free. Often the off-leash dog area is divided into sections for large and small dogs.

The City may consider development of a dog park in one of its parks in the future.

Community Gardens

Community gardens provide a wide variety of community enhancements. They offer health benefits by providing local gardeners with fresh vegetables and increased exercise as they tend the gardens. They also provide environmental benefits by reducing transportation cost for food production and providing more plant cover, which reduces urbanization impacts on climate change. In addition, community gardens provide a venue for social interaction that reduces isolation and supports community involvement.

With the many benefits provided by community gardens, many parks and recreation agencies are implementing community garden programs. The City has facilitated development of a community garden with the Mebane Woman's Club. Should this initial garden prove successful, other garden locations should be considered.



Walker Field, like many of Mebane's parks, is a local landmark

Section Five

Action Plan Implementation

INTRODUCTION

This Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Master Plan is based upon an assessment of the community's character and growth, an analysis of the existing park system, the development of recreation standards, the identification of user needs, and the creation of proposals and recommendations to meet those needs. The plan is designed to provide recommendations that will guide the City's Recreation and Parks Department as it enhances their parks and recreation system.

Instrumental to the implementation of the Master Plan is the identification of adequate funding for facility development and improvements. Finding adequate funding is particularly difficult in this time of lower tax base and budget concerns. Limited budgets place even greater importance on careful planning to meet projected needs. In addition to capital cost, the Master Plan must also consider operational and management issues. This section reviews some of these issues.

While much of the focus of previous sections has been on capital needs and facility improvements. Physical improvements are only part of the needs for the Department. As staff plans for the future, they should also consider a number of operational and management issues that will position them to meet community needs. This section reviews some of those issues.

This section will look at a Capital Improvements Plan for recommendations found in Section Four and provide a strategy for raising funds to construct the proposed improvements and new facilities.

Implementing the recommendations made in this Master Plan will result in meeting the future needs for parks and recreation services, as well as preserving open space in the area. The City should establish annual budgets for projected capital improvements, staffing, operations and maintenance costs for the Department that not only meet current needs, but also allow acquisition and development for future needs. This Action Plan is designed to give the Department a realistic approach to financing the proposals and recommendations of this Master Plan.

REVENUE PLAN

Upon adoption of the Master Plan, the Department, with input from civic leaders, should consider the establishment of a revenue plan. A revenue plan incorporates all available funding resources in a community, prioritizes them, and puts each option into a funding strategy. In a revenue plan, the following funding alternatives are evaluated for their appropriate use in funding capital improvements and programs:

Key Funding/Revenue Sources

The Recreation and Parks Department has strong public support, but even so, innovative measures will be required to meet some of the needs identified in this plan. The proposed additional facilities and expanded operations will require dollars from a variety of sources. The following funding sources are provided to help the City evaluate funding options.

General Tax Revenues (operational and capital)

General tax revenues traditionally provide the principle source of funds for general operations and maintenance of municipal and county recreation and parks systems. Recreation, as a public service, is scheduled along with health, public safety, schools, etc. in annual budgets



established by the governing authority. Assessed valuation of real and personal property provides the framework for this major portion of the tax base. This tax base is then used to fund the majority of municipal services. If the City wishes to offer a park and recreation system that provides quality of life and healthy lifestyle opportunities for the community, the current level of funding for parks and recreation must be maintained or increased.

Park Foundation (operational and capital)

A park foundation can be instrumental in assisting the City in acquiring land, developing facilities, sponsoring programs, and buying equipment for the Department. Park foundations typically create funding strategies for generating funds to support park projects. These include foundation membership fees, individual gifts, grants from other recognized and national foundations, long term endowments, and a land trust for future acquisitions.

The Department has very strong support from a core of long time park and recreation community boosters, but does not have an organized park foundation. Development of a citizen group to support, promote and fund park programs and facilities would be an excellent way to mobilize those in the community who would like to see improved parks.

General Foundations (operational and capital)

Another source of revenue is the direct contribution of money from state and national General Foundations. Foundation funds should be sought for both development and construction

of facilities as well as providing programs. They should include general-purpose foundations that have relatively few restrictions, special program foundations for specific activities, and corporate foundations with local connections. The Trust for Public Land and NC Rails-Trail have been instrumental in providing financial and technical assistance for open space conservation and development of greenways in North Carolina.

Another source of local assistance may be large corporations with foundations established to provide grants for public projects. Companies such as Bank of America, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and Duke Energy, may have available funding through existing grant programs, or they may be interested in creating a program or partnership for specific projects.

The Department should actively pursue grants from foundation and trust sources on a regional and national level. Information on trusts and foundations can be found through the Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003-3076 (<http://foundationcenter.org/>) and the Non-Profit Gateway to Federal Government agencies (<http://www.usa.gov/index.shtml>).

General Obligation Bonds (capital)

General tax revenue for parks and recreation are usually devoted to current operations and maintenance of existing facilities. General obligation bonds are often used to finance capital improvements in parks. The State of North Carolina gives municipal and county governments the authority to accomplish this borrowing of funds for parks and recreation through the issuance of bonds not to exceed the total cost of improvements (including land acquisition). For purposes of paying the debt service on the sale of these bonds, cities are often required to increase property taxes. Total bonding capacities for local government is limited to a maximum percentage of assessed property valuation.

Mebane has not used this method of financing park improvements in the past. In view of the recommended capital improvements suggested in

this plan, borrowing of funds to acquire new land and develop facilities may be necessary.

An added value of a governing agency's bonding authority and capacity is its ability to use those funds to leverage other funding opportunities. Bonding enables government agencies to utilize funds to match federal grant-in-aid monies or state funds. General obligation bonds are still the greatest source utilized to fund park projects in North Carolina. Through a well thought out and publicly presented bond campaign, voters would be given the opportunity to choose to support park improvements through the sale of bonds.

Revenue Bonds (capital)

Revenue bonds are used for financing high use specialty facilities like golf courses, aquatic centers, tennis centers, and complexes for softball and soccer. The users, and other revenue sources, pay for operations and sometimes repay the bonds. This revenue source would only be of use to the City if they choose to change their tax subsidy policy for using this type of funding. The City most likely would not seek out this option.

The legal requirements for utilizing these funding mechanisms are extremely complicated and can actually require approval from the state legislature. Use of revenue bonds seem to be unlikely at this time.

Limited Option or Special Use Tax (capital)

Limited option or special use taxes can be established in various ways. A municipality or county can establish the tax by determining the source, such as property valuation, real estate transfer taxes, or sales tax. This option requires legislative approval. Typically, special use taxes are structured on sales tax or transfer taxes and are earmarked for a specific project. A governing body can approve a tax that is identified or earmarked on property valuation; however, other sources may require state approval. The idea behind a special option or limited option tax is that the tax is identified or limited for a special purpose or

projects and the duration can also be limited to accomplishing the projects.

Federal and State Assistance (capital)

Federal funding sources are available to assist financing capital improvement recommendations found in this plan. One of the oldest park funding sources has been available from the U.S. Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Several of the City's existing parks were funded with monies from this funding source. Unfortunately, funding through this program has been sporadic over the past few years. Other potential federal funding sources are the National Foundation of Arts and Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

The North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill in 1994 creating a consistent source of funds for parks and recreation in the state. The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) provides money for capital improvements, repairs, renovations, and land acquisition in state and local parks. Revenues from the state's portion of the real estate deed transfer tax support the fund. Revenues vary from year to year. Since 2007, funds from real estate taxes have been significantly lower.

Of the funds allocated, 65% go to the state parks system, 30% provide matching grants to local governments, and the remaining 5% go to the Coastal and Estuarine Water Beach Access Program. The maximum matching grant is limited to \$500,000 for a single project. The PARTF system allows an agency to apply for a 50/50 cost-sharing grant to develop or acquire parkland and facilities.

The City has not sought funding from a PARTF grant for park development. In the future, the City may consider applying for funds through this program on a regular basis.

Additionally, the State can fund projects such as bikeways and pedestrian walks through the federally funded SAFTEA [formerly known as the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)]. The North Carolina Department of

Transportation (NCDOT) administers the funds and the local government agency can use these funds for developing portions of any proposed greenway system. Local communities can also apply for assistance with pedestrian, bikeway, and greenway projects by applying for "NCDOT Enhancement Funds."

Another source of state administered funding is through the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF). These funds are set aside for the acquisition of riparian properties, financing of innovative wastewater management initiatives, stormwater mitigation and stream bank restoration projects, support for greenways, and some planning programs. The acquired or purchased property can be used for recreation while protecting valuable water resources from the affects of urban encroachment. Money from this grant is particularly applicable to the preservation of open space, greenway development, and water access.

Unfortunately, since the economic downturn that started in 2008, all of these funding sources have been greatly reduced.

User Fees (operational)

User fees are often charged by park and recreation departments to offset operational cost, and (occasionally) provide funding for the construction of facilities. Every department must establish its philosophy with regard to cost recovery through the use of fees. Mebane has historically charged fees for some facilities and programs, but these fees have typically not been set to cover the total operational cost of the program and have never been used to finance construction of facilities.

Currently the City does receive some revenue from rentals and classes. While these user fees are an important part of the Department's budget, it must also be noted that the user fees do not cover the cost of their respective programs.

Ultimately the City may consider a change in user fees that will help offset more of the cost of some activities. Based on elected officials' direction, the revenue generated by increased fees could then

be used to reduce the general fund and possibly increase capital improvement funding to help make park improvements and expansion.

Many of the Department's facilities are outdoors (playgrounds, open space, athletic facilities, etc.) and offer only limited opportunity for cost recovery. There may be some areas where greater cost recovery could be achieved. Examples may include higher rental fees for shelters, fields, etc. or for requiring permits for dog parks, disc golf, etc.

This method of funding is particularly applicable in the event the Department constructs an indoor fitness facility or a swimming pool. The Department will need to update its current revenue and pricing policy as part of an overall revenue plan based on the values and guiding funding



principles of the area. The cost of additional facilities and operation of those facilities must be increasingly borne by the user through user fees.

Revenue Opportunities

User fees are not the only means of generating revenue. The Department should be constantly exploring additional opportunities for generating income. Some of these opportunities include:

- Sponsorships from local private businesses. Sponsorships typically come in the form of products, events, programs, cause-related, and in-kind. Sponsorships can also take the form of naming rights for a facility or program. The City is currently using this revenue tool on the athletic fields. Sponsorship or naming

agreements should include very specific details related to sponsorship cost, duration, use of promotional materials, etc.

- Grant applications from local foundations, state and federal agencies, or individuals are typically created by staff. Most grants take time to prepare and require coordination effort with other agencies or departments from within the community to create a quality submittal. Grants also require extensive tracking of expenditures and outcomes for attaining future funding.
- Partnerships are a relatively new method of sharing funding resources to provide services. These partnerships can be formed with a wide variety of other public or private agencies. Many times the partners are two or more government agencies. Through these partnerships, the City receives direct benefit in either facility use, programming assistance, or volunteer man hours. All of these benefits add value to the department and help offset cost; thus creating earned income for the department. This earned income requires both agencies to have common visions, values, and goals for the partnership to be successful. Examples of partnerships include:
 - Church facilities or recreation services.
 - Youth sports associations that help the Department provide the services to the community for the sports that they represent.
 - Trail sponsors that adopt sections of trails for maintenance and cleanup.
 - Adopt-a-park partners that help maintain park lands. These sponsors are typically in the form of neighborhood associations and businesses that are in proximity to parks.
 - School partnerships where both partners invest in the development of facilities and programs based on shared use of facilities and staff. This investment may be financial, or may include other means of support.
 - Special event partners that assist with the development of community-wide events.
 - Program partners who assist in providing services to the community. One potential partnership could be with Hawfield

Presbyterian Church to co-sponsor athletic and family events.

- Advertising and licensing in programs, facilities, and events sponsored by the Department. The City could leverage highly exposed advertising space to businesses willing to pay a fee for the right to advertise. They are already using this method of revenue generation by selling naming rights to the athletic fields at the athletic complex at Mebane Arts and Community Center.
- Volunteer development programs can reduce staff costs. Volunteers can create advocacy and bring down the cost of programs and services.
- Privatizing the development of facilities or services is an opportunity that is used by communities when they are unable to control the cost of labor and are unable to find the needed capital to develop a recreational facility or a concession operation. This gives the government agency a management tool to create an asset or improve a service without tapping into their own resources. Facilities that are typically considered for privatization may include golf courses, marinas, camping and RV facilities, boat rentals, bike rentals, equipment rentals, and other forms of concessions.
- Marketing strategies are an important component in developing untapped revenue opportunities. Promotional activities improve awareness of the activities provided by the Department and assist in bringing more revenue to the system by filling programs and facilities.

METHODS FOR LAND ACQUISITION & DEDICATION

With several parks and special use facilities and approximately 250 acres of park land, Mebane has a very good park system. In the future, there will be the need for land acquisition in the development of some of the facility needs listed in Section Four (greenways, district/community parks, neighborhood parks). There are a number

of ways to acquire needed land. Methods available for acquiring the land recommended in this Master Plan include the following:

Fee Simple Purchase

Outright purchase is perhaps the most widely used method of obtaining parkland. Fee simple purchase has the advantage of being relatively simple to administer and to explain to the general public to justify a particular public expenditure. Unfortunately, fee simple purchase often is the most expensive means of obtaining and utilizing a property.

Fee Simple Purchase with Lease-Back or Resale

This technique of land acquisition enables the Department to purchase land to lease or sell to a prospective user with deed restrictions that would protect the land from abuse or development. This method is used by governments who impose development restrictions severe enough that the owner considers himself to have lost the major portion of the property's value and it is more economical for him to sell with a lease-back option.

Long-Term Option

A long-term option is frequently used when a property is considered to have potential future value though it is not desired or affordable to the Department at the time. Under the terms of a long-term option, the Department agrees with the landowner on a selling price for the property and a time period over which the Department has the right to exercise its option. The first benefit of this protective method is that the option may stabilize escalating land cost and establishes land use for the property. Secondly, the Department does not have to expend large sums of money until the land is purchased. Thirdly, the purchase price of the land is established. The disadvantage of this method is that a price must be paid for every right given by the property owner. In this case, the cost of land use stabilization and a price commitment comes in the form of the cost of securing the option.

First Right of Purchase

This approach to acquiring parkland eliminates the need for fixing the selling price of a parcel of land, yet alerts the Department of any impending purchase which might disrupt the parkland acquisition goals. The Department would be notified that a purchase is pending and would have the right to purchase the property before it is sold to the party requesting the purchase.

Land Trust

The role and responsibility of a Land Trust is to acquire parkland and open space while maintaining a well-balanced system of park resources representing outstanding ecological, scenic, recreational, and historical features. A Land Trust is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit corporation made up of key knowledgeable leaders in the area who represent a cross section of interest and experience in recreation, historic properties, conservation, preservation, land development, and environmental issues. Their goals and responsibilities are to work with landowners to acquire parkland for current and future generations. The individuals appointed to the Land Trust must have knowledge of land acquisition methods and tools used to entice land owners to sell, donate, provide easements, life estates, irrevocable trusts, or a combination of all. This includes seeking out a knowledgeable land acquisition attorney who is trained in these areas to provide the most efficient and effective processes to achieve the balance of types of land to meet the goals of this Master Plan.

The Department does not have to go through the time and expense of setting up a land trust to utilize this vehicle for land donation or conservation. The Land Trust of North Carolina is an established land trust in the area. The City could partner with them to provide protection of valuable open space without creating a new entity.

Donations

A significant, and yet often untapped, source for funding acquisition and development of local park projects is through a well-organized local gifts program. Donations of land, money, or labor can

have a meaningful impact on the development of the City's park system.

The most frequently used type of gift involves the giving of land to be used for a park. The timing of such a donation can correspond with a PARTF grant application, thereby providing all or a significant portion of the local matching requirement associated with this fund. A similar use of gifts involves donated labor or materials, which become part of an improvement project and help to reduce project costs. The value of the services or materials can, in some cases, also be used to match non-local grant funds.

Some agencies have developed a gift catalog as a tool for promoting a gifts program. Such a publication should explain the role and importance of the gifts program, describe its advantages, define the tax advantages that may occur to the donor, and identify various gifts (land, labor, play equipment, materials, trees, etc.) that are needed to meet local program needs. The gifts catalog should be prepared in a format that can be distributed effectively and inexpensively and should provide a clear statement of needs, typical costs associated with various gifts, and be made readily available to the public.

To aid this type of gift program, a strategy for contacting potential donors (individuals, businesses, foundations, service clubs, etc.) should be developed. An important part of this strategy should include contacting the local Bar Association, trust departments of lending institutions, and the Probate Court. Communicating with these groups regularly will make them aware of the potential for individuals to include a gift to the Recreation and Parks Department as part of their tax and estate planning.

Life Estate

A life estate is a deferred gift. Under this plan, a donor retains use of his land during his lifetime and relinquishes title to such land upon his death. In return for this gift, the owner is usually relieved of the property tax burden on the donated land.

Easement

The most common type of less-than-fee interest in land is an easement. Property ownership may be viewed as a combination of rights. With this understanding, it is possible to purchase any one or several of these rights. An easement seeks either to compensate the landholder for the right to use his land in some manner or to compensate him for the loss of one of his privileges to use the land. One advantage of this less-than-fee interest in the land is the private citizen continues to use the land while the land remains on the tax records continuing as a source of revenue for the City. Perhaps the greatest benefit lies in the fact that the community purchases only those rights that it specifically needs to execute its parkland objectives. By purchasing only rights that are needed, the Department is making more selective and efficient use of its limited financial resources.

Zoning/Subdivision Regulations

Many communities in North Carolina have zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations that require a developer to donate a portion of the property they are developing to the government agency to be used for public park land. Through these regulations zoning ordinances, subdivision regulation, and mandatory dedications may be utilized to create new parkland at no cost to the community. Regulations can require that land is dedicated and/or compensation made to the City for the development of parkland. Mebane UDO has a section (Section 6-7) on the required dedication of land for recreational use. This dedication requirement applies to single family subdivisions and multi-family development. The City's requirements provide for both land dedication and payment in lieu. Likewise, the dedication requirements call for review by Recreation and Parks staff.

PARK FACILITIES AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS

John L. Crompton, in his publication "Parks and Economic Development", determined there are four economic development benefits that a

community may derive from park and recreation services. These benefits include:

- **Attracting Tourists:** The features and programs that attract tourism to a community include parks, beaches, historic sites, museums, special events and festivals, and athletic tournaments. The majority of these features are provided by public agencies (national, state, local park agencies, etc.).
- **Enhancing Real Estate Values:** Research shows people will pay more to live close to natural park areas. These higher property values result in owners paying higher property taxes, which in turn offsets some of the cost for the development parks and preservation of open space.
- **Attracting Business:** Quality of life issues influence where businesses locate. Parks, recreation, and open space are an important component of the quality of life equation. Good parks help cities attract and retain businesses.
- **Attracting Retirees:** A new growth industry for American communities is the retirement population. The decision to relocate by this segment of our population is primarily governed by climate and recreation opportunities. This segment of the population is extremely attractive to local governments because retirees are unlikely to have children enrolled in the local school system and therefore are less of a burden on the community's tax base.

Mebane has traditionally placed a high value on parks and recreation programs and facilities that provide quality of life improvement. Development of this master plan is further evidence that the City recognizes the importance parks play in the quality of life.

Through investing in parks over the years, local officials can ensure that Mebane provides the quality of life that helps attract new businesses, enhances real estate values, and provides an attractive option to the retirement community.

There are many more opportunities for attracting economic impact to Mebane through tourism.



Athletic tournaments attract tourism

John Crompton lists the following opportunities for tourist attractions:

Tournament Sports

- Softball
- Soccer
- Baseball
- Basketball

Arts

- Theaters
- Art Galleries
- Museums
- Performing groups, Music
- Concerts

Heritage Places

- Ethnic cultural places
- Shrines/churches
- Historical sites and structures
- Educational institutions
- Industry factory tours

Parks

- National
- State
- Regional
- Local
- Beaches
- Theme parks

Recreation

- Events and festivals
- Aquatic and coastal areas
- Outdoor recreation (e.g., camping, fishing, hunting)

Arenas

- College sports
- Professional franchises
- Concerts and exhibitions

Some of these activities and facilities are already found within the City. Many of these potential tourism attractions are in the public realm or are a public/private venture.

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to looking at future facility needs of the Department, this Master Plan must also address some of the operational issues that will face the Department in the coming decade. These issues relate to the manpower and organizational changes that will be required as the Department adds new parks/facilities. Likewise, these recommendations address some of the critical operational issues the Department needs to identify as it works to become not only a bigger department, but a better department.

Staff Needs

With the expansion of park facilities over the next decade, there will be a need for additional staff to develop, operate, and maintain these new facilities. These anticipated new facilities will require program/operational staff for the proposed swimming pool and indoor fitness center. In addition, expansion of existing parks, a new district park, a new community park, several new mini parks, and miles of new greenways will require:

- New grounds crews (1 Foreman, 2 Laborers)
- Park superintendent
- Seasonal pool staff

While the development of a true operation and maintenance program for these future facilities

is beyond the scope of this master plan study, it is important that the City plan and budget for adequate staff positions for any new facilities that are constructed. Likewise, as these new facilities come on line, the City should actively seek the highest level of programming staff with strong educational experience in the various areas of park and recreation administration.

Operational Costs

As noted above, the development of new recreation facilities will require additional staff for the Department. These new staff positions will add to the annual operational budget in both staff and equipment costs. The expansion of recreational facilities will also add significantly to the energy and utility cost of park and recreation facilities. Based on recent increases in energy cost, these operational costs could be substantial. The recommended facility improvements included in this Plan will increase the Department's facilities by 30-40%. Expansion of this magnitude will have significant implications to the operational budget. The Department's management staff and elected officials must carefully consider the financial impact of each major capital improvement project as projects are considered. No capital improvement project should be undertaken without the commitment of support for adequate ongoing operational funding. Likewise, consideration should be given to the positive economic impacts that some facilities may have on Mebane's economy, and if applicable, their potential for revenue generation.

Greener Operation

As the world's population expands and environmental concerns over global warming, conservation of resources, and preservation of our fragile natural systems become more apparent, greater environmental responsibility by public and private agencies has become critical. As a government agency, particularly one that is involved with the management of public open space and the improvement of the public's health, the Recreation and Parks Department should make a concerted effort to minimize its environmental impact.



Promoting recycling is one initiative to reduce waste

With this understanding, the Department should evaluate its maintenance and operational procedures with an intent to minimize waste and environmental impact. Where economically feasible, the Department should look to implement operational procedures that emphasize conservation, recycling, and sustainability. Likewise, as the Department looks to build new facilities, it should consider constructing facilities that minimize environmental impacts, conserve energy, and reuse building materials where possible.

As a starting point for this conversion to a "greener" operation, the Department should establish a committee of operation, maintenance, and construction stakeholders to study the options available and develop a plan for becoming "greener".

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Capital Improvement Plan for the acquisition, renovation, and development of parks for the planning period was prepared with input from City staff and public involvement. All of the proposed costs are shown in current dollar values. The

capital improvement costs include funds for land acquisition, site preparation, site utilities, and facility development as well as estimated planning and design fees.

The Capital Improvement Plan can be summarized into the following components:

Park Renovations	\$ 880,000
Land Acquisition	1,050,000
Park Development	3,630,000
Facility Development	<u>3,300,000</u>
Total Capital Improvement Budget	\$8,860,000

Table 5-1 “Capital Improvements Plan” shows the costs associated with the capital improvement program (ten-year planning period). The table reflects the proposals and recommendations as outlined in Section Four of this Master Plan.

MASTER PLAN FUNDING STRATEGY

Over the planning period (2014 - 2024), the City will not be able to support the growth in operational cost and the proposed capital improvement (\pm \$8,860,000) with the current level of capital appropriations. The Department will need to use a combination of revenue sources to accomplish the recommendations of the Master Plan. There are numerous combinations of funding strategies that can be explored and implemented. Upon careful analysis of past budget documents, current practices, available resources, and national trends, an example of a funding strategy is presented as one possible strategy.

General Funds

Allocations from the General Fund will need to increase to pay for operation of future facilities. This additional per capita funding, along with the increase in population, could fund the majority of future operational costs, but will not provide the funding required for capital improvements.

In addition to this increased operational spending, the City should begin budgeting for capital

improvements projects on an annual basis. Annual allocations of \$250,000 to capital improvements over the next ten years could provide \$2-3 million in funds for capital projects.

General Obligation Bonds

General Obligation Bonds could be used for major renovations and to acquire and develop new parks and recreation facilities. A successful bond campaign for park improvements in the next ten years could generate \$4 - \$5 million for construction and acquisitions. This would represent a significant portion of funds needed for the proposed capital improvements budget. These funds can be dedicated to funding the larger park development and making major park improvements. As noted earlier in this section (General Obligation Bonds, page 5-3), this level of bond sales will likely result in the need for additional tax revenues to pay for the debt service created by the sale of these bonds.

Revenues and User Charges

A crucial strategy to accomplish the goals of this plan is to price services based on the value and benefits received by the participants beyond those of all taxpayers. Increasing the number of participants using the facilities and programs will increase revenue opportunities. A good time to price services to their value and benefits is after new facilities are constructed or when facilities have been renovated to enhance a participant’s recreational experience. A proposed user charge revenue strategy designed to recoup a larger percentage of program cost should be considered. This will create more revenue and capacity opportunities for the program needs of the City.

Currently, revenues and user charges account for a relatively small percentage of the operating budget. The City should develop a fee structure that will allow greater net revenue to be realized. Assuming the level of funding can increase, it could generate \$50,000 to \$75,000 annually, providing as much as a half million dollars in increased income over the next ten years that can be used for operating new facilities developed as recommended in this plan.

Partnerships and Gifts

The City should work to develop a park foundation to explore ways to raise sponsorships and gifts. This non-profit organization can engage private citizens and corporations to donate money and in-kind services for use by the Recreation and Parks Department. Through active involvement with a park foundation the Department may be able to raise \$20,000 - \$30,000 in funds annually. This could result in donations of as much as a quarter of a million over the ten year planning period. This level of funding would require the park foundation to become an active organization within the community.

Sponsorships and Naming Rights

Another excellent source of development capital is through project sponsorship/underwriting by corporations throughout the community. Quality facilities, properly marketed, provide an excellent venue for raising development funds. Naming rights for athletic fields, swimming facilities, playgrounds, etc., can be used to raise tens of thousands of dollars.

Grants

At one time the Recreation and Parks Department has been successful in finding and procuring funds from state and local grants. The City will need to renew those efforts to explore grants such as LWCF, PARTF, SAFTEA, clean water grants, etc. Active pursuit of this funding could provide several million dollars in funds for capital improvements over the next ten years.

Overview

Together, these funding options could be used to raise millions of dollars of development capital over the next decade. It may be unrealistic to assume the City can fund ±\$8.8 million of park improvements in the next ten years especially during these challenging economic times. Actively pursuing the options that are available should provide funding for many of the needs listed in this master plan. Through the continued use of this document, City staff and elected officials can identify and prioritize community needs and

actively seek funds to meet those needs over the next ten (or more) years.

FIVE YEAR PRIORITY PROJECTS

Recognizing that this is a ten year vision plan for park development, City staff and elected officials must prioritize the recommendations in this document based on the public's input and staff review. The following park improvements should be undertaken in the next five years:

- Renovations to Mebane Arts and Community Center.
- Trail and amenity improvement at Lake Michael.
- Facility expansion/improvements at Holt Street Park.
- Development of phase one improvements at Turner Road Park.
- Acquisition and development of a new community park.
- Development of a greenway master plan.

Table 5-1
CITY OF MEBANE
RECREATION AND PARKS COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

	10 Year Total	2014-2018	2019-2024
Existing Parks Renovation/Improvements			
Specific Renovations to Existing Parks			
Lake Michael Trails	\$200,000 *	\$200,000	
Mebane Arts & Community Center Athletic Complex	\$150,000 *		\$150,000
Mebane Arts & Community Center Improvements	\$300,000	\$300,000	
Holt Street Park	\$150,000 *	\$150,000	
Planning & Design (10%)	\$80,000	\$65,000	\$15,000
Renovation Total	\$880,000	\$715,000	\$165,000
Land Acquisition			
Community Park (30 acres at \$25,000)	\$750,000	\$750,000	
Neighborhood Park (5 acres at \$25,000)	\$125,000		\$125,000
Neighborhood Park (5 acres at \$25,000)	\$125,000		\$125,000
Mini Park (1 acre at \$25,000)	\$25,000		\$25,000
Mini Park (1 acre at \$25,000)	\$25,000		\$25,000
Land Acquisition Total	\$1,050,000	\$750,000	\$300,000
Park Development			
Turner Road District Park (initial development)**	\$1,000,000 *	\$1,000,000	
Neighborhood Park	\$250,000 *		\$250,000
Neighborhood Park	\$250,000 *		\$250,000
Community Park (initial development)***	\$1,500,000 *	\$1,500,000	
Mini Park	\$150,000 *		\$150,000
Mini Park	\$150,000 *		\$150,000
Planning and Design (10%)	\$330,000	\$250,000	\$80,000
Park Development Total	\$3,630,000	\$2,750,000	\$880,000
Facility Development			
Swimming Pool (Outdoor)	\$1,500,000		\$1,500,000
Fitness Center (5,000 SF at \$150/SF)	\$750,000		\$750,000
Greenway Development	\$750,000	\$750,000	
Planning & Design (10%)	\$300,000	\$75,000	\$225,000
Facility Development Total	\$3,300,000	\$825,000	\$2,475,000
Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost	\$8,860,000	\$5,040,000	\$3,820,000

* See Table 5-2 for information on potential scope of each park.

**Turner Road District Park will include many of the facility needs identified in Section Four (walking/biking trails, picnic facilities, playground).

*** Future Community Park will contain many of the active recreation needs identified in Section Four (soccer fields, tennis courts, etc.).

Table 5-2
CITY OF MEBANE
RECREATION AND PARKS COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN
POTENTIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Park Renovations

Holt Street Park

- Shelter Improvements
- Playground Improvements
- Walking Trail
- Drive & Parking
- ADA Sidewalks

Mebane Arts & Community Center Complex

- Lobby and building improvements
- Sidewalk/Trail Improvements
- Benches, Amenities
- Playground Enhancements
- Court Games
- Shelters

Lake Michael

- ADA Improvements
- Expand/improve walking trail
- Signage/Benches

Turner Road District Park

- Playground
- Picnic Shelters
- Walking Trails
- Mountain Bike Trails
- Disc Golf Course
- Restroom/Park Office
- Entrance Drive/Parking
- Site Preparation
- Utilities
- Sidewalks/ADA Access
- Signage, Landscape, Amenities

Typical Park Development

Community Park

- 2 Soccer Fields w/lights
- Restroom/Concession
- Picnic Shelters
- Walking Trails
- Tennis Courts (6) w/lights
- Site Preparation
- Utilities
- Drives/Parking

Neighborhood Park

- Playground
- Restroom/Shelter
- Walking Trail
- Site Preparation

Mini Park

- Playground
- Small Shelter
- Walking Trail
- Site Preparation

The potential park improvements listed for each of the proposed park improvements is provided for general planning purpose only. There have been no plans developed for any of the proposed parks. This information is provided to give the reader an idea of what each development project might include.

Appendices



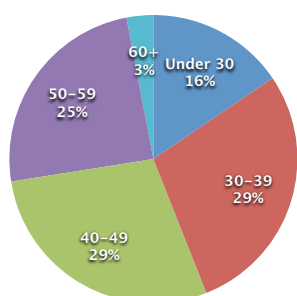
Community Health Assessment • Spring 2011

Members of the Mebane on the Move initiative conducted a Community Health Assessment from the Summer of 2010 through the Spring of 2011 in order to better understand how to help local citizens attain a healthy lifestyle. The assessment included key informant interviews, focus groups, and community surveys. Surveys (N=207) were conducted at local festivals and worksites, in businesses, via newsletters and listservs, and using social media. The results of the comprehensive community assessment are provided here.

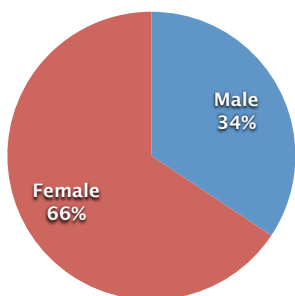
More information about Mebane on the Move can be obtained by visiting www.mebaneonthemove.com or by emailing us at motmprograms@gmail.com.



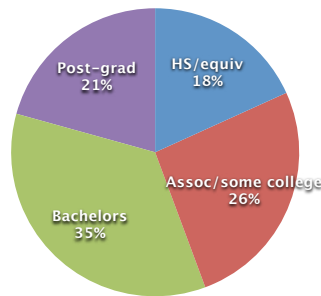
Whose opinions are represented here?



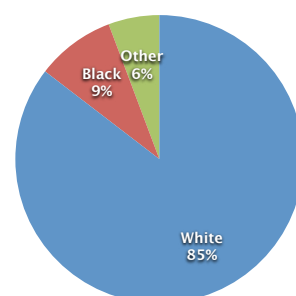
Age



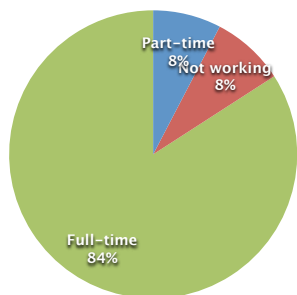
Gender



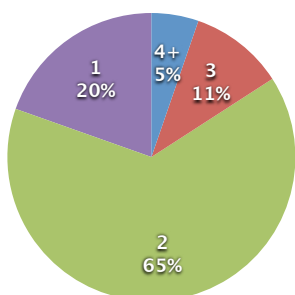
Education



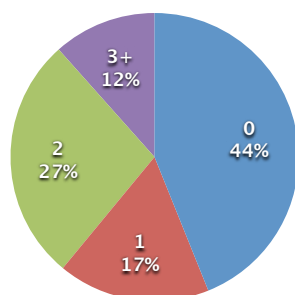
Race



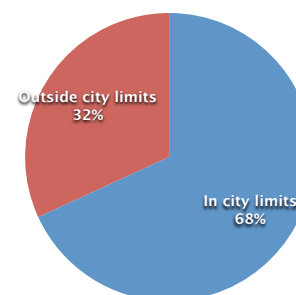
Employment



Adults in the home



Children in the home



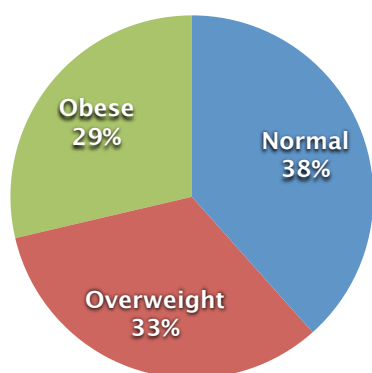
Location

Obesity is a problem affecting North Carolina - we are ranked as the 10th heaviest state in the nation (Trust for America, 2010). Obesity can be prevented by increasing activity levels and eating a healthy diet.

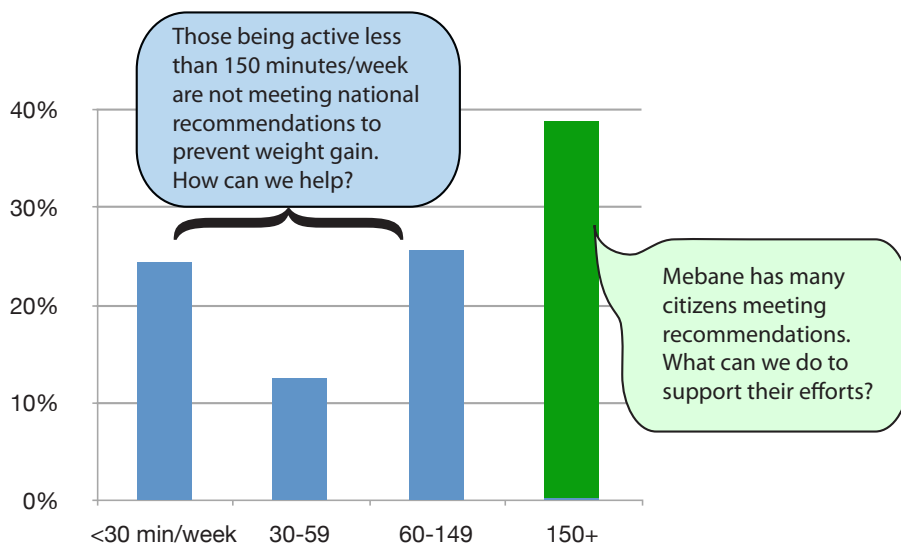
The American College of Sports Medicine recommends a minimum of 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous physical activity for optimal health. More than 150 minutes/week of moderate-intensity physical activity is associated with modest weight loss.

Many agencies, including the World Health Organization suggest that fruit and vegetable intake is an important factor in reducing the risk of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

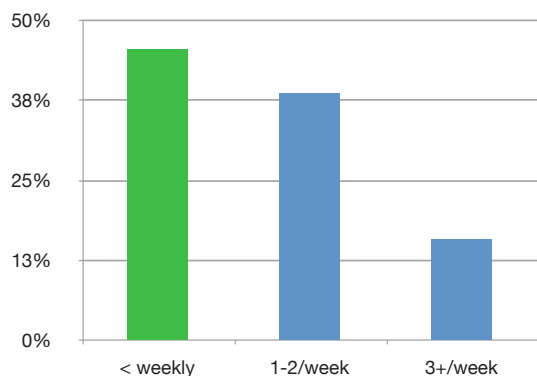
How can Mebane support the efforts of its citizens in making better choices towards health?



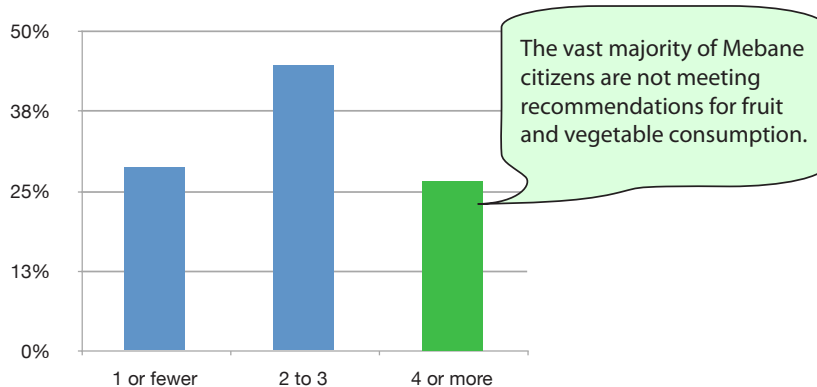
BMI category of respondents



Minutes per week of physical activity

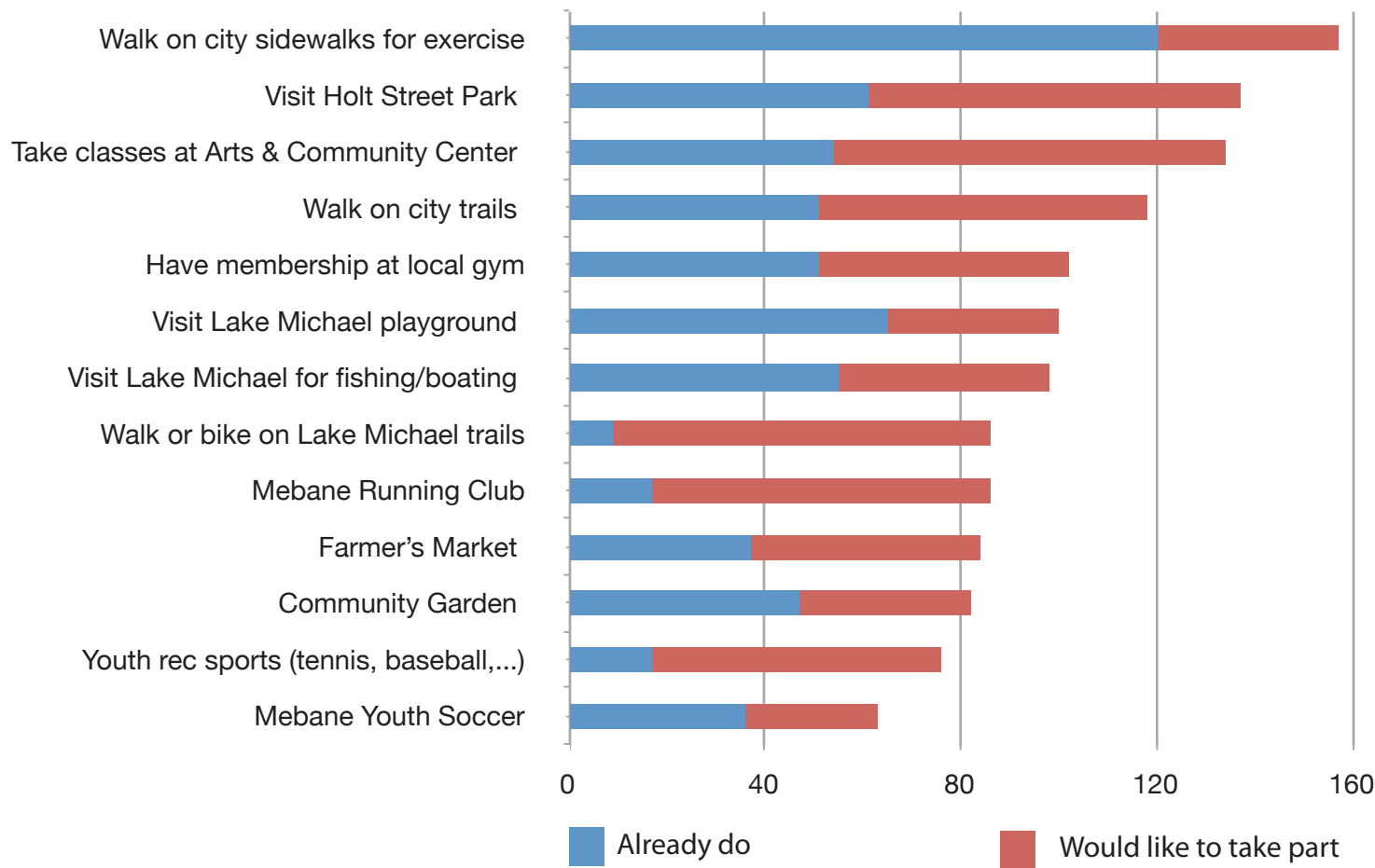


Fast food consumption per week



Servings of fruits/vegetables per week

What are people doing or wanting to do for physical activity?



What are the barriers to taking part in local opportunities for activity?

Unaware /cannot get information		
City trails or park offerings	28%	
MACC class offerings	14%	
Community garden	10%	
Farmer's market	8%	
No place to be active with dogs		
	11%	
No place to be active with bikes		
	4%	
Poor quality/selection		
Sidewalks/trails	2%	
Farmer's market	12%	
MACC classes	14%	
Have no time/schedule issues		
Running club	10%	
Farmer's market or garden	6%	
MACC classes	11%	
Youth sports	2%	
Safety		
Streets/sidewalks	5%	
Parks or entry to parks	6%	
Expense		
Gym	4%	



"Many of these things I haven't even heard of, and I've noticed that "getting the word out" is non-existent ... "

"If there were some classes like Zumba, pilates, or yoga ... that were held at a good time for working people, that would be great!"

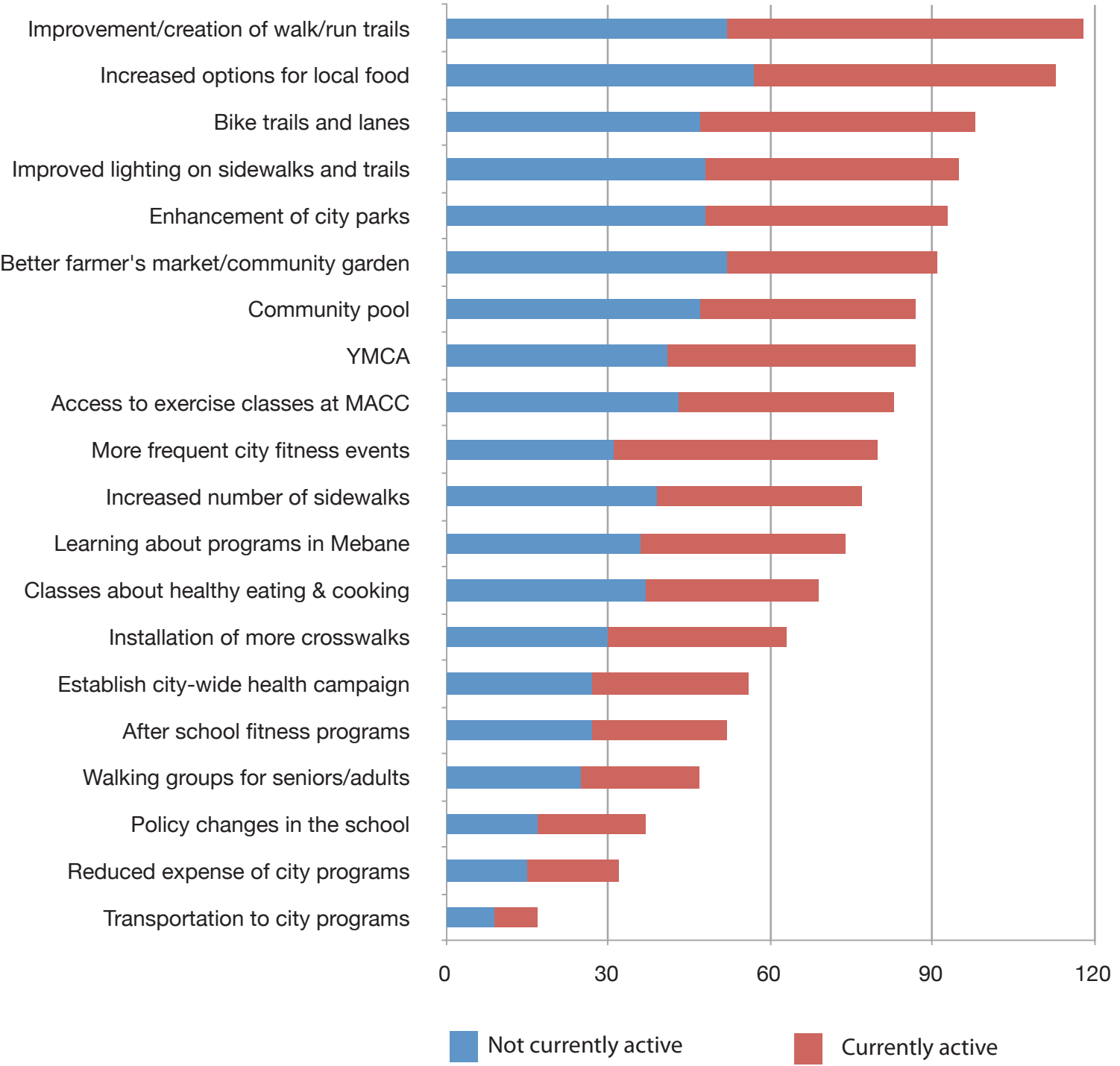
"We have two dogs we take hiking with us. We have to drive all the way to Hillsborough or Durham to take them hiking on the Poet's Walk or Eno River trails. We won't be visiting Lake Michael anymore because of this. "

"I plan on moving back to Durham or to Hillsborough in the next couple years because of the lack of organic/local food"

How can Mebane support its citizens in adopting or maintaining healthier choices?

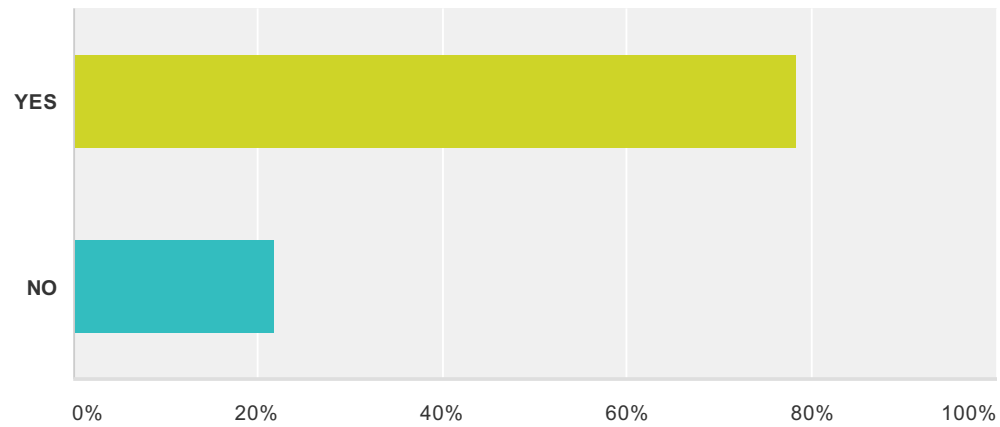
In the spring of 2009, key informants in Mebane and focus group participants helped the Mebane on the Move committee identify opportunities for improved health in our community. The options were listed on the community health assessment and respondents (207) indicated whether they thought each item would actually improve the chances that they or someone in their home would become more active or eat healthier foods.

Responses are separated by those that are already meeting guidelines for an active lifestyle and those that are not.



Q1 Is this household located within the Mebane city limits?

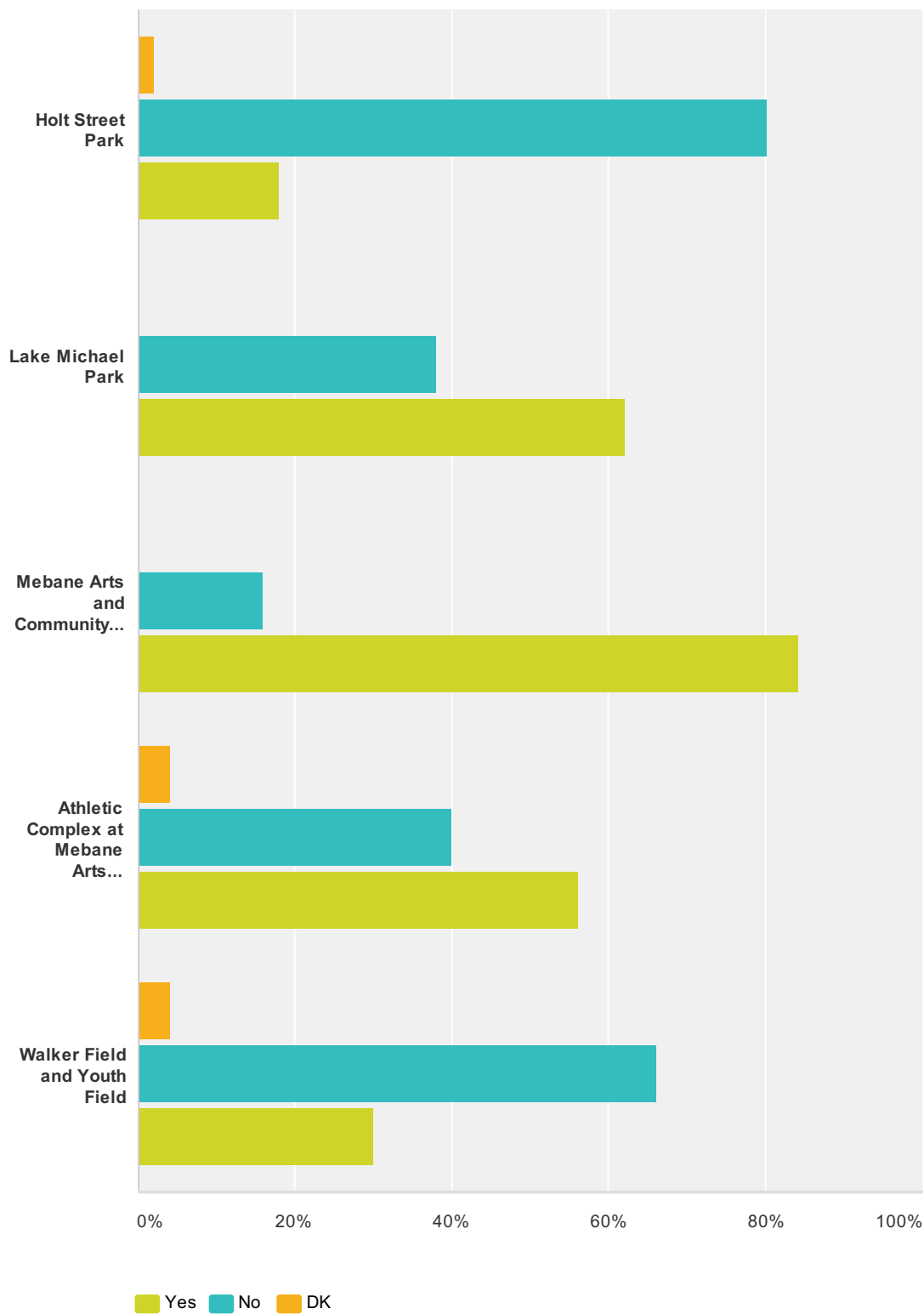
Answered: 55 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
YES	78.18%	43
NO	21.82%	12
Total		55

Q2 Have you or any members of your household visited the following parks or recreation centers in the past year?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 5



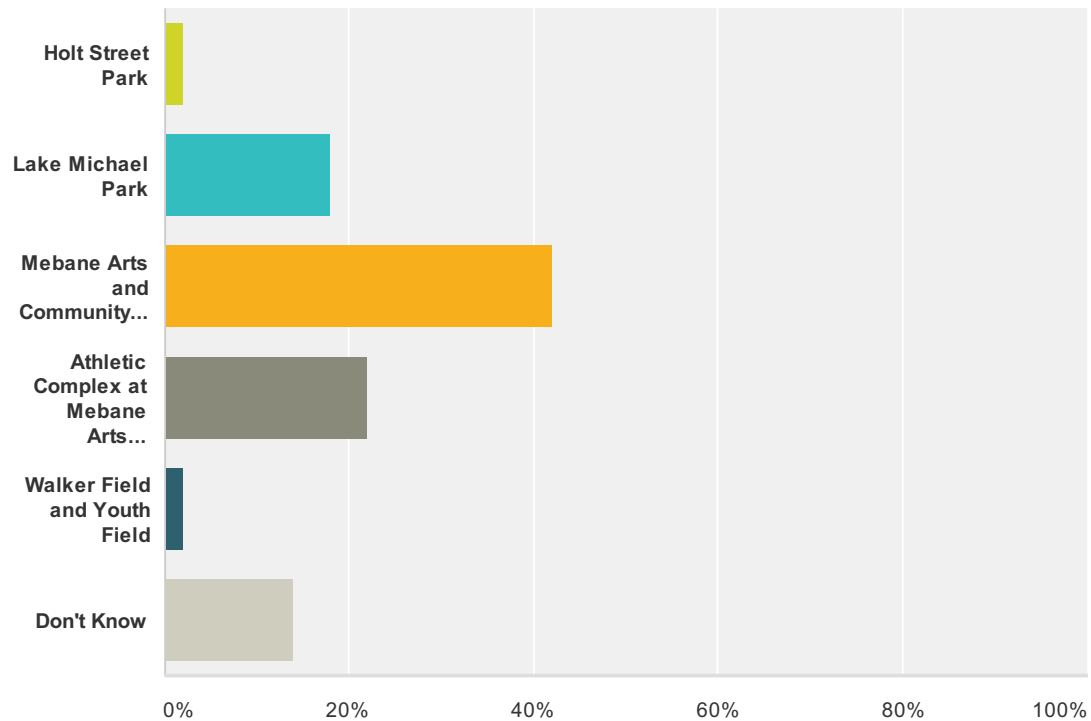
	Yes	No	DK	Total
Holt Street Park	18% 9	80% 40	2% 1	50

STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE 2013 City of Mebane Recreation and Parks Survey Site Solutions,

Lake Michael Park	62% 31	38% 19	0% 0	50
Mebane Arts and Community Center	84% 42	16% 8	0% 0	50
Athletic Complex at Mebane Arts and Community Center	56.00% 28	40% 20	4% 2	50
Walker Field and Youth Field	30% 15	66% 33	4% 2	50

Q3 Which do members of your household visit most often?

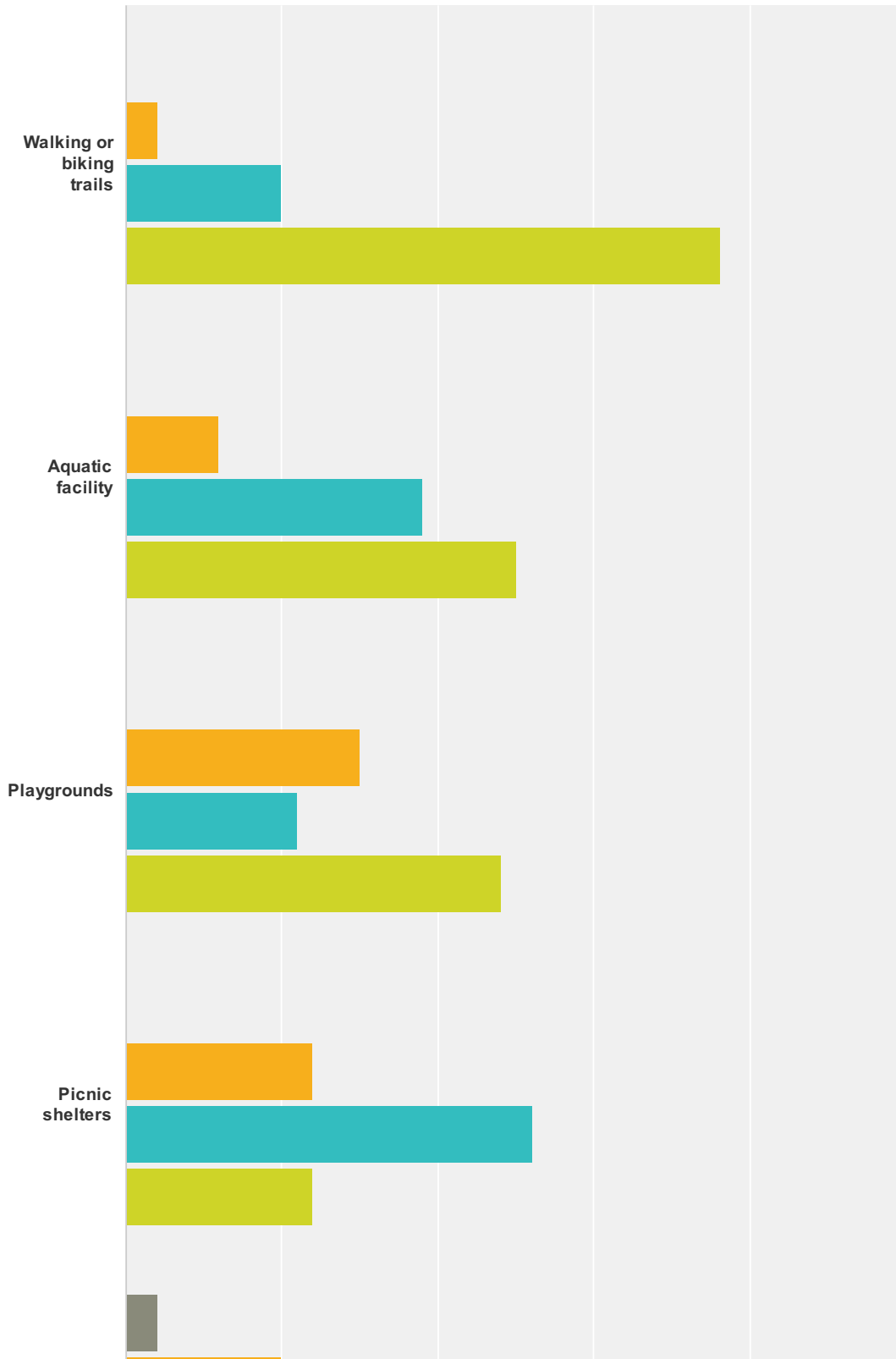
Answered: 50 Skipped: 5



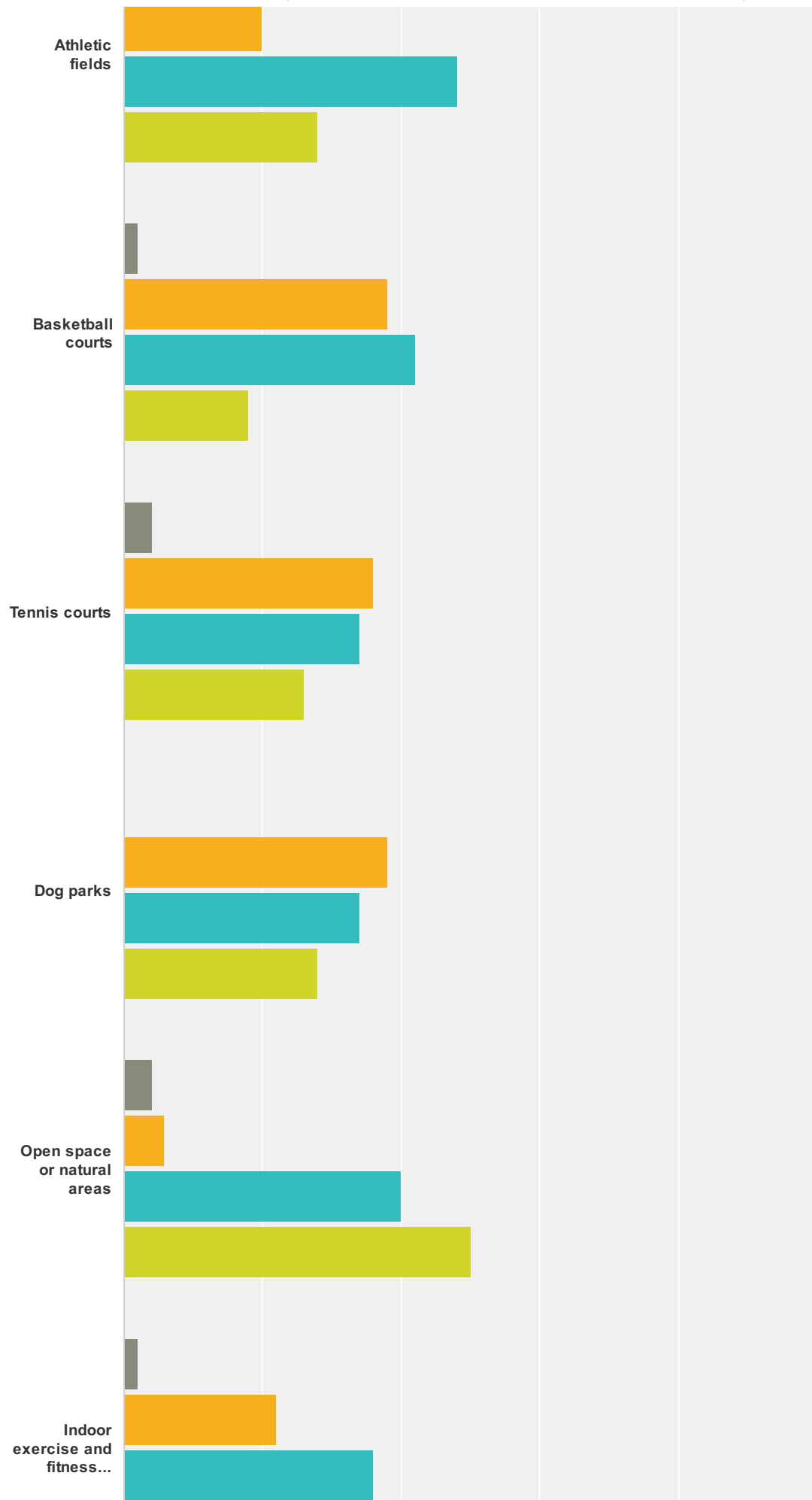
Answer Choices	Responses	
Holt Street Park	2%	1
Lake Michael Park	18%	9
Mebane Arts and Community Center	42%	21
Athletic Complex at Mebane Arts and Community Center	22%	11
Walker Field and Youth Field	2%	1
Don't Know	14.00%	7
Total		50

Q4 Below is a list of facilities that may be available at a public park or recreation area. For each, please tell us if you or someone in your household has great interest, some interest, or no interest in that type of facility.

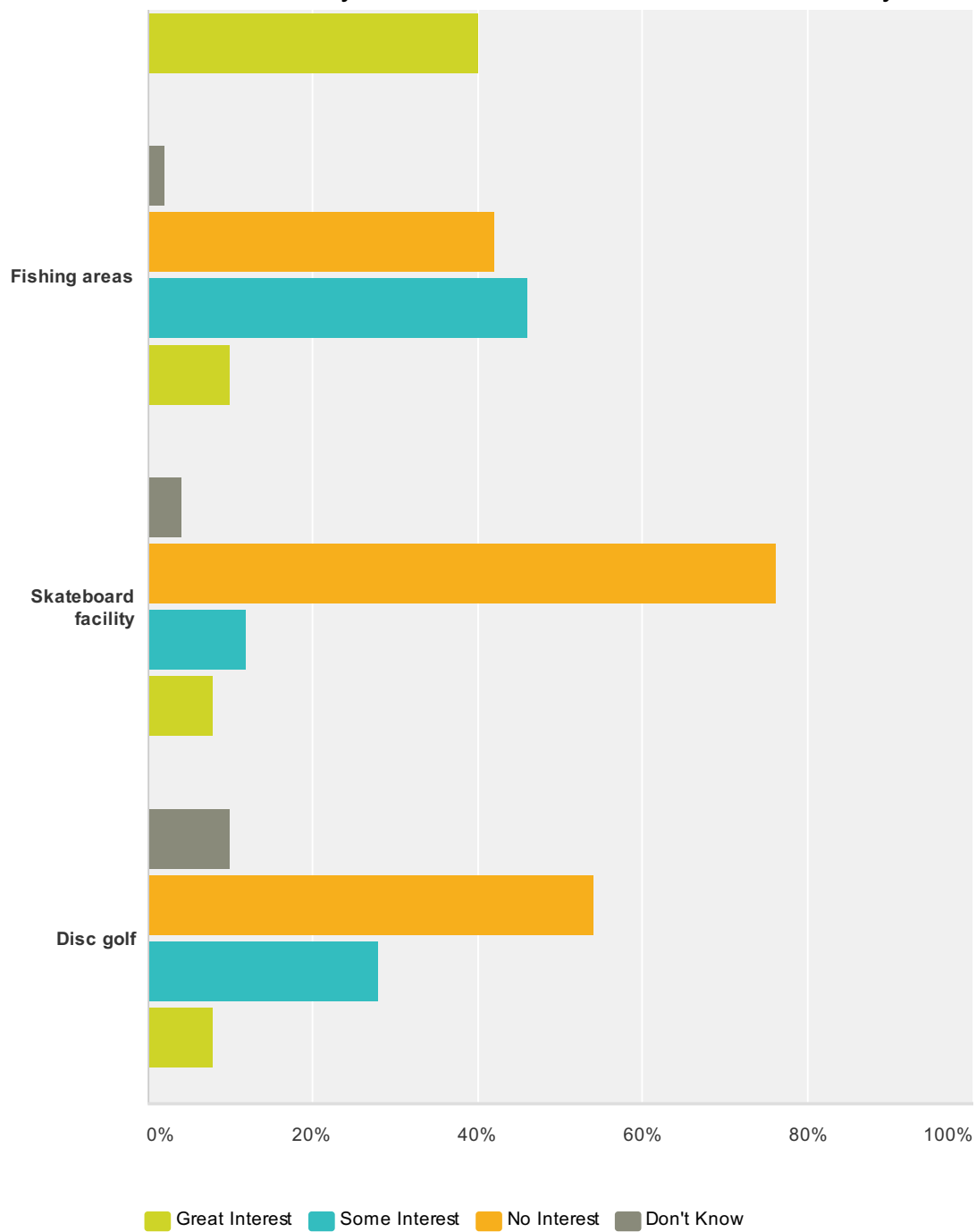
Answered: 50 Skipped: 5



STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE 2013 City of Mebane Recreation and Parks Survey Site Solutions,



STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE 2013 City of Mebane Recreation and Parks Survey Site Solutions,



	Great Interest	Some Interest	No Interest	Don't Know	Total
Walking or biking trails	76% 38	20% 10	4% 2	0% 0	50
Aquatic facility	50% 25	38% 19	12% 6	0% 0	50
Playgrounds	48% 24	22% 11	30% 15	0% 0	50
Picnic shelters	24% 12	52% 26	24% 12	0% 0	50
Athletic fields	28.00% 14	48% 24	20% 10	4% 2	50
Basketball courts	18% 9	42% 21	38% 19	2% 1	50

STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE 2013 City of Mebane Recreation and Parks Survey Site Solutions,

Tennis courts	26% 13	34% 17	36% 18	4% 2	50
Dog parks	28.00% 14	34% 17	38% 19	0% 0	50
Open space or natural areas	50% 25	40% 20	6% 3	4% 2	50
Indoor exercise and fitness facilities	40% 20	36% 18	22% 11	2% 1	50
Fishing areas	10% 5	46% 23	42% 21	2% 1	50
Skateboard facility	8% 4	12% 6	76% 38	4% 2	50
Disc golf	8% 4	28.00% 14	54% 27	10% 5	50

Q5 If you expressed an interest in athletic fields on the list above, what type of athletic fields is your household interested in?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 29

- Youth sports - soccer, baseball, softball
- Football/ lacrosse
- Soccer
- more soccer
- soccer
- Baseball/t-ball fields Football field (I realize there is already a baseball field at the community center. However, if there were more then maybe Mebane could include t-ball with their little league program.)
- Our town is in desperate need of tennis courts. As the community grows, we could become a great town for tennis if we had the facilities available.
- Soccer, baseball, tennis
- soccer fields
- soccer and baseball/softball
- soccer,football and baseball
- soccer
- We are a soccer family!
- softball
- soccer
- basketball, walking trails, swimming
- Baseball, football, soccer
- Soccer
- I think we need more soccer fields for Mebane Youth Soccer Association.
- Soccer
- Fields for the use by the general public, not under the arbitrary control of some youth soccer organization.
- Soccer and baseball
- Additional Tennis Courts
- Tennis
- soccer
- Football and baseball - little league

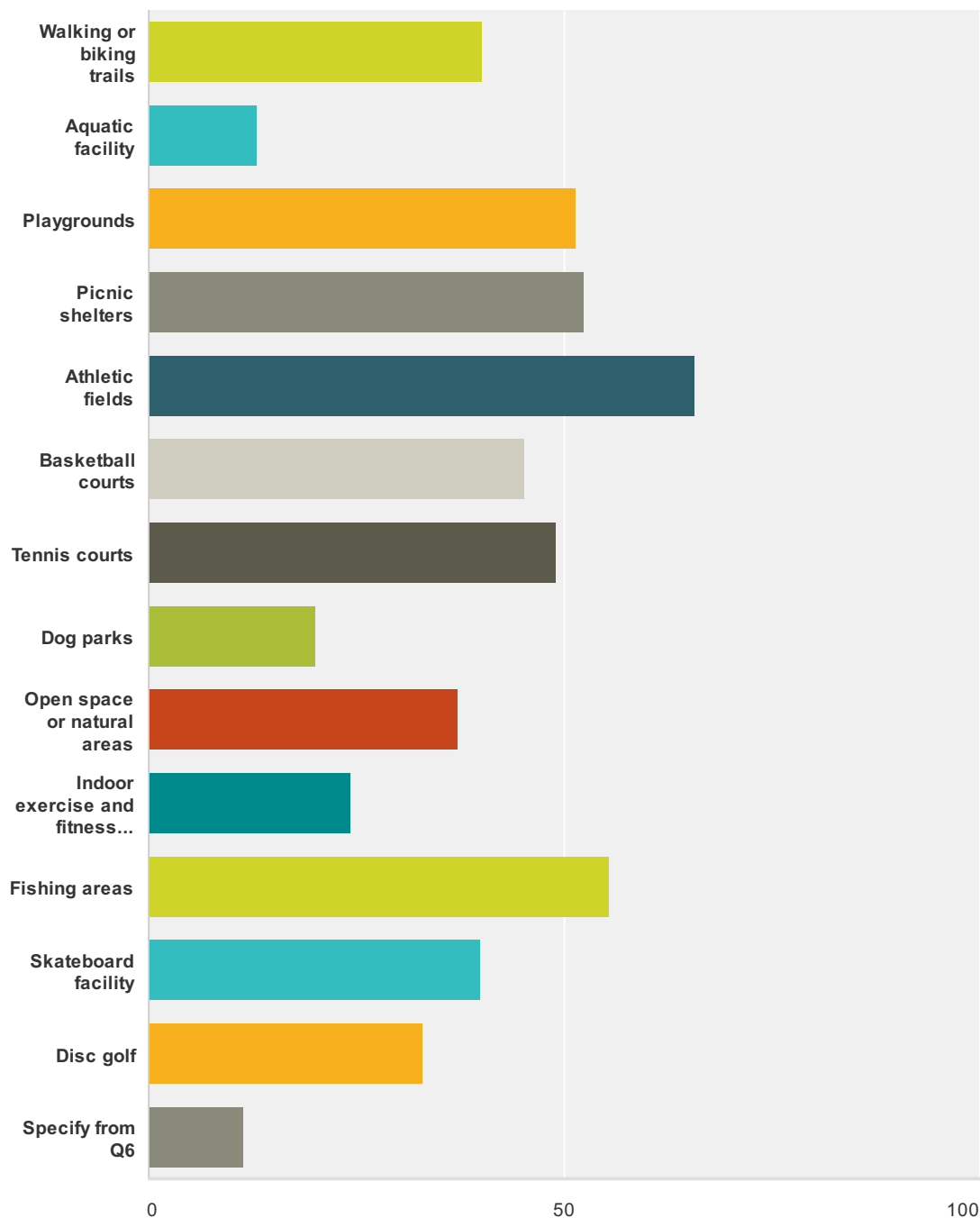
Q6 Is there another type of facility you would like to see offered at a public park or recreation area? Please choose one.

Answered: 21 Skipped: 34

- More basketball courts. Practice time is currently limited.
- A summer splashground
- DOG PARKS
- Splash park
- pool and gym that isn't so expensive
- water spray park for the hot summer months
- Covered playground equipment
- N/A
- Spray grounds
- Track
- Spray ground, play grounds
- Bike Trail
- tennis
- Outdoor exercise: chin-up bars, etc.
- ice skating rink
- Rec area
- spray ground (ie: Keely Park in Kernersville/Gboro)
- Volleyball, bocce
- Tennis Courts
- More Tennis Courts
- paddle boats at lake facilities

Q7 What percent of your needs for each of the facilities listed below are already being met? Please use a numerical response from 0 to 100 percent. Your best estimate is fine.

Answered: 44 Skipped: 11



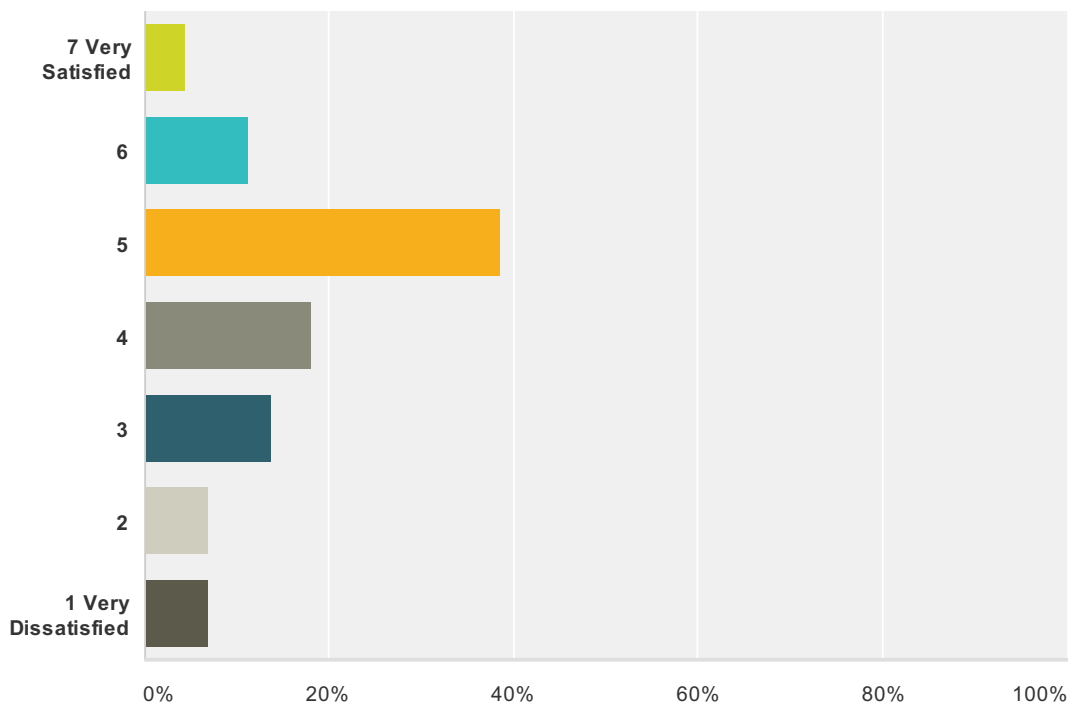
Answer Choices	Average Number	Total Number	Responses
Walking or biking trails	40	1,646	41
Aquatic facility	13	513	39

STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE 2013 City of Mebane Recreation and Parks Survey Site Solutions,

Playgrounds	51	1,900	37
Picnic shelters	52	1,938	37
Athletic fields	66	2,425	37
Basketball courts	45	1,627	36
Tennis courts	49	1,764	36
Dog parks	20	806	40
Open space or natural areas	37	1,446	39
Indoor exercise and fitness facilities	24	925	38
Fishing areas	55	1,942	35
Skateboard facility	40	1,400	35
Disc golf	33	1,152	35
Specify from Q6	12	185	16
Total Respondents: 44			

Q8 Using a scale of one to seven, where "1" is Very Dissatisfied and "7" is Very Satisfied, how satisfied are you with the public park and recreation areas in Mebane?

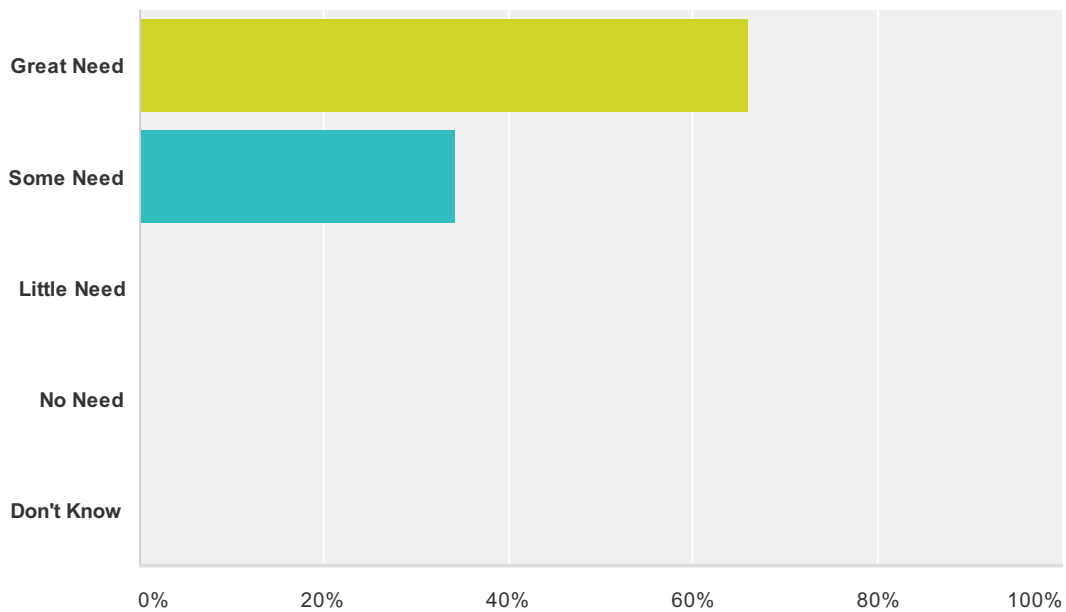
Answered: 44 Skipped: 11



Answer Choices	Responses	
7 Very Satisfied	4.55%	2
6	11.36%	5
5	38.64%	17
4	18.18%	8
3	13.64%	6
2	6.82%	3
1 Very Dissatisfied	6.82%	3
Total		44

Q9 Would you say there is a great need, little need, or no need for additional park and recreation areas in Mebane?

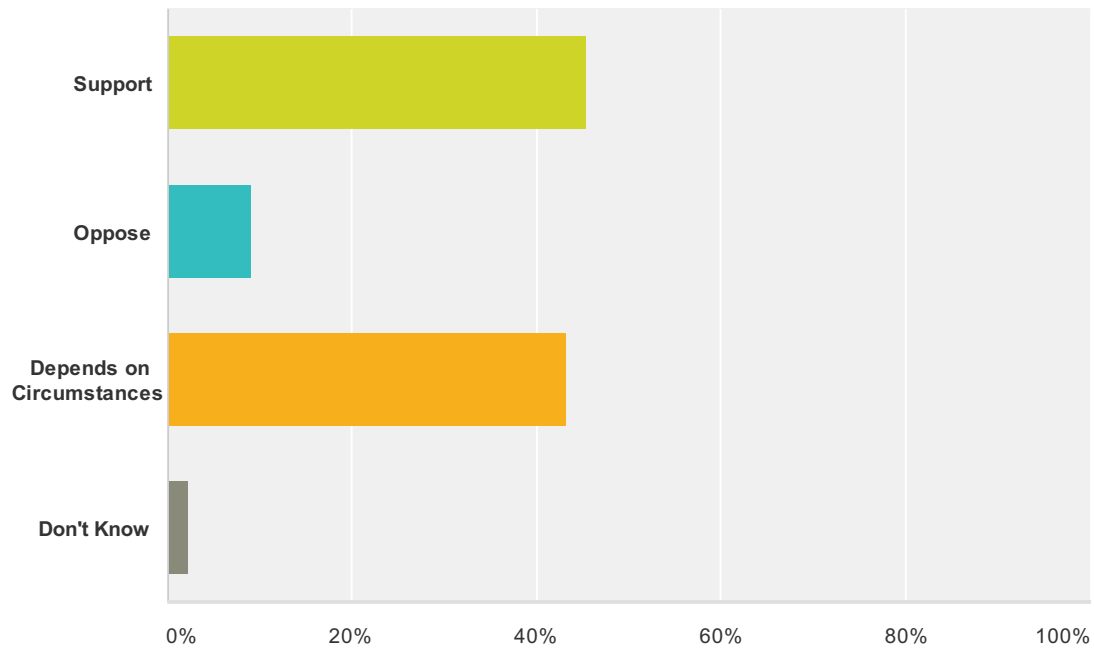
Answered: 44 Skipped: 11



Answer Choices	Responses	
Great Need	65.91%	29
Some Need	34.09%	15
Little Need	0%	0
No Need	0%	0
Don't Know	0%	0
Total		44

Q10 If taxes are needed to be raised to pay for additional park and recreation areas in Mebane, would you support or oppose the tax increase?

Answered: 44 Skipped: 11



Answer Choices	Responses	
Support	45.45%	20
Oppose	9.09%	4
Depends on Circumstances	43.18%	19
Don't Know	2.27%	1
Total		44

National and State Studies on Outdoor Recreation Demand

President's Commission

The President's Commission Report indicated the following significant facts:

The top ten most popular outdoor recreation activities nationwide are:

Picnicking	Playing sports
Driving for pleasure	Fishing
Swimming	Attending sporting events
Sightseeing	Boating
Bicycling	Walking for pleasure

Activities rapidly growing in popularity are:

Canoeing	Sailing
Bicycling	Hiking/backpacking
Attending outdoor sports	Walking for pleasure
Camping, all types	Water skiing

The President's Commission report also noted that municipal agencies are providing 39% of the public recreation opportunities.

North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Survey

The North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Survey provided a list of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in the state. The most popular outdoor recreation activities in North Carolina are:

1. Walking for pleasure
2. Driving for pleasure
3. Viewing scenery
4. Beach activities
5. Visiting historical sites
6. Swimming
7. Visiting natural areas
8. Picnicking
9. Attending sporting events
10. Visiting zoos

National Sporting Goods Association Survey

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) conducts an annual study of sports participation. The survey lists the following top activities per million participants. A participant is defined as someone seven years of age or older who participates in a sport more than once within a year for all sports except aerobic exercising, bicycle riding, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, running/jogging, step aerobics, weight lifting, and swimming. For these seven fitness sports, participation is defined as six times or more during the year. The following information reviews the findings for the past ten years.

Sport	2010	2008	2006	2004	2002	2000
Aerobic Exercising	38.5	36.2	na	29.5	29.0	26.7
Archery (target)	6.5	na	na	5.3	4.2	4.5
Backpack/Wilderness Camp	11.1	13.0	13.3	17.3	14.8	15.4
Baseball	12.5	15.2	14.6	15.9	15.6	15.6
Basketball	26.9	29.7	26.7	27.8	28.9	27.1
Bicycle Riding	39.8	44.7	35.6	40.3	39.7	43.1
Billiards/Pool	24.0	31.7	31.8	34.2	33.1	32.5
Boating, Motor/Power	20.0	27.8	29.3	22.8	26.6	24.2
Bowling	39	49.5	44.8	43.8	42.4	43.1
Camping (vacation/overnite)	44.7	49.4	48.6	55.3	55.4	49.9
Canoeing	na	10.3	7.1	7.5	7.6	6.2
Cheerleading	na	2.9	3.8	3.8	na	na
Exercise Walking	95.8	96.6	87.5	84.7	82.2	81.3
Exercising with Equipment	55.3	63.0	52.4	52.2	46.8	44.8
Fishing	33.8	42.2	40.6	41.2	44.2	47.2
Football (tackle)	9.3	10.5	10.1	8.2	7.8	8.0
Golf	21.9	25.6	24.4	24.5	27.1	26.4
Hiking	37.7	38.0	31.0	28.3	27.2	24.3
Hunting with Firearms	16.3	18.8	19.9	17.7	19.5	19.1
Hunting w/Bow & Arrow	5.5	6.2	5.9	5.8	4.6	4.7
In-line Roller Skating	7.5	9.3	10.5	11.7	18.8	21.8
Kayaking/Rafting	5.6	na	na	na	na	3.1
Mountain Biking (off road)	7.2	10.2	8.5	8.0	7.8	7.1
Paintball Games	6.1	6.7	8.0	9.4	6.9	5.3
Running/Jogging	35.5	35.9	28.8	24.7	24.7	22.8
Skateboarding	7.7	9.8	9.7	10.3	9.7	9.1
Skiing (alpine)	7.4	6.5	6.4	5.9	7.4	7.4
Skiing (cross country)	2.0	1.6	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.3
Snowboarding	6.1	5.9	5.2	6.6	5.6	4.3
Soccer	13.5	15.5	14.0	13.3	13.7	12.9
Softball	10.8	12.8	12.4	12.5	13.6	14.0
Swimming	51.9	63.5	56.5	53.4	53.1	58.8
Yoga	20.2	16.0	na	na	na	na
Target Shooting	19.8	20.3	19.1	19.2	18.9	16.9
Tennis	12.3	12.6	10.4	9.6	11.0	10.0
Volleyball	10.6	12.2	11.1	10.8	11.5	12.3
Water Skiing	5.2	5.6	6.3	4.7	6.9	5.9
Weight Lifting	31.5	37.5	32.9	26.2	25.1	22.8
Workout at Club	36.3	39.3	34.9	31.8	28.9	24.1

SOURCE: National Sporting Goods Association, Mt Prospect, IL 60056



Lake Michael, Mebane's Regional Park, provides access to a 59 acre lake.

CLASSIFICATIONS FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACE & GREENWAYS

A well balanced park system is made up of several park types that range from very large regional parks (often encompassing hundreds of acres) to very small mini parks (sometimes less than one acre). The descriptions on the following pages define the parks that typically comprise a community's park system. Numerous agencies (federal, state, county, and municipal) play a role in providing this system. Looking at the entire system helps identify the roles of the various agencies.

The following park descriptions are based on park classifications outlined in the 1995 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) publication "Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines". They are not intended to serve as park standards, but instead are used as a framework for describing the components found in a park system. Communities should structure their park types based on individual community needs. Table 3A-Park Acreage (PA) and Table 3B-Park Acreage (PA) reflect the standards for development that are recommended for the City of Mebane. The recommended standards vary slightly from NRPA guidelines listed on the following pages.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are typically very large sites, encompassing unique qualities that exemplify the natural features, diverse land formations, and the variety of vegetation and wildlife found in the region. Examples of the types of facilities provided in a regional park include environmental centers, camping, nature trails, observation decks, and picnic areas. Open fields for non-structured activities, such as frisbee throwing or kite flying, are also generally found in these parks.

Land chosen for future preserves or the expansion of existing sites should contain the previously mentioned characteristics accompanied with natural water features such as beach areas, rivers, and creeks. The majority of the site should be reserved for passive recreation, with the remaining acreage used for active recreation.

NRPA's guidelines for developing regional parks are as follows:

Service Area:	Typically serve the entire county
Acreage/Population Ratio:	10 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	Sufficient area to encompass the resources to be preserved and managed. Typically a minimum of 200 acres; up to 1,000 acres.
Typical Facilities:	
Environmental Center	Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)
Equestrian Center	Restrooms/Vending
Primitive Camping	Beach
Group Camping	Swimming
Recreational Vehicles Camping	Boating
Nature Trails	Fishing Piers/Boat Docks
Observation Deck	Parking
Picnic Shelters with Grills	Caretaker's House

Development of **regional parks** typically falls within the responsibility of federal, state and/or county agencies.



Typical Regional Park

200 + Acres

District Parks

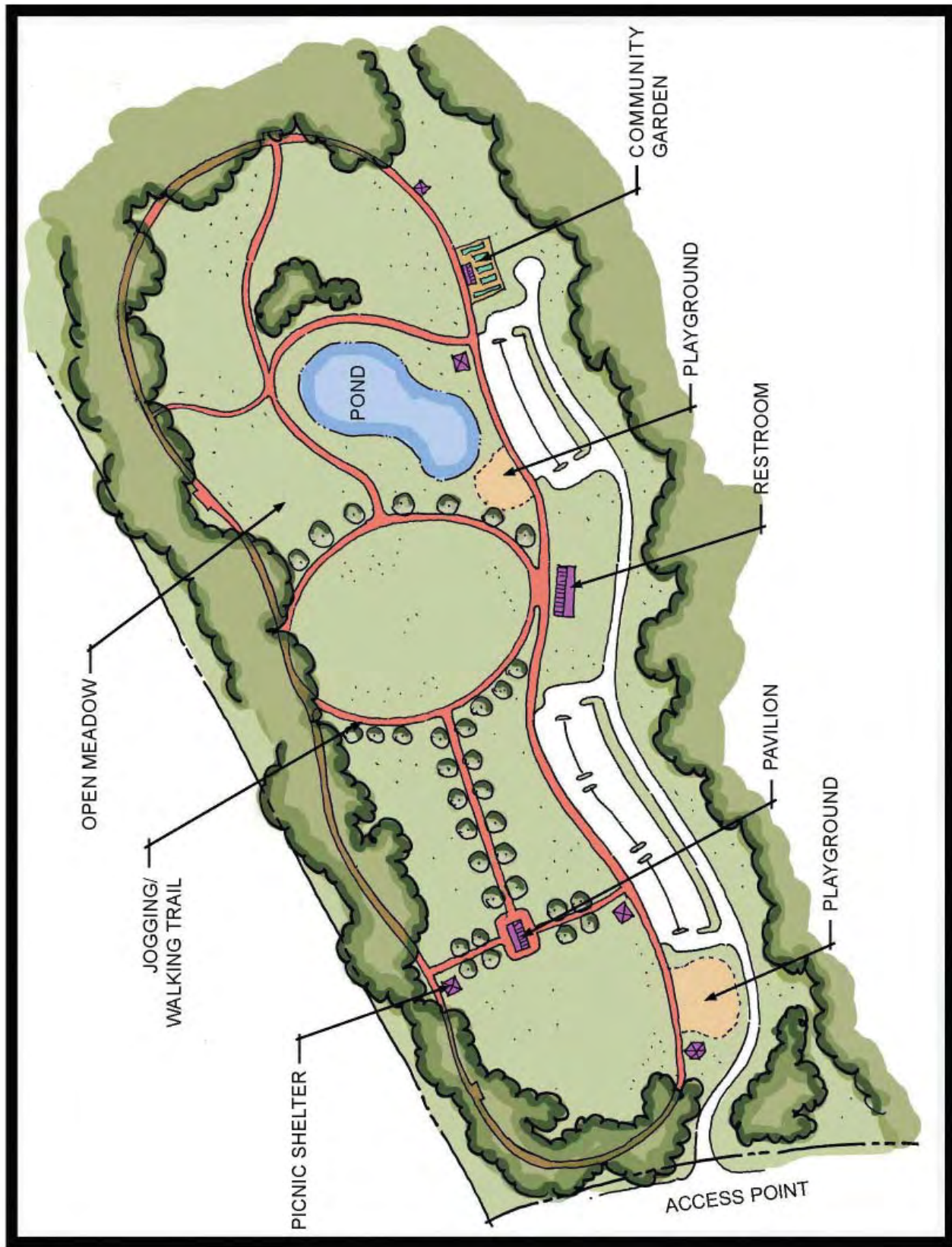
A district park provides more diverse recreational opportunities than the regional park. The district park emphasizes passive recreational opportunities that are similar to the regional park in addition to including limited active recreational facilities. It is easily accessible by the population (typically 40,000) it serves and maintains a 2.5-5 mile service radius. The park contains a minimum of 5 acres per 1,000 population and should be a minimum of 100 acres in size.

An indoor recreation building/community center may be included in a district park. These facilities typically reflect the character of the park with a historic, natural, or urban theme. Active recreational facilities located in a district park include play areas, limited ball fields, hard surface courts, multi-purpose play fields, picnicking locations, and various types of trails.

Listed below are NRPA's guidelines for developing district parks:

Service Area:	Typically serve the entire community
Acreage/Population Ratio:	5.0 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	40 acres minimum, 80-150 acres optimal
Typical Facilities:	
Playground	Picnic Shelter with Grills
Basketball Courts	Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)
Tennis Courts (lighted)	Nature Trail
Tournament Level Tennis Facilities	Benches or Bench Swings
Volleyball Courts	Restroom/Concessions
Multi-purpose Fields	Parking
Tournament Level Soccer Fields	Service Yard
Tournament Level Baseball/Softball Fields	
Alternate Facilities:	
Recreation Center	Amphitheater
Tennis Center	Observation Decks
Running Track	

Development of **district parks** typically falls within the responsibility of county or municipal agencies.



Typical District Park 80-150 Acres

Community Parks

Community parks provide for the recreation needs of several neighborhoods or large sections of the community. A range of facilities is typically provided and may support tournament competition for athletic and league sports or passive recreation. These parks also present opportunities for nontraditional types of recreation. Fifty percent of community park sites should be developed for passive recreation. These relatively undisturbed areas may serve as buffers around the park and/or act as buffers between active facilities.

Community park sites should have varying topography and vegetation. Forested areas should have a variety of tree species. Cleared areas should be present for siting active recreational facilities. One or more natural water feature(s), such as a lake, river, or creek, are desirable. Parkland should be contiguous and strategically located in order to be accessible to all users within the neighborhoods it serves.

Listed below are NRPA’s guidelines for developing community parks:

Service Area:	.5 - 3 mile radius
Acreage/Population Ratio:	5.0 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	30-50 acres

Typical Facilities:

Recreation Center	Picnic Tables with Grills
Basketball Courts	Benches or Bench Swings
Tennis Court (lighted)	Nature Trails
Baseball/Softball Fields (lighted)	Restroom/Concessions
Multipurpose Fields	Parking
Soccer Fields (lighted)	Playgrounds
Swimming Pool	Volleyball Courts
Amphitheater	Disc Golf
Observations Decks	Lakes
Picnic Shelters	Paddle Boat/Canoe Harbor
Picnic Shelters with Grills	Fishing Piers/Boat Docks

Specialty facilities may be added to or substituted for other facilities depending on community need or special site characteristics.

Development of **community parks** may fall within the responsibility of municipality or county agencies.



Typical Community Park 30 - 50 Acres

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide the basic unit of most park systems. These parks are usually located within walking distance of the area serviced and provide a variety of activities of interest to all age groups. While their small size requires intense development, fifty percent of each site should remain undisturbed, if possible, to serve as a buffer between the park and adjacent land users.

The NRPA guidelines for neighborhood park development are as follows:

Service Area:	.25 to .75 mile radius to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding populations
Acreage/Population Ratio:	2.5 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	5-10 acres
Typical Facilities:	
Playground	Picnic Shelters with Grills
Court Games	Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)
Informal Play Field	Benches or Bench Swings
Volleyball	50% of Site to Remain Undeveloped
Trails/Walkways	Parking (7-10 spaces)

Neighborhood parks are typically developed by municipalities.



Typical Neighborhood Park 5 - 10 Acres

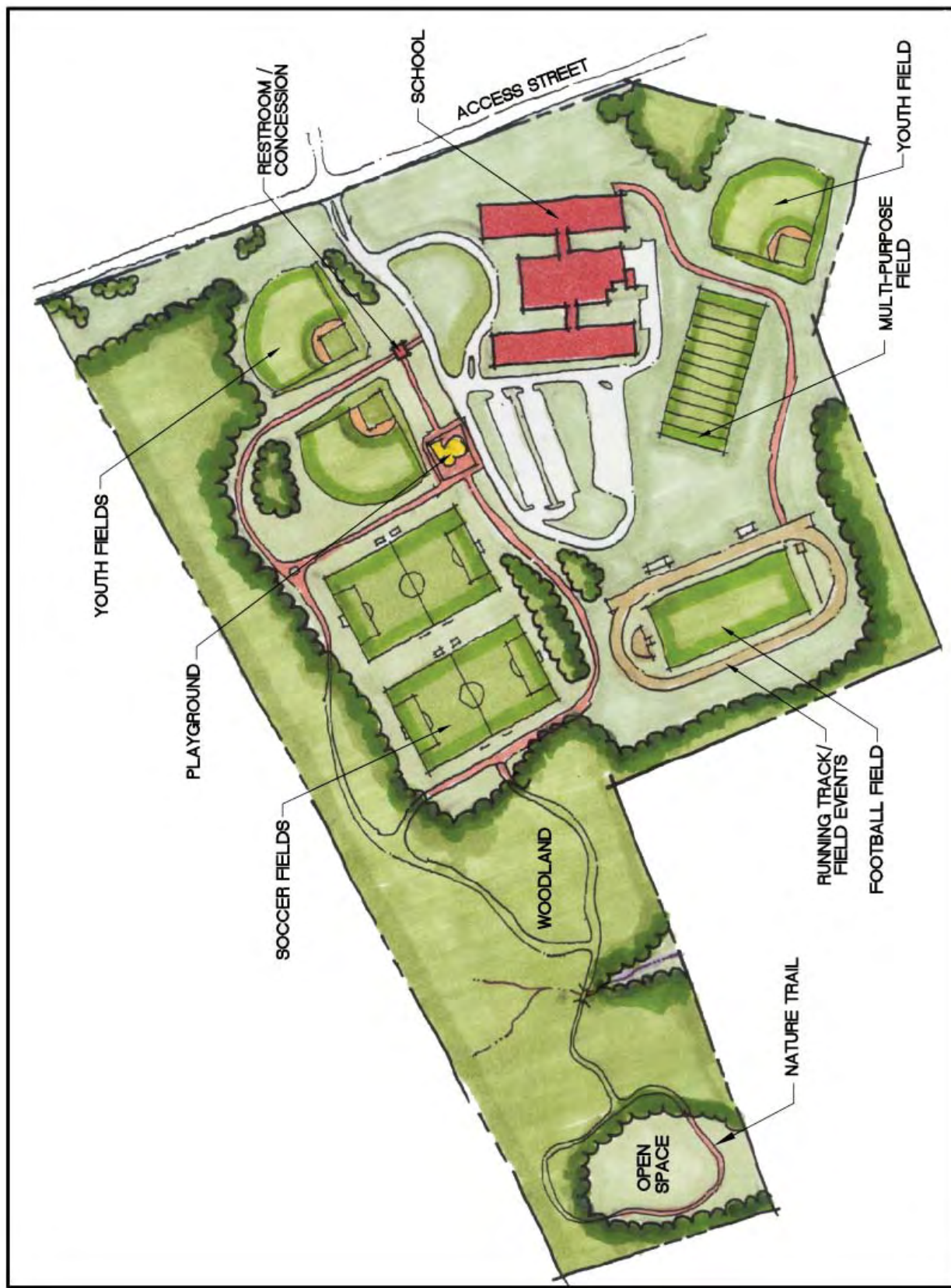
School Parks

Joint use is a mechanism that public agencies use to maximize resources. Through joint use, both the school system and the parks and recreation department benefit from shared use of facilities and valuable land resources. School park facilities typically go beyond the simple joint use of school facilities. The parks and recreation agency will become a partner in the development of a school site and fund recreational facilities beyond those typically built with a stand-alone school. These facilities may be indoor spaces (gymnasiums, classrooms, meeting rooms, etc.) or outdoor recreation facilities (ballfields, playgrounds, picnic shelters, etc.). The cost of developing and operating these additional facilities is minimized when constructing them in partnership with school development. Savings are also found in shared infrastructure (parking, restrooms, etc.) and shared maintenance and operational cost.

The school park concept maximizes the joint use objective and provides a planned facility that maximizes public funds. The school park concept typically varies depending on the school. Elementary and middle schools provide the ideal setting for a neighborhood park, while middle and high schools follow the function of a community park or sports complex. Access to school sports facilities at high schools and middle schools can be difficult based on team sports needs. This concept only works if there is a mutually agreed upon joint use agreement to define roles, responsibilities, and use of facilities.

Service Area:	Varies depending on school type and park type
Desirable Size:	Varies depending on school type and park type
Typical Facilities:	Varies depending on school type and park type

Development of **school parks** usually fall within the responsibility of municipalities, county agencies, or school districts.



Typical School Park

± 50 Acres

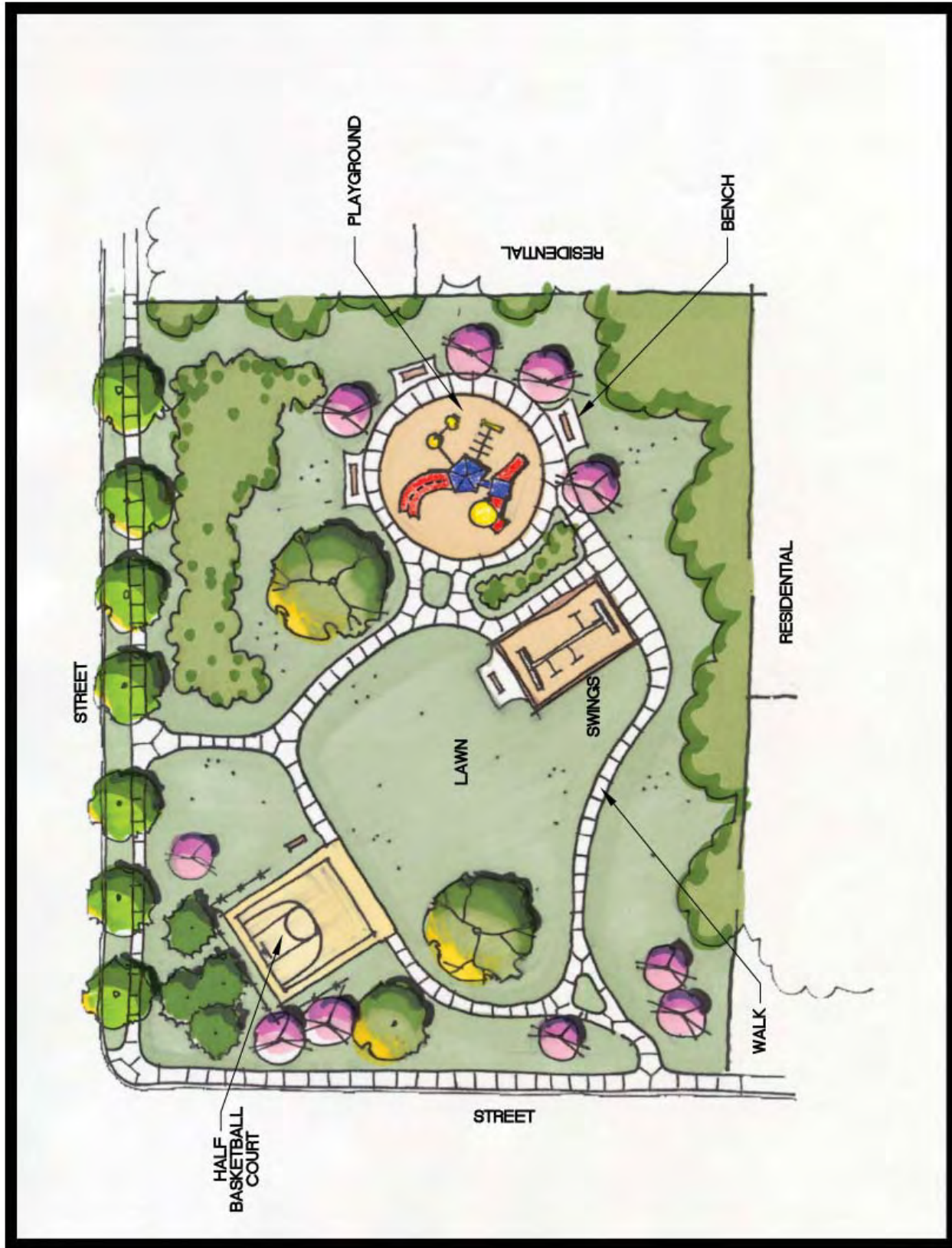
Mini Parks

Mini parks are the smallest park classification. These parks are located within walking distance of the area serviced, and they provide limited recreational needs. The small amount of land associated with mini parks usually results in intense development with little to no buffer between the park and adjacent properties.

NRPA's guidelines for mini park development are as follows:

Service Area:	.25 mile radius to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding populations
Acreage/Population Ratio:	.25 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	.25 - 1 acres
Typical Facilities:	
Playground	Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)
½ Basketball Courts	Benches or Bench Swings
Open Play Area	Landscaped Public Use Area

Mini parks are typically developed by municipalities.



Typical Mini Park

.25 - 1 Acres

Greenway Trails

Greenways provide an important component of the overall park system. They:

- Serve as alternative non-motorized transportation facilities.
- Provide links between parks, schools, neighborhoods, and commercial areas.
- Emphasize harmony with the natural environment.
- Provide safe pedestrian movement.
- Provide resource based outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Enhance adjacent property values.
- Provide linear parks and open spaces.

Greenways are very similar to natural resource sites; the primary difference is the emphasis on pedestrian trails found in the greenway system.

Desirable Size: Greenways form corridors that vary considerably in length and width. A 50' width is generally considered a minimum.



While Mebane does not currently have a greenway trail, Lake Michael has 1.8 miles of walking/jogging trails

