

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ROWAN COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

September 2016

For Rowan County,
North Carolina



Prepared for Rowan County
Board of Commissioners

 **MCADAMS**

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Master Plan

The Rowan County Parks & Recreation Department and the County Commissioners have recognized the need to develop a Comprehensive Plan for Parks and Recreation for Rowan County. The Comprehensive Plan shall address the needs of the citizens of Rowan County as they relate to park and recreation programs and facilities offered over the next 5-10-15 years. The following groups have contributed to the development of the plan:

- Rowan County Parks & Recreation Department
- Rowan County Parks & Recreation Commission
- County Commissioners
- Citizens of Rowan County
- Project consultants from: McAdams, Pros Consulting, Highland Mapping, & Leisure Vision/ETC Institute

Rowan County Parks & Recreation Service Area

Today, the Parks and Recreation Department of Rowan County provides recreational facilities and services to approximately 140,000 residents within the County limits. The Parks and Recreation Department provides mostly passive use parks on a district and regional level; with local municipalities providing most of the active facilities and programming. The Department provides special programming to targeted demographics with, Therapeutic Recreation, Senior Games, Arts Classes, and Nature Learning for school age children.

Dan Nicholas Park's regional draw brings users from across the state and provides most of the Parks System's non-tax revenue (\$1.45 million annually). The Nature Learning program at the park's Nature Center provides programming to school groups from over 30 North Carolina Counties annually.

Another important aspect of the system are the contributions of municipalities non-profit, and private recreation providers. The YMCA, County Schools, local country & swim clubs and municipalities have provided most of the county's active recreation. The types of recreation includes mainly organized sports leagues.

Many of the County's park lands have come from citizen donations. Public input will be an important component in determining future system needs. For this study the county was divided into four regions for public input: North, South, East and West.

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MASTER PLAN CONTENTS

The following Master Plan sections are included in the Master Plan document which can be found in the Parks & Recreation Department office:

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Process
4. Inventory & Analysis
5. Public Opinion
6. Needs & Demands
7. Recommendations
8. Action Plan
9. Appendix

MASTER PLAN PROCESS

The method of investigation for this Master Plan involved several means of data collection and analysis that were used to determine the unmet needs for recreation in Rowan County. Public comment and feedback were taken from, meetings with park staff, local government, community meetings and a County wide survey. Methods for collection and analysis are listed below:

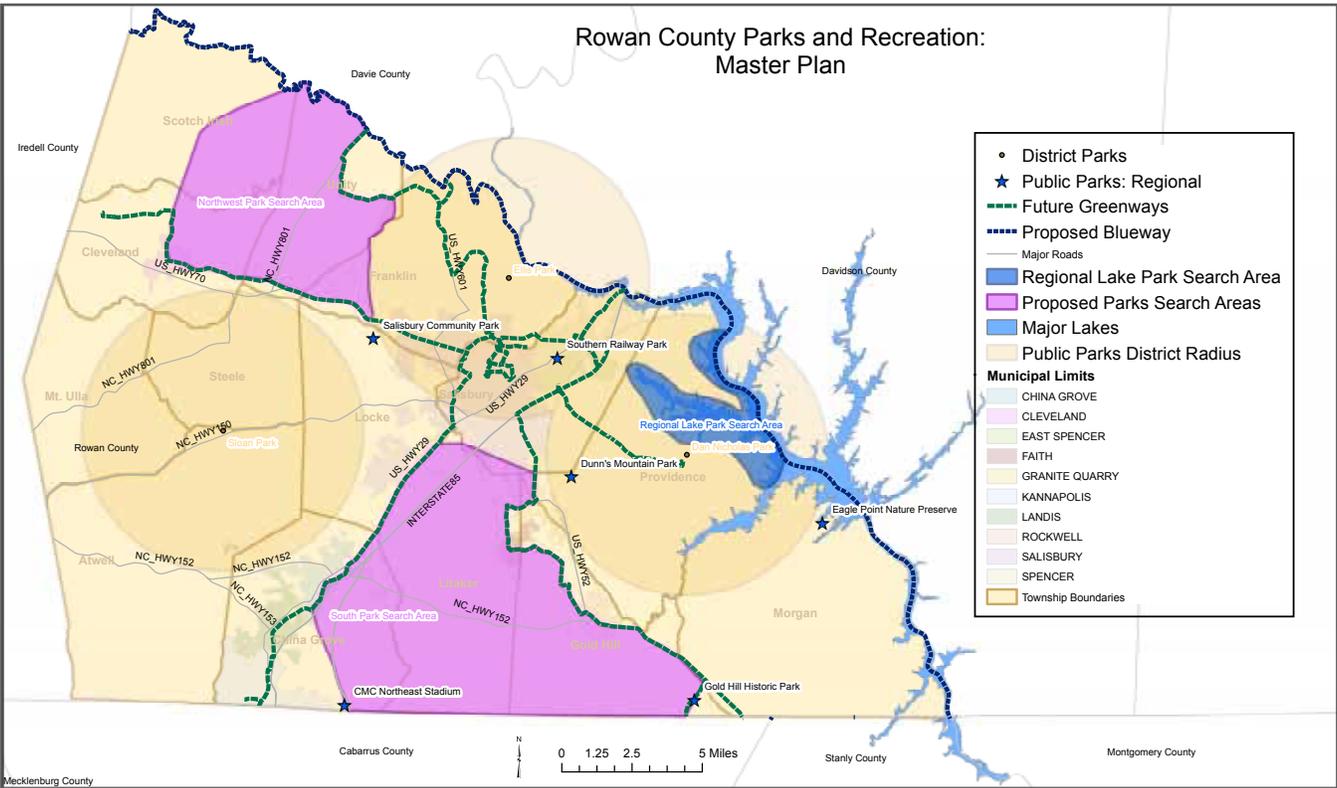
- County wide facilities Inventory
- Review of Previous Master Plans & Maps
- Inventory & Analysis of Existing Facilities
- Inventory & Analysis of Existing Programs
- Demographics Study
- Trends Analysis Study
- Benchmarking & Level of Service Study
- Meetings with staff
- Meetings with Government officials & Parks Committee
- County Survey & Data Analysis
- Public Meetings

The public meetings were an open forum where citizens were encouraged to view maps of the County's population and existing recreation facilities. Citizens were then interviewed about their needs for recreation and any concerns or dreams they may have for the Parks & Recreation System. Meetings were held in the morning and afternoon of April 21st and 28th.

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NEEDS & DEMANDS

The Rowan County Parks & Recreation unmet needs and demands were broken down into four categories, parks & facilities, programming and marketing. The list of needs and demands provides a comprehensive look at many different areas within the Department that should be provided, expanded, or improved in order to better serve County residents.



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ACTION PLAN

The needs & demands were turned into formal recommendations and prioritized into a final action plan for implementation along a 10 year time-line of completion.

1-5 YEARS

- **GENERAL STRATEGIES**

- * Partnering with Agricultural Advisory Board.
- * Development of new open space, park land acquisition and greenways ordinances.
- * Perform park specific accessibility audits & inventories.
- * Adopting a system wide accessibility standard.

- **PROGRAMMING**

- * Development of core programming.
- * Enhance how the entire calendar year is presented to the public.
- * Define standards and procedures for reviewing customer satisfaction.
- * Implementation of customer feedback strategies.
- * Implement an annual review process of programs.
- * Layout a documented program development process.
- * Identification of customer requirements.
- * Conduct similar provider review on a bi-annual basis.
- * Create partnership policies.
- * Development of new partnerships.
- * Creation of a sponsorship recognition program.
- * Develop a volunteer program.
- * Develop a marketing strategy through social media campaign, website renovation and branding.
- * Development of a pricing policy for programs.
- * Create a standard of financial performance measures.

- **FACILITIES**

- * Produce master plans for each existing park.
- * Meet outstanding needs and renovations for existing parks.
- * Map a strategy for use of County owned school facilities.
- * Creation of greenway and blueway trail connections.

- Final planning of the Carolina Thread Trail.
- Acquisition of land for 10 miles of greenway trails.
- Planning of possible access points for blueway trail.

- * Serve the County with a Regional and District Park System.
 - Acquisition of land for the High Rock Lake Regional Park
 - Acquisition of land for the South District Park
- * Plan and Design a Central Programming Facility.
 - Identify a space for renovation within the Rowan County Facilities Master Plan
 - Develop a Master Plan and Program for the facility.

- **FUNDING**

- * Identify money available through grants, charitable donors, and other foundations.
- * Capitalize on retaining self-generated funding through establishing a non-reverting fund.
- * Maximize self-generated funding.

5-10 YEARS

- **PROGRAMMING**

- * Staffing to administer program needs.
- * Development of new programming.
- * Provide programs coordinator position.
- * Devise a system wide approach for handling customer dissatisfaction
- * Development of new partnerships.

- **FACILITIES**

- * Creation of greenway and blueway trail connections.
 - Development of Greenway Trails (10 miles)
 - Acquisition of land for Greenway Trails (8 miles)
 - Acquisition and development of access points for blueway trail.
- * Serve the County with a Regional and District Park System.
 - Acquisition of land for the Northwestern District Park
 - Development and planning of the High Rock Lake Regional Park
 - Development and planning of the South District Park

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- **FUNDING**

- * Identify money available through grants, charitable donors, and other foundations.
- * Obtain County generated funds to assist with financing.

10 + YEARS

- **GENERAL STRATEGIES**

- * Master Plan update

- **PROGRAMMING**

- * Development of new partnerships.

- **FACILITIES**

- * Creation of greenway and blueway trail connections.
 - Development of Greenway Trails (18 miles by)
 - Acquisition of land for Greenway Trails should be ongoing until the trail network is complete.
- * Serve the County with a Regional and District Park System.
 - Development and planning of the Northwestern District Park

- **FUNDING**

- * Identify money available through grants, charitable donors, and other foundations.
- * Obtain County generated funds to assist with financing.

