



# Apex

*Parks, Recreation, Greenways,  
and Open Space Master Plan*  
June 2013



Prepared by Sage Design and Alta/Greenways



# Acknowledgements

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# Section One

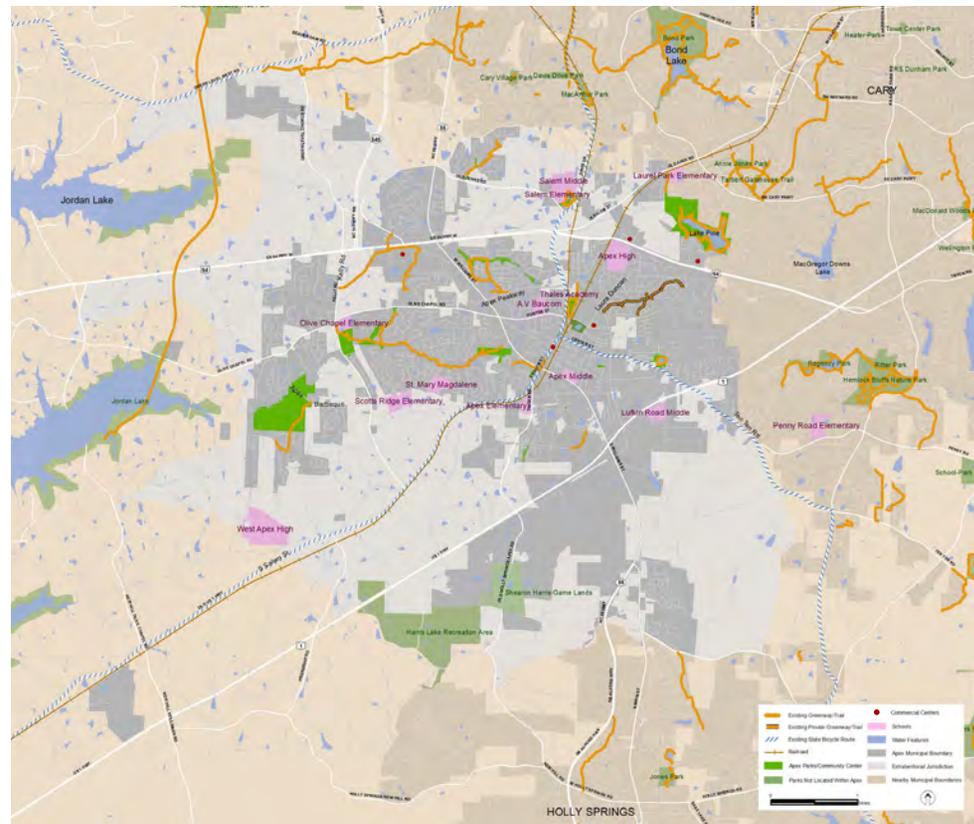
## Executive Summary

### OVERVIEW

The Town of Apex is an active community which has continued to grow over the last several years. According to 2010 census data, a growth rate of about 85% resulted in a population of 37,476. The town's planning department estimated the population at the end of 2012 to be approximately 40,000, illustrating steady growth in spite of recent economic challenges.

Apex has been lauded for its quality of life. In 2009, *Forbes* ranked it the 3rd "Best Place to Move in America." In 2007, *CNN Money Magazine* proclaimed Apex to be the best in all of North Carolina and the 14th best in the U.S. to live, work, and raise a family.

Committed to maintaining high living standards, in 2012 the town surveyed residents and users about parks, recreation, and cultural resources to identify wants, needs, and overall perceptions of level of services. Programs and facilities were also inventoried and evaluated. The feedback and data will assist in developing a plan for the future.



Apex Community Map: Existing Parks and Greenways.



PLAN PROCESS VISION

The department’s mission was the springboard for this plan’s vision.

The Apex Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department provides programs, services, and facilities to the residents and visitors of Apex, North Carolina. Department initiatives should respond to the changing needs of Apex’s growing population; reflect age, gender, ability, and cultural diversity; and demonstrate environmental responsibility and careful stewardship of all natural resources. Programming should be conducted year round and balance activities that are indoor and outdoor; active and passive; physical and intellectual. The programs, services and facilities should be implemented and managed to balance quality and quantity of recreational experiences.



FOUNDATION

Demographics Past Plans Existing Facilities and Programs



DISCOVERY

Committee Interviews Public Events Survey Inventory



ANALYSIS

Standards: Local and National Input Results Future Growth



Recommendations + Action Steps + Staff Commitment

## FOUNDATION, DISCOVERY, AND ANALYSIS

Public involvement is crucial to parks and recreation planning. In addition to analyzing demographics and comparing trends, there is no better gauge for identifying needs than asking users about their desires, opinions, and ideas, and using this information, along with the other findings, to create a clearer picture of required facilities and services. For this plan, public input was gathered by consulting the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Advisory Commission; distributing hard-copy and electronic surveys to current and past participants; sending e-blasts to homeowners associations; adding inserts to utility bills; holding focus group sessions; and sharing information by “piggy-backing” on events, such as the Turkey Trot and Concerts at the Town Complex. The electronic survey was accessible via a project website, a Facebook page, the Town of Apex website, and computer kiosks in the community center. To stimulate awareness of the plan, information cards were distributed at Parks and Recreation facilities and program locations.

A comprehensive planning process supports the department’s mission. The following *Measurements of Success* were established to help better understand what action plan elements may be needed for implementing goals:

- Provide recreational opportunities that suit resident needs within a service area as defined by distance.
- Create a park system that residents can access by walking, biking, and driving.
- Provide recreational opportunities that promote an “active” lifestyle to maintain a high quality of life in Apex.
- Provide opportunities for Apex residents to enjoy natural, historical, and cultural resources, and protect these resources for future generations.
- Ensure residents are satisfied with the types of facilities available, as well as their condition and maintenance.

Recommendations are segmented into four main action item categories:

- 1. Facilities:** *Where* Apex residents participate in recreation
- 2. Programs:** *What* residents are doing for recreation
- 3. Greenways:** How to *Connect* residents
- 4. Land Acquisition:** How to *Plan for Future* recreational needs



## It's Time to Grow!

What types of parks would YOUR family enjoy?

Where do YOU want to go on a greenway?

What classes would YOUR kids think are fun?

***Tell us what YOU would like to see!***

For more information about the project, visit  
[www.apexparksplan.com](http://www.apexparksplan.com).



Contact: John Brown | Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources  
 919.249.3344 | [john.brown@apexnc.org](mailto:john.brown@apexnc.org)

*The survey yielded responses from 1,485 participants who commented on facilities, programs, and cultural resources. Results and free response comments were analyzed to create a snapshot of desires within the community.*



The plan recommends clustering action items into the following timeframe to help set a course for implementation.

- **Immediate Needs** (0-2 years): Elements residents feel are needed to meet current demand
- **Near Term Needs** (3-5 years): Elements the town should address through planning, funding allocation, grant sources, and/or land acquisition
- **Long Term Needs** (5-7 years): Items that are priorities as the town develops and the population increases.

## PROVIDING A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE

High quality parks, recreation facilities, and programs help make Apex an attractive place to live and provide a sense of pride and community identity. Park facilities serve as the “first impression” for a community. These recommendations will contribute to the quality of life for residents and users of Apex parks, recreational, and cultural resources.

## FACILITIES

While residents are currently satisfied with the level of service provided by many of the town’s recreational offerings, the survey indicated additional facilities are also desired to fulfill the interests of the community.

### IMMEDIATE NEEDS (0-2 YEARS)

- Acquire or re-use existing space for downtown festivals, concerts, and markets:
  - Re-use the train depot, if it becomes available, to serve as a downtown urban park, market, and street festival space.

- Improve use of the Town Complex by encouraging partnerships between the commercial district, downtown vendors, and programmers of concerts and events.
- Acquire additional indoor space for senior, teen and fitness programming. This can be done through:
  - Expanding the community center; or
  - Re-using an existing building(s); or
  - Developing new facilities.
- Provide additional unprogrammed open space and multi-use fields. While the nature park will help fulfill some of this need, the town should make improvements to existing parks where opportunity exists to allow for greater access to passive space, as well as include passive and unprogrammed space in future park development.
- Incorporate walking and/or multi-use paths within existing parks and/or town facilities, such as the Apex Community Center and Town Hall Complex, and link pedestrian systems where possible.
- Expand recreational opportunities for teens by planning for specialty facilities such as skate parks or plazas, climbing structures, zip-lines, and ropes courses.
- Use PRORAGIS (Park and Recreation Operating Ratio & Geographic Information System), a national database that allows park and recreation agencies to benchmark with others, develop programs, and enhance overall community operations. The town should begin by completing the “lite” or “quick start” data collection version to receive access to the database.
- Acquire land for a sports complex (60-200 acres) in an underserved area as indicated on page 1-10.

### **NEAR TERM NEEDS (3-5 YEARS)**

- Seek additional space for more health, wellness and fitness related classes.
- Provide unprogrammed open space and/or multi-use fields.
- Provide additional playgrounds, either in existing parks or as parks are developed.
- Look for additional locations within existing parks to include volleyball and basketball courts.

### **LONG TERM NEEDS (5-7 YEARS)**

- Develop a sports complex (60-100 acres) that can not only meet active recreation needs, but also serve as an economic tournament venue for the town. Elements may include:
  - 4-5 baseball/softball pinwheel
  - 2 basketball courts
  - 1 batting cage
  - 3 tennis courts
  - 1-2 volleyball courts
  - 3-4 multi-purpose fields
- Incorporate additional dog park(s) in future parks, as needed.
- Incorporate picnic shelters in future parks and make park improvements for rental use.
- Implement plan for additional indoor space via re-use, expansion, or new construction, including:
  - Gymnasium space
  - Multi-purpose space (3 rooms, minimum)
  - Rooms for senior programs



*New facilities will be required to meet the needs of growing families in Apex.*



## PROGRAMS

Recreational preferences should guide the development of programs, cultural resources, and facilities. Apex is a very active community and residents would like to see expanded program offerings to support their interests. After each programming period, an assessment should be conducted to gauge interest and inform adjustments. Evaluation may include: class schedules, number of participants, frequency of class cancellations, feedback regarding instructors, and general suggestions for improvement. This will maintain an open dialogue between residents and the Department, ensuring flexibility and satisfying demand.

Based upon current interests and program needs, the Town should do the following to expand and improve programs:

### IMMEDIATE NEEDS (0-2 YEARS)

- Create a strategic marketing plan to ensure residents are aware of program variety and locations, and have an opportunity to make recommendations on future offerings.
- Improve the website so that it is easy to find programs by topic, facility type, and location.
- Expand special events programming, such as concerts, movies, and family friendly activities.
- Examine partnership opportunities to celebrate the Town of Apex and its residents, such as installing work by artists in community spaces.
- Provide programs for underserved age groups:
  - Youth and teens;
  - Seniors;
  - Adults (18-54) who may need family oriented support, such as childcare or activities parents and children can participate in simultaneously.

- Hire or assign a staff person to serve as a Parks and Recreation planner for Apex. This person will help oversee park, greenway, and open space elements, serving as a liaison between departments to ensure coordination occurs for future parks, recreation, and connectivity efforts.
- Develop a list of website resources and links for residents, including nearby programs, facilities, and services for special populations. Links may include:
  - Transportation offerings (bus, ride shares, carpools, and shuttle services);
  - Senior resources;
  - Programs and resources for special populations;
  - Teen programs;
  - Accessible facilities.

### NEAR TERM NEEDS (3-5 YEARS)

- As more indoor space becomes available, plan for additional classes in areas such as health and wellness, fitness, cooking, gardening, and arts and crafts.
- Hire a senior staff member who is qualified in Therapeutic Recreation to help shape programming and resources for seniors and special populations.
- Expand program offerings for underserved age groups listed above as space becomes available.

### LONG TERM NEEDS (5-7 YEARS)

Provide additional programs (type and/or frequency) as space and staff become available. Programs listed by residents were:

- Yoga, cooking, martial arts, gardening/community gardens, dancing (several varieties listed), ropes course/team building, babysitting, CPR, First Aid, bridge and other card games, Zumba, and Pilates.

## CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY

### GREENWAYS

Greenways are the highest priority for Apex residents. They desire easy access to greenways from their homes, and want to be able to travel to parks, commercial centers, work, and schools on a system of well connected paths and bicycle facilities. Connecting to commercial districts and parks rated highly in the survey. Linking residents to all of these key areas can have a positive impact on the health and wellness of residents, especially children. As such, the following recommendations are made to improve community connectivity:

#### IMMEDIATE NEEDS (0-2 YEARS)

- Take steps for the feasibility study, acquisition, design, and construction of:
  - American Tobacco Trail (ATT) connections, including:
    - Jaycee Park to Downtown (1,500 LF);
    - Kelly Road Park to Apex Nature Park (1.2 miles);
    - Apex Nature Park to American Tobacco Trail (2.3 miles).
  - Middle Creek Greenway connection to ensure safe crossing at the future 540.
  - White Oak Creek Greenway through Apex and to the ATT, working in collaboration with the Town of Cary.
- Complete separately, or in conjunction, a bicycle master plan and pedestrian master plan to provide an interconnected system of facilities (including routes, bike lanes, shared use lanes, bicycle parking facilities, sidewalks, intersection treatments, and signalization) and prioritize implementation. This will augment the existing prioritization in the Transportation Plan.
- Create a user-friendly greenway map accessible online, in an application, and/or via hard copy.
- Create a Master Wayfinding and Signage Plan (include design, typology, and placement standards). Install signage on existing greenways.

- Provide safe crossings by completing intersection improvements as indicated in Greenway section of this report.

#### NEAR TERM NEEDS (3-5 YEARS)

- Plan, design and develop the Apex Barbecue Road Greenway from Apex Nature Park to Salem Street downtown.
- Complete a destination-based greenway system, providing connections between downtown, commercial centers, parks, the library, Town Complex and schools (a connection from the Town Complex to the Eva Perry Regional Library is a top priority in the Near Term).
- Explore converting the Shepherds Vineyard Greenway from private to public.
- Install wayfinding signage on new greenway facilities.
- Complete intersection improvements (in Greenway section of this report) for routes as they are developed.

#### LONG TERM NEEDS (5-7 YEARS)

- Continue to develop identified greenways, completing critical connections between residential areas, commercial centers, parks, and other facilities.
- Fully implement greenway wayfinding system and map guide to show residents access points, trail lengths, and location of and distance to points of interest.
- Continue efforts to expand the greenway system, including planning, designing, and developing the Bond Park Connector Greenway, and Greenways in SE and NW Apex, including Reedy Branch Greenway, and Green Level Church Multiuse Path.
- Complete intersection improvements as greenways are developed.
- Seek opportunities to bridge gaps in the pedestrian network to improve connectivity.



## PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

### LAND ACQUISITION

Land acquisition is strongly linked to facilities, greenways, and programs. In order to maintain a high quality of life in Apex, more land should be acquired to ensure improved connectivity, open spaces for play and celebration, and future active recreation facilities. Land should also be sought for underserved areas to accommodate new facilities. Improving greenway connectivity will require the addition of corridors, while increasing program options will necessitate more space in general.

#### IMMEDIATE NEEDS (0-2 YEARS)

- Acquire land for the Beaver Creek Greenway. Easements are already in place for Jaycee Park to downtown and Kelly Road Park to the future Apex Nature Park. Easements are needed to connect the Apex Nature Park to the American Tobacco Trail.
- Acquire easements for the White Oak Creek and Middle Creek Greenways.
- Allocate land for downtown space through:
  - Re-using existing space, such as partnering with downtown shops, stores, and restaurants for concerts; or
  - Re-using the Depot if it becomes available; or
  - Acquiring additional land
- Acquire indoor space for seniors and teens by:
  - Expanding the Community Center; or
  - Re-using an existing building(s); or
  - Developing new facilities
- Acquire land for a sports complex (60-200 acres) in an underserved area as indicated on page 1-10.

#### NEAR TERM NEEDS (3-5 YEARS)

- Acquire land or easements for the Apex Barbecue Road multi-use path.

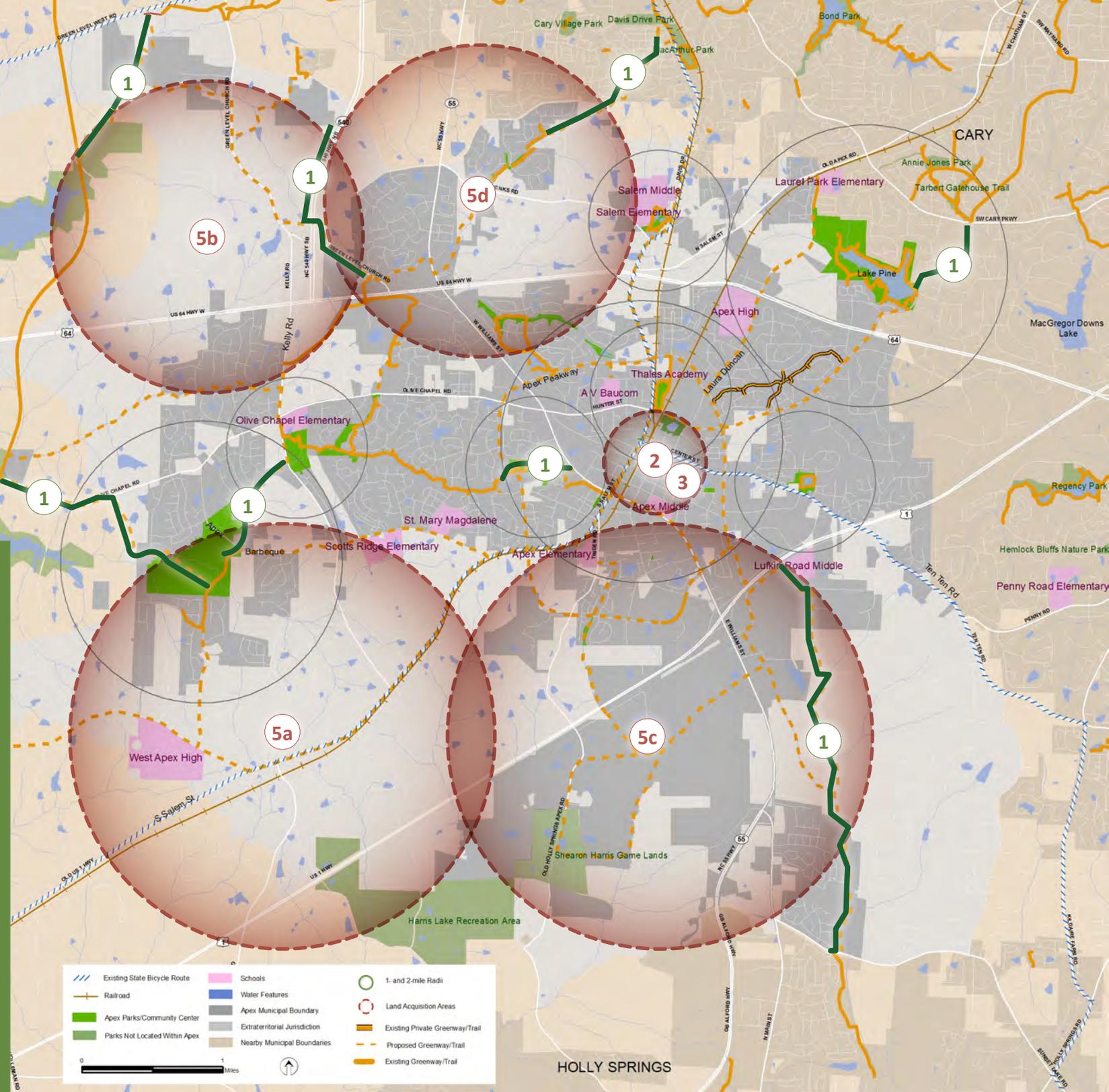
#### LONG TERM NEEDS (5-7 YEARS)

- Acquire land and/or easements for greenway trails.
- Acquire land for an area or community sized park in one of the underserved sections identified on page 1-10.

The map to the right illustrates the needs of the Apex community and the recommendations of this plan. Future growth areas, potential available land, and community needs were assessed to identify areas for land acquisition (as indicated in red dashed circles). Top priority greenways are highlighted with green solid lines. These alignments are crucial to connecting people with places, and building priority alignments ahead of roadway impacts.

## Land Acquisition Priorities:

1. Acquire land and/or easements to meet recommendations for greenway connectivity
2. Seek space for community gathering downtown
3. Seek opportunities to expand indoor recreational space for teens and seniors
4. Explore opportunities for passive & un-programmed open space
5. Acquire land and park space in underserved areas





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# Section Two

## Introduction

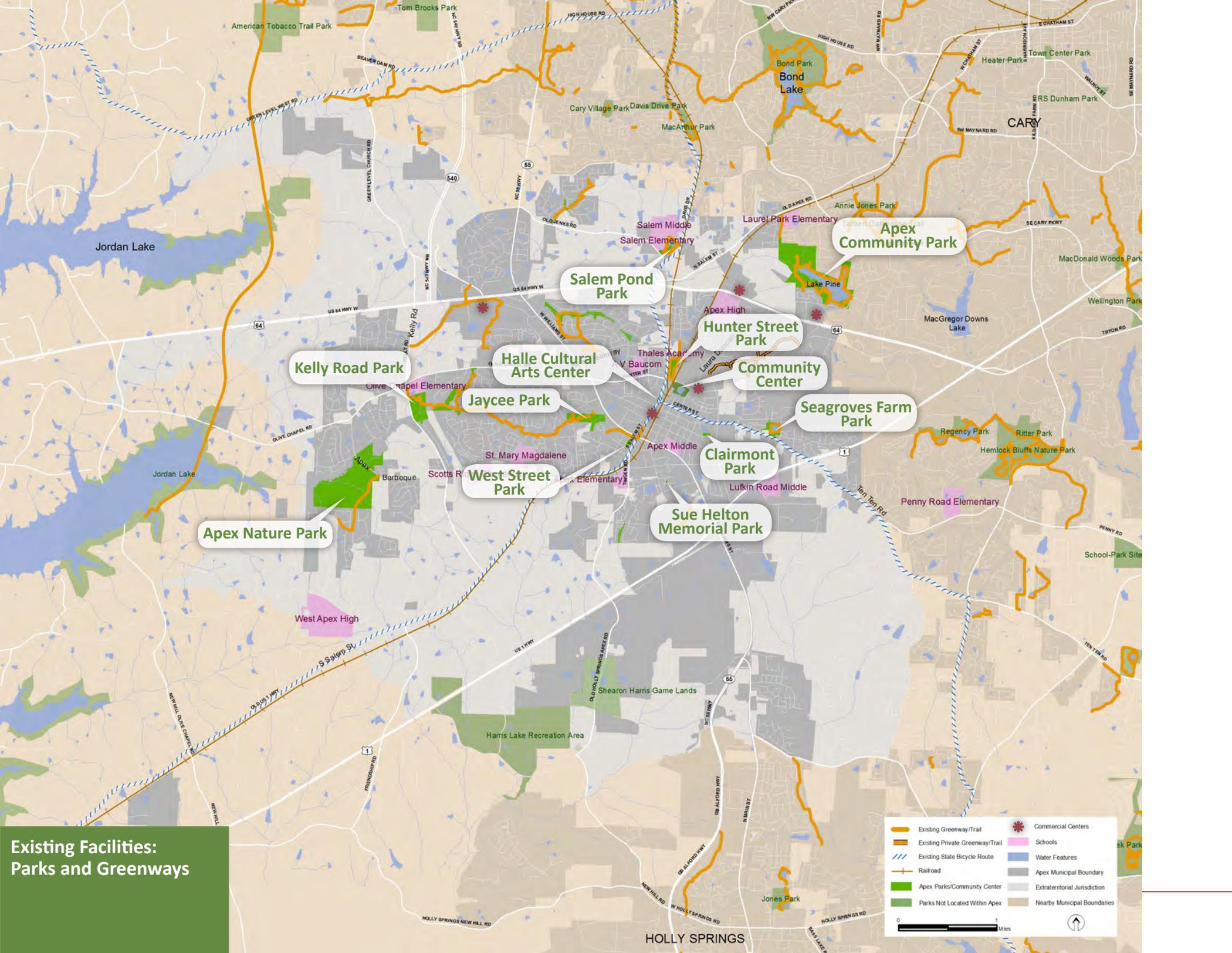
### OVERVIEW

The Town of Apex is located in Central North Carolina and is one of twelve municipalities within Wake County. The town is known for its unique downtown district. The name - apex: the top or highest part - is a topographical reference as the town is the highest point along the Chatham Railroad between Jacksonville, FL and Richmond, VA.

Apex's downtown district remains the heart of the community even as the town has expanded and grown to include several nodes and commercial centers. The landmark 1914 Apex Union Depot is evidence of the historical significance of the railroad in the development of the town. This building has been restored and currently houses the Apex Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center. The main street is the divide between the Cape Fear and Neuse River watersheds. The historical character, quality of life, and geographic characteristics are referenced in the town motto: "Apex, the Peak of Good Living."

The town is experiencing significant population growth, evidenced by a 300% increase (5,000 to 20,212) from 1990 to 2000, followed by an 85% increase by 2010 (37,476). The Town of Apex Planning department estimated the population at the end of 2012 to be 40,000. Despite a national economic downturn, the community of Apex has continued growing and therefore continues to require additional services and facilities to provide "good living" for residents and visitors.

Services and facilities contribute to national recognition. Apex has been lauded for its quality of life. In 2009, Forbes ranked it the 3rd "Best Place to Move in America." In 2007, CNN Money Magazine proclaimed Apex to be the best in all of North Carolina and the 14th best in the U.S. to live, work, and raise a family.



## Existing Facilities: Parks and Greenways

	Existing Greenway/Trail		Commercial Centers
	Existing Private Greenway/Trail		Schools
	Existing State Bicycle Route		Water Features
	Railroad		Apex Municipal Boundary
	Apex Parks/Community Center		Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
	Parks Not Located Within Apex		Nearby Municipal Boundaries

0 1 Miles

## PROJECT VISION

The project’s vision, below, was guided by the mission of the Apex Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department and Commission:

*The Apex Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department provides programs, services, and facilities to the residents and visitors of Apex, North Carolina. Department initiatives should respond to the changing needs of Apex’s growing population; reflect age, gender, ability, and cultural diversity; and demonstrate environmental responsibility and careful stewardship of all natural resources. Programming should be conducted year round and balance activities that are indoor and outdoor; active and passive; physical and intellectual. The programs, services and facilities should be implemented and managed to balance quality and quantity of recreational experiences.*

The project team used the mission and vision to serve as checks and balances for the project process. The team surveyed residents in order to learn what they want and need from the Town of Apex Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department. These findings provided a foundation for creating a plan of action that fulfills the departmental mission and guides responsible program development and facility improvements to better connect all residents to the history, culture, and recreational resources of the Town.

The following *Measurements of Success* were established to help better understand what action plan elements may be needed for implementing goals:

- Provide recreational opportunities that suit resident needs within a service area as defined by distance.
- Create a park system that residents can access by walking, biking, and driving.
- Provide recreational opportunities that promote an “active” lifestyle to maintain a high quality of life in Apex.
- Provide opportunities for Apex residents to enjoy natural, historical, and cultural resources, and protect these resources for future generations.
- Ensure residents are satisfied with the types of facilities available, as well as their condition and maintenance.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to learn about residents’ recreational needs and follow the vision created for the plan, a systematic planning process was employed. This process identified recreational needs, determined if the need was currently being met, and established a plan of action.

The first step of the process is conducting a thorough analysis of facility and program inventory. Understanding existing facilities and programs, coupled with a thorough review of existing planning efforts by the Town, revealed opportunities for planning and implementation. Town site features, commercial centers, streams and tributaries, and parks and recreation facilities contribute to a holistic vision of livability. Matrices provide a detailed description of these existing conditions allowing for evaluation, quantification, and analysis.

The second step of the process involved gathering input from Apex residents to assess their impressions of current programs and facilities, and understand their needs. Public information gathering included



attending public functions and conducting a recreation survey. Team members surveyed participants at local concerts, races, and recreation registration events. An online survey posted through a project website was announced via e-blast, flyers, hard copy distribution in utility bills, Facebook links, and Town website links.

All of the inventory, public comments, and direction from focus groups determines how Apex should plan for its future facilities and programs. Recommendations are presented at the end of this report along with action steps to guide the implementation process. These recommendations are presented by immediate (0-2 years), near term (3-5 years), and long term (5-7 years) needs.

## POPULATION AND GROWTH CHARACTERISTICS

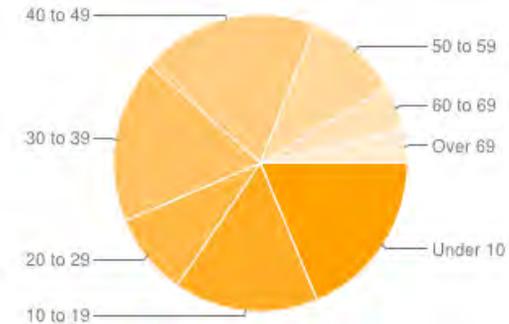
The composition of citizens who currently live in Apex and the age, race, ethnicity, and characteristics of the growing population affect the quantity, location, type, and timing of park facilities and programs.

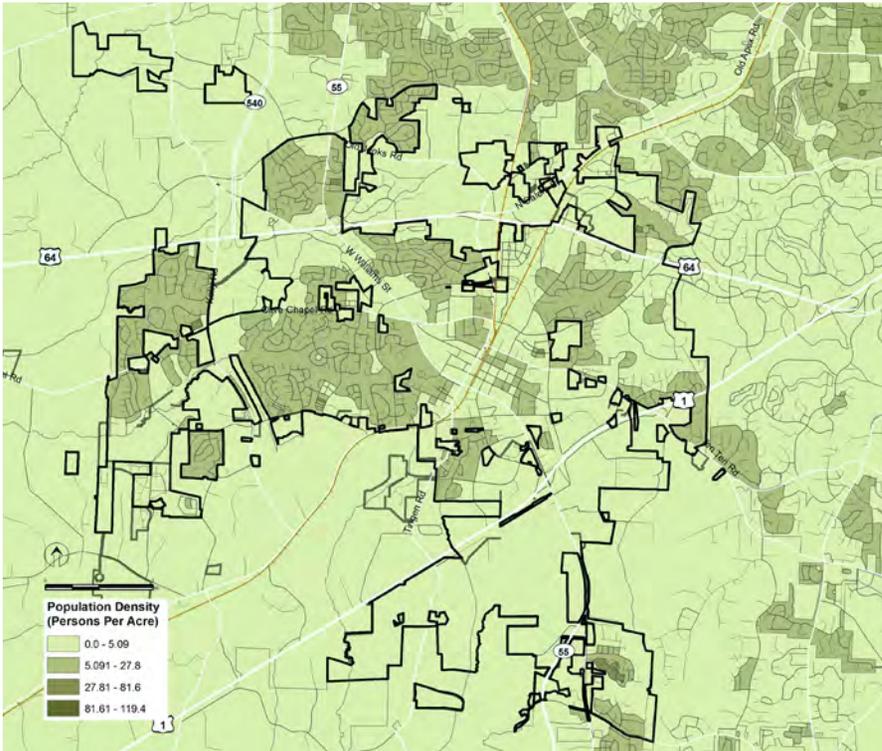
The Town of Apex's growth rate over the past two decades is similar to its neighbors: Cary, Holly Springs, and the City of Raleigh. The Town of Cary saw significant growth from 1990 to 2010 at a rate of about 100%, but that growth slowed significantly from 2010 to 2012 to about 5%, while Apex growth continued steadily. The City of Raleigh maintained a

steady 45%-50% growth rate since the 1990s, seeing a slight slow down in 2010 and 2011. Holly Springs has also experienced large growth rates over the past decade.

### AGE

The town of Apex has a fairly young population with the 40-49 age bracket having the largest percentage of population at 19.5%, followed by children under 10 years of age at 18.7%. The age ranges with the fewest percentage of population are those 60 and over, with individuals 60-69 at 4.8% and those over 69 at 3.7%.



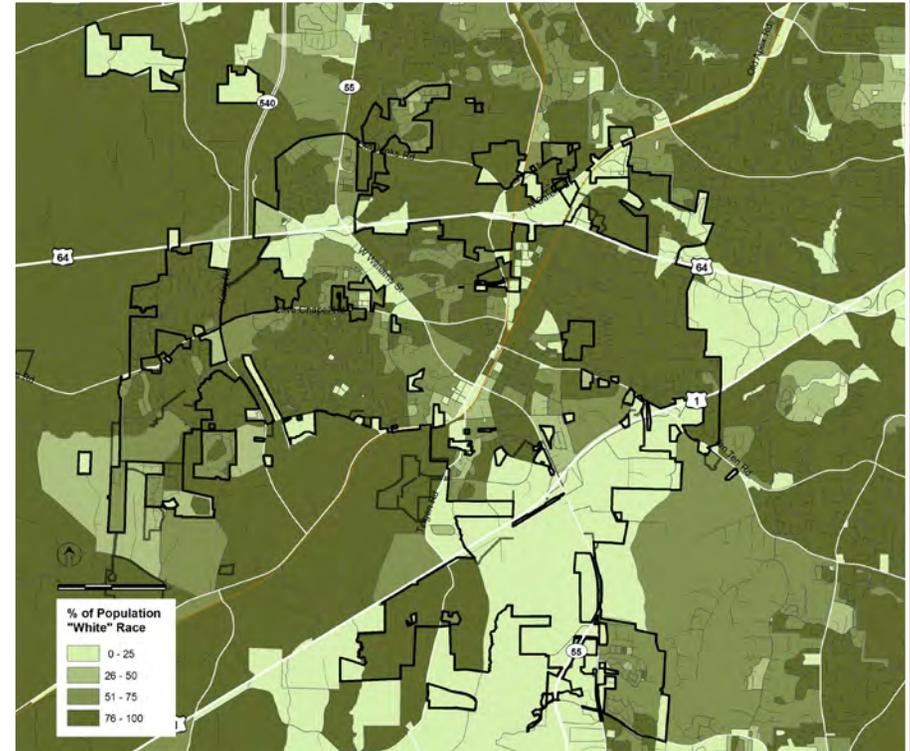


Map 1: Population Density

### POPULATION DENSITY

Map 1 illustrates the population density (persons per acre) for the Town of Apex as of the 2010 decennial US Census. Apex is fairly low density, with the majority of the community carrying population densities below 27.8 persons per acre. The least dense areas (0-5.09 persons per acre) exist in the eastern and southern portions of the Town, along W. Williams Street and Ten Ten Road.

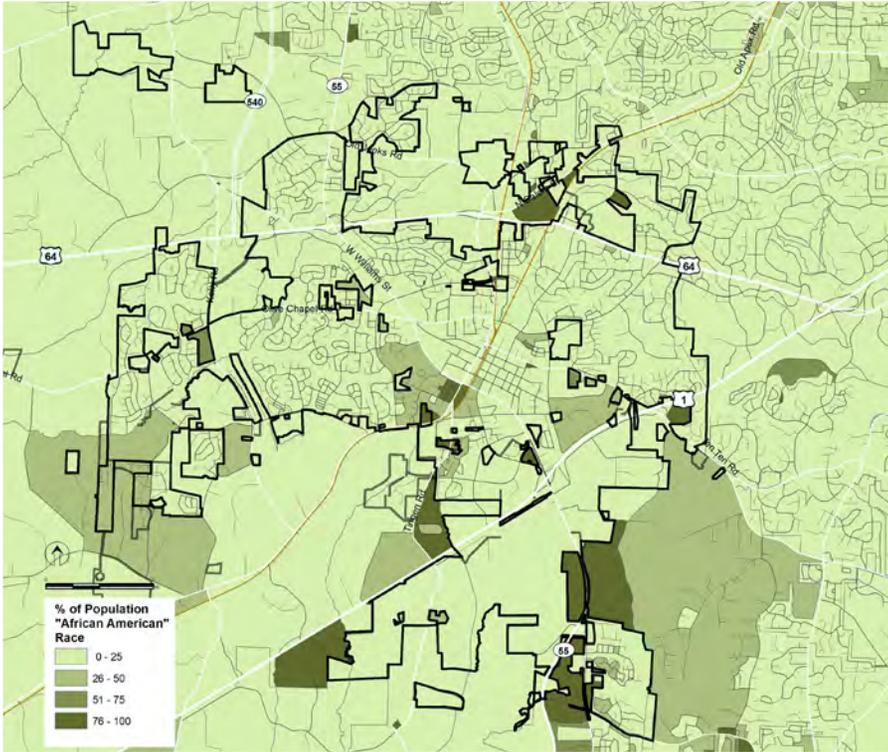
More densely populated areas, with densities over 27.8 persons per acre, are located west of the downtown area along Olive Chapel Road, and in the northwestern reaches of the community, near Old Jenks Road. One Census Block located along Reunion Creek Parkway off of NC 55, has the highest population density in Apex, with 119.4 persons acre.



Map 2: Race - White

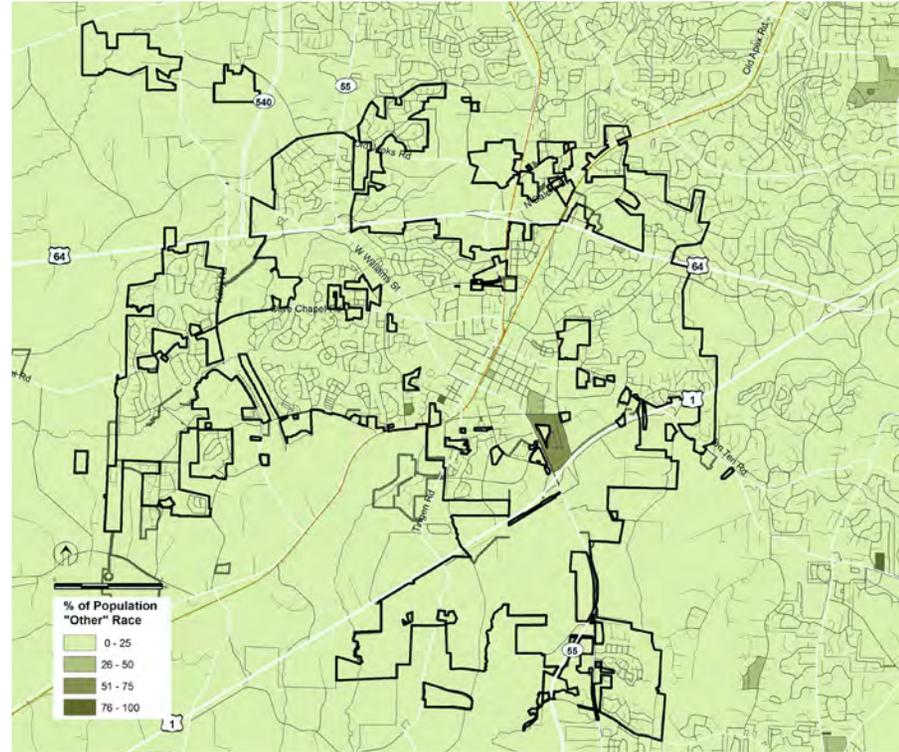
### RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Map 2 shows the percentage of the total population of Apex residents who identified themselves as “white.” The map indicates that the smallest percentage (0 percent - 25 percent) of “white” persons reside in the southern portion of Apex, near the intersection of US 1 and NC 55. High percentages (76 percent - 100 percent) of “white” persons are located throughout the community, with clusters south of US 64, along Kelly Road and in close proximity to Old Jenks Road. The downtown area where W. Williams Street and Olive Chapel Road intersect have percentages of “white” population between 26 percent and 50 percent, and 51 percent and 75 percent.



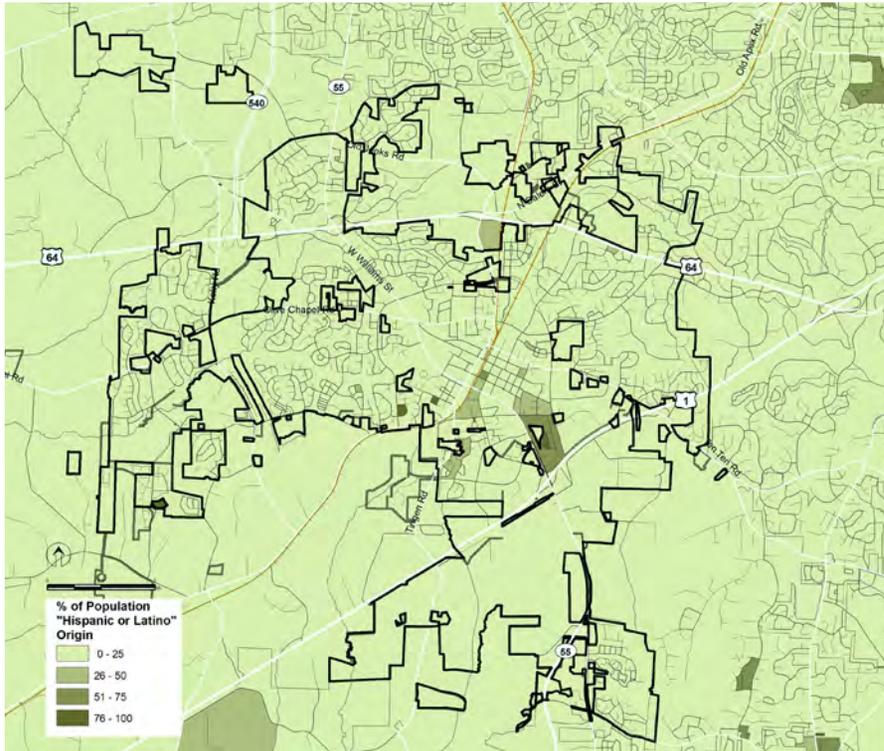
Map 3: Race - Black or African American

Map 3 indicates that there are very specific clusters of Apex residents who identified themselves as “black or African American.” These clusters are primarily located along NC 55 in the southeastern portion of the community. With the exception of a couple of Census Blocks located along W. Williams Street, the majority of Apex has a very low percentage of “black or African American” population.



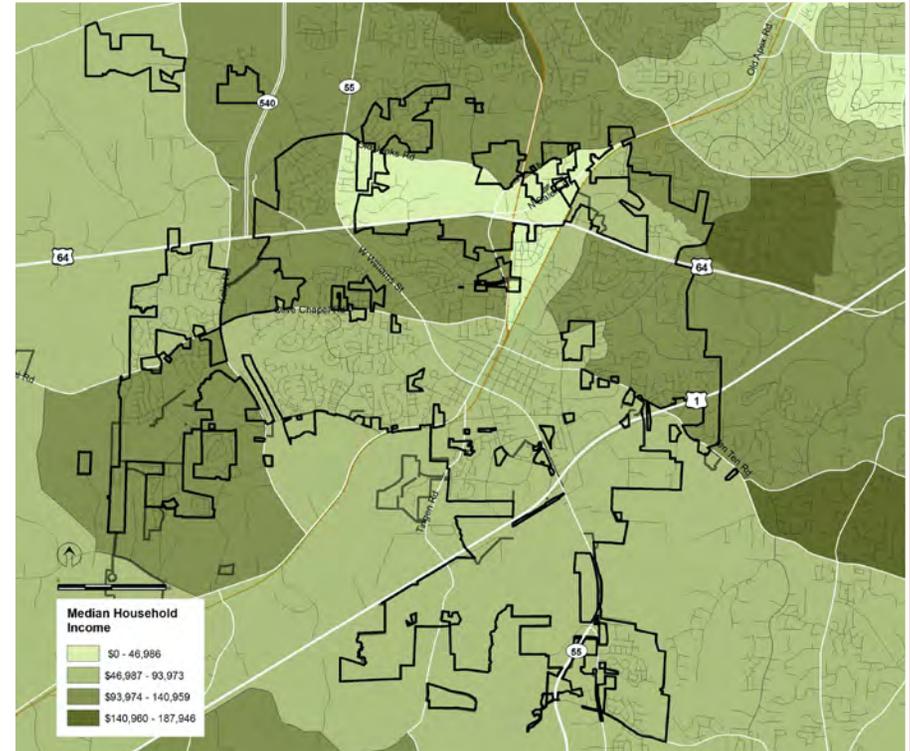
Map 4: Race - Other

Map 4 details the percentage of the total population of Apex residents who identified themselves as a race other than “white” or “black or African American” persons. This category includes, but is not limited to, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native. The map indicates that Apex as a whole, has very few persons (<25 percent) categorized as “other” races living in the community. In one area near the intersection of US 1 and W. Williams Street, a dense cluster of the population categorized as “other” races exists.



Map 5: Ethnicity - Hispanic or Latino

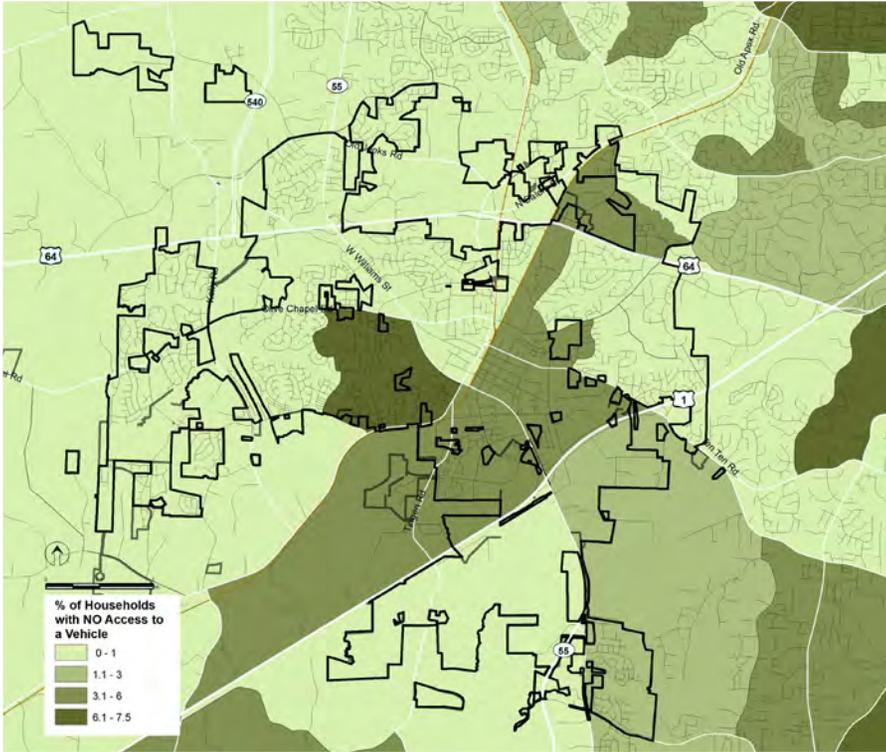
The next Census map, Map 5, depicts the percentage of the total population of Apex residents that identified themselves as being of “Hispanic or Latino” origin. The map indicates that Apex as a whole, has very few persons of Hispanic or Latino origin living in the community. The highest populations (51 percent to 75 percent, and 76 percent to 100 percent) of Hispanic residents are located along W. Williams Street, just north of the intersection of US 1. North of S. Salem Street there are two Census Blocks with greater than 76 percent of the population identifying themselves as being of “Hispanic or Latino” origin or ethnicity.



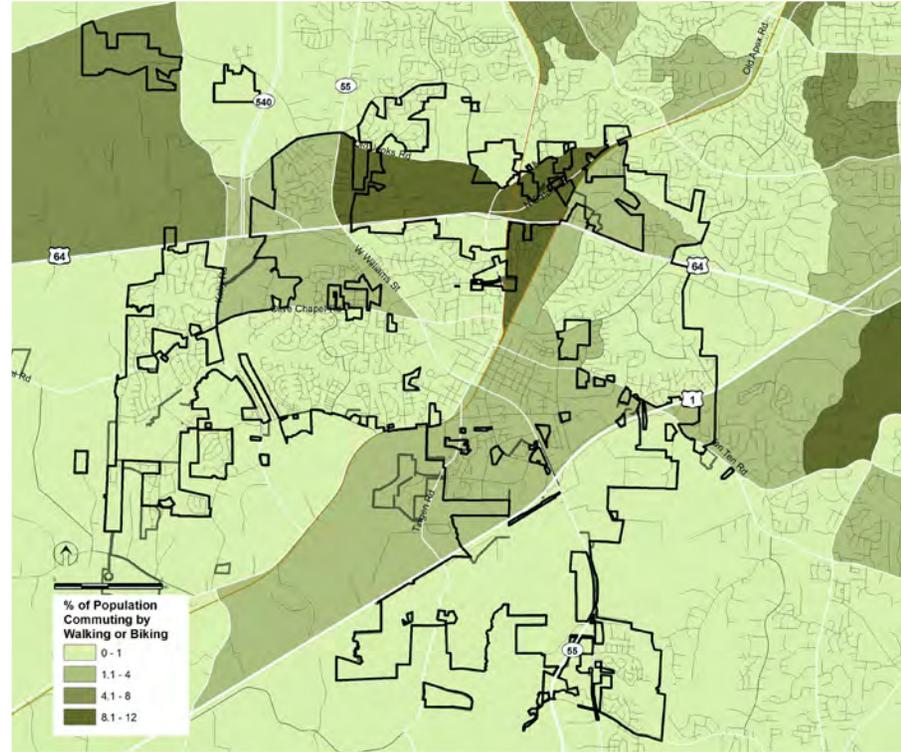
Map 6: Median Household Income

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Map 6, shown on this page, illustrates the median household income by Census Block Group. The median household income in 2010 in North Carolina was \$46,291, and for Wake County was \$65,289. Comparatively, the median household income for Apex was \$86,782. The areas just north of the downtown area, along US 64 near the intersection of US 64 and W. Williams Street and the intersection of US 64 and N. Salem Street, have populations with median household income levels below \$46,986. This income level is significantly lower than the median household income for the Town of Apex. The majority of the community has median household income levels between \$46,987 and \$140,959.



Map 7: Households with NO Access to Vehicles



Map 8: Households that Commute by Biking and Walking

### POPULATION WITHOUT ACCESS TO A CAR

Map 7 indicates the percent of households without access to a vehicle. Apex has Census Blocks with as high as 7.5 percent of households without access to a vehicle. The highest percentages of households without access to a vehicle are located south of Olive Chapel Road, west of W. Williams Street, and south of US 64, near Ten Ten Road. The areas of Apex located south of S. Salem Street, near Tingen Road have 3.1 to 6 percent of households without access to a vehicle. The remainder of the households in the community fall within the 0.0 to 1 percent of households without access to a vehicle. Households in these areas have access to at least one or more vehicles.

Map 8, shown on this page, illustrates the percent of households that commute to work by walking or bicycling. The households along US 64 near N. Salem Road and Old Jenks Road have the highest percentage of households with residents who walk or bicycle to work. As many as 12 percent of households in this area have residents who walk or bicycle to work. The southern portion of Apex, near Tingen Road, W. Williams Street, and Ten Ten Road also has higher percentages of households that commute by walking or bicycling. The remainder of the community has between 0.0 and 1 percent of households that commute by bicycle or by walking.

The census data indicate Apex is comprised of pockets of suburban density, with no heavily dense urban core. An overwhelming majority of the citizens reported they consider their race to be “white” with minimal



*Seagroves Farm Park provides a quiet place for observing pond wildlife. This can be beneficial for some special needs populations.*

evidence of those who consider themselves ethnically “Hispanic or Latino.” Salary reportings depict a wealthy population that has access to personal vehicles. A very low percentage of the population commutes via biking or walking, which can be influenced by culture, facilities, safety, land use, economics, and other personal factors.

### **SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

Prior to this study, representatives from the community expressed interest in the Town of Apex exploring ways to better serve special population residents. For the purpose of this update, a standard definition was adopted to better evaluate the needs of special populations in Apex. This is not a detailed study of special populations, rather a general understanding of these populations and how they may or may not be currently served by existing recreational services. This study defines special populations as:

- Individuals with disabilities;
- Individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including foster children;
- Single parents, including single pregnant women;
- Individuals with limited English proficiency.

According to the 2000 Census Summary, there are approximately 1500 residents with disability status ages 5 and up. The largest disability age range is 21-64. On the recent Town of Apex parks and recreation survey, 288 respondents out of 1479 stated they are a part of the following special population categories: individual with physical disability (89), individual with mental disability (58), economically disadvantaged family (31), single parents (78), elderly people needing assistance (25), and individuals with limited English proficiency (7). Of the residents who provided further



clarification on their specific special population, autism and mobility impairments ranked among the highest.

The Town of Apex does not currently provide recreational programs specifically for special populations but rather works to provide inclusive programs through existing efforts. While nearby communities such as Cary and Holly Springs provide resource services and partner programs for special populations, the City of Raleigh is the only municipality with a special populations staff coordinator. There are not currently any Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources staff certified in therapeutic recreation nor are there formally established partnerships with other agencies providing services. Based on survey comments, the majority of the above respondents currently use the Town of Cary facilities and programs with a few responding they use Raleigh and Holly Springs programs and facilities.

## ZONING, GROWTH, AND PLANNING

The population and area of Apex will continue to grow as the culture changes and demands on existing land within the Town limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction evolve. At the helm of this change is the Town's planning department. Several documents, plans, and maps are available online to clarify existing zoning, zoning changes, current development, and overall planning documents. Zoning documents and mapping indicate a large area of rural residential land in the west, northwest, and southeast. As these developments move forward, residents will be in need of park facilities in close proximity to their homes, as no park land exists in these areas. Future land use is depicted in the 2025 Future Land Use Map.

The map indicates an increase in high density housing with the largest areas south of US 1 between 540

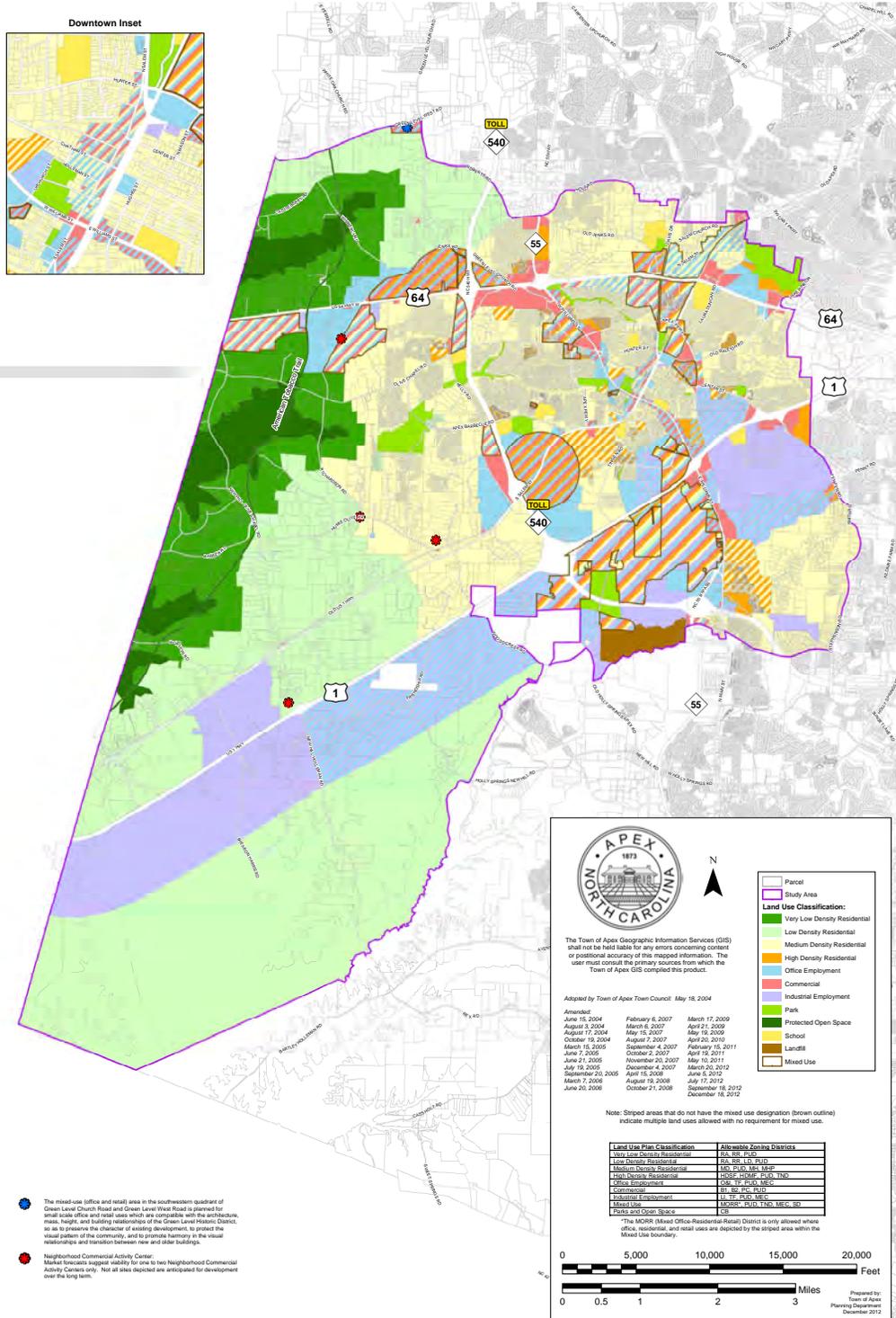
and Williams Street, and near the junction of 540 and S. Salem Street. These pockets of high density - particularly those serving as components of mixed-use development - will become nodes and demand public open space and greenway connectivity. For the most current zoning information, planning documents, and other maps, visit: <http://www.apexnc.org/services/planning/documents-plans-maps>.

## STREAMS AND TRIBUTARIES

As greenways are increasingly a large component of parks and recreation resources, their location and condition will be considered in this Plan. A widely accepted planning practice is to site trails along streams and tributaries. For this purpose, it is important to understand the hydrologic system within and adjacent to the Town.

Apex sits on the peak of two watersheds, the Neuse River Basin and the Cape Fear River Basin. The headwaters of several tributaries are found in or near Apex including: Beaver Creek, Reedy Branch, and tributaries from White Oak Creek, which flow into the Harris Reservoir or Jordan Lake, eventually flowing into the Cape Fear River Basin. Some of these tributaries are subject to the Jordan Lake Water supply watershed buffer rules, which can be found on the NC Division of Water Quality Website. Swift Creek and its tributaries flow into the Neuse River Basin.

Tributaries within the Neuse River are subject to Neuse River Buffer (NRB) regulations as defined by the NC Division of Water Quality. In general, these regulations require undeveloped land to maintain a 50' buffer from the tops of banks on both sides of an existing tributary. These regulations protect the quality of water and provide a continuous natural buffer in the Neuse River Watershed. <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/swp/ws/401/riparianbuffers/rules>.



The mixed-use (office and retail) area in the southwestern quadrant of Green Level Church Road and Green Level West Road is planned for small scale office and retail uses which are compatible with the architecture, mass, height, and building relationships of the Green Level Historic District, so as to preserve the character of existing development, to protect the visual pattern of the community, and to promote harmony in the visual relationships and transition between new and older buildings.

Neighborhood Commercial Activity Center:  
Market locations suggest viability for one to two Neighborhood Commercial Activity Centers only. Not all sites depicted are anticipated for development over the long term.

2025 Future Land Use Map  
Digital version can be found at:  
<http://files.www.apexnc.org/docs/plan/2025LUPmap.pdf>



One hundred year floodplain information is produced by FEMA and can be found on their website at <http://www.fema.gov>. These areas have specific regulatory requirements and protective measures for development.

In addition to the federal and state rules referenced above, the Town of Apex has regulations in place that protect the watersheds within the town which are outlined in the Town's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) 6.1 WATERSHED PROTECTION OVERLAY DISTRICTS. Areas within these overlay districts must adhere to specific regulatory requirements including buffer and density requirements.

Additionally, the UDO outlines flood protection requirements in an effort to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of the Town and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas as outlined in provisions 6.2 FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION OVERLAY DISTRICT.

## REGIONAL PARK CONNECTIONS

Apex is located in southwest Wake County and located adjacent to Cary, NC, and Holly Springs, NC, both of which provide their own recreation resources. The state capitol of Raleigh is also nearby with plentiful greenways, recreation facilities, and programs. Bond Park in Cary serves as a greenway hub, and boasts a lake with boathouse, ropes course, picnic shelters, athletic fields, multi-use fields, and an education center. In addition to these nearby towns, there are several regional facilities which provide open space and recreational opportunities for Apex residents.

## REGIONAL FACILITIES

**Jordan Lake**, located just west of Apex, is approximately 15,000 acres with approximately 30,000 acres of adjacent lands. The facility offers picnic areas, trails, boat launch areas, and camping.

**Harris Lake County Park** is a Wake County run facility located just southwest of Apex. A portion of this property has been developed as parkland and includes trails, playgrounds, fishing, picnicking, and environmental education. This provides a much needed recreational resource to residents south and west of Highway 1.

## FUTURE GREENWAY TRAIL CONNECTIONS

The **American Tobacco Trail (ATT)** is a 30 mile rails-to-trails project that would provide a regional trail connection for residents to downtown Durham near the Durham Bulls Athletic Park and to New Hill Olive Chapel Rd. in western Wake County.

**Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve** is located east of Apex off of Ten Ten Road and is a part of the Town of Cary Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department. The approximately 150 acre tract contains trails, a stand of Hemlock trees, and a nature center with educational displays and environmental education classes.

**Regency Park Symphony Lake** is also a part of the Town of Cary Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department Park System. Located east of Apex on Tryon Road, it houses the North Carolina Symphony during the summer months. There is a long range opportunity to link to park trails and Cary area greenways.

**Bond Park** is located northeast of Apex in Cary and serves as a regional facility for the Town of Cary. There is an opportunity to connect Apex residents to this park by creating future trail connections northeast of Apex Community Park.

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# Section Three

## Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Inventory

### PARK CLASSIFICATION AND ZONES

The Town of Apex uses a park classification system and designation of park zones to help define the park types offered and where they may be found within the Town. As the community continues to grow and diversify, so will the need to provide a variety of parks and facilities. The following is the current classification; it is recommended this system be updated to reflect current facilities and demand for new ones. The adjustments to the park classification can be found in the facilities recommendations section of this report. The existing park zones can be found on the map to the right.

**Neighborhood Parks** are typically the smallest and most numerous. They should be in walking distance--1/4 to 1/2 a mile. Many of these parks have been created as part of a neighborhood development and/or PUD to serve neighborhood recreational needs.

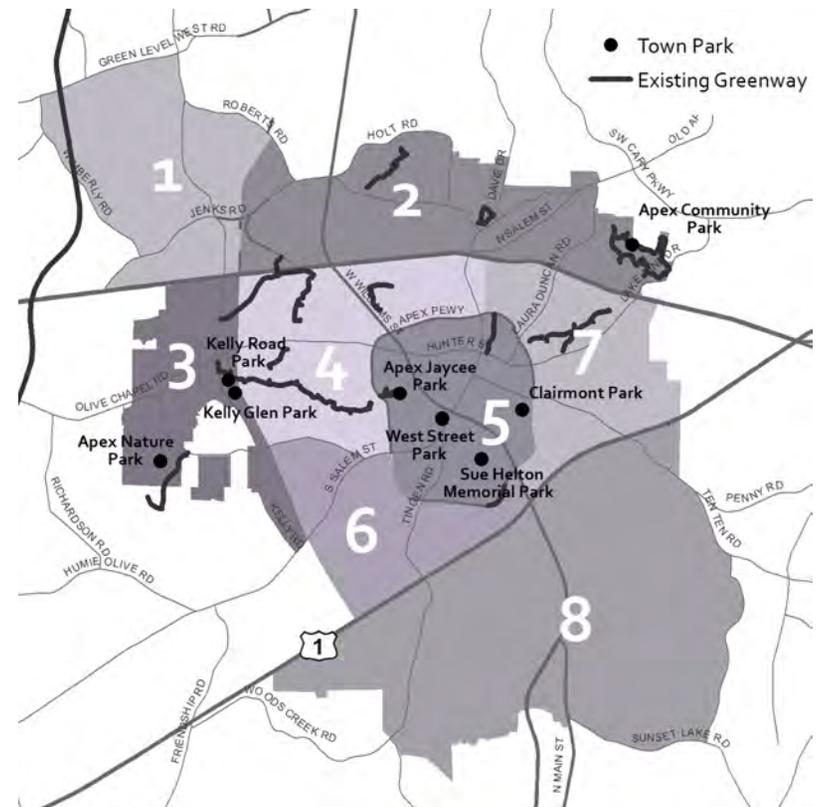
**Size:** 3/4- 3 acres, optimal is 5-10 acres    **Service Area:** 1/4-1/2 mile

**Area Parks** serve a larger population and service area.

**Size:** 20-50 acres    **Service Area:** 2+ miles.

**Community Parks** range in size from 60- 100 acres. They typically serve the entire town, and offer a variety of programs and facilities. These sites should be connected by greenways and/or sidewalks and have adequate parking facilities.

**Size:** 50-200 acres    **Service Area:** 1/2 mile-3+ mile radius





## EXISTING FACILITIES: PARKS

In an effort to build on previous plans, the facility inventory chart below provides comparative data from the 2001 Parks, Recreation, Greenways, and Open Space Master Plan. A complete inventory of each park's facilities is provided. The Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Advisory Commission vetted several options for site specific inventory and analysis, and selected the criteria deemed most appropriate to create the inventory matrix. Photographic documentation, counts, ratings, and commentary on strengths, challenges, and opportunities are included.

*Note:* Complete inventories are not provided for the dog park at Hunter Street Park and Apex Nature Park due to construction.

NAME/LOCATION	PARK TYPE	PARK ACREAGE	PARK ZONE	Facilities																					
				Amphitheater	Auditorium	Baseball	Basketball	Batting Cages	Concessions	Disc Golf	Dog Park	Football	Gymnasium	Horseshoes	Multi-Purpose Field	Multi-Purpose Room	Picnic Shelter	Playground	Skate Park	Soccer	Softball	Swimming	Tennis	Trails	Volleyball
Apex Community Center	S	12.4										2			5										N
Apex Community Park <sup>^</sup>	C	160				2	3	2						1		2	1		2	1		6	Y	3	
Apex Nature Park	C	158.1	1							1	1					1	1		2			5/4m	Y		
Clairmont Park	N	1.5					1							1		1	1							N	
Halle Cultural Arts Center	S	0.16		1											3									N	
Hunter Street Park	A	12								1						1	1		1	1				Y	
Jaycee Park	A	23						1								1	1		1	1				Y	
Kelly Road Park	A	25														1	1			1		4m	Y		
Sue Helton Memorial Park	N	0.23																1						N	
Seagroves Farm Park	N	11														1	1							Y	
Salem Pond Park	A	14.3																						Y	
West Street Park	N	1.3					1									1	1							N	

<sup>^</sup>Under Construction

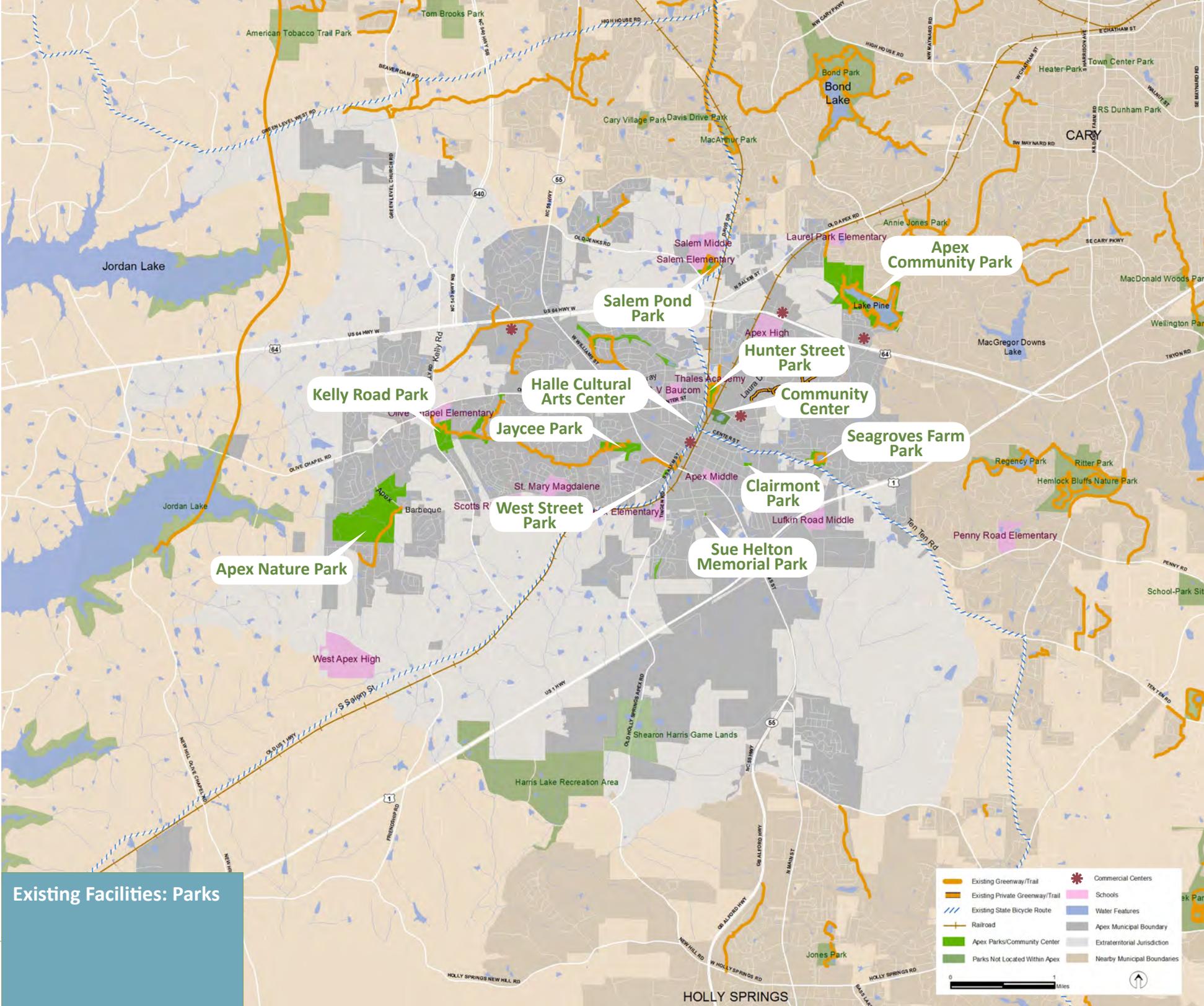
\*Overall site acreage (including police station)

C = community park (50-200 acres)

A = area park (20-50 acres)

N = neighborhood park (¾- 3 acres)

M = Mini Court



**Existing Facilities: Parks**

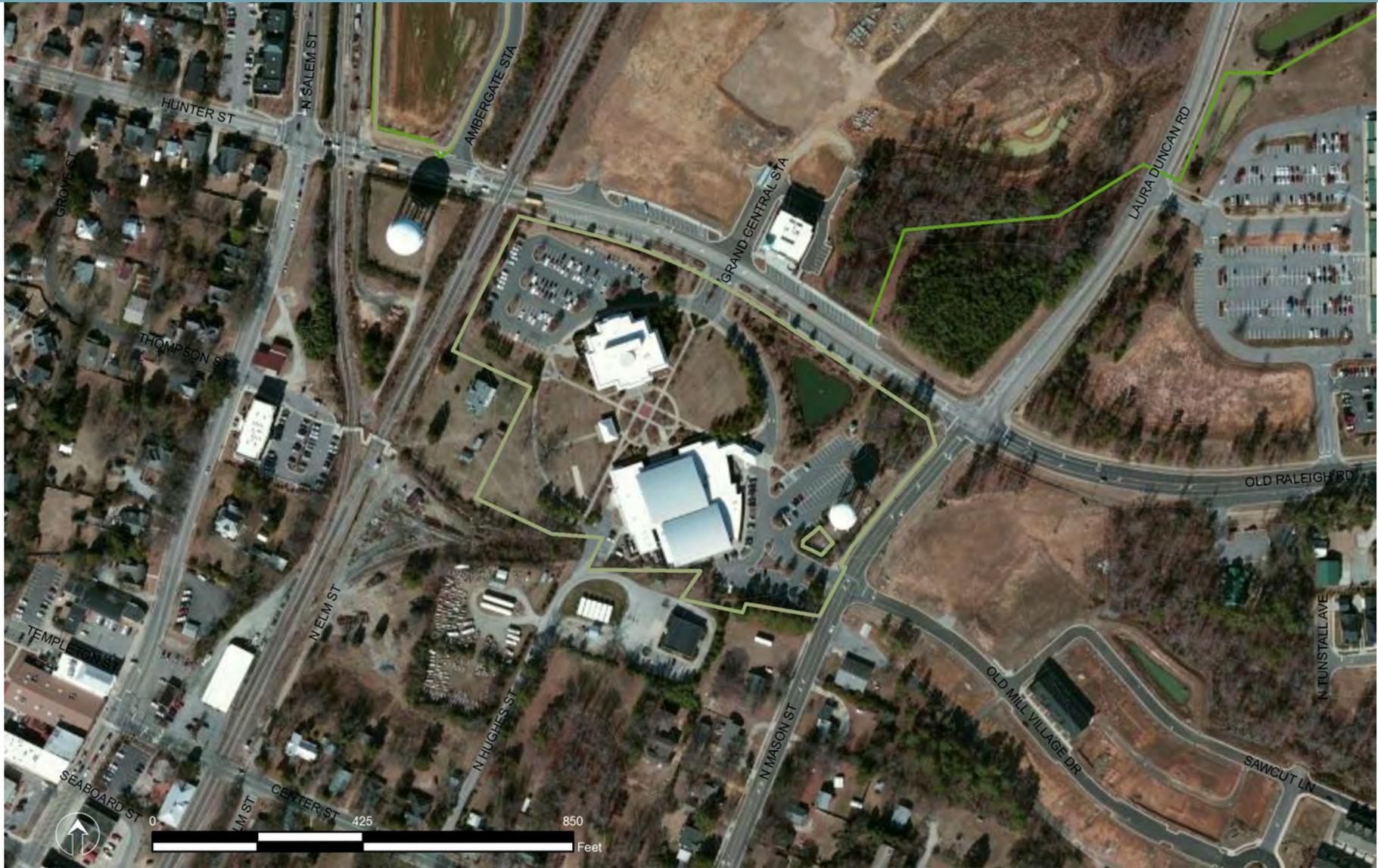
Existing Greenway/Trail	Commercial Centers
Existing Private Greenway/Trail	Schools
Existing State Bicycle Route	Water Features
Railroad	Apex Municipal Boundary
Apex Parks/Community Center	Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
Parks Not Located Within Apex	Nearby Municipal Boundaries

0 1 Miles

↑



# Apex Community Center



**ACRES**

9.12

**LOCATION**

53 Hunter Street, within the Town Commons complex adjacent to Town Hall

**TYPE**

Community Park

**PRIMARY USE**

Gymnasiums, Classrooms, Multi-purpose rooms



*The gymnasium hosts many programs and athletic events.*



*A game room offers leisure activities.*

The Apex Community Center is centrally located and within the Town complex adjacent to Town Hall. The facility contains 4 multi-purpose rooms, including the Summit, Pinnacle, and Zenith rooms, all approximately 31'x31' (which accommodate 65 people). The arts and crafts room is approximately 22'x28' and accommodates 20 people. In addition to the multipurpose room, there is a catering kitchen which can be rented or used as part of programming. The Community Center contains two full size gymnasiums, associated restrooms, and changing room facilities. Each gym is 82' X 109' (8,938 square feet). The first gym was built in 1998 with the original facility construction. The second was built in 2005 with the expansion of the building. The center also contains a small resource room and game room.

## STRENGTHS

The facility is centrally located and highly visible due to its proximity to downtown and the Town Hall Complex. It is a newer facility and well maintained. Natural lighting throughout creates a bright atmosphere for users. Accessibility is convenient and ADA compliant with connections from the Town Hall, a large parking lot, and adjacent sidewalks.

## CHALLENGES

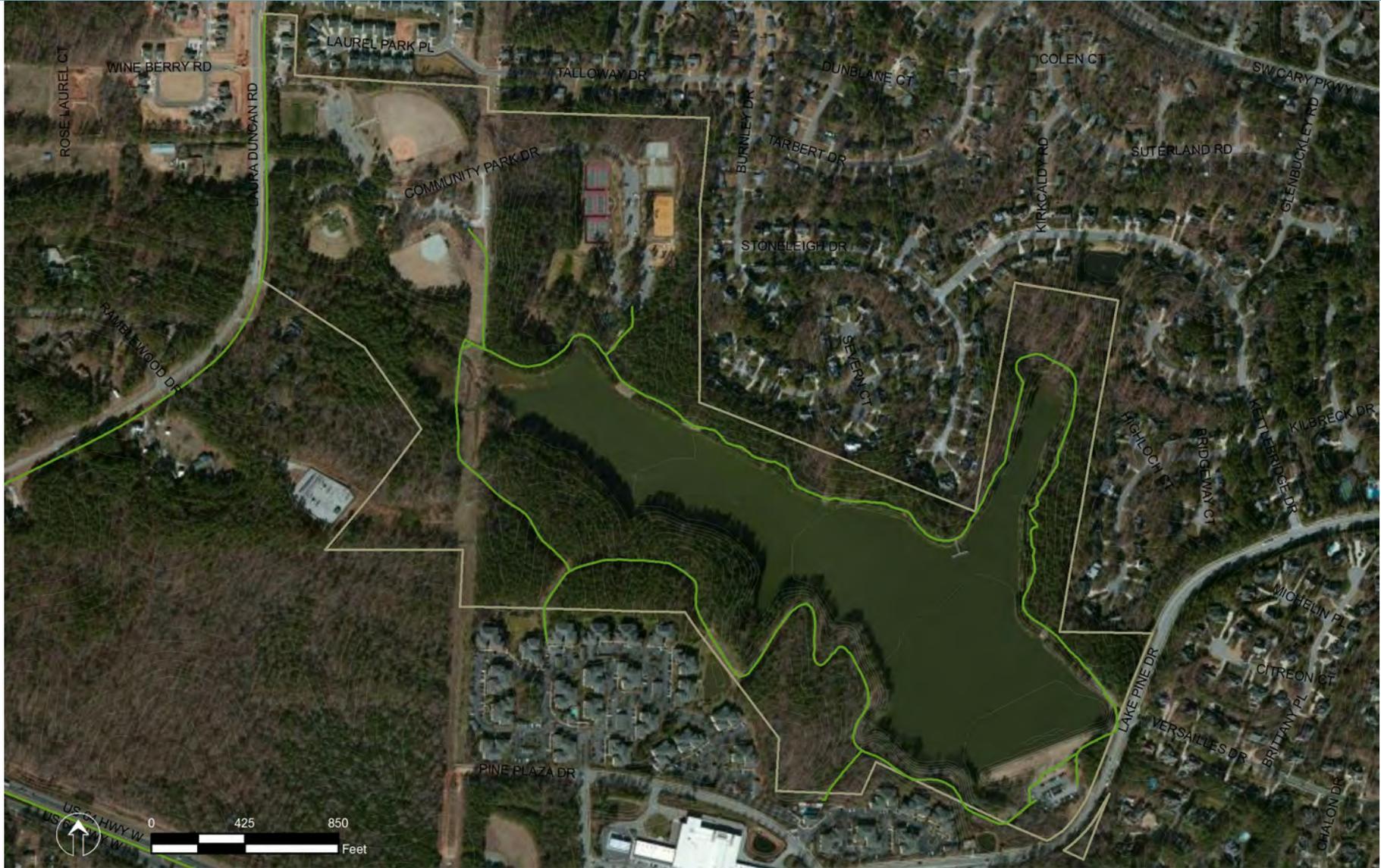
The building is quite active during peak use hours and can be loud and busy. The site has a variety of user groups ranging in age and ability. Careful consideration should be given to scheduling of programs to minimize overcrowding.

## POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

The hallway is wide, presenting an opportunity to install benches for parents waiting to pick up children, and children doing homework. Additional opportunities exist for expansion of this facility to support increasing need for indoor programming. Consideration should also be given to support facilities on the campus, such as walking and fitness trails, play equipment, and children's program space.



# Apex Community Park



**ACRES**

160 acres

**LOCATION**

2200 Laura Duncan Road, between Laura Duncan Road and Lake Pine Drive

**TYPE**

Community Park

**PRIMARY USE**

Baseball, Tennis, Soccer, Volleyball, Picnic, Trails



Baseball field #3 is in excellent condition. Shade for spectators could be improved by building a structure and planting shade trees.



The soccer field is well maintained and could also use additional shade for spectators.



Multiple types of wayfinding are used throughout the park. A consistent system and map will help visitors navigate the park.



# Apex Community Park

## BASEBALL FIELD #3 AND SOCCER FACILITY

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Parking	114/4HC	Excellent	Well paved with ample lighting
Pedestrian Access		Fair	The park should complete a trail system connecting each activity center. This would be safer than pedestrians walking in the street.
Bicycle Access/Parking		Poor	No bicycle parking is available.
Signage: Internal		Fair	Should be upgraded to include maps and consistent labeling.
Sun/Shade		Fair	Shading spectator seating for both fields would create a more pleasant environment for game observers.
Circulation		Good	It is easy to move between these fields, but as indicated in pedestrian access, a continuous trail throughout the park would help separate vehicle from pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
Safety/Security		Good	The field areas are open and visible. The soccer field should have additional lighting.
Picnic Tables/Benches/Picnic Shelter	2 bleachers at baseball field	Fair	Bleachers should be added to the soccer field area.
Trash/Recycling Receptacles	2 trash / 2 recycling	Excellent	Sufficient for this area.
Baseball	1	Excellent	The field is in excellent condition with good lighting.
Soccer	1	Excellent	The field condition is excellent, but could use spectator seating and additional lighting.
Lights		Good	Add for soccer field.
Water Fountains	1	Good	In working condition.



Field #2 is well maintained and provides ample shade for spectators above the retaining wall.



A paved trail connects baseball field #2 to the restrooms and playground area.



The playground equipment is in good condition, but the surface needs replenishing.



A soft surface trail access is near the restroom facility and playground.



# Apex Community Park

## BASEBALL FIELD #1, RESTROOMS, AND PLAYGROUND

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Parking	32/3HC	Good	Parking is in good conditions and near the field.
Pedestrian Access		Good	A path connects the baseball field and restroom/playground area.
Bicycle Access/Parking		Poor	No bicycle parking is available.
Signage: Internal		Fair	Should be upgraded to include maps and consistent labeling.
Sun/Shade		Excellent	Well shaded areas above the field and around the playground.
Restrooms		Good	
Circulation		Good	Easy access from ballfield to restrooms.
Safety/Security		Good	Wooded - but open.
Picnic Tables/Benches/Picnic Shelter	bleachers at baseball field/2 picnic tables in shaded area/ 2 benches at playground	Good	
Trash/Recycling Receptacles	4 trash / 3 recycling	Good	
Playground	1	Good	Play equipment is in good conditions but the surface mulch needs to be replenished.
Baseball	1	Excellent	Field in excellent condition with ample shade surrounding the field for spectators.
Lights		Excellent	Well lighted field and parking lot.
Water Fountains		Good	At restroom facility.



Baseball Field #1 is in great condition adjacent to ample parking, batting cages, and the trail system entrance.



Pitching and batting cages are located near Field #2.



The Fit-Trail signage and stations should be updated to reflect the park system signage.



## BASEBALL FIELD #2, BATTING CAGES, GREENWAY, FIT-TRAIL

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Parking	51/1HC/Gravel lot: 27	Good	Parking in good condition and well lighted.
Pedestrian Access		Fair	Greenway system and Fit-Trail should connect via a trail along Chardstone Court.



# Apex Community Park

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Bicycle Access/Parking		Poor	Bicycle parking should be added.
Signage: Internal		Fair	Should be upgraded to include maps and consistent labeling. The fit trail and greenway system should have signage with coordinating styles and colors of the park system overall.
Sun/Shade		Excellent	Excellent shaded Fit-Trail and batting cages, good shading around the baseball field.
Circulation		Fair	A more interconnected trail system would help pedestrians and cyclists navigate this area.
Safety/Security		Good	Field and cages are open and visible.
Picnic Tables/Benches/Picnic Shelter	2 bleachers/2 picnic tables	Good	Could add additional seating along the retaining wall.
Trash/Recycling Receptacles	3 trash	Good	Need to add recycling bins to the field. Greenway trail should have trash and recycling at trailhead area and other trail junctions.
Baseball	1	Excellent	Excellent condition and well lighted.
Track/Walking Trail	Greenway and Fit-Trail	Good	The Greenway Trail needs a more significant entrance with maps of the greenway within the park, and those connected to this greenway in the overall Apex Greenway System. The Fit-Trail needs upgraded signage and stations.
Lights		Good	Well lighted field and parking.
Exercise Equipment		Fair-good	Some fit trail equipment needs to be upgraded.



Any entry court provides space for information kiosks and users waiting for one of the six tennis courts.



The basketball courts should have a couple benches for players and a few spectators or those waiting to use the courts.



A large and small picnic shelter accommodate groups of difference sizes.



A small, fenced soccer practice field is located near the picnic shelters.



# Apex Community Park



The playground location works well with the picnic shelters and adjacent activities.



The volley ball courts are in good condition but could use some edging to contain the sand.

## TENNIS, BASKETBALL, VOLLEYBALL, PLAYGROUND, AND PICNIC SHELTERS

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Parking	109/8HC	Excellent	Well spaced throughout uses in the area.
Pedestrian Access		Good	Greenway entrance is located near shelters. More connections should be made throughout this area and other places within the park.
Bicycle Access/Parking		Poor	Bicycle parking should be added near tennis courts and other uses. Bicycles were parked on the retaining wall near the tennis courts.
Signage: Internal		Fair	Information kiosk and signage should be updated throughout this area to indicate uses and rules.
Sun/Shade		Excellent	Mixture of sun and shade is excellent for all uses.
Restrooms	1 Shelter	Excellent	Vending located outside building.

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Circulation		Fair	Paths need to connect all uses.
Safety/Security		Good	Well lit open area.
Basketball Court (outdoor)	4 - 1 fenced for roller hockey	Good	Courts are well lighted.
Swing Set	4 belt/4 infant	Good	
Picnic Tables/Benches/Picnic Shelter	Tennis: 2 bleachers Volleyball: 1 picnic table Playground: 1 picnic table/1 bench Shelter 1: 13 picnic tables Shelter 2: 7 picnic tables	Good	Benches and tables are well distributed throughout the area. Three grills and one water spigot are available in the picnic area.
Trash/Recycling Receptacles	Tennis: 5 trash Basketball: 2 trash/1 recycle Volleyball: 1 trash Playground: 1 trash Shelters: 6 trash/3 recycle Multiuse/soccer practice: 1 trash		Trash and recycling should be distributed evenly throughout.
Playground		Good	Sign indicates ages 2-12 but is more appropriate for ages 2-5. The sign is required by the manufacturer.
Soccer	1	Good	Practice field or multiuse field - fenced but not lighted.
Sand Volleyball	3	Good	Well lit. Sand needs barrier to protect overflow onto grass. Courts are not accessible - an accessible route should be added to the picnic table adjacent to the courts.
Tennis Courts	6	Good	Good condition with lighting. Cracks in surface of southeast court should be repaired.
Track/Walking Trail		Excellent	Greenway entrance is located near uses, but should have a trail map.
Lights		Good	Well lit overall.
Water Fountains	Tennis: 1 (spigot at shelters)	Good	



# Apex Community Park

## STRENGTHS

This park is easily accessible by car with ample parking distributed throughout the various activity centers. The variety of activities increase the opportunity to serve multiple genders, ages, and interests within the Apex community. Around the lake, there are over three miles of walking trails which include fitness stations, contributing to the general health of the community. Although a large park, the design provides small pockets of activity, allowing guardians to easily observe children, minimizing the conflicts between activities, and providing a natural wooded experience within a highly developed suburban area. Access points from both the east and west sides of the lake, as well as the spurs into adjacent neighborhoods, creates a well connected network of paths and parking. Picnic shelters, boating, fishing, and other uses make this park a unique destination.

## CHALLENGES

A more comprehensive wayfinding and signage program will help visitors navigate the various areas of the park as well as help users understand the variety of activities available to them. For example, sand volleyball was highlighted by several residents as a desired activity in the town, and the community park contains three courts. However, the activity area is on a hill behind a row of vegetation; unless users are aware of the location, they may not know this resource is available.

## SENSORY OBSERVATIONS

Apex Community park has a good balance of passive and active recreation activities and facilities, as well as a good separation between uses via vegetation, water, and/or topography.

## PHYSICAL SETTING AND ACTIVITY LEVEL

Not all facilities have an easily accessible route, either due to topography, such as the lower baseball fields, or surface type, such as the sand volleyball courts. However, other baseball fields within the park are accessible and sites such as the volleyball courts could provide an accessible route in the future. (See the inventory matrix for facility specific access). During all site visits, the park was quiet and offered several different types of activity, either passive or active. Noise and activity level increases during organized sporting and special events. Therefore, there is overall moderate activity at this site.

## POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Apex Community Park could benefit a larger population by creating a few additional connections. The future bicycle facilities being constructed along Laura Duncan Road will increase the ability of residents to safely travel to the park. Additionally, a greenway in the utility corridor with a separated grade crossing for pedestrians and cyclists across US 64 could connect residents south of US 64 - including users of the Eva Perry Regional Library. The Town is planning to construct a 10' wide multi-use path along Laura Duncan Road from US 64 to Apex Community Park. Construction on that project will likely take place in the fall of 2013 or spring of 2014.

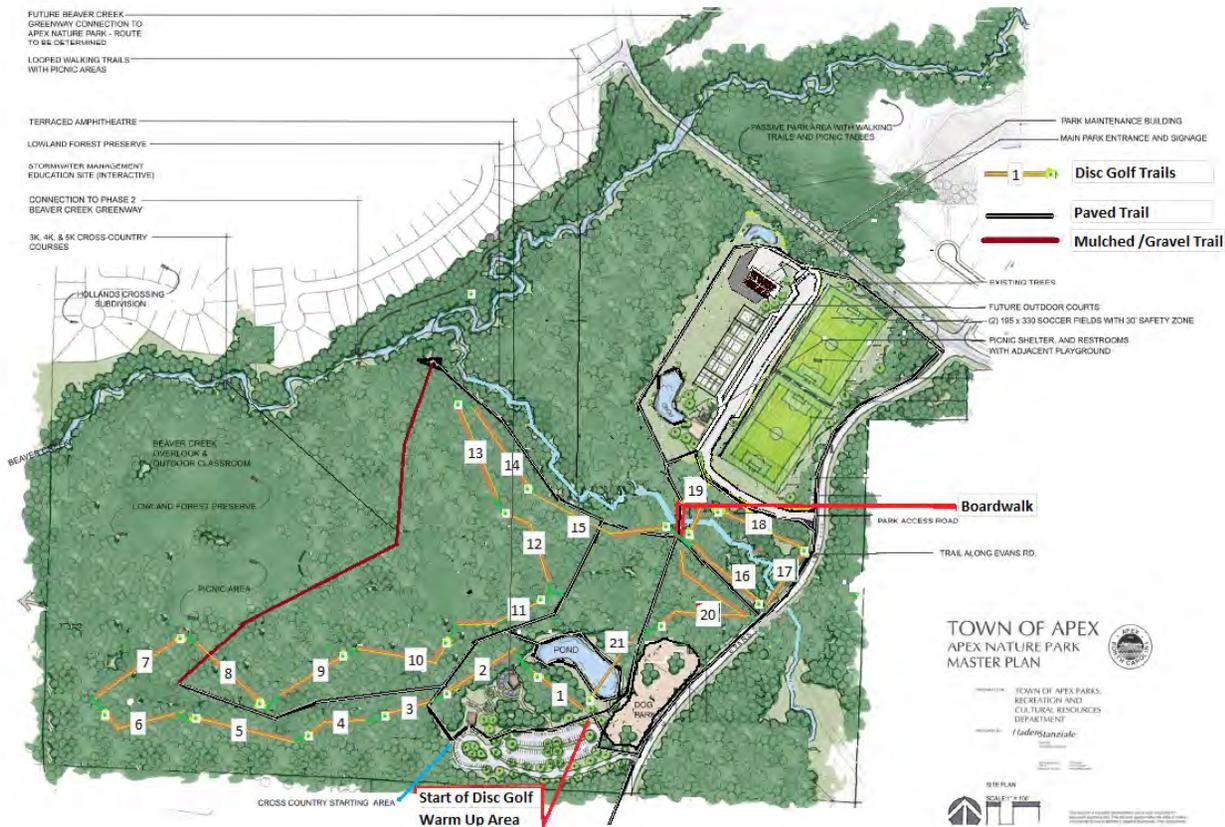
More shade opportunities and improved drainage near the tennis area would help those waiting and watching. Additional picnic areas, beaches, and seating could expand opportunities for use at this park, specifically near the Lake Pine side. Lastly, as part of the overall recommendations, signage and identification will be discussed; this could specifically help at park entries and trail heads.



*Bicycle parking should be added to the tennis court plaza area.*



# Apex Nature Park



**ACRES**

160

**LOCATION**

Western Apex off of Apex Barbecue Road and Evans Road

**TYPE**

Community Park

**PRIMARY USE**

Passive and Active Recreation: Multi-use fields, Soccer fields, Tennis, Trails, Dog park, Amphitheater, Playground

## APEX NATURE PARK PHASES I AND II

These two phases are currently under construction and will provide passive and active activities in the western part of the town.

### PHASE 1 WILL INCLUDE:

Dog Park, amphitheater, restroom, walking trails, disc golf, open play area, and connection to the overall Greenway network.

### PHASE 2 WILL BE MORE ACTIVE AND IS PLANNED TO INCLUDE:

Multi-use and soccer fields, tennis courts, playground, picnic shelter, walking trails, and park maintenance facility.



# Clairmont Park



**ACRES**

1.5 acres

**LOCATION**

801 East Chatham Street

**TYPE**

Neighborhood Park

**PRIMARY USE**

Playground (ages 5-12), Picnic, Basketball



*Clairmont Park has a natural landscape with large trees providing shade to the playground and unprogrammed areas.*

## STRENGTHS

Clairmont Park is a peaceful, shaded park suitable for children's play, family gatherings, and pick-up basketball games. Located just east of downtown, this park is within walking distance for residents in the community east of Salem Street and North of Williams Street, including Apex Middle School. The open lawn and wooded area provide a flexible space for families and groups. A sidewalk and path leading to the shelter allow for access to this structure.

## CHALLENGES

Grass was observed growing through the mulch in the playground area, suggesting the mulch is too compacted and requires replacement. It appears there is a makeshift bocce court located between the two play areas that needs to be completed. The cobra light between the playground and shelter was broken at the time of the study and should be repaired, or removed, and replaced with more pedestrian scale lighting suitable for a park.

## SENSORY OBSERVATIONS

The park provides a pleasant neighborhood setting for passive and active recreation. There are both sunny and shady spots, and effective separation of features.

## PHYSICAL ACCESS AND ACTIVITY LEVEL

The site currently has one accessible route to the existing shelter. This could be improved by installing sidewalks and paths to connect each programmed area within the park. There is low to moderate activity level on this site.

## POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

While the park appears to be in great condition and well used, a few improvements will help integrate it into the overall system and create a safer space for residents of Apex. The title signage should be updated to reflect the new signage plan and include a planting area. Pedestrian scaled lighting will enhance the aesthetics, while improving visibility at night, therefore contributing to perceived safety of the park and East Chatham Street. Feature access could be improved, and removal of the chain link fence and/or replacement with something consistent with the neighborhood would help make this a more welcoming space. Support facilities such as bike racks, benches, and picnic areas would increase use.



# Clairmont Park

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Parking	on street		
Pedestrian Access		Good	Sidewalk present along park but not throughout neighborhood. People likely feel safe walking in the street.
Bicycle Access/Parking		Good	No bicycle parking or bike facilities leading up to the park, but the park is in a neighborhood and cyclists would most likely feel comfortable riding in the street.
Signage: Title	1	Good	The sign is in good condition but should be replaced to match the parks and recreation signage. Planting area around sign needs attention.
Sun/Shade		Excellent	
Circulation		Good	No accessible routes throughout but acceptable for this type of park.
Safety/Security		Good	
Basketball Court (outdoor)	1	Good	
Swing Set	2 belt swings		
Picnic Tables/Benches/Picnic Shelter	1 shelter/1 picnic table		
Trash/Recycling Receptacles	2 trash/1 recycling		
Playground	1	Good	Grass is coming up through the mulch and may be too compacted.
Lights	1 cobra	Poor	Broken
Open Play Space		Good	Plenty of unprogrammed space with ample shade trees.



*Grass is beginning to grow through the mulch, suggesting the surface needs to be replaced.*



*The basketball court provides physical activity for a variety of ages.*



# Halle Center



**ACRES**

N/A

**LOCATION**

237 North Salem Street

**TYPE**

Cultural Arts Facility

**PRIMARY USE**

Galleries, Studios, Arts Programs



The downtown location contributes to the local economy.



Different room sizes are available for classes, lectures, and art displays.



Services include a catering kitchen, storage, elevator, built in coat closet, and built in bar.

## STRENGTHS

The Halle Cultural Arts Center serves a core function of the Department by providing a permanent venue for performances, art displays, art lessons, and lectures. The location downtown contributes to economic development as attendees to classes, shows, and other activities at the center are adjacent to the shops and restaurants in the core of historic Apex. The gallery space allows for multiple artists and types of creative work to be displayed and the classrooms are an appropriate size for cultural-based classes. Events requiring catering services have access to a kitchen space, and the performance area upstairs makes efficient use of space with a built-in roll-away closet and bar amenities.

## CHALLENGES

One of the main challenges of the Halle Center is access to the building from the parking lot. Uneven pavement, a narrow driveway, and the inability for physically challenged patrons to easily gain access to the building present a problem. Survey respondents requested several programs that are currently offered at this facility, indicating a need for improved outreach and awareness.



# Halle Center

## SENSORY OBSERVATIONS

The Halle Center is a quiet facility with great lighting and interior access to indoor facilities. However, it is expected that during an event there is a high noise level in the auditorium.

## PHYSICAL ACCESS AND ACTIVITY LEVEL

The structure itself is accessible once inside. The access to the site is not desirable as mentioned above. Improvements should be made from the parking area to the back door of the site where the access ramp is located and/or at the front of the facility. Improved access would serve all residents, including seniors, people with mobility impairments, and families with strollers. This improved identification and access could potentially stimulate use.

## POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Halle Cultural Arts Center has the potential to serve a wider audience, but will require upgraded building access. With this improvement, and an awareness program, the Halle Cultural Arts Center can provide small theater groups, schools, companies, and the Town with performance and meeting spaces central to the downtown, with safe, accessible building entrances. By activating the space with more Town programming, and renting the space for private use, the Halle Cultural Arts Center will be seen as an asset to the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department, as well as to the economic development of Salem Street.

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Parking	23/1 HC	Fair	No "T" or turnaround is available, pavement is uneven and difficult for physically challenged and aging patrons.
Pedestrian Access		Fair	Sidewalks are present along the front of the building but circulation from the parking lot to the building front is unsafe. Pedestrians are forced to share a narrow driveway with vehicles which is challenging before and after events.
Bicycle Access/Parking	4 racks	Good	Parking is good but there are no bicycle facilities near or around the Center.
Signage: Title	1	Excellent	Attractive and legible.
Signage: Internal	Several	Excellent	Well branded, legible, includes braille.
Internal Facilities	3 Galleries 1 Studio Classroom 150 Seat Theatre		



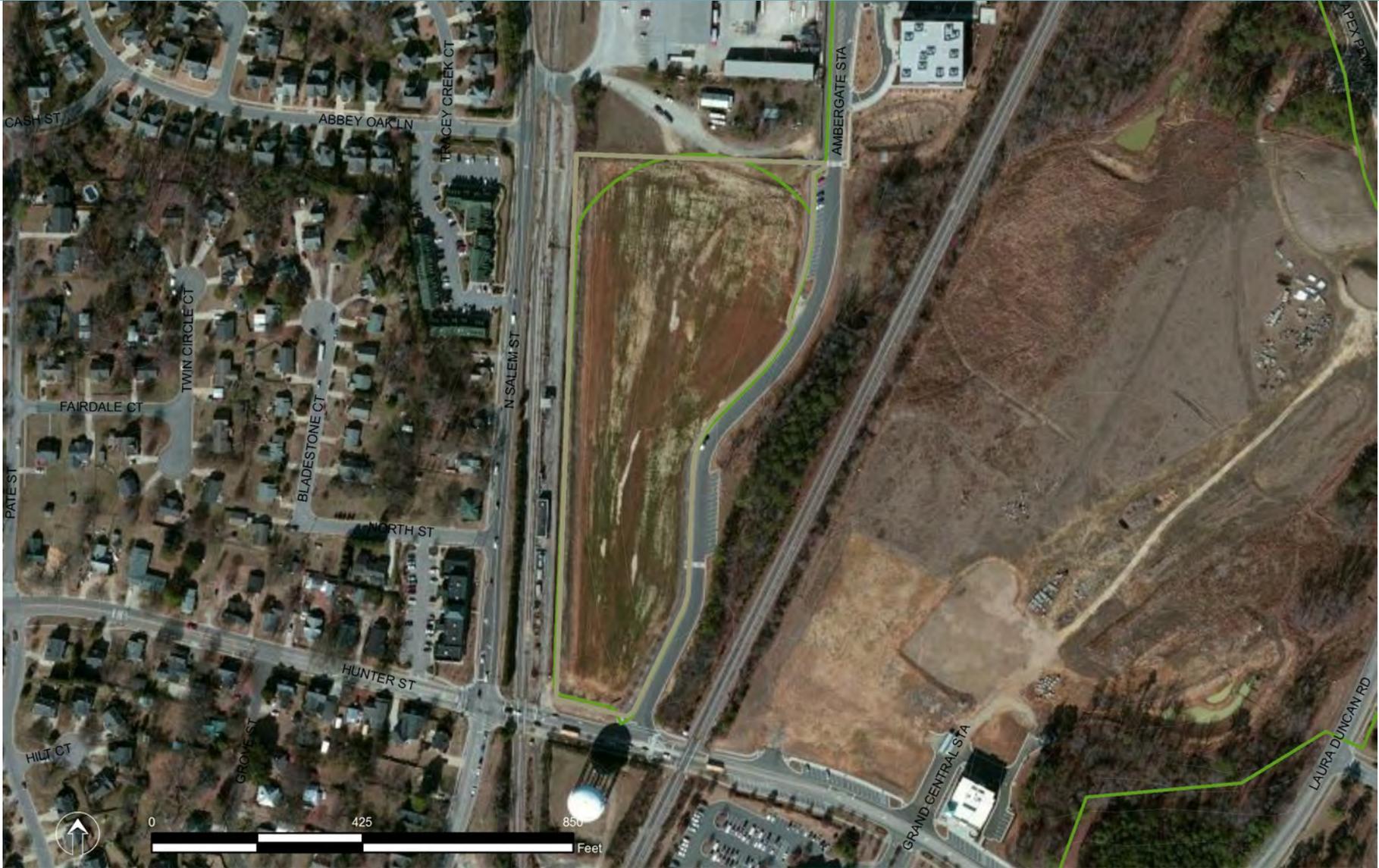
The historic performance space is suitable for small shows, class plays, graduations, and lectures.



Access is challenging, with uneven pavement, a narrow driveway, and no accessible call button.



# Hunter Street Park



<b>ACRES</b>	12 Acres	<b>LOCATION</b>	1250 Ambergate Station, across from Apex Town Hall
<b>TYPE</b>	Area Park	<b>PRIMARY USE</b>	Baseball, Soccer, Walking, Running/FUTURE: Dog Park



*The baseball field at Hunter Street Park is well maintained and serves multiple purposes. Students from Thales Academy use the outfield for group activities.*

## STRENGTHS

Hunter Street Park is well maintained, and is conveniently located near schools, residential neighborhoods, and Salem Street. The fields are in immaculate condition. A playground and bathroom facility are currently under construction. The elevated walking trail provides excellent views into the park and allows guardians to observe children's activity while also exercising and socializing with other adults. Ample, well-lighted parking provides enough space for the park to host multiple planned activities while leaving room for others who want to walk the trails, or (in the future) use the dog park (currently under construction).

## CHALLENGES

The park signage typology should be used, in scale with the park type, to create an identifiable park system. A potential safety concern is the rail line adjacent to the walking trail. Currently, there is no physical barrier between the tracks and the park. While this provides convenient access to the park from the adjacent neighborhood, potential conflict may be a concern. Young children should be supervised and appropriate signage and education can prevent conflicts. Preserving the neighborhood connection is important, but if issues arise, a fence can be installed.

## POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

The elevated trail presents a great opportunity to provide additional seating for the soccer field; along the edge of the trail overlooking the field is a great vantage point for spectators. Additional trees could also be planted, or a shade structure added, to provide a more comfortable experience for those on the sidelines. There is also an opportunity for a fitness trail component.

## SENSORY OBSERVATIONS

The park is adjacent to a school and typically peaceful. However, during periods of high use, such as sporting events and school activities, the noise levels increase. Adjacent train service also contributes to periodic noise.

## PHYSICAL ACCESS AND ACTIVITY LEVEL

There are accessible routes to each feature. Active use areas are predominantly in the sun. The soccer field is partially enclosed and the dog park will be fully enclosed. There is a high activity level on this site.

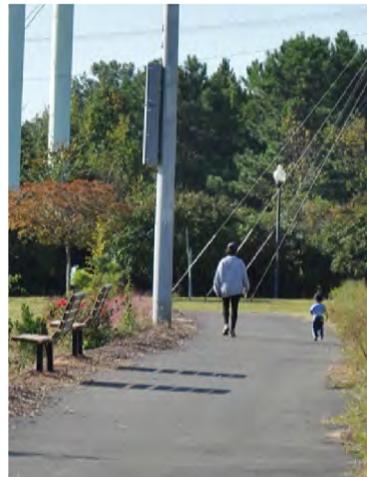


# Hunter Street Park

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition Poor/Fair/Good/Excellent	Notes
Parking	138/5HC	Excellent	Well lighted.
Pedestrian Access		Good	Complete sidewalk on east side of entrance into park.
Bicycle Access/Parking	Two racks, three stalls each	Good	Bikes have access via walking trail and bike parking is near ball fields.
Signage: Title	1	Good	Sign is in good condition, but should be a larger size.
Signage: Internal	Multiple	Good	Regulatory Only. Hours are clearly indicated. Could use additional internal signage to name/mark fields.
Sun/Shade		Good	Well shaded seating for baseball field. Street trees will improve shade condition on trail as they mature. Additional shade needed on soccer field.
Restrooms	1	n/a	New (not complete @ inventory)
Circulation	1 main walking trail	Good	Access could be improved to trail by adding stairs near future restroom facility or soccer field.
Safety/Security		Excellent	Well lighted with excellent visibility.
Picnic Tables/Benches/Picnic Shelter	4 on trail/2 on soccer field/2 bleacher at baseball field/2 dugout benches at baseball field	Good	Great seating throughout. Soccer field could use spectator seating.
Trash/Recycling Receptacles	8 trash/2 recycling/2 doggie stations	Excellent	Well placed throughout the park.
Playground	1	n/a	New (not complete @ inventory)
Baseball	1 baseball/softball	Excellent	Outfield and infield in great condition.
Soccer	1	Excellent	Turf in great condition.
Dog Park	1	n/a	
Track/Walking Trail		Excellent	Mile markers should be added to enhance user experience.



The walking trail provides a great view of the park. The slope along the soccer field could be used for additional spectator seating.



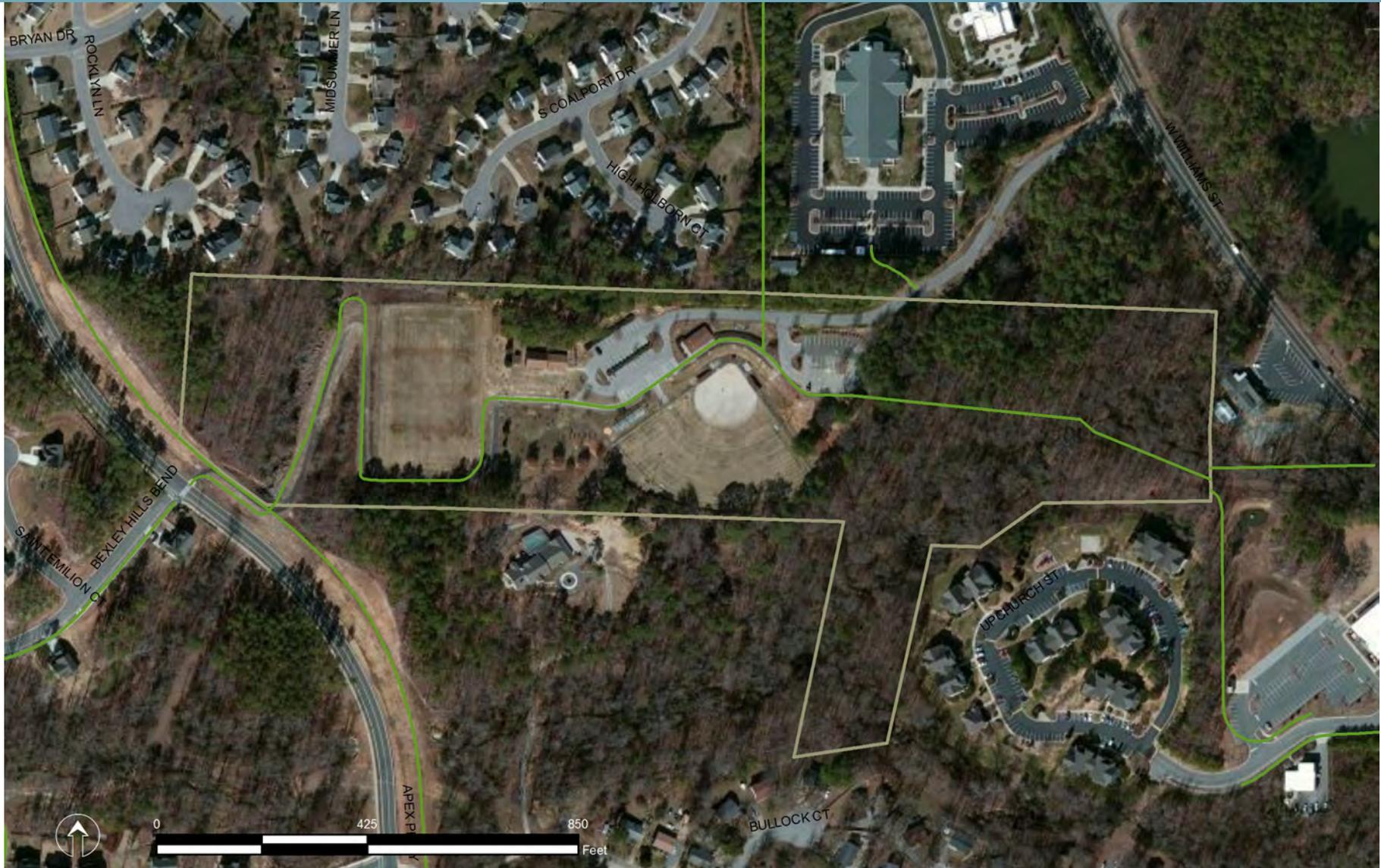
The walking trail surrounds a heavily programmed park, providing views to high activity spaces.

The park entrance is accessible and attractive.

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition Poor/Fair/Good/Excellent	Notes
Lights	parking/field/street lights	Excellent	Ample lighting
Open Play Space	none	Fair	The only non-programmed space is the trail. With the proximity of the park to the Town and school, it could use more open play space.
Water Fountains	3	Excellent	Drinking fountains are well placed and in working condition.



# Jaycee Park



**ACRES**

23 acres

**LOCATION**

451 NC Hwy 55, West Williams Street

**TYPE**

Area Park

**PRIMARY USE**

Softball, Soccer, Picnic, Playground



The playground is located between the softball field and soccer fields and is well connected with accessible paths.



A greenway connection surrounds the perimeter of the softball field.

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Parking	Upper Lot: 44/2HC Lower Lot: 40/7HC	Excellent	
Pedestrian Access		Good	A greenway connects the park to residential neighborhoods and other parks.. Street access is not supported with a sidewalk.



# Jaycee Park

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Bicycle Access/Parking		Fair	The greenway provides access, however there is no bicycle parking.
Signage: Title		Fair	In ok condition but should be replaced with new signage package.
Signage: Internal		Good	
Sun/Shade		Good	Additional trees and shade structures could be added to soccer and softball fields for spectator comfort.
Restrooms		Excellent	2 shrubs at entrances should be removed to provide sight lines to doors from parking lot.
Circulation		Good	A 5' path connects all uses.
Safety/Security		Good	Remove shrubs as restroom.
Picnic Tables/Benches/Picnic Shelter	Shelter: 6 picnic tables Softball field: 2 bleachers Playground: 1 picnic	Excellent	The picnic shelter also has a grill.
Trash/Recycling Receptacles	7 trash/1 recycle	Good	Balance recycle and trash receptacles.
Playground	1	Excellent	Accessible via path, contains shade and picnic table.
Softball	1	Excellent	Well lighted, fenced, no accessible route to dugouts.
Batting Cages	1	Excellent	
Soccer	2 half or 1 large	Excellent	Fields in good conditions, fenced, and appears to be flexible to serve regulation games as well as smaller fields for tots and youth players.
Track/Walking Trail		Good	Beaver Creek Trail connects to park. 90 degree turns can be challenging for cyclists, creating a turning radius will help reduce user conflict.
Lights		Good	



*A facility for the Apex boy scouts is located within the park.*



*A picnic shelter and grill are adjacent to the softball field.*



*Two large shrubs outside the bathroom entrances should be removed.*

## STRENGTHS

The greatest strength of this park is the connection to the Beaver Creek Greenway. This links residents to the park as well as creates a connection to Kelly Road Park. The park is well maintained and the uses are complimentary, with younger children able to use the playground during older children's soccer and softball games.

## CHALLENGES

The site does not contain much unprogrammed open space for users; therefore, unless you are familiar with the site through scouting or sports you may not realize it exists or understand that features can be used when not reserved.

## SENSORY OBSERVATIONS

The site is set back from the roadway and buffered on each side with vegetation and there is good separation between uses. There is not a lot of shade near use areas.

## PHYSICAL ACCESS AND ACTIVITY LEVEL

Each of the features on site have an accessible route; the park is low use during weekdays, but has a high activity level during high use times (after school and weekends).

## POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Entry signage to this park can be updated to include the Beaver Creek Greenway. With ample parking, and restroom facilities, this park can be a trailhead. Serving this purpose would also require updating the existing map kiosk to show the entire greenway system, key locations along the trail, greenway rules, and distances of trail segments. The playground area can also be expanded to include activities for a wider range of youth; adding a swing set is an easy method for providing activity for many ages. This site could be improved to provide picnic areas and potentially hiking or passive rest areas in the unprogrammed parts of the park. A critical connection for this site is the completion of the greenway trail to downtown Apex. This, along with improved visual access at the entry, will make the park more accessible to residents.



# Kelly Road Park



**ACRES**

25 acres

**LOCATION**

1609 Kelly Road, behind Olive Chapel Elementary School

**TYPE**

Area Park

**PRIMARY USE**

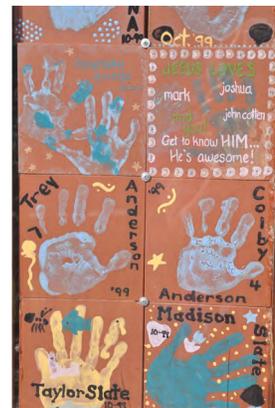
Playground, Tennis, Baseball



The baseball field is in great condition and well positioned near the restroom and picnic facilities.



Vending and a picnic shelter are components of the restroom building.



Several monuments, art pieces, plaques, and other special touches are located in the park. This creates a sense of community and ownership.

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Parking	82/4HC	Excellent	
Pedestrian Access		Good	Connected to the school via a sidewalk and connected to neighborhoods via the greenway.
Bicycle Access/Parking		Good	Well connected via the greenway, bicycle parking should be added.
Signage: Title		Fair	Signage should be updated.



# Kelly Road Park

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Signage: Internal		Fair	Internal regulation signage can also be updated to look like Apex Parks and Recreation signage.
Sun/Shade		Good	Trail around park is well shaded.
Restrooms		Good	
Circulation		Good	Play area and baseball field are well connected via a loop trail. A crosswalk or trail should create a connection to the tennis courts.
Safety/Security		Good	While shaded, the park still has open sight lines.
Swing Set		Good	
Picnic Tables/Benches/Picnic Shelter	Baseball: 2 bleachers Restroom Shelter: 6 picnic Playground: 7 picnic and various benches Loop Trail: x benches Tennis: 2 bleachers	Excellent	Ample seating throughout the park.
Trash/Recycling Receptacles	Playground: 4 trash/2 recycle Tennis: 1 trash	Good	Should balance out the recycling and trash receptacles.
Playground		Excellent	Well designed with many personal touches from the community.
Tennis	1 full/4 half	Excellent	Great condition, well lighted.
Baseball	1	Excellent	Well lighted, fenced, in excellent condition.
Track/Walking Trail	Loop trail and greenway connection	Good	
Lights		Good	Parking, baseball, and tennis are lighted.
Water Fountains	1	Fair	May want to consider adding fountains at the tennis court.



The playground is well integrated with benches, swings, open areas, climbing, and a variety of activities for ages 2-12.



Tennis courts are located just inside the park entrance with a small parking area attached to the sidewalk access.

## STRENGTHS

This park is well connected to the adjacent school as well as neighborhoods to the east via the Beaver Creek Greenway. As a community project, KidsTowne creates a sense of ownership by all who donated and volunteered to create a special place for families in the Apex community. A sense of ownership usually results in a heightened awareness of what is going on in the park and overall maintenance and care. With multiple uses for multiple age children, Kelly Road Park can serve the entire family with tennis, play, and baseball.

## CHALLENGES

While the grounds and facilities are excellent, one factor that could pose a problem in the future is the proximity of the school. During field analysis, several cars were observed parked in the circulation route of the parking lot waiting to pick up students. If this use increases, and conflicts with an event at the park, this can become a problem for visitors to the park. The parking lot is not designed to accommodate the volume and traffic pattern employed by vehicles waiting for students. School pick up conflicts should be monitored by Apex Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Staff to avoid a large scale problem.

## SENSORY OBSERVATIONS

Kelly Road park is a fairly active park. It is heavily utilized and has several park features near to each other and to the adjacent school. There is a good balance of sun and shade, but the park is predominantly active and has quite a bit of noise.

## PHYSICAL ACCESS AND ACTIVITY LEVEL

Each of the site features is accessible through a paved trail system. Even though the site does have varied topography, features can be accessed through the network of trails. The activity level at this park is very high; it would be helpful to add “pockets” for rest and/or quiet spaces for those who have adverse reactions to high activity and stimulation.



# Sue Helton Memorial Park



**ACRES**

¼ Acre

**LOCATION**

Inside Perry Farms, 201 Matney Lane

**TYPE**

Neighborhood Park

**PRIMARY USE**

Playground



*This small neighborhood park is great for families with young children, and provides a peaceful retreat for reading and socializing with neighbors.*

## STRENGTHS

Charlotte Sue Helton Memorial Park is well maintained and tucked into a safe neighborhood. Walking and biking with small children to this park is safe for families in the surrounding homes. While the play equipment is not new, a collection of fruit on the top platform provides evidence of use. The playground is aimed at 2-5 year old children, however any age child or adult can enjoy this space as a quiet place to read or meet friends.

## CHALLENGES

While the location is convenient for residents of the neighborhood, it also discourages public use. The park seems more like a private green space for the development. Another challenge of the park is accessibility. Only one side of the park is connected with a ramp and sidewalks are not present throughout the neighborhoods to provide clear connections separate from vehicular traffic. Not a challenge, but an oddity, each of the benches/picnic tables within the park are different. Eventually, all furnishings should be the same and fit the standard of the Parks and Recreation system. Lighting is also a challenge at night and should be added to increase visibility after dark.

## SENSORY OBSERVATIONS

The site is situated in a quiet neighborhood and is a passive recreation site.

## PHYSICAL ACCESS AND ACTIVITY LEVEL

While the site has paved trails and walkways, they are very narrow and have steps to the gazebo feature. General site access could be improved for users. The site has a low activity level.

## POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Improved site access and consistency in furnishings and signage will help residents understand this is part of the Town park system and not a private park.



# Sue Helton Memorial Park

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Parking	none marked		Visitors likely walk from their homes, but drivers could park on the street.
Pedestrian Access		Fair	Parks is within a neighborhood with no sidewalks. Visitors would likely be walking in the street. One sidewalk within the park site has a curb ramp, the other has a full 18" curb.
Bicycle Access/Parking		Good	There is no bicycle parking present, but not needed. Visitors would likely bike in the neighborhood streets and not lock up their bikes.
Signage: Title	1	Good	The sign is in good condition but should be changed in the future to fit into the parks and recreation signage package.
Signage: Internal	1 regulatory/1 monument	Good	The regulatory sign looks like it matches the parks and recreation signage. The monument sign is in great condition but could use a landscape surround as it is just a bare concrete pedestal.
Sun/Shade		Excellent	A gazebo and large hardwoods provide ample shade.
Circulation		Good	Sidewalks are present throughout, with one curb cut ramp access, and one side of the gazebo with ramp access.
Safety/Security		Excellent	The parks is visible and free of visual obstructions and tucked into a safe neighborhood.
Picnic Tables/Benches/Picnic Shelter	3 picnic tables (2 wood/1 metal)/1 bench in gazebo	Good	In good conditions, but a hodge-podge of materials.

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Trash/Recycling Receptacles	1 trash/1 recycling		
Playground	2-5 year old	Fair	The playground area was not accessible but equipment was in good condition. More mulch is needed in the playground area.
Baseball			
Lights	none		Lights should be added to create a safer space after dark.



Multiple types of signs are located in this park. The title signage should be upgraded, and the memorial signage can be enhanced with vegetation.



# Seagroves Farm Park



<b>ACRES</b>	11 Acre	<b>LOCATION</b>	Inside Seagrove Farms, 201 Parkfield Drive
<b>TYPE</b>	Neighborhood Park	<b>PRIMARY USE</b>	Walking, Running, Fishing/FUTURE: Playground



*A walking trail loops around the back of the pond and connects to the sidewalk in Seagroves Farm.*

## STRENGTHS

Seagroves park is relatively new and provides a beautiful setting for a short walk, picnic, or quiet place to read. The pond features a boardwalk and outlook suitable for fishing or relaxing. A trail surrounding the pond weaves through the woods and connects to paths in an adjacent neighborhood. Ample parking is provided, and a restroom facility and playground are currently under construction.

## CHALLENGES

One challenge of this park is the location. Being tucked into a neighborhood presents the park as a private amenity. It may be beneficial to place signage or an identifying park feature along Center Street so residents know this resource is available for public use.

## SENSORY OBSERVATIONS

The park provides a quiet setting for passive recreation in the neighborhood. There is noise from Center Street but the existing vegetation buffers most of it. A variety of spaces offer options to enjoy shade and sun; the addition of passive amenities would enhance the opportunity to choose these spaces.

## PHYSICAL ACCESS AND ACTIVITY LEVEL

The site has a paved trail around it, and access to each site feature. There is moderate activity level on this site.

## POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Signage along Center Street would help identify the park as accessible to the public and not as a part of a neighborhood. Additional passive elements can be added over time including picnic areas, walking trails, and plant identification. Since many residents can walk and/or bike to the park, bicycle parking should be provided. There is a small wooded area near the fishing pier that could offer nature trails with plant identification. Additionally mile markers and fitness stations could be added.



# Seagroves Farm Park

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Parking	15/1HC	Excellent	
Pedestrian Access		Excellent	
Bicycle Access/Parking		Good	No bicycle parking - see plans.
Signage: Title	1	Excellent	
Signage: Internal	Multiple Regulatory	Excellent	
Sun/Shade		Excellent	
Restrooms/shelter	1	Excellent	Newly constructed, in great condition with picnic tables under shelter
Circulation		Good	Bridge grade is not consistent - otherwise, circulation around park is great.
Safety/Security		Good	No lights in the park, but daytime safety is good with great visibility around the pond and trail.
Picnic Tables/Benches/Picnic Shelter	1 picnic/3 benches/4 planters	Good	More picnic tables could be added around the pond.
Trash/Recycling Receptacles	4 trash/1 recycling/3 dog stations	Excellent	
Playground	Young children	Excellent	New small age equipment with accessible poured in place safety surface.
Track/Walking Trail	need length	Excellent	One board is peeling up on the lookout.
Lights	0	Poor	Should be lights in the parking lot and pedestrian lights on the greenway.
Open Play Space		Good	Adequate for park type - wooded.



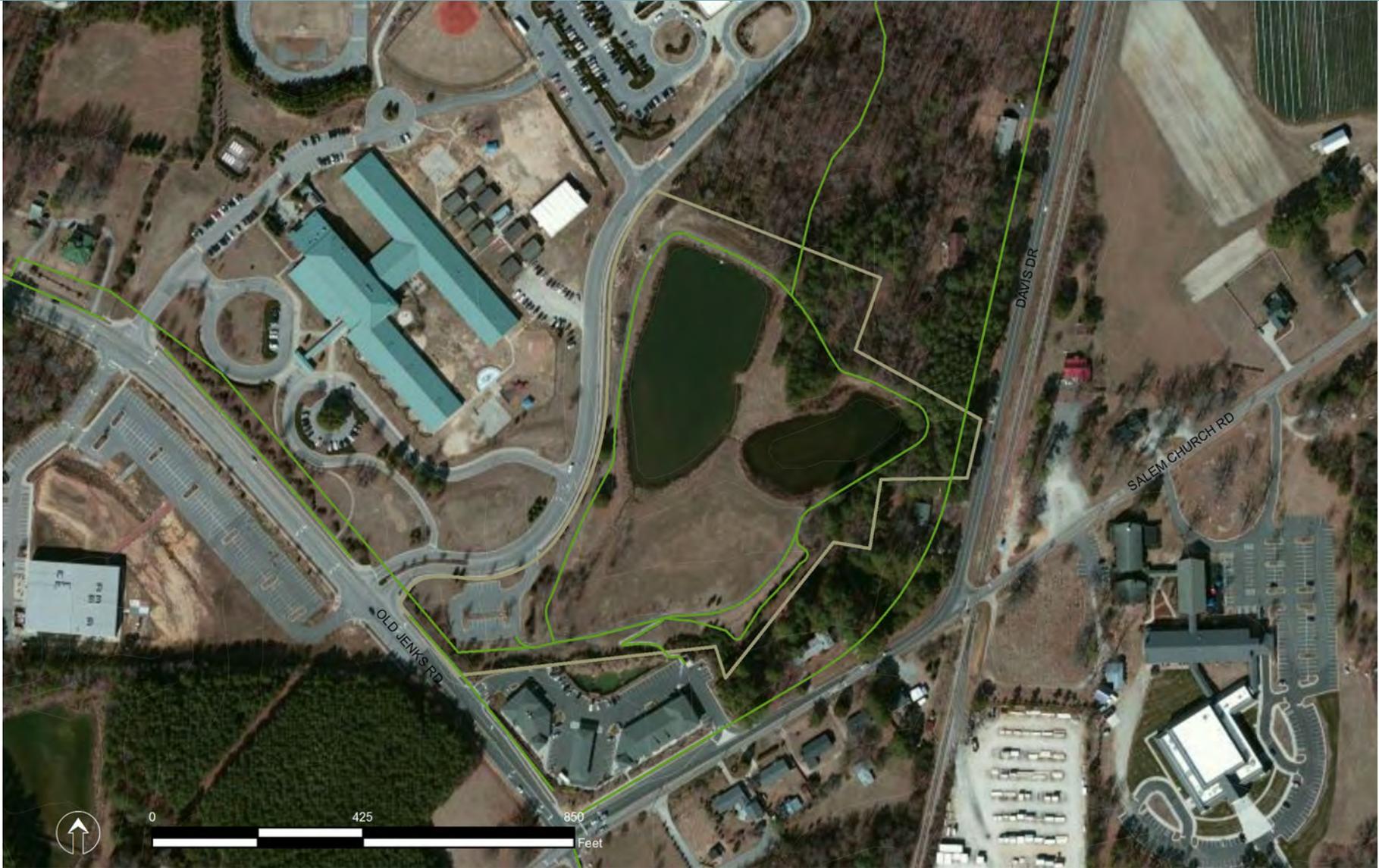
New park signage is used at Seagroves.



A fishing pier is a unique feature of Seagroves Farm Park.



# Salem Pond Park



**ACRES**

14.3 Acres

**LOCATION**

6112 Old Jenkins Road

**TYPE**

Area Park

**PRIMARY USE**

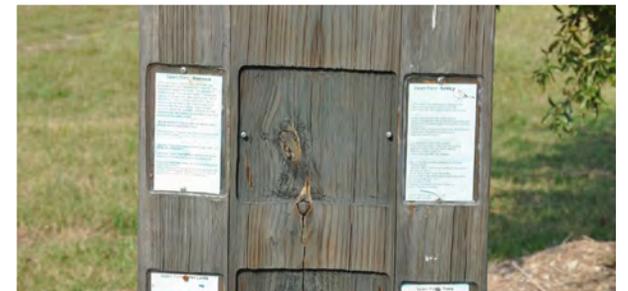
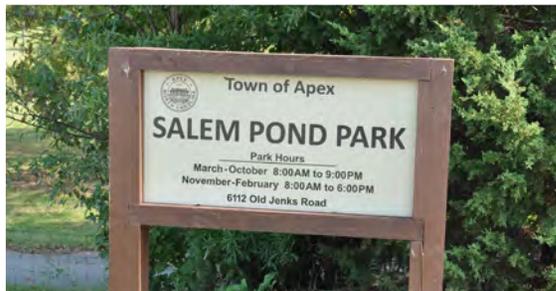
Walking, Running, Education, Open Play



A pond, greenway, and open space create a quiet passive park next to Salem Elementary.



Salem Pond Park has a large open unprogrammed space.



Title and regulatory signage should be updated and interpretive signage needs to be replaced due to disrepair.



# Salem Pond Park

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Parking	24/0HC	Poor	Need to mark an accessible space.
Pedestrian Access		Fair	The park is well connected to the school and shopping center, but the trail from the parking lot exceeds a 12:1 slope.
Bicycle Access/Parking		Fair	No bicycle parking.
Signage: Title		Fair	Should be updated.
Signage: Internal		Fair	Interpretive signage is in disrepair and should be replaced - either by the Parks department, or service group.
Sun/Shade		Fair	Shaded seating areas could be carved out around the pond.
Circulation		Good	
Safety/Security		Fair	Some vegetation should be trimmed to improve sight lines across the pond and around the trail. Lights should also be added as students may be using this trail before sunrise or after sunset depending on the season.
Trash/Recycling Receptacles	1 dog/1 trash/1 recycle	Good	Should add additional dog stations and trash stations if seating areas are created.
Track/Walking Trail		Fair	Slopes and maintenance should be examined to create a smooth, accessible surface.
Open Play Space		Excellent	Excellent unprogrammed space. Works well adjacent to school.



*Segments of the trail are in need of repair and the pump station facilities are outdated.*

## STRENGTHS

Being located adjacent to a school is a great opportunity for education and recreation for students. The large, unprogrammed space offers endless opportunities for gym classes, fairs, and outdoor learning. Parents can also benefit from the park by using the space to walk or exercise before dropping off or picking up students.

## CHALLENGES

The trail is in need of repair, as is the interpretive signage. Access to, and separation from the school is not ideal. The sidewalk should continue and connect to the trail instead of emptying into the parking lot. The fence along the sidewalk is not attractive, nor is the pump house area.

## SENSORY OBSERVATIONS

The park is a quiet passive recreation setting even though it is located next to a school and commercial center. There is noise from the adjacent school, but due to existing vegetation, you can find quieter areas; there are shade and sun opportunities.

## PHYSICAL ACCESS AND ACTIVITY LEVEL

The site has a paved trail around it, but due to age of the trail, improvements are needed to make a fully accessible route. There is low activity on this site.

## POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

With a few cosmetic upgrades and better access to the school, this park could be an asset to health and learning at Salem Elementary and Middle Schools. Programs and field days can be held in the open fields, and science classes can use the pond for wildlife exploration, water quality testing, soil sampling, and more. Thinking of the space as an amenity for those parents and guardians who escort their children to school may open opportunities for the park to be a travel corridor - via walking or cycling - or an exercise and play area for families waiting for students to finish school or after school activities. Proximity to the school and educational partnerships may avail the site of grant opportunities to fund improvements. Specific elements like trail resurfacing, shelter, picnic areas and benches, interpretation, and maintenance of field space will enhance use.



# West Street Park



<b>ACRES</b>	1.3 Acres	<b>LOCATION</b>	108 West Street
<b>TYPE</b>	Neighborhood Park	<b>PRIMARY USE</b>	Playground, Basketball



*Additional tables should be added under the shelter.*



*The mulch surface is well maintained but the playground equipment needs to be replaced soon.*

## STRENGTHS

West Street park is a small neighborhood park serving West, Harwood, and Lynch Street residents. The location is walkable for families in this area and is just a few blocks from the activity center of Salem Street. The picnic shelter, with the addition of tables, could be a great location for neighborhood gatherings as the rolling topography and shade provide ample room for small games and group outdoor activities.

## CHALLENGES

While most visitors to this location would likely walk or park on-street, the few parking spaces are gravel and the one accessible space is not truly accessible, as there is no smooth, hard surface or sidewalks connecting from the space to areas within the park. The playground is also in need of an update, including ADA access to the equipment. One additional challenge is safety and use. The water fountain was vandalized, causing a water leak. An update in the playground equipment can encourage use, and additional pedestrian scale lighting can contribute to safety and decreased opportunities for vandalism.

## SENSORY OBSERVATIONS

The park has a quiet neighborhood passive recreation setting. There is not a lot of noise; there are shade and sun opportunities; and there are passive and active recreation activities and good separation between features.

## PHYSICAL ACCESS AND ACTIVITY LEVEL

The site does not currently have accessible routes to existing site features. There is an opportunity to provide access to each feature, but topography on the site might make access between each feature challenging; there is a low activity level on this site.

## POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

With the above mentioned improvements of adding lighting, replacing playground equipment, defining parking, and creating more seating under the picnic shelter, the space will be more attractive to families and small groups. The park signage should also be updated to fit into a Town signage package.



# West Street Park

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Parking	3 spots	Poor	Gravel pull-off. One space marked with an accessible sign but the space is not accessible.
Pedestrian Access		Fair	New sidewalks surround the park but there are no paths leading into the park itself.
Bicycle Access/Parking	none		
Signage: Title	1	Fair	Old sign, needs to be updated to fit into the overall parks and recreation signage program. There are no way-finding signs leading people to the park from Williams and Salem.
Signage: Internal	2	Fair	Regulatory only.
Sun/Shade		Excellent	Great hardwood trees with ample shade.
Restrooms	1 portable unit	Poor	The unit is on a slope and does not look accessible.
Circulation		Poor	No accessible routes between uses in the park.
Safety/Security		Good	Visible but doesn't seem to be well used. The water fountain was vandalized and there is trash scattered throughout.
Basketball Court (outdoor)	1	Good	Asphalt is in good condition and baskets are intact.
Swing Set	1 - 2 infant seats	Excellent	Unit looks fairly new and in good condition.
Picnic Tables/Benches/Picnic Shelter	1 picnic shelter/1 picnic table/1 grill	Good	Not accessible, but in good condition.
Trash/Recycling Receptacles	2 trash/1 recycling		

Park Assets/Amenity	Quantity	Condition	Notes
Playground	1 - 5 and under	Fair	Crack in the slide surface. In fair condition overall with well maintained mulch surface. No accessible route.
Lights	1 cobra light	Fair	Not very well placed in the woods, could use additional lighting throughout the park.
Open Play Space			Ample open play space with rolling topography.
Water Fountains	1	Poor	Vandalized - cut water line.



The basketball court is in good condition and should be monitored seasonally for goal repair and surface cracks on the court.



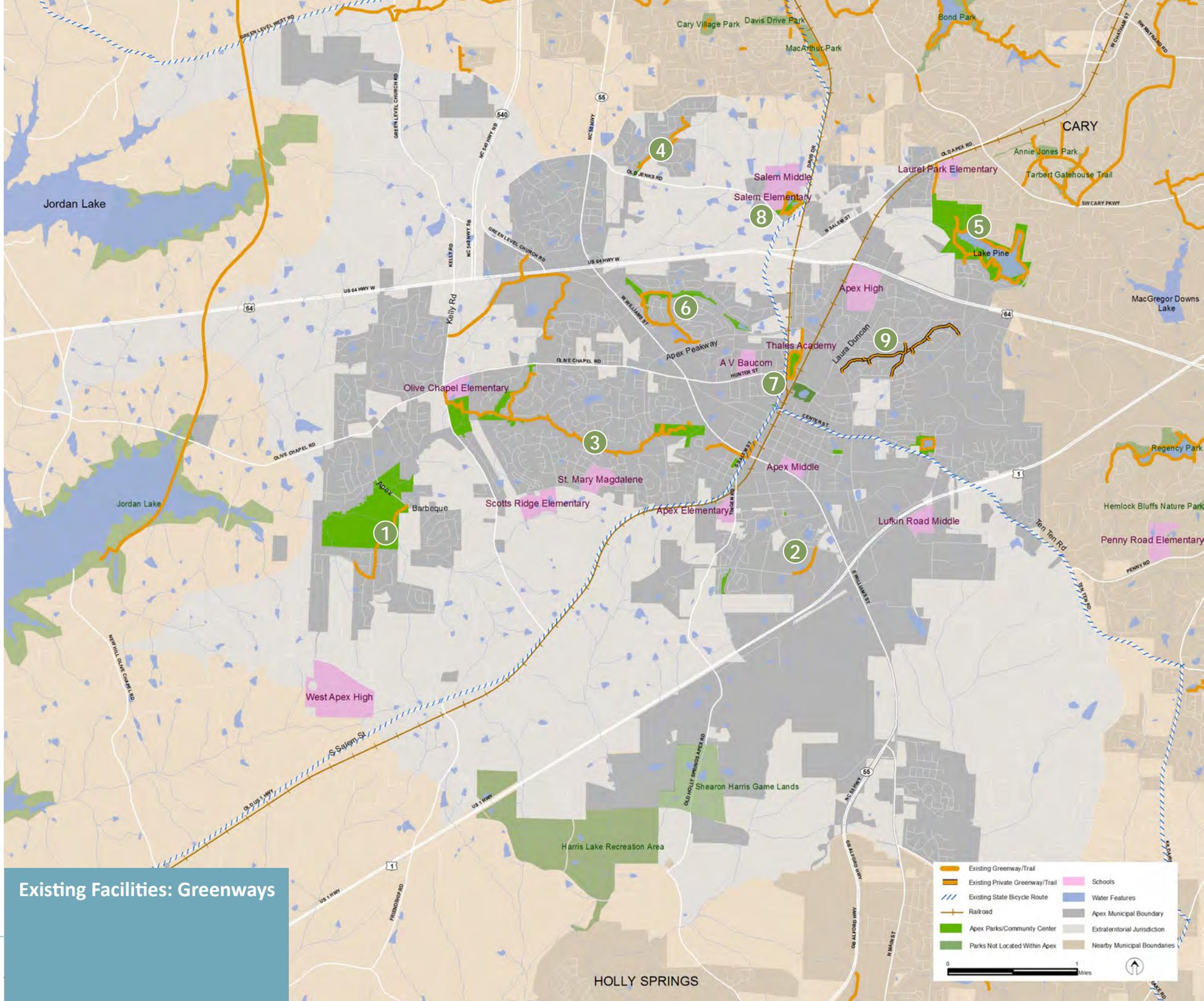
Vandalism in a park can deter use. During the evaluation, park staff responded immediately to correct the leak. Access to the playground is in need of maintenance and repair.



## EXISTING FACILITIES: GREENWAYS

The demand for greenways, and access to daily needs via walking and biking facilities, is exploding across the nation. Communities are applying for walk and bike friendly status and newcomers research neighborhoods based on Walk Scores®. Apex is located in proximity to major multi-county trails, including the American Tobacco Trail, and towns with extensive greenway systems. Currently, the Apex greenway system is comprised of approximately 26 miles of trails, with the majority classified as recreational. The longest trail in Apex is the Beaver Creek Greenway which has been developed as a result of the input from the 2001 recommendations. This trail and other highlighted connections continue to be a priority for residents.

	LENGTH (MILES)	WIDTH (FEET)	Public	Private	Asphalt	Boardwalk	Crushed Stone	Concrete
<b>EXISTING GREENWAYS &amp; TRAILS</b>								
1. Evans Rd Multi Use Side Path	0.657	10	X		X			
2. Apex Peakway Multi Use Side Path	0.288	10	X		X			
3. Beaver Creek Greenway	4.959		X		X	X		X
4. Charleston Village Greenway	0.358		X		X			
5. Community Lake Trail	2.409		X		X			
6. Haddon Hall Greenway (small portion is private)	1.605	8-10	X	x	X			X
7. Hunter Street Park Trail	0.722		X		X			
8. Salem Pond Park Greenway	0.530		X		X			X
9. Shepherd Vineyard	1.431	5-8		X	X	X		



## Existing Facilities: Greenways

	Existing Greenway/Trail		Schools
	Existing Private Greenway/Trail		Water Features
	Existing State Bicycle Route		Apex Municipal Boundary
	Railroad		Extrateritorial Jurisdiction
	Apex Parks/Community Center		Nearby Municipal Boundaries
	Parks Not Located Within Apex		

0 1 Miles

↑

HOLLY SPRINGS



## EXISTING PROGRAMS

Program demand changes over time with growing populations, demographic shifts, cultural interests, regional offerings, and national trends. Currently the population of Apex has expressed an interest in youth program needs, and overall programs that focus on improved health and wellness. By offering a variety of programs and providing an open dialog between the Department and users, the Town of Apex can prepare for and adapt to the demands of their population. The below table illustrates the current program schedule offered by the Town.

Youth Athletic Program	Ages Served	Male/Female	Where Held
Fall Soccer	Ages 5-14	Both	Park, school
Spring Soccer	Ages 5-14	Both	Park, school
Youth Basketball	Ages 7-15	Both	ACC, school
Youth Volleyball	Ages 10-15	Girls	ACC
Fall Softball	Ages 7-15	Girls	Park, school
Spring Softball	Ages 7-15	Girls	Park, school
Fall Baseball	Ages 9-14	Boys	Park, school
Spring Baseball	Ages 9-14	Boys	Park, school

Adult Athletic Program	Ages Served	Male/Female	Where Held
Fall Softball	17 and up	Male	Parks
Spring Softball	17 and up	Male	Parks
Winter Basketball	17 and up	Male	ACC
Spring Basketball	17 and up	Male	ACC
Fall Soccer	17 and up	Both	Parks
Spring Soccer	17 and up	Both	Parks
Sand Volleyball	17 and up	Both	Parks
Indoor Volleyball	17 and up	Both	ACC
Tennis Ladder	17 and up	Both	Parks

Adult Instructional Program	Ages Served	Male/Female	Where Held
Tennis Lessons	17 and up	Both	Parks
Wee-Tots & Toddlers	10-36 mos	Both	ACC
Preschool Education Adventures	Ages 3-4	Both	ACC
Boogie Babies	10-36 mos	Both	ACC
Wee-Painters	Ages 2-4	Both	ACC
Wee-Critters	Ages 3-5	Both	ACC
JumpStart for Preschoolers	Ages 3-5	Both	ACC
Kindertots	Age 2	Both	ACC
Kindergym	Ages 3-5	Both	ACC
Kinderdance	Ages 3-5	Both	ACC
Preschool Swimming (TAC)	Ages 3-5	Both	TAC
Preschool Yoga	Ages 3-5	Both	ACC
Tech Tots	Ages 3-5	Both	ACC
Preschool Art	Ages 3-5	Both	ACC
Junior Engineering	Ages 6-9	Both	ACC
Art Ventures Workshops	Ages 6-10	Both	ACC
JumpStart Sports	Ages 5-7	Both	ACC
Elementary Engineering	Ages 10-12	Both	ACC
Art 4U2	Ages 7-11	Both	ACC
Computer Explorers	Ages 6-13	Both	ACC
Babysitting Training	Ages 11-15	Both	ACC
Hapkido Youth Beginner	Ages 9-12	Both	ACC
Hapkido Youth Intermediate	Ages 9-12	Both	ACC
Hapkido Youth Int Ext	Ages 9-12	Both	ACC
Digital Moviemaking	Ages 9-13	Both	ACC
Hapkido Teen/Adult Beginner	13 and up	Both	ACC
Hapkido Teen/Adult Intermediate	13 and up	Both	ACC
Hapkido Teen/Adult Int Ext	13 and up	Both	ACC
Hapkido Advanced	13 and up	Both	ACC
Ballroom Dance	16 and up	Both	ACC
Ballroom Dance Strictly Latin	16 and up	Both	ACC
Dance Fitness	16 and up	Female	ACC





Adult Instructional Program	Ages Served	Male/Female	Where Held
Pilates	16 and up	Both	ACC
Nia Non-Impact Fitness	16 and up	Both	ACC
Decorating	14 and up	Both	ACC
SAT Assistance	Ages 15-17	Both	ACC
Health & Wellness Seminars	16 and up	Both	ACC
JumpStart Preschool Camp	Ages 3-5	Both	ACC
Preschool Fun Camp	Ages 3-5	Both	ACC
Curious Kids Preschool Nature Camp	Ages 3-5	Both	ACC
Preschool Art Camp	Ages 4-5	Both	ACC
Youth Art Camp	Ages 6-12	Both	ACC
JumpStart Sports Camp	Ages 5-10	Both	ACC
Mini Youth Basketball Camp	Ages 6-10	Both	ACC
Youth Basketball Camp	Ages 8-13	Both	ACC
Drills & Thrills Basketball	Ages 7-14	Both	ACC
Summer Fun Days Camp	Ages 6-11	Both	Park
Fun Days Track Out Camp	Ages 6-11	Both	Park



*Youth sports camps are important for building skills and teamwork.*



*Apex offers many programs for the senior population.*



## EXISTING PROGRAMS BY AGE

The table below illustrates the age served by each of the existing Apex programs. Gender is indicated by “M” for male, “F” for female, and “B” for programs serving both genders. This chart illustrates service gaps by age.

Program		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Fall Soccer	B					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X											
Fall Soccer	B																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spring Soccer	B					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X											
Spring Soccer	B																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Basketball	B							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
Winter Basketball	M																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spring Basketball	M																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Volleyball	F										X	X	X	X	X	X										
Sand Volleyball	B																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Indoor Volleyball	B																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fall Softball	F							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
Fall Softball	M																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spring Softball	F							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
Spring Softball	M																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fall Baseball	M									X	X	X	X	X	X											
Spring Baseball	M									X	X	X	X	X	X											
Tennis Lessons	B					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tennis Lessons	B																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tennis Ladder	B																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lacrosse Clinic	B						X	X	X	X	X	X	X													
Softball Clinic	F									X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
Health Fair	B																									
Bridge	B																									
Bingo	B																									
Silver Cardio	B																									

26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55+	Program	
																														Fall Soccer	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Fall Soccer	
																														Spring Soccer	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Spring Soccer	
																														Basketball	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Winter Basketball	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Spring Basketball	
																														Volleyball	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Sand Volleyball	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Indoor Volleyball	
																														Fall Softball	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Fall Softball	
																														Spring Softball	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Spring Softball	
																														Fall Baseball	
																														Spring Baseball	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Tennis Lessons	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Tennis Lessons	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Tennis Ladder	
																														Lacrosse Clinic	
																														Softball Clinic	
				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Health Fair	
																													X	Bridge	
																														X	Bingo
																														X	Silver Cardio



Program		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Steel Strong	B																									
Zumba Gold	B																									
Line Dancing - Ultra Beginner	B																									
Line Dancing - Beginner I	B																									
Line Dancing - Beginner II	B																									
T'ai Chi Chih	B																									
Yoga for Seniors - Beginners	B																									
Yoga for Seniors - Intermediate	B																									
Yoga for Seniors - Advanced	B																									
Wee-Tots & Toddlers (10-36 months)	B	X	X	X																						
Preschool Education Adventures	B			X	X																					
Boogie Babies (10-36 months)	B	X	X	X																						
Wee Painters	B		X	X	X																					
Wee-Critters	B			X	X	X																				
JumpStart for Preschoolers	B			X	X	X																				
Kindertots	B		X																							
Kindergym	B			X	X	X																				
Kinderdance	B			X	X	X																				
Preschool Swimming (TAC)	B			X	X	X																				
Preschool Yoga	B			X	X	X																				
Tech Tots	B			X	X	X																				
Preschool Art	B			X	X	X																				
Junior Engineering	B						X	X	X	X																
Art Ventures Workshops	B						X	X	X	X	X															
JumpStart Sports	B					X	X	X																		
Elementary Engineering	B										X	X	X													
Art 4U2	B							X	X	X	X	X														

26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55+	Program	
																													X	Steel Strong	
																														X	Zumba Gold
																														X	Line Dancing - Ultra Beginner
																														X	Line Dancing - Beginner I
																														X	Line Dancing - Beginner II
																														X	T'ai Chi Chih
																														X	Yoga for Seniors - Beginners
																														X	Yoga for Seniors - Intermediate
																														X	Yoga for Seniors - Advanced
																															Wee-Tots & Toddlers (10-36 months)
																															Preschool Education Adventures
																															Boogie Babies (10-36 months)
																															Wee Painters
																															Wee-Critters
																															JumpStart for Preschoolers
																															Kindertots
																															Kindergym
																															Kinderdance
																															Preschool Swimming (TAC)
																															Preschool Yoga
																															Tech Tots
																															Preschool Art
																															Junior Engineering
																															Art Ventures Workshops
																															JumpStart Sports
																															Elementary Engineering
																															Art 4U2



Program		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Computer Explorers	B						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												
Babysitting Training	B											X	X	X	X	X										
Hapkido Youth Beginner	B									X	X	X	X													
Hapkido Youth Intermediate	B									X	X	X	X													
Hapkido Youth Int Ext	B									X	X	X	X													
Digital Moviemaking	B									X	X	X	X	X												
Hapkido Teen/Adult Beginner	B													X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hapkido Teen/Adult Intermediate	B																									
Hapkido Teen/Adult Int Ext	B																									
Hapkido Advanced	B													X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ballroom Dance	B																X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ballroom Dance Strictly Latin	B																X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dance Fitness	F																X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pilates	B																X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nia Non-Impact Fitness	B																X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Decorating	B														X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
SAT Assistance	B															X	X	X								
Health & Wellness Seminars	B																X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
JumpStart Preschool Camp	B			X	X	X																				
Preschool Fun Camp	B			X	X	X																				
Curious Kids PreSch. Nature Camp	B			X	X	X																				
Preschool Art Camp	B				X	X																				
Youth Art Camp	B						X	X	X	X	X	X	X													
JumpStart Sports Camp	B				X	X	X	X	X	X	X															
Mini Youth Basketball Camp	B					X	X	X	X	X																
Youth Basketball Camp	B							X	X	X	X	X	X	X												
Drills & Thrills Basketball	B							X	X	X	X	X	X	X												
Summer Fun Day Camp	B						X	X	X	X	X	X														

26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55+	Program	
																														Computer Explorers	
																															Babysitting Training
																															Hapkido Youth Beginner
																															Hapkido Youth Intermediate
																															Hapkido Youth Int Ext
																															Digital Moviemaking
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Hapkido Teen/Adult Beginner
																															Hapkido Teen/Adult Intermediate
																													X	Hapkido Teen/Adult Int Ext	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Hapkido Advanced
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Ballroom Dance
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Ballroom Dance Strictly Latin
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Dance Fitness
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Pilates
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Nia Non-Impact Fitness
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Decorating
																															SAT Assistance
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Health & Wellness Seminars
																															JumpStart Preschool Camp
																															Preschool Fun Camp
																															Curious Kids PreSch. Nature Camp
																															Preschool Art Camp
																															Youth Art Camp
																															JumpStart Sports Camp
																															Mini Youth Basketball Camp
																															Youth Basketball Camp
																															Drills & Thrills Basketball
																															Summer Fun Day Camp



HALL CENTER PROGRAMS

Program		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Fun Days Track Out Camp	B						X	X	X	X	X	X														
Indoor Concerts	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jazz Concerts	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Orchestra Concerts	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pizza and a Show	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Live Theatre	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dance Performances	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dances	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Special Events	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Art Shows	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Book Launches	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Poetry Readings	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Outdoor Concerts	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Historical Society Presentations	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Morning Movies	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Play-On	B								X	X	X															
Creative Drama	B						X	X																		
Apex Players	B										X	X	X	X												
Joy of Colored Pencils	B																									
Group Voice	B								X	X	X	X	X	X	X											
Hilarious Homeschoolers	B									X	X	X	X	X												
Go Medieval Camp	B						X	X	X	X	X	X														
Creative Players Camp	B						X	X	X																	
Apex Players Camp	B										X	X	X	X												
Page to Stage Camp	B										X	X	X	X	X											
Kids on Stage Camp	B									X	X	X	X													
Wild Outside, Wild Inside	B						X	X	X	X	X	X														
Pastels: Fast and Fabulous	B																									

26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55+	Program
																														Fun Days Track Out Camp
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Indoor Concerts
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Jazz Concerts
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Orchestra Concerts
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Pizza and a Show
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Live Theatre
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Dance Performances
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Dances
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Special Events
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Art Shows
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Book Launches
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Poetry Readings
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Outdoor Concerts
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Historical Society Presentations
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Morning Movies
																													Play-On	
																														Creative Drama
																														Apex Players
																											X			Joy of Colored Pencils
																														Group Voice
																														Hilarious Homeschoolers
																														Go Medieval Camp
																														Creative Players Camp
																														Apex Players Camp
																														Page to Stage Camp
																														Kids on Stage Camp
																														Wild Outside, Wild Inside
																											X			Pastels: Fast and Fabulous



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# Section Four

## Needs Assessment

### PUBLIC INPUT AND INVOLVEMENT OVERVIEW

Public involvement is imperative in parks and recreation planning. In addition to analyzing demographics and comparing trends, there is no better gauge for identifying needs than asking users for their desires, opinions, and ideas. For this plan, public input was gathered by consulting the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Advisory Commission, distributing hard-copy and electronic surveys, and attending “piggy-back” events. The electronic survey was accessible via a project website, project Facebook page, the Town website, and computer kiosks in the Community Center. To stimulate awareness of the plan, information cards were distributed at Parks and Recreation facilities, the project team manned a booth at community events, and the Town posted announcements and news on their website, sent email blasts out to past and present users, and included the survey in utility bill distribution.

### COMMUNITY EVENTS

In lieu of arranging public open houses or workshops, it is more effective to “go where the people are.” As part of the planning process, events were identified

**Apex**  
Parks & Recreation Master Plan

**It's Time for You to Decide!**

- More Parks?
- Different Facilities?
- New classes & workshops?

**Tell us what YOU would like to see!**

For more information about the project, visit [www.apexparksplan.com](http://www.apexparksplan.com).

Contact: John Brown | Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources  
919.249.3344 | [john.brown@apexnc.org](mailto:john.brown@apexnc.org)

Example of Information Cards: four different messages were distributed throughout the community to raise awareness of the project.



Apex Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Master Plan project website.

that would be suitable to attend with a team equipped with information about the plan, existing conditions maps, surveys, information cards, and general parks and recreation information. Booths were set up during Apex Concerts on the Lawn, sports registration at the Community Center, and during the Apex Turkey Trot. Attendees were invited to share their vision for the park plan, comment on the map to address geographic gaps in service, indicate ideal locations for greenways, communicate their needs for programs, and complete a survey in-person, or online.

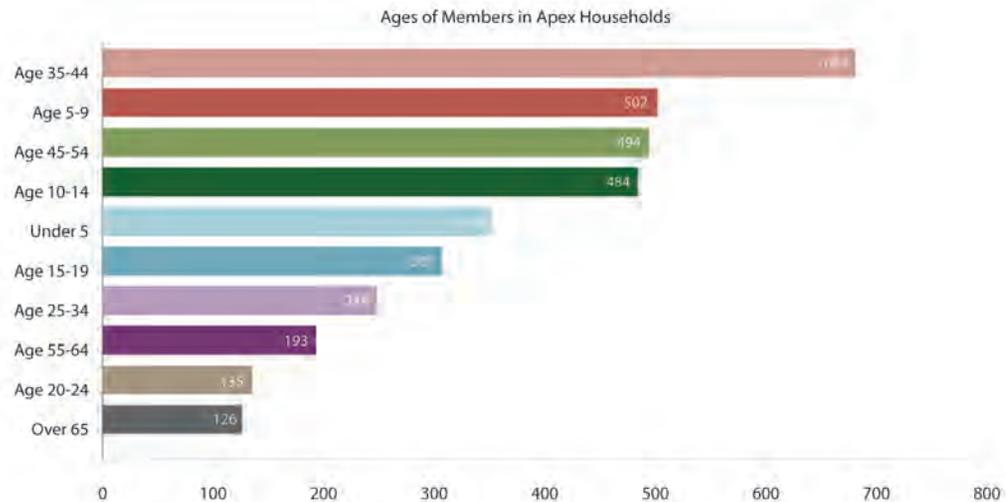
## ON-LOCATION AND WEB-BASED SURVEY

As a key component of the plan, the Town prepared a survey to assess residents' needs, attitudes, and opinions related to improving parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services. The survey was voluntary and invited individuals to comment openly. While not statistically significant, the information

captured was valuable in providing insight into local public opinion and offering a framework that reflects current priorities of the community while planning for future needs. Most residents who feel invested in the quality of life that parks and recreation programs offer appreciate the opportunity to offer feedback to shape the future of Apex facilities and program variety.

## SURVEY RESULTS

The survey consisted of 23 questions, including an open-ended response, tailored to capture user needs. Results of the survey indicated that most respondents were female (64.5 percent), between 35-44 years of age (46.1 percent), and lived within the Town limits of Apex (92.2 percent). A vast majority of respondents indicated there were teens in their household (74.1 percent), while other households included a person with a physical disability (15.5 percent) or mental disability (10.1 percent). Single parents comprised 13.6 percent of respondents. Many respondents have lived in the Apex area for 6-10 years (29.2 percent). The following summary provides highlights of the survey results.



### ACCESS TO PARKS AND GREENWAYS VIA BICYCLING AND WALKING

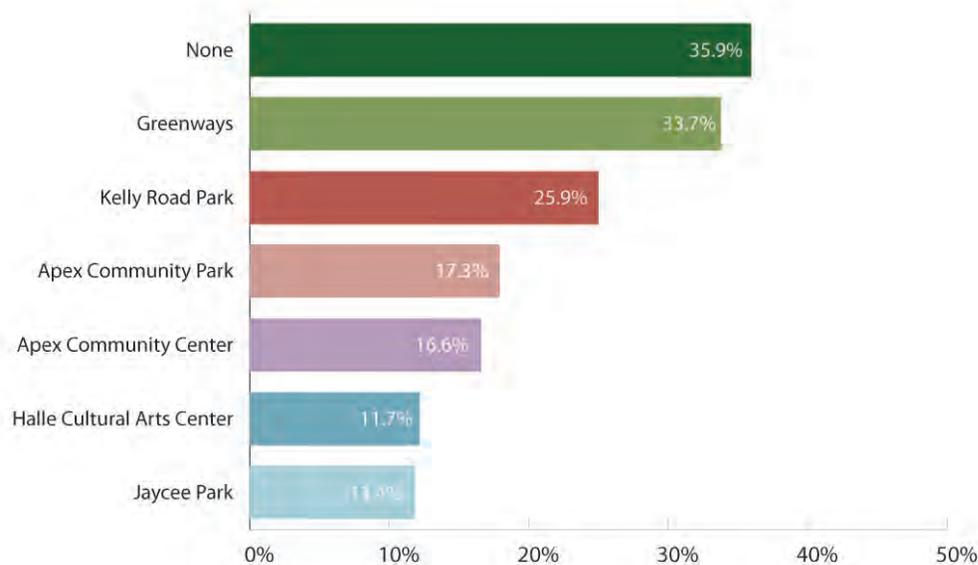
Several questions asked respondents about bicycling and walking to an Apex park from their residence (see chart below). While 35.88 percent of respondents selected “none” (meaning they do not walk or bike anywhere from their homes), greenways topped out in the access group with 33.73 percent indicating they currently walk or bike to these facilities from their homes. The most popular parks to bike or walk to were Kelly Road Park (25.9 percent), Apex Community Park (17.3 percent) and the Apex Community Center (16.6 percent). Both Jaycee Park and the Halle Cultural Arts Center were indicated as bikeable and walkable by around 11 percent of the respondents.

When respondents were asked the types of activities they wanted to walk or bike to, top responses included parks (86.1 percent), recreation areas (72.6 percent),

restaurants (53.4 percent), and grocery stores (48.8 percent). There was a high level of interest in places to walk/ride from, including neighborhoods (70.6 percent); parks (67.6 percent); recreation areas (54.8 percent); and restaurants (39.2 percent). Many respondents’ open-ended answers expressed a desire to walk or bicycle for short trips, such as to the post office, downtown, and other greenway trails.

The vast majority of respondents indicated that access to greenways or trails would encourage them to walk or bike more frequently (87.6 percent), followed by the development of bike lanes (53.3 percent), having a park close to their home (47.5 percent), and improved crossings at intersections (46.3 percent). Many open-ended responses called for more facilities, such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and bicycle racks, and a better understanding of where facilities are located, indicating a need for improved signage and mapping.

Top Facilities Walked or Biked to from Apex Homes





## ARTS AND CULTURE

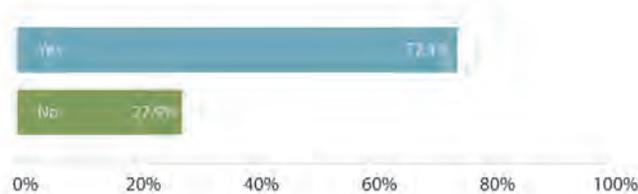
The Halle Cultural Arts Center provides concerts, performances, visual arts presentations, special events, community engagements, facility rentals, and educational programs. Visitation to the facility was mixed, with 60.8 percent of respondents having visited and 39.2 percent never visiting the facility. When asked to indicate why, many open-ended responses included lack of interest, lack of knowledge about the facility, or lack of promotional materials.

Arts and cultural programs included music, movies, theater, art, and lectures. Interest in children/family play participation was expressed by 40 percent of respondents. Other categories with a high rating of interest were movies (32.6 percent); dinner theater (30.4 percent); contemporary band (32.4 percent); and plays (31.2 percent). Categories of less interest were drama and theater classes (31.4 percent); performing arts classes (26.3 percent); and arts/lecture classes (both categories were 20 percent). When asked about supporting a public art installation program, the majority of respondents were supportive (57.7 percent); while 11.5 percent were not supportive, and 30.8 percent responded, “don’t know.”

## FACILITY AND PROGRAM USE

Almost three quarters of respondents indicated that they use neighboring town facilities or programs (72.1 percent). The most popular facilities and programs

Do You Use Facilities or Programs in Nearby Towns?



being used outside of Apex included Cary Tennis Park, Cary and Raleigh parks and greenways, and Cary dog parks (as indicated by open-ended responses).

As an exercise in preference and personal importance, participants were asked to rate how they would spend \$100 on facilities and programs. The question allowed for any distribution of funds – from \$100 on one option to spreading the total across all categories. The most popular preference was greenways and trails (65.3 percent), followed by playgrounds (32.6 percent); an amphitheater (31.8 percent); and dog parks (27.5 percent). However, an analysis of the sums indicates further separation and a different order of preference. Greenways and trails were funded for a total of \$60,000 with dog parks coming in second at \$12,699, an amphitheater at third (\$11,780) with the fourth highest funded facility being playground (\$11,368).

## SPECIAL EVENTS

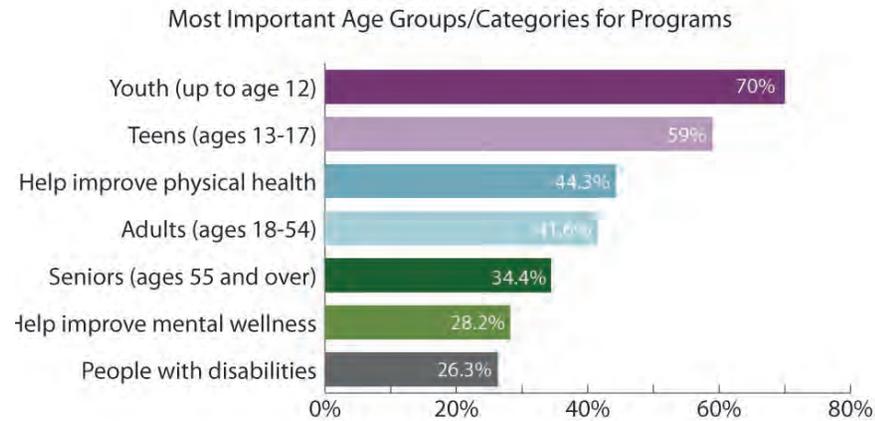
Respondents were asked to indicate where they would prefer to attend a family concert if the Town of Apex hosted the event. Locations ranked as follows: downtown (39.2 percent); in a park (33.3 percent); and town hall campus (27.5 percent). Popular park locations included Apex Community Park and Kelly Road (based on open-ended responses).

Top responses for preferred events among respondents were community festivals (53.9 percent); concerts (45.6 percent); and outdoor movies (30.3 percent). Lower event preferences included community runs and parades. Open-ended responses were widely varied, from a desire to see more seasonal events, pet-related events, and food fairs.

## PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND USER NEED

Respondents were asked to rate the top five activities they and their family enjoy within Apex. The top-ranked responses included: aquatics/swimming (40.2 percent); swimming (38.3 percent); biking (37.8 percent); hiking (32.7 percent); and fitness programs (31.8 percent).

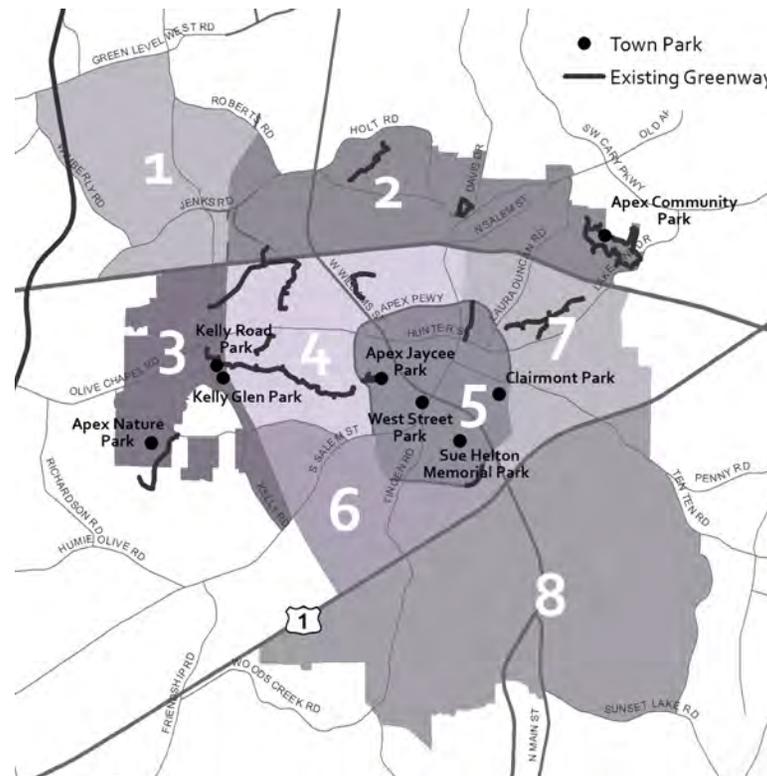
Respondents were asked to indicate age groups for which they wanted additional programs. The question was based on a sliding scale of “very important” to “very unimportant.” The most popular “very important” age groups were youth 12 and under (70.1 percent); teens (58.9 percent); and adults (41.6 percent).



## OPEN SPACE AND GREENWAYS

To determine areas of need for additional greenways, respondents were asked to rank their preferences based on map “zones.” The highest preferences for zones with additional greenways were Zone 3 (62.1 percent); Zone 4 (38.3 percent); and Zone 8 (38.1 percent).

A similar question structure was provided for open space and parks in “zones” of Apex. The highest-ranking zones were Zone 3 (60.5 percent); Zone 8 (43.4 percent); and Zone 7 (41 percent).



Zone Map used in survey.

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

The Town completed an in-house customer satisfaction survey in the fall of 2011 to understand citizen satisfaction with the quality of services provided by the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department. The purpose of the study was



*John Brown sharing greenway plans with citizens of Apex at a concert on the lawn.*

to assist town leaders in setting budgeting priorities and establishing policy decisions.

A total of 450 responses were gathered over the course of one month. Seventy-seven percent of respondents were female, with the majority ages of the members in each household being between 35 and 54.

The top Apex recreation facilities and parks that respondents had visited in the last year were (in order of popularity): the Apex Community Center, Apex Community Park, Kelly Road Park, Halle Cultural Arts Center, local greenways, and Jaycee Park.

When asked to rate various community parks and recreation facilities and efforts, adequate maintenance and repair of existing facilities was listed as most important. Additional greenway trails ranked as the next most important, followed by additional active recreation facilities. A skateboard park and community center were ranked as the lowest in priority.

When asked about what factors would encourage more use of recreational programs and facilities, the top two responses were more activities and more knowledge about the programs offered. In the open-ended responses, many respondents indicated access to more senior programs and health programs would benefit the community. These findings are consistent with the recent survey .

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# Section Five

## Recommendations

### OVERVIEW

Recreation professionals, including the National Recreation and Park Association, have traditionally offered guidance to communities by publishing “ratios” for parks, facilities, and/or programs based upon acres or facilities per thousand people. Ratios were adapted over the years using a variety of methods by a number of communities, resulting in noticeable inconsistency. These inconsistencies in supply and demand resulted in modifications to the industry standard methods for parks and recreation planning. Instead of population ratios, planning methods include analyzing demographics, current demand, future demand, cultural trends, city or town capacity, and other relevant factors. Consulting with residents through various outreach efforts helps define and measure the current level of service and future growth opportunities for facilities and programs. A clear vision and specific goals maintain the focus of the planning process and are cross-checked to ensure recommendations and action steps comply with the original intent of the study.

The Town of Apex Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Advisory Commission strives to achieve the Departmental and Master Plan vision by using the following goals as a measure of success:

- Provide recreational opportunities that suit resident needs within a service area as defined by distance.

- Create a park system that residents can access by walking, biking, and driving.
- Provide recreational opportunities that promote an “active” lifestyle to maintain a high quality of life in Apex.
- Provide opportunities for Apex residents to enjoy natural, historical, and cultural resources, and protect these resources for future generations.
- Ensure residents are satisfied with the types of facilities available, as well as their condition and maintenance.

Recommendations and prioritization evolve from overlapping and analyzing the *2001 Parks, Recreation, Greenways, and Open Space Master Plan*; related plans, including the *2011 Transportation Plan*; facility and program inventory; the cultural and demographic makeup of Apex and anticipated growth; adjacent facilities and programs; and community, staff, and stakeholder input. Recommendations are presented in four key areas: Park Facilities, Greenways and Connectivity, Programs, and Land Acquisition.

Before recommendations are made, the system needs to be classified, or defined, to plan for diverse offerings. Classifications are crafted based on the current and future composition of the Town - including density, residential areas, commercial centers, and population demographics.



## PARK ZONES AND CLASSIFICATION ZONES

In past Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Plans, the Town of Apex divided the town into eight Park Zones. While this method helped identify geographic gaps, it does not provide standard measures within each zone. Further, review of reference material and discussions with staff revealed that these zones are not used anywhere but in the *2001 Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Master Plan*. Residents and town staff typically reference facilities geographically by major roadway. For example, areas north of highway 64 (east or west); areas located between highway 64 and US 1; and areas south (east or west) of US 1. This Plan recommends discontinuing the use of park zones in favor of geographic and directional referencing.

### CLASSIFICATIONS

As the community grows and diversifies, the supply of parks and facilities will need to respond to changing patterns. The following classification is a modification of the existing park types as defined in the 2001 Plan. Adjustments in size and service area respond to resident needs and recommendations for future facilities and programs:

**Pocket Parks/Urban Parks:** Pocket parks are urban downtown spaces that can meet a variety of needs including: green space, urban play space, areas for resting, or public art space. It is recommended this typology be added in response to resident need for more urban public space.

**Size:** Typically 0-1/4 acres  
**Service Area:** Apex Downtown district

**Neighborhood Parks:** These are currently in the classification system and were the smallest, most numerous type of park in the Town. These should be within walking distance of homes. Many of these parks have been created as part of a neighborhood

development and/or PUD to serve neighborhood recreational needs. This Plan recommends increasing the service area to 1/2 mile, which is typical of neighborhood parks.

**Size:** 3/4- 3 acres,  
optimal is 5-10 acres  
**Service Area:** 1/4-1/2 mile

**Area Parks:** These serve a larger population and are accessible by walking, biking, and driving. They typically provide support facilities such as restrooms and parking.

**Size:** 20 acres-50 acres  
**Service Area:** 1-2 miles

**Community Parks:** range in size with multiple uses provided and are typically created to serve the entire town. It is recommended these sites be connected through Greenways and/or sidewalks with adequate parking facilities.

**Size:** 50-200 Acres  
**Service Area:** 1/2 mile- 3+ mile radius.

**Greenways:** are linear parks which may include trails and paths, and may be along stream corridors, abandoned railways, or utility easements. Trails and paths should provide connections to and from residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, commercial centers, and local areas of interest. Due to the demand for this type of park it is recommended this become a park classification type in addition to a type of facility to underscore the need for future acquisition and development.

**Size:** Length varies based upon connections and destinations  
**Service Area:** varies and is based upon how many community elements are connected and where connections are made.



*Pocket and Urban Parks serve multiple purposes from daily lounging, to serving as rentable space, and becoming “rooms” for large events.*

*Tanner Springs Park  
Portland, OR*

**Specialty Use Facility:** Specialty facilities provide a specific recreational resource not typically found in a traditional park setting and/or park typology. Examples of specialty facilities and/or parks in the Town of Apex are Halle Cultural Arts Center, Apex Community Center, and Hunter Street Dog Park. A Specialty Park or facility can be separate or a facility or use provided as part of a larger park offering. It is recommended this typology is added to the classification system as recreational needs continue to diversify with population growth.

**Shared Used Facilities:** are facilities that are used and/or managed in partnership with another agency or provider. An example of shared used facilities in Apex is the partnership with Wake County Schools for facility use at area elementary and middle schools. Another type of shared use facility would be a partnership between municipalities.

## **PARK FACILITIES** *WHERE RESIDENTS PARTICIPATE IN RECREATION*

Overall, the Apex Parks and Recreation facilities are in good condition. Most parks are well maintained with updated equipment, clean restrooms, well-manicured fields, and a variety of active play spaces.

Apex Nature Park will provide additional trails, playgrounds, tennis courts, soccer fields, picnic shelters, a dog park, and disc golf course, augmenting current offerings.

The survey revealed a large demand for greenways. Comparing Apex to adjacent communities, the Town is behind in supplying accessible walking and biking facilities for residents. Cary supplies over 40 miles of greenways, with more under construction, and Raleigh boasts almost 100 miles. Many residents are traveling to Cary, Raleigh, and Holly Springs to use the connected network of trails for recreation and exercise.

With future planning efforts, Apex has the opportunity to build trails to address the recreation, exercise, and transportation desires of the community. By strategically planning for alignments that connect neighborhoods to parks, neighborhoods to commercial centers, parks to parks, and greenways to other greenways, Apex can become a component of an interconnected regional system.

The survey revealed other top priorities for facilities:

1. Downtown festival space and expanding the downtown area



2. Unprogrammed open space and multi-use fields
3. Playgrounds
4. Amphitheater
5. Dog parks
6. Future Active and Passive Recreation

### DOWNTOWN SPACE

Many members of the community expressed an interest in Town festivals and events. Concerts are currently held on the lawn at the community center and downtown in the parking lot fronting the Chamber of Commerce building. Survey respondents prefer a downtown location, but the facility lacks the area and design to facilitate large crowds, tents, and vendors. Local merchants and the Town economy would benefit from hosting events within, near, and in partnership with merchants in the historic downtown area. While the community center lawn is not far from Salem Street, no visual connection exists to encourage attendees to circulate throughout the shops and restaurants before or following events. It is recommended the Town partner with local vendors to create events that support and encourage participation on town campus and promote circulation to and from the downtown core.

### UNPROGRAMMED SPACE

Public input and facility inventory indicated that while Apex offers many ballfields and tennis courts, there is a deficiency in unprogrammed open space. As the Town acquires additional land for parks and designs future facilities, emphasis should be placed on providing unprogrammed open space and space for other sports, such as lacrosse, which ranked highly as a need in the open ended portion of the survey. The park inventory also highlights opportunities to improve usage of areas within existing parks. These spaces serve the community by allowing groups to assemble for activities, such as ultimate frisbee, flag football, kickball, remote control aircraft flights, kite flying, and picnicking. Both wide open

fields and acres of wooded land can serve this purpose, and would complement the existing facilities.

### PLAYGROUNDS

Playgrounds are currently being constructed at Hunter Street Park, Seagroves Farm Park, and Phase Two of the Apex Nature Park. This should alleviate some of the pressure for additional playgrounds; however, there are still underserved areas of Apex that should include playgrounds in the land acquisition and park design process. Additionally, continued use of poured in place and manufactured surfacing will help improve access to these facilities for all Apex residents.

### AMPHITHEATER AND DOG PARK

Plans for the Apex Nature Park include both an amphitheater and dog park. The amphitheater and dog park openings at Hunter Street and Apex Nature Park should be announced via media outlets, at other park facilities, and through the department website. The Amphitheater will likely fill the need expressed for that type of facility, however, additional dog park locations should be identified for future park land acquisition to serve the areas without easy access to these two sites.

### ACTIVE RECREATION

Residents are satisfied with the current level of service for active recreation offerings. However, in order to maintain these high level offerings, the Town needs to plan for future population growth over the next 7 to 10 years. Active facilities include multi-use fields, soccer fields, softball fields, basketball courts, and tennis courts. In order to best serve the Town and residents it is recommended these facilities be planned as a sports complex. This packaging of multiple fields will require acquisition of a larger park space with multiple uses that can serve a variety of interests, and become a venue for hosting tournaments. This can be an economic generator by bringing people to area restaurants, overnight accommodations, and shops.



*This flexible urban space at the American Tobacco Campus in Durham, NC, serves as a model for the type of space Apex citizens need: flexible, multipurpose, staging areas that are not solely used for events, hard and soft surfaces, accessible, and located in the core of the downtown.*

### OTHER NEEDS

Dog walking, lacrosse, fishing, in-line skating, climbing, zip-lines, ropes courses, and skateboarding ranked high in the open ended section of the “other activities” residents would like to see offered by the Town. Survey participants also expressed a desire for more teen programs. Several of these activities were also mentioned in the 2001 report. The town should provide for these activities in future park development.

### CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Halle Cultural Arts Center is well positioned in the downtown area. This location allows for the Center to mutually benefit the businesses on Salem Street. Existing and new programs offered at the Halle Center should be created to encourage use of the downtown

before or after classes or events. While the proximity to other economic generators is an advantage, access to the building is difficult. Additional signage is needed to indicate where to park and to warn of a pedestrian presence along the alley next to and behind the building. Uneven pavement is not only a problem for vehicles accessing the parking area, but also for pedestrians moving from cars to the front entrance of the building. Users, particularly those with physical challenges, find it difficult to navigate the pavement and gain access to the building. A pedestrian path (a striped walkway at a minimum) should be added to provide space for people to walk from the front of the building to the parking lot. An ADA accessible ramp and alert/automatic door system should be installed at the back of the building to enable entry by those with mobility challenges.



Residents would like to expanded offerings that are geared toward family participation, such as movie nights, plays, and classes involving the entire family.

### NEXT STEPS

To address the needs of the community and provide facilities that are well maintained and accessible, Apex should:

1. Focus on developing a comprehensive greenway system (See Greenways and Connectivity).
2. Look for ways to include walking facilities and/or trails within current parks and town facilities, such as the Town Complex.
3. Look for partnerships to host downtown festivals and concerts (See Land Acquisition).
4. Add facilities for indoor programming geared toward seniors and teens via community center expansion, reusing an existing structure, or building a new facility.
5. Plan for unprogrammed open space in future park designs (see underserved areas of town on the land acquisition map).
6. Target underserved areas for future park sites and a sports complex.
7. Improve physical access and awareness of the Halle Center.
8. Examine opportunities to incorporate playgrounds into existing and future parks.
9. Provide an equal balance of active and passive recreational offerings in future park sites.
10. Incorporate specialty recreation features and facilities into future park development projects.

## GREENWAYS AND CONNECTIVITY

### HOW TO CONNECT RESIDENTS

Greenways and the ability to walk or bike within the community overwhelmingly surfaced as priorities for survey participants. Eighty-six percent of respondents indicated a need for greenway connections between parks and seventy percent desire links from their homes to commercial centers. Running and walking were also a favorite activity among those surveyed. With only 26 miles of existing greenway, residents are dramatically underserved and turning to other areas including Cary, Raleigh, and Holly Springs to fulfill their recreation requirements. However this does not address the challenge of access to greenways from their homes to Apex commercial centers. This need is also evident in the *2011 Apex Transportation Plan Update*.

#### **Objective 5:**

Promote a pedestrian-friendly environment by filling in gaps and improving interconnectivity in the sidewalk system.

#### **Action Step 5.2:**

Coordinate with the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department to create a greenway network that allows people to walk both for recreation and for transportation.

#### **Objective 8:**

Support more bike lanes and trails to parks and community activity centers.

#### **Action Step 8.2:**

Coordinate with the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department to identify future activity centers.

Creating a well-connected network of greenways, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities will enhance the livability of Apex and address the desires of the community - both present and future. Greenways should radiate from the downtown center; connect the park system; provide links from residences to daily needs; support economic development by steering visitors into the community; and provide a series of recreational loops varying in length.

Currently, the majority of greenways in Apex are located along waterways and within parks. To become a component of the Town’s infrastructure and provide the desired transportation function, the definition of greenways will extend beyond paths in natural

areas along creeks and streams. Multiuse sidepaths are types of greenways that are located within the right of way separated from vehicular movement. These sidepaths provide highly visible routes along existing roads serving both pedestrians and cyclists. One benefit of multiuse sidepaths is the perceived safety for inexperienced cyclists and families - therefore supporting efforts to increase bicycling as a transportation mode.

Other likely alignments for greenways are along utility corridors. These cleared corridors often provide ideal routes from neighborhoods to commercial centers. Other potential routes are rail lines, both active and non-active. Rails-With-Trails and Rails-To-

**Priorities listed in the 2011 Apex Transportation Update include:**

- Proximity to pedestrian/bicycle generator
  - School
  - High Density Residential
  - Office
  - Park
- Connection to regional trails/routes
- Location along thoroughfare or collector street
- Prime connection within the transportation network
- Proximity to minority or low-income area
- Support for transportation as primary function as opposed to recreation

**EXISTING AND PLANNED ROAD WIDTHS AND ROW WIDTHS**

The chart below indicates sidepaths with a verge have the potential to fit within the current and future ROW - even with proposed road width increases. Feasibility studies will provide further information including physical barriers such as utilities.

Road Name	Road Width In Feet		ROW Width In Feet		Fit 2010			Fit 2035		
	2010	2035	2010	2035	10' Path	12' Path	Verge	10' Path	12' Path	Verge
Apex Barbecue Rd	20/21	30	60	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Apex Peakway	28/71	71	60/100	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Davis Drive	24/32	75	30/60	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E Williams Street	24/69	43/75	100	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Evans Road*										
Green Level Church	18	43/75	60	70/100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Humie Olive Rd	19	30	60	65	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hunter Street	27/35	35/43	60/80	60/80	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kelly Rd	19/27	75	60	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Laura Duncan Road	20	43/75	60/75	65/105	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N Salem Street	22/36	36/41	20/60	50/70	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Old Raleigh Road	Varies	43	70	70	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Olive Chapel	18/32	30/75	60	70/100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S Salem	22/43	35/75	50/60	50/100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vision Drive*										
Williams Street	36/64	43/69	100/150	100/150	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

\*Not included in 2011 Apex Transportation Plan



Trails projects are becoming more prevalent across the country. A comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan should complement this greenway system with on-road bike facilities and a network of sidewalks. This web of travelways for cyclists and pedestrians will also contribute to the economic development of the Town. Commercial centers and the core of downtown will prosper by being safely connected to neighborhoods. Linkages from the

American Tobacco Trail and adjacent Town greenways will also help drive visitors to retail and restaurant venues in the community.

To create an environment replete with safe, healthy, bicycle and pedestrian access, priorities should include a legible wayfinding system, a destination-based greenway system, and intersection improvements.

## Grenways and Multi-Use Side Paths

### General Design Practices

#### Description

Multi-use paths can provide a desirable environment, particularly for recreation and users of all skill levels preferring separation from traffic. Bicycle paths should generally provide directional travel opportunities not provided by existing roadways.

#### Guidance

##### Width

- 10 feet is recommended in most situations and will be adequate for moderate to heavy use.
- 12 feet is recommended for heavy use situations with high concentrations of multiple users. A separate track (5' minimum) can be provided for pedestrian use.

##### Lateral Clearance

- A 2 foot or greater shoulder on both sides of the path should be provided. An additional foot of lateral clearance (total of 3') is required by the MUTCD for the installation of signage or other furnishings.

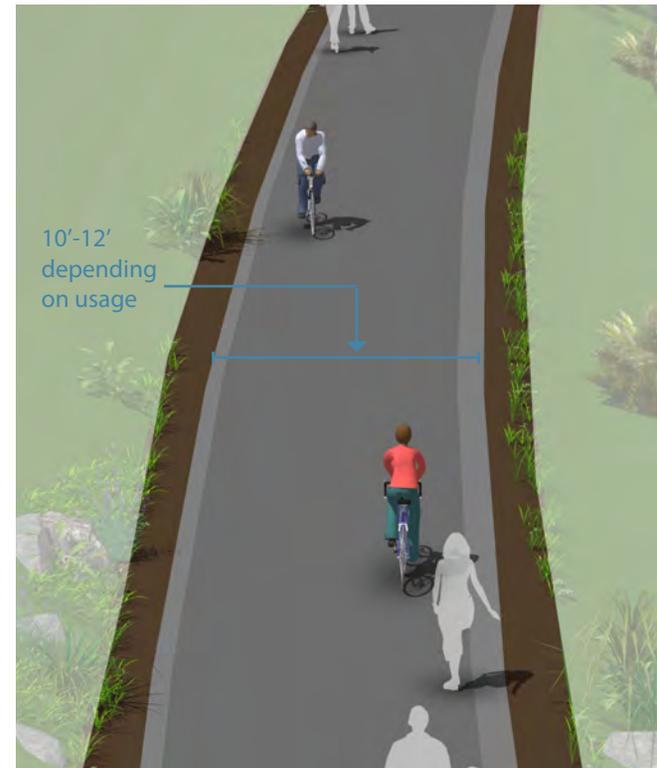
##### Overhead Clearance

- Clearance to overhead obstructions should be 8 feet minimum, with 10 feet recommended.

##### Striping

- When striping is required, use a 4 inch dashed yellow centerline stripe with 4 inch solid white edge lines.
- Solid centerlines can be provided on tight or blind corners, and on the approaches to roadway crossings.

Terminate the path where it is easily accessible to and from the street system, preferably at a controlled intersection or at the beginning of a dead-end street.



## Shared Use Paths Along Roadways

### Description

A shared use path allows for two-way, off-street bicycle use and also may be used by pedestrians, skaters, wheelchair users, joggers and other non-motorized users. These facilities are frequently found in parks, along rivers and beaches, and in greenbelts or utility corridors where there are few conflicts with motorized vehicles.

Along roadways, these facilities create a situation where a portion of the bicycle traffic rides against the normal flow of motor vehicle traffic and can result in wrong-way riding where bicyclists enter or leave the path.

The AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities generally recommends against the development of shared-use paths directly adjacent to roadways.

### Guidance

- 8 feet is the minimum allowed for a two-way bicycle path and is only recommended for low traffic situations.
- 10 feet is recommended in most situations and will be adequate for moderate to heavy use.
- 12 feet is recommended for heavy use situations with high concentrations of multiple users such as joggers, bicyclists, rollerbladers and pedestrians. A separate track (5' minimum) can be provided for pedestrian use.
- Bicycle lanes should be provided as an alternate (more transportation-oriented) facility whenever possible.

Pay special attention to the entrance/exit of the path as bicyclists may continue to travel on the wrong side of the street.





### WAYFINDING SYSTEM

A comprehensive wayfinding system for Apex should be approached from both recreation and transportation perspectives. As the system of interconnected greenways, multiuse sidepaths, and sidewalks expands and gaps are filled, residents and visitors will be able to access longer recreation loops, schools, commercial centers, and other parks without using personal vehicles. For economic development purposes, signage should be placed along the American Tobacco Trail and adjacent Town greenways to drive traffic to Apex commercial centers and the downtown. Through travels of the American Tobacco Trail and those using the Holly Springs and Cary greenways are more likely to use services in Apex if maps and travel times are clearly posted.

Components of a successful wayfinding system include standards for logos, color, typography, and symbols. All of these elements create an identity package for sign types, such as trailhead identification, trail markers, mile markers, pedestrian directionals, regulatory signage, confidence markers, interpretive signage, and information kiosks. The same package can also be

used to create a hierarchy of signage for different park types: regional, community, and neighborhood.

Two types of maps should be used in the wayfinding system. Trail maps should be included at trailheads and major spurs. Items included on the map should be the trail alignment, mileage of the trail, parking areas, restrooms, spurs, adjacent road names, and adjacent neighborhoods. Large maps showing the entire greenway system should be placed at major trailheads, parks, downtown, and on the American Tobacco trail. Existing and future trails, commercial centers, important landmarks, and mileage should be indicated on these maps. Walk and bike times and other information can also be included to educate and inform the public about the ease of using the system to navigate Apex.

### DESTINATION-BASED GREENWAY SYSTEM

The recommended greenway system includes waterway alignments and multiuse sidepaths as previously described. These routes radiate from the center of the downtown, connect parks to parks, and connect people to their daily needs. The Town



Typologies and designs from the 2006 Greenway Standards created for Raleigh, NC by DJS Design.



Bond Park in Cary, NC, serves as a hub for several greenways. The map kiosk includes information about trails and areas sites.

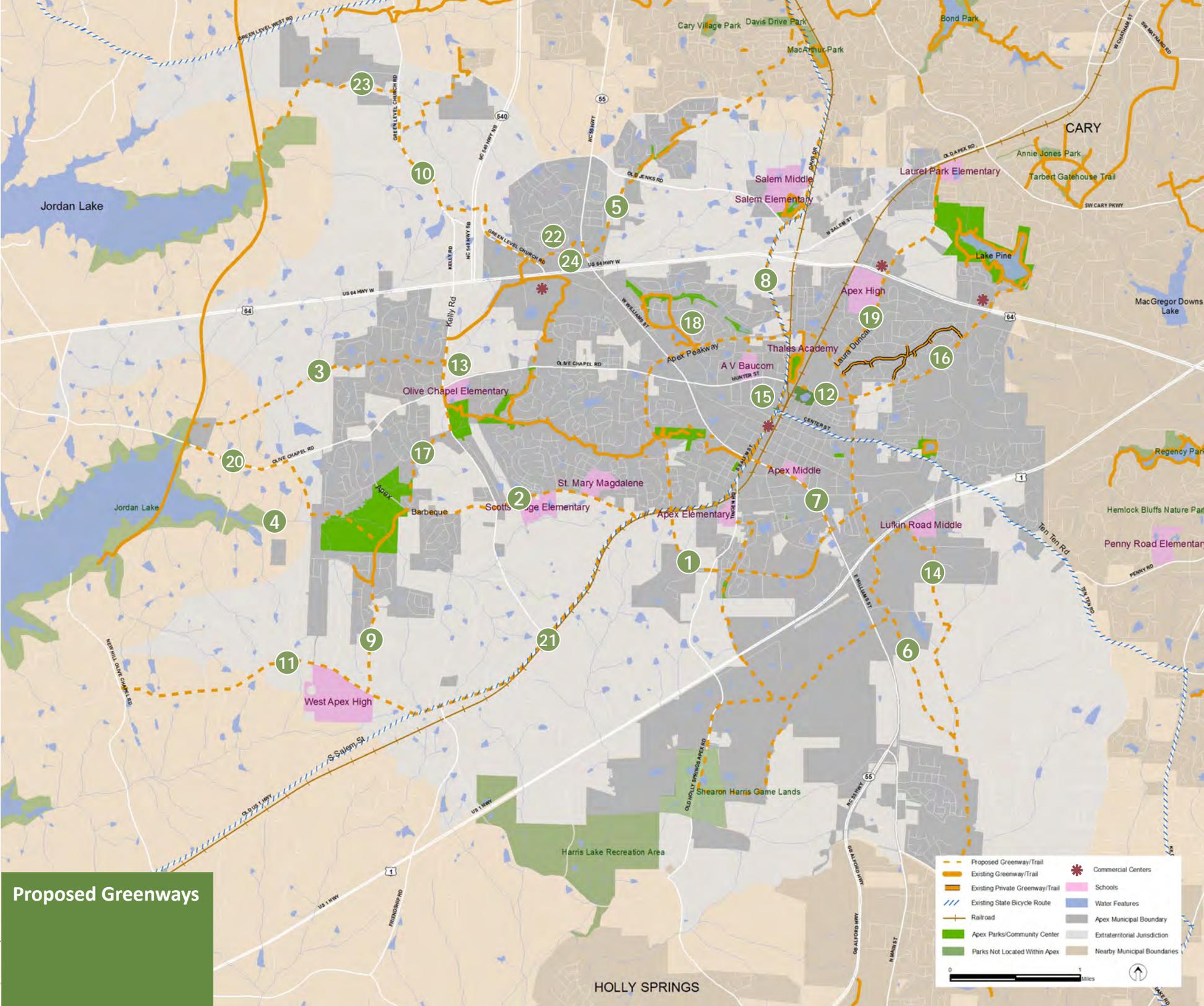


needs to focus on a connected system that provides links to currently missing sections, and allows for residents to get to and from their neighborhoods, parks, and commercial centers. This system will grow and change as new residential and commercial areas are developed. Schools and libraries should also be accessible by bicycle and foot and are emphasized in the network. In addition to driving the local economy, a master plan of route alignments addresses the needs indicated by survey participants. The community needs safe walking and bicycling paths that connect to parks (86 percent), recreation areas (72 percent), restaurants (53 percent), grocery stores

(48%), and neighborhoods (47 percent). Four critical connections revealed from survey questions and free response comments are: (1) American Tobacco Trail to downtown Apex via the Beaver Creek Greenway; (2) Old Raleigh Road Multiuse Sidepath linking downtown, town hall, commercial centers, the Eva Perry Regional Library, and community park; (3) Apex Barbecue Road Greenway from Apex Nature Park to Salem Street downtown; (4) Bond Park Connector Greenway. These four routes are the first priority for further feasibility studies and construction document development.

	LENGTH (MILES)	WIDTH (FEET)	Public	Private	Asphalt	Boardwalk	Concrete
1. Apex Peakway Multi Use Side Path	5.633	10-12	X		X		
2. Apex Barbecue Road Multi Use Side Path	2.113	10-12	X		X		
3. Reedy Branch Greenway	2.139	10-12	X		X		
4. Beaver Creek South Trail	0.352	6	X				X
5. Charleston Village Connection	0.034	10-12	X		X		
6. West Middle Creek Greenway	1.714	10-12	X		X		
7. E Williams St Multi Use Side Path	0.866	10-12	X		X		
8. Davis Dr Multi Use Side Path	0.813	10-12	X		X		
9. Evans Rd Multi Use Side Path	0.426	10-12	X		X		
10. Green Level Church Multi Use Side Path	1.942	10-12	X		X		
11. Humie Olive Rd Multi Use Side Path	0.846	10-12	X		X		
12. Hunter St Multi Use Side Path	0.465	10-12	X		X		

	LENGTH (MILES)	WIDTH (FEET)	Public	Private	Asphalt	Boardwalk	Concrete
13. Kelly Rd Multi Use Side Path	1.399	10-12	X		X		
14. Middle Creek Greenway	3.806	10-12	X		X		
15. N Salem St Multi Use Side Path	1.424	10-12	X		X		
16. Old Raleigh Rd Multi Use Side Path	1.662	10-12	X		X		
17. Beaver Creek Greenway	0.189	10-12	X		X		
18. Haddon Hall Multi Use Side Path	0.144	10-12	X		X		
19. Laura Duncan Rd Multi Use Side Path	1.605	10-12	X		X		
20. Olive Chapel Multi Use Side Path	1.923	10-12	X		X		
21. S Salem Multi Use Side Path	3.134	10-12	X		X		
22. Vision Dr Multi Use Side Path	0.519	10-12	X		X		
23. White Oak Greenway	2.109	10-12	X		X		
24. William St Multi Use Side Path	0.163	10-12	X		X		



# Proposed Greenways

	Proposed Greenway/Trail		Commercial Centers
	Existing Greenway/Trail		Schools
	Existing Private Greenway/Trail		Water Features
	Existing State Bicycle Route		Apex Municipal Boundary
	Railroad		Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
	Apex Parks/Community Center		Nearby Municipal Boundaries
	Parks Not Located Within Apex		

0 1 Miles

↑

HOLLY SPRINGS



## INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to providing a system with logical connections from starting points to destinations, intersections, conflict points, and transitions are also critical to a successful, safe travelway. Greenways sometimes intersect roads where there are no crossing facilities. Safe mid-block crossing treatments or signage routing users to the nearest intersection are necessary. These intersections are also critical points. Safety measures include pedestrian countdown signals, high visibility crosswalks, curb ramps, pedestrian refuge islands, and parallel connections. Community input suggest fourteen key intersections in need of safety analysis and planning.

These intersections should be considered priorities for the Town's improvement plans. A bicycle and pedestrian plan for the Town can further identify intersections in need of facilities, and prioritize which facilities should be implemented immediately and those that can be constructed at a later date.

## KEY INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

- Kelly Road and Beaver Creek Commons Drive
- Kelly Road and Olive Chapel Road\*
- Kelly Road and Beaver Creek Greenway~
- Olive Chapel Road and Beaver Creek Greenway
- West Williams Street and Haddon Hall Drive^
- Salem Street and Williams Street^
- North Salem Street and the Apex Peakway
- Apex Peakway and Ambergate Station
- Laura Duncan Road and the Apex Peakway
- Laura Duncan Road and Hunter Street
- Hunter Street and the Apex Peakway
- Center Street and the Apex Peakway
- US 64 and Laura Duncan Road^
- US 64 and Olde Raleigh Road

*\*Proposed pedestrian crossing from 2011 Apex Transportation Plan.*

*^Existing pedestrian crossing from 2011 Apex Transportation Plan.*

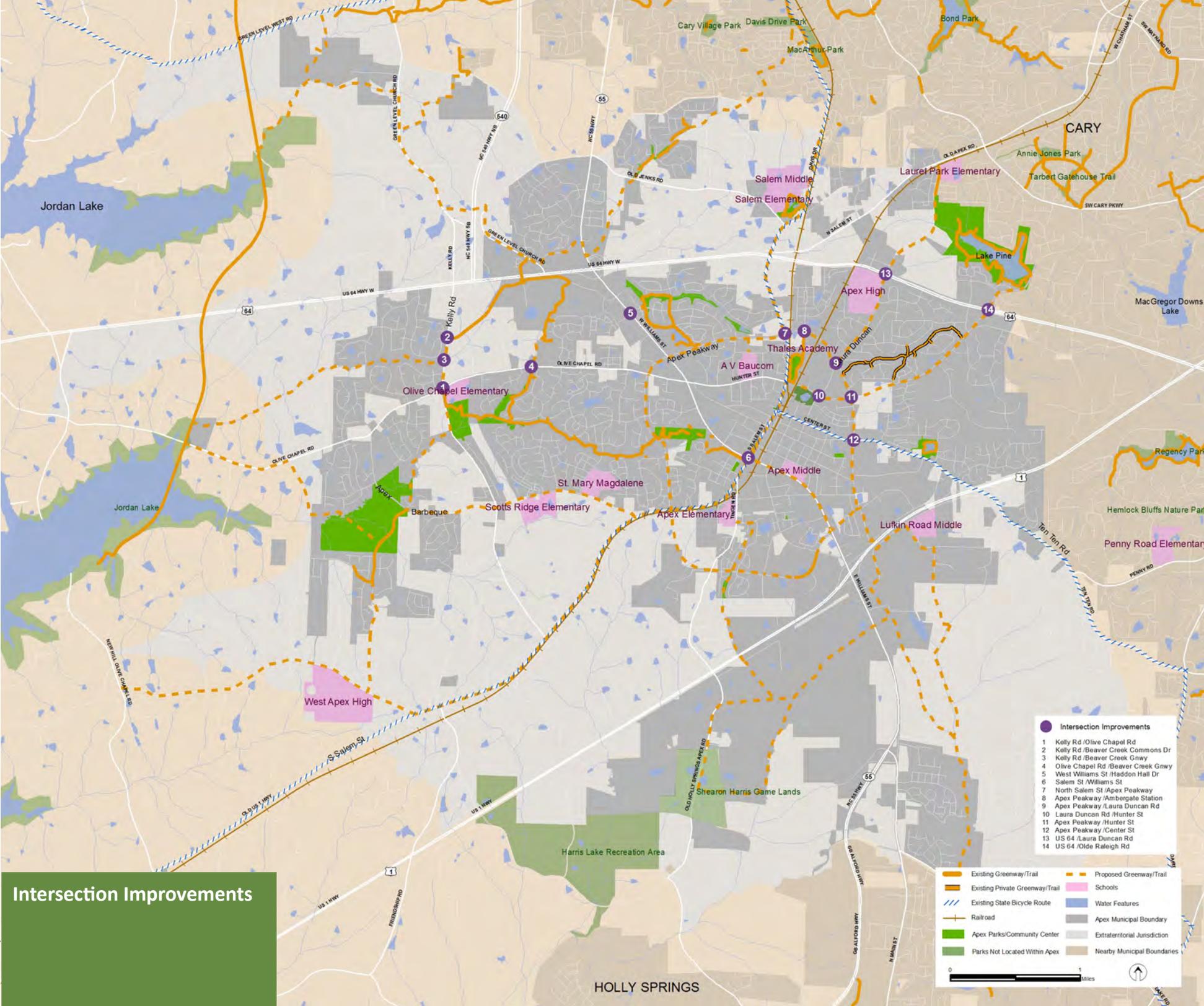
*This area should be studied to understand why this intersection is still perceived as unsafe.*

*~Proposed pedestrian bridge from 2011 Apex Transportation Plan.*

## NEXT STEPS

To fulfill the needs of the community and provide a system of greenways, multiuse sidepaths, bike facilities and sidewalks, the Town should:

1. Complete feasibility studies and design development for the top priority greenway system connections:
  - A. American Tobacco Trail to downtown Apex via the Beaver Creek Greenway;
    - i. Jaycee Park to Downtown (1500 l.f.)
    - ii. Kelly Road Park to Apex Nature Park (1.2 miles)
    - iii. Apex Nature Park to the American Tobacco Trail (2.3 miles)
  - B. Connect downtown to Apex Community park either by
    - i. Old Raleigh Road Multiuse Sidepath linking downtown, town hall, commercials centers, the Eva Perry Regional Library, and community park or
    - ii. by making Shepherds Vineyard a public greenway;
  - C. Complete the Middle Creek Greenway Connection from existing neighborhoods along highway 55 to the Holly Springs Greenway network to ensure connectivity under the future 540;
  - D. Work in partnership with the Town of Cary to complete the White Oak Creek Greenway;
  - E. Apex Barbecue Road Multi-use Path from Apex Nature Park to Salem Street downtown;
  - F. Bond Park Connector Greenway.
2. Complete separately, or in conjunction, a bicycle master plan and pedestrian master plan to provide an interconnected system of facilities (including routes, bike lanes, shared use lanes, bicycle parking facilities, sidewalks, intersection treatments, and signalization) and prioritize implementation. This will augment the existing prioritization in the Transportation Plan.



# Intersection Improvements

- Intersection Improvements**
- 1 Kelly Rd /Olive Chapel Rd
  - 2 Kelly Rd /Beaver Creek Commons Dr
  - 3 Kelly Rd /Beaver Creek Gwny
  - 4 Olive Chapel Rd /Beaver Creek Gwny
  - 5 West Williams St /Haddon Hall Dr
  - 6 Salem St /Williams St
  - 7 North Salem St /Apex Peakway
  - 8 Apex Peakway /Ambergate Station
  - 9 Apex Peakway /Laura Duncan Rd
  - 10 Laura Duncan Rd /Hunter St
  - 11 Apex Peakway /Hunter St
  - 12 Apex Peakway /Center St
  - 13 US 64 /Laura Duncan Rd
  - 14 US 64 /Olde Raleigh Rd

	Existing Greenway/Trail		Proposed Greenway/Trail
	Existing Private Greenway/Trail		Schools
	Existing State Bicycle Route		Water Features
	Railroad		Apex Municipal Boundary
	Apex Parks/Community Center		Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
	Parks Not Located Within Apex		Nearby Municipal Boundaries

0 1 Miles

HOLLY SPRINGS



3. Take ownership and assume maintenance responsibilities of Shepherd's Vineyard Greenway to provide access for the public use.
4. Develop a comprehensive wayfinding system design package.
5. Complete a wayfinding system plan.

## PROGRAMS

### WHAT RESIDENTS ARE DOING FOR RECREATION

The Town of Apex provides a variety of recreational programs. Survey respondents expressed a need to expand existing programs in general, and to better reach youth under 12, teens, seniors, and provide overlapping programs for parents with children. Several survey respondents requested programs that are currently offered by the town. However, times, days, or locations may not be accessible for the desired user group. Additionally, outreach methods or marketing may not be reaching the desired user.

The town should create a use matrix for programs to determine if an overlap may occur for adult programs and youth programs, or seek to offer a childcare program that allows for increased adult participation. There are in demand programs at the community

center; due to space limitations, the town should look for partnerships to meet demand or look for additional indoor program space.

Residents expressed strong interest and support for special events such as outdoor movie night, running events, festivals, concerts, and family oriented special event programs. The town should expand these programs to supplement the existing special event offerings, specifically creating activities that are family oriented.

Staff should evaluate participation numbers, wait lists, and receive input on instructors on a seasonal basis in order to make appropriate adjustments in what is offered, who is teaching, and when and where programs are provided.

Focus group members expressed a desire for a senior center. This may allow for relocation of the senior exercise classes which result in more use of the Community Center facilities for other in demand programs. This would also provide a central location for seniors with potential partnerships for future transportation.



*The greenway looping around Hunter Street Park is perfect for everyday recreation and group walks.*

The Town completed a study of the use of the Tunstell House; while this report does not make recommendations for a separate senior facility, there is a need for additional indoor program space. Consideration of this report and these findings should be evaluated when moving forward with creation of additional indoor space.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Create a strategic marketing plan to ensure residents are aware of programs, where they are offered, and that they can make recommendations on future offerings.
  - a. Website Improvements - need to navigate offerings by facility/program/age
2. Expand Special Events and Program offerings.
3. Provide programs for the “gap ages”: Youth to age 12, and teens (based on existing age chart for program offerings and survey results)
4. Provide adult programs (18-54) with family oriented support; adult/child programs at same time and place, or childcare program expansion at the same time as adult programs.
  - a. Scheduling
  - b. Access
5. Provide Health and Wellness related programs and classes.
6. Provide a broader range of program offerings, such as cooking, arts and crafts, and fitness and wellness programs.
7. Examine ways to support public art programs in the community through partnerships.
8. Provide additional programs and resources for seniors.
9. Address need for additional special populations program integration.

## SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Residents have expressed a need for special populations program offerings and/or expanded resources for special populations within the town. Since the Town does not provide special population programs separate from other programs, a focus group was formed to start evaluation of this need and how to respond to it. It appears the majority of respondents stated they currently go to other locations for programs and/or recreational services.

According to a study completed by Management Learning Laboratories for the Town of Cary, the City of Raleigh is the nearest municipality with a comprehensive program for special populations, employing a coordinator who specifically organizes programs. According to the study, the adjacent Town of Holly Springs also offers a program called Buddy Sports. The program offers various sports sessions in partnership with the local high school. Teens assist at the program as “buddies” and assist participants with skill instruction. Since Cary commissioned this study, it can be assumed that they are exploring ways to provide recreational services for special populations. Creating partnerships with Cary may be possible to provide these services to Apex residents.

## SPECIAL POPULATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town of Apex currently provides recreational programs for special populations by request and/or inclusion in existing programs. The town should consider a separate study to determine actual need for programs and/or staffing for programs. The following recommendations are a way for the Town to start improving access for special populations.

## NEXT STEPS

1. If the town needs to hire additional Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources program staff, it is recommended hiring an individual with therapeutic recreation training and/or



experience--not to serve solely as a special populations coordinator, but to provide the expertise necessary to create and/or expand inclusive programs.

2. Develop a list of resources and links for residents to have an understanding of nearby programs, facilities, and services for special populations. Place the associated links on the town Parks and Recreation Page as a “resources link.”
  - a. Transportation offerings (bus, ride shares, carpools, and shuttle services)
  - b. Senior resources
  - c. Special Population Programs and Resources
  - d. Teen programs
  - e. Accessible facilities
3. Look at partnership opportunities with other towns, such as Holly Springs and the Town of Cary and other municipalities and programs for outreach.
4. Appoint a Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission member to serve as a liaison/ Commission member for special populations, programs, and facilities.
5. Consider creating a town access board comprised of individuals with a vested interest in identifying town resources for improved inclusion, access, and communication of resources.
6. Consider a separate study to assist in accomplishing the above steps for recreational inclusion in the town.

## LAND ACQUISITION

### HOW TO PLAN FOR FUTURE RECREATIONAL NEEDS

Land for recreation and open space can be acquired a variety of ways. In general, land can be donated, purchased, acquired through easement, acquired through granting agencies, and dedicated through

policy. The Town has several methods for land dedication and protection, which are further outlined in the policy section of this report. Some of these methods are Overlay Districts, Article 6 sections 6.1 and 6.2; Recreation land dedication section 7.3 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Sites; and through general development standards, Section 8.1 Resource Conservation Areas (RCA’s), all found in the Towns Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Additional information for land acquisition strategies and local resource partnerships and programs can be found on a comprehensive resource links page with the Wake County Open Space Program: <http://www.wakegov.com/parks/openspace/Pages/Resources.aspx>

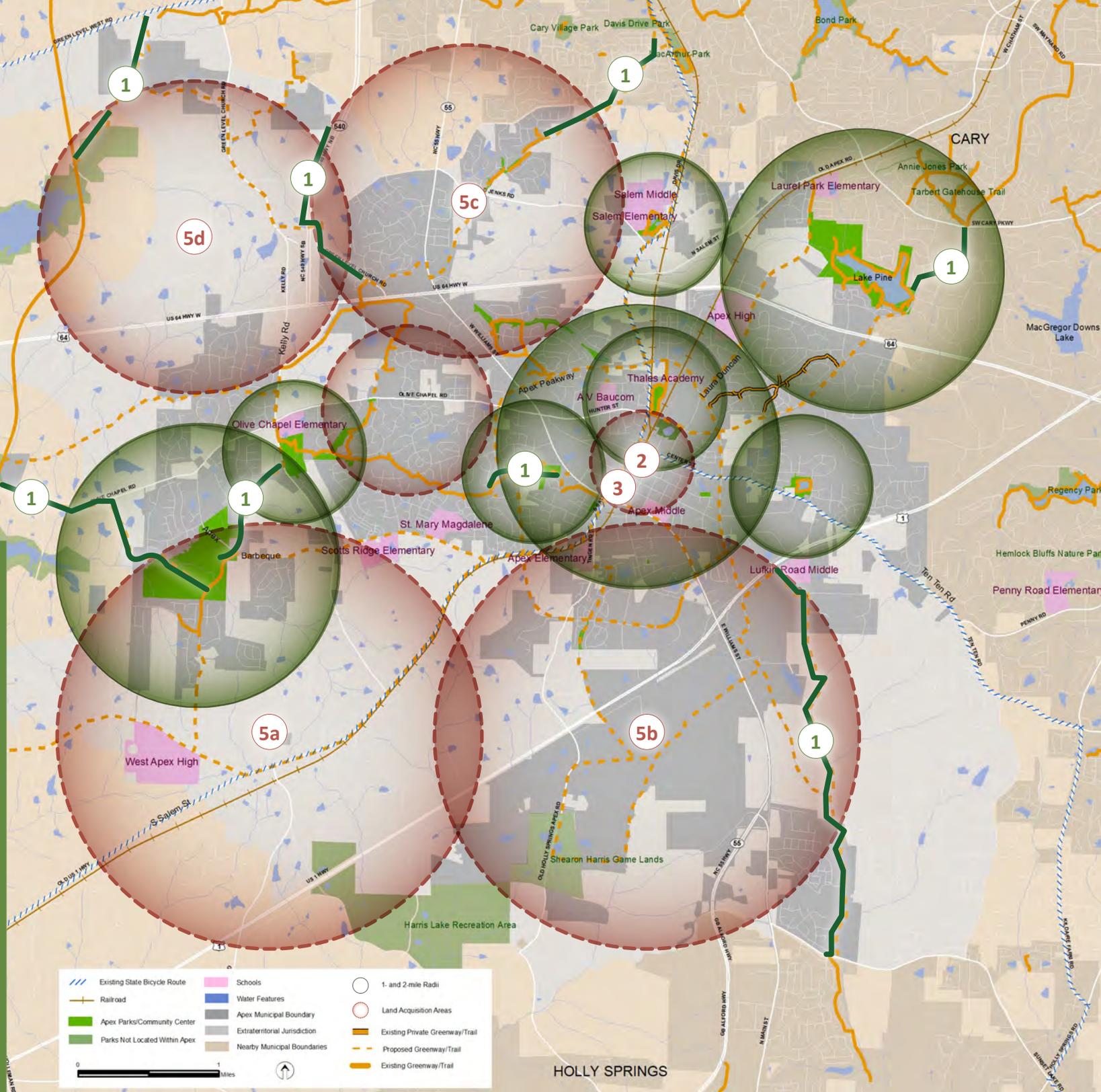
To ensure the Town can meet recreational needs and protect its natural and cultural resources, acquisition strategies should reflect the values of conservation and preservation. Town residents have expressed trails and greenways remain the highest priority for recreation facilities. Acquisition strategies outlined above should reflect resident priorities as follows:

1. Acquire land to meet Greenway Connectivity recommendations
2. Seek opportunities for Expanded Indoor Recreational Space for teens and seniors through expansion, re-use, or new development
3. Look for opportunities for passive & un-programmed open space
4. Acquire land and park space in underserved areas on service area map to provide a Sports Complex (60-100 AC)
5. Continue to acquire and protect significant Cultural Resource Properties
6. Continued protection of Natural Areas

Land that is acquired for the underserved areas should balance active and passive recreational offerings. Residents have expressed interest in a wide variety of recreational features, and while passive

## Land Acquisition Priorities:

1. Acquire land and/or easements to meet recommendations for greenway connectivity
2. Seek space for community gathering downtown
3. Seek opportunities to expand indoor recreational space for teens and seniors
4. Explore opportunities for passive & un-programmed open space
5. Acquire land and park space in underserved areas



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*Acquiring additional land will allow the Town to provide more open, unprogrammed space, like the field at Salem Pond Park.*

unprogrammed open space is in demand now, the Town will need to plan for growth and future populations by maintaining a quality level of service for more traditional facilities such as soccer, tennis, baseball, and basketball.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

The Town of Apex is challenged with meeting the recreational needs of its population as it continues to grow. Current policy requires subdivided land provide for future residents by contributing to the parks, recreation, greenways, open space, and cultural resource needs of this community.

The Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) outlines land dedication, or fee in lieu, when a residential development is submitted for approval. The policy is written to meet the recreational needs of the population caused by an increase in residential inventory.

As recommend in 2001, it should remain a priority to amend and strengthen language in section 7.3 of the UDO to support greenway dedications to meet resident needs. Greenways are the highest priority for town residents and as such a more detailed outline of how this dedication can be quantified should be included in section 7.3 Park, Recreation, and Open Space Sites.

Additionally, consideration should be given to a “greenway overlay district” to include non-residential land dedication where a greenway is proposed. This is an integral part of a town wide transportation network and may require additional means for dedication to provide desired connections. Continued efforts to work with state, regional, and local agencies should be maintained so connections that are not only made in town, but to and from the Town, are considered as part of a town-wide transportation plan and vision.



Greenway connections between key destinations like residential communities, business parks, commercial centers, and public facilities are essential to meeting these transportation needs. These destinations and locations were highlighted by residents in the needs assessment as key locations for pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. The town should evaluate commercial site design requirements to include comprehensive trail connections and support facilities.



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# Section Six

## Action Steps

### PRIORITIZATION

Public input and assessment of existing facilities led to the development of action items. This section offers guidance on priorities, timelines and funding.

This plan recognizes that development patterns, resident interests, and funding options may change over time. Town staff should move forward with the recommendations detailed in section 5, while adjusting priorities when appropriate to reflect the community's evolving needs and interests.

The following *Measurements of Success* were established to help better understand what action plan elements may be needed for implementing goals:

- Provide recreational opportunities that suit resident needs within a service area as defined by distance.
- Create a park system that residents can access by walking, biking, and driving.
- Provide recreational opportunities that promote an “active” lifestyle to maintain a high quality of life in Apex.
- Provide opportunities for Apex residents to enjoy natural, historical, and cultural resources, and protect these resources for future generations.

- Ensure residents are satisfied with the types of facilities available, as well as their condition and maintenance.

Recommendations are segmented into four main action item categories:

- 1. Facilities:** *Where* Apex residents participate in recreation
- 2. Programs:** *What* residents are doing for recreation
- 3. Greenways:** How to *Connect* residents
- 4. Land Acquisition:** How to *Plan for Future* recreational needs

The plan recommends clustering action items into the following timeframe to help set a course for implementation.

- **Immediate Needs** (0-2 years): Elements residents feel are needed to meet current demand
- **Near Term Needs** (3-5 years): Elements the town should address through planning, funding allocation, grant sources, and/or land acquisition
- **Long Term Needs** (5-7 years): Items that are priorities as the town develops and the population increases.



## PROVIDING A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE

High quality parks, recreation facilities, and programs help make Apex an attractive place to live and provide a sense of pride and community identity. Park facilities serve as the “first impression” for a community. These recommendations will contribute to the quality of life for residents and users of Apex parks, recreational, and cultural resources.

### FACILITIES

While residents are currently satisfied with the level of service provided by many of the town’s recreational offerings, the survey indicated additional facilities are also desired to fulfill the interests of the community.

#### IMMEDIATE NEEDS (0-2 YEARS)

- Acquire or re-use existing space for downtown festivals, concerts, and markets:
  - Re-use the train depot, if it becomes available, to serve as a downtown urban park, market, and street festival space.
  - Improve use of the Town Complex by encouraging partnerships between the commercial district, downtown vendors, and programmers of concerts and events.
- Acquire additional indoor space for senior, teen and fitness programming. This can be done through:
  - Expanding the community center; or
  - Re-using an existing building(s); or
  - Developing new facilities.
- Provide additional unprogrammed open space and multi-use fields. While the nature park will help fulfill some of this need, the town should

make improvements to existing parks where opportunity exists to allow for greater access to passive space, as well as include passive and unprogrammed space in future park development.

- Incorporate walking and/or multi-use paths within existing parks and/or town facilities, such as the Apex Community Center and Town Hall Complex, and link pedestrian systems where possible.
- Expand recreational opportunities for teens by planning for specialty facilities such as skate parks or plazas, climbing structures, zip-lines, and ropes courses.
- Use PRORAGIS (Park and Recreation Operating Ratio & Geographic Information System), a national database that allows park and recreation agencies to benchmark with others, develop programs, and enhance overall community operations. The town should begin by completing the “lite” or “quick start” data collection version to receive access to the database.
- Acquire land for a sports complex (60-200 acres) in an underserved area as indicated on page 1-10.

#### NEAR TERM NEEDS (3-5 YEARS)

- Seek additional space for more health, wellness and fitness related classes.
- Provide unprogrammed open space and/or multi-use fields.
- Provide additional playgrounds, either in existing parks or as parks are developed.
- Look for additional locations within existing parks to include volleyball and basketball courts.

### LONG TERM NEEDS (5-7 YEARS)

- Develop a sports complex (60-100 acres) that can not only meet active recreation needs, but also serve as an economic tournament venue for the town. Elements may include:
  - 4-5 baseball/softball pinwheel
  - 2 basketball courts
  - 1 batting cage
  - 3 tennis courts
  - 1-2 volleyball courts
  - 3-4 multi-purpose fields

- Incorporate additional dog park(s) in future parks, as needed.
- Incorporate picnic shelters in future parks and make park improvements for rental use.
- Implement plan for additional indoor space via re-use, expansion, or new construction, including:
  - Gymnasium space
  - Multi-purpose space (3 rooms, minimum)
  - Rooms for senior programs

	Amphitheater	Auditorium	Baseball	Basketball	Batting Cages	Disc Golf	Dog Park	Gymnasium	Multi-Purpose Field	Multi-Purpose Room	Picnic Shelter	Playground	Soccer	Softball	Tennis (Full Court)	Volleyball
<b>LONG TERM NEEDS</b>																
Total Existing Facilities	1	1	5	5	3	1	2	2	3	9	10	9	4	1	6	3
Service Population = 40,000	40000	40000	8000	8000	13333	40000	20000	20000	13333	4444	4000	4444	10000	40000	6667	13333
Anticipated 2023 Population = 55,340	1	1	7	7	4	1	3	3	4	12	14	12	6	1	8	4
Future facilities to be added (2023)			2	2	1		1	1	2	3	4	3	2		2	1

Red denotes facilities that are not currently meeting demand. Additions are indicated to meet existing demand and plan for future growth.



## PROGRAMS

Recreational preferences should guide the development of programs, cultural resources, and facilities. Apex is a very active community and residents would like to see expanded program offerings to support their interests. After each programming period, an assessment should be conducted to gauge interest and inform adjustments. Evaluation may include: class schedules, number of participants, frequency of class cancellations, feedback regarding instructors, and general suggestions for improvement. This will maintain an open dialogue between residents and the Department, ensuring flexibility and satisfying demand.

Based upon current interests and program needs, the Town should do the following to expand and improve programs:

### IMMEDIATE NEEDS (0-2 YEARS)

- Create a strategic marketing plan to ensure residents are aware of program variety and

locations, and have an opportunity to make recommendations on future offerings.

- Improve the website so that it is easy to find programs by topic, facility type, and location.
- Expand special events programming, such as concerts, movies, and family friendly activities.
- Examine partnership opportunities to celebrate the Town of Apex and its residents, such as installing work by artists in community spaces.
- Provide programs for underserved age groups:
  - Youth and teens;
  - Seniors;
  - Adults (18-54) who may need family oriented support, such as childcare or activities parents and children can participate in simultaneously.
- Hire or assign a staff person to serve as a Parks and Recreation planner for Apex. This person will help oversee park, greenway, and open space elements, serving as a liaison between



Basketball courts are great for programs as well as pick-up games.

departments to ensure coordination occurs for future parks, recreation, and connectivity efforts.

- Develop a list of website resources and links for residents, including nearby programs, facilities, and services for special populations. Links may include:
  - Transportation offerings (bus, ride shares, carpools, and shuttle services);
  - Senior resources;
  - Programs and resources for special populations;
  - Teen programs;
  - Accessible facilities.

### **NEAR TERM NEEDS (3-5 YEARS)**

- As more indoor space becomes available, plan for additional classes in areas such as health and wellness, fitness, cooking, gardening, and arts and crafts.
- Hire a senior staff member who is qualified in Therapeutic Recreation to help shape programming and resources for seniors and special populations.
- Expand program offerings for underserved age groups listed above as space becomes available.

### **LONG TERM NEEDS (5-7 YEARS)**

Provide additional programs (type and/or frequency) as space and staff become available. Programs listed by residents were:

- Yoga, cooking, martial arts, gardening/ community gardens, dancing (several varieties listed), ropes course/team building, babysitting, CPR, First Aid, bridge and other card games, Zumba, and Pilates.

## *CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY*

### **GREENWAYS**

Greenways are the highest priority for Apex residents. They desire easy access to greenways from their homes, and want to be able to travel to parks, commercial centers, work, and schools on a system of well connected paths and bicycle facilities. Connecting to commercial districts and parks rated highly in the survey. Linking residents to all of these key areas can have a positive impact on the health and wellness of residents, especially children. As such, the following recommendations are made to improve community connectivity:

### **IMMEDIATE NEEDS (0-2 YEARS)**

- Take steps for the feasibility study, acquisition, design, and construction of:
  - American Tobacco Trail (ATT) connections, including:
    - Jaycee Park to Downtown (1,500 LF);
    - Kelly Road Park to Apex Nature Park (1.2 miles);
    - Apex Nature Park to American Tobacco Trail (2.3 miles).
  - Middle Creek Greenway connection to ensure safe crossing at the future 540.
  - White Oak Creek Greenway through Apex and to the ATT, working in collaboration with the Town of Cary.
- Complete separately, or in conjunction, a bicycle master plan and pedestrian master plan to provide an interconnected system of facilities (including routes, bike lanes, shared use lanes, bicycle parking facilities, sidewalks, intersection treatments, and signalization) and prioritize



implementation. This will augment the existing prioritization in the Transportation Plan.

- Create a user-friendly greenway map accessible online, in an application, and/or via hard copy.
- Create a Master Wayfinding and Signage Plan (include design, typology, and placement standards). Install signage on existing greenways.
- Provide safe crossings by completing intersection improvements as indicated in Greenway section of this report.

### **NEAR TERM NEEDS (3-5 YEARS)**

- Plan, design and develop the Apex Barbecue Road Greenway from Apex Nature Park to Salem Street downtown.
- Complete a destination-based greenway system, providing connections between downtown, commercial centers, parks, the library, Town

Complex and schools (a connection from the Town Complex to the Eva Perry Regional Library is a top priority in the Near Term).

- Explore converting the Shepherds Vineyard Greenway from private to public.
- Install wayfinding signage on new greenway facilities.
- Complete intersection improvements (in Greenway section of this report) for routes as they are developed.

### **LONG TERM NEEDS (5-7 YEARS)**

- Continue to develop identified greenways, completing critical connections between residential areas, commercial centers, parks, and other facilities.



*Playgrounds were listed as one of the priorities for residents. Spaces for rest and shade are important components of playgrounds.*

- Fully implement greenway wayfinding system and map guide to show residents access points, trail lengths, and location of and distance to points of interest.
- Continue efforts to expand the greenway system, including planning, designing, and developing the Bond Park Connector Greenway, and Greenways in SE and NW Apex, including Reedy Branch Greenway, and Green Level Church Multiuse Path.
- Complete intersection improvements as greenways are developed.
- Seek opportunities to bridge gaps in the pedestrian network to improve connectivity.

## PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

### LAND ACQUISITION

Land acquisition is strongly linked to facilities, greenways, and programs. In order to maintain a high quality of life in Apex, more land should be acquired to ensure improved connectivity, open spaces for play and celebration, and future active recreation facilities. Land should also be sought for underserved areas to accommodate new facilities. Improving greenway connectivity will require the addition of corridors, while increasing program options will necessitate more space in general.

#### IMMEDIATE NEEDS (0-2 YEARS)

- Acquire land for the Beaver Creek Greenway. Easements are already in place for Jaycee Park to downtown and Kelly Road Park to the future Apex Nature Park. Easements are needed to connect the Apex Nature Park to the American Tobacco Trail.

- Acquire easements for the White Oak Creek and Middle Creek Greenways.
- Allocate land for downtown space through:
  - Re-using existing space, such as partnering with downtown shops, stores, and restaurants for concerts; or
  - Re-using the Depot if it becomes available; or
  - Acquiring additional land
- Acquire indoor space for seniors and teens by:
  - Expanding the Community Center; or
  - Re-using an existing building(s); or
  - Developing new facilities
- Acquire land for a sports complex (60-200 acres) in an underserved area as indicated on page 1-10.

#### NEAR TERM NEEDS (3-5 YEARS)

- Acquire land or easements for the Apex Barbecue Road multi-use path.

#### LONG TERM NEEDS (5-7 YEARS)

- Acquire land and/or easements for greenway trails.
- Acquire land for an area or community sized park in one of the underserved sections identified on page 1-10.

### FUNDING SOURCES FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

Federal funding is typically directed through state agencies to local governments, either in the form of grants or direct appropriations, independent from state budgets, where shortfalls may make it difficult to accurately forecast available funding for future project development. Federal funding typically requires a local



match of approximately 20%, but there are sometimes exceptions, such as the recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus funds, which did not require a match. Since these funding categories are difficult to forecast, it is recommended that the local jurisdiction work with its MPO, in the case of Apex, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), on getting pedestrian projects listed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), as discussed below.

The following is a list of possible federal funding sources that could be used to support construction of many bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Most of these are competitive, and involve the completion of extensive applications with clear documentation of the project need, costs, and benefits. However, it should be noted that the FHWA encourages the construction of pedestrian facilities as an incidental element of larger, ongoing projects. Examples include providing paved shoulders on new and reconstructed roads, or building sidewalks, trails and marked crosswalks as part of new highways.

### **MOVING AHEAD FOR PROGRESS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (MAP-21)**

The largest source of federal funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects is the US DOT's Federal-Aid Highway Program, which Congress has reauthorized roughly every six years since the passage of the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916. The latest act, Moving Ahead for Progress in the Twenty-First Century (MAP-21) was enacted in July 2012 as Public Law 112-141. It replaces the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which was valid from August 2005 - June 2012.

MAP-21 authorizes funding for federal surface transportation programs, including highways and transit for the 27 month period between July, 2012

and September, 2014. It is not possible to guarantee the continued availability of any listed MAP-21 programs, or to predict their future funding levels or policy guidance. Nevertheless, many of these programs have been included in some form since the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991, and thus may continue to provide capital for active transportation projects and programs.

In North Carolina, federal monies are administered through the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Most, but not all, of these programs are oriented toward transportation versus recreation needs, with an emphasis on reducing auto trips and providing inter-modal connections. Federal funding is intended for capital improvements and safety and education programs, and projects must relate to the surface transportation system.

There are a number of programs identified within MAP-21 that are applicable to bicycle and pedestrian projects. These programs are discussed below.

More information: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/summaryinfo.cfm>

### **TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES**

Transportation Alternatives (TA) is a new funding source under MAP-21 that consolidates three formerly separate programs under SAFETEA-LU: Transportation Enhancements (TE), Safe Routes to School (SR2S), and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). These funds may be used for a variety of pedestrian, bicycle, and streetscape projects, including sidewalks, bikeways, multi-use paths, and rail-trails. TA funds may also be used for selected education and encouragement programming, such as Safe Routes to School, despite the fact that TA does not provide a guaranteed set-aside for this activity as SAFETEA-LU did. Unless

the governor of a given state chooses to opt out of Recreational Trails Program funds, dedicated funds for recreational trails continue to be provided as a subset of TA. MAP-21 provides \$85 million nationally for the RTP.

Complete eligibilities for TA include:

**1. Transportation Enhancements** as defined by Section 1103 (a)(29). This category includes the construction, planning, and design of a range of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, including “on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.” Infrastructure projects and systems that provide “Safe Routes for Non-Drivers” is a new eligible activity. For the complete list of eligible activities, visit:

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation\\_enhancements/legislation/map21.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_enhancements/legislation/map21.cfm)

**2. Recreational Trails.** TA funds may be used to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Examples include hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, and other non-motorized and motorized uses. These funds are available for both paved and unpaved trails, but may not be used to improve roads for general passenger vehicle use or to provide shoulders or sidewalks along roads.

Recreational Trails Program funds may be used for:

- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails
- Purchase and leasing of trail construction and maintenance equipment
- Construction of new trails, including unpaved trails
- Acquisition of easements of property for trails
- State administrative costs related to this program (limited to seven percent of a state’s funds)
- Operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to trails (limited to five percent of a state’s funds)

NC’s dedicated annual RTC funds for 2012 total \$1,506,344. See this link for funding levels in subsequent years: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/MAP21/funding.cfm>.

**3. Safe Routes to School.** The purpose of Safe Routes to Schools is to promote safe, healthy alternatives to riding the bus or being driven to school. All projects must be within two miles of primary or middle schools (K-8).

Eligible projects may include:

- *Engineering Improvements.* These physical improvements are designed to reduce potential bicycle and pedestrian conflicts with motor vehicles. Physical improvements may also reduce motor vehicle traffic volumes around schools, establish safer and more accessible crossings, or construct walkways, trails or bikeways. Eligible projects include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming/speed reduction, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities,



off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and secure bicycle parking facilities.

- *Education and Encouragement Efforts.* These programs are designed to teach children safe bicycling and walking skills while educating them about health benefits and environmental impacts. Projects and programs may include creation, distribution and implementation of educational materials; safety based field trips; interactive bicycle/pedestrian safety video games; and promotional events and activities (e.g., assemblies, bicycle rodeos, walking school buses).
- *Enforcement Efforts.* These programs aim to ensure that traffic laws near schools are obeyed. Law enforcement activities apply to cyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles alike. Projects may include development of a crossing guard program, enforcement equipment, photo enforcement, and pedestrian sting operations.

**4.Planning, designing, or constructing roadways within the right-of-way of former Interstate routes or divided highways.** At the time of writing, detailed guidance from the Federal Highway Administration on this new eligible activity was not available.

Average annual funds available through TA over the life of MAP-21 equal \$814 million nationally, which is based on a 2% set-aside of total MAP-21 allocations. Current projected obligations for NC are available at this website: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/MAP21/funding.cfm>. Note that state DOT's may elect to transfer up to 50% of TA funds to other highway programs, so the amount listed on the website represents the maximum potential funding.

Remaining TA funds (those monies not re-directed to other highway programs) are disbursed through a separate, competitive grant program administered by NCDOT. Local governments, school districts, tribal governments, and public lands agencies are permitted to compete for these funds.

### **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM**

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides states with flexible funds which may be used for a variety of highway, road, bridge, and transit projects. A wide variety of bicycle and pedestrian improvements are eligible, including on-street bicycle facilities, off-street trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle and pedestrian signals, parking, and other ancillary facilities. Modification of sidewalks to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is also an eligible activity. Unlike most highway projects, STP-funded bicycle and pedestrian facilities may be located on local and collector roads which are not part of the Federal-aid Highway System. 50% of each state's STP funds are suballocated geographically by population; the remaining 50% may be spent in any area of the state.

### **HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

MAP-21 doubles the amount of funding available through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) relative to SAFETEA-LU. HSIP provides \$2.4 billion nationally for projects and programs that help communities achieve significant reductions in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, bikeways, and walkways. MAP-21 preserves the Railway-Highway Crossings Program within HSIP but discontinues the High-Risk Rural roads set-aside unless safety statistics demonstrate that fatalities are increasing on these roads. Bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements, enforcement activities, traffic



*Apex residents indicated they would like more passive spaces, like the pier shown here at Seagroves Park.*

calming projects, and crossing treatments for non-motorized users in school zones are eligible for these funds.

### **TRANSPORTATION FOR ELDERLY PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

This program can be used for capital expenses that support transportation to meet the special needs of older adults and persons with disabilities, including providing access to an eligible public transportation facility. More information: [http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants\\_financing\\_3556.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3556.html)

### **LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND**

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides grants for planning and acquiring outdoor recreation areas and facilities, including trails. Funds can be used for right-of-way acquisition and construction. The program is administered by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as a grant program for states and local governments.

Maximum annual grant awards for county governments, incorporated municipalities, public authorities, and federally recognized Indian tribes are \$250,000. The local match may be provided with in-kind services or cash. More information: [http://www.ncparks.gov/About/grants/lwcf\\_main.php](http://www.ncparks.gov/About/grants/lwcf_main.php)

### **RIVERS, TRAILS, AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) is a National Parks Service (NPS) program providing technical assistance via direct NPS staff involvement to establish and restore greenways, rivers, trails, watersheds and open space. The RTCA program provides only for planning assistance—there are no implementation funds available. Projects are prioritized for assistance based on criteria including conserving significant community resources, fostering cooperation between agencies, serving a large number of users, encouraging public involvement



in planning and implementation, and focusing on lasting accomplishments. This program may benefit trail development in North Carolina locales indirectly through technical assistance, particularly for community organizations, but is not a capital funding source. More information: <http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/> or contact the Southeast Region RTCA Program Manager Deirdre “Dee” Hewitt at (404) 507-5691.

### **STATE FUNDING SOURCES**

The North Carolina Department of Administration offers a North Carolina Funding Resource guide that outlines opportunities and sources available for improved education and health for children: <http://www.doa.state.nc.us/yaio/documents/publications/FGR.pdf>

### **NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (NCDOT) STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

NCDOT’s Policy to Projects process uses data regarding pavement condition, traffic congestion and road safety, as well as input from local governments and NCDOT staff, to determine transportation priorities. This approach ranks projects for all modes of transportation in priority order, based on the department’s goals and also determines which projects are included in the department’s State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), a federally mandated transportation planning document that details transportation improvements prioritized by stakeholders for inclusion in the Work Program over the next seven years. The STIP is updated every two years.

The STIP contains funding information for various transportation divisions of NCDOT, including: highways, aviation, enhancements, public transportation, rail, bicycle and pedestrians, and the Governor’s Highway Safety Program. Access to many federal funds require that projects be incorporated into the STIP. STIP is the

largest single source of funding within SAFETEA-LU and NCDOT.

To access the STIP: <http://www.ncdot.org/planning/development/TIP/TIP/>. For more about the STIP process: <http://www.ncdot.org/performance/reform/>

### **SPOT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

The Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DPBT) budgets \$500,000 per year for “spot” safety improvements throughout North Carolina. Eligible improvements include drain grate replacement, bicycle loop detectors, pedestrian signals and other small-scale improvements. These funds are used for small-scale projects not substantial enough to be included in the STIP. Proposals should be submitted directly to the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation.

### **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANNING GRANT INITIATIVE**

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative is a matching grant program administered through NCDOT that encourages municipalities to develop comprehensive bicycle plans and pedestrian plans. The Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DPBT) and the Transportation Planning Branch (TPB) sponsor this grant. All North Carolina municipalities are eligible and are encouraged to apply. Funding allocations are determined on a sliding scale based on population. Municipalities who currently have bicycle plans or pedestrian plans, either through this grant program or otherwise, may also apply to update their plan provided it is at least five years old.

More information: <http://www.ncdot.gov/bikeped/planning/>

### **NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources Division of Coastal Management offers the Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Funds program, awarding \$500,000 to \$1 million a year in matching grants to local governments for projects to improve pedestrian access to the state's beaches and waterways. Eligible applicants include the 20 coastal counties and municipalities therein that have public trust waters within their jurisdictions.

More information: <http://www.nccoastalmanagement.net/Access/about.html>

### **THE NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation and the State Trails Program offer funds to help citizens, organizations and agencies plan, develop and manage all types of trails ranging from greenways and trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding, to river trails and off-highway vehicle trails.

More information: <http://www.ncparks.gov/About/grants/main.php>

### **THE NORTH CAROLINA PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND (PARTF)**

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants to counties, incorporated municipalities and public authorities, as defined by G.S. 159-7. Through this program, several million dollars each year are available to local governments to fund the acquisition, development and renovation of recreational areas. A local government can request a maximum of \$500,000 with each application. An applicant must match the grant dollar-for-dollar, 50% of the total cost of the project, and may contribute more than 50%. The appraised value of land to be donated to the applicant

can be used as part of the match. The value of in-kind services, such as volunteer work, cannot be used as part of the match.

More information: [http://www.ncparks.gov/About/grants/partf\\_main.php](http://www.ncparks.gov/About/grants/partf_main.php)

### **RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM**

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) of the federal transportation bill provides funding to states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Examples of trail uses include hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, and equestrian use. These funds are available for both paved and unpaved trails, but may not be used to improve roads for general passenger vehicle use or to provide shoulders or sidewalks along roads. Recreational Trails Program funds may be used for:

- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails
- Purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment
- Construction of new trails, including unpaved trails
- Acquisition or easements of property for trails
- State administrative costs related to this program (limited to seven percent of a state's RTP dollars)
- Operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to trails (limited to five percent of a state's RTP dollars)

In North Carolina, the Recreational Trails Program is administered by the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation. This grant is specifically designed to pay for recreational trail projects rather than utilitarian transportation-based projects. Grants are for up to \$75,000 per project, and applicants must be able to contribute 20% of the project costs with cash or in-



kind contributions. Projects must be consistent with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

More information: [http://www.ncparks.gov/About/trails\\_grants.php](http://www.ncparks.gov/About/trails_grants.php)

### ADOPT-A-TRAIL PROGRAM

The Adopt-A-Trail (AAT) Program is a source of small funds for trail construction, maintenance, and land acquisition. The program funds \$108,000 annually in North Carolina, and awards grants up to \$5,000 per project with no local match required. Applications are due in February. More information is available from Regional Trails Specialists and the Grants Manager.

More information: [http://www.ncparks.gov/About/grants/docs/AAT\\_info.pdf](http://www.ncparks.gov/About/grants/docs/AAT_info.pdf)

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING SOURCES

Municipalities often plan for the funding of pedestrian facilities or improvements through development of Capital Improvement Programs (CIP). In Raleigh, for example, the greenways system has been developed over many years through a dedicated source of annual funding that has ranged from \$100,000 to \$500,000, administered through the Recreation and Parks Department. CIPs should include all types of capital improvements (water, sewer, buildings, streets, etc.) versus programs for single purposes. This allows municipal decision-makers to balance all capital needs. Typical capital funding mechanisms include the following: capital reserve fund, capital protection ordinances, municipal service district, tax increment financing, taxes, fees, and bonds. Each category is



*Tennis is a top activity enjoyed by residents. As the population grows, the demand for courts will likely increase.*

described below. A variety of possible funding options available to North Carolina jurisdictions for implementing pedestrian projects are described below. However, many will require specific local action as a means of establishing a program, if not already in place.

### **CAPITAL RESERVE FUND**

Municipalities have statutory authority to create capital reserve funds for any capital purpose, including pedestrian facilities. The reserve fund must be created through ordinance or resolution that states the purpose of the fund, the duration of the fund, the approximate amount of the fund, and the source of revenue for the fund. Sources of revenue can include general fund allocations, fund balance allocations, grants and donations for the specified use.

### **CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCES**

Municipalities can pass Capital Project Ordinances that are project specific. The ordinance identifies and makes appropriations for the project.

### **LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (LIDS)**

Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) are most often used by cities to construct localized projects such as streets, sidewalks or bikeways. Through the LID process, the costs of local improvements are generally spread out among a group of property owners within a specified area. The cost can be allocated based on property frontage or other methods such as traffic trip generation.

### **MUNICIPAL SERVICE DISTRICT**

Municipalities have statutory authority to establish municipal service districts, to levy a property tax in the district additional to the citywide property tax; proceeds provide services in the district. Downtown revitalization projects are one of the eligible uses of service districts, and can include projects such as street, sidewalk, or bikeway improvements within the taxing district.

### **TAX INCREMENT FINANCING**

Project Development Financing bonds, also known as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), is a relatively new tool in North Carolina. It allows localities to use future gains in taxes to finance the current improvements that will create those gains. When a public project (e.g., sidewalk improvements) is constructed, surrounding property values generally increase and encourage surrounding development or redevelopment. The increased tax revenues are then dedicated to finance the debt created by the original public improvement project. Streets, streetscapes, and sidewalk improvements are specifically authorized for TIF funding in North Carolina. Tax Increment Financing typically occurs within designated development financing districts that meet certain economic criteria that are approved by a local governing body. TIF funds are generally spent inside the boundaries of the TIF district, but they can also be spent outside the district if necessary to encourage development within it.

### **INSTALLMENT PURCHASE FINANCING**

As an alternative to debt financing of capital improvements, communities can execute installment or lease purchase contracts for improvements. This type of financing is typically used for relatively small projects that the seller or a financial institution is willing to finance or when up-front funds are unavailable. In a lease purchase contract, the community leases the property or improvement from the seller or financial institution. The lease is paid in installments that include principal, interest, and associated costs. Upon completion of the lease period, the community owns the property or improvement. While lease purchase contracts are similar to a bond, this arrangement allows the community to acquire the property or improvement without issuing debt. These instruments, however, are more costly than issuing debt.



## TAXES

Many communities have raised money for general transportation programs or specific project needs through self-imposed increases in taxes and bonds. For example, Pinellas County residents in Florida voted to adopt a one cent sales tax increase, which provided an additional \$5 million for the development of the overwhelmingly popular Pinellas Trail. Sales taxes have also been used in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and in Boulder, Colorado to fund open space projects. A gas tax is another method used by some municipalities to fund public improvements. A number of taxes provide direct or indirect funding for the operations of local governments. Some of them are:

### SALES TAX

In North Carolina, the state has authorized a sales tax at the state and county levels. Local governments that choose to exercise the local option sales tax (all counties currently do) use the tax revenues to provide funding for a wide variety of projects and activities. Any increase in the sales tax, even if applying to a single county, must gain approval of the state legislature. In 1998, Mecklenburg County was granted authority to institute a one-half cent sales tax increase for mass transit.

### PROPERTY TAX

Property taxes generally support a significant portion of a municipality's activities. However, the revenues from property taxes can also be used to pay debt service on general obligation bonds issued to finance greenway system acquisitions. Because of limits imposed on tax rates, use of property taxes to fund greenways could limit the municipality's ability to raise funds for other activities. Property taxes can provide a steady stream of financing while broadly distributing the tax burden. In other parts of the country, this mechanism has been popular with voters as long as the increase is restricted to parks and open space.

Note, other public agencies compete vigorously for these funds, and taxpayers are generally concerned about high property tax rates.

### EXCISE TAXES

Excise taxes are taxes on specific goods and services. These taxes require special legislation and funds generated through the tax are limited to specific uses. Examples include lodging, food, and beverage taxes that generate funds for promotion of tourism, and the gas tax that generates revenues for transportation related activities.

### OCCUPANCY TAX

The NC General Assembly may grant towns the authority to levy occupancy tax on hotel and motel rooms. The act granting the taxing authority limits the use of the proceeds, usually for tourism-promotion purposes.

### FEES

A variety of fee options have been used by local jurisdictions to assist in funding pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Enabling actions may be required for a locality to take advantage of these tools.

### STORMWATER UTILITY FEES

Greenway trail property may be purchased with stormwater fees, if the property in question is used to mitigate floodwater or filter pollutants. Stormwater charges are typically based on an estimate of the amount of impervious surface on a user's property. Impervious surfaces (such as rooftops and paved areas) increase both the amount and rate of stormwater runoff compared to natural conditions. Such surfaces cause runoff that directly or indirectly discharge into public storm drainage facilities and create a need for stormwater management services. Thus, users with more impervious surface are charged more for stormwater service than users with less impervious surface. The rates, fees, and charges collected for

stormwater management services may not exceed the costs incurred to provide these services.

### STREETSCAPE UTILITY FEES

Streetscape Utility Fees could help support streetscape maintenance of the area between the curb and the property line through a flat monthly fee per residential dwelling unit. Discounts would be available for senior and disabled residents. Non-residential customers would be charged a per-foot fee based on the length of frontage streetscape improvements. This amount could be capped for non-residential customers with extremely large amounts of street frontage. The revenues raised from Streetscape Utility Fees would be limited by ordinance to maintenance (or construction and maintenance) activities in support of the streetscape.

### IMPACT FEES

Developers can be required to pay impact fees through local enabling legislation. Impact fees, which are also known as capital contributions, facilities fees, or system development charges, are typically collected from developers or property owners at the time of building permit issuance to pay for capital improvements that provide capacity to serve new growth. The intent of these fees is to avoid burdening existing customers with the costs of providing capacity to serve new growth so that “growth pays its own way.”

In North Carolina, impact fees are designed to reflect the costs incurred to provide sufficient capacity in the system to meet the additional needs of a growing community. These charges are set in a fee schedule applied uniformly to all new development. Communities that institute impact fees must develop a sound financial model that enables policy makers to justify fee levels for different user groups, and to ensure that revenues generated meet (but do not exceed) the needs of development. Factors used to

determine an appropriate impact fee amount can include: lot size, number of occupants, and types of subdivision improvements. A developer may reduce the impacts (and the resulting impact fee) by paying for on- or offsite pedestrian improvements that will encourage residents/tenants to walk or use transit rather than drive. Establishing a clear nexus or connection between the impact fee and the project’s impacts is critical in avoiding a potential lawsuit.

### EXACTIONS

Exactions are similar to impact fees in that they both provide facilities to growing communities. The difference is that through exactions it can be established that it is the responsibility of the developer to build the greenway or pedestrian facility that crosses through the property, or is adjacent to the property being developed.

### IN-LIEU-OF FEES

As an alternative to requiring developers to develop a greenway or pedestrian facility that would serve their development, some communities provide a choice of paying a front-end charge for off-site protection of pieces of the larger system. Payment is generally a condition of development approval and recovers the cost of the off-site land acquisition or the development’s proportionate share of the cost of a regional facility serving a larger area. Some communities prefer in-lieu-of fees. This alternative allows community staff to purchase land worthy of protection rather than accept marginal land that meets the quantitative requirements of a developer dedication but falls short of qualitative interests.

### BONDS AND LOANS

Bonds have been a very popular way for communities across the country to finance their pedestrian and greenway projects. A number of bond options are listed below. Contracting with a private consultant to assist with this program may be advisable. Since



bonds rely on the support of the voting population, an education and awareness program should be implemented prior to any vote. Billings, Montana used the issuance of a bond in the amount of \$599,000 to provide the matching funds for several of their TEA-21 enhancement dollars. Austin, Texas has also used bond issues to fund a portion of its bicycle and trail system.

### REVENUE BONDS

Revenue bonds are bonds that are secured by a pledge of the revenues from a specific local government activity. The entity issuing bonds pledges to generate sufficient revenue annually to cover the program's operating costs, plus meet the annual debt service requirements (principal and interest payment). Revenue bonds are not constrained by the debt ceilings of general obligation bonds, but they are generally more expensive than general obligation bonds.

### GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS

Cities, counties, and service districts are typically able to issue general obligation (G.O.) bonds that are secured by the full faith and credit of the entity. A general obligation pledge is stronger than a revenue pledge, and thus may carry a lower interest rate than a revenue bond. The local government issuing the bonds pledges to raise its property taxes, or use any other sources of revenue, to generate sufficient revenues to make the debt service payments on the bonds. Frequently, when local governments issue G.O. bonds for public enterprise improvements, the public enterprise will make the debt service payments on the G.O. bonds with revenues generated through the public entity's rates and charges. However, if those rate revenues are insufficient to make the debt payment, the local government is obligated to raise taxes or use other sources of revenue to make the payments. Bond measures are typically limited by time, based on the debt load of the local government or the project

under focus. Funding from bond measures can be used for right-of-way acquisition, engineering, design, and construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Voter approval is required.

### SPECIAL ASSESSMENT BONDS

Special assessment bonds are secured by a lien on the property that benefits from the improvements funded with the special assessment bond proceeds. Debt service payments on these bonds are funded through annual assessments to the property owners in the assessment area.

### STATE REVOLVING FUND LOANS

Initially funded with federal and state money, and continued by funds generated by repayment of earlier loans, State Revolving Funds (SRFs) provide low interest loans for local governments to fund water pollution control and water supply related projects, including many watershed management activities. These loans typically require a revenue pledge, like a revenue bond, but carry a below market interest rate and limited term for debt repayment (20 years).

### FUNDS FROM PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Many communities have solicited greenway and pedestrian infrastructure funding assistance from private foundations and other conservation-minded benefactors. Below are several examples of private funding opportunities available in North Carolina.

### LAND FOR TOMORROW CAMPAIGN

Land for Tomorrow is a diverse partnership of businesses, conservationists, farmers, environmental groups, health professionals and community groups committed to securing support from the public and General Assembly for protecting land, water and historic places. The campaign is asking the North Carolina General Assembly to reject legislation that threatens to reduce funding of conservation focused trust funds. Land for Tomorrow will enable North



*The Halle Cultural Arts Center provides flexible space for small classes. This Center is an untapped resource that could host more programs.*

Carolina to reach a goal of ensuring that working farms and forests; sanctuaries for wildlife; land bordering streams; parks and greenways; land that helps strengthen communities and promotes job growth; historic downtowns and neighborhoods; and more, will be there to enhance the quality of life for many generations. In 2011, the Land for Tomorrow Campaign suffered an 85 percent budget cut and future program funding is uncertain.

More information: <http://www.landfortomorrow.org/>

### **WALMART STATE GIVING PROGRAM**

The Walmart Foundation financially supports projects that create opportunities for better living. Grants are awarded for projects that support and promote education, workforce development/economic opportunity, health and wellness, and environmental sustainability. Both programmatic and infrastructure projects are eligible for funding. State Giving Program grants start at \$25,000, and there is no maximum award amount. The program accepts grant applications on an annual, state by state basis January 2nd through March 2nd.

Online resource: <http://walmartstores.com/CommunityGiving/8168.aspx?p=8979>

### **THE RITE AID FOUNDATION GRANTS**

The Rite Aid Foundation supports projects that promote health and wellness in the communities that Rite Aid serves. Award amounts vary and grants are awarded on a one year basis. A wide array of activities are eligible for funding, including infrastructure and programming.

Online resource: <http://www.riteaid.com/company/community/foundation.jsf>

### **Z. SMITH REYNOLDS FOUNDATION**

This Winston-Salem-based Foundation has been assisting the environmental projects of local governments and non-profits in North Carolina for many years. They have two grant cycles per year and generally do not fund land acquisition. However, they may be able to offer support in other areas of open space and greenways development.

More information is available at <http://www.zsr.org>.

### **BANK OF AMERICA CHARITABLE FOUNDATION, INC.**

The Bank of America Charitable Foundation is one of the largest in the nation. The primary grants program is called Neighborhood Excellence, which seeks to



identify critical issues in local communities. Another program that applies to greenways is the Community Development Programs, and specifically the Program Related Investments. This program targets low- and moderate-income communities and serves to encourage entrepreneurial business development.

More information: <http://www.bankofamerica.com/foundation>.

### AMERICAN GREENWAYS EASTMAN KODAK AWARDS

The Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program has teamed with the Eastman Kodak Corporation and the National Geographic Society to award small grants (\$250 to \$2,000) to stimulate the planning, design and development of greenways. These grants can be used for activities such as mapping, conducting ecological assessments, surveying, holding conferences, developing brochures, producing interpretive displays, incorporating land trusts, and building trails. Grants cannot be used for academic research, institutional support, lobbying or political activities. Currently, the grant program is on hold until further notice.

More information: [http://www.conservationfund.org/kodak\\_awards](http://www.conservationfund.org/kodak_awards).

### THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

Land conservation is central to the mission of the Trust for Public Land (TPL). Founded in 1972, the Trust for Public Land is the only national nonprofit working exclusively to protect land for human enjoyment and well being. TPL helps conserve land for recreation and spiritual nourishment and to improve the health and quality of life of American communities.

More information: <http://www.tpl.org>

### NATIONAL TRAILS FUND

The American Hiking Society created the National Trails Fund in 1998 as the only privately supported national grants program providing funding to grassroots organizations working toward establishing, protecting, and maintaining foot trails in America. The society provides funds to help address the \$200 million backlog of trail maintenance. The National Trails Fund grants help give local organizations the resources they need to secure access, volunteers, tools and materials to protect America's cherished public trails. To date, the American Hiking Society has granted more than \$240,000 to 56 different trail projects across the U.S. for land acquisition, constituency building campaigns, and traditional trail work projects. Awards range from \$500 to \$10,000 per project. Projects the American Hiking Society will consider include:

- Securing trail lands, including acquisition of trails and trail corridors, and the costs associated with acquiring conservation easements.
- Building and maintaining trails that will result in visible and substantial ease of access, improved hiker safety, and/or avoidance of environmental damage.
- Constituency building surrounding specific trail projects, including volunteer recruitment and support.

More information: <http://www.americanhiking.org/>

### LOCAL TRAIL SPONSORS

A sponsorship program for trail amenities allows smaller donations to be received from both individuals and businesses. Cash donations could be placed into a trust fund to be accessed for certain construction or acquisition projects associated with the greenways and open space system. Some recognition of the donors is appropriate and can be accomplished through the placement of a plaque, the naming of a trail segment,

and/or special recognition at an opening ceremony. Valuable in-kind gifts include donations of services, equipment, labor, or reduced costs for supplies.

### **CORPORATE DONATIONS**

Corporate donations are often received in the form of liquid investments (i.e. cash, stock, bonds) and in the form of land. Municipalities typically create funds to facilitate and simplify a transaction from a corporation's donation to the given municipality. Donations are mainly received when a widely supported capital improvement program is implemented. Such donations can improve capital budgets and / or projects.

### **VOLUNTEER WORK**

Residents and other community members are excellent resources for garnering support and enthusiasm for a greenway corridor or pedestrian facility. Furthermore, volunteers can substantially reduce implementation and maintenance costs. Individual volunteers from the community can be brought together with groups of volunteers from church groups, civic groups, scout troops and environmental groups to work on greenway development on special community workdays. Volunteers can also be used for fund-raising, maintenance, and programming needs.