Executive Summary

Introduction

The Town of Garner is located in central North Carolina and is one of twelve municipalities within Wake County. Garner is located approximately 8 miles south of Raleigh, the capital city of North Carolina. As of February 1, 2007, the estimated population for the Town of Garner was 24,555. Due to the location of Garner and its convenient access to metropolitan areas, major transportation arteries, numerous universities, and Research Triangle Park, the Town is experiencing significant growth.

The Town recommended a Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Master Plan be created to serve as a guide for future parks and recreation facility and program expansion. This document not only serves as a guide for future recreational development and expansion, but is also used as a tool to seek alternative funding sources.

Project Team

The development of the Comprehensive Parks & Recreation, Open Space and Greenways Master Plan has been a team effort and involved the following team members:

- Board of Alderman
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
- Town of Garner Parks and Recreation Department Staff, and staff from Engineering, Planning, and Public Works Departments
- Focus Group Participants
- Garner Residents
- Wake County Staff
- Needs Assessment Survey Consultants:
    - Dr. Nancy Gladwell and Dr. Jim Sellers from Department of Recreation, Tourism, and Hospitality Management University of North Carolina Greensboro
    - HadenStanziale

Mission Statement (Approved Mission Statement – Feb. 7, 2007)

The Town of Garner Parks and Recreation Department provides a well balanced program of quality recreational activities and facilities that enhances the physical and mental well being of our citizens, preserves the natural environment, and celebrates the arts and our cultural identity. We constantly enrich our diverse and growing community by discovering and providing new recreational opportunities both directly and through community partnerships.

Methodology

In order to determine the recreational needs for Garner residents, a thorough master planning methodology was established. The Master Planning process involved several tasks and was completed utilizing the following process:

Review of Past Plans and Related Community Plans
+
Inventory of Existing Recreational Program and Facility Resources
+
Staff Analysis
+
Recreation Oriented Community Focus Group Input
+
Public Open Houses, Focus Group Meetings
+
Recreation Needs Assessment Survey
+
Interdepartmental Coordination
+
Community Comparison and Regional Context Evaluation
=
Action Item Recommendations

Significant Findings and Action Item Recommendations:

The Town of Garner Comprehensive Parks and Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Master Plan Action items are broken down into the following categories:

1. Unified Development Ordinance
2. Land Acquisition Needs
3. Open Space Needs
4. Greenway and Sidewalk Needs
5. Recreation Programs Needs
6. Recreation Facilities Needs
7. Existing Facility Needs
8. Recreation Staffing Needs
9. Financing Strategies

These action items are further broken down over a ten year period into: immediate needs (0-3 years); near term needs (4-7 years); and long term needs (8-10 years).

1 Unified Development Ordinance:

The Town of Garner Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) has several mechanisms to obtain land to fulfill future park demands. The Town recognizes the impact new residential development has on existing recreational resources and future recreational needs. Needs presented below should be incorporated immediately and therefore are not further broken down into near term or long term needs. In order to help plan for this growth, The Town requires the following subdivision/design improvements as part of the development process:

- **Open Space Land Dedication:** When land is developed for residential purposes a portion of that land is to remain as common open space. The UDO describes the quantity, type of land, and intent for open space allocation.
    - The Town should review the comprehensive land use land dedication areas and the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Master Plan to ensure proposed land dedications and/or land acquisition areas are not accepted without parks and recreation use consideration.
- **Park Land Dedication:** The Town understands the impact of residential development on Town park and recreation facilities and requires new residential developments to plan for this increase in demand through recreation land dedication or fee in lieu of.
    - The UDO describes quantity, type, and intent.
    - The Town should continue the parkland and fee in lieu of review process by completing review and approval of proposed park land dedication presented during the site development process.
    - Additionally, the fee in lieu of section states the fee is based upon the cost per acre to acquire new park land multiplied by the acreage demand per housing unit. It is recommended the Town evaluate this dedication fee yearly to ensure fee requirements reflect increase in property value and the cost to purchase land.

- **Public and Private Dedication**- It is recommended as future development occurs and as the greenway master plan is implemented that greenway land dedication be required as public dedication. Private greenway dedications could prohibit the general public from greenway usage and from the Town policing and maintaining the greenway corridors in a safe manner.

- **Neighborhood Parks-** As new development is reviewed by the Town planning staff, private recreation space for neighborhood parks and usable passive recreation areas should be encouraged. These parks can be maintained by homeowner's associations. These areas should not be accepted as park land dedication areas or fee in lieu of, but rather encouraged as part of the development plan.

2. Land Acquisition Needs:

Land resources available for future parks, open space, and greenway development are finite in Garner. Therefore, the Town should pursue land acquisitions as opportunities arise regardless of proposed timelines indicated in the facilities and program recommendations. Due to increasing property values, less available suitable land, and growth, the Town should look at identified target land acquisition areas as soon as possible.

A summary of the land acquisition needs are as follows:

1. **Vance Elementary School Acquisition Area**

   Park land acquisition in partnership with the school, or as a Town facility in close proximity to the school, is recommended to meet a growing active and passive recreation need in this area. With the proposed Old Stage Road Trail and proposed South Garner Neighborhood Greenway, the Town and County should look for greenway acquisition and trail head opportunities to service Garner and nearby communities.

2. **Swift Creek Greenway Property Acquisition Area**

   Land acquisition to maximize opportunities for passive recreation access to water, nature study or environmental education, and greenway related parkland should occur. Additional land may also be needed for greenway connectivity.

3. **Lake Benson, Thompson Road, and White Deer Parks Acquisition Area**

   Future park design should be examined for critical pedestrian links, and to determine if any easements or acquisitions are required. Any easements or acquisitions should be pursued immediately. Consideration should be given to combining these parcels for stormwater runoff planning and treatment.

4. **Smith Elementary School Acquisition Area**

   This area should capitalize on a school/parks partnership opportunity to meet active and or passive recreation park land acquisition needs. The park acquisitions could be tied into sidewalks and greenway acquisition needs for the proposed Yates Mill Pond Connector to provide an important expanded regional passive recreation potential.

5. **Cloverdale Park and North Garner Greenway Acquisition Area**

   This area is a key trail head for the North Garner Greenway. Park land acquisition should be pursued adjacent to this park to create parking and to expand park opportunities in this area.

6. **East Garner Elementary/Middle School Acquisition Area**

   A school/parks partnership opportunities should be explored in this area to meet active and/or passive recreation needs. With many schools in close proximity, a joint park venture is optimal for field sports or other active recreation. In efforts to link schools with the proposed East Garner Schools Connector on the Greenways and Sidewalk Master Plan, greenway or sidewalk land acquisition may be

required. In addition, a greenway/sidewalk link to the newly acquired ±15 acre recreation property to the north should be explored. A feasibility study will determine the specific acquisition need.

7. Big Branch Area Land Acquisition

Big Branch offers two potential recreation opportunities. One is water access to the Creek including boating, fishing, and scenic overlooks. The second opportunity is a potential Big Branch spur from the Mountains-to-Sea Trail in a partnership with Wake County for greenway acquisition.

8. East Garner ETJ Acquisition Area

With growth extending into the eastern part of Garner, this area should be examined for future active and passive recreation potential. The area also represents public water access potential along Big Branch.

9. Potential WRAL Recreation Site

This property has already been examined in a conceptual site plan for active recreation suitability. Land acquisition partnership opportunities, including easements and leases, should be supported. Since the site location promises good regional access, an active recreation complex should be considered here. Also, links to the proposed White Oak Greenway should be explored for passive recreation.

10. White Oak Acquisition Area

Acquisition of a large tract in this existing low density area could provide an alternate place for the needed Community Arts Center and/or Indoor Athletic Complex. In addition, active and passive recreation partnerships with the Bryan Road Elementary/ Middle School should be pursued.

11. Rand Mill Park Area Acquisition

Expansion of this park would fulfill public need for short walking loops, nature study areas, and water access. Examination of the park for expansion potential including parking, athletic fields, trails, and pond access could help enhance one of Garner's existing neighborhood parks.

12. Southeast Garner Greenway and Swift Creek Greenway Acquisition Area

This area may be a potential area for an active recreation athletic complex. Land acquisition to connect south and east Garner area recreation users to the potential complex and proposed greenways should be explored. Also, any water access along Swift Creek should be pursued in a Town/County partnership. This area is outside of Garner's ETJ.

13. Highway 50 / South Garner Acquisition Area

This area inside the Garner ETJ is similar to number 12 in land acquisition needs for active recreation outdoor facilities and/or an athletic complex.

3. Open Space Needs:

Open Space is defined differently across the United States. For the purposes of this study, Open Space shall follow Wake County's statement of Open space which includes, "any parcel or area of land and water that is devoted to: 1) the preservation of natural resources and habitat; 2) the managed production of resources (forest and farm land); 3) outdoor recreation; 4) preservation of historic and cultural property; 5) protection of scenic landscapes; and 6) protection of public health, safety and welfare".

The acquisition and preservation of open space land is a high priority for Garner residents. The results of the recreation needs assessment survey and public input sessions revealed over 82% of Garner residents would like to see the Town provide additional opportunities for passive outdoor recreation. Approximately 80% of residents would like to see the Town provide a greenway/trail system linking various areas within the community. These needs relate to two of the primary objectives listed below and within the Wake County Consolidated Open Space Plan (WCOSP). Because land is finite and these resources should be acquired as available, recommendations are not presented based upon immediate, near term, and long term needs. Wake County is committed to supporting municipalities within the County that are focused on:

- **Protection of water resources**
- **Improved access to open space and public land**
- **Acquisition of park and greenway land**
- **Linking municipal open space and greenway systems together (connectivity)**

According to needs assessment survey & public input, Garner residents support these efforts as follows:

1. 92.5 % would like more picnic areas and shelters
2. 92. 3% want to see the preservation of forested land
3. 89.9 % would like the Town to implement greenways and trails
4. 89.4 % would like more hiking trails
5. 88.7 % would like the Town to acquire conservation land for improved water quality.
6. 86 % of residents would like to see the Town expand facilities for outdoor active recreation activities and for public access.

Walking ranked as the highest activity for participation of Garner residents according to public input sessions and results in the recreation needs assessment survey. Therefore, The Town should focus on implementing a greenway, trail, and sidewalk system. This will not only meet Town resident demands, but also offer partnership potential with the County in their efforts to protect open space land.

Additionally, forest preservation, and improved water quality are key issues for residents. Land should be acquired to meet these demands for open space acquisition.

Based upon Wake County and Town initiatives we recommend the following land be sought for open space protection and recreational use:

1. Land that falls within the **Water Supply Watershed area.**

2. **Floodplain Land-** According to The Town of Garner Unified Development Ordinance, "special flood hazard areas are those identified under the cooperating technical state (CTS) agreement between the State of North Carolina and FEMA in its Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and its accompanying flood insurance rate maps (FIRM), for Wake County dated May 2, 2006, which are adopted by reference and declared to be a part of this ordinance." These areas are depicted on the Wake County FIRM maps.

3. **Areas along Major Streams and Tributaries within the Town of Garner including:** Adams Branch, Bagwell Branch, Big Branch #1**,** Big Branch #2, Mill Creek Swift Creek**,** Big Branch Tributary, Buck Branch, Hilliard Creek**,** Mahler's Creek**,** Reedy Branch**,** Reedy Creek Tributary**,** Walnut Creek**,** White Oak Creek, Yates Branch.

4. **Open Space and Greenway Acquisition Areas-** areas are shown on the *Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Greenway Action Plan Map,* and the *Greenway and Sidewalk Master Plan Map.*

5. Additional **land acquisition needs** for the Town, including public access land for active and passive recreation, are listed in the Land Acquisition section. All of the recommended areas meet the four Wake County strategies listed: Protection of water resources, improved access to open space and public land, acquisition of park and greenway land, and linking municipal open space and greenway systems together (connectivity).

4. Greenway and Sidewalk Needs:

There is high demand for greenway and pedestrian related facilities within the Town of Garner. Focus group participants, public meeting participants, and needs assessment survey respondents all listed walking and pedestrian related facilities as their highest priority. These groups especially want to see key community features linked by greenways, sidewalks and trails. Almost 80% of the survey respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that the Garner Parks and Recreation Department needs to provide a greenway trail system linking various areas within the community. Walking is listed as the recreational activity with the highest percentage (72%) of participation by survey respondents, and the highest ranked activity that respondents would like to see the Town of Garner provide facilities for over the next 10 years.

Immediate Greenway and Sidewalk Needs:

- **Hire or allocate staff person to head up greenway efforts** – This position is critical to respond to the demand of the Garner residents for more greenways and better pedestrian connectivity throughout the community. This effort will

require full time attention to ensure interdepartmental coordination and to seek alternative funding sources for implementation.

- **North Garner Greenway is** 6.5 miles in length and should be broken down into several phases. The North Garner Greenway will provide off road greenway facilities and sidewalks that link downtown to schools, parks, and key community features.
    - Critical intersection improvements:
        - East Garner Road and Hwy 50
- **Downtown Pedestrian Route is** 2.4 miles of sidewalk that will link North Garner to areas south of Hwy. 70. This is a critical planning component because it is one of the few locations pedestrians may be able to safely cross Hwy. 70 with the implementation of crossing facilities.
    - Critical intersection improvements:
        - East Garner Road and New Rand Road
        - New Rand Road and Highway 70
- **Garner Loop is** 6.12 miles of existing and proposed sidewalk that links existing neighborhoods to the library, parks, the Town complex, and schools. It will provide sidewalks and greenway facilities to improve pedestrian connectivity, offer transportation alternatives, and promote health by implementing several exercise loops.
    - Critical Intersection Improvements:
        - Timber Drive and Aversboro Road
        - Timber Drive and Vandora Springs Road

- **North-South Greenway is a** 5 mile internal greenway route to the Garner Loop and connects several Garner parks and neighborhoods in central Garner.

Near Term Greenway and Sidewalk Needs

- **Timber Drive Sidewalk Connector is** 2.05 miles of existing and proposed sidewalk that will connect central Garner to schools, existing neighborhoods and key commercial centers.
- **West Garner Connector is** 2.17 miles combination of greenway with existing and proposed sidewalk that connects parks and schools to existing and future growth areas.
- **East Garner Schools Connector is** approximately 1.6 miles of critical sidewalk connection linking the North Garner Greenway and Garner Recreational Park to future and existing school sites.
- **Mahler's Creek Greenway is** 2.7 miles of greenway that will offer off-road greenway facilities through a natural setting and lies predominantly within an already cleared sewer easement. This area also presents a unique setting for environmental observation and education.
- **Swift Creek Greenway Phase 1 is a** Wake County Project & Town partnership opportunity; Phase 1 is approximately 5.6 miles and links City of Raleigh and Wake County recreational resources to The Town of Garner.

Long Term Greenway and Sidewalk Needs

- **Rand School Road Connector is a** short .44 mile sidewalk link that will take students at Rand Road School to the proposed Lake Benson Trail.

- **Yates Mill Pond Connector is a** partnership opportunity with Wake County and the Town of Garner to provide a 3.17 mile greenway corridor that will connect schools and neighborhoods in Garner to regional recreation facilities.
- **White Oak Greenway is a** 3.3 mile greenway corridor partnership opportunity with Wake County and the Town of Garner to provide pedestrian facilities to existing and future growth areas in the eastern section of Garner.
- **White Oak Road Sidewalk Connector is a** 1.89 mile commercial and residential area connector to a variety of proposed greenways.
- **Southeast Garner Greenway is** 4.77 miles of trail and presents an opportunity to form a partnership with a private company within an existing cleared power and gas easement. It offers a unique setting for environmental education and natural resource observation and links existing residential neighborhoods to future growth areas within the Town.
- **Southeast Garner Greenway (Secondary) is** a 1.41 mile spur connecting the main greenway to Centennial Park.
- **Swift Creek Greenway Phase 2 is** approximately 4.4 miles in Garner's ETJ and in Wake County; therefore, the project is a County and Town partnership opportunity. It connects residents in southeast Garner to several Garner area parks, City of Raleigh Lake Benson, and regional recreation resources.
- **South Garner Neighborhood Greenway is** approximately 4.35 miles of greenway in existing power and gas line easements. This greenway connects many existing neighborhoods to schools and future commercial areas. This may prove to be a challenging connection due to greenway easement acquisition needs.
- **Old Stage Road Greenway is** approximately 2.4miles mostly in Wake County; therefore, the project is a County and Town partnership opportunity and will connection lake Benson to Vance Elementary school, existing neighborhoods, and future growth areas.
- **Southern Lake Benson Loop is** approximately 4 miles and falls within Garner and Wake County, but strongly affects Garner recreation users. This would provide a wonderful looped greenway connection around an existing natural resource and connect several residents to parks, schools, and other area recreation resources.
- **Lake Benson Pedestrian Connector is a** 1.19 mile connector between the Garner Loop and Swift Creek Greenway Phase 1 and the West Garner Connector.

5. Recreation Programs Needs:

The Town of Garner offers a wide variety of recreation programs throughout the year in a variety of locations. Residents are happy with programs they are receiving but would like more of them. Expanded program offerings, times, and locations were the main issues from respondents and public meeting participants. Below are the needs from the overall assessment.

Immediate Programs Needs: (0-3 years)

- **Departmental Software:** Acquire software that will track programs, facilities, and use participation to establish future program and facility need.
- **Field Use Organization:** Allocate staff to oversee field use organization and use.

- **Nature Study and Outdoor Programs**:
    1. fishing
    2. walking
    3. summer camps
    4. nature study
    5. biking
    6. crafts
    7. hiking
    8. gardening
    9. dog walking/ dog parks

- **Track-out Camp Program offerings:** Eighty-one percent (81.5%) of the needs assessment survey respondents with children stated they feel there is a need for the Town to provide program alternatives for Wake County School "Track-out periods."
- **Teen and Young Adult Programs** were listed as a high priority for expansion. Special attention should be given to the type of programs offered to this age group to ensure participation.
- **Special Events** ranked as the 3rd highest priority out of 48 potential future program offerings. Some of the recommendations include:
    - Concerts and outdoor performances
    - More festivals and holiday events for young children and residents of all ages
    - Local runs, walks, and races
    - Special trips
- **Public Arts:** Residents have expressed interest in the implementation of a public arts program. Residents would like to see public art displays throughout the Garner Community. There are several ways to accomplish the implementation of this program some include:
    - Art exhibits within proposed gallery space
    - Public art displays on municipally owned land
    - Encourage public art into existing and future private development and government sites

- **Cultural Arts Programming:** Areas of Cultural Arts Program expansion included:
    - Crafts
    - Cultural /Historical
    - Dance
    - Drama
    - Music:
        - Vocal
        - Instrumental
    - Visual

- **Special Needs programming:** Needs assessment respondents commented on special needs program offerings within the Town. The Town currently provides for special needs individuals within their existing program structure. These needs are met through existing staff and program offerings. Separate program offerings should be examined as the population increases to approximately 60,000.

- **Swimming Programs** ranked among the highest need for future growth and expansion. Garner residents would like to see swimming complex facilities and related programs. Due to the limited access to existing resources within the Town we do not currently see a way fulfill this demand. This program need should be fulfilled by the implementation of new facility partnerships and/or new facilities.

Near Term Programs Needs

- **Preschool Programs** have shown steady increase and will continue to increase as this population age group increases. We see the need to expand these program times and schedules as this occurs.

Long Term Programs Needs

- **Swimming Programs** will need to grow with the population increase and as facilities are brought on-line for programming.

6. Recreation Facilities Needs:

Garner recreation users participate in various activities, some can be accommodated with existing facilities, and some will require expanded or new space. As with all Garner development, the needs of the users and the economic viability have to be carefully balanced. The following needs were compiled from the action items methodology including: analysis of existing recreational facility resources, population projections, community comparisons, the needs assessment survey, the public input, staff input, and interdepartmental input. They are broken into timed completion ranges as follows:

Immediate Needs (0-3 years):

Immediate Active Recreation Facilities Needs:

- **Swimming Facility** planning, any necessary partnerships, and land acquisition for this facility should be completed within this timeline.
    - The survey needs assessment ranked a swimming facility as a high priority (the number 3 activity participated in over the last year and the number 2 desired facility in Garner in the next 10 years).
- **Indoor Athletic Complex / Gymnasium** designated land should be acquired, and its implementation completed to accommodate a gymnasium with 2 basketball courts, 1 volleyball court, and possible room for future expansion of the facility.
- **Multi-Purpose Fields-** three 160' x 360' fields are needed to free up existing fields for open play areas and club sports groups.
- Creech Road Elementary School has **two previously planned baseball/softball fields, a restroom, and a lighted field** that need to be constructed.
- Possible School Partnerships for consideration to alleviate immediate strain on Town facilities:
    - East Garner Magnet Middle School for soccer/football and baseball/ softball fields for youth and informal group play.
    - Aversboro Elementary School for multi-use, baseball/softball, and soccer/football fields for preschool, youth, and informal group play.
    - Rand Road Elementary School for multi-use fields for preschool, youth, and informal play.

- It is recommended that the Town pursue partnerships with any available school gymnasiums to alleviate the stress on existing Town facilities until the Town can build its own gymnasium space.
- It is recommended that the Town continue existing Wake County School / Garner Parks and Recreation partnerships with future school site development.

- **Specialty Facilities**
  - Although **skate parks, mountain biking, and disc golf** were not an extremely high priority from our public input and needs assessment, they can fit relatively easily into new park facilities or be retrofitted into existing parks. These types of facilities should be designed into new parks.

Immediate Passive Recreation Facilities Needs:

- **Building greenways and sidewalk connections** meets the needs of the number one desired facility in Garner for walking and links to key areas in and around the town.
- **Implementation of Proposed Park Features** at White Deer Park, White Deer Expansion Tract, Thompson Road Park, and Lake Benson Park.
- **Track-Out Camp Space** to be located, retro-fitted, built, or established through partnership.
- **Community Arts Center** – 67.8% of survey participants support this type of facility for craft rooms, wireless internet connection, and multi-purpose rooms for specific recreation like performing or visual arts. This facility is currently proposed at White Deer Park, but consideration should be given to combining the Community Arts Center and the recommended Indoor Athletic facility. In case of facility combination, the White Deer Park should be evaluated to make sure the park is still the best site for this type of facility.
- **Nature Facilities**
  - The proposed White Deer Park Nature Center is recommended for design and development in the immediate term to support and act as a central amenity for a variety of desired nature oriented educational and program opportunities.
  - When designing new parks or evaluating recreation access to existing land, the following items should be reviewed for park program inclusion:
    - educational signage
    - nature and bird trails
    - visual accesses or overlooks
    - wildlife viewing stations
    - picnic shelters
    - fishing piers/fishing access
    - non-motorized boat access to existing water bodies
- The **Lake Benson Boathouse Lease** will expire in the immediate term. Evaluation of the lease renewal should occur after the new City of Raleigh water treatment facility comes on line. A Town owned boating facility and water access to Lake Benson is recommended and publicly supported.
- **Amphitheater** New amphitheater to accommodate medium to large sized performances, etc. is recommended.
- **Specialty Facilities**

- **Dog Park Facilities** proposed at Thompson Rd. Park should be implemented. Future parks should try to incorporate these facilities as space allows.

Near Term Needs (4-7 years):

Near Term Active Recreation Facilities Needs:

- Continue **Swimming Facility** planning and begin implementation if possible.
- The Town should create **and Maintain Wake County Schools partnerships** for active and passive park and recreation facilities especially at future Bryan Road Elementary/Middle School and proposed high school on East Garner Road.
- The **Community Arts Center** should be constructed if not already built.
- Add one **Tennis Court**
- Add one **playground equipment unit** for **age 3-5**
- Add one **playground equipment unit** for **age 5-12**
- Add one **picnic shelter** into existing or proposed parks

- **Specialty Facilities:**
  - Continue incorporating **Disc golf, Mountain Biking Trails, Skateboard Parks and other specialty facilities** into future parks.

Near Term Passive Recreation Facilities Needs:

- **Greenways and Sidewalk Connection** efforts should be continued.
- **Track-Out Camp Space -** continue to find and implement new space
- The **Indoor Athletic Complex** should be constructed if not already built.
- **Implementation of Additional Nature Facilities** should continue from immediate needs priorities. Implementation of any fishing piers, new water access opportunities, overlooks, and other related facilities are recommended.
- **Gallery Space** should be designed into new facilities and retro-fitted (when possible) into existing facilities to serve the growing demand for public art.
- **Specialty Facilities**
  - Continue to allocate areas for **Dog Parks** as space allows.

Long Term Needs (8-10 years):

Long Term Active Recreation Facilities Needs:

- **Swimming Facility** implementation should be completed within 10 years.
- Add one **Tennis Court**
- Add one **Baseball field**
- Add one **Football field**
- Add one **Softball field**
- Add one **Soccer field**
- Add one **Shuffle Board Court**
- Add one **Outdoor Basketball Court**
- Add one **Gymnasium including one Indoor Basketball Court and one Volleyball Court.** These may be added as an expansion to the Indoor Recreation Center; future growth space should be included into the facility planning.
- Add one area for **Horseshoes Pit**
- Add one **Bocce Court**

- Add one **Croquet Court**
- Add two **playground equipment units** for **age 3-5**
- Add two **playground equipment units** for **age 5-12**
- Add one **concession stand** in an active recreation park
- Add two **picnic shelters** into existing or proposed parks

- **Specialty Facilities**
    - Assess recreation trends, and continue incorporating appropriate specialty recreation facilities like **Disc golf, Mountain Biking Trails, Skateboard Parks and other specialty facilities** into future parks.

Long Term Passive Recreation Facilities Needs:

- Continue implementation of **greenways and sidewalk connections.**
- **Track-Out Camp Space -** continue to find and implement new space
- **Museums** focusing on local topics such as sites, history, arts, culture, nature, etc. should be implemented as opportunities are available.
- **Nature Facilities**
    - When designing new parks or evaluating recreation access to existing land, the following items should be reviewed for park program inclusion:
        - educational signage
        - nature trails **and bird trails**
        - visual accesses or overlooks
        - wildlife viewing stations
        - picnic shelters
        - fishing piers/fishing access
        - non-motorized boat access to existing water bodies

- **Specialty Facilities**
        - Continue to allocate areas for **Dog Parks** as space allows.

7. Existing Facilities Needs:

The existing facility improvement recommendations resulted from analysis and needs assessment comments that apply to existing parks and recreation facilities. There is a full list of current capital needs in section three of the master plan. These individual park improvements should be reevaluated yearly in capital improvement priorities listings. Park improvements include recommendations for the following facilities:

- Avery Street Recreation Center
- Avery Street Park
- Centennial Park
- Cloverdale Park
- Creech Road Elementary School Park
- Garner Historic Auditorium
- Garner Recreational Park
- Garner Senior Center

- Bryan Nature Park
- Greenbrier Park
- Jaycee Park
- Jones Sausage Road Property
- Lake Benson Park
- North Garner Middle School Baseball Field
- Pearl Street Building
- Rand Mill Park
- South Garner Park
- Swift Creek Open Space Property
- Thompson Road Park
- White Deer Park

8. Recreation Staffing Needs:

The assessment of immediate, near term, and long term staffing needs have been evaluated based upon the action item recommendations to expand recreational programs, facilities, and services. The evaluation of existing needs and the expansion of future recreational services demonstrate a clear need to expand the support for providing these services. Outside of the immediate need for a full time position for a Parks and Recreation Greenway and Open Space planner, we have listed general staffing needs that can be hires or allocations into the existing departmental organizational structure. These staff recommendations do not include maintenance and janitorial staff that must be added as parks and facilities are added.

Immediate Staffing Needs:

- **Full time Parks, Recreation, Greenway, Sidewalk, and Open Space Planner/ Coordinator-** This is a critical position to be filled in order to meet the demand of Garner residents. The responsibilities required to implement the greenway, sidewalk, and pedestrian facilities recommended within the Town will require full time attention for success. This position is typically filled in a Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department, or Engineering Department.
- **Track-out Camps Coordinator and Staff-** The Garner Parks and Recreation Department should hire or assign staff to head up the Track-out programs.
- **Nature and Outdoor Education Coordinator**
    - With the size and amount of passive/natural parks within the Town, and with the anticipated completion of the White Deer Nature Center within the next 2.5 years, the Department should create a staff position with outdoor education and/or natural resource management and programming experience to oversee and manage all outdoor recreation programs and facilities within the Town. The expansion of this program area ranked among the highest for Garner residents.
- **Cultural Arts Programming Coordinator**
    - The Town should hire or assign, and/or redefine current staff responsibilities to include a Town wide Cultural Arts Recreation Coordinator who will oversee, manage or coordinate all cultural arts programming.

Near Term Staffing Needs

- **Program instructors:**
  - As new programs and facilities become available, the Town should plan for part-time instructor needs to increase.
- **Community Arts Center Staff/ Indoor Athletic Complex Staff**: As the development of these indoor facilities takes place, the department should plan for support staff for these facilities.

- **Field Scheduling and Organization:** As outdoor athletic facilities and programs grow, and athletic specialist will need to be added to organize athletic facilities, field scheduling, and field use organization.

Long Term Staffing Needs

Long Term staffing needs are a reflection of long term facilities and programs needs within the Town of Garner. As these facilities and programs develop, the Town should plan for the needs to fill staffing positions to provide these recreational resources. These anticipated needs are as follows:

- **Swimming Complex Staff:**
  - May include: aquatics facility operations specialist & technicians, supervisors, lifeguards, instructors, and program specialists
- **Specialty Staff**
  - May include staff to support future specialty recreation facilities such as: skate parks, mountain biking, etc.

9. Financing Strategies:

In addition to general revenues and funding from the Town budget, Town of Garner should pursue a variety of funding sources for future recreation land acquisition, planning, and development. These needs are not solely met through the annual Town budget. There are several funding strategies to investigate in order to implement action item recommendations. However, we have listed the main tools municipalities use to implement action items in addition to annual budget allocation.

1. Bond Referendums:

A bond referendum can be placed on a ballot to finance land acquisition and site development costs for parks and/or greenways. Voters must approve a bond. Because of this fact, it is critical to educate the public on the mission and intent of the bond in order to gain support.

2. Grants:

The Town of Garner should continue to apply for and access county, state and federal grant programs as another method of financing recreation facility acquisition and development. Several grant programs that should be investigated are listed below:

- Be Active North Carolina Grant Recipient Program
- Bikes Belong Coalition
- Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

- The Conservation Fund
- The Environmental Protection Agency
- Eat Smart, Move More
- Federal Aid Construction Funds
- Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- Recreational Trails Fund Act (NRTFA)
- North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)
- North Carolina's Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF)
- The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
- Transportation Enhancement Funds
- NC DWQ Wetland Restoration Program
- The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation Trails Program
- National Heritage Trust Fund (NHTF)
- National Park Foundation
- Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse
- The Trust for Public Land
- Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program
- US Soccer Foundation
- Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Grants
- Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

3. Partnerships:

There are several partnership opportunities that exist within the Town of Garner that can help reduce implementation costs including: non-profit partnerships (ie. YMCA), private agency partnerships, municipal partnerships (ie. Wake County Schools), etc. These efforts should be strongly encouraged and supported by the Town to open doors for future land acquisition, facilities, and programs. Other partnerships should also be pursued and encouraged.

LAND ACQUISITION LEGEND:

1. VANCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
2. SWIFT CREEK GREENWAY PROPERTY
3. LAKE BENSON, THOMPSON ROAD, AND WHITE DEER PARKS
4. SMITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
5. CLOVERDALE PARK AND NORTH GARNER GREENWAY
6. EAST GARNER ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL
7. BIG BRANCH AREA
8. EAST GARNER ETJ
9. POTENTIAL WRAL RECREATION SITE
10. WHITE OAK
11. RAND MILL PARK AREA
12. SOUTHEAST GARNER GREENWAY AND SWIFT CREEK GREENWAY
13. HIGHWAY 50/ SOUTH GARNER
14. OPEN SPACE

LEGEND:

- GARNER EXTRA- TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION
- GARNER CORPORATE TOWN LIMITS
- TOWN PARKS
- TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE
- PONDS AND LAKES
- SCHOOLS
- PROPOSED SCHOOL
- EXISTING SIDEWALKS
- PROPOSED SIDEWALKS
- EXISTING TRAILS
- PROPOSED GREENWAYS
- THOROUGHFARE
- FLOODWAY
- 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN
- 500-YEAR FLOODPLAIN
- STREAMS & TRIBUTARIES
- CRITICAL SIDEWALK CONNECTIONS
- PROPOSED LAND ACQUISTION AREAS
- TOWN OF GARNER PROPOSED OPEN SPACE AREAS FROM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
- IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN INTERSECTION
- PROPOSED UNDERPASS PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
- PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN ACTIVATED CROSSINGS

ACTION PLAN

TOWN OF GARNER
COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN

PREPARED FOR:
Town of Garner
Parks & Recreation Department

PREPARED BY: HadenStanziale
planning landscape architecture

DATE: June 4, 2007
SCALE: 1"=1500'

NORTH

0' 750' 1500' 3000' 6000'

GREENWAY & SIDEWALK MASTER PLAN

TOWN OF GARNER
CHARTERED 1905

TOWN OF GARNER

COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN

PREPARED FOR:

Town of Garner

Parks & Recreation Department

PREPARED BY:

HadenStanziale
planning landscape architecture

NORTH

DATE: June 4, 2007
SCALE: 1"=1500'

0' 750' 1500' 3000' 6000'