

## **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space**

The purpose of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space ~~Element~~Section of the Comprehensive Plan is to set a framework of policies and action steps to guide the programming, management, and development of the parks, recreation, and open space system in Raleigh. Included within this plan are recommendations for new park development, management, continued renovation of existing parks and facilities, preservation of open space and significant natural resources, and expansion of greenways. Also included are strategies to provide ample recreational experiences for all citizens, while adapting to trends, significant development opportunities, and Raleigh's growing population. These policies and actions will guide decisionmakers to work towards providing parks and recreational experiences that would create a balanced system across the community, responding to the varied needs of its residents.

From the time of Raleigh's founding, parks, recreation, and open space have played a central role in city life, and in the city's urban form. Through more than two centuries of growth, these green spaces have enriched the quality of life of Raleigh's citizens. The nature and uses of park lands have evolved to meet the needs of a growing community. From the city's five original civic squares, to today's athletic fields and nature preserves, green space remains a vital part of the city's infrastructure.

The city of Raleigh has now entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a vibrant community that serves as the nucleus for a growing region. In its current system, Raleigh has over 6,100 acres of park land making up 224 park properties and nearly 4,000 acres of greenway property including 117 miles of trails (see Map PR-1). As the city continues to develop at a rapid pace, it will need to provide for new parks and to conserve additional open spaces, special landscapes, and natural resource areas for its expanding population. With undeveloped land rapidly disappearing and environmental concerns on the rise, the people of Raleigh must become stewards of the land in order to ensure that future generations will have both recreational opportunities and healthy city parks and natural areas.

This ~~Element~~Section addresses the following major issues:

- Maintaining and renovating existing parks and recreation facilities to meet current needs;
- Addressing the need for walkable, neighborhood parks in existing and newer parts of the city;
- Acquiring adequate land for future park development;
- Developing recreational facilities in close proximity to all residents, equitably distributed throughout the city;
- Enhancing access to and awareness of Raleigh's recreation and natural resource opportunities;
- Providing better interconnectivity between the parks, greenways, and open space system locally and regionally;
- Providing best practice management and stewardship of Raleigh's natural resources; and
- Integrating the parks and recreation system into a broader context of green infrastructure to maximize ecosystem conservation.

These issues impact not only this element of the Comprehensive Plan, but have larger impacts on the community's overall growth and development prospects. Parks and recreation facilities influence the economic prosperity and quality of neighborhoods, land use decisions, growth management efforts, and the health and livability of residents. Therefore, it is vital to realize that addressing these issues in an effective manner will dictate the wellness and welfare of future residents.

For a more in-depth analysis of the City's parks, recreation, and open space inventory and future needs assessment, see the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space chapter of the Community Inventory, the data and analysis companion volume of

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan there are several other well-defined and up-to-date documents that offer the city excellent guidance on meeting future park and recreation needs. These include: city of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources System Plan (2014); The Capital Area Greenway Planning and Design Guide (2014); The City of Raleigh Aquatic Study (2008); The Senior Center Study (2007); and many other documents that are available for public review through the city's web site. Additional information can be found on the Park and Greenway Planning and Development website.

This elementsection does not replace adopted parks planning documents; rather, it provides a forum for coordinating park and open space policies across multiple city departments. The policies and actions in this elementsection are generally consistent with prior Parks plans, but where differences exist, this elementsection provides more up to date guidance. Any Parks plans adopted or revised subsequent to the adoption of this elementsection should be reflected, where appropriate, by future amendments to this elementsection. Adopted in May 2014, the city of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources System Plan is a detailed working supplement to the city of Raleigh 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Expanding upon the vision of the Comprehensive Plan, the System Plan is a long-range planning document that is meant to help shape the direction, development and delivery of the city's parks, recreation and cultural resource facilities and services over the next 20 years.

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department's vision in the 2014 System Plan strives to integrate the parks, recreation and cultural resources system into the city's infrastructure, while also addressing evolving trends and changing needs of the community. The vision can be summarized in the following vision statement:

The City of Raleigh's vision for its parks, recreation and cultural resources system is 'bringing people to parks and parks to people.' It is a system that addresses the needs of all and fosters a community of creativity, engagement, healthy lifestyles, and welcoming neighborhoods. In addition to providing traditional, high-quality parks, recreation and cultural facilities and programs, the city uses innovative initiatives to reach all residents, workers and visitors.

This elementsection also addresses all six of the vision themes that serve as the overarching goals of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. High-quality parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces will provide added value and amenities to the community, which in turn will attract jobs, workers, and greater economic

prosperity to the area. Evenly distributed park and recreation facilities, accessible to residents throughout the city, further promotes the goal of equity.

Consistent with the theme of *Expanding Housing Choices*, Raleigh needs to provide for a variety of housing types at a range of price points to meet the needs of its current and future residents. Parks, recreation and open space opportunities must be developed in tandem with new housing. The issue is particularly important for affordable housing, as many lower-income residents have reduced access to private vehicles, limiting their ability to travel to distant parks, and making pedestrian, bike, and transit access all the more critical.

The need for new parks and recreational facilities in the coming decades will require that substantial acreage be acquired by the city for park development. This is part of an overall strategy of *Managing Our Growth*. By planning and identifying priority areas for future park areas and land acquisitions, land can be acquired in advance of development, at lower cost and in appropriate locations, to develop the parks and recreational opportunities that the future residents will require. Further, parks are a significant land use and a source of travel demand, and their location, siting, and design should be coordinated with the city's transportation infrastructure to maximize access by multiple modes and to mitigate impacts on congestion, consistent with *Coordinating Land Use and Transportation*.

Providing safe and convenient access to parks for all city of Raleigh residents will be a guiding principle of park system planning in the coming years. Citizen surveys have shown that Raleigh residents desire walkable access to small neighborhood parks and greenways within a mile of their homes. In addition to acquiring land and developing new parks, park access can be improved by providing new and enhanced walkable connections to existing parks. By improving pedestrian facilities, expanding greenway network connectivity, and opening up new access points within existing parks, park access can be improved for thousands of residents for a fraction of the cost of new park development and land acquisition.

Sustainable design and green building is increasingly becoming a part of parks and recreation facilities design. Networks of interconnected parks, greenways, and open spaces (as part of a comprehensive green infrastructure system) can direct urban form and guide conservation efforts. Green infrastructure ensures that preserved open spaces and greenways provide greater environmental benefits by maximizing ecosystem conservation, promoting the theme of *Greenprint Raleigh*.

The parks and open spaces within Raleigh serve the daily leisure needs of the community; promote the social, cultural, mental, and physical wellbeing of the community; and provide important experiences to achieve better places to live. In a broader sense, they promote a more livable community, a higher quality of life and lend a sense of place and belonging to the community and its residents. They are fundamental to *Growing Successful Neighborhoods and Communities*.

Policies and actions of this element appear below. Numbers indicate their relationship to the Vision Themes, as follows:

To track the efficiency of the city's policies, any of the Comprehensive Plan's vision themes that may be relevant to a particular policy are indicated by one of six icons. The vision themes are:

- Economic Prosperity and Equity
- Expanding Housing Choices
- Managing Our Growth
- Coordinating Land Use and Transportation
- Greenprint Raleigh
- Growing Successful Neighborhoods and Communities

In this Section and throughout the Plan, Key Policies used to evaluate zoning consistency are noted as such with an orange dot ( ).

### **8.1 Planning for Parks**

Planning is fundamental to every step of the process by which new parks are created, starting with the determination of parks and recreation needs, to the identification and analysis of potential sites for acquisition, to the development of detailed park master plans for specific park sites. Accordingly, the city has developed a variety of park planning tools, methodologies, and processes, and has prepared many planning documents addressing both the entire Parks system as well as specific components. These include the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources System Plan, adopted in 2014 and incorporated into this ~~element~~Section by reference, as well as special plans addressing aquatic facilities, city cemeteries, senior centers, and other topics. Each of these documents has been the result of a thorough process of data collection, analysis, and civic engagement.

As public needs and priorities change, plans and the processes used to create them must also evolve to remain current. The 2014 Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources System Plan contains a recommendation that it be updated every five years, and an update is recommended as Action PR 1.1. ~~The Parks and Recreation Department has commissioned a study that recommends enhancements to the adopted Parks Master Planning Process, with City Council action on these recommendations expected in 2012.~~ The city intends to keep all park-related planning documents fully current, in the same manner that the Comprehensive Plan and other planning documents will be continually reviewed and updated for currency and consistency.

#### **Policy PR 1.1**

#### **Plan Consistency**

Maintain consistency among the Comprehensive Plan, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources System Plan, and special purpose plans undertaken to address specific components of the Parks system. (3, 5, 6) See also Relation to Capital Improvement Planning and Other City Plans in Implementation.

See also '17.2 Relation to Capital Improvement Planning and Other City Plans' in Section 17: 'Implementation.'

## **Policy PR 1.2**

### **Plan Currency**

Keep the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources System Plan and other special purpose park plans current through a regular schedule of updates and re-examinations, including five-year updates to the System Plan.

## **Policy PR 1.3**

### **Coordinated Park Planning**

Work with interdepartmental and external partners to align siting, land acquisition, co-location, programming design, and construction opportunities with growth projections and demographic information. ~~(3, 5)~~

## **Policy PR 1.4**

### **Community Involvement in Special Programs**

Where specific or special programs are desired, such as aquatics, skate parks, and off-leash dog areas, involve stakeholders across the entire city to achieve a broad long range system-wide approach for capital development and replacement.

## **Policy PR 1.5**

### **Program and Facility Evaluations**

Evaluate programs and facilities through community and citywide surveys, focus groups, evaluations, data regarding programmed and non-programmed usage, and demographic analysis in addition to participation at public meetings. ~~(6)~~

## **Policy PR 1.6**

### **New Park Types and Acquisition Criteria**

Establish new urban park types and acquisition criteria to ensure that Growth Centers in the city have adequate access to a mix of parks and open space types to meet needs.

#### **Policy PR 1.7**

##### **New Parks in Growth Centers**

Create new urban parks and enhance existing urban parks throughout Growth Centers using proactive planning, partnerships and innovative approaches.

#### **Policy PR 1.8**

##### **Integrate Parks and Transportation Options**

Utilize existing and future public transportation centers, greenway trails and pedestrian connections to provide access to parks, recreation and cultural opportunities throughout growth areas and citywide.

#### **Action PR 1.1**

##### **System Plan Update**

Update and evaluate the 2014 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources System Plan every five years to provide the city with the most current and detailed information available to respond to evolving community needs.

#### **Action PR 1.2**

##### **Greenway Plan Update**

Update and evaluate the implementation of the Capital Area Greenway Master Plan and the 2014 Capital Area Greenway Planning and Design Guide in order to promote the acquisition of land or easements for greenway corridors and the completion of the proposed trail system.

#### **Action PR 1.3**

##### **Promote Parks as Economic Assets**

Continue to collaborate with the State of North Carolina and Wake County to promote regional recreation tourism and encourage economic development.

#### **Action PR 1.4**

## Provide Regional Connectivity

Provide access through public transit, greenway trail, and bicycle facilities connectivity to regional recreation hub(s).

### 8.2 Parks System and Land Acquisition

In order to provide parks, recreation and cultural resources experiences, the City of Raleigh must acquire the rights to develop park property through fee simple ownership, easements providing access, and/or partnerships with agencies or organizations that may share ~~common green space~~ goals, ~~department~~ philosophy, and strategies. In addition to acquiring land as the ~~City~~ city continues to expand into unincorporated areas, the city must continue to evaluate property that is undeveloped, suitable for redevelopment, or worthy of maintaining as open space through a systematic evaluation utilizing the latest data and technologies available.

Historically, the City of Raleigh has acquired and planned parks and recreation facilities according to the National Recreation and Parks Association's (NRPA) Level of Service (LOS) Standard. The purpose of this standard is to assure "equal opportunity to share in the basic menu of services implicit in the standard." The City of Raleigh has used these measurements to meet the NRPA guidelines and State standards based on:

- *Acres per Population,*
- *Facilities per Population,*
- *Quality of the Facilities, and*
- *Availability of Programs.*

While these measurement techniques help ensure a commitment to park land and facilities as the city develops, they do have shortcomings. Equitable access to inherent experiences expected by citizens is not measured with these techniques.

Incorporating a fifth measurement technique— Access Distance or Travel Time—can help progress the simple idea that every citizen should be able to access an inherent park, recreation or cultural experience within similar walking, bicycling, and/or driving distance. The creation of an experience-based model helps to better evaluate how parks, recreation, and cultural resource experiences offered by the City of Raleigh actually function as a dynamic system.

Several core neighborhood-based experiences have been identified based on public input during the System Plan planning process. It will be a priority to improve access to one of these core neighborhood-based experiences:

- *Sitting outside, reading, contemplating, socializing*

- *Going to a playground*
- *Informal open play*
- *Walking or riding a bike in a park or on a greenway trail*

In addition to these core neighborhood experiences, several area-wide experiences have been identified. Unlike the neighborhood-based experiences, which are evaluated using a single travel distance of one mile, area-wide experiences will use a range of differences based on the type of activity or amenity involved. This range may be from one to five miles.

At-will activities encompass other recreational pursuits, which do not need to meet an exact schedule or be coordinated through a centralized process. Area-wide at-will experiences include:

- *Playing on an athletic field or court*
- *Enjoying nature and the outdoors*
- *Aquatic recreation*
- *River and lake-related activities*
- *Fitness*
- *Enjoying cultural opportunities*

Level of Service Criteria based on access to inherent park, recreation and cultural experiences (rather than per capita acreage standards based on park classification) will provide a more accurate and effective means of monitoring Raleigh's how well Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources system is serving Raleigh's citizens.

By using these evaluation tools together to build an experience-based system, the city can be more inclusive in determining needs, accommodating of changing lifestyles, innovative in identifying solutions, and responsive to balancing experiences based on context.

The experience-based network access analysis identifies a more valid service area than a traditional radius "neighborhood park service area boundary" based on park classification type and a static search radius.

The Experience-Based System model is the first step in the process of identifying parks and greenways that are poorly connected. The model uses distance or travel time standards based on development patterns, street networks, bicycle/pedestrian networks, and demographics in the community to evaluate access to park experiences.

The specific metrics used for the Experience-Based System evaluation include distance to closest park, parks per person within one mile, and acres per person within one mile. The evaluation also calls for the use of census block centroids, park access points, and the Wake County road network. This model first identifies all parks offering core experiences, which includes opportunities for socializing, going to a playground, informal open play, and walking or riding a bike in a park or on a greenway trail.



The Experienced-Based System model uses the following measures to evaluate accessibility to parks:

1. The distance to the closest park measures the distance from each Census Block centroid to the closest park access point. This distance is calculated using the Wake County road network and does not take into account sidewalks, trails, walking paths, greenways, or any other connection type.
2. The number of accessible parks per person within one mile is calculated by dividing each park by the total population of all of the surrounding Census Blocks within a distance of 1.29 miles to determine parks/person. Each Census Block receives the sum of the calculated number of parks/person for all parks within the 1.29-mile distance.
3. The number of accessible park acres per person within one mile is calculated by dividing the park's acreage by the total population of all Census Blocks within a distance of 1.29 miles to determine acres/ person. Each Census Block gets the sum of the acres/person values of all parks within a 1.29-mile distance.

Once these three metrics are calculated, they are combined for each census block. The census block values are then aggregated up to census block groups and those values are weighted by population. Map PR-2 demonstrates how this model is used to identify areas with low accessibility.

Using this analysis based on the existing Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources system in 2013, the street network distance for every block centroid to each park was 1.3 miles. A distance of 1.3 miles or less indicates an average to better than average accessibility level. The distance via the street network represents the current service area.

As a first step to improving access Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department is currently developing a new, the city has recently adopted a Neighborhood and Community Connections Program and Policy (N&CC) to identify areas of the city where communities are in close proximity to a park but have low access along the existing street network. Using the existing experience-based model described in the 2014 System Plan, the N&CC Program compared current service to potential service levels to assess which parks had the greatest need and potential for accessibility improvements. The comparison allowed the department The N&CC policy prioritizes these projects based on quantitative criteria specifically designed to see where potential gaps in access fall, for example a resident may live ¼ of a mile from a park entrance, but if they used the street network, they would travel two miles promote pedestrian safety and health equity, guiding investment directly to reach the park Raleigh's most vulnerable communities.

## Policy PR 2.1

### System Integration Plan

Undeveloped parks should be the subject of a System Integration Plan that identifies features of special interest on the site, and suggests interim management strategies until the new site can be part of a master plan effort. ~~(3, 5)~~

## **Policy PR 2.2**

### **Park Accessibility**

Seek to provide convenient access to a public park or recreational open space to all city residents by 2030, by using the Level of Service and Experience Based System guidelines provided in this Plan.

## **Policy PR 2.3**

### **Level of Service Achievement**

Continue to refine the experience-based Level of Service (LOS) analysis in order to identify areas of need within the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources system. Conduct further analyses to determine if needs can be fulfilled through reinvestment in the existing park system, ~~through~~ public and private sector partnerships, N&CC projects, or ~~through~~ land acquisition. ~~(1, 3, 5)~~

## **Policy PR 2.4**

### **Acquisition Methodology**

Pursue a pattern of acquisition consistent with a search area methodology that analyzes current and projected population and demographic data. ~~(3, 6)~~

## **Policy PR 2.5**

### **Acquisition Opportunities**

Pursue land acquisition when opportunities arise if the site is suitable for meeting the mission of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department ~~(3, 5, 6)~~.

## **Policy PR 2.6**

### **Acquisition Grants and Partnerships**

Seek grants and partnerships with agencies, communities, and/or organizations for land acquisition to maximize the public benefit. ~~(3, 5, 6)~~

## **Policy PR 2.7**

## **Acquisition Coordination**

Coordinate park land needs assessments, current land acquisition costs, and the city's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) in order to ensure adequate funding is on hand to react to opportunities and market patterns. ~~(3, 5, 6)~~

### **Policy PR 2.8**

#### **Creating Recreational Experiences through Adaptive Reuse**

Consideration should be given to opportunities for providing parks, recreation and cultural resource experiences through innovative and adaptive reuse of underutilized or vacant properties. ~~(3, 5, 6)~~

### **Policy PR 2.9**

#### **Plan for Bus and Bicycle Accessibility**

Make transit and bike access a factor in selecting park sites.

### **Policy PR 2.10**

#### **Plan for Proximity**

Provide new parks or joint-use facilities so that every resident has access to a core neighborhood-based park experience within one-mile travel distance of their home or place of employment.

### **Action PR 2.1**

#### **Innovative Strategies for Acquisition**

Explore innovative strategies such as donations by developers and philanthropists, inter-agency transfer, park improvement districts, partnerships with other government and non-government agencies and tax-defaulted properties to acquire parkland and open space. ~~If acquired properties in the city's park land inventory are not well suited for public recreation use and are not of significant environmental or ecological value, revenue consider disposition of these properties. Revenue~~ from disposition should revert to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources land acquisition program.

### **Action PR 2.2**

#### **Grant Requests and Partnerships**

Submit grant requests and pursue partnerships for land acquisition, especially to agencies that share missions with City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department. Reasonable economic justification and equity of access should be strong considerations in these actions.

### **Action PR 2.3**

#### **Search Area Methodologies**

Continue to refine and update search area methodologies to include census data, forecasts, and trends, making use of best available technology and planning techniques.

### **Action PR 2.4**

#### **Facility Fee for Acquiring and Developing New Parks**

Monitor the effectiveness of the open space Facility Fee Program and propose updates if appropriate.

### **Action PR 2.5**

#### **Completed 2014**

#### **Action PR 2.5**

##### **Zoning Incentives for Recreation**

Explore zoning incentives for developers and land owners to increase recreational amenities and tie-ins to municipal recreational projects on their property or as part of new

#### **Action PR 2.6**

##### **Provision for Publicly Accessible Parks**

Explore zoning incentives and other methods to encourage developers and land owners to provide publicly accessible open spaces and recreational amenities in the context of new development. Encourage new development to provide walkable connections and other tie-ins to nearby parks and greenways.

### **8.3 Greenway System Land and Trails**

The City of Raleigh's Capital Area Greenway (CAG) System began as a 1970s planning effort to effectively manage riparian floodways. Today, Raleigh boasts one of the most extensive greenway systems in the

United States, with current greenway open space holdings totaling nearly 4,000 acres. More than 117 miles of greenway trails have been built to date, and an additional 120 miles are proposed (Map PR-3).

The backbone of the CAG system are the riparian greenway corridors—lands adjacent to the waterways and tributaries of Walnut Creek, Crabtree Creek, and the Neuse River—which protect aquatic habitat, provide wildlife corridors, prevent development of ecologically sensitive lands, and mitigate potential flood damage. Where feasible and appropriate, these greenway corridors are developed into publicly accessible greenway trails, providing a network of linear parks throughout the city that provide active transportation options and recreational opportunities for residents as well as visitors. Pedestrian and bicycle access to these areas offers a unique opportunity to experience nature in the midst of a city of over 400,000 people.

Greenway trails within the CAG System range in function and character based on a variety of factors, and are organized according to a hierarchy of classifications:

- *Cross-City Greenway Trails are main routes crossing the city or connecting to adjacent jurisdictions,*
- *Greenway Collector Trails connect to larger residential, employment, and retail centers while maintaining mobility for high volumes of users;*
- *Loop Trails are destination-oriented trails typically located around lakes;*
- *Neighborhood Greenway Trails are lower volume trails that provide access to neighborhoods, parks, retail centers, or employment centers; and*
- *Greenway Connectors, which may utilize sidewalks and public rights of way, link trails between corridors.*

The goals of the Capital Area Greenway program are to:

- *Preserve natural characteristics of the land;*
- *Preserve wildlife corridors;*
- *Preserve riparian buffers as a means of protecting water quality;*
- *Preserve stream corridors to manage storm water runoff;*
- *Provide buffers for multiple land uses;*
- *Provide opportunities for passive recreation; and*

- *Provide trails for recreation and safe transportation routes.*

### **Policy PR 3.1**

#### **Capital Area Greenway System**

Continue to expand Raleigh’s greenway trail network according to the guidelines established in the Capital Area Greenway Master Plan and the Capital Area Greenway Planning and Design Guide, in order to protect greenway corridors and connect greenway trails, parks, schools, and other destinations with safe integration into on-road facilities.

### **Policy PR 3.2**

#### **Public Awareness and Stewardship**

Educate citizens about the benefits of supporting stewardship efforts of greenway corridors.

### **Policy PR 3.2**

#### **Greenway Corridors**

~~Support initiatives that work to create a protected, linked network of linear natural areas, wildlife habitats and greenspaces throughout the region.~~

### **Policy PR 3.3**

#### **Resilience and Green Infrastructure Network**

Acquire and maintain greenways along important riparian corridors as identified in the Capital Area Greenway Planning and Design Guide in order to preserve the natural character of watercourses, promote water quality, and increase flood protection.

### **Policy PR 3.4**

#### **Reserved**

### **Policy PR 3.4**

#### **Greenway Transportation Network**

~~Position and promote the Capital Area Greenway system trails as safe, healthy and sustainable travel alternatives.~~

### **Policy PR 3.5**

**Reserved**

### ~~Policy PR 3.5~~

#### ~~Multi-Modal Integration~~

~~Improve pedestrian and bicycle linkages by closing gaps in network connectivity and prioritizing connections to public transportation, streets, sidewalks, and other transportation corridors.~~

### **Policy PR 3.6**

#### **Regional Network**

Complete the Capital Area Greenway system with connections to surrounding greenway corridors that are elements of a regional network.

### **Policy PR 3.7**

**Reserved**

### **Policy PR 3.7**

#### ~~Public Awareness and Stewardship~~

~~Educate citizens about the benefits of supporting stewardship efforts of greenway corridors.~~

### **Policy PR 3.8**

#### **Multi-Modal Integration**

Improve pedestrian and bicycle linkages by closing gaps in network connectivity and prioritizing connections to public transportation, streets, sidewalks, and other transportation corridors. Development along proposed Greenway Connectors should provide public access and infrastructure necessary to serve the needs of greenway trail users.

### **Policy PR 3.9**

## Reserved

### Policy PR 3.9

#### Development Adjacent to Greenways

Development adjacent to a designated greenway should provide links between internal pedestrian networks and greenway trails, where appropriate. The development should proactively respond to greenways as an amenity, incorporating and maintaining greenway viewsheds and aesthetic character, as well as storm water management and flood control benefits.

### Policy PR 3.10

#### Greenway Corridors

Support initiatives that work to create a protected, linked network of linear natural areas, wildlife habitats and greenspaces throughout the region. Continue to identify new corridor alignments as necessary to promote the goals of the Capital Area Greenway program.

### Policy PR 3.11

#### Greenway Transportation Network

Position and promote the Capital Area Greenway system trails as safe, healthy and sustainable travel alternatives.

### Policy PR 3.12

#### Signage and Wayfinding

Provide a sense of identity and utility for the greenway trail network through a program of consistent, selective, and strategic signage so as not to clutter or dominate the visual character of the greenway trails.

### Policy PR 3.13

#### Greenway-oriented Development

Development adjacent to a designated greenway corridor or greenway connector should provide links between internal pedestrian infrastructure and the greenway network, where appropriate. The development should pro-actively respond to greenways as an amenity, incorporating and maintaining



greenway viewsheds and aesthetic character, as well as storm water management and flood control benefits.

### **Action PR 3.1**

#### **Capital Area Greenway System**

Prioritize an implementation schedule to complete the full system of greenway trails, including proposed greenway connectors, with a focus on inter-connectivity among neighborhoods, parks, schools, commercial areas, cultural and civil institutions, and other regional destinations.

### **Action PR 3.2**

**Removed 2018**

### ~~Action PR 3.2~~

#### ~~Greenway Corridors~~

~~Acquire and maintain easements along all designated greenway corridors. Require greenway dedication whenever a tract of land within a proposed residential subdivision or site plan includes any part of a designated greenway, and pursue dedication or reservation of greenway land from non-residential development. Explore opportunities to require the construction of greenway trail infrastructure when new development occurs within a designated greenway corridor.~~

### **Action PR 3.3**

**Completed 2015**

### ~~Action PR 3.3~~

#### ~~Resilience and Green Infrastructure Network~~

~~Develop a program to accelerate greenway acquisition of contiguous land and quality natural resource areas along the full width of the 100-year flood plain or a 100-foot wide vegetative buffer, whichever is greater, through additional funding and/or regulations.~~

~~See also 'C.4 Flood Reduction and Preparedness' in Element C: 'Environmental Protection.'~~

### **Action PR 3.4**

**Removed 2018**

#### **Action PR 3.4**

##### **Greenway Connection Improvements**

Increase public awareness of and facilitate access to the Capital Area Greenway network by providing links to nearby communities and destination centers.

#### **Action PR 3.5**

##### **Greenway Corridors**

Acquire and maintain easements along all designated greenway corridors. Require greenway dedication whenever a tract of land within a proposed residential subdivision or site plan includes any part of a designated greenway, and pursue dedication or reservation of greenway land from non-residential development. Explore opportunities to require the construction of greenway trail infrastructure when new development occurs within a designated greenway corridor.

#### **Action PR 3.6**

##### **Resilience and Green Infrastructure Network**

Develop a program to accelerate greenway acquisition of contiguous land and quality natural resource areas along the full width of the 100-year flood plain or a 100-foot wide vegetative buffer, whichever is greater, through additional funding and/or regulations.

*See also '5.4 Flood Reduction and Preparedness' in Section 5: 'Environmental Protection.'*

#### **Action PR 3.7**

##### **Greenway Connection Improvements**

Increase public awareness of and facilitate access to the Capital Area Greenway network by providing links to nearby communities and destination centers.

#### **Action PR 3.8**

##### **Multi-modal Integration**

Provide multi-modal access to trailhead locations, as well as adequate parking where feasible.

#### **Action PR 3.9**

## **Regional Network**

Coordinate with adjacent municipalities and other entities in order to identify potential cross-jurisdictional connections. Examine potential partnerships and funding opportunities to implement regional trail connections including the Mountains-to-Sea Trail and East Coast Greenway.

### **Action PR 3.10**

## **Public Awareness and Stewardship**

Promote the Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Adopt-A-Trail program to individuals, businesses, and groups interested in supporting the Capital Area Greenway System.

### **Action PR 3.11**

## **Signage and Wayfinding**

Implement the Raleigh Greenways Master Sign Program throughout the system and improve to include wayfinding with comprehensive directions to and from the Capital Area Greenway system, nearby destination information, orientation indicators, educational and interpretive information, and route options within the system.

### **Action PR 3.12**

## **Development Adjacent to Greenways**

Implement the Capital Area Greenway Master Plan and engage greenway planning staff during rezoning and site development for residential and non-residential sites. Involve the city's greenway planning staff in the planning and design of all infrastructure projects that impact a corridor or proposed trail as identified in the Capital Area Greenway Planning and Design Guide.

### **Action PR 3.13**

## **Implement Safety Education Program**

Develop and implement a trail user safety and etiquette education program.

### **Action PR 3.14**

## **Implement Maintenance Standards**

Enhance and implement maintenance standards for existing greenway trails to ensure safe and comfortable travel by users.

#### **8.4 Recreational Facilities and Programs**

In order to maintain its position as a center of wise growth and prosperity, the city of Raleigh must continue to provide a wide variety of experiences for citizens. Planning for these experiences through a site-specific master plan process should take into account a system-wide approach as well as consideration for individual neighborhoods, adjoining public facilities, and future opportunities.

The city's parks, recreation and cultural resources facilities support a broad range of skills and experiences, and exposure to opportunities and programs in aquatics, arts, athletics, history, museums, nature, summer and track-out camps, and tennis. Programs serve all ages from youth to senior adults, as well as special populations. Amusement areas and several lakes also offer contact with nature and relief from the stress of everyday life for all generations. Facilities include trails, tracks, playgrounds and play fields, as well as a variety of courts, gymnasiums, and activity spaces.

To adapt and continue to meet the needs of the community, planning for flexible facilities with opportunities for future expansion is of utmost importance in accommodating future growth.

##### **Policy PR 4.1**

###### **Flexible Facilities**

Continue to plan, develop, and operate a variety of flexible indoor and outdoor facilities to support programs and multiple activities across the entire city with respect to sufficient quality, quantity, size, and geographic distribution, and to reserve space for future trends and services.

##### **Policy PR 4.2**

###### **Sustainable Design**

Incorporate sustainable design in the development and management of parks, recreation and cultural resource facilities.

##### **Policy PR 4.3**

###### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

Collaborate with partners in the public and private sectors to develop innovative park arrangements and spaces that help provide a diversity of needed recreational facilities.

#### **Policy PR 4.4**

##### **Enhanced Access and Awareness**

Enhance access to and awareness of Raleigh's recreational opportunities by locating and developing some active recreational facilities along major streets near other commercial development and in highly visible areas.

#### **Policy PR 4.5**

##### **Reserved**

#### **Policy PR 4.5**

##### **User Fee and Charges**

Conduct a study to review and evaluate user fees and charges.

#### **Policy PR 4.6**

##### **Universal Access**

Develop recreational facilities that are universally accessible to all residents. Update existing facilities when new construction is planned, or when renovations are undertaken to, be compliant with new city and federal regulations as they come into effect.

#### **Policy PR 4.7**

##### **Joint Use of Schools**

Seek and work collaboratively, when feasible, with other municipal, county, and state entities on the joint use of school properties for public recreation.

#### **Policy PR 4.8**

##### **Private Parks Development**

Encourage the provision of tot lots, pocket parks, and other privately-held and maintained park spaces within residential developments to improve access public park facilities.

## **Policy PR 4.9**

### **Adequate Indoor Facilities**

Seek to provide adequate indoor and all- weather facilities for a wide variety of active living choices for all generations.

## **Policy PR 4.10**

### **Reserved**

## **Action PR 4.1**

### **Completed 2014**

#### ~~Action PR 4.1~~

#### ~~User Fees and Charges~~

~~Develop a revenue policy, cost recovery criteria, and cost of service templates for use in determining pricing for program and user fees.~~

## **Action PR 4.2**

### **Sustainable Practice Development**

Use nationally accepted sustainable design principles and best management practices in park design.

## **Action PR 4.3**

### **Completed 2014**

## **Action PR 4.4**

### **Creating Opportunities for Active Living Choices**

Develop new and renovate existing facilities, multiuse fields, trails, and courts as often as practical to support formal and informal opportunities for active living choices by all generations.

## **Action PR 4.5**

### **Completed 2014**

## **Action PR 4.6**

**Removed 2018**

## **Action PR 4.7**

**Removed 2018**

### **8.5 Open Space and Special Landscapes**

The City of Raleigh will continue to experience incredible rates of growth and urbanization between now and 2030. As the city continues to mature, its character will be defined by how it manages these trends. A larger population, shifting land-use patterns and the pressures of development will bring new opportunities and challenges to the management of open spaces and special landscapes. In order for Raleigh to stay true to its essential character and retain the qualities that make it one of the most livable cities in America, it must find a balance between urban development and the protection of open spaces.

Open spaces provide opportunities for organized programs, informal or unprogrammed activities, and the conservation of special landscapes for the long-term benefit of the public. A variety of public open spaces contributes to the health and wellbeing of citizens and visitors, the conservation of wildlife and wild land, and the mitigation of environmental impacts from development. The City of Raleigh will enact policies that recognize open space as a complement—not a competition— to growth and development, and will take action to protect natural areas and special landscapes that enhance quality of life for all citizens.

Every citizen of Raleigh should be able to experience the benefits of public open space and special landscapes. These spaces must be integrated within new and existing development, thereby promoting public access and awareness of these resources. This integrated approach will require the city to develop and implement new and innovative policies to pro-actively encourage the provision of open space within both public and private development projects.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize that citizens of Raleigh benefit immensely from parks and open spaces that are protected and managed by Wake County, the State of North Carolina, various land trusts and other nonprofit organizations operating within the city of Raleigh. An integrated approach to open space planning will require partnerships and coordination with each of these entities.

In addition to providing everyday access to open spaces, the city must protect and promote the unique and special landscapes that exist within Raleigh. Nature Preserves and Natural Areas (Anderson Point Park; Annie Louise Wilkerson, MD Nature Preserve Park; Durant Nature Preserve; Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve; Lake Johnson; and Walnut Creek Wetland Center) are important components of the parks system that contain examples of high quality plant or animal populations, natural communities, landscapes or ecosystems that contribute to biodiversity and environmental health.

The parks system also includes four lakes (Lake Johnson, Lake Wheeler, Lake Lynn and Shelley Lake) that provide access to unique outdoor recreation experiences while enhancing the region's water quality and stormwater management. The Capital Area Greenway System protects thousands of acres of riparian

land while providing Raleigh's citizens and visitors with access to over 117 miles of trails, rivers and streams. Continuing to protect and expand upon these special landscapes and natural resources will be an important aspect of Raleigh's future open space planning.

A city's vitality depends on the network of public open spaces and natural areas that provide respite to its residents and soften the impact of human activities on the natural environment. Protecting and planning for these spaces will ensure that Raleigh remains a place that people will love to live for generations to come.

*See also Section 5: 'Environmental Protection' for additional policies related to the preservation and use of open spaces and landscapes.*

### **Policy PR 5.1**

#### **Protecting Heritage Sites**

In addition to acquiring land suitable for park facility development, work with local land trusts to acquire and conserve sites with significant natural heritage that are currently unprotected from development (as defined by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program).

### **Policy PR 5.2**

#### **Unique or Endangered Public Landscapes**

Ensure that park planning, facilities, and land management respect and conserve resources and landscapes such as Significant Natural Heritage Areas and N.C. Wildlife Action Plan priority habitat areas.

### **Policy PR 5.3**

#### **Interpretive Conservation Activities**

Maximize ecosystem conservation and promote interpretive and educational activities in unique ecological areas and habitats in partnership with other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

*See also '5.9 Environmental Education, Awareness and Coordination' in Section 5: 'Environmental Protection.'*

### **Policy PR 5.4**

#### **Improving Park Access**

Public spaces should be included in private developments that can connect to and benefit from their proximity to public infrastructure and spaces such as greenway trails, public sidewalks, and plazas.

### **Policy PR 5.5**

#### **Encourage Public Open Space in Rezonings**



Encourage the provision of publicly accessible open space during the consideration of zoning petitions.

**Action PR 5.1**

**Mandatory Greenway Dedication**

Continue the program of mandatory greenway land dedication from residential development to further the goals of the Capital Area Greenway program, and explore expanding it to non-residential development.

**Action PR 5.2**

**Converted to Policy 2014**

**Action PR 5.3**

**Removed 2018**

**Action PR 5.4**

**Identify Conservation Lands**

Identify lands that can be conserved and managed for their outstanding natural features, landscapes and assets, and cultural heritage values as part of a system of open spaces and green infrastructure.

**Action PR 5.5**

**Inventory Private Park Facilities**

Inventory/map private park facilities, amenities, and accessible open space.

**Action PR 5.6**

**Amend UDO to Promote Open Space**

Amend UDO Section 1.5.3 to allow for the provision of publicly accessible open space to meet the UDO outdoor amenity area requirements. Amend UDO Section 2.5.2 to include 'Areas that connect to neighboring open space, trails, or greenways' as Primary rather than Tertiary Open Space Allocation options for Compact and Conservation Residential Districts. Consider other changes as necessary to improve public access to parks and open spaces throughout the city, especially in high-growth areas.

**Action PR 5.7**

**Facility Fees for Park Projects**

Explore the use of Facility Fee revenue and other methods of public-private partnership to fund publicly accessible park development projects at the time of private development and new construction.

## **Action PR 5.8**

### **Cost Sharing for Greenway Connections**

Actively explore cost-share opportunities for the creation of new access points or connections between greenway easements and new development at the time of construction.

## **8.6 Management and Stewardship**

As a steward of public land, recreational facilities, and cultural and natural resources, the city must manage with a goal of efficiency, equitable quality and access, and long term public benefit. Management and stewardship of parklands and facilities includes maintenance of existing developed parks as well as proper stewardship and management of undeveloped parklands and natural areas, and cultural resources. This requires a commitment from city employees, the public and their elected representatives to plan for the operating funds necessary to maintain sites, structures, and systems for their expected life cycle. Additionally, new capital development, renovation of existing facilities, and replacement of facilities when life-cycles are over should be planned and fully funded.

Promoting citizen involvement in stewardship and volunteer activities such as clean-ups, minor construction, and landscaping will continue to build community knowledge and support of the parks and greenway system. Numerous partner organizations and agencies exist in the area that can further the mission of the city of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department.

## **Policy PR 6.1**

### **Budget Adequacy**

Ensure that capital and operating budget support of the parks, recreation and cultural resources system keeps pace with growth as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan to provide the quantity and quality of programs, facilities, and facilities maintenance expected by citizens.

## **Policy PR 6.2**

### **Volunteerism**

Encourage citizens to volunteer within the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources system by offering opportunities to be involved in recreational and resource programming, youth athletic coaching, park clean-up efforts, habitat restoration, special event support, and other supportive activities.

## **Policy PR 6.3**

### **Park Stewardship**

Strive to improve safety, awareness, cleanliness, and neighborhood support at existing parks in part by involving residents in these efforts, partnering with other city departments such as Planning, Public Utilities, Police, Housing and Neighborhoods, and other partner agencies and programs that may have a presence on the site.

## **Policy PR 6.4**

### **Access to Natural Resources**

Promote the public awareness and knowledge of access to natural resource areas within the regional park system.

#### **Action PR 6.1**

### **Innovative Maintenance Strategies**

Implement and support innovative methods and initiatives such as park conservancies, Friends of the Parks groups, and trust funds to help supplement funding and encourage stewardship of public parks.

#### **Action PR 6.2**

### **Adopt-A-Park/Adopt-A-Trail**

Expand the Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Trail programs to encourage individual citizens, neighborhoods, organized groups, partner agencies, and non-profits to participate in the establishment and maintenance of facilities and delivery of programs.

#### **Action PR 6.3**

### **System Integration Plan Implementation**

Implement System Integration Plans for all newly-acquired properties and for undeveloped park sites and key areas of underdeveloped sites.

#### **Action PR 6.4**

**Removed 2018**

#### **Action PR 6.5**

### **Awareness of Natural Resource Areas**

Implement strategies through traditional methods and emerging technologies to increase public awareness of natural resource areas within the Raleigh Park system and adjoining communities.

#### **Action PR 6.6**

**Removed 2018**

## **8.7 Dorothea Dix Park**

On July 24, 2015, the City of Raleigh and the State of North Carolina agreed to the city's acquisition of the Dorothea Dix Campus, to plan and transform the former hospital property into a new destination park.

Dix Park is a total of 307.9 acres—143 acres to the west of the railroad and 164 acres to the east. The historic character of the eastern parcel, which includes the Dix Hill National Register Historic District, makes it very distinct from the park-like setting of the western parcel. There are 85 structures on the campus totaling 1.2 million square feet of building space. The site has many unique features including a historic cemetery, chapel, and 65-acre landfill. The Rocky Branch Greenway Trail runs along the creek on the northern edge of the site. The study area for this project will not only include the 307.9 acres but will also need to consider how the park connects to and impacts the greater area. Rosengarten Greenway Trail, currently in the design phase, will connect Dix Park to the future Union Station through the Historic Boylan Heights neighborhood.

Dix Park is a site that blends historic architecture and rich landscapes into a unique destination in the heart of the capital city. Dix Park offers skyline views, old growth oaks and rolling fields all in a bucolic, campus-like setting. From a plantation to a mental health hospital to the headquarters of a state agency, this property has evolved through centuries. This site also marks the spot where a common purpose was shared—the treatment and healing of North Carolina's mentally ill. Understanding the rich history and legacy of the land is essential to the creation of an authentic vision for its future.

Purchase of the Dorothea Dix Campus provides an extraordinary opportunity to create a transformational public park that will contribute to the ongoing revitalization of downtown Raleigh, existing adjacent and future neighborhoods, the Triangle region, and the State.

The most successful destination parks across the United States include some form of public-private partnership and the city of Raleigh supports the value and importance of having these partners as an integral part of the planning and development of Dorothea Dix Park. The City of Raleigh is collaborating with the Dix Park Conservancy for the fund-raising and development of a master plan for Dorothea Dix Park.

The Dorothea Dix Park planning process will be unique, progressive, and ambitious so that the final master plan is visionary and iconic for the future of Dorothea Dix Park and the City of Raleigh. The planning process will provide opportunities for the community to discover the park's history, beauty and potential. It will be inclusive, transparent, and provide broad equitable opportunities for public participation.

The planning process will be governed by a three-tiered structure led by the Master Plan Executive Committee, which represents the partnership between the City of Raleigh and the Dix Park Conservancy. A 45-member Advisory Committee will advise the consultant team, make recommendations to the Executive Committee, be heavily involved in public outreach and engagement and serve as project advocates. Members of the Advisory Committee will also lead subcommittee workgroups which will be open to the public. Workgroups will enrich the planning process by providing topic-specific expertise and be involved in public outreach and engagement.

## **Policy PR 7.1**

### **Contextual Development**

Complement the ongoing growth and development of the Centennial and Main Campuses of North Carolina State University, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture's State Farmer's Market, and other regional institutions.

#### **Policy PR 7.2**

##### **Integration into Park System**

Integrate into and build upon the city's regional park and greenway system, and be mutually supportive of other city parks and cultural institutions.

#### **Policy PR 7.3**

##### **Design for Sustainability**

Incorporate at a most fundamental level the notions of sustainability and the relationship between the health of the human spirit and landscape.

#### **Policy PR 7.4**

##### **Exemplary Planning and Design**

Exhibit the highest level of planning principles and design innovation.

#### **Policy PR 7.5**

##### **Public Engagement**

Demonstrate that sustained, broad and inclusive public engagement is essential to the long-term development, support and use of the park.

#### **Policy PR 7.6**

##### **Placemaking**

Create a remarkable civic space that welcomes all that will embrace its history and legacy, showcase its beautiful and inspiring landscape and become a destination, a landmark, and an icon for the city.

#### **Action PR 7.1**

##### **Collaborative Master Planning**

Create and implement a collaborative and comprehensive process for developing a Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan.

#### **Action PR 7.2**

## **Public Participation in Programming**

Engage the public in park programming.