

Town of Four Oaks

Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan

December 11, 2023

Acknowledgements

Board

Vic Medlin, Mayor
Andy Hardy, Mayor Pro Tem
Mike Hines, Council Member
Carlos Surles, Council Member
Kim Robertson, Council Member
Michael Bradley, Council Member

Staff

JR Stanley, Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Director
Martha Garris, Town Clerk

Steering Comittee

Adrian O’Neal
Austin Cross
Michael Bradley
Tim Johnson
Reid Williams
Andy Jackson
Susan Adams
Cathy Tassielli

A special thanks to community stakeholders who provided their time and input during the public engagement events in this plan’s development and the recommendations of this project. Their input has shaped the vision and goals of the Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Department.

Prepared by



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I. Introduction

A. Purpose of the Plan

The Town of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning document that is meant to guide the future development of the Town’s parks and recreation facilities and shape the offering of programs provided by the Town over the course of the next 10-15 years. Based on a holistic planning approach, this effort considers previous planning documents, department goals, existing conditions and an assessment of needs to provide a framework for the development of a vision, recommendations, and prioritization strategies for the parks system.

While this plan is intended to establish a strategic vision for recreation and parks in the Town of Four Oaks, the plan also considers other strategic planning efforts undertaken by the Town, including the Economic Development Assessment (2020), the Four Oaks Land Use Plan Update (2022), the Four Oaks Downtown Master Plan (2021), and the Impact of Greenways (2017) resource.

Multiple elements of these plans relate to the Town’s desire to improve the quality of life for Four Oaks residents while also addressing the rapid growth that is expected during the coming decade. The development of the Town of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan is based on the acknowledgment that providing excellent recreation and parks facilities and program opportunities for a diverse, growing population will be a critical component of accomplishing the Town’s overarching goals.

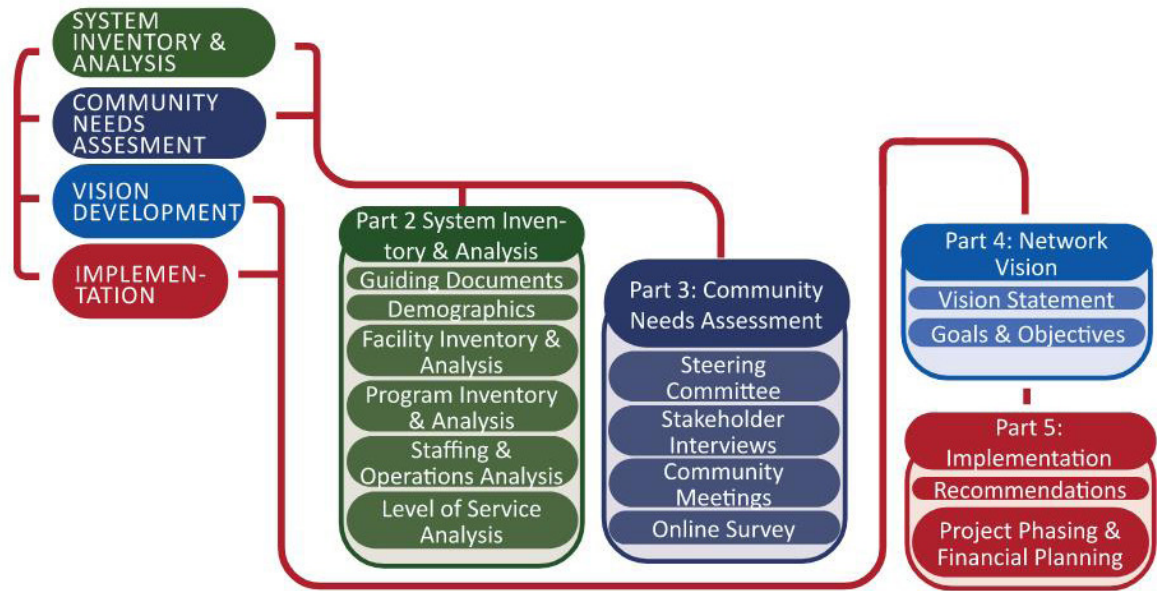
The purpose of this plan is to establish a clear vision for the Parks and Recreation system that supports the department’s mission. The development of this vision was initiated by establishing a community-based set of priorities to maximize the effectiveness of the department and its resources. This master plan provides a focused direction for development and delivery of the Town’s recreation and parks services for current and future residents, ensuring that Four Oaks continues to be a desirable community for people to live, work, and play.



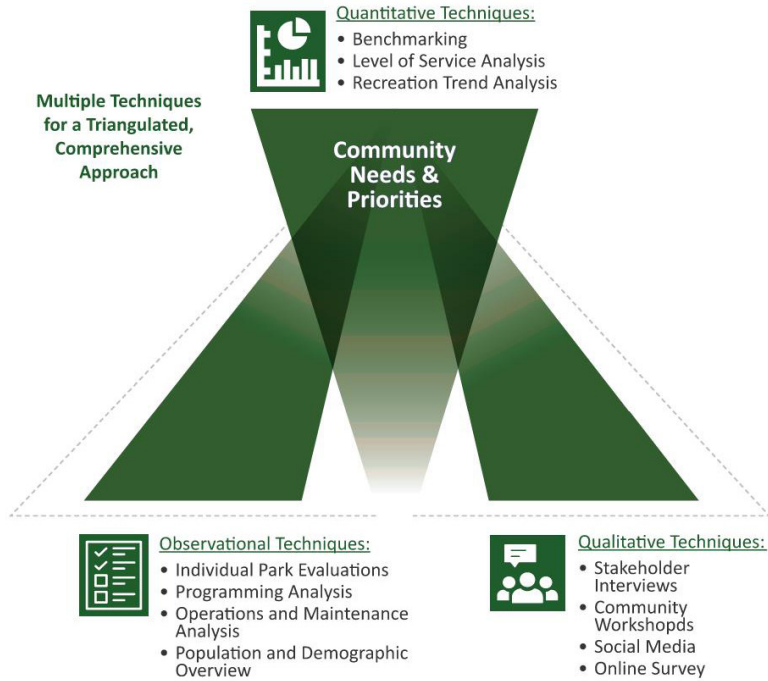
Barbours Grove Park on Baker

B. Project Process

This document is intended to serve as a comprehensive guide for the planning, property acquisition, development and operations of parks, trails, park facilities, and recreation programs throughout the Town. As such, this master plan will assist staff with future improvements to facilities and programs by establishing priorities within a defined vision.



This document has been developed in a linear process, building upon previous work. The process began with an evaluation of the existing parks system, analysis of public need and priorities, formation of a long-range vision, and lastly a strategic plan for implementation. The plan used a triangulated data approach of quantitative, observational, & qualitative data to comprehensively assess existing conditions and community needs.



Triangulated Data Approach

II. System Inventory & Analysis

A. Introduction

This chapter documents the current conditions of the Town of Four Oaks’s parks, facilities, programs, services, department operations, planning context, and the demographics of the community being served. Currently the Town manages three named parks, maintains a joint use agreement for two public school facilities, and is in close proximity to the East Coast Greenway. Evaluation of current conditions include appearance, accessibility and safety, level of service and other considerations providing a snapshot for analysis.

Named Parks:

- » Johnson – Strickland Kiddie Park
- » Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park
- » Barbour’s Grove Park

Public School Facilities (joint use agreement):

- » Four Oaks Elementary School Gymnasium and Fields
- » Four Oaks Middle School Gymnasium and Fields

Proximate Facilities

- » East Coast Greenway

B. Guiding Documents

In order to create a continuing narrative of planning, studying, and acting within Four Oaks, prime importance was placed upon review of previously adopted plans and studies. Consideration of previously adopted plans and studies will ensure that the recommendations of this study and are compatible with other developmental regulations and patterns of growth. These documents may be classified into three broad categories:

- » Town and Regional Documents
- » Area- or facility-specific studies and plans
- » Previous recreation master plans

A listing, though not exhaustive, of significant influencing plans include:

- » The Impact of Greenways (2017)
- » Economic Development Assessment (2020)
- » Four Oaks Downtown Streetscape Master Plan (2020)
- » Johnston County Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2021)
- » Four Oaks Land Use Plan Update (2022)
- » Four Oaks Zoning Ordinance

The Impact of Greenways 2017

The Impact of Greenways is a document commissioned by the East Coast Greenways Alliance, which contains an analysis of the estimated benefits resulting from implementation of greenway trails in the Triangle region, including Johnston County. The East Coast Greenway travels through Johnston County nea Four Oaks, as it travels along the Neuse River Trail. Numerous health, economical, transportation and environmental benefits are explored and explained in the document.



Economic Development Assessment 2020

The Report of Economic Development Assessment, completed in January 2020, was developed by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center for the Town of Four Oaks. The information from this assessment was then incorporated in the 2020 Downtown Streetscape Master Plan. A local group comprised of business owners, planning and economic development board members, Chamber of Commerce officials and others met and participated in a workshop which focused on discussion around issues facing the Town while identifying its assets, economic drivers, strengths, challenges, opportunities, and difficulties. A forum was also held in which the public was able to participate and provide feedback.

This planning process provided an implementation plan, with a timeframe of 12 to 18 months. The Town also outlined a goal of working with economic development partners that are local to the area, to leverage resources and capacity. Specific current economic drivers were listed, along with future drivers.

The following goals, including objectives to meet these goals, were created as a result from this plan:

- » Create an environment for downtown vibrancy.
- » Create an oasis of hospitality.

Four Oaks, a gateway to North Carolina's Capitol and coast, is an oasis of hospitality centered between Boston and Miami on I-95. Downtown is a center for creative local artisans with destination businesses, community events and social activity. Four Oaks is home to industry, business, family and authentic heritage as deep as the roots of Four Oaks trees.

Vision Statement, 2020 Economic Development Assessment

Four Oaks Downtown Streetscape Master Plan 2020

The Four Oaks Downtown Master Plan provides a brief description of the rich history of the town and explains the purpose of the document: providing a framework for improving the streetscape in the historic area of downtown. This includes sidewalk improvements, provision of furnishings and amenities, utility rehabilitation, additional green spaces, and an enhanced public realm. Through a systematic process of research, site analysis and stakeholder input, the Master Plan provides thorough information on the opportunities and challenges of improving the Four Oaks downtown area.

Initial concepts were prepared and presented to the community for feedback during multiple meetings. This feedback helped to form a consensus on the desired streetscape improvements, and the development of a preferred concept alternative. By reviewing the local sites, observing the existing conditions of specific areas, and listing out spaces that would benefit the most from revitalization, the Four Oaks Downtown Streetscape Master Plan provides a conceptual framework for development. This plan lists out the opportunities to beautify downtown, including investing in public spaces, public art, and programs to encourage visits to downtown and the assets that will help to preserve the historic nature. The constraints and challenges are listed as well, listing the railroad, overhead utilities, steep grade, and pedestrian safety as areas to improve upon. Construction documents for the master plan are currently being prepared for the first two phases of implementation.



Recommended Streetscape Improvements

Johnston County Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2021

The Johnston County Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes a description of how information was gathered and an understanding of the existing condition of the parks and recreation services available in the County. The plan provides clear action steps based on the vision and goals of the community within the County. Various parks, including ones located within the Town of Four Oaks, are listed. Town of Four Oaks residents were included in the various survey participation and results. 5% of the total respondents who responded to the Johnston County survey reside in Four Oaks.

The inventory of Four Oaks’ recreational resources was taken as well. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommends immediate attention to specific items, including Connecting the greenway trails from Benson to Four Oaks, and Four Oaks to Selma. Residents of Johnston County listed greenways, walking, and hiking trails as the most important item to focus on as a priority for recreational components.

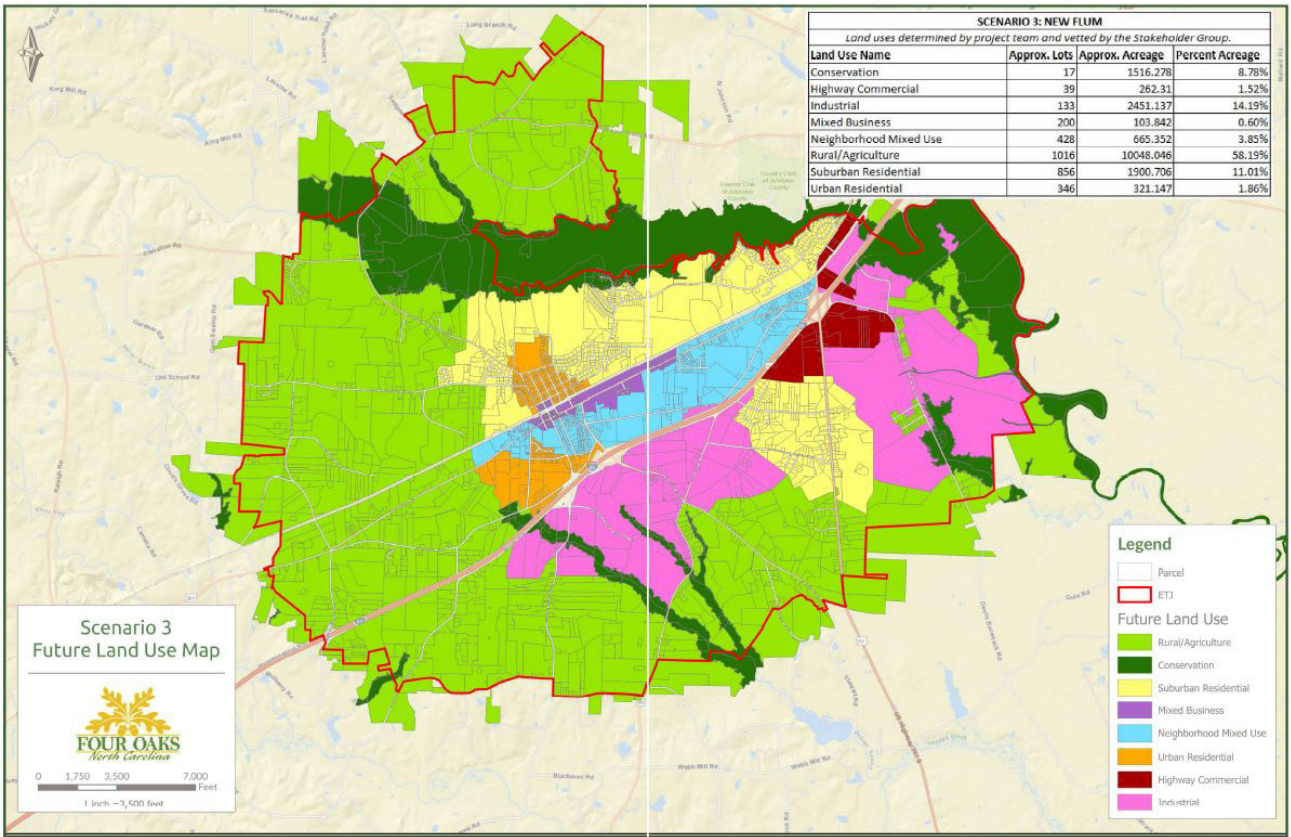


Four Oaks Land Use Plan Update 2022

The previous Land Use Plan for the Town of Four Oaks was published in 2001. The purpose of the Land Use Plan Update document was to adopt and apply updated zoning regulations that would evaluate existing conditions, identify areas for improvement, and prioritize the next steps for the Town. In addition, this document’s focus was to establish a vision and strategy to create a competitive application when seeking funding for project development. The updated document went through a phasing process, which included initiation, background analysis, planning, considerations, and review and adaptation of the new document.

The demographic analysis projected a future population growth which would add an exponential amount of growth to the Town. The diversity, age variations, housing status and education status, employment and income of citizens within the Town was considered in the analysis. The outcome of the analysis determined that the population would continue to see steady growth over the next 10 years.

Differing scenarios for the land use plan were proposed in the updated plan, in addition to Future Land Use Plan Considerations. These scenarios help to provide an intelligent means of coming to a decision for the Town of Four Oaks that will lead to sustainable and successful growth.



Future Land Use Map

Four Oaks Zoning Ordinance

The Town of Four Oak’s Zoning Ordinance Use Table addresses various recreational uses, including park facilities which would be operated and maintained by the Town. Greenways, active parks, and passive parks are all permitted outright in a variety of zoning districts. This allows for a range of new parks to be considered in Four Oaks. The Zoning Ordinance discusses Open Space requirements for new development, namely Traditional Neighborhood Development. Calling for ‘centrally located open space’ to be an integral part of the subdivision (Section 308.2), walkways and areas designated to encourage walking for pleasure and destinations are required.



Four Oaks Town Hall

C. Demographics

To better focus on community addressed by this master plan,, we must first gain a better understanding of the demographic and population trends of the Town. The first step in analyzing the community’s demographics and population is to identify trends in historic data as well as future projections. Although this data is static in nature, analysis will allow the Town to make more informed decisions based on trends that may impact the delivery of services over the next 10 years. The following population estimates are based on U.S Census Bureau Data, as well as projections for approved and planned housing developments in Four Oaks

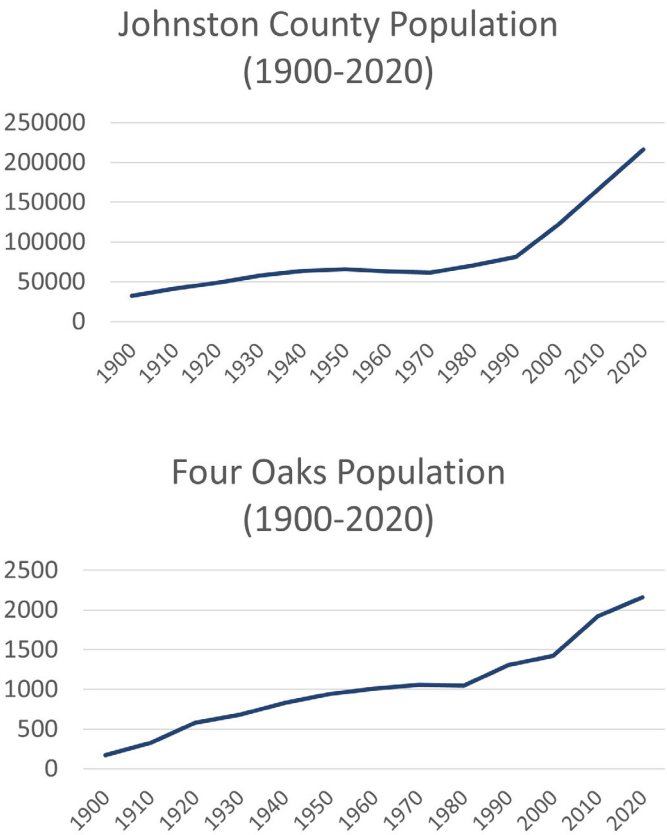
Population Growth

Over the past 10 years, the Town of Four Oaks has experienced steady growth. In 1990, the total population was 1,308. In 2010, the population had expanded to 1,921 residents, and in 2020 there were 2,158 residents. During the period from 1990 to 2020, the town witnessed a 39% increase in growth. **Based on historic growth rates, the projected population for 2030 calls for an increase to 2,503 residents.**

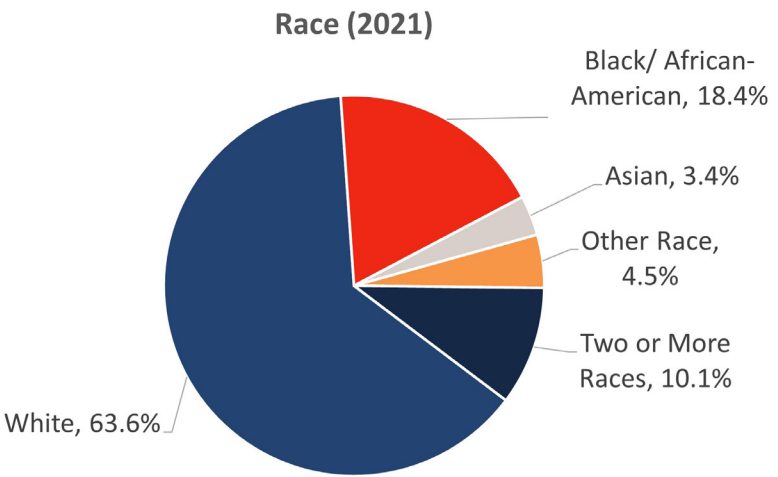
Regionally, Johnston County’s population has experienced a large amount of growth since 1990 as well. In 1990, the population was 81,306. Then in 2000, the population had grown to 121,965.

What this represents is a historical trend of population growth within the County, which presumably influenced the growth of the Town of Four Oaks.

The town experienced steady growth over the last 30 years, at a rate comparable to Johnston County. Furthermore, the town has the potential to experience a steady increase in growth alongside the County. This growth has direct implications for recreation and parks services within the town of Four Oaks.

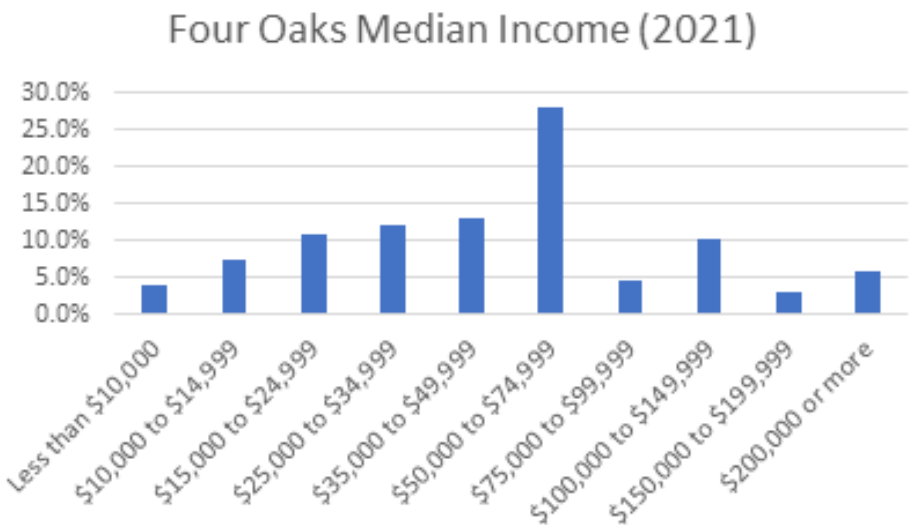


As the population is projected to increase steadily, it will be of the utmost importance to strategically plan for infill development in Four Oaks. Recreation and parks facilities near large infill sites may need to be considered to meet a new or changing population nearby. If no existing parks are within reach of the infill sites, new locations may need to be identified. The town’s transportation network will be impacted with the growth, and the inclusion of multi-modal transportation alternatives will be beneficial in order to maintain specific levels of service throughout the Town.



Population Characteristics

While total population and growth can help to determine park and greenway trail level of service goals, population characteristics can help to define what type of facilities will serve the community best. The following population characteristics are based on American Community Survey datasets and present a snapshot of population trends. The data is pulled from 2011 and 2021, demonstrating a temporal and geographic context. This research, among other factors, will help determine needs for parks and facilities.



Race/Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity were assessed between 2011 and 2021. The Town of Four Oaks is a fairly diverse municipality. The white population accounted for 74.1% of the total population in 2011 and went down to 63.6% in 2021. This makes up the prominent racial majority in the Town of Four Oaks. The African American population has decreased slightly, from 19.5% in 2011, to 18.4% in 2021, making it the second largest race in the town.

Age

Age was pulled from 2011 and 2021 data in order to identify trends in age cohorts. The median age in Four Oaks was 41.2 years of age in 2021. This demonstrates an upward shift in age over the years between 2011 and 2021, when the median population in 2011 was 37.4 years old. Furthermore, the median age in Johnston County is 38.5 years old in 2021, representing an increase in median age from 36.2 years old in 2011.

Gender

Typically, populations do not witness extreme changes in gender distribution unless a major event occurs, such as the closing of a military base. In 2021, the data shows that 54.3% of Four Oaks residents were women, slightly less than the 57.6% from 2011.

Income

Four Oaks residents experienced a significant increase in median income between 2011 and 2021. Median income in 2021 was \$52,159, illustrating a \$18,956 rise in income from \$33,203 in 2011, and representing a 57% overall increase in median income. Johnston County experienced a similarly significant increase in income with a \$16,138 increase to \$66,026 in 2021.

In the frame of income brackets, \$50,000 to \$75,000 saw the highest increase of 6.7% from 2011 to 2021 in Four Oaks. Fortunately, the Under \$10,000 bracket saw the highest decrease in amount, down 10.3% from 2011. This is important to note, as it contrasts with the increasing median income. County numbers followed with similar results, with decreases in all brackets of income from Under \$10,000 to \$35,000 to \$50,000. Decreasing numbers in lower income brackets may hint at a closing wage gap between the Town’s populations.

Education

Educational attainment levels shifted upward within Four Oaks between 2011 and 2021, with 80.5% of the population graduating high school (a 6.7% increase from 2011), and 21.5% earning a Graduate degree or higher (a 5.8% increase).

D. Parks & Recreation Facility Inventory & Analysis

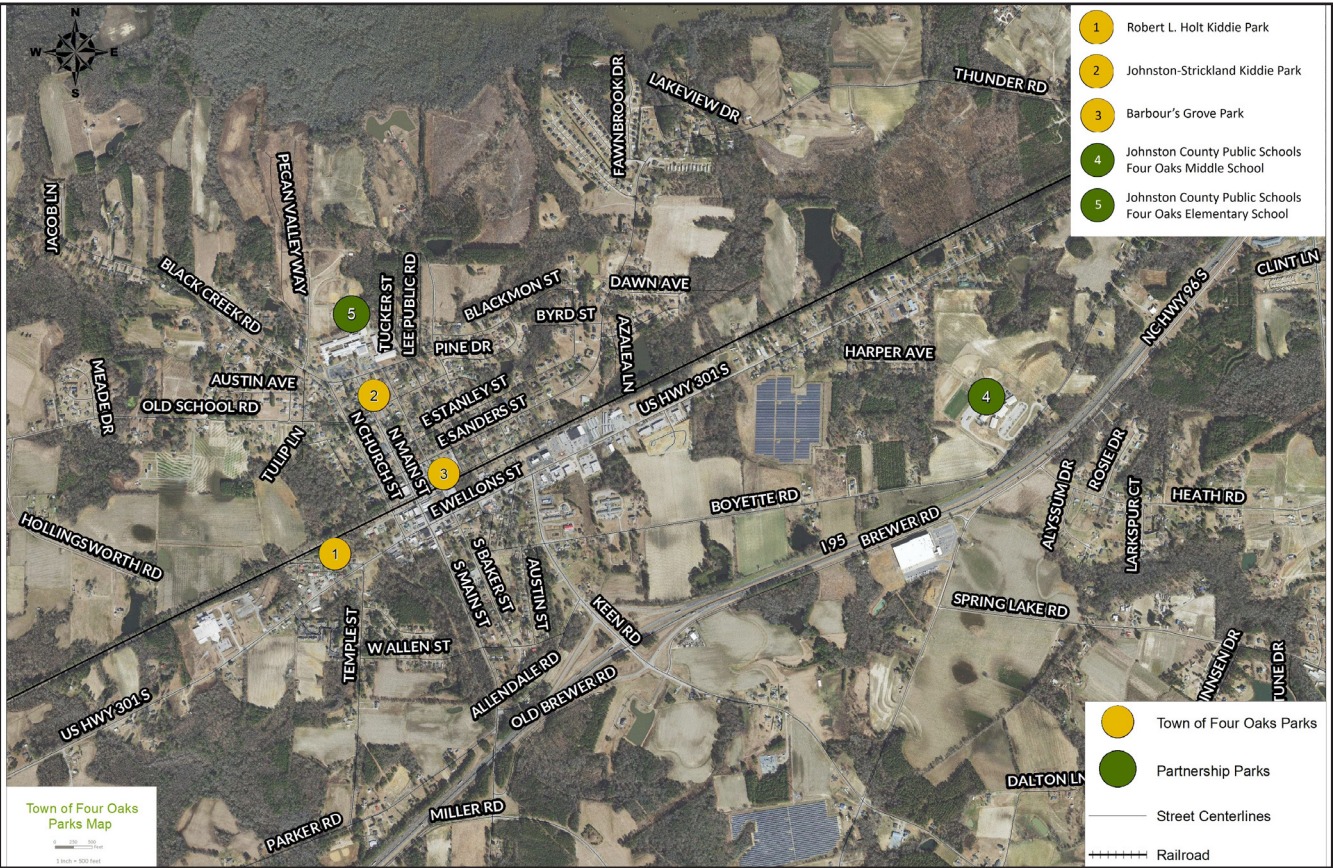
System Overview

The Town of Four Oaks currently maintains three parks and has a joint use agreement with local schools. Parks which include the following features:

- » Multi-purpose play field
- » Basketball court
- » Sidewalks
- » Benches
- » Bike racks
- » Picnic pavilion
- » Playground
- » Performance stage

Park Details

The parks of Four Oaks are detailed below and referenced on the following map.



Existing Parks & Partnerships Map

Johnson – Strickland Kiddie Park

The Johnson – Strickland Kiddie Park contains approximately 0.36 acres of playground equipment just off Main Street. In addition to youth playground equipment, the park offers a small picnic area and shaded seating .



Johnson-Strickland Kiddie Park

Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park

Much like the Johnson – Strickland Kiddie Park, the Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park offers a selection of youth playground equipment. The park is approximately 0.8 acres in size and is located near the southwestern termination of the Town.



Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park

Barbour’s Grove Park

Barbour’s Grove Park represents a central green for the Town of Four Oaks. Amenities provided at this park serve a wider range of ages, and the park contains several benches, a performance pavilion, and a large gazebo. The park is about 0.5 acres in size.



Barbour's Grove Park

In addition to the Town’s facilities, Four Oak’s also provides access to the following facilities:

Four Oaks Elementary School Gymnasium and Fields

The Four Oaks Elementary School is located just north of the Town’s center, providing a very walkable suite of amenities through the Town’s joint use agreement. The school offers several baseball/softball fields, multi-purpose fields, a playground, and an indoor gymnasium. The use of these facilities is provided by a joint agreement between the Town and the Johnston County Public School System.

Four Oaks Middle School Gymnasium and Fields

Four Oaks Middle School is located towards the eastern termination of the Town. Similar to the elementary school, the middle school offers baseball/softball fields, multi-purpose fields, and an indoor gymnasium. Like the Elementary School, use of the facilities is provided by the joint agreement with the school system.

East Coast Greenway

The East Coast Greenway runs along the eastern Coast of the United States from Key West, Florida up through Maine and into Canada. In total, the greenway is 3,000 miles long and travels through 15 states and 450 communities. The Town of Four Oaks is fortunate to be one of the communities that the greenway passes through, around the intersection of Keen Road and Boyette Road. From Four Oaks, greenway users may travel north to Smithfield or southwest to Benson. Of note, the portions of the greenway within and around Four Oaks are considered “On Road” meaning that they are not individually paved or marked.



Greenway map from the official East Coast Greenway webpage <https://www.greenway.org/>

Park Ratings Methodology

To observe system wide successes and opportunities, representatives of the project team visited each of the parks and facilities operated by the Town and completed an observational form for each site. The following criteria were used and are based in part on guidelines developed by Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a non-profit organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities.

Design & Construction:

- » Is the design and construction of this site appropriate for the needs of users served?
- » Is the site readily accessible to the users being served? (walking, biking, all users)
- » Have changes in context made site ineffective to users?
- » Does the site include appropriate recreation amenities for intended users?
- » Has the site been improved?
- » Is there a clear indication that the site utilizes design standards for branding, materials, etc.)

Effectiveness:

- » Does the site have features/amenities that can be used by people of different ages?
- » How many different types of activities are available?
- » Are there choices in intensity of activities to do?
- » Is there a balance of active recreation and passive or at-will opportunities?

Comfort & Image:

- » Does the site make a good first impression?
- » Are there enough places to sit and conveniently located?
- » Is the site clean and free of litter?
- » Does the site feel safe?
- » Do vehicles dominate the site through access roads, parking and/or maintenance?
- » Does the site need improvements?

Access & Linkages:

- » Are there clear and open view lines into open spaces?
- » Is there clear and useful wayfinding/signage within the site?
- » Can people walk easily to the site from surrounding areas?
- » Does the site function for people with special needs?
- » Do paths and/or roads connect people to primary amenities?

Sustainability:

Sociability & Sustainability

- » Does the site provide places for people to gather?
- » Does the site promote healthy lifestyle and/or reduce daily stress?
- » Is the site well connected with clear and safe access point(s)?

Environmental Sustainability

- » Does the site use energy, water and material resources efficiently?
- » Does the site improve water quality?
- » Does the site enhance, preserve, promote or contribute to biological diversity?
- » Is the site a node within a larger ecological corridor or habitat?
- » Does the site enhance environmental awareness or knowledge?

Economic Sustainability

- » Does the site create public and/or private revenue-generating opportunities?
- » Does the site help sustain or increase property values?
- » Does the site contribute to nearby property development or redevelopment?
- » Does the site provide permanent jobs?

Scoring

Each park observed was assigned a score for each categorical question based on a qualitative assessment of how the park met the criteria. Once all scores were assigned, a matrix was created that allowed trends to become visible across the entire system.

It is important to note that there is no one-size-fits-all set of criteria that can accurately evaluate every type of park. However, seeing each individual park's score and system-wide scores allows for the identification of unique trends and a general comparison of parks within the system.



Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park

Exceeding Expectations

These are generally defined as parks with new or recently enhanced facilities or features, readily accessible through multiple modes of transportation, exhibit multiple features that enhance the comfort and experience of park users, and exhibit a maintenance quality that meets or exceeds the standards of the Town. Example characteristics of parks that exceed expectations include the following:

- » The park is functioning as intended and is also exceptionally well maintained, aesthetically pleasing, safe, and often demonstrates sustainable techniques.
- » The park accommodates a wide variety of uses and maintains a consistently high level of activity while remaining flexible.
- » The park shows clear evidence of good design standards and embraces heritage resources (if applicable).
- » There are many ways for users to access the park, including walking and biking.
- » Multi-purpose fields or lawn surfaces are well-maintained and could be considered tournament/competition grade.
- » Sports fields may contain premium amenities such as score boards, enclosed dugouts, bleachers, and lighting.

This type of park scores in the 75–100 range.



Barbour's Grove Park

Meeting Expectations

These are generally defined as parks with serviceable facilities or features providing functional recreational access for the public, accessed primarily by vehicle with some connections to adjacent neighborhoods, exhibit a few features that enhance the comfort and experience of park users beyond a minimal recreational access capacity, and exhibit a maintenance level sufficient for the uses in the park but would benefit from additional maintenance. Example characteristics of parks that meet expectations include the following:

- » From a programmatic level, the park functions as intended.
- » This type of park is generally well-maintained and may be aesthetically pleasing.
- » The park can accommodate several different activities and has a moderate level of activity.
- » This park may or may not have a transit stop nearby and has reasonable sidewalk connectivity.
- » This park is generally compatible with the surrounding land uses and provides the user with a feeling of safety.
- » Field surfaces are well maintained and playable, but typically do not include the premium features that may be present in a park that “exceed expectations.”

This type of park scores in the 50–74 range.



Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park

Not Meeting Expectations

These are generally defined as parks with facilities or features that have exceeded their functional life span and/or need enhancement or replacement to provide functional recreational access for the public, accessed primarily by vehicle and are disconnected from adjacent neighborhoods, exhibit few, if any, features that enhance the comfort and experience of park users, and exhibit a maintenance level insufficient to continue to provide the desired uses and recreational access. Example characteristics of parks that do not meet expectations include the following:

- » The park is not currently performing as intended.
- » Although the park can still be well maintained and/or aesthetically pleasing, it typically is not.
- » This type of park may have a consistently low level of activity, few accommodated uses, and may not be compatible with the surrounding land uses.
- » The park may not be perceived as safe by its users.
- » It is common for this type of park to be difficult to access either by public transit, bicycle, or on foot.
- » Field surfaces are not typically well maintained, or the fields are so over-programmed that adequate maintenance is impossible.

This type of park scores in the 0–49 range.

All parks and facilities were evaluated by the project team over a one-week period in early January 2020. The following table summarizes the assessed facility scores for each park owned and operated by the Town of Four Oaks. It should be noted that these are based on the team’s observations during a limited period and do not necessarily reflect the recommendations produced during the Needs and Priorities Assessment portion of this report, which included public engagement.

Park Name	Design & Construction (Max 30)	Effectiveness (Max 20)	Comfort and Image (Max 30)	Access and Linkages (Max 25)	Sustainability (Max 60)	Park Total
Barbour’s Grove Park	26	14	21	19	41	73
Holt Kiddie Park	26	14	21	19	41	73
Johnson-Strickland Kiddie Park	24	11	25	19	38	71
Criteria Total	79	65	74	76	69	

The full evaluation matrix can be found in the appendix.

Facility Rating Summary

This section provides examples of successful aspects of the parks in Four Oaks, and examples of areas that could be an opportunity to expand or enhance certain areas of the parks. This information is pulled from the Facilities Analysis, in which the parks in Four Oaks were visited and analyzed by staff in April 2023.

Successes:

The various successful aspects of the parks documented from the site visits will appear in the sections below. This information is gathered by combining the high-scoring individual park ratings, which include the categories that indicate the specific park system that meets or exceeds expectations.

Design & Construction

An appropriate number of amenities are provided for the enjoyment of parks users. The design and construction of the items at the parks exhibit quality and are effective in attracting a variety of visitors, and there are a reasonable number of activities for visitors to choose from. The opportunities provided at these park facilities accommodate activities for a diverse range of age groups.

Comfort, Image and Effectiveness

The parks in Four Oaks are readily accessible to users by various methods of transportation including walking and biking, from the neighborhoods they are adjacent to. The parks appear free of litter and debris and contribute to an overall feeling of safety and security within the boundaries. Ample opportunities for leisure, including areas to sit are included in the majority of the parks. Most of the parks are found to be in good condition and reflect a solid amount of satisfaction and pride from both users and Parks and Recreation staff. Appropriate maintenance is indicated by the clean appearance of most gathering areas, and the presence of well-maintained lawns and planted areas.

Sociability Sustainability

The majority of the parks appeared to be frequently used by the community, allowing them to function as an important feature of the neighborhood. The locations of the parks allow them to be places for gathering and social hub for the community. The sites provide opportunities for exercise and leisure activities, which promote stress relief for visitors. These parks have a positive impact on nearby properties.

Opportunities:

Opportunities identified in this section were defined through analysis of individual park metrics and performance of overall parks in the specific categories.

Environmental & Economical Sustainability

Environmental sustainability metrics assess the facilities, features, and other measures that can potentially affect and utilize water, energy, biological diversity, and other resources in a sustainable fashion. There is an opportunity to offer environmental education at the parks in Four Oaks. Additionally, some of the parks contain important stormwater collection areas for the surrounding streets. These areas also potentially function as part of a larger ecological corridor. Education signage that makes environmental features more understood by the public are significant opportunities.

E. Program Inventory & Analysis

Recreation Programs Assessment

The following section provides an assessment of the Town of Four Oaks’s Parks and Recreation Department’s current recreation programs, events, and services. Information in this section was gathered through a series of staff interviews, facility and park tours, and a review of information and documents supplied by the Department.

Comparative analysis of the Town’s facilities and operations to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) benchmarks is an important method in understanding the opportunities and challenges of Four Oaks’s. These comparisons show parks, facility, programming, and operations benchmarking across communities of similar size to Four Oaks. However, please note that this method should only be used for benchmarking purposes. The Town must define its own needs and consider community input (Chapter 3) when establishing system goals and objectives.

Summary

- » Four Oaks hosts a range of special events for all ages.
- » Current athletic programming is for ages 5 – 12.
- » Additional programming is currently supplemented by volunteers.

Program Areas

When assessing recreational programming, there are a variety of categories that can be used to better understand the full suite of program potential.

- » Sports – These programs feature team or individual sports, clinics, clubs, and tournaments.
- » Fitness – Group fitness, personal training, and health education represent some of the Most common fitness programs.
- » Cultural Arts – These programs can include performing arts, visual art classes, and similar enrichment classes.
- » Aquatics – Learn-to-swim classes, aqua exercise classes, competitive swimming, SCUBA, and other programs (synchro, water polo, etc.).
- » Youth Programs – Youth based programming for before and after school programs, summer school break camps, and preschool.
- » Education – Language programs, tutoring, science / technology / math (STEM) classes, computer classes, and financial planning.
- » General Interest – Personal development classes.
- » Special Needs – Programs for those with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, and inclusion within activities offered.
- » Special Events – Special events that focus on the local market.
- » Outdoor Recreation – Environmental education, hiking, camping, paddle sports and other activities.
- » Seniors Programs – Programs and services that are dedicated to serving the needs of seniors. This can include all of the activity areas noted above plus social service functions.
- » Teen Programs - Programs and services that are focused on serving the needs of teens. This can include all of the activity areas noted above (except seniors).
- » Self-Directed Activities – Opportunities for individuals to recreate on their own, including activities such as open gym, use of weight/ cardio space, lap/recreational swimming, golf, and tennis. Although not an organized program, time and space must be allocated in Town facilities.
- » Social Services – Can include nutrition and feeding programs, job training, life skills training, and other activities such as job training.

Program Classifications

The categories listed below represent the major areas of focus for current Four Oaks Recreation and Parks Department recreation programs and services by general categories commonly found in recreation and parks agencies nationally. Program lists are based on a review of program offerings for 2022–2023, that were provided by the Department. Please note that programs are general listings only.

Area	Age	Programs
Sports	Youth	Cardinal Football Program Cardinal Cheerleading Program
	Adult	
Fitness	Youth	
	Adult	
Cultural Arts	All	
Aquatics	Youth	
	Adult	
Youth Programs	Youth	
	Adult	
Education	Youth	
	Adult	
General Interest	Youth	
	Adult	
Special Needs	All	
Special Events	All	Oyster Roast Four Oaks Acorn Festival A Small Town Christmas: Tree Lighting & Parade Four Oaks Chamber Car, Truck, & Motorcycle Show
Outdoor Recreation	Youth	
	Adult	
Senior Programs	Youth	
	Adult	
Teen Programs	Youth	
	Adult	
Self-Directed Activities	Youth	
	Adult	
Social Services	All	

Additionally, please note that the Four Oaks Civitan Community offers the following programs:

Area	Age	Programs
Sports	Youth	Baseball
		Softball
		Tee Ball
		Soccer
		Basketball
		Fall Football/Cheer
		Volleyball

Program Overview

Current programs offered by the Town and strategic partners are limited in Four Oaks due to:

- » Limited Staff/Resources – The Town of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Department has limited staff in relation to the community demand for programming. Additional staff would enable the Town to strengthen the capabilities of both the department and the Civitan Community.
- » Limited Facilities – The Town of Four Oaks park facilities are primarily designed for youth to use and enjoy. Future investments should secure land and/or facilities that allow for flexible programming and offerings for a variety of age ranges including teens and adults.
- » Limited Programming Outside of Youth Athletics – Due in part to limited Town Staff, the Four Oak’s current program schedule provides limited opportunities for teens, adults, and active adults/senior citizens.

F. Staffing and Operations Analysis

In addition to the review of the department’s suite of program offerings, the planning effort also reviewed the staffing and operations of the department itself. This helps ensure that the department can grow strategically to meet the needs of the Town.

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs)

One method of reviewing department service is to assess the number of residents being served by each Fulltime Equivalent (FTE) staff position. FTE positions that are above national benchmarks can represent redundancy of department responsibilities and/or exceptionally high levels of service. Lower FTE’s may depict a department with limited manpower or departments that are extraordinarily efficient in serving their communities.

Four Oaks currently has 1.34 FTE staff members, including 1 full-time staff member and part-time staff during the summer months. State benchmarking provides that communities of less than 20,000 people have a median of 11.3 FTEs per 10,000 people. Four Oak’s 2020 population indicates a benchmark value of 2.44 FTE staff. In this regard, Four Oaks is approximately 1.1 FTE staff member(s) below the national benchmark. Staffing will become slightly more important as the community grows, with 2030 projections showing a deficit of about 1.5 staff members.

Operating Budget

Operational funds are allocated for various needs of the department over the year including employee salaries, professional services, vehicles, and maintenance. National benchmarking indicates that agencies of similar size to Four Oaks have a median operating expenditure of \$117.36 per resident. With a population of approximately 2,158 residents according to the census, the Town of Four Oaks would have a benchmark median expenditure of \$253,262.88.

The 2022-2023 Town budget allocated \$207,756.00 for the operations of the Parks and Recreation Department via the General Fund. This in turn provides an operating expenditure of approximately \$96.27 per resident. Of note, while this operating expense is lower than the agency median, it is above the lower quartile of similar agencies. This reduction can be caused by department efficiencies, lower maintenance needs for facilities, and the presence of the Four Oaks Civitan. However, increased budgets may be required if citizens desire additional facilities and programming.

Non-Tax Revenues

Non-tax revenues represent the money generated by the department through program registrations, facility rentals, and similar services. National benchmarks indicate that communities under 20,000 residents generate a median non-tax revenue of \$34.55 per resident. Using the 2020 census data providing a population of 2,158 residents in the Town, this equates to a benchmark of \$74,558.90 in non-tax revenue.

The Town is budgeted to generate \$12,500.00 in non-tax revenue in the 21-22 fiscal year. This income is a result of registration and gate fees collected by the department. These fees reflect approximately 6% of the department’s overall operations budget.

Recreation Fee

Section 308.2.3 within the Zoning Ordinance of Four Oaks requires that a recreation fee be provided on any new subdivision or multi-family development of four lots or more. This fee is currently set at \$800.00 per lot. The Board of Commissioners may grant an exception for this requirement if the developer demonstrates a willingness to construct an active recreation facility.

G. Level of Service Analysis

A Level of Service (LOS) Analysis measures a Town’s parks and recreation resources against its population, and the resulting averages can be benchmarked against data collected from park systems across the country.

This analysis helps to quantify how well the existing parks system is meeting the needs of residents. The National Recreation and Park Association defines Level of Service as:

“an allocation mechanism for the delivery of park land and basic recreation facilities throughout a community. By adoption of such a standard, a community in essence says that all citizens... will have an equal opportunity to share in the basic menu of services implicit in the standard and accompanying spatial distribution and allocation of policies.”

While every municipal park system is different to serve their respective needs, there are three metrics that can be used to benchmark a municipality’s parks by comparing them to data collected across the country by the NRPA. These methods are:

- » Acreage (Total Amount of Park Land)
- » Facilities (Number of Facilities)
- » Access (Distance or Travel Time)

Each method offers a different approach to measuring a park system’s level of service. Acreage LOS reviews the system’s general availability of park land and resources. Facilities LOS quantifies the number of park amenities that are available for each resident. Access LOS illustrates the availability of park facilities to all members of the community.

Acreage LOS

The typical way to measure LOS for existing acreage is to calculate the number of public park acres per 1,000 residents in a community. For communities of comparable size to Four Oaks, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends 12.9 acres per 1,000 residents.

At this time, there are approximately 1.62 acres (not including greenways) of public park lands directly managed by the Town’s Parks and Recreation Department. The population of Four Oaks in 2020 was 2,158. This means there is an Acreage LOS deficit of -26.2 acres. The 2030 population of Four Oaks is estimated to be 2,503 residents. If there is no additional parkland added during this time, this translates into a total Acreage LOS drop to -30.7 acres. To meet the current benchmark median for communities of similar size to Four Oaks, the Town would need to acquire approximately 12.1 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

Acres of Park Land (acres / 1,000 residents)			
Year	NRPA (ac)	Four Oaks (ac)	+/-
2020	27.8	1.62	-12.1 acres / 1,000 residents -26.2 acres total
2030	32.3	1.62	-12.3 acres / 1,000 residents -30.7 acres total

While Acreage LOS creates a way to ensure commitment to providing park land as the Town develops, it can have shortcomings. Comparison to other municipalities may create difficulties in comparison as some cities operate golf courses, conservation areas, and other non-recreational facilities that are high in acreage but low in available capacity.

Please note, Acreage LOS only considers amenities that are accessible to residents and are owned and operated by the Town. This means parks and facilities owned and operated by entities that are not the Town, such as the school system, would not count in the total.

It should be noted that, through the joint use agreement, Town residents have access to approximately 20 additional acres of parkland, which in turn drastically reduces the benchmarking acreage deficit. However, this analysis does not take into consideration the public access to joint-use facilities or other facilities utilized by the department, which may have limited or no access at certain times. As such, this master plan will explore additional techniques, such as Facility LOS, to more accurately determine the extent to which parks and recreation facilities and programs are able to meet the needs of Four Oaks residents.

Facility LOS

Facility Level of Service (Facility LOS) is the second method used to measure the Town’s parks system. Facility LOS reviews the number of park and recreation facilities per resident. While there are no strict standards for the number of facilities that a municipality must provide, or that its community needs, the NRPA provides recommendations to establish a starting point.

The following table depicts the Facility LOS for noted park features and how they compare against the NRPA recommendations. Figures shown for the current population and those projected for 2030 . Facilities experiencing a deficit are shown in red.

Facility	2020 Census Pop.: 2,158			2030 Pop. Projection: 2,503		
	NRPA	Four Oaks	+/-	NRPA	Four Oaks	+/-
Playgrounds	1	1	0	1	1	0
Basketball Courts	1	1	0	1	1	0
Diamond fields: baseball	1	0	-1	1	0	-1
Tennis courts	1	0	-1	1	0	-1
Rectangular fields: multipurpose	0	0	0	1	1	-1
Dog parks	0	0	0	0	0	0
Diamond fields: softball fields – adult	0	0	0	0	0	0
Diamond fields: softball fields – youth	0	0	0	0	0	0

Facility	2020 Census Pop.: 2,158			2030 Pop. Projection: 2,503		
	NRPA	Four Oaks	+/-	NRPA	Four Oaks	+/-
Swimming pools	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community gardens	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rectangular fields: soccer field – youth	1	0	-1	1	0	-1
Multiuse courts: basketball, volleyball	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tot lots	0	1	1	0	1	1
Rectangular fields: soccer field – adult	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skate parks	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rectangular fields: football field	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regulation 18-hole courses	0	0	0	0	0	0
Driving range stations	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multipurpose synthetic fields	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ice rinks	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pickleball courts	1	0	-1	1	0	-1
Miles of Trail	3	0	-3	3	0	-3

When assessing facility level of service for the Town, national benchmarking illuminates only a few deficient facilities. This is mostly due to facilities actually being provided for larger populations. The Town lacks a diamond baseball field, a tennis court, a soccer field, a pickleball court, and 3 miles of trail to be commensurate with national standards. The Town currently has a surplus of one multipurpose field (located in Robert L. Holt Park). Providing additional facilities is currently heavily restricted by the amount of parkland owned by the Town. Land acquisition will be of the upmost importance for the Town moving into the next 10 years to ensure that Four Oaks has the room to grow and provide additional facilities for future populations.

As the population grows towards 2030, the existing deficits remain much the same as they are currently. The only difference being that the Town no longer has a surplus of the multipurpose field. Much like the acreage LOS analysis, the school facilities available through the Town’s joint agreements are not counted towards these benchmark numbers. Inclusion of these facilities would provide multiple surpluses and reduce deficiencies across all facilities with the exception of tennis/pickleball courts.

Though a Facility LOS analysis provides a current glance at the outdoor recreation facility capacity, it does not capture whether facilities are accessible for all residents. For this analysis, the master plan team conducted an Access LOS analysis to identify gaps in accessibility to facilities.

Access LOS

Access Level of Service (Access LOS) is another approach to calculating if a park system is appropriately meeting the needs of the community. Access LOS reveals the level of access that residents have to nearby park facilities. This is typically measured by distance, either in miles or travel time, suggesting the level of effort that a person must spend to get to a park facility.

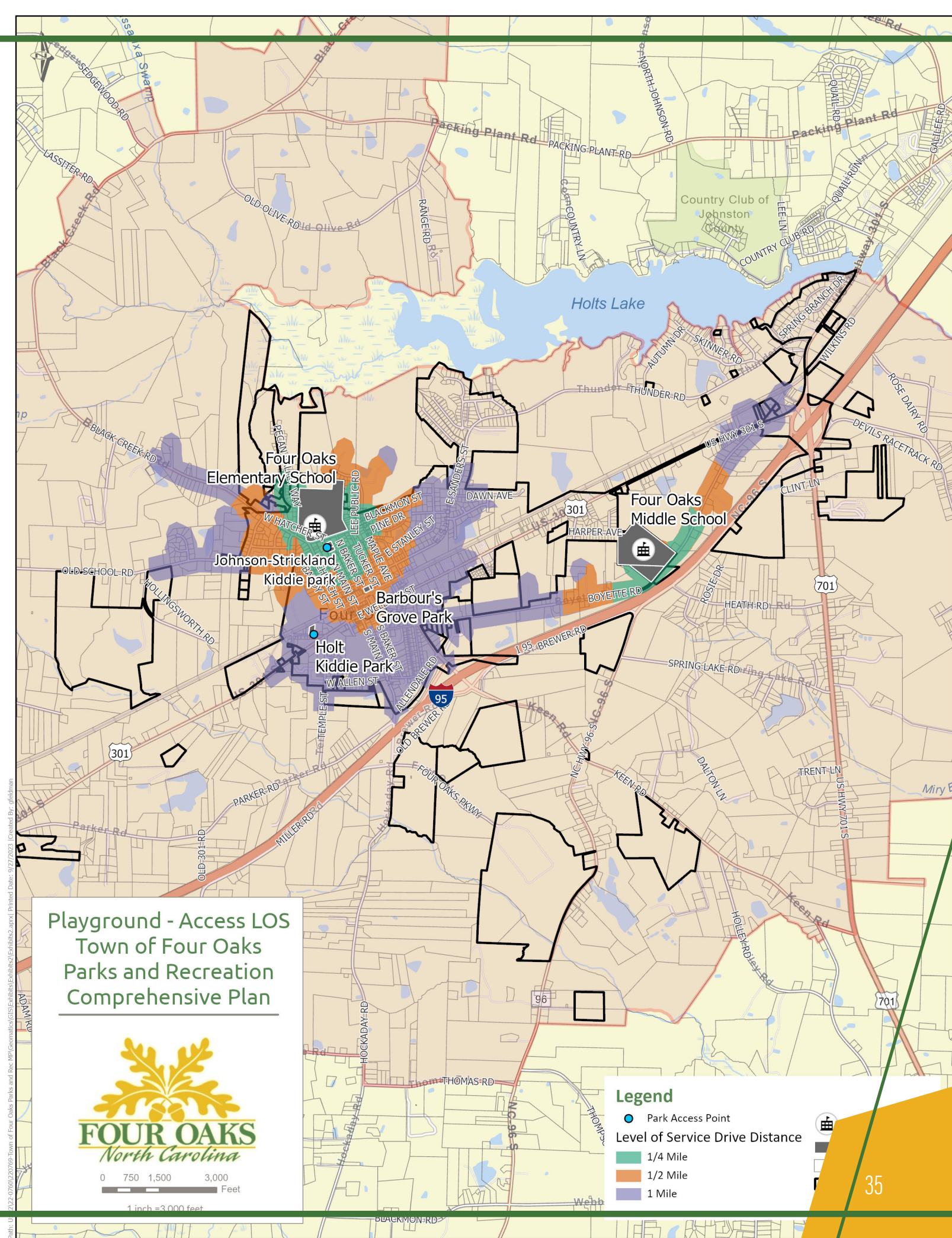
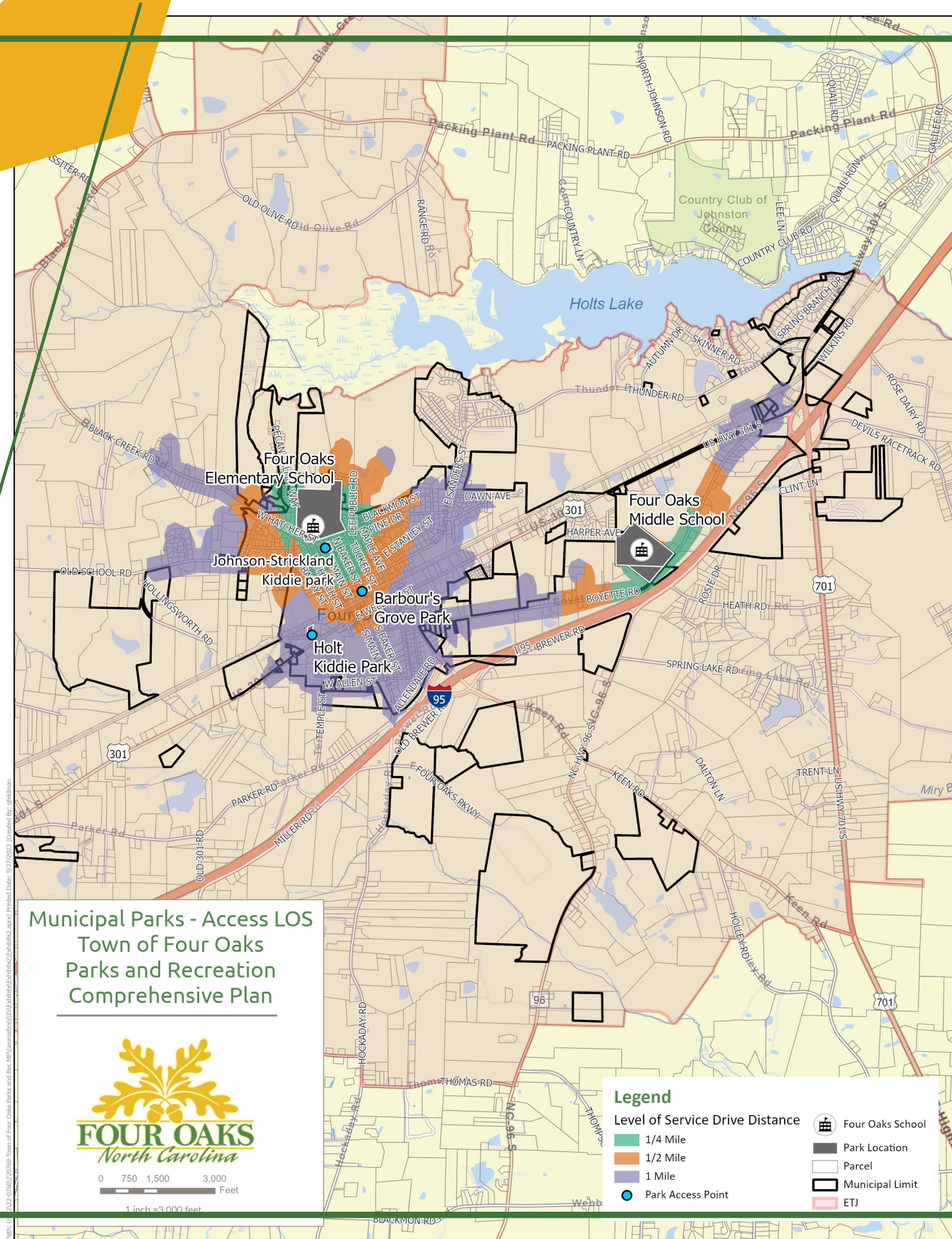
For the included parameters, a distance of 1/4 mile is considered to be a brief walk, a distance of 1/2 mile is considered a comfortable walking distance; and 1 mile a long walk or short bike ride.

Access LOS is provided for parks and for select facilities. The facilities categories in this section mirror those identified above in the Facility LOS section. The elements include:

- » General Park Locations
- » Playgrounds
- » Soccer Fields
- » Baseball/Softball
- » Basketball



Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park



Soccer Field - Access LOS

Town of Four Oaks

Parks and Recreation

Comprehensive Plan



0 750 1,500 3,000 Feet

1 inch = 3,000 feet

Legend

- Park Access Point
- Level of Service Drive Distance**
 - 1/4 Mile
 - 1/2 Mile
 - 1 Mile
- Four Oaks School
- Park Location
- Parcel
- Municipal Limit
- ETJ

Baseball/Softball - Access LOS

Town of Four Oaks

Parks and Recreation

Comprehensive Plan

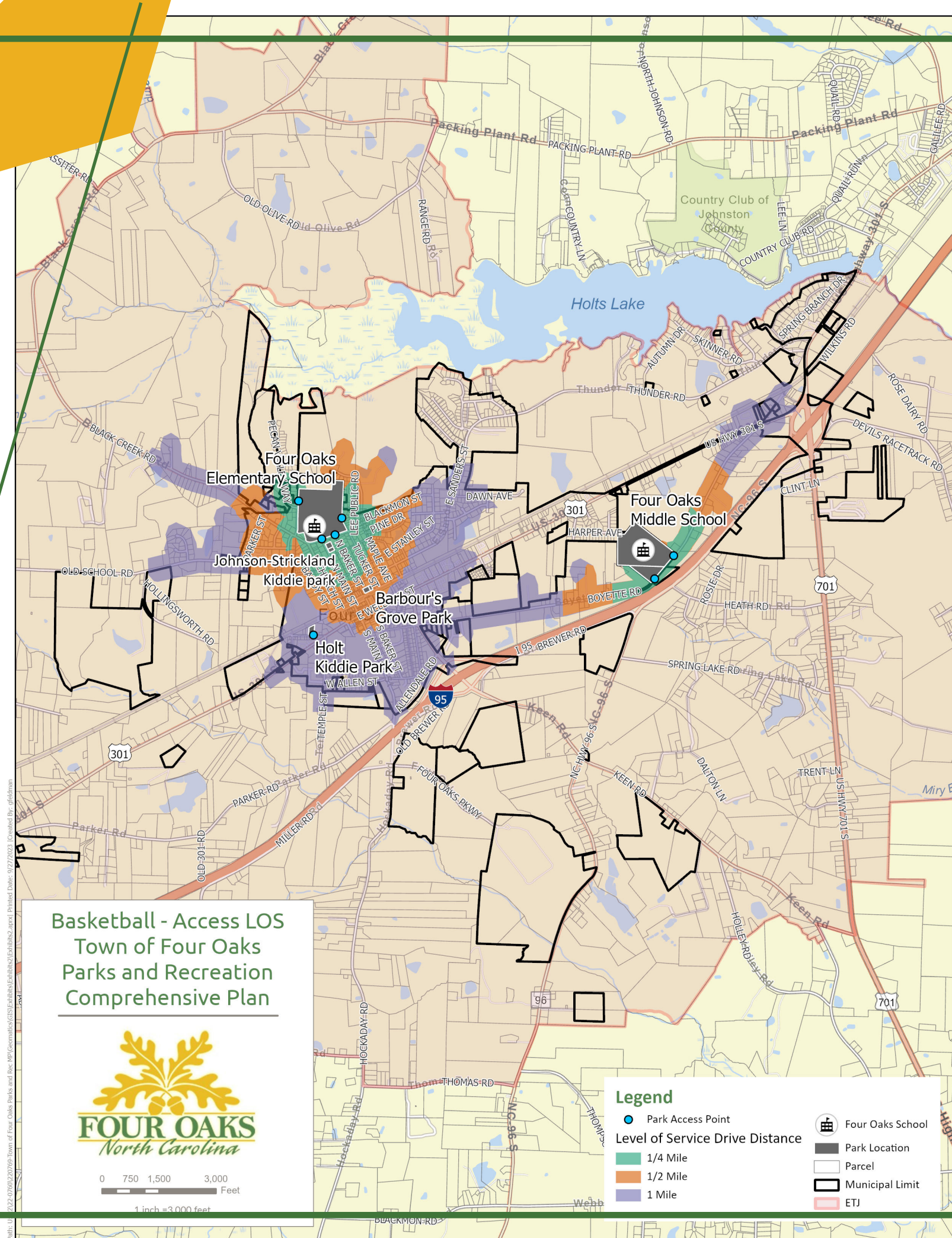


0 750 1,500 3,000 Feet

1 inch = 3,000 feet

Legend

- Park Access Point
- Level of Service Drive Distance**
 - 1/4 Mile
 - 1/2 Mile
 - 1 Mile
- Four Oaks School
- Park Location
- Parcel
- Municipal Limit
- ETJ



LOS Summary

Of note, the LOS maps found that, generally, US 301, Boyette Road, and the greater ETJ have limited access to parks/facilities. Existing Town facilities serve adjoining neighborhoods and the Town core. While this is not unexpected due to the location of the Town's three parks, it emphasizes the importance of having a large, region-serving facility rather than relying on small, neighborhood-serving parks. In particular, the northern neighborhoods (Meadow Hills, Holt Lake West, & Holt Lake South) have limited access to municipal parks and facilities in general. Basketball facilities are currently most accessible facility type due to the school facilities and Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park.



Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park

III. Community Needs Assessment

A. Introduction

A community’s recreational needs are unique to their area, their culture, and their specific aspirations. In order to accurately assess a community’s perspective on types of recreational opportunities they need and desire, it is vital to obtain an in-depth review through public engagement. Involving the public in the planning process provides an opportunity for residents to help accurately define recreational needs and master plan recommendations.

B. Methodology

For the Town of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, various approaches were taken to fully gauge the needs of the community through public engagement in the limited time frame provided. The focal points of the engagement process were to understand the community’s unique perspectives; obtain input from residents regarding specific programs, facilities and concepts; raise awareness of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan including its goals and scope; and foster support and a sense of ownership within the community. Frequently throughout the engagement process, the Town’s Parks and Recreation staff were updated with reports on the progress of the Plan and provided the results from the community engagement. The staff and Steering Committee were asked to provide feedback as well during the process.

As part of this master plan effort, a public engagement plan was built using a cross-section of techniques. These included one-on-one stakeholder interviews, meetings with the community where the community was encouraged to provide detailed feedback, online surveys, and a community-wide mail survey.

C. Steering Committee

Throughout plan development the Steering Committee, representing community leaders and champions, was consulted. Committee members provided guidance regarding planning efforts and reviewed draft chapters of the plan. Additionally, members of the committee championed public engagement efforts, including the project community meetings and distribution of the plan survey. Consistent collaboration and iterative meetings with the Steering Committee helped ensure that the community’s voice was integrated into the plan.

D. Stakeholder Interviews

A series of one-on-one interviews were held with stakeholders in order to gauge future interests, priorities, and opportunities for the Town of Four Oaks park facilities. Town stakeholders were comprised of members of Four Oaks Civitan Club, local parks and recreation professionals, and Johnston County school system officials.

In summary, the following perspectives were gathered through these interviews:

- » The Town should prioritize the addition of greenways and trails that coincide with the forthcoming East Coast Greenway.
- » Four Oaks should look to expanding existing recreational facilities including athletic fields and courts, playgrounds, and other recreational centers to accommodate youth, senior, and active adult programs.
- » Safety and accessibility should be kept for all ages.
- » Programming should be diverse in meeting the needs of the whole community through inclusiveness of all age groups. Town-wide culturally diverse programming should be considered.
- » There is a general feeling that the amenities and programs offered need to be diverse to meet the needs of new and existing residents with divergent interests. Specifically, the need for the following amenities and parks were mentioned:
 - › Playgrounds
 - › Greenway and Trail network that provides interconnectivity to existing and future park facilities and connects to the East Coast Greenway
 - › Dog Park
 - › Splash Pad
 - › Open Space for multi-purpose recreational uses.
 - › Skate Park
 - › Tennis
 - › Pickle Ball
 - › Basketball
 - › Community Garden
- » The Town should look to available grant opportunities, revenue bonds, user fees, inclusion in general fund, and fundraising through social events to assist with necessary and desired park facility additions.
- » Four Oaks should consider partnering with local religious organizations, Johnston County school system, Four Oaks Civitan Club, Chamber of Commerce, Partnership for Children in Smithfield, and local businesses to provide recreational opportunities.

Four Oaks should emulate the success of its neighbors including the Town of Benson, Town of Smithfield, Town of Garner, Town of Cary, Town of Clayton, and the Town of Wendell.

E. Community Meetings

Various meetings were held with the community of Four Oaks, in order to allow the members of the community to come together and present their thoughts on the current system, and their vision for the future of the parks and recreation facilities in Four Oaks. The planning team conducted the first community meeting on June 20, 2023, to collect information regarding existing park conditions and needs. The team conducted a second community meeting on August 23, 2023 to review the draft vision, recommendations, and implementation items.



Community Meeting, June, 20, 2023

Meeting 1: Existing Conditions

The first community meeting was conducted within the Council Chambers of Town Hall. Around 20 stakeholders attended the event which provided several avenues to discuss facility needs and desires.

Initially, participants were provided maps of the three existing park facilities owned and operated by the Town. These maps allow for the space for participants to discuss park-specific needs. For Barbour's Grove Park, participants had indicated a need to address pest control and commended the Town for actively addressing existing trip hazards in

the park. For Johnston Strickland Kiddie Park, users had noted the need to actively secure the adjoining lot to guarantee future parking is provided. No specific comments were provided for Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park, however some attendees did not use the park due to accessibility barriers.

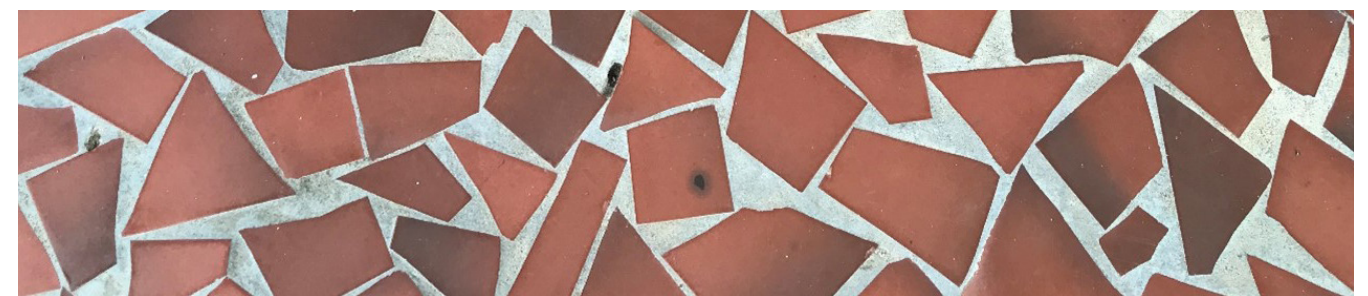
After reviewing existing park details, participants were directed to a Town-wide park map. On this map, participants used yellow stickers to indicate where they live in Town and green stickers to indicate where future parks may best serve the community.

Many participants noted that they live outside of the map limits, further from the town center. Two regional-serving sites were identified by participants via expansion and/or enhancement of lands adjoining the two school facilities. Note that while the Town maintains a joint use agreement with the school system, investment of Town resources into purchasing and supplying Town facilities would be optimal. Lands adjoining the schools should be assessed for purchase and development of Town park facilities. This allows for the supply of park facilities outside of the immediate Town core and can lead to stronger and more diverse joint use opportunities between the schools and Four Oaks.

Additionally, many stakeholders identified an opportunity to route the East Coast Greenway into the Town Core. As shown in the figure, many users identified the land west of South Mains Street to be suitable for greenway development. This creates a destination and a place to stop along the greenway and can serve as an economic development device for downtown businesses. Furthermore, a portion of the land is under a sanitary sewer easement, offering an opportunity to further develop the greenway without purchasing land.

Other participant comments and discussion points regarding the overall park network involved the desire for skate park/BMX equipment, and the need for expanded sidewalk/bikeways along existing roadways. Skate park equipment and BMX courses were also featured in the next station, the "Design Your Own Park" sheets. These sheets provided participants with a blank patch of land and allowed them to devise what their dream park in Four Oaks would look like. Many participants designed parks around specialized skating facilities or BMX courses.

Following the "Design Your Own Park" exercise, participants were asked to provide any big ideas for the Town's facilities and programs. Reoccurring topics included development of a Farmer's Market, a paved greenway and sidewalk network, senior citizens programming/resources, and the overarching theme that residents should be incentivized to stay in Town when they choose to grow their family



Barbour's Grove Park

After providing their big ideas for the previous station, participants were asked to rate the top five recreation programs they would like to see in Four Oaks and the top 5 parks and recreation facilities they desired. The following priorities were developed by the participants of the meeting:

Of note there were write-in options for skate park, BMX park, sidewalks, and a downtown park. Notably, the Trails/Greenway category was largely prioritized with 19 votes while the second highest preference, Amphitheater, scored eight votes.

Meeting 2: Recommendations & Implementation

The second community meeting focused on the proposed recommendations and methods of implementation, inviting residents and visitors to review the potential plans and provide input for the Town to consider. The community meeting occurred on August 23, 2023, from 4:00pm to 7:00pm in the Four Oaks Town Hall Chamber meeting space. There were approximately fifteen attendees at the meeting.

The following comments and recommendation additions were noted during the workshop:

- » Purchase of the lot north of Johnston-Strickland Kiddie Park was discussed with following benefits identified with securing the land:
 - › Creation of space for a permanent parking lot.
 - › Allows for space to develop a splash pad.
 - › The additional land at this park can be developed organically as Four Oaks grows.
- » The need for both short-term and long-term Farmer’s Market locations were stressed.
- » Signage improvements were desired for all municipal parks.
- » Connection from East Lassiter Road to Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park to provide another method of access to the park that leverages ongoing and future streetscape development.
- » The need for indoor gymnasium space was discussed via new construction or utilization of partner facilities.
- » There was also a desire for general passive recreation amenities as the Town develops including shelters and benches.

Participants were also largely in favor of the 30+ acre regional park purchase, and noted that a park in proximity to US 301 provides access to recreation facilities for residents further from the Town core. Recommended facilities at the site, including the community garden, baseball fields, pickleball/tennis courts, and trail networks were included in the potential park proposal, and were met with general satisfaction from the participants.

For programming needs, participants recommended programming additions for Four Oaks, including a youth golf team and a swim team. Programming discussions largely revolved around the development of the recommended community center, as the facility would allow for a large variety of non-athletic programming opportunities.

F. Online Community Survey

An online community survey was conducted, with the goal of accumulating information regarding various Town parks and greenway systems. The Online Community Survey comprised of 30 questions for respondents to answer.

A total of 200 respondents completed the online survey. The Town of Four Oaks’s 2020 population was 2,158 residents, which means that the 200 responses represent approximately 10% of the Town’s population .

Respondents provided an array of answers that showcased the recreational and park opportunities that they’d like available to them, while highlighting the areas that Four Oaks is providing satisfactory services for its residents. Several items stood out from the results, including:

- » There is a lack of awareness among the residents regarding the facilities available for their use. For residents who are not using the park facilities, it primarily stems from a lack of knowledge of these facilities.
- » There is also a lack of awareness of the programs available to residents in Four Oaks. This was the largest barrier respondents provided for their lack of participation in the programs available.
- » The most visited park facilities are Johnston Strickland Kiddie Park and Four Oaks Elementary School Gymnasium/Fields. The least visited park facilities are the East Coast Greenway and Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park. For the East Coast Greenway, 50% of respondents replied they were not aware of the greenway’s existence.
- » For the respondents not satisfied with the parks facilities, facility maintenance and a lack of desired amenities were among the top chosen reasons.
- » The most important new facility amenities respondents would like to see in Four Oaks include playground equipment, baseball/softball fields, and multi-purpose fields.
- » Residents expressed a desire to participate in adult and senior athletics and programs but are unable at this time due to a lack of opportunities.
- » Special events hosted by the Town are popular with residents. The events catered to youths were the most popularly attended.
- » Most residents showed a preference for grants to fund all improvements to the facilities and programs. They also support additional funding for the parks and recreation in Four Oaks.

Top 5 Preferred Facilities	Top 5 Preferred Programs
1. Trails/Greenways	1. Adventure/Nature Programs
2. Amphitheater	2. Teen Programs
3. Community Gardens	3. Senior/Active Adult Programs
4. Tennis/Pickleball	4. Summer Camps
5. Splash Pad	5. Aquatic Programs

- » To enhance the greenway and increase use, residents responded that wayfinding and signage was the most important factor, followed by sidewalks connecting to existing parks.
- » Youth-wide athletics and town-wide special events were rated as the most important programs to be available to residents in Four Oaks.

The information below is pulled from select inquiries and results from the online survey that was taken by respondents who visit the parks and recreation facilities of Four Oaks. This will provide a general indication of the responses and themes that resound within the community.

Q1. How familiar are you with the parks, recreation facilities, and programs/services provided by Four Oaks?

Before further evaluating specific park facilities, programs, and services within the Town of Four Oaks, the project team felt it was necessary to gain an understanding of familiarity levels with existing recreational uses within the parks system. While nearly half of the respondents were ‘somewhat familiar’ with surrounding parks and services, about 12% of respondents indicated that they were ‘not familiar at all’, which suggests additional outreach and promotion could be necessary.

Q2. Please indicate how often members of your household visited each of the parks/facilities in the past year.

Of the respondents who indicated they visit park facilities; a majority will visit Barbour’s Grove Park annually and Johnson – Strickland Kiddie Park monthly. Many respondents were unfamiliar with the existing East Coast Greenway. While the greenway is unimproved, planning efforts can contribute towards its promotion and development.

Q3. If members of your household have not visited Four Oaks facilities, please identify which of the following barriers have prevented your household from visiting.

74.81% of respondents said they did not visit Four Oaks facilities because they were unaware of the facilities’ existence. The next highest, 33.59% said that the facilities lacked their desired amenities. The third highest, 8.40%, said that there was poor maintenance of the facilities that prevented them from visiting.

Q5. For each of the park’s facilities listed, indicate your level of satisfaction with the amenities.

The highest level of satisfaction was shown for Johnston-Strickland Kiddie Park, at 39.09%. The next highest level of satisfaction was shown for Barbour’s Grove Park, at 35.03%. Responses indicated a general satisfaction with all park facilities, with very few participants indicating low satisfaction.

Q6. Respondents that answered ‘not satisfied’ with a specific park in Q5 were asked to provide the reason for their dissatisfaction.

68.60% of respondents answered that their reason was not provided in the survey answers, and they wrote in answers that varied from ‘the equipment is rusty and peeling’ to ‘no basketball courts for youth, no tennis courts, no water parks’. The next answers provided

were 19.83% saying ‘Facility maintenance’ and 19.83% saying ‘Lack of desired amenities’.

Q7. Rate the importance of having the following facilities in the Town of Four Oaks.

Playground equipment ranked the highest at 65.99%. Baseball/softball fields ranked the second highest at 59.90%. Greenways/trails ranked the third highest at 48.73%.

Q10. For each of the programs provided, indicate if members of your household have participated in them.

The Four Oaks Civitan: Tee Ball program was the most popular program, with 51.55% of respondents saying they’ve participated. Baseball was the next popular program at 42.27%, followed by basketball at 41.05%. These participation percentages highlight the importance of Four Oaks Civitan Club and planning strategies should maximize the support and resources shared between the two organizations.

Q11. If members of your household have not participated in any programs within Four Oaks, identify which of the following barriers have prevented participation.

The majority of respondents, 55.56% said they were not aware of the programs available to them. 40.00% said the programs were not offered their appropriate age group, while 18.89% said there was a lack of desired programs.

Q13. Rate the importance of having the following programs in the Town of Four Oaks.

Youth athletics were rated as the most important program, with 77.78% of respondents saying this was very important to them. This was followed by Youth Programs at 73.60%, and Town-Wide Special Events at 70.41%.

Q15. Select the Youth programs that members of your household would like to participate in.

Youth Programs: Summer Camp was the most popular choice with 56.29% of respondents choosing this option. This was followed by Youth Programs: Nature/Education Programs at 53.64%, and Youth Programs: Soccer at 48.34%. At the first Town of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan community meeting, it was evident that Summer and Nature programs were among the top in terms of youth program popularity. The community survey results further reiterated this need.

Q18. Which of the following events do members of your household attend?

92.27% of respondents attended the Four Oaks Acorn Festival. 86.19% of respondents attend the ‘A Small Town Christmas: Tree Lighting & Parade’, and 38.67% of respondents attend the Four Oaks Chamber Car, Truck, and Motorcycle Show.

Q21. In order to invest in more parks and recreation facilities, the Town of Four Oaks may require additional funding. Please rank your preferred methods for additional capital funding for recreation and parks.

The most preferred funding method was ‘Parks and Recreation Matching Grants’, at 49.71%. ‘Increased Impact Fees on Development’ and ‘Property Tax Rate Dedicated for Parks’ were tied at 19.50%.

IV. Network Vision

The Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan vision was developed through evaluation of the Town’s existing conditions and park facilities (Chapter 2), extensive community engagement (Chapter 3), and direct work with Town leadership. Subsequently, the draft vision was returned to Town staff and the public during a public workshop in August of 2023 for review and comment prior to the development of plan recommendations to ensure vision accuracy.

A. Purpose

The vision is intended to guide the development of the parks and recreation system over the next 10 years. Goals and subsequent objectives have been developed in this chapter to further the established vision for the system. However, goals and objectives may be modified as needs change within the system or other components of the plan change. To be successful, this plan and its subsequent vision and goals must be flexible and used as a playbook, rather than a rigid list of actions to take. Goals and objectives are presented at a high level within this chapter, with more specific recommendations provided in Chapter 5.

B. Vision Statement

The Town of Four Oaks establishes the following vision for the parks and recreation system:

The Town of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Department will enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors of Four Oaks. This will be accomplished through strategic investments that improve connectivity, develop community gathering spaces, and establish new recreation options. The department will work with community and regional partners to ensure that residents and visitors can enjoy a diverse array of recreation opportunities regardless of age, race, sex, and creed.



Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park

C. Goals and Objectives

Based on the direction of the overarching vision statement, the following goals have been established to serve the Four Oaks community. These goals serve as guideposts for the department and project champions, allowing responsible parties to measure progress vision accomplishment.

- » Provide a comprehensive suite of recreation services (programs, events, facilities, etc.) to meet the diverse needs of residents and visitors.
- » Strategically grow the department and foster innovative partnerships and agreements to maximize organization efficiencies and contributions.
- » Holistically engage residents and visitors to maximize plan implementation and respond to changing community needs.
- » Ensure equitable access to parks, programs, and natural/cultural resources.
- » Interconnect the Town internally and with the greater region through strategic investments into a comprehensive trail/greenway network.

For each of the following overarching vision goals, the plan puts forward more specific objectives that begin detailing actionable and implementable recommendations.

Goal 1: Provide a Comprehensive Suite of Recreation

Services

As noted in the existing facility analysis, the Town of Four Oaks park facilities and suite of programs are primarily designed for youth enjoyment. Facility and program expansion will be paramount in guaranteeing that all residents and visitors can enjoy Town accommodations.

- » Develop a policy of park acquisition to establish a supply of additional facility and program space.
- » Strategically enhance existing and future parks with diverse facilities.
- » Develop a community center to provide the needed space for programming and facilities.

Goal 2: Strategically Grow Department and Foster Innovative Partnerships

As the Town of Four Oaks continues to grow, the Parks and Recreation Department will need to grow alongside it and continue bolstering its existing partnerships to help ensure adequate programming opportunities are available.

- » Explore hiring additional staff to assist with program development and management.
- » Engage in regularly scheduled coordination meetings with recreation partners to distribute resources and venue space as necessary to best serve the community.
- » Coordinate with regional partners to best align visions and goals, and coordinate with other agencies to maximize grant opportunities.

Goal 3: Engage Residents and Visitors

Consistent engagement with the Four Oaks community is necessary to maximize program/facility attendance, forward the vision, goals, and objectives of this plan, and to account for any shifts in needs or desires. The Town of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Department will need to work with other departments to maximize two-way communications between the Town and its people.

- » Proactively advertise upcoming programs and new facilities via Town social media, utility bills, and other means.
- » Work with partner organizations to collect feedback regarding public opinion on Town programs and facilities.
- » Reassess and update the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan within five years to ensure goal accomplishment and community direction.

Goal 4: Ensure Equitable Access

A successful parks system ensures that citizens have convenient and comfortable access to Town facilities despite where they reside.

- » Strategically acquire parkland in locations identified as deficient in the Level of Service Analysis within this plan.
- » Continue engaging with the public to identify any barriers of entry into existing parks.



Johnson-Strickland Kiddie Park

Goal 5: Interconnect the Town Through a Comprehensive Trail/Greenway Network

A parks and recreation network consists of not only the park facilities and programs offered by the Town, but also considers the interconnectedness of these facilities to one another and to other features of economic, cultural, and natural significance. Expansion of the multi-modal network within Four Oaks can increase usership of the Town's facilities and programs and enhance the daily life of Four Oaks residents.

- » Work with Johnston County and East Coast Greenway representatives to develop a paved greenway facility through the Town.
- » Identify sidewalk gaps between existing and proposed park facilities and proactively work with applicable local and state departments to develop the appropriate infrastructure.



Example Greenway

D. The Comprehensive Vision

Each of the above goals and objectives provided in this chapter form the basis for the comprehensive vision for the Town of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation system. The vision was developed through extensive public engagement and coordinated efforts with Town leadership.

In the following chapter, the plan will outline the specific recommendations and actions necessary to bring this plan into fruition. Implementation will require coordinated efforts between department staff, Town leadership, community partners, and the full support of the public.



Community Meeting, June 20, 2023

V. Recommendations & Implementation

The previous chapter details the overall vision of the Town's Parks and Recreation network based on a comprehensive assessment of existing conditions, national standards, and public involvement. This established vision provides five goals for the network that are further detailed by sub-objectives. Viewing recommendations within the framework of these objectives allowed the planning team to strategically select and prioritize projects that effectively further the goals of the vision.

This chapter seeks to bring this vision into fruition through strategic investments, policies, and action items. The following sections will detail recommendations for existing parks, new facilities, programming opportunities, and new policies.

Implementation for the Town of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan must strictly consider project timing and costs to ensure the plan is both aspirational but also implementable. Following the detailing of network recommendation, an opinion of probable costs is provided for the larger projects for the purposes of budgeting and planning. This plan concludes with a summary matrix of action items and project phases and a list of available funding mechanisms to use as an ongoing playbook for Town staff.

A. Existing Park Recommendations

Utilizing the individual park evaluations provided in Chapter 2 in addition to community feedback in Chapter 3, recommendations intended to satisfy system-wide needs were developed at an individual park level. While each of the existing parks is nearing capacity for new facilities, strategic improvements can greatly impact the use of each facility. A recommendation exists for the expansion of the joint use agreement, which will enable the gymnasium and park facilities to be used by the public. Currently, the County is working to enhance school facilities with joint use features.



Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park

Barbour's Grove Park

Barbour's Grove Park is roughly half an acre in size and contains the following facilities:

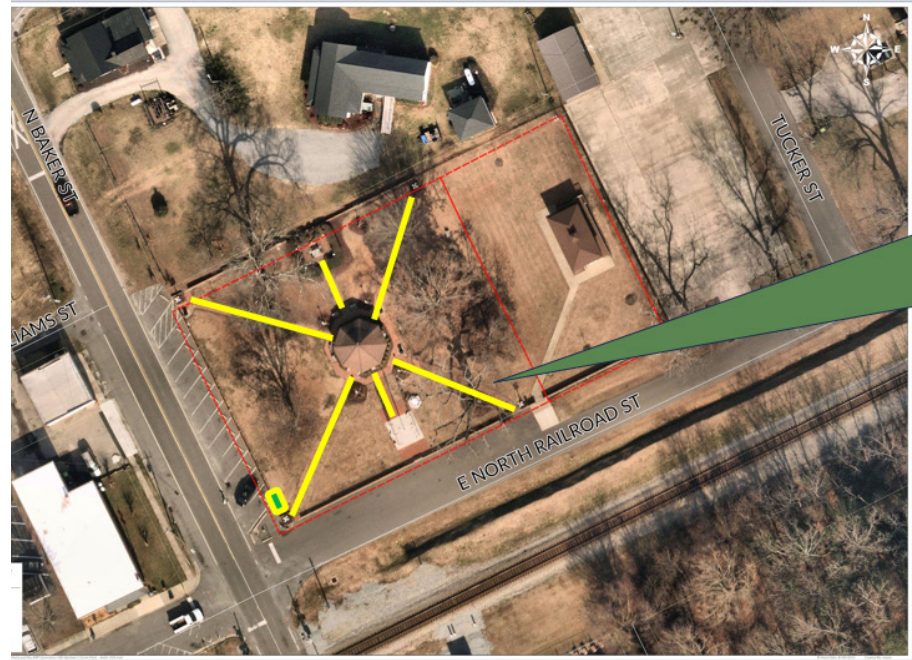
- » Benches
- » Memorial & Flagpoles
- » Gazebo
- » Performance Pavilion

This park tied for the highest score among the Town's parks with a rating of 73 out of 100 based on field assessments, which is considered meeting expectations. Survey results indicated that the park is visited primarily on a yearly basis, most likely aligning with special events held by the Town. User satisfaction with the park indicated that the survey participants found moderate to high satisfaction with this park. Workshop feedback indicated that there were maintenance needs in the park including walking path stability and pest control. Updated and refreshed signage and wayfinding signs are recommended for this park as well.

Currently, the park has effectively reached capacity regarding the addition of facilities/amenities. The park represents the gathering hub for the community and active recreation enhancements should be avoided within the park. Instead, park enhancements should focus primarily on maintenance, access, and maintaining the identity of a passive recreation/community gathering spot.

To further enhance this park and ensure its use into the future, the plan makes the following recommendations:

- » Continue remediation of uneven walking paths within the park to ensure the stability and safety of guests.
- » Proactively plan to extend sidewalk to park entrances so that guests may safely access the park via sidewalk or streetside parking.



Barbour's Grove Park is undergoing walking path improvements and contains updated signage. This effort is ongoing.

Johnson-Strickland Kiddie Park

Johnson-Strickland Kiddie Park is approximately 1/3rd of an acre in size and contains the following facilities:

- » Playground Equipment
- » Picnic Shelter
- » Picnic Tables
- » Benches

This park has a field assessment rating of 71 out of 100 which is considered meeting expectations. Survey results indicated that the park is visited primarily on a monthly basis, making this park the most used by the surveyed participants. Surveyed park satisfaction indicated that participants found moderate to high satisfaction with the facilities of Johnson-Strickland Kiddie Park. Updated and refreshed signage and wayfinding signs are recommended for this park as well.

Workshop feedback indicated that this park was widely used, especially with the additional parking provided on the north side of the park. Research found that the area used for parking by Johnson-Strickland Kiddie Park is not owned nor under any formal agreement with the Town. This poses a challenge for the future vision of the network, as this land may be jeopardized by future property owners or use of the land.

Currently, the park has limited capacity for additional playground equipment, shelters, and picnic tables. In addition to the land reaching physical capacity, more diverse facility types that serve a variety of ages will be better suited in other parks within the Town. Johnson-Strickland Kiddie Park's role within the system is to serve as a location for freeform play for the Town's children.

To continue serving the Four Oak's youth, the plan makes the following recommendations for Johnson-Strickland Kiddie Park:

- » Acquire adjoining parking lot land The purchase of the lot is recommended.
- » Monitor and update playground infrastructure as needed. Prioritize park as the location for equipment enhancements as required by community feedback and benchmarking in future plan updates.



Johnson-Strickland Kiddie Park is expanded through purchase of the adjacent lot to include a paved parking lot, new signage a splash pad, and contains room for future facilities.

Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park

Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park is approximately 1/3rd of an acre in size and contains the following facilities:

- » Playground Equipment
- » Open space
- » Picnic Shelter
- » ½ Basketball Court
- » Picnic Tables
- » Benches

This park was also tied as the highest field assessment score alongside Barbour’s Grove Park with a rating of 73 out of 100. As with the other Town parks, this is considered meeting expectations. Of note, survey results indicated that the majority of survey participants had not visited the park. Additionally, the second highest response rate was that participants were not aware of the facility. Of those who have visited the park, surveyed satisfaction indicated a moderate level of satisfaction with the park. Workshop feedback also indicated that this park was not widely used, but that the facilities were nice. Additional recommendations found in this chapter will address advertising of existing parks and programs to raise usership. Updated and refreshed signage and wayfinding signs are recommended for this park as well

The park has additional capacity for facilities, depending on their size. The center of the parcel is currently used as passive open space but offers the opportunity to include additional infrastructure if needed in the future.

The following recommendations are intended to increase park use:

- » Install a paved asphalt parking lot to replace the existing gravel lot.
- » Replace park signage at entrance to better draw attention to the facility.
- » Enhance existing basketball court to a full-size court.

Robert L. Holt Kiddie Park is improved by paving the parking lot, installing new park signage, and extending the existing basketball court to full size.



B. Future Facility Recommendations

The Town of Four Oaks has reached capacity within the existing parks it maintains. In order to provide its residents and visitors with additional opportunities and programs, the Town must expand its existing facilities and begin looking toward future park facilities. Benchmarking using national averages reveals that the current system is in need of approximately 31 additional acres of parkland to meet the needs of the Town’s 2030 population. The purchasing and/or activation of additional land will allow the Town to meet benchmarking needs and provide facilities that the community desires.

Farmer’s Market

An organized and meaningfully conducted Farmer’s Market is also recommended. Farmer’s Markets are opportunities to create a community gathering space that allows for networking, fresh and seasonal local goods, and the opportunity for economy in Four Oaks to be self-serving and invest within the community. Recommendations for the Farmer’s Market will be provided in two phases.

- » Current Recommendations: Enhancements will be made at the lot near the corner of Church Street and Highway 301, including a gravel path, updated signage, and promotion of the Market through local utility billing and the Town’s website and social media outlets.
- » Future Recommendations: Review the Farmer’s Markets needs during the development of the 30+ acre regional community park. Research and recommend potential parking lot designs in order accommodate the Farmer’s Market needs.



The site located along West Wellons Street can be enhanced in the short-term using Farmer’s Market signage, a gravel entrance and Town promotion of the space.

Town-wide Park and Community Center

It is recommended that the Town evaluate and purchase 30 or more acres of land to establish a Town-wide park and a community center. The park facilities provided will allow the Town to meet the needs of the community and greatly expand its programming potential. To demonstrate the affects of this recommendation, 1723 Boyette Road was selected as an example site to establish these features.

This ~47-acre site provides a lot of benefits to the existing parks network, but also builds upon the other recommendations made in this plan. The East Coast Greenway is oriented along Boyette Road and offers an opportunity to tie the greenway directly into the heart of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation. Its location in the Town is also beneficial, as it is oriented somewhat away from the Town's core, where the majority of the existing parks and programs are offered. This allows for a more accessible and equitable experience for residents of the Town.

To fulfill Town facility needs, it is recommended that the park provide the following facilities:

- » 1 multi-purpose field
- » 1 baseball diamond
- » 2 tennis courts, convertible to pickleball courts
- » Community garden

However, most large parcels, including the example of 1723 Boyette Road, will have much more additional land available. This provides a degree of 'futureproofing' for the Town, allowing the park to grow organically alongside the Town and supply the future residents of Four Oaks with additional facilities as needed. Example facilities that were discussed during plan development and should continue to be evaluated as the Town grows include:

- » Pool
- » Skate Park
- » BMX Park

The largest facility recommended for the future park space is a community center. A facility of approximately 10k square feet would greatly open up the programming potential for the Town. As mentioned above, the facility may also be planned and developed to be expandable in the future, allowing for the potential to expand the building itself or provide aquatic amenities. Several communities in North Carolina including Thomasville, Smithfield, and Clayton have successfully developed community centers like the one recommended.

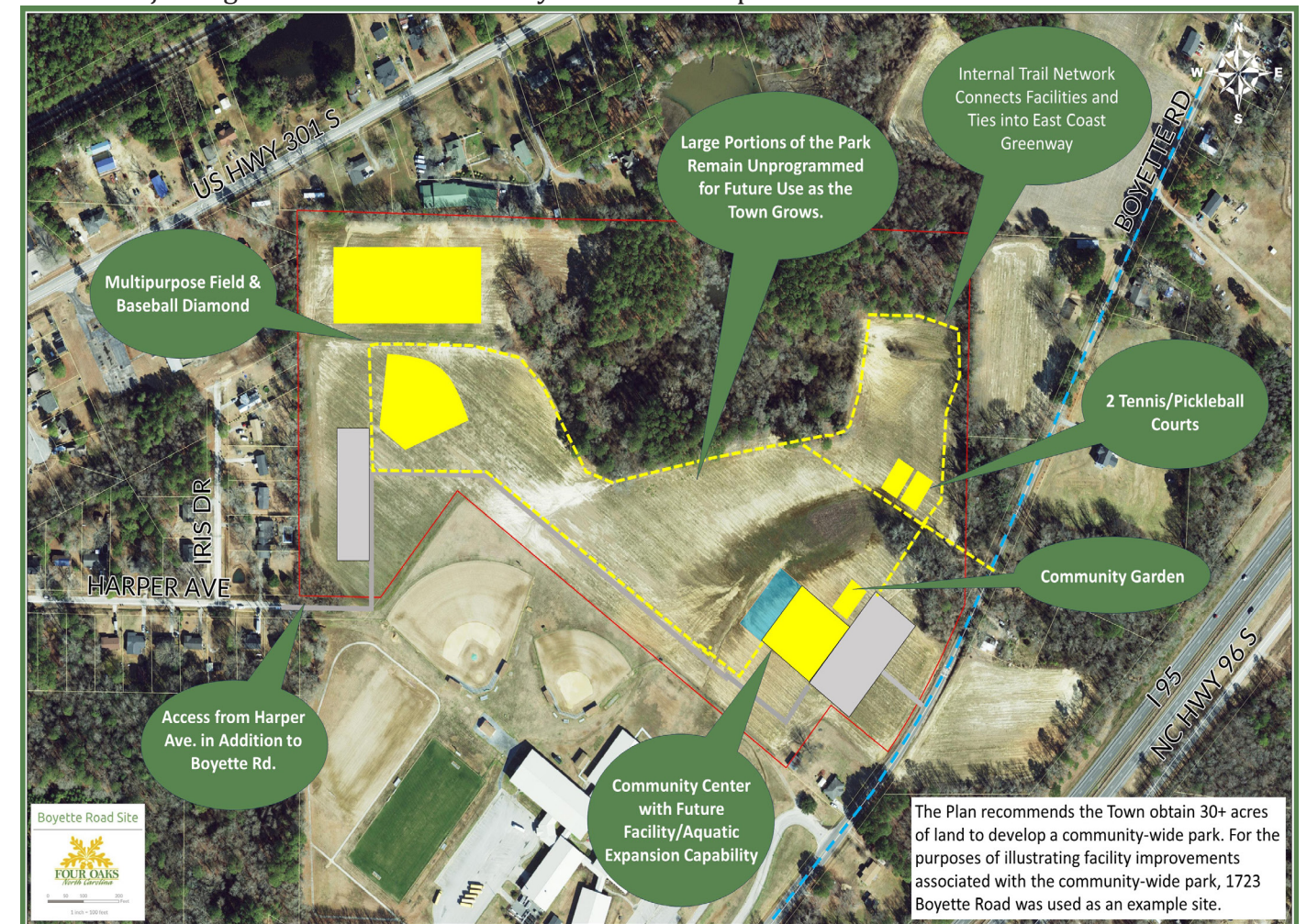
The importance of the facility is three-fold.

Firstly, it provides rooms and spaces for flexible, non-athletic programming. Senior programming and teen programming were identified as being important needs within the Town. The ability to conduct indoor programming allows the Town to create impactful recreation experiences for the previously under-represented cohorts. Flexible programming space in turn supports partner organizations, such as the Civitan Club. Like the Town, partner organizations may also expand programming offers by utilizing the community center.

Secondly, the facility allows for revenue saving and revenue generating policies. Community center equipment and spaces may be rented to enhance the department's non-tax revenues. Additionally, facility space may also be used to house Town offices as needed, providing yet another way to 'futureproof' the Town.

Lastly, the community center makes a statement to the wider region that Four Oaks is the place to recreate. In the example location, this statement is further enhanced by its location

adjoining the East Coast Greenway and offer a stop for travelers.



305 North Baker Street

The Town of Four Oaks has recently come into ownership of a parcel on Baker Street. The 0.17-acre lot was previously a residence and is located catty-corner to Barbour’s Grove Park. While small in size, the parcel provides a unique opportunity to enhance downtown parking in addition to the programming of the parcel. The lot’s location in the heart of the Town would enhance accessibility to Town services and Barbour’s Grove Park, which is limited primarily to streetside parking in addition to its 12 off-street parking spaces.

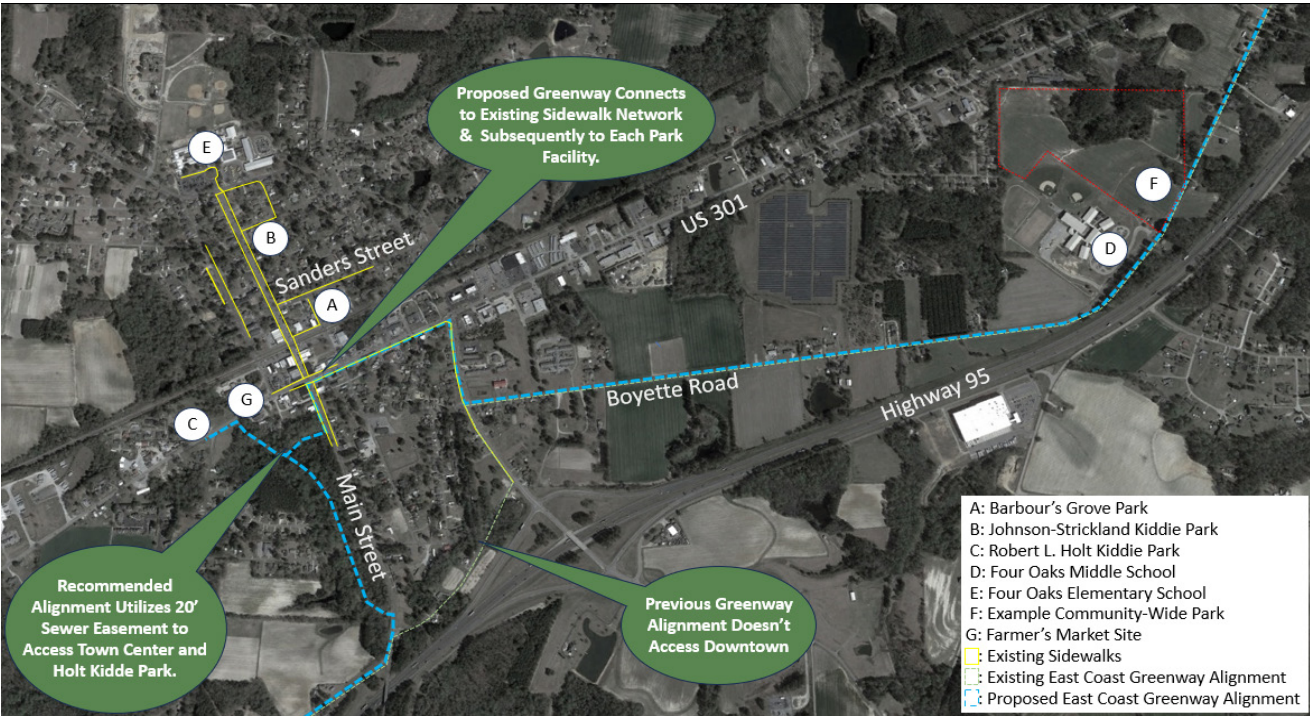
C. Greenway Recommendations

Greenway development is a critical component of the future Four Oaks parks network. It leverages the Town’s location along the East Coast Greenway to interconnect Four Oaks with its neighbors and supports internal multi-modal travel. The current alignment of the East Coast Greenway runs from Parker Road up Allendale Road and then intersects with Keen Road where it then runs north until turning up Boyette Road. Currently there is no physical infrastructure to identify the trail alignment.

Community engagement revealed that many residents desired to see the greenway make its way through downtown before moving north towards Smithfield. Several parcels adjacent to South Main Street contain a 20-foot sanitary sewer easement that follows a small creek. This easement may be leveraged to redirect the existing greenway route from Parker Road to instead run parallel to South Main Street. From the easements, the greenway can access the existing sidewalk infrastructure along South Main, US 301, and Keen Road to rendezvous with the previous alignment along Boyette Road. Additionally, a small extension of the greenway southwest along US 301 would also serve to directly connect Robert L. Holt Park to the remainder of the parks and recreation network.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) maintains each route described in the proposed system. Development of this formalized greenway plan in addition to ongoing coordination with NCDOT can identify opportunities for the State to help develop roadside greenway infrastructure through its Complete Streets program or other applicable policies. In turn the Town can begin directly investing in infrastructure within the easement that follows the creek adjoining South Main Street.

The access easement in place would support a 12-foot concrete path. Safety lighting will be a necessary component of the greenway as it parallels South Main due to the dense foliage. Four Oaks can also support greenway development by providing uniform wayfinding at key locations along the greenway. Strategically, signage may be most applicable where Parker Street meets South Main, from South Main to Keen Road, and along Boyette Road. Wayfinding infrastructure in the downtown is also supported by the Town’s Streetscape Master Plan, and the two efforts may be complimented by the development of appropriate signage. Future improvements could include a story-book trail or environmental education plaques to further enhance the trail network.



Greenway Recommendations Map

D. Program Recommendations

With a clear need for additional programming opportunities, the Town must strategically implement new and diverse options while balancing department resources and time. Community engagement revealed a clear need for senior and teen programming options. Simultaneously, preexisting youth athletics and special events are widely attended and supported by the community. With limited staff, the Parks and Recreation Department must steadily grow its program catalog while leveraging partner agencies and community resources.

The Civitan group has provided a variety of expanded programming for the residents of Four Oaks. Survey results indicated that an average of 41% of respondents have either participated in or would like to participate in a Civitan athletic sport. Furthermore, the results indicate that the events are ranked highly in satisfaction, indicating that the organization is providing high quality opportunities. The following section will discuss enhancing partnerships further, however continued work with this organization will be vital to ensuring that a diverse array of programming is provided to Four Oaks. It is recommended that the Town focus future programming opportunities to serve specialty interests, such as senior programming, and allow the Civitan group and other organizations to provide youth athletics options.

It is also recommended that Four Oaks staff coordinate with local municipalities such as Benson and Smithfield to identify existing programmers and invite them to do limited programming in Four Oaks. This recommendation has two primary benefits. Firstly it provides an external workforce to supplement the department’s limited resources.

Secondly, doing limited programming efforts allows the Town to try various program types and gauge which ones are best received by the public. In turn, this allows the department to focus future, more permanent programming efforts on the successful opportunities. Initial programmers should focus on teen and senior programming, and the Town must work with these programmers to identify opportunities that can be conducted in the short term without the need for a community center.

The Johnston County Board of Education maintains an Outdoor Public Learning Trail adjacent to the Four Oaks Elementary School. This trail contains informational plaques for the local environment, and outdoor classroom area, and birdhouses. It is well maintained and considered to be a hidden gem among members of the public that attended workshop events. While the trail is in excellent condition and represents an amazing amenity for the Town, it is currently underused and not widely known. It is recommended that the Town work with the Johnston County Board of Education to amend the joint-use agreements for school facilities to include the Outdoor Public Learning Trail and the Four Oaks middle school gymnasium. Furthermore, once the trail is officially open for public use, the Town should develop a trail map and advertised the amenity to raise awareness.

Programming in Four Oaks will primarily be driven by the development of the community center identified in Future Facility Recommendations section. The center will make non-athletic programming and support services viable options through the addition of flexible, programmable facilities. During community center development, it is recommended that the Town conduct a program-specific survey to be distributed to every resident through the utility bill mailer. This survey will allow staff to understand detailed programming needs and better prepare specific courses or events. One example questions that could be included in the survey to detail programming needs is as follows:

- » Senior Programming: What types of senior programs would you be interested in participating in?
 - › Chair yoga/flexibility
 - › Walking team
 - › Art classes
 - › Cooking classes
 - › Jazzercise/dancing

E. Partnerships, Policies, & Communications

In addition to the facility, greenway, and programming recommendations made within the chapter, the plan also provides recommendations for internal and external efforts for the department itself. These actions are intended to expand capacity directly and indirectly through strategic implementation and consensus building with partners. While these efforts may not directly increase facilities or programs, they retain the same level of importance and influence on the success of this plan.

As discussed in Program Recommendations section, continued and expanded support for Four Oaks Civitan is vital to success of the Town’s recreational programming. Based on meetings with staff and members of the organization, it is recommended that the Parks and Recreation Department establish a regularly scheduled coordination call with Civitan leadership. This coordination call will help identify action items that affect both organizations, such as facility issues and maintenance needs. Additionally, the coordination time can be used to jointly advertise the upcoming events, programs, and volunteer opportunities of both organizations, allowing each entity to advertise to larger audiences. Additionally, the Town should work closely with the organization once the community center is completed to ensure that the organization programming can utilize the facilities most efficiently.

National benchmarking identified that the Town is understaffed by approximately 1.1 – 1.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff compared to other communities of similar size. With operational efficiencies, limited programming, and recreation partnerships, Four Oaks has been able to maintain a lean, but effective parks department. However, as the plan grows operations within the Town, it is anticipated that additional staff will be required to support future facilities and programming. Therefore, it is recommended that the Town explore the hiring of 1.5 – 2.5 FTE’s by 2030.

As identified during the Level-of-Service mapping analysis, subdivision developments to the northeast of Town are under-served by the existing facilities. While providing accessible recreation opportunities for all Four Oaks residents is a plan priority, subdivision developments may also be required to provide their own recreation opportunities for the future residents. Currently under subsection 152.51 of the Town’s Subdivision Regulations, the Town accepts fee-in-lieu from subdivision developments to provide recreation services at the cost of \$800/unit for major subdivisions. While beneficial, this fee may often not reflect the full cost of providing recreation services and opportunities to the incoming residents. Other municipalities require the developer to provide active/passive recreation as part of subdivision development. As Four Oaks grows, the Town must consider changing the ordinance so that the expectation is on the developer to build recreation infrastructure rather than provide a flat fee to the Town.

Finally, it is recommended that the Town begin producing a bi-monthly insert for the Town’s utility bills that advertises upcoming events and programs in addition to highlighting different park features. Public input during plan development identified that a lack of awareness of facilities/programs was the largest barrier to their use. By having a reliable, regularly scheduled update that is guaranteed to be mailed to each resident of the Town offers a clear opportunity for advertising. This mailer should also be supplemented by updates to the Town’s social media, email, and the Town webpage, avenues that are most used for residents based on survey results.

F. Phasing and Financial Planning

Plan fulfillment relies on strategic phasing of network improvements that balance financial planning and project completion. This section identifies the recommended phases of project completion, proposes estimates of probable project costs, and identifies alternative funding sources that Four Oaks may consider during plan execution. These financial considerations may also include stacking various funding sources and working with external public, private, and non-profit organizations. Staff review of the funding sources as they relate to various projects within the plan’s phases will be required to ensure that the sources are kept up to date and phases are reorganized as needed.

Phases

For the phasing recommendations below, four categories of time are used to organize when projects are recommended to be tackled.

- » Ongoing: Projects that begin in the short-term or have already begun, and which are expected to be ongoing throughout all phases of the plan.
 - » Short-term: Immediate projects to be completed within 1 – 3 years.
 - » Medium-term: Facility-improvements and network-expanding projects to be completed within 4 – 7 years.
 - » Long-term: Network-defining projects to be completed within 8 – 10 years.
- Funding Sources

Public engagement identified grants as being the desired mechanism to fund system improvements. The following section details grants identified by the planning team that may be applicable or useful for plan implementation. Staff should keep this list up to date over the next 10 years to ensure that funding sources are accurate and applicable to the needs of Four Oaks.

Individual grants can apply to multiple projects, and staff should consider the magnitude of each grant listed. Additionally, grants may overlap and stack to achieve project completion. Integration of stormwater, education, and transportation projects also provide opportunities to overlap goals and funds to bolster the Four Oaks parks network. For example, NCDOT transportation improvements along Boyette Road may also facilitate the opportunity for greenway development by NCDOT during the same project. Staff must be vigilant and think holistically about how projects occurring within Four Oaks can also support the parks and recreation vision.

Existing Facilities	
Project Description	Timeframe
Barbour’s Grove Park: Walking path safety improvements.	Short-term
Barbour’s Grove Park: Proactively extend sidewalk to park entrances.	Short-term
Holt Kiddie Park: Enhance basketball court.	Short-term
Holt Kiddie Park: Improve park signage.	Short-term
Johnson-Strickland Kiddie Park: Secure adjacent parking lot for Town use.	Medium-term
Holt Kiddie Park: Pave existing parking lot.	Long-term

Greenway	
Project Description	Timeframe
Collaborate with NCDOT to extend greenway from 20-foot sewer easement to Holt Kiddie Park.	Medium-term
Collaborate with NCDOT to develop a paved greenway along Boyette Road.	Medium-term
Develop paved and lighted greenway along 20-foot sewer easement parallel to South Main Street.	Long-term
Coordinate with local experts to develop story-book trail or environmental education plaques along easement.	Long-term

Future Facility	
Project Description	Timeframe
Secure a park site of 30+ acres.	Medium-term
Develop 2 tennis/pickleball courts.	Medium-term
Develop baseball diamond.	Medium-term
Develop multipurpose field.	Medium-term
Develop community garden.	Medium-term
Develop Town-wide community center with capacity for future facility/aquatic expansion.	Long-term

Programming	
Project Description	Timeframe
Coordinate with neighbor municipalities to identify existing programmers and programs to offer in Four Oaks.	Short-term
Amend joint use agreement with Johnston County Board of Education to enable public access to the Outdoor Public Learning Trail.	Short-term
Conduct a follow-up public survey during Community Center development that polls the public regarding on future programming needs.	Long-term

Partnerships, Policies, and Communications	
Project Description	Timeframe
Support Civitan Group through regularly scheduled coordination call, maintenance needs, and jointly advertisement events/volunteer opportunities.	Ongoing
Prepare bi-monthly insert for Town utility bill to advertise upcoming programs and events.	Short-term
Amend §152.51 of the development ordinance to require the development of park facilities in new subdivision developments.	Medium-term
Hire 1.5 – 2.5 fulltime equivalent staff for the Parks and Recreation department by 2030.	Long-term

Probable Cost Estimates

Estimates of probable project cost are based on recent project experience and are provided in 2023 dollars. These costs are provided for planning purposes only. Costs associated with land acquisition, facility development, and facility improvements will vary based on numerous ongoing factors. It will be the responsibility of Town Staff to accurately plan and budget for the recommended projects.

It is recommended that each recommended project undergo a detailed feasibility study and cost analysis prior to plan implementation. Factors that could significantly impact actual cost include, but are not limited to:

- » Implementation timeframe
- » Raw materials and supply chains
- » Property values
- » Individual project scales
- » Changing community needsW

Existing Facilities - Town of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Existing Park and Facility Projects		Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Subtotal
1	Barbour's Grove walking path safety improvements / remove brick to replace with concrete	SY	230	\$100.00	\$23,000
2	Extend sidewalk to Barbour's Grove Park entrances	SY	230	\$80.00	\$18,400
3	Enhance basketball court at Holt Kiddie Park (Full size court with resurfacing and striping)	SY	500	\$80.00	\$40,000
4	Improve Holt Kiddie Park Signage	Allowance	2	\$500.00	\$1,000
5	Pave existing parking lot at Holt Kiddie Park	SY	450	\$80.00	\$36,000
Subtotal:					\$118,400
1	Mobilization and General Conditions	lump sum	1		\$8,880
2	Design/Engineering Services	lump sum	1		\$14,208
3	Construction and Estimating Contingency	lump sum	1		\$23,680
TOTAL:					\$165,168

Future Facilities - Town of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Identified Park and Facility Projects		Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Subtotal
1	Land Acquisition (Park site of 30+ acres)	Acre	30	\$20,000.00	\$600,000
2	Land Acquisition (Site adjacent to Johnston Strickland Kiddie Park)	Allowance	1	\$26,000.00	\$26,000
3	Splashpad	Allowance	1	\$300,000.00	\$300,000
	Tennis Court Fencing	LF	84	\$50.00	\$4,200
	Tennis Court Asphalt	SY	800	\$80.00	\$64,000
4	Tennis/Pickleball Courts (Surfacing and Striping)	SY	800	\$90.00	\$82,000
5	Baseball Diamond (+ fencing)	Allowance	1	\$230,000.00	\$230,000
6	Multipurpose Field	Allowance	1	\$350,000.00	\$350,000
7	Community Garden Beds/Plots	Each	20	\$200.00	\$4,000
8	Community Center 10,000 sf	SF	10,000	\$450.00	\$4,500,000
Subtotal:					\$5,792,000
1	Mobilization and General Conditions	lump sum	1		\$108,750
2	Design/Engineering Services	lump sum	1		\$695,040
3	Construction and Estimating Contingency	lump sum	1		\$1,158,400
TOTAL:					\$7,754,190

Proposed Greenways - Town of Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Proposed Greenways		Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Subtotal
1	Greenway Extension to Holt Kiddie Park (10' wide asphalt path)	Mile	0.2	\$1,250,000.00	\$250,000
2	Boyette Road Greenway (10' wide asphalt path)	Mile	2.5	\$1,250,000.00	\$3,125,000
3	South Main Street Greenway (10' Wide asphalt path)	Mile	0.5	\$1,250,000.00	\$625,000
4	South Main Street Greenway Pedestrian Scaled Lighting (every 100')	Each	27	\$4,500.00	\$121,500
5	Wayfinding signage along South Main Street Greenway	Each	6	\$500.00	\$3,000
Subtotal:					\$4,124,500
1	Mobilization and General Conditions	lump sum	1		\$309,338
2	Design/Engineering Services	lump sum	1		\$494,940
3	Construction and Estimating Contingency	lump sum	1		\$824,900
TOTAL:					\$5,753,678

The figures listed above are intended for planning purposes only. Acquisition costs for new facilities, materials, land acquisition and other itemized improvements should be further evaluated by the Town on a project-specific basis.

Funding Sources

Public engagement identified grants as being the desired mechanism to fund system improvements. The following section details grants identified by the planning team that may be applicable or useful for plan implementation. Staff should keep this list up to date over the next 10 years to ensure that funding sources are accurate and applicable to the needs of Four Oaks.

Individual grants can apply to multiple projects, and staff should consider the magnitude of each grant listed. Additionally, grants may overlap and stack to achieve project completion. Integration of stormwater, education, and transportation projects also provide opportunities to overlap goals and funds to bolster the Four Oaks parks network. For example, NCDOT transportation improvements along Boyette Road may also facilitate the opportunity for greenway development by NCDOT during the same project. Staff must be vigilant and think holistically about how projects occurring within Four Oaks can also support the parks and recreation vision.

Land and Water Conservation Fund	
Level of Funding	State
Management Agency	NC Division of Parks and Recreation
Website	https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/land-and-water-conservation-fund
Description	The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides matching grants to local governments to assist with public park and recreation projects
Project Examples	Acquire land for a public park Renovate/replace outdoor recreational or support facilities at existing park sites
Grant Amount	\$500,000
Match	At least 50% of the total cost of the project
Application Deadline	Early October

Parks and Recreation Trust Fund	
Level of Funding	State
Management Agency	NC Division of Parks and Recreation
Website	https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/parks-and-recreation-trust-fund
Description	The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PRTF) provides matching grants to local governments to assist with public park and recreation projects
Project Examples	Acquire land for a public park Renovate/replace outdoor recreational or support facilities at existing park sites
Grant Amount	\$500,000
Match	At least 50% of the total cost of the project
Application Deadline	Early May



NC Land and Water Fund	
Level of Funding	State
Management Agency	NC Land and Water Fund
Website	https://nclwf.nc.gov/
Description	The Land and Water Fund improves water quality, sustains ecological diversity, and protects historic sites and military installations by funding projects to acquire land, restore the habitat for fish, wildlife, and other species, and enhance the filtering of stormwater runoff to reduce pollutants from entering water supplies.
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration projects to enhance or restore degraded waters and to protect downstream natural resources such as drinking water supplies, fisheries, and recreation opportunities, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stream restoration • Innovative stormwater • Planning efforts that develop potential projects with one or more of the following goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance or restore degraded waters • Protect unpolluted waters • Contribute towards a network of riparian buffers • Provide buffers around military bases • Acquire land that represents ecological diversity • Acquire land for a balanced program of historic properties • Facilitate innovative efforts in improve stormwater treatment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Acquisition
Grant Amount	No set funding range
Match	No match requirement. However, the percentage of match and the type of match are factored in the application rating system
Application Deadline	Early February

Clean Water State Revolving Fund	
Level of Funding	Federal
Management Agency	EPA – Environmental Protection Agency
Website	https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf
Description	The Clean Water State Revolving Fund provides funds for wastewater treatment facilities and projects associated with estuary and nonpoint source programs
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wastewater treatment • Wastewater collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reclaimed water • Stormwater BMPs • Stream restoration • Energy efficiency at treatment works or collection systems
Grant Amount	\$30,000,000, 0% loan, 20-year term
Match	n/a
Application Deadline	Spring and Fall application funding cycles

Water Source Development Grant Program	
Level of Funding	State
Management Agency	NCDEQ – Division of Water Infrastructure
Website	https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/water-resources-grants/water-resources-development-grant-program
Description	The purpose of this program is to provide cost-share grants and technical assistance to local governments for seven eligible project types
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General navigation • Recreational navigation • Water management • Stream restoration • Water-based recreation • Natural Resource Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) • Feasibility/Engineering studies
Grant Amount	\$200,000, however larger awards may be granted
Match	50%
Application Deadline	Spring

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	US Dept. of Transportation
Website	https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/about
Description	These grants fund regional and multi-modal transportation projects of regional and local significance. In 2021, the program funded bike and pedestrian projects at the highest level ever and “includes new or improved walking, biking, and rolling access for the disabled, especially access that reverses the disproportional impacts of crashes on people of color.
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails and greenways • Bike lanes • Installation
Grant Amount	No set amounts
Match	No match required
Application Deadline	Mid-April



Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	US Department of Agriculture Forest Service
Website	https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/private-land/community-forest
Description	The purpose is to protect forest land from conversion to non-forest uses and provide community benefits such as environmental benefits including clean air, water and wildlife habitat; benefits from forest-based educational programs; benefits from serving as models of effective forest stewardship; and recreational benefits secured with public access.
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community outreach • Land purchases • Installation
Grant Amount	\$20,000 to \$50,000
Match	At least 50% of the total cost of the project
Application Deadline	January

Bike and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative	
Level of Funding	State
Management Agency	North Carolina Dept. of Transportation
Website	https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/Planning-Grant-Initiative.aspx
Description	Encourage municipalities to develop comprehensive bicycle plans and pedestrian plans.
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Bicycle Plans • Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan • Comprehensive Plan Updates
Grant Amount	No set amount
Match	Sliding scale based on population (high populations must have higher match)
Application Deadline	June

Recreational Trails Grant Program	
Level of Funding	State
Management Agency	North Carolina Trails Committee
Website	https://trails.nc.gov/trail-grants/apply-grant
Description	Grants help fund sustainable, construction ready projects that meet recreational trail needs to provide low infrastructure economic development opportunities through natural resource tourism
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail construction and renovation • Land acquisition • Planning, legal and permitting
Grant Amount	\$10,000 - \$100,000
Match	At least 25% of the total cost of the project
Application Deadline	September

Community Challenge	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
Website	https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/info-2021/2021-challenge/?cmp=EMC-DSM-NLC-LC-HOM-FAM-20210217_LivableCom
Description	This program provides funding for projects that create change and opportunity for walking and movement at the community level.
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of public spaces and parks • Increase community engagement • Programs or services
Grant Amount	No set amounts.
Match	At least 25% of the total cost of the project.
Application Deadline	April

Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund Grant	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Website	https://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/grants/doppelt/
Description	Support organizations and local governments that are implementing projects to build and improve multi-use trails.
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails and greenways • Bike lanes • Installation
Grant Amount	\$5,000 - \$8,000
Match	No match required.
Application Deadline	Early spring

T-Mobile Hometown Grants	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	T-Mobile
Website	https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/hometown-grants
Description	This program provides funding for projects to build, rebuild, or refresh community spaces that help foster local connections. Communities must have less than 50,000 in population to be eligible. This program runs for 5 years.
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park construction • Site furnishings & beautification efforts • Public art installation • Accessibility improvements • Rebuilding/renovating urban spaces
Grant Amount	Up to \$50,000
Match	No match required.
Application Deadline	Quarterly

Safe Routes to School (Safe Routes to Parks Partnership)	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	Safe Routes Partnership
Website	https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/healthy-communities
Description	This program provides funding for park access, especially in low-income areas and in communities of color; grants given to nonprofits.
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalk route planning construction • Park access • Accessibility improvements
Grant Amount	\$12,500 plus technical assistance
Match	No match required
Application Deadline	December

Bloomberg Asphalt Art	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	Bloomberg
Website	https://asphaltart.bloomberg.org/grants/
Description	Fund visual art interventions on roadways, pedestrian spaces, and public infrastructure in U.S. cities with the goal of improving street and pedestrian safety, revitalizing and activating underutilized public space, and promoting collaboration and civic engagement in local communities.
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving street and pedestrian safety • Revitalizing and activating underutilized spaces • Promoting collaboration and civic engagement
Grant Amount	Up to \$2,500 plus technical assistance
Match	No match required
Application Deadline	April

Pool Safety Grant Program	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	Consumer Product Safety Commission
Website	https://www.poolsafely.gov/grant-program/
Description	These grants provide funds to assist jurisdictions in reducing deaths and injuries from drowning and drain entrapment incidents in pools and spas.
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool plumbing system reconstruction
Grant Amount	\$50,000 - \$400,000
Match	No match required
Application Deadline	July

Build it with Kaboom!	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	KaBoom!
Website	https://kaboom.org/grants/community-built
Description	KaBOOM! Works with communities to design and build playgrounds and play spaces
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground equipment including shipping • Safety surfacing • Installation
Grant Amount	No set amounts. Grant will provide equipment, safety surfacing, and installation.
Match	\$8,500
Application Deadline	Accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year

Build It Yourself – Community-Built Playgrounds	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	KaBoom!
Website	https://www.kaboom.org/grants/build-it-with-kaboom
Description	KaBOOM! Works with communities to design and build playgrounds and play spaces
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground equipment including shipping
Grant Amount	\$15,000
Match	\$9,000 - \$15,000 with a maximum project cost of \$50,000
Application Deadline	Accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year

Bark for your Park	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	PetSafe
Website	https://barkforyourpark.petsafe.com/
Description	The PetSafe Bark for your Park program provides funding to create new dog parks to maintain/improve existing dog parks
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a new dog park • Dog Park improvements and maintenance
Grant Amount	\$25,000 for new parks; \$5,000 for improvements and maintenance of existing parks
Match	None
Application Deadline	June

People for Bikes	
Level of Funding	Local
Management Agency	Triangle Community Foundation
Website	https://www.peopleforbikes.org/grants
Description	Program supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted advocacy initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike paths, lanes, trails, and bridges • Mountain bike facilities • Bike parks and pump tracks • BMX facilities • End-of-trip facilities such as bike racks, bike parking, bike repair stations and bike storage
Grant Amount	\$10,000
Match	No specific match is required but will not consider grant request in which funding would amount to 50% or more of the total project cost
Application Deadline	2 cycles per year: April and October

Baseball of Tomorrow Fund Youth Development Foundation	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	MLB/MLBPA Youth Development Foundation
Website	https://www.mlbplayers.com/ydf
Description	MLB-MLBPA Youth Development Foundation is a joint initiative between Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association. It was created to increase participation in and expand access to youth baseball and softball. The Foundation makes grants to organizations in the United States and internationally.
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital projects include building and renovating fields and practice facilities and installing lighting. Field and lighting capital projects that have most of the funding secured will be prioritized • Baseball/Softball programs include in-school/after-school baseball/softball programming, equipment and uniforms, umpire fees, player registration fees and practice facility rental fees • Education initiatives include programs, exhibits and other learning opportunities that use baseball and softball as its primary focus to promote interest and engagement in the game
Grant Amount	No set funding range
Match	No match required. Field and lighting capital projects that have most of the funding secured will be prioritized.
Application Deadline	Accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year.

Community Improvement Grants	
Level of Funding	National
Management Agency	Keep America Beautiful
Website	https://kab.org/beautification/community-grants/
Description	Grant recipients are selected based on their potential to collect cans and bottles as well as creating new or expanded access to recycling opportunities in a community. Keep America Beautiful selects recipients based on the merits of their proposal, then works with its vendors to arrange delivery of the bins at no cost to the grant recipients
Project Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide recycling access to greater numbers of people • Provide access in environmentally sensitive areas • Potential to increase overall recycling participation in a community
Grant Amount	Recipients are granted recycling bins as requested
Match	None
Application Deadline	March

Triangle Community Foundation – GSK Impact Awards	
Level of Funding	Local
Management Agency	Triangle Community Foundation
Website	https://trianglecf.org/nonprofits/grants/
Description	Triangle Community Foundation is made up of over 800 philanthropic funds which are used in a variety of ways to provide support for non-profit organizations. Grants from the Foundation are made in two ways: from the discretionary grant programs and through donor-advised grants.
Project Examples	Programs that support healthy eating, exercise, sports, outdoor activities to help the community achieve or maintain healthy weight.
Grant Amount	\$50,000
Match	None
Application Deadline	March

Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program	
Level of Funding	Federal
Management Agency	USDA
Website	https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program
Description	Program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial, or business undertakings
Project Examples	<p>Funds can be used to purchase, construct, and/or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment, and pay related project expenses including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care facilities such as hospitals, medical clinics, dental clinics, nursing homes or assisted living facilities • Public facilities such as city and town halls, courthouses, airport hangars or street improvements • Community support services such as childcare centers, community centers, fairgrounds, or transitional housing • Public safety services such as fire departments, police stations, prisons, police vehicles, fire trucks, public works vehicles or equipment • Educational services such as museums, libraries, or private schools • Utility services such as telemedicine or distance learning equipment
Grant Amount	No set funding range
Match	None
Application Deadline	Accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year

I. Appendix

The following appendix contains the full facility evaluation matrix as conducted by the project team.



	Barbour's Grove Park	Holt Kiddie Park	Johnson-Strickland Kiddie Park	Criteria Total
Design & Construction (Max 30)	26	26	24	79
Is the design and construction of the site meeting the needs of the users served?	4	4	4	80
Is the site readily accessible to the users being served?	5	5	4	93
Have changes in context made the site ineffective to users?	4	4	4	80
Does the site include appropriate recreation amenities for intended users?	5	5	5	100
Has the site been improved?	3	3	3	60
Is there evidence that the site utilizes design standards for branding, materials, etc.?	3	3	3	60
Effectiveness (Max 20)	14	14	11	65
Does the site have features/amenities that can be used by people of different ages?	4	4	3	73
How many different types of activities are available?	3	3	2	53
Are there choices in intensity of activities to do?	4	4	3	73
Is there a balance of active recreation and passive or at-will opportunities?	3	3	3	60
Comfort and Image (Max 30)	21	21	25	74
Does the site make a good first impression?	4	4	4	80
Are there enough places to sit and conveniently located?	4	4	5	87
Is the site clean and free of litter?	5	5	5	100
Does the site feel safe?	5	5	5	100
Do vehicles dominate the site through access roads, parking and/or maintenance?	1	1	3	33
Does the site need improvements? (1= Very Much, 5=None)	2	2	3	47
Access and Linkages (Max 25)	19	19	19	76
Are there clear and open view lines into open spaces?	5	5	5	100
Is there clear and useful wayfinding/signage within the site?	3	3	2	53
Can people walk easily to the site from surrounding areas?	5	5	4	93
Does the site function for people with special needs?	1	1	3	33
Do paths and/or roads connect people to primary amenities?	5	5	5	100
Sustainability (Max 60)	41	41	38	69
Sociability Sustainability	13	13	13	87
Does the site provide places for people to gather?	4	4	5	87
Does the site promote healthy lifestyle and/or reduce daily stress?	4	4	4	80
Is the site well connected with clear and safe access points?	5	5	4	93
Environmental Sustainability	15	15	15	60
Does the site use energy, water, and material resources efficiently?	3	3	3	60
Does the site improve water quality?	3	3	3	60
Does the site enhance, preserve, promote or contribute to biological diversity?	3	3	3	60
Is the site a node within a larger ecological corridor or habitat?	3	3	3	60
Does the site enhance environmental awareness or knowledge?	3	3	3	60
Economic Sustainability	13	13	10	60
Does the site create public and/or private revenue generating opportunities?	4	4	2	67
Does the site help sustain or increase property values?	4	4	3	73
Does the site contribute to nearby development or redevelopment?	3	3	3	60
Does the site provide permanent jobs?	2	2	2	40
Park Total	73	73	71	

