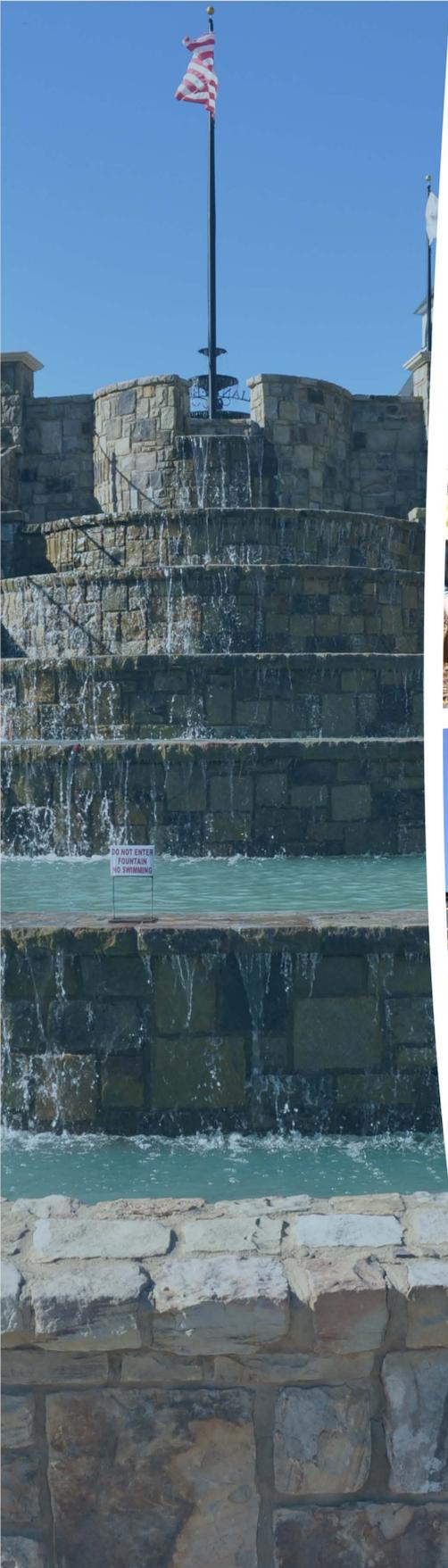




Parks Master Plan

JANUARY 2011





City of Norcross

PARKS MASTER PLAN

January 2011

Prepared by:



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of those who contributed to the development of the Parks Master Plan. This document is a product of the vision and dedication of Norcross staff, officials, and the project steering committee. We also extend our thanks to the many residents and organizations in Norcross who provided the valuable insights and opinions and whose feedback have made the Plan a document that embodies the core values and beliefs of the Norcross community.

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Executive Summary

In keeping with the City's progressive approach to creating a livable community, Norcross embarked on the preparation of a Parks Master Plan to provide guidance for strategic phasing and spending that will address deficiencies and identify the key recreational needs as expressed by the residents. The prioritization of projects within the Master Plan allows for selective phasing and spending and helps to focus attention on key issues, rather than attempting to do all things for all people.

The overwhelming opinion of the community is that the City has done an exceptional job with the recent redevelopments of Thrasher Park, Lillian Webb Park, and the downtown. Equally overwhelming was the identification of a significant shortfall in recreational opportunities southeast of Buford Highway. With significant population increases forecasted for the next twenty years, it is important that key issues and priorities be established and, where possible, addressed before opportunity for land acquisition or greenway development is no longer possible and/or economical.

The following is a summary of the five highest priorities identified in this Parks Master Plan, in order of priority for resource allocation and implementation.

#1 – PARKLAND IN THE SOUTHEAST

The focus group sessions, surveys, and inventory assessment all concluded that the **number one priority was the need to address the absence of recreational facilities and/or space southeast of Buford Highway.**

While the existence of City-owned land on Mitchell Road is ideally located for meeting the geographic requirements of open space needs of residents in the area, there is a possibility that costly remedial measures may not justify the development of this site as an active park. If this is the case, the number one priority needs to be the securing of suitable land for active recreation opportunities, including soccer fields, play equipment, spray pad, picnic facilities, and trails for safe access to the facilities.

Securing of parkland in the southeast can be done in a number of ways including:

1. Developing the Mitchell Road Parcel as a park with soccer, play equipment, spray pad and picnic facilities; and/or
2. Acquiring a new parcel of land and developing it as a park with soccer, play equipment, spray pad and picnic facilities; and/or
3. Entering into either partnership or purchase agreements with the Gwinnett County Public Schools (and the Norcross Cluster Schools Organization) for the land to the rear of the former Buchanan School, with added access to the south/west of the site; and/or
4. Entering into agreements with Georgia Power to develop informal soccer fields and walking paths within the utility corridor.

Although situated in the southeast, the development of the Pinnacle Parcel (which is green space and not suitable for active recreation) should be a very low priority due to the timing of growth around it and the need to connect it to the proposed greenway and trail network.

#2 – CONNECTIVITY

While there are no recreational opportunities currently existing to the southeast of Buford Highway, Best Friend Park (operated by Gwinnett County) is located just outside of the City to the west. As this is the favorite and most used park of children in Norcross, **safe access to Best Friend Park must be made a priority.**

Reflective of the ‘lack of free time’ issue, the most popular activities are those that are not built around a schedule. Activities such as walking, jogging, picnicking, using playground equipment, cycling, and walking the dog are the most popular leisure activities of adults. Connectivity was a strong and consistent theme throughout the project’s research phase. While safe access to Best Friend Park should be the first connectivity priority, **safe access to all the parks and any recreational facility (whether a City or County park, school or church) must also be addressed.**

Connectivity would include improved access to existing sites such as Cemetery Field and the former Buchanan School, as well as better linkages to Rossie Brundage Park. While important, linkages to or through other City parks are seen as lower priorities and should only be pursued when or if opportunities are presented to the City that make the development of the trail timely.

#3 – SOCCER FIELDS / INFORMAL PLAY FIELDS

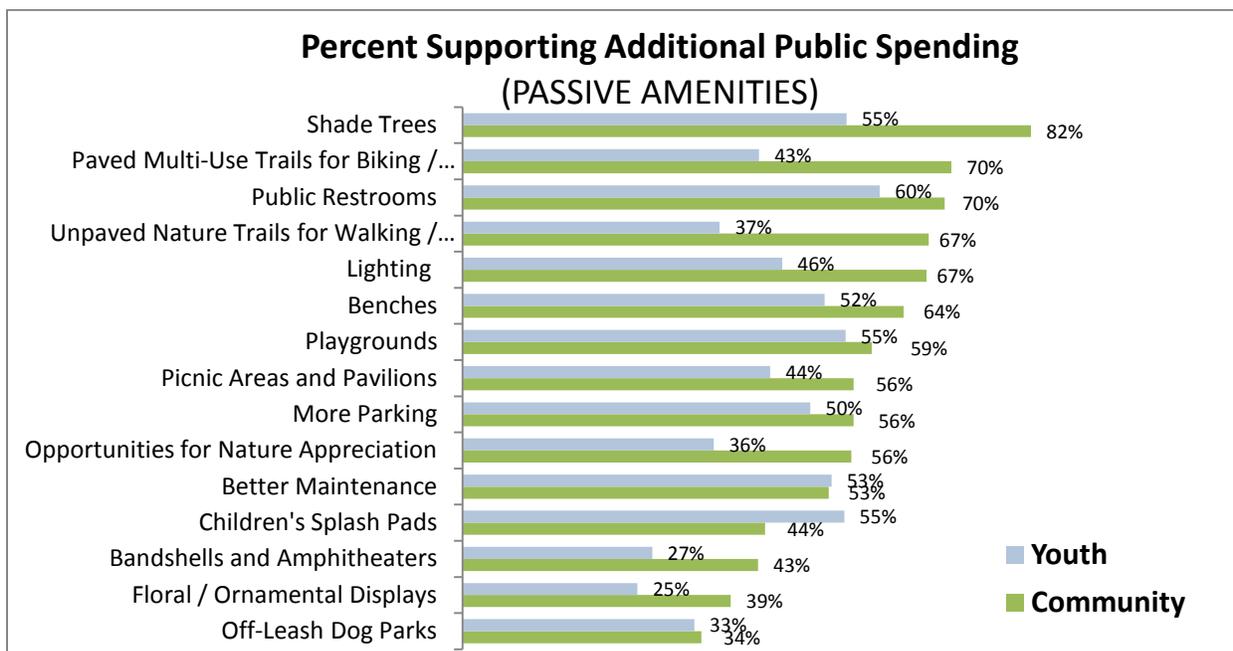
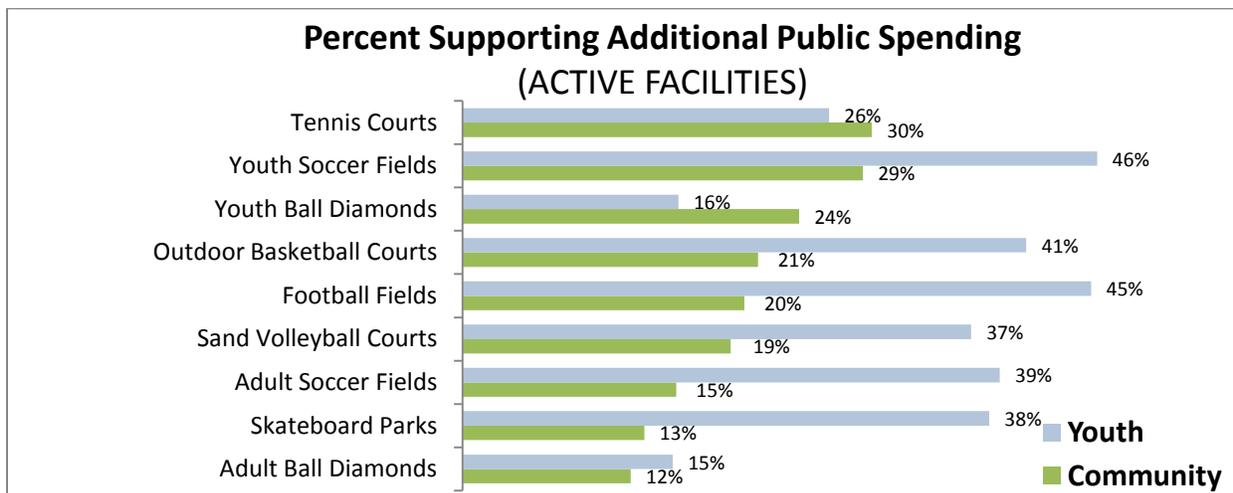
It is clear from both the surveys and observations that there is a lack of soccer fields within Norcross. As not all residents have easy access to transportation in order to reach County parks and as unstructured recreational opportunities are the most in demand, there is a high need for the development of informal soccer fields. The development of fields may not be easy to achieve, but needs to be actively pursued. Options for informal field development include:

1. Mitchell Road Parcel
2. School sites such as Summerour MS or the former Buchanan school
3. Agreements with Georgia Power
4. Acquisition of additional lands
5. Ensuring that Cemetery Field (with newly installed artificial turf) can also be available for community soccer use

In the surveys, the biggest difference between Norcross’ youth and adults was the high priority that youth place on soccer field development. Aside from soccer, both youth and adults had very similar park improvement suggestions. For example, while youth wanted playgrounds, soccer fields, splash pads, football fields, and basketball hoops, they also wanted trails, washrooms, shade trees, and better maintenance (which were suggested by most adults). While swimming was also mentioned as a popular activity by both youth and adults, swimming facilities are already provided by the County and not recommended as a City investment in this Master Plan. The top suggestions are listed in the table below and in graph form on the following page.

Top Items and Amenities Suggested for Additional Spending

Youth Survey	Community Survey
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Playgrounds 2. Youth Soccer Fields 3. Public Restrooms 4. Children’s Splash Pads 5. Football Fields 6. Better Maintenance 7. Shade Trees 8. Outdoor Basketball Courts 9. Adult Soccer Fields 10. Paved Multi-Use Trails for Biking/Jogging 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paved Multi-Use Trails for Biking/Jogging 2. Unpaved Nature Trails for Walking/Hiking 3. Shade Trees 4. Playgrounds 5. Off-Leash Dog Parks 6. Public Restrooms 7. Lighting 8. Opportunities for Nature Appreciation 9. Picnic Areas and Pavilions 10. More Parking



#4 – PLAY FACILITIES

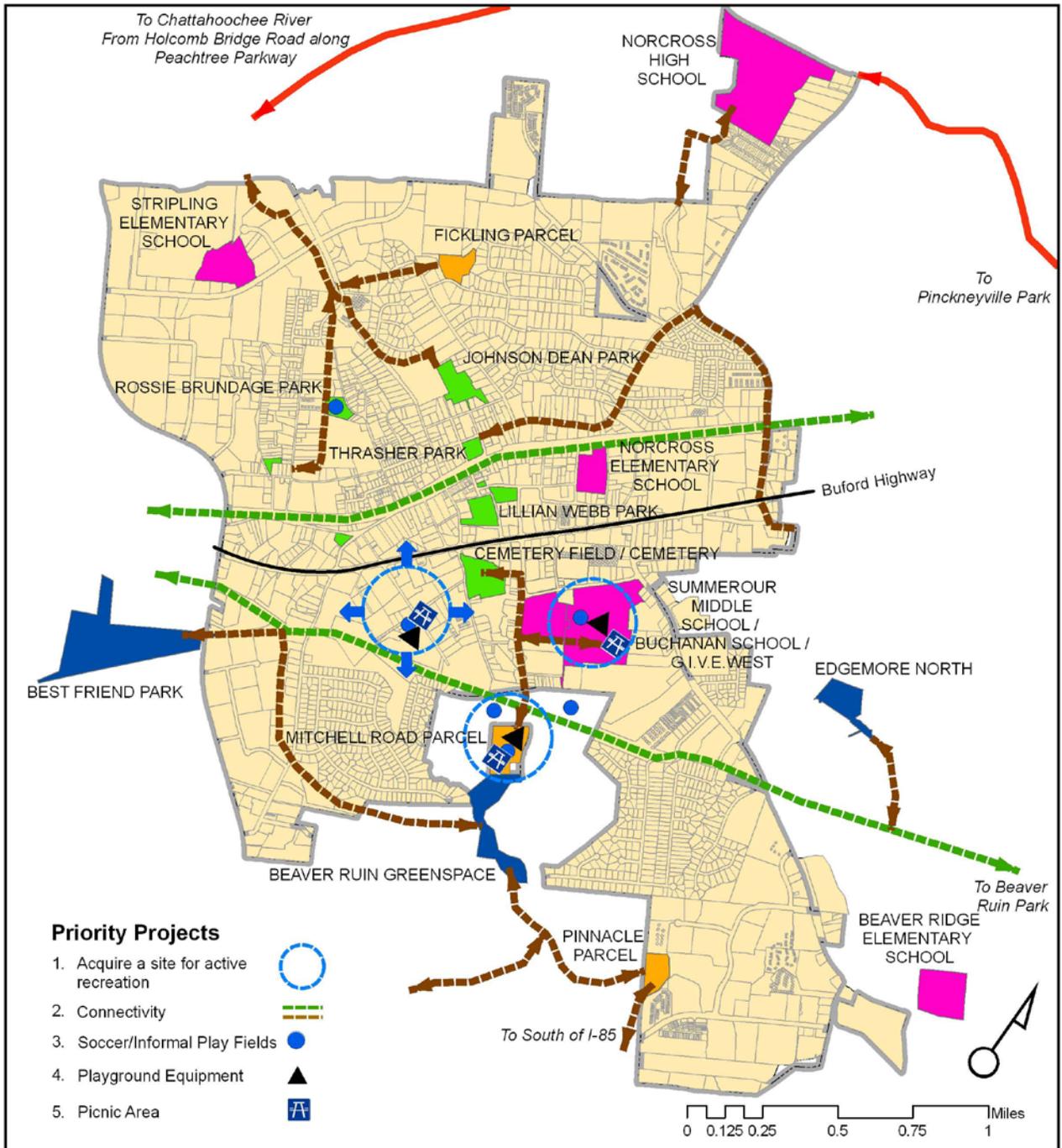
The fourth priority issue is facilities that allow parents to have play equipment within easy walking distance of their home. The greatest void for such equipment is to the southeast of Buford Highway. A small gap also exists in the extreme northeast of Norcross. The provision of traditional and creative play equipment within gap areas, as well as splash pads, are seen as high priorities. The installation of this equipment is integral part to addressing the parkland development issue that was identified as the top priority in the Master Plan.

#5 – PICNIC FACILITIES AND PASSIVE RECREATION

With gatherings, socializing, and picnicking increasing in popularity, combined with the overutilization that is being observed at Thrasher and Lillian Webb Parks, it is recommended that any park developed in the east and southeast also be designed to support picnicking and social gathering opportunities. Picnic tables and shelters are complementary features to play equipment and soccer fields.

The City owns two undeveloped parcels in the north/northwest that offer longer-term possibilities for passive recreation:

- Fickling Parcel has an opportunity to serve as a passive neighborhood park. In the immediate term, a priority should be placed on determining a course of action regarding the maintenance of the existing pond/dam at this site. Over time, the possibility of establishing a passive trail and small play feature (toddler-oriented) should be considered when the design for this park is developed; this planning process should include public input.
- Johnson-Dean Park is not as capable of meeting the expressed recreational needs of local residents; therefore, its expansion is seen as a low priority. In the short-term, however, there is a need to secure the buildings on this site to assist with their future preservation.



Parks Master Plan

Summary of Capital Priorities



Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Master Plan Purpose and Scope

The City of Norcross is known for its traditions in preserving historical architecture, enhancing the vibrant downtown district, hosting lively community events, and creative thinking. In the City's effort to continue these traditions and expand its influences into areas beyond the City center, it has become clear that public parks and the connecting infrastructure are critical to any long range plan the City may develop.

Public space is vital to community health and social development and parks and trails are two of the most visible and accessible elements of public space. Most importantly, parks facilitate social interaction, community cohesion, and allow neighbors to get to know each other. Through their many community events, sporting activities, and inspirational landscapes, the City's parks are critical community assets. Enhancing the appeal and vibrancy of parks and greenways to better serve Norcross residents is a key part of the City's continued focus on defining creative and new redevelopment strategies. Furthermore, with a diverse, growing, and evolving population Norcross is seeking new opportunities for park and greenspace provisions that are targeted at meeting the needs of its citizens.

The purpose of the Parks Master Plan is to develop a vision for improvements, uses, acquisitions, and planning of parks and green space projects in the City of Norcross. This Plan – which is the first of its kind in Norcross – provides a framework for identifying and evaluating future park and greenway projects, including new opportunities and the redevelopment of existing assets. The Plan is not only intended to guide capital improvements to the parks system for the next 20 years, but it also lays the groundwork for future planning, policy development, and grant securement.

Norcross has received many accolades for the recent redevelopment of its two signature parks – Thrasher Park and Lillian Webb Park. However, the focus of most of these initiatives has been on parks in the downtown area, which has resulted in some areas of the City being underserved. This Parks Master Plan goes beyond looking at what the City has done in the past by building upon existing patterns of service provision to recognize the ways Norcross has changed and looking forward to the next stages in its evolution. Just as Norcross will continue to transform, so to must its park and greenspace assets and services.

1.2 Planning Process

The 2030 Norcross Comprehensive Plan highlighted the fact that the City is underserved by parks and open space. To better assess the situation, the City of Norcross prepared a Park and Greenspace Inventory report in 2009 that identified the supply of existing and undeveloped open space in the City. In addition, this report identified the roles that these current assets played in the community at the time it was written. This report was intended to form a basis for this Parks Master Plan and it has been relied upon as a key resource.

The development of this Master Plan also relies heavily on the input of local residents and stakeholders – those that know the community the best! By gaining an understanding of what makes Norcross unique, what the activity patterns are, and what residents aspire to, it is possible to match local needs with a responsible capital program for parks and green space development. Citizen engagement has been achieved through a series of consultative events, including surveys, interviews, and public meetings.

Current and future needs are identified through the assimilation of existing research, demographic profiles, trends, and public input. Where applicable, the work plan considers best practices and standards from similar jurisdictions and their applicability to Norcross. Recommended projects are prioritized based on justified needs and community benefit. A focus of this Master Plan is on developing recommendations that have strategic focus, that are forward-thinking, and that will be effective in their implementation.

To guide the work plan, this project was divided into three phases:

Phase 1 – Environmental Scan:

This phase involved significant research and consultation, including a review of park assets, background documents, reports, mapping, demographic characteristics, and interviews of City staff and officials. The public was also consulted through community surveys, a public meeting, and stakeholder interviews. A key objective of this stage was identifying key inputs and issues that provide focus to the Phase 2 assessment of needs and priorities. This phase culminated in the creation of an Environmental Scan Report.

Phase 2 – Analysis:

This phase involved the analysis of research collected through the Environmental Scan tasks. For this Master Plan, the focus is on identifying potential changes to existing park assets, parks and trail connectivity, options for enhancing natural features, and future capital park and facility needs. A draft Master Plan complete with an achievable implementation strategy aimed at meeting the highest priority needs of the community was the deliverable at the end of this stage.

Phase 3 – Finalization:

This final phase involves refinements to the draft Plan based on input from City staff, elected officials, the public, and key stakeholders. Following the final round of consultation, the Master Plan was finalized and recommended for adoption by City Council.

The Consulting Team of Southeastern Engineering Inc. and Monteith Brown Planning Consultants were retained to assist the City of Norcross with this Master Plan. To help guide the logistics and development of the Plan, a Project Steering Committee comprised of community volunteers, City Council, and City staff members was established.

1.3 Definitions

This Master Plan uses terms such as parks, open space, green space, natural areas trails, and greenways that describe similar pieces of infrastructure. To help provide clarity, the following definitions (adapted from the *Green Infrastructure Toolkit* produced by the Atlanta Regional Commission) are used for the purpose of this Plan.

'Parks' are developed lands that contain outdoor facilities and amenities (e.g., sports fields, hard surface courts, etc.) that support active and/or passive recreation.

'Open spaces' are undeveloped lands that have been disturbed by humans, but still provide habitat for floral and faunal species, non-significant natural features, and/or passive unprogrammed recreational opportunities.

'Natural Areas' are lands that have not been recently disturbed by human activity. They are not generally intended to be publicly accessible due to their sensitive natural features (e.g., densely wooded, flood and erosion prevention, wetlands, wildlife habitat, etc.).

'Greenways' are linear corridors composed of protected open space used for conservation and recreational purposes. While the "riparian buffer" area adjacent to most rivers and creeks can also be considered a greenway, this Plan focuses on areas that are enhanced for recreational uses, such as multi-use trails for pedestrian and non-motorized cycling uses.

'Green Spaces' are comprised of pervious and landscaped portions of parks, natural areas, open spaces, and greenways.

'Trails' is a broader term that encompasses greenways and can also include corridors, such as city streets, public utilities, or abandoned rail lines.

1.4 Report Organization

This Parks Master Plan is organized as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction
Provides an overview of the Master Plan’s purpose, scope and planning process.
- Section 2: Community Profile & Context
Contains an overview of the City’s demographic characteristics, population trends, activity and park design trends and best practices, and a summary of related initiatives influencing the City’s parks and open space system.
- Section 3: Public Input
Identifies the public’s perceptions of the current state of parks, open space, and greenway facilities in the City as well as future opportunities and challenges as identified through the various community consultation methods.
- Section 4: A ‘Vision’ for Parks, Green Space, and Trails
Provides an overview of the key issues to be addressed in this Parks Master Plan, as well as a proposed vision for the City’s parks system.
- Section 5: Inventory
Contains a description of local parks assets and recreation program providers.
- Section 6: Park and Outdoor Facility Analysis
Identifies infrastructure and active parkland needs by examining current and projected demographic data, public input, and service gaps; also recommends future capital parks and facility projects, along with changes to existing City assets.
- Section 7: Open Space & Natural Area Analysis
Reviews existing open spaces and prominent natural features to identify locations best suited for preservation or passive park usage.
- Section 8: Trail/Greenway Analysis
Establishes a connectivity plan for trails and greenways within Norcross and surrounding lands.
- Section 9: Implementation
Identifies the timing and priority of the Master Plan’s recommendations, along with a process for monitoring and updating the Plan.

Section 2: Community Profile & Context

2.1 History of Norcross

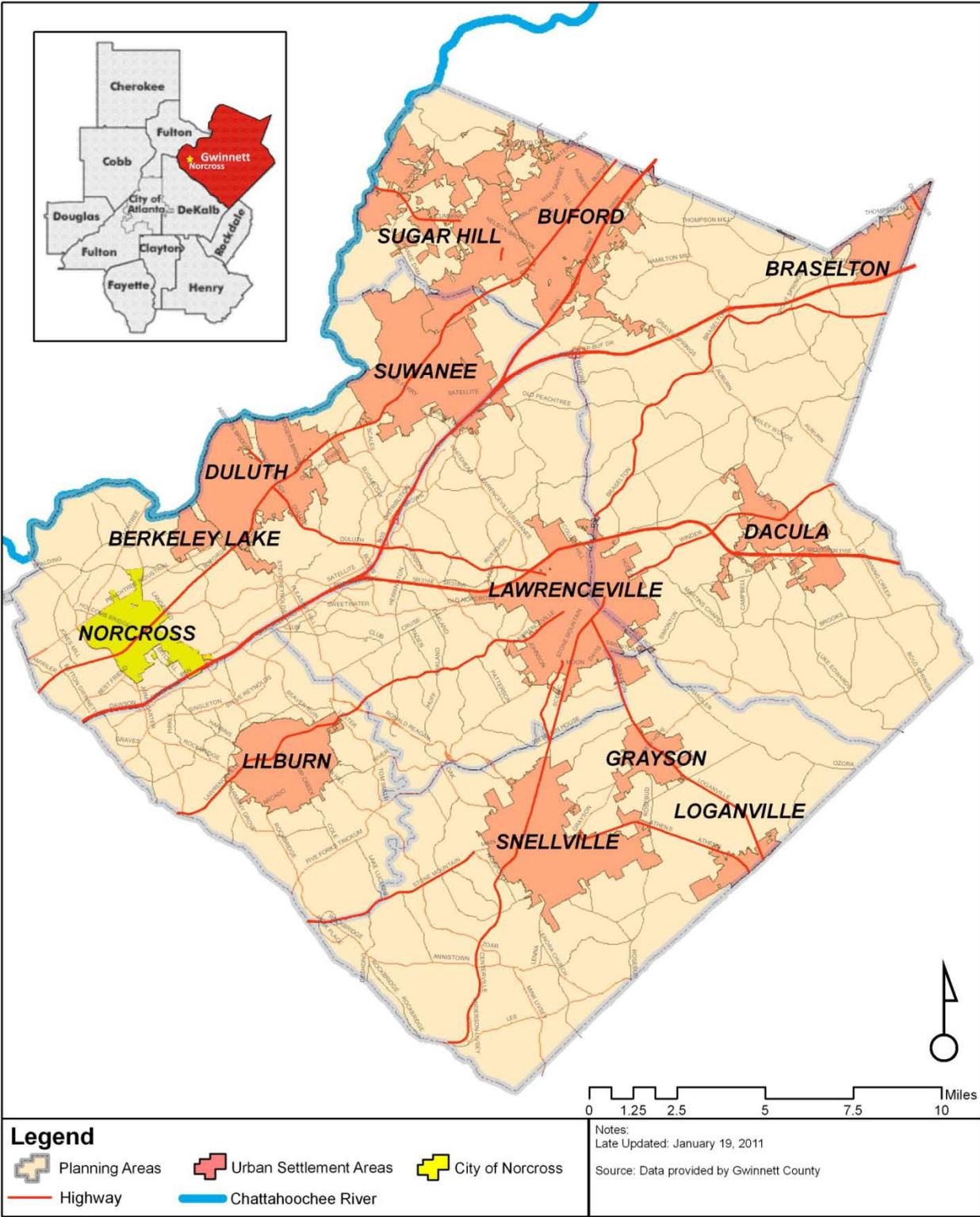
The City of Norcross encompasses approximately 4.5 square miles with a population of approximately 10,946 (2009 estimate). Norcross is located near the western boundary of Gwinnett County, approximately 20 miles from downtown Atlanta. Of the 14 cities and towns in the County, Norcross ranks eighth in overall population. **Map 1** on the following page shows the City of Norcross in the regional context.

The following account of the City's history was extracted from the City of Norcross website (<http://www.norcrossga.net/community/about.php>):

Georgia's first rail tracks were laid in the mid-1830's, and during the years of post-Civil War Reconstruction, rail expansion led to town expansion. In 1869, Atlanta entrepreneur J.J. Thrasher purchased 250 acres around the first stop north along the proposed Richmond Danville lines, and a year later, the area was incorporated. Thrasher named the new town for his good friend and fellow entrepreneur, Jonathan Norcross, who was also the fourth mayor of Atlanta.

As years passed, the town of Norcross grew to become known as "Atlanta's Favorite Summer Resort", a destination for Atlantans who rode the train north to escape the hot dry summer conditions of the city. Here, they could enjoy lakeside camping, or stay at one of the town's three luxury hotels. Norcross was a thriving community whose economic growth was fueled by area farms and mercantile business, and the mainstay presence of the trains.

With well over 100 years of history, Norcross offers a rich abundance of stories and tales. The years have painted a charming patina that cannot be created by anything other than the passing of time. The early Victorians and craftsman cottages have been carefully restored and the old brick buildings of downtown still create the hub of the community. For many, it still represents a place to escape the hustle of the big city, a welcome alternative to suburbia. The City of Norcross offers a lifestyle that appeals to those who want to enjoy the time-honored values of family and community, in a place that embraces diversity and creativity. It's a place where historic charm blends with the easy-energy of new urbanism . . . where it's easy to live and work and play. Norcross respects and preserves its past, while continuing to thrive with creative vision. Norcross is indeed a place to imagine.



NORCROSS a place to imagine
Parks Master Plan
 Map 1 - Regional Context



2.2 Related Planning Initiatives and Studies

A number of studies were reviewed as part of this Parks Master Plan. In many ways, this Master Plan is a product of these reports, as many recommendations have been proposed for parks and greenways in Norcross in the past (much of which remains relevant today). Research and directions from the following studies have been incorporated into the appropriate sections of this Plan:

- City of Norcross Parks and Green Space Inventory (2009)
- City of Norcross 2030 Comprehensive Plan (2008)
- City of Norcross Official Zoning Map (2008)
- Norcross Imagination Task Force (2009)
- Norcross Activity Center – Livable Centers Initiative (2008)
- Gwinnett Village CID, Jimmy Carter / Buford Highway Redevelopment Plan (2007)
- Gwinnett County Update of the Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Plan (2007)
- Gwinnett County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2004)
- Gwinnett County Open Space and Greenway Master Plan (2001)

2.3 Responsibility for Parks, Green Space, and Trails

Parks and open spaces serving Norcross residents are managed by two disparate jurisdictions – the City of Norcross and Gwinnett County. Funded by both a SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales tax) and general funds, Gwinnett County provides recreation County-wide and is the primary provider of sports parks in the area (most of which are outside of the City limits). Norcross is one of several Gwinnett County cities that has chosen to provide a higher level of service in their parks and recreation sector.

As identified in the Gwinnett County 2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan, there are a number of significant differences between the City of Norcross parks system and the Gwinnett County parks system:

- County parks tend to be larger than City parks and draw users from a greater distance. Many City parks were established generations ago as part of traditional village settlement areas, whereas the majority of the County's landholdings have been developed in the past twenty years. As a result of this and other factors, many city parks are smaller, urban in nature, and centralized. More often than not, City parks contain aging facilities that are in need of revitalization.
- County parks are often designed to incorporate both active and passive recreational opportunities (as opposed to single purpose parks, which are more common at the City level). It is typically the County's intention to provide a range of facilities at each park in order to serve all age groups and to provide experiences beyond that which could be obtained at local parks.
- Many City parks provide activities that are oriented toward visits of relatively short duration (e.g., playgrounds). County parks, on the other hand, are more multi-purpose and provide for activities of an extended nature.
- Historically, County park amenities and design standards have been more sophisticated; however, this is beginning to change as can be seen through the high quality design of Norcross parks, including Lillian Webb and Thrasher Parks.

- Compared to most County parks, City parks are generally located in closer proximity to historical population concentrations, thereby allowing many of their users to travel to the park by foot or bicycle. Recognizing the increasing shortage of land in some high density areas, the County is beginning to respond to this by developing Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks that are smaller in size.

There are several City departments and agencies that have been involved in parks and recreation. Some park construction has been overseen by the City of Norcross' Downtown Development Authority. The parks infrastructure is maintained by the Public Works and Utilities Department. Maintenance of City parks is budgeted at approximately \$150,000 annually (this includes an annual maintenance contract). The parks-related staff complement includes the Park, Recreation & Cultural Arts Superintendent and one full-time and one part-time parks maintenance worker. The Recreation, Cultural Arts & Community Center Department looks after programming, camps, rentals, and civic events. In addition, the Community Development Department undertakes much of the high level park planning and policy development through initiatives such as the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to the above, the City has established a Parks and Green Space Commission, composed of active citizens of Norcross who are charged with the goal of improving the quality of the parks and green spaces. Their responsibilities include submitting recommendations and providing oversight of the enhancements that are approved by City Council and staff.

The City of Norcross relied heavily on SPLOST (special-purpose local-option sales tax) funding for past park improvements, including those at Lillian Webb Park and Thrasher Park. The SPLOST is a self-imposed County-wide sales tax, part of which is allocated to local cities and can be used for capital improvements to parks and recreation facilities. The 2009 SPLOST program runs from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2014 and is expected to generate about \$785 million for the County and City governments. Norcross' anticipated share is \$9.1 million, part of which is available for parks and recreation (note: the recent economic downturn may result in reduced revenues; further, the municipal allocation of SPLOST funds is the focus of an ongoing legal challenge). In terms of past spending, park developments/renovations in Norcross have received about \$6 million over the past three years from the SPLOST funds and there are plans to allocate another \$2 to \$3 million of SPLOST funding over the next three to four years for park projects.

2.4 Demographic Analysis

The analysis of demographic information is an essential component of the Parks Master Plan, as population and community-specific data has significant implications on the demand and provision of parks services and facilities.

Note: Reliable and recent socio-demographic data for the City of Norcross is difficult to come by. The last U.S. Census was taken in 2000 (another has been undertaken in 2010, but results are not expected to be available until late 2011) and, while the U.S. Census Bureau releases some annual data and projections, much of this information is not available by the boundaries of the City of Norcross. Some estimates have also been prepared by Claritas, a nationally recognized socio-economic and demographic information source. This section uses the best data available at this time.

Urban Composition – Existing

Norcross is divided into traditional neighborhoods. The oldest homes are located near downtown, which grew around the railroad station. Many newer homes were built as subdivision developments, including those southeast of Buford Highway. Vacancy rates in Norcross' downtown soared in the 1990s, but revitalization strategies and the move of big commercial sites to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Buford Highway have allowed the downtown to reclaim its vitality and historic charm. At present, the City has a number of large, underdeveloped commercial sites; these are particularly prevalent given the economic downturn. With excellent access to transportation corridors and transit, the City of Norcross is well situated poised to rebound strongly as the economy improves.

In recent years, developments with slightly higher densities have been the norm (such as Seven Norcross), particularly those that are within walking distance of the downtown and its many restaurants, shops, and services. The location of the City's parks, in combination with the redevelopment of several of them, has been a key ingredient in the ongoing success of the downtown area in Norcross.

Approximately half (50%) of the City's housing stock is townhouse/duplex and multi-family, and just less than half of all housing (46%) is renter occupied (according to the Norcross Activity Center LCI, 2008).

Urban Composition – Future

In terms of how the City expects to evolve in the future, the 2030 Comprehensive Plan offers the following insight:

"In 2030, the City of Norcross will continue to offer a small town experience, with metropolitan access. Capitalizing on its location – direct access onto Interstate 85 and minutes from Atlanta's perimeter (I-285), the City draws corporate offices and education centers whose employees enjoy the charm of Historic downtown. Master Planning efforts coordinated with Gwinnett County, the Gwinnett Village CID and major property owners and investors along Buford Highway and Jimmy Carter Boulevard will have transformed the heavy commercial areas into more efficient and attractive corridors, and the City will have created Gateway areas which give Norcross visitors a distinct sense of arrival."

The 2030 Norcross Future Development Map is a guide for redevelopment within the Norcross city limits; it implements the 2030 Comprehensive Plan and illustrates that the City is encouraging higher-density development in targeted areas and a greater mix of uses within these areas. Norcross has been divided into 12 distinct 'zones', each with several unique policies and future directions.

Atlantic/PIB Redevelopment Center (zone 1)

This area will be oriented towards a large-scale, employment center with a mixed-use component comprised primarily of commercial more so than residential. Housing will be primarily high density in order to support employment in the area and across Norcross and to promote proximity of living and working environs.

Gateway Areas: Holcomb Bridge Gateway; Medlock Bridge; South Peachtree Street (zone 2)

In the future, these areas will mark entry into the City in order to create a distinct sense of arrival through aesthetic focal points. Greenway or trail plans should originate at City gateways.

Medlock /PIB Redevelopment Area (zone 3)

Commercial uses are expected to intensify (stable “mid-box” and offices), with amenities servicing corporate-oriented needs such as hotel and training facilities. Civic uses will likely expand to capitalize on the school destination, such as a library or community art space. Walking trails should be developed to unify and connect convenience amenities both to civic and daytime employment uses.

Neighborhood Preservation (zone 4)

Large-lot homes characterize the area, as do churches, parks and the Norcross High School facility that the community currently enjoys. Home owners maintain property values through investing in renovations over time and parks and greenways provide additional amenities to enhance the quality of life. Some residential infill may occur, in keeping with the policies of the Plan.

Hopewell Woods (zone 5)

Over time, this neighborhood will transition toward Traditional Neighborhood Design with a mix of housing options that promotes higher density infill. Active open-space or trail networks (linking the neighborhood to adjacent development areas, including Downtown Norcross) may be required to serve new residential development.

West Peachtree Neighborhood Commercial (Kelly Street) (zone 6)

This area provides neighborhood-scale commercial usage that carries the downtown character to the adjacent gateway.

Downtown Norcross (zone 7)

The downtown area is a historic district with pedestrian-scale access that achieves the eight objectives of the Downtown Norcross Strategic Plan (2006). The objectives include the preservation of existing services and cultivation of new businesses. The continued expansion of pedestrian improvements remains a key goal, and new development should include walkways to connect to Lillian Webb Park.

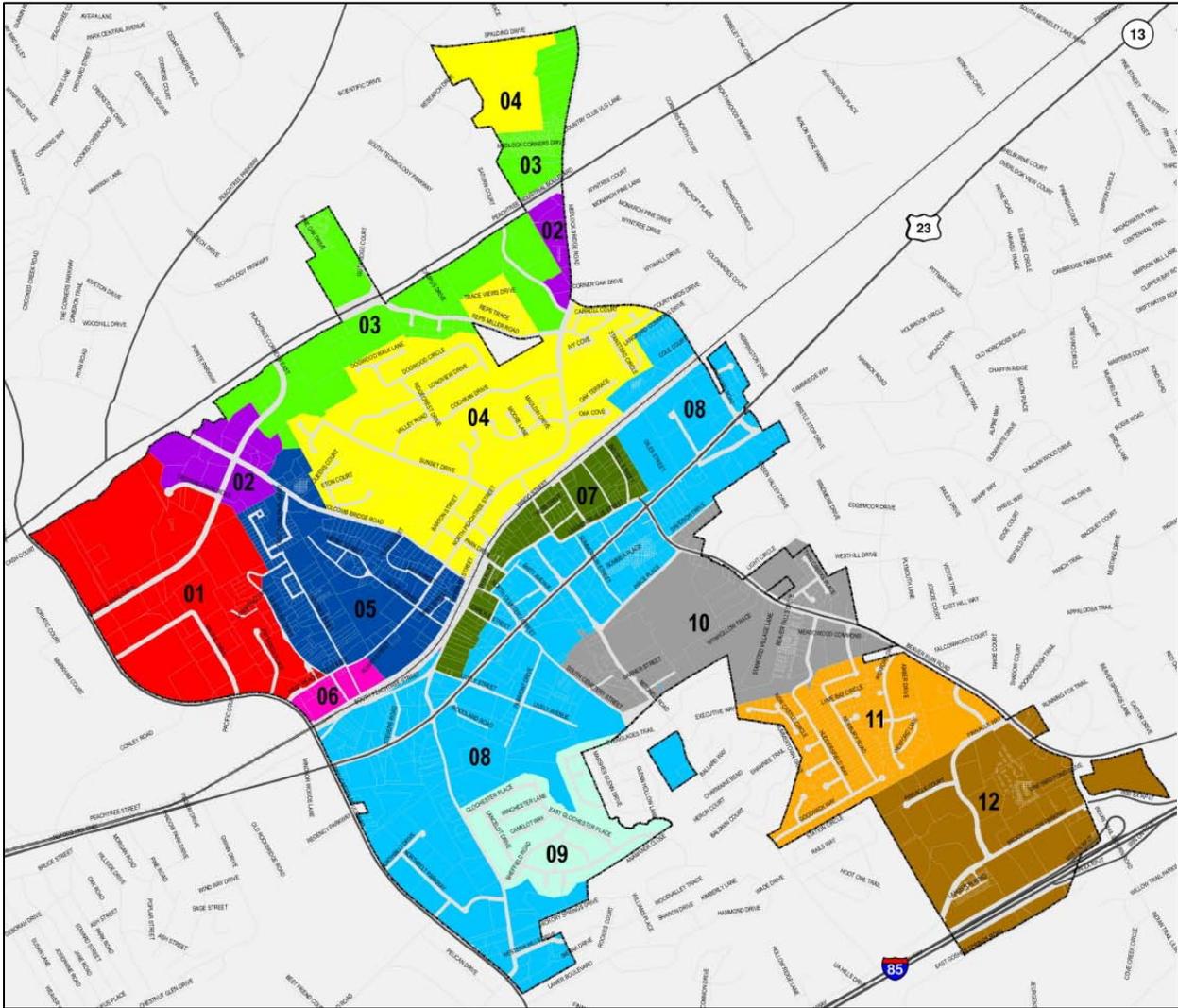
Buford Highway/Jimmy Carter Boulevard Reinvestment Area (zone 8)

These two prominent corridors of Norcross will redevelop over the next twenty years to maximize their strategic transportation role and become premier boulevards. Residential uses will be permitted as a component of mixed use developments (e.g., over commercial and freestanding retail). A four-tiered approach will be used to manage scale and density, which could be considerable in some areas. Greenspace linkages and potential outdoor recreation improvements were proposed through the Gwinnett Village CID Corridor Study.

Sheffield Forest Neighborhood Revitalization (zone 9)

The revitalization of this area will be achieved through re-establishing it as a stable, middle class neighborhood and insulating it from incompatible growth.

Future Development Map, City of Norcross



	01 - Atlantic/PIB Redevelopment Center		07 - Downtown Norcross
	02 - Gateway		08 - Buford Highway Reinvestment
	03 - Medlock/PIB Redevelopment		09 - Sheffield Forest Neighborhood Revitalization
	04 - Neighborhood Preservation		10 - Educational, Recreational & Arts Activity Center
	05 - Hopewell Woods		11 - Planned Residential Neighborhood
	06 - West Peachtree Neighborhood Commercial		12 - Employment Center at Beaver Ruin

Educational, Recreational & Arts Activity Center (zone 10)

As a new focal point in the center of Norcross, this district is intended serve the common needs of all residents, including education, recreation, and arts/culture. The Comprehensive Plan notes the opportunity to create a path through this area (using the power line easement) linking the southeastern portion of the city with the central and northwestern sections.

Planned Residential Neighborhood (zone 11)

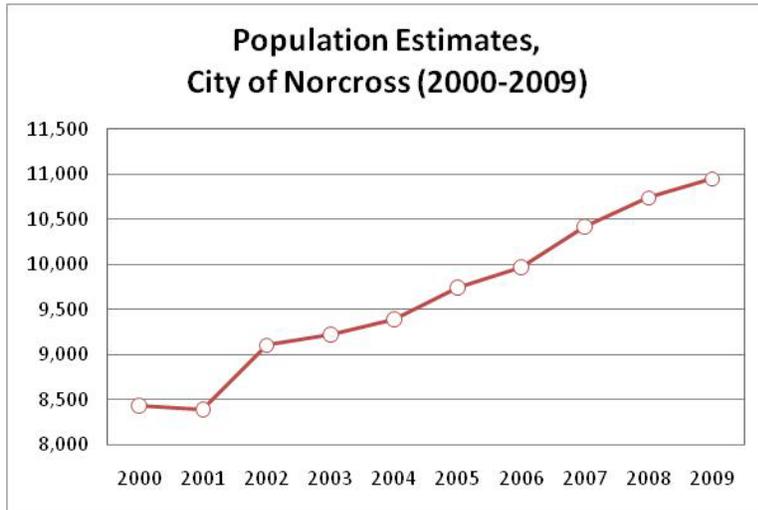
This area is intended to be comprised of high quality medium to high density residences (up to 7-8 stories), complemented by mixed use buildings. Opportunities to walk or bicycle to neighborhood commercial and public facilities and to connect to the activity center area to the northwest should be key objectives in this area.

Pinnacle Park Employment Center (zone 12)

This area is envisioned to grow into a high-density employment center due to its prominent and convenient access to I-85 and a future transit stop. New developments should feature pocket parks with appropriate street furniture for heavy lunch time usage.

Current and Projected Population

As of July 1, 2009, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the City of Norcross’ population to be 10,946, an increase of 30% (2,536 persons) over the 2000 Census figure of 8,410 and 84% (4,999 persons) over the 2000 Census figure of 5,947.¹ Not all of this growth has been a result of migration or births/deaths, as the City has annexed some lands during this period. Norcross is currently 4.5 square miles in size (2,871 acres).



All figures July 1
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program, 2010

¹ U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/13135.html>. Accessed August 23, 2010.

Note: There are several estimates of the City's population, and they are often conflicting; for example, the Atlanta Regional Commission estimates the City's 2009 population to be 9,569 (13% lower than the U.S. Census Bureau estimate). For the purposes of this study, the estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau have been used.

As much as the City of Norcross is its own municipality, there are many more residents that live just outside the City boundaries in Gwinnett County. The Norcross Parks and Green Space Inventory report (2009) estimated that there are nearly 250,000 people living within a 5-mile radius of Norcross parks. Tremendous population growth in Gwinnett County has blurred the boundary lines between the County and Norcross. There is not a significant difference in population densities and land use patterns between the City and its surrounding lands. The people and park supplies within this 'secondary market' must also be considered when assessing the strengths and future needs of the Norcross parks and open space system. Likewise, the City must recognize that visitors from outside the City limits spend money at local businesses and, therefore, are just as critical to the City's ultimate success as its own residents.

In the coming few years, residential demand is expected to grow at a very modest pace. However, when market conditions improve, according to the Norcross Activity Center LCI, Norcross is poised to experience higher than average growth. Land costs and site assembly constraints are anticipated to lead to higher density development, which is likely to occur along key arterial roads that link to regional road networks and have transit access.

The Norcross Comprehensive Plan indicated that the City expects to continue to grow at a rate of approximately 3% increase per year, which is the rate of growth that Norcross experienced between 2000 and 2009. Based on a 2009 estimate of 10,946, this means that the population forecasts for 2020 and 2030 are 15,150 and 20,360, respectively. It bears noting that the economic downturn may delay the City's ability to achieve these population levels, at least in the short term.

Age

Age plays an important role in determining the types of activities that are pursued by residents. For example, children and teens are more likely to participate in organized active sports such as basketball or soccer than older adults, many of whom prefer more passive activities such as personal fitness or hiking.

The median age of residents was estimated at 33 years in 2008 (compared to 34 years in Gwinnett County as a whole), up slightly from 30 years in 2000.

The following table illustrates the breakdown of the City's population (2008 estimates) by age cohort.

Age Composition, City of Norcross and Gwinnett County (2008 Estimates)

Age Cohort	Norcross (2008)		Gwinnett County (2008)
	Persons	Percent of Total	Percent of Total
0 to 4	810	7.8%	8.9%
5 to 9	685	6.6%	7.8%
10 to 14	638	6.2%	8.0%
15 to 17	284	2.7%	4.5%
18 to 20	385	3.7%	3.5%
21 to 24	696	6.7%	4.7%
25 to 34	2,103	20.3%	14.4%
35 to 44	1,862	18.0%	17.4%
45 to 49	751	7.3%	8.4%
50 to 54	562	5.4%	6.9%
55 to 59	448	4.3%	5.4%
60 to 64	347	3.4%	4.0%
65 to 74	382	3.7%	3.8%
75 to 84	286	2.8%	1.7%
85+	115	1.1%	0.6%
Total	10,354	100.0%	100.0%

Sources: Norcross data – Claritas (2009); Gwinnett data – US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2006-2008)

Based on 2008 estimates, the City has a much lower percentage of residents ages 0-17 than the County (23% v. 29%). Conversely, the City has a significantly higher proportion of residents between the ages of 18 and 34 (31% v. 23%), ages that are associated with child-bearing years. This suggests that, should many of these residents remain in Norcross, the City could witness an increase in demand for recreational infrastructure for children and youth within the coming years and decades.

Cultural and Ethnic Diversity

In years past, Norcross’ and Gwinnett’s residents were primarily Caucasian and African American. While 20% of Norcross’ population is African American – the largest minority group – more recently the largest growth has occurred in the Hispanic American population and this growth has been very pronounced in Norcross. People of Hispanic or Latino backgrounds have accounted for the large majority of the population growth in Norcross between 2000 and 2008, representing an increase of approximately 1,900 persons (however, this number is now believed to be in decline due to the slumping economy). As a percentage of the population, Asians have also increased during this time period, from 6% of the Norcross population in 2000 to 9% in 2008.

2008 estimates suggest that **51.5% of Norcross residents identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino**; this is much higher than the 17% across the entire County. Further, 32% of Norcross residents indicate that they speak Spanish as home (compared to 58% English and 10% other).

Note: ‘Race’ and ‘ethnicity’ are both represented in the United States Census, but they are considered separate and distinct identities. Specifically, residents are asked to choose the race (or races) with which they most closely identify (e.g., White, Black/African American, Asian, etc.) and to also indicate whether or not they are of Hispanic or Latino origin (ethnicity). Hispanic or Latino is not considered to be a ‘race’, but rather an ‘ethnicity’. These are not necessary biological or genetic categories, but rather groupings that take into account ancestry as well as social and cultural characteristics.

Race Composition, City of Norcross and Gwinnett County (2008 Estimates)

	Norcross (2008)		Gwinnett County (2008)
	Persons	Percent of Total	Percent of Total
White alone	5,068	48.9%	59.5%
Black or African American alone	2,106	20.3%	20.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	76	0.7%	0.3%
Asian alone	695	6.7%	9.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	7	0.1%	0.1%
Some other race alone	1,972	19.0%	8.6%
Two or more races	430	4.2%	1.8%
Total	10,354	100.0%	100.0%

Sources: Norcross data – Claritas (2009); Gwinnett data – US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2006-2008)

Hispanic or Latino Composition, City of Norcross and Gwinnett County (2008 Estimates)

	Norcross (2008)		Gwinnett County (2008)
	Persons	Percent of Total	Percent of Total
Not Hispanic or Latino	5,022	48.5%	83.1%
Hispanic or Latino:	5,332	51.5%	16.9%
Total	10,354	100.0%	100.0%

Sources: Norcross data – Claritas (2009); Gwinnett data – US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2006-2008)

Language Spoken at Home (age 5+), City of Norcross and Gwinnett County (2008 Estimates)

	Norcross (2008)		Gwinnett County (2008)
	Persons	Percent of Total	Percent of Total
Speak only English at Home	5,546	58%	70%
Speak Spanish at Home	3,048	32%	15%
Speak Other Language at Home	950	10%	14%
Total	9,544	100%	100%

Sources: Norcross data – Claritas (2009); Gwinnett data – US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2006-2008)

Some local planning agencies and City staff have stated that the rapid growth in populations, especially the Latin American demographic, over the last ten years has recently been significantly reversed due to severe losses of jobs in construction and development industries. As the jobs have gone so has a large sector of the population, leaving apartment complexes and traditional areas of occupied rental homes sitting vacant or seeing a shift in occupant demographics.

A large part of this Master Plan is about identifying ways to improve parks services and accessibility to under-represented populations and those geographic areas that are currently under-served. As such, it will be important for the Plan to recognize the significant number of Hispanic and Latino residents still living in Norcross and developing a greater understanding of their recreation preferences and expectations for the parks system.

Income

Research suggests that income (along with education) is a variable that tends to influence participation in physical and social pursuits. Generally speaking, the higher the level of income, the more likely a person is to participate in leisure activities. Income can also impact participation in leisure activities by serving as a barrier to participation for some households due to the cost of being involved in certain activities; therefore, higher household income tends to correlate with higher participation in recreation activities. Specific approaches must be taken to reduce participation barriers for low income residents, including effective subsidy programs, a wide range of no cost / low cost programs, and parks and open spaces that engage people of all ages in unorganized activities.

Incomes have generally been increasing over the past decade, however, poverty continues to be an issue in various pockets throughout Gwinnett County, with an estimated 9.6% of the County's residents living below the poverty level as of 2008 (this is less than the 14.7% experienced across the entire State).

² The recent economic downturn has also negatively affected the area.

The median household income in Norcross was estimated at \$47,880 in 2008, which is significantly lower than the County median of \$66,846. This would suggest that participation in organized sports and more costly recreational activities is lower in Norcross than it is across the County, on average.

2.5 Trends Affecting Parks and Open Space

Effective parks planning requires the identification of existing and emerging trends which may potentially affect facility, service, and parks needs. Understanding trends pertaining to demographics, participation, and park facility development can assist the City with anticipating shifts in the demand for local recreational opportunities.

This section summarizes major trends and best practices in participation, demand and the delivery of facilities and services, based largely on information collected from national research, with references to local implications or data where appropriate.

Increased Inactivity and Obesity

Alarming high rates of childhood, youth and adult obesity provide a strong basis for ongoing municipal support of programs which foster improved levels of activity. The provision of safe and appropriate outdoor play spaces and trails for people of all ages can be a major contributor to the promotion of physical activities and healthy life choices. A 2005 study found that "creating or enhancing access to parks led to a 26.5% increase in the percentage of people exercising more than 3 times per week."³

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 34% of adults age 20 years and over were

² U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/13135.html>. Accessed August 23, 2010.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2005). *Increasing Physical Activity*. (p.11).

obese in 2007-2008, with an additional 34% being overweight.⁴ While the percentage of overweight adults only rose by 2% since the 1960s edition of this study, the number of obese adults rose by 30% in the same timeframe.

A similar study conducted with adolescents and children found that 18% of adolescents age 12-19 years, 20% of children age 6-11, and 10% of children age 2-5 were obese in 2007-2008.⁵ These figures represent increases of 15% for children age 6-11 and 13% for adolescents age 12-19 years since 1963. Children age 2-5 were not included in the 1963 edition of this study.

It is interesting to note that the proportion of the state that is insufficiently active is just over 40% and is “over-represented by women, minorities, people aged 65 years and over, people with low income or low education and non-metro residents”, as reported by the Georgia Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP; 2008-2013). Although metro Atlanta has the lowest prevalence of obesity and other chronic diseases within the state, there are a myriad of health risks associated with inactivity and obesity including premature death, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, colon cancer, anxiety, depression, weaker muscles and joints.⁶ With Norcross having a greater proportion of minority and low income residents compared to other most areas in the County, this increases the local risk factors for physical inactivity and incidences of overweight and obesity.

While the amount of physical activity provided within school curriculum may be decreasing, the Sporting Good Manufacturers Association (SGMA; 2008) reported that high school sports participation is on the rise, as the number of participants in high school athletics increased for the 19th year in a row, and that “54.8% of students enrolled in high schools participate in athletics.” Schools are where a large percentage of local youth gain access to recreation programs and the continuation of this trend will be an important element in the fight against inactivity and obesity.

Aging Population

According to the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Related Statistics, in 2008 there were an estimated 39 million Americans age 65 and older, comprising 13% of the country’s population (by comparison, 8% of Norcross’ population is age 65 and over). By 2030, it is projected that these figures will grow exponentially and seniors will number 72 million or 20% of the population of the United States. In the state of Georgia, the last U.S. Census reported that approximately 10% of the state’s population was 65 years of age or older, with this figure expected to increase to 13.6% by 2015. This aging trend is expected to be felt in Norcross as well, although the current profile suggests that the shift may not be quite as severe.

Although life expectancy at age 65 in the United States is lower than in many other industrialized nation,

⁴ Ogden, C.L. & Carroll, M.D. (2010). Prevalence of Overweight, Obesity, and Extreme Obesity Among Adults: United States, Trends 1976-1980 Through 2007-2008. Accessed from: http://www.cdc.gov/NCHS/data/hestat/obesity_adult_07_08/obesity_adult_07_08.pdf on July 22, 2010.

⁵ Ogden, C. & Carroll, M. (2010). Prevalence of Obesity Among Children and Adolescents: United States, Trends 1963-1965 Through 2007-2008. Accessed from: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/obesity_child_07_08/obesity_child_07_08.pdf on July 22, 2010.

⁶ Centers for Disease Control. (1999). Physical Activity and Health At-A-Glance. Accessed from: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/ataglan.htm> on July 16, 2010.

the 65+ age cohort can expect to live an average of 18.5 more years, 4 years longer than the average in 1960. Older adults are not only living longer, but they are generally remaining more active later in life; this may be due to higher levels of discretionary income and the fact that many members of the 'Baby Boomer' demographic (generally between the ages of 45 and 64) are quickly reaching retirement age, contributing to a significant 'graying' of the population and placing greater demand for programs and activities aimed at older adults. This generation may be shifting away from traditional seniors' activities and towards more active recreation, seeking quality wellness and active living opportunities. The 'new senior' will typically be wealthier and more physically active than those in previous generations; activities of interest may include swimming, yoga, pilates, fitness, walking, and even more rigorous activities, such as cycling or soccer. As 'new seniors' reach a point where they physically cannot participate in the more intensive activities, there will still be some that reflect the historical interests for seniors such as shuffleboard and card playing, but this will represent a smaller portion of the total senior population.

With the local older adult population increasing in number, there will be greater demand for services for this age group that are more active and that are based more on ability than simply one's age.

Lack of Free Time

Commuting, home-based occupations, night shifts and weekend work are creating the need to have extended hours for leisure services and the need to promote drop-in opportunities as Americans face a greater lack of time within which to recreate. Furthermore, peak times (notably weekends) are becoming increasingly busy at local parks, as many families try to maximize their available time together. According to the Georgia Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP; 2008-2013), three-fourths of all Georgians reported 'not having enough time' as the most important barrier to participation in parks and outdoor recreation activities.

Similarly, increases in the number of single-parent families and extended family households places significant time pressures and constraints on recreation and leisure participation for these families. The 2006-2008 U.S. Census Bureau data revealed that 12.5% of households are single-parent, headed by women (12.2% in 2000), with single-parent households headed by men being reported for the first time (4.6% of all households). While the City cannot directly address this barrier, the provision of spaces that can be used for unorganized and spontaneous recreation (e.g., greenways, playgrounds, open space, etc.) can help residents access leisure opportunities at convenient times that fit their busy schedules.

Income and Affordability of Recreation and Leisure Opportunities

Levels of income can also be a barrier to participation in leisure pursuits, particularly in organized, structured environments. Municipalities are facing increasing pressure to offer affordable leisure programs and subsidies to promote participation among all user groups. In general, older adults have more disposable income to spend on leisure pursuits, while young families, youth, minorities, and economically disadvantaged individuals may find it difficult to afford to pursue a healthy lifestyle through participation in recreation.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment in Georgia has more than doubled since between January 2000 (3.6%) and January 2010 (10.4%). National unemployment rates have also risen,

but not to the same degree felt in Georgia (from 4.6% to 9.7% during this same period). The impact of unemployment on leisure participation may be profound as household income will be lower when one or more members are jobless or underemployed.

The Georgia SCORP (2008-2013) estimated that 12.5% of the state's residents live below the poverty line, suggesting that this may be a major participation barrier for many of the area's residents. The term 'working poor' has been put forward in recent years to describe the financial situation of many Americans who have a job but do not have any additional funds beyond paying for life necessities (due to increasing cost of living).

Multi-use Facilities and Parks

Most communities are currently moving away from single-purpose, stand-alone facilities in favor of multi-use facilities and parks that integrate numerous activities and offer economies of scale with respect to construction, maintenance, staffing, scheduling, etc. Multi-use indoor facilities are often designed with flexible spaces (e.g., meeting rooms, gymnasiums, etc.) and the potential to expand and easily respond to changing trends and demands of future users. In some municipalities, there is a growing trend of locating a number of other services at larger complexes, such as municipal offices and bill payment kiosks, community supports and resources (e.g., employment centers, counseling services, food distribution, etc.), library services, healthcare (e.g., walk-in clinics, physiotherapy, etc.). The Norcross Cultural Arts & Community Center (NCACC) is a prime example of a multi-use facility that incorporates many of these elements to create a community hub. The NCACC includes a banquet room with a stage, several classrooms, a theatre, office space and a conference suite inside the building. The immediately adjacent facilities and parks include City Hall, the parsonage, Latin American office, Betty Mauldin, Heritage and Lillian Webb Parks. These facilities include pavilions, bathrooms, interactive fountains, a gazebo, gardens and significant public green spaces.

A telephone survey undertaken for the Georgia Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2008-2013) found that "88% of Georgians support public investments in parks and outdoor recreation areas", suggesting that a high level of importance is placed upon these resources. Typically, those parks that are able to meet the broadest range of resident needs are those that are multi-use and that provide a mix of structured and unstructured recreation opportunities.

Emerging Recreation Activities

There are numerous recreation and leisure activities that are popular across the United States, including the following outdoor examples:

- Team sports (football, basketball and baseball, as well as lower participation sports like lacrosse, rugby, field hockey, and cheerleading);
- Racquet sports (tennis has recently shown increased participation in some areas); and
- Water sports (canoeing, fishing, etc.)⁷.

⁷ Sporting Good Manufacturers Association. (2008). The American Sports Scene: An Analysis of Sports Participation in the U.S. Accessed from: <http://www.sgma.com> on July 16, 2010.

According to the Georgia Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the top five outdoor recreation activities in the state are (*as a percentage of people participating in each activity*):

- Walking, jogging or running (62%)
- Picnicking or outdoor social gatherings (50%)
- Swimming outdoors (42%)
- Viewing, identifying & photographing nature (39%)
- Fishing (33%)

In addition to these more traditional activities, there are many activities that are emerging in popularity, prompting some municipalities to become direct service providers, including the following.

- Skateboarding is one of the fastest growing sports and demand for skateboard parks is high.
- BMX / trick cycling has also become a growth area in recent years and this activity can share many of the same facilities used by skateboarders.
- Inline Skating has increased in popularity as skaters can make use of paved infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks and trails, as well as skateboard parks for those desiring to add an ‘extreme’ element to the sport.
- Mountain biking is another form of cycling that has gained popularity – municipalities, especially those with significant natural open spaces and different terrain, are increasingly providing designated mountain biking trails and parks which can also help protect sensitive environmental areas by discouraging unregulated use through the provision of a regulated area in which the activity can take place safely.
- Ultimate Frisbee is an exciting, fast-paced non-traditional sport that takes very little equipment, accommodates both male and female players of all skill levels and is easy to learn but hard to master. This sport is quickly gaining popularity all over the world, especially as an interschool/intramural activity by high school youth and by young adults enrolled in university.
- Adventure-Based & Endurance Sports represent a growing market for a wide range of age groups that allow individuals to achieve personal fitness goals in a competitive or non-competitive environment.
- Road racing/triathlon training is gaining in popularity, particularly in rural and semi-rural areas where it can be done more safely.
- Beach Volleyball & Pick-Up Basketball remain popular amongst youth and young adults as activities that can be played in a flexible, non-structured environment.
- Eco-tourism and outdoor passive recreation is a growing market segment as people become increasingly aware of environmental issues. Trips to conservation areas continue to increase in popularity, as individuals and families take an interest in natural heritage (activities such as bird watching, wildlife viewing, and hiking have strong growth profiles).
- Disc Golf has been around since the 1970s but in recent years has become more popular with both the younger and older demographics as a sport that is affordable to all and relatively inexpensive to provide and maintain.
- Nature Play Areas are fast becoming popular compared to more traditional playgrounds. With growing concerns of obesity in children, the interest and demand for play areas that educate and encourage children to be more active and eat healthy are in high demand. Nature Play can include tree houses, community gardens, ropes courses, playgrounds located in wooded and more natural settings, and playground design that incorporates the landscape as a major play element. For example, large grassed mounds of soil make wonderful play elements as do trees.

- *Bouldering and Rock Climbing* has grown in popularity significantly in the last ten years, with indoor climbing gyms sprouting in almost every major City in the US. New trends include large realistic boulders placed in parks with a safety surface below each. These elements provide safe places for all ages to practice climbing without any gear.

Increased Interest in Trails and Hiking

A survey conducted by the American National Association of Homebuilders found that trails are the most desired feature in a community, especially in new subdivisions.⁸ Respondents indicated that they would choose a new community based on the type and extent of the trail system. Trails are a cost-effective method to increase physical activity levels and support positive interaction between the community and the natural environment.

The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA; 2008) identified the sports and activities with the highest level of participation among ‘core’ participants in 2007 – walking for fitness was the number one activity mentioned, with almost three times as many participants reported than the second most common. The use of trails and greenways as a form of alternative transportation is growing; “transportation systems which afford Americans the choice of getting to places without using their cars actually offer more freedom than those where people are solely dependent on the auto to get anywhere.”⁹ The provision of trails as a base service in many municipalities is one that may serve as a positive factor in the promotion of physical activity, including purposeful use of trails to access work, shopping, and schools.

Increased Environmental Awareness and Stewardship

The importance of environmental protection is being increasingly recognized by society. As the population ages and people become more aware of the benefits of environmental protection, demand for passive settings that connect people to nature is increasing. Municipalities (including Norcross) are placing a greater emphasis on the ‘development’ of passive park space (e.g., woodlots, meadows, flower gardens, civic gathering spaces, etc.), often ensuring that a portion of new active parks remains in a more natural state. Naturalized park spaces (whether by maintaining a site in its natural state or returning a site to its natural state) are becoming more popular and are consistent with many of the principles related to environmental stewardship. Naturalization typically involves reduced grass cutting and pesticide use, as well as the planting of native species, which should be accompanied by a public education program to create awareness in the community of the environmental benefits of this approach.

The Sustainable Norcross Commission is a citizen panel appointed by City Council to “advise the Mayor and Council regarding sustainability and environmental matters through development of a measured sustainable city plan and regular communication (in the areas of) green building, energy conservation, water conservation, trees and green space, transportation and air quality, recycling and waste

⁸ National Association of Homebuilders (2002). Home Buyers Survey. Available online at www.nahb.org.

⁹ Gary Roth. (date unknown). Back to Basics in Transportation Planning. Accessed from: <http://www.pps.org/backtobasicsintransportation> on July 21, 2010.

reduction, land use, education and volunteerism.”¹⁰ The City is committed to building environmentally sustainable facilities through its Green Building Policy, which mandates that new construction over 5,000 square feet of occupied space be certified under LEED (Leadership Through Environmental Design) standards. The City also purchases the most fuel efficient and least polluting vehicles that meet the intended uses, is seeking to reduce waste and increase recycling efforts, and conserve water through the quick repair of water leaks.

One of the more important policies that the Sustainable Norcross Commission was able to facilitate was for the City was to pursue accreditation by the ARC as a Green Community. An application for ARC Green Communities Certification was submitted by Norcross in early 2010. Below are two of the most relevant criteria of the ARC accreditation process to the Parks Master Plan:

27—Government Greenspace Benchmarks (under ‘Trees and Greenspace’) calls for meeting at least one of the following: (1) have 20 acres per 1,000 residents, (2) have at least 8 percent of total land protected for greenspace, or (3) all residents live within ½ mile walking distance to a park.

29 – Government Greenspace Plan calls for the development, adoption, and implementation of a greenspace plan that provides for connectivity of protected greenspace within and among communities. The greenspace plan must be comprised of natural areas, open spaces and greenways that provide for connectivity.

Providing Access for Persons with Disabilities

The *Americans with Disabilities Act* (1990) was created by Congress to “provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities”, as well as recognizing that “physical and mental disabilities in no way diminish a person’s right to fully participate in all aspects of society.” This act has been updated multiple times including recent updates in 2010. This legislation is in place to break down barriers to participation and access for persons with disabilities. Barriers can be defined to include anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, or policy/practice barriers. For recreation, leisure, and parks facilities, this could include accessibility to facilities, ramps to entrances, proper lighting, clearly marked identification signs, removal of barriers from the pedestrian path (e.g., garbage bins) and hand rails. Inclusive programming must also be considered as a method of integration.

Volunteerism

Volunteers are essential to the operation of a large number of leisure programs (including special events, sports, and programs for children) and many municipalities rely heavily on their assistance. Volunteer coordination and recognition are key aspects of many municipal community development strategies.

¹⁰ City of Norcross. (2010). Sustainable Norcross. Accessed from: http://www.norcrossga.net/info-2-col.php?page_ID=1276180904 on July 22, 2010.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010), the rate of volunteering and the overall number of volunteers rose slightly between September 2008 and September 2009. The median number of hours volunteered in 2009 (in all areas) was 52 hours for men and 50 hours for women. The total number of volunteers was nearly 63.5 million, 3.4% of which volunteered for a sport, hobby, cultural or arts organization as their main place of volunteering. The three most common organization types at which Americans volunteer are religious, educational or youth service, and social or community service. Sport, hobby, cultural or arts organizations ranked sixth of ten organization types. Across all organization types, the most common main volunteer activity Americans undertook for their main organization (aside from 'other') was fundraising, followed by collecting, preparing or serving food, and tutoring or teaching; a large majority (69%) of all American volunteers volunteer for only one organization.

Financing and Partnerships

Many communities are pursuing partnership approaches that dramatically differ from traditional service delivery mechanisms. Partnerships, alliances and collaborative relationships of varying types are required in today's economy to effectively and efficiently provide for the leisure needs of citizens. Not only is there growing interest in public-private partnerships (P3s), but also in arrangements with Trusts acting on behalf of community organizations and formal operating or cost sharing relationships with school boards as well as user/community groups.

Section 3: Public Input

Note: The data included in this section represents the opinions of the community and local stakeholder groups and are not to be considered recommendations. Where appropriate, this data has been used to inform the needs assessment phase of the Master Plan.

3.1 Public Participation Process

For any Master Plan, effective and extensive consultation with City staff and Council, the public, user groups, and other stakeholders is required in order to identify and prioritize issues and to create a level of cooperation and understanding. The Plan's public participation program engages citizens and all facets of the community, with the goal of articulating a shared vision and key priorities for implementation.

The public consultation approach involved the following:

- Community Survey
- Youth Survey
- Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews
- Public Meetings

The results of each of these consultative methods is summarized below.

3.2 Community Survey

A four-page mail survey was distributed to Norcross citizens by the City in August 2010. The sample for the survey was drawn from the City's property rolls and was sent to every private residence and business in Norcross. In total, 4,000 surveys were distributed. Returns were encouraged through return mail, fax, and personal delivery to City Hall. As of mid-September 2010, 334 mail surveys had been completed and returned.

In addition, an identical survey was posted on the internet, with the link identified in the cover letter of the mail survey, in correspondence with community leaders, and through a poster displayed in several public areas. This survey opened on August 4, 2010. As of September 1, 2010, 61 web surveys had been completed.

The purpose of the surveys was to help identify needs and preferences and to set priorities for the provision of parks facilities, green space, and trails projects. Specifically, the surveys asked questions about participation, usage of local parks, activity barriers, importance and satisfaction ratings, and priorities for capital spending.

Survey responses were limited to one submission per household (web or mail) and was intended for Norcross residents only (voluntary admission). Because of the different sampling techniques between the mail and web surveys, the survey cannot be considered to be statistically significant, meaning that it may not be representative of the population. In comparing the demographic composition of the City to

that of the survey respondents, this would appear to be quite true – only 8% of survey respondents identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, despite previous Census data indicating that nearly 52% of the Town’s residents have Hispanic or Latino ethnic backgrounds (note: this percentage is understood to have declined in recent years). **The opinions of the Hispanic and Latino community would appear to be significantly under-represented in the community survey results.** When it comes to government surveys, a non-response bias is common amongst minority groups and it is likely that this was exacerbated by offering the survey only in the English language. **Additional outreach to the local Hispanic and Latino community should be considered through the implementation phase of the Parks Master Plan.**

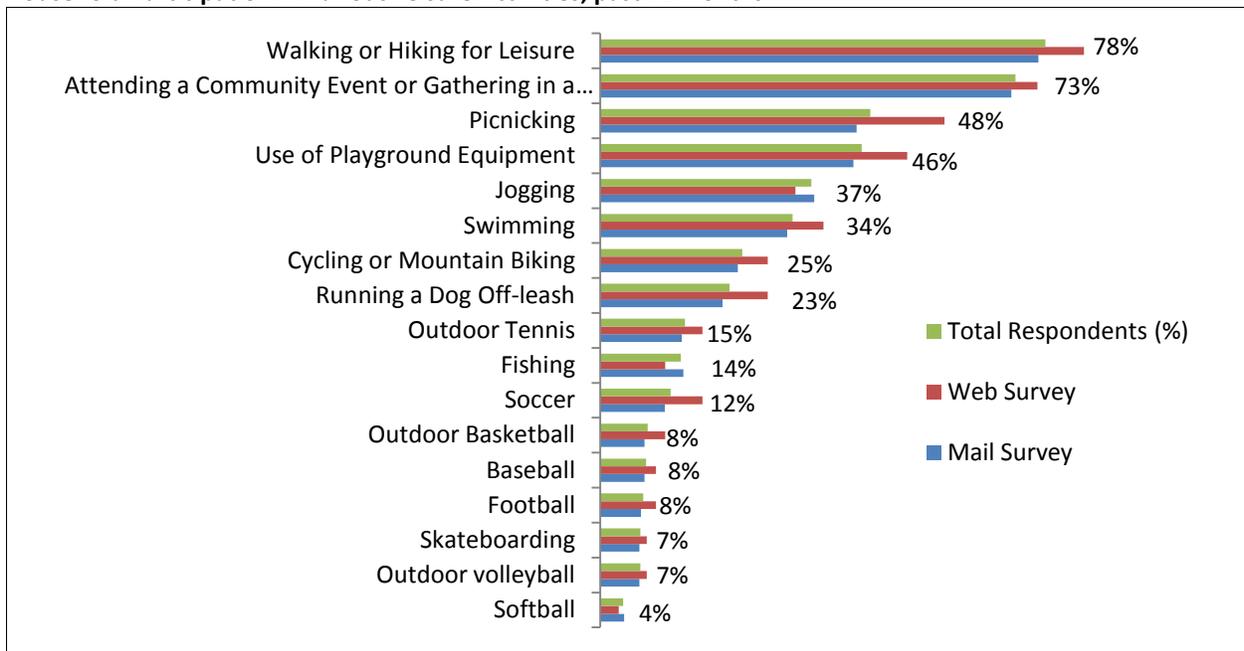
A summary of the survey results is provided in the following pages; detailed survey results can be found in **Appendix A**. The mail and web survey results have been shown both separately and combined, as there was a good degree of consistency between the two data sets with regard to priorities and leisure pursuits. As this survey is not intended to be statistically significant, the following text reports on the combined results (mail and web together – totaling 395 surveys).

Participation & Park Use

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their households, in the past 12 months, participated in particular active and passive park and recreation activities.

Similar to other communities that have undertaken this kind of market research, **walking or hiking for leisure was ranked as the most popular activity (78%)**, followed by attending a community event or gathering in a park (73%), picnicking (48%), use of playground equipment (46%), jogging (37%), and swimming (34%). Other cities tend to rank swimming and cycling/biking highly, after walking; however, in Norcross, they are ranked sixth and seventh respectively. The following figure displays the most popular leisure activities within Norcross.

Household Participation in Various Leisure Activities, past 12 months

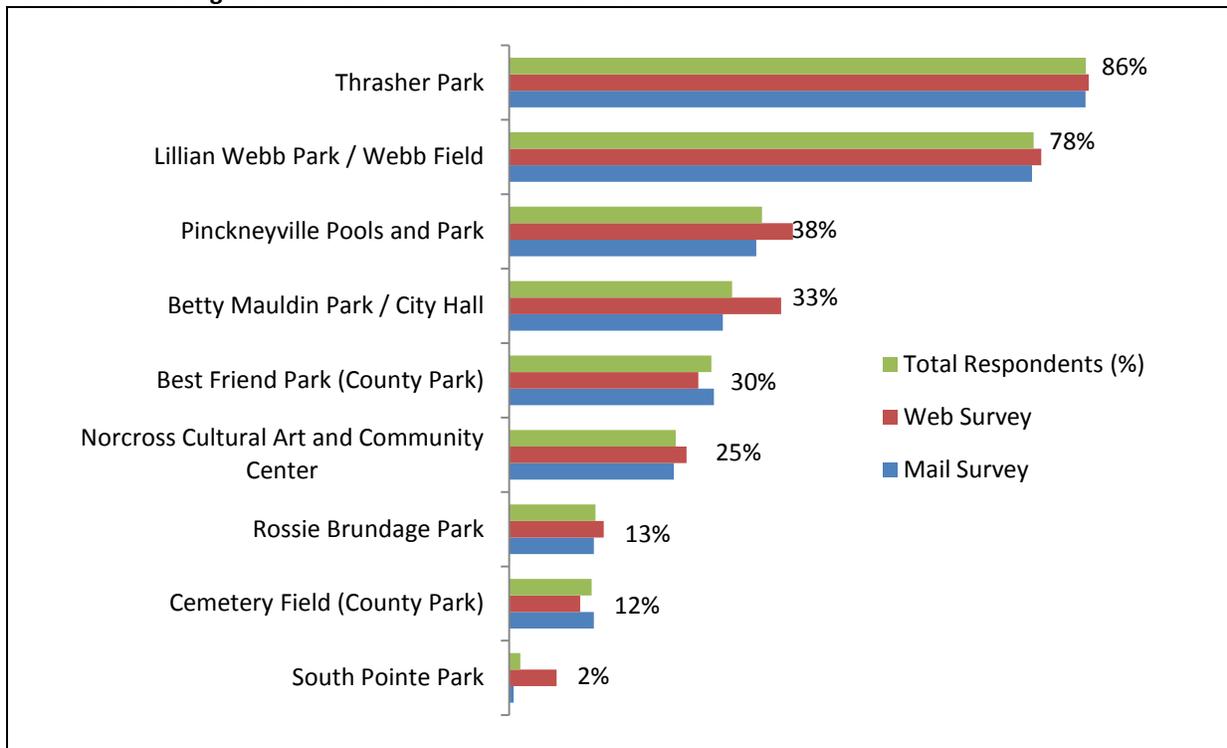


It is worth noting that with the exception of ‘attending a community event or gathering in a park’, **the most popular activities are generally undertaken as unorganized, drop-in style activities that are flexibly scheduled**, which in the experience of the consultant, has become a common trend in parks and recreation activities. Active sports, such as tennis, soccer, baseball, softball, and football all ranked relatively low, with 15% or fewer households participating.

Although walking/hiking ranked as the most popular activity in Norcross, walking as an activity is less popular than in other smaller urban/rural municipalities surveyed by the consultant. As expected, there were some differences in participation patterns based on socio-demographic characteristics. Given that a significant number of households contain adults 35 and older, advanced age is an additional factor in accounting for their lower participation levels.

Respondents were also asked about specific parks visited. Nine parks were listed on the survey, and respondents answered ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to whether members of their household has visited each within the past 12 months. **The two parks that were most visited were ‘Thrasher Park’ (86% of households), and ‘Lillian Webb Park/Webb Field’ (78% of households).** The ‘Pinckneyville Pools and Park’ outside of Norcross was the third most visited park (38% of households).

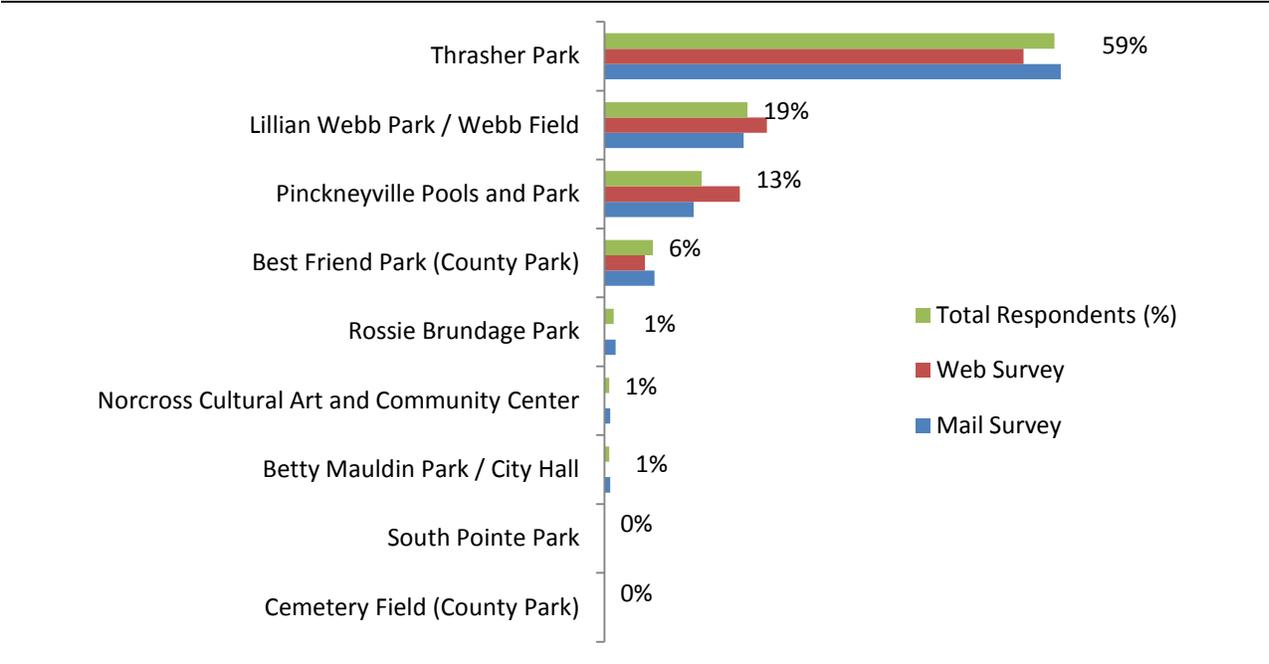
Households Visiting Selected Parks in the Past 12 Months



Note: ‘Don’t know’, ‘No Responses’, and ‘Did not visit and Norcross Parks’ were not included.

Of these parks, respondents were asked which park was their favorite. Of these parks, **the top three favorite parks are ‘Thrasher Park’ (59%), ‘Lillian Webb Park/Webb Field’ (19%), and ‘Pinckneyville Pools and Park’ (13%).** ‘Best Friend Park’ was the fourth favorite park (6%).

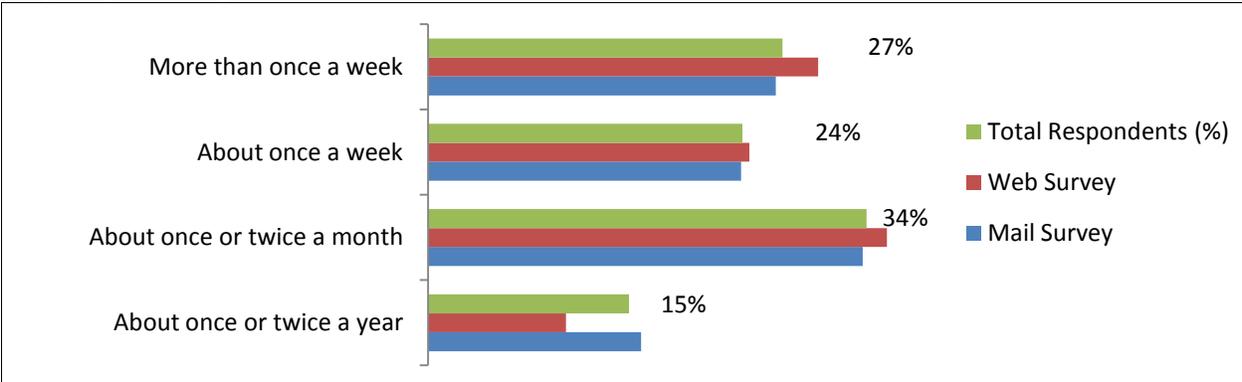
Households' Favorite Parks



Note: 'Don't know', 'No Responses', and 'Did not visit and Norcross Parks' were not included.

Respondents who have visited parks in the past 12 months were then asked how often they or their household visited parks in the Norcross area. **The most common frequency in which respondents visited parks in the Norcross area was 'about once or twice a month' (34%), followed by 'more than once a week' (27%), and 'about once a week' (24%).** Only about 15% of households completing the survey have not visited a local park in the past 12 months.

Frequency in Visiting Parks

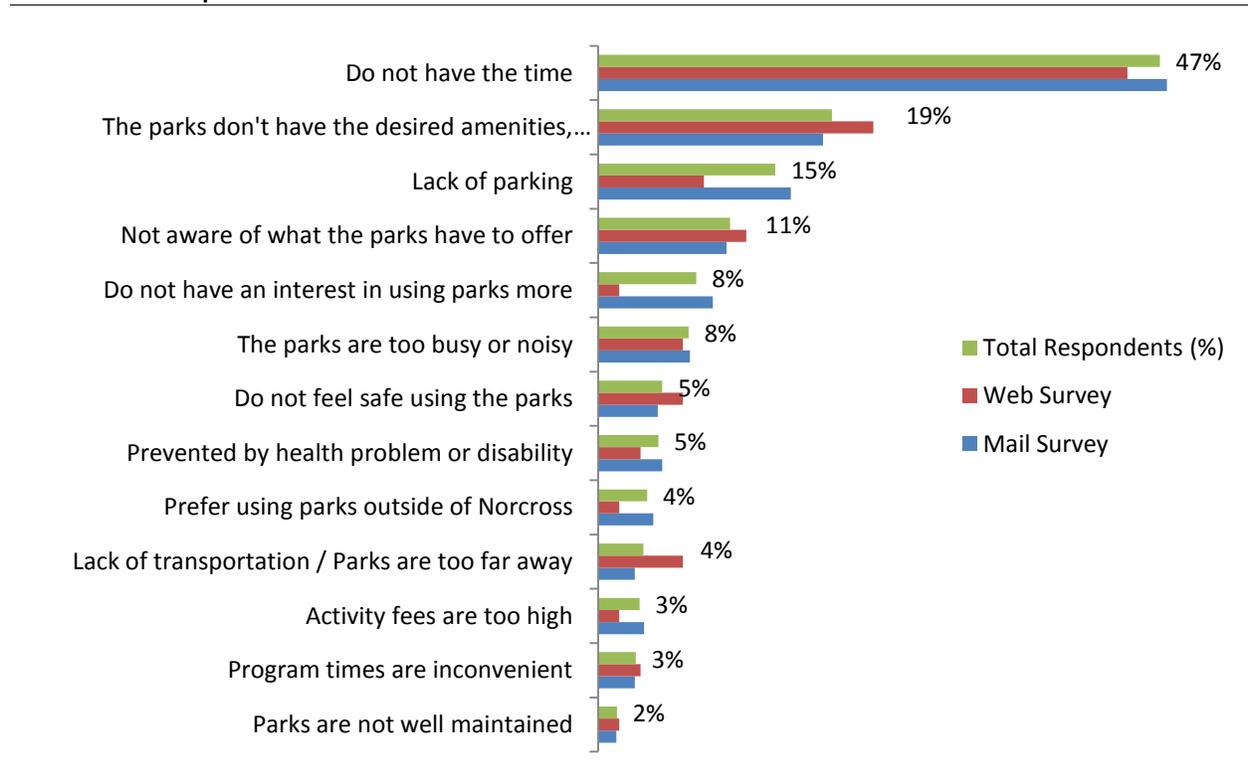


Note: 'Don't know', 'No Responses', and 'Did not visit and Norcross Parks' were not included.

Barriers to Participation

Respondents were asked about whether they were able to use parks in Norcross as often as they would like. The **most common reason given was ‘do not have the time’ (47%)**, followed by ‘the parks don’t have the desired amenities, facilities or activities’ (19%), and ‘lack of parking’ (15%).

Barriers to Participation



Note: ‘Don’t know’, and ‘No Responses’ were not included.

This question yielded results similar to other surveys in other cities. ‘Do not have the time’ is repeatedly cited as the number one barrier, and unfortunately, there are no direct strategies that Norcross can employ to significantly alter this barrier.

Importance, Satisfaction & Priorities

Respondents were asked to rate how important various park items were to them and their household, as well as their level of satisfaction with these items, both on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 meant ‘not at all important/satisfied’ and 5 meant ‘very important/satisfied’). These figures represent the sum of respondents with either a 4 or a 5, with respondents that answered ‘don’t know’ removed from calculations. Categories include parks for active recreation, passive recreation, green spaces and trails/greenways.

It is noteworthy that in areas where the satisfaction rating is lower than the importance rating, this typically indicates that there are service gaps. It should also be noted that results may be also skewed by the demographic composition of the respondents. For example, households without children may not

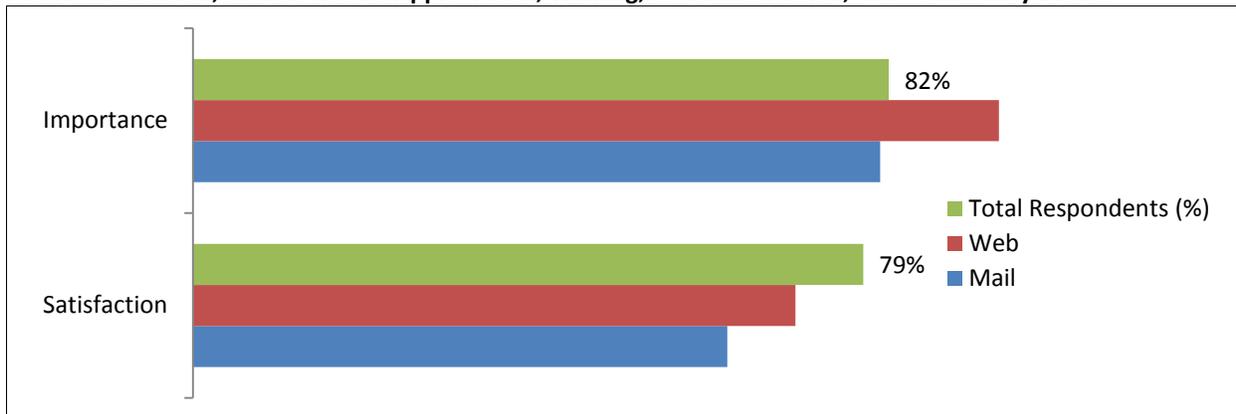
participate in active activities (nearly half of all survey respondents had no children under the age of 20 in their household).

Respondents rated ‘passive parks’ as most important to them (82%); this category also received the highest satisfaction rating (79%). ‘Trails and greenways that support walking, jogging, cycling, and inline skating’ received the second highest importance rating (79%); however, this item received the lowest satisfaction rating (45%), indicating a significant service gap. ‘Green space properties that protect natural features’ were ranked third in importance (80%) with a satisfaction rating of 68%. ‘Active recreation’ was the least important item (55%); however, had 79% satisfaction.

Based on these results, the public is suggesting that the most severe gaps/needs relate to trails/greenways, followed by natural green space properties, and passive recreation parks. Parks for active recreation generally appear to be meeting the needs of most responding households.

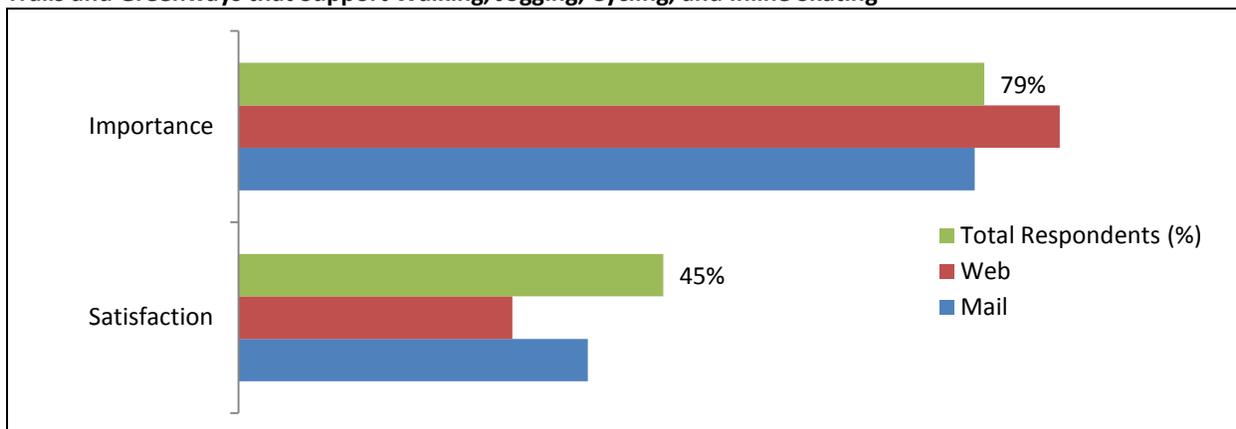
The following figures display the importance and satisfaction ratings of park items in Norcross.

Passive Recreation, such as Nature Appreciation, Walking, Social Interaction, and Community Events



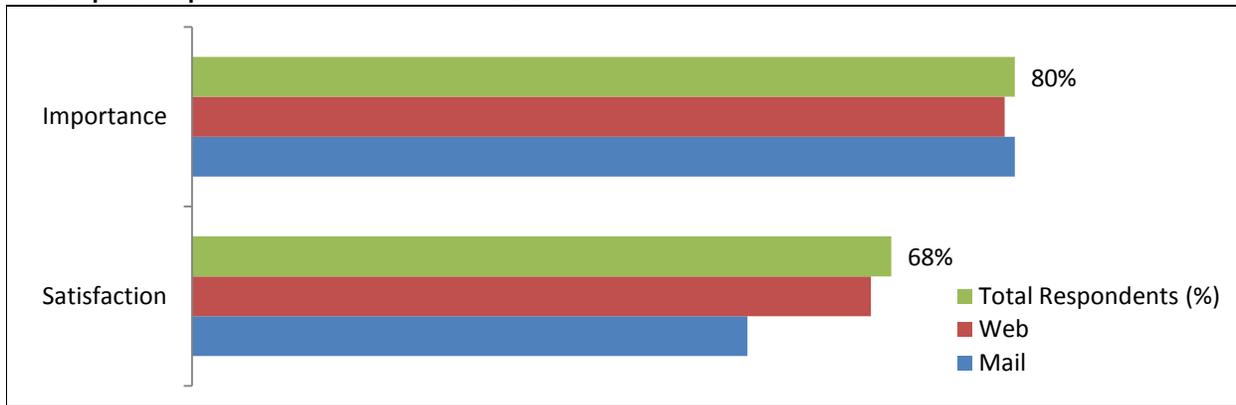
Note: ‘Don’t know’, and ‘No Responses’ were not included.

Trails and Greenways that Support Walking, Jogging, Cycling, and Inline Skating



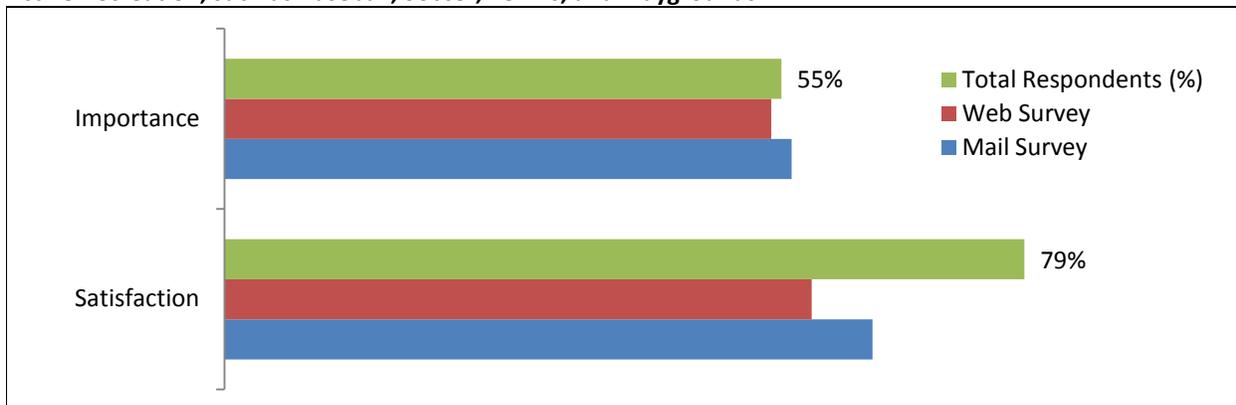
Note: ‘Don’t know’, and ‘No Responses’ were not included.

Green Space Properties that Protect Natural Features



Note: 'Don't know', and 'No Responses' were not included.

Active Recreation, such as Baseball, Soccer, Tennis, and Playgrounds

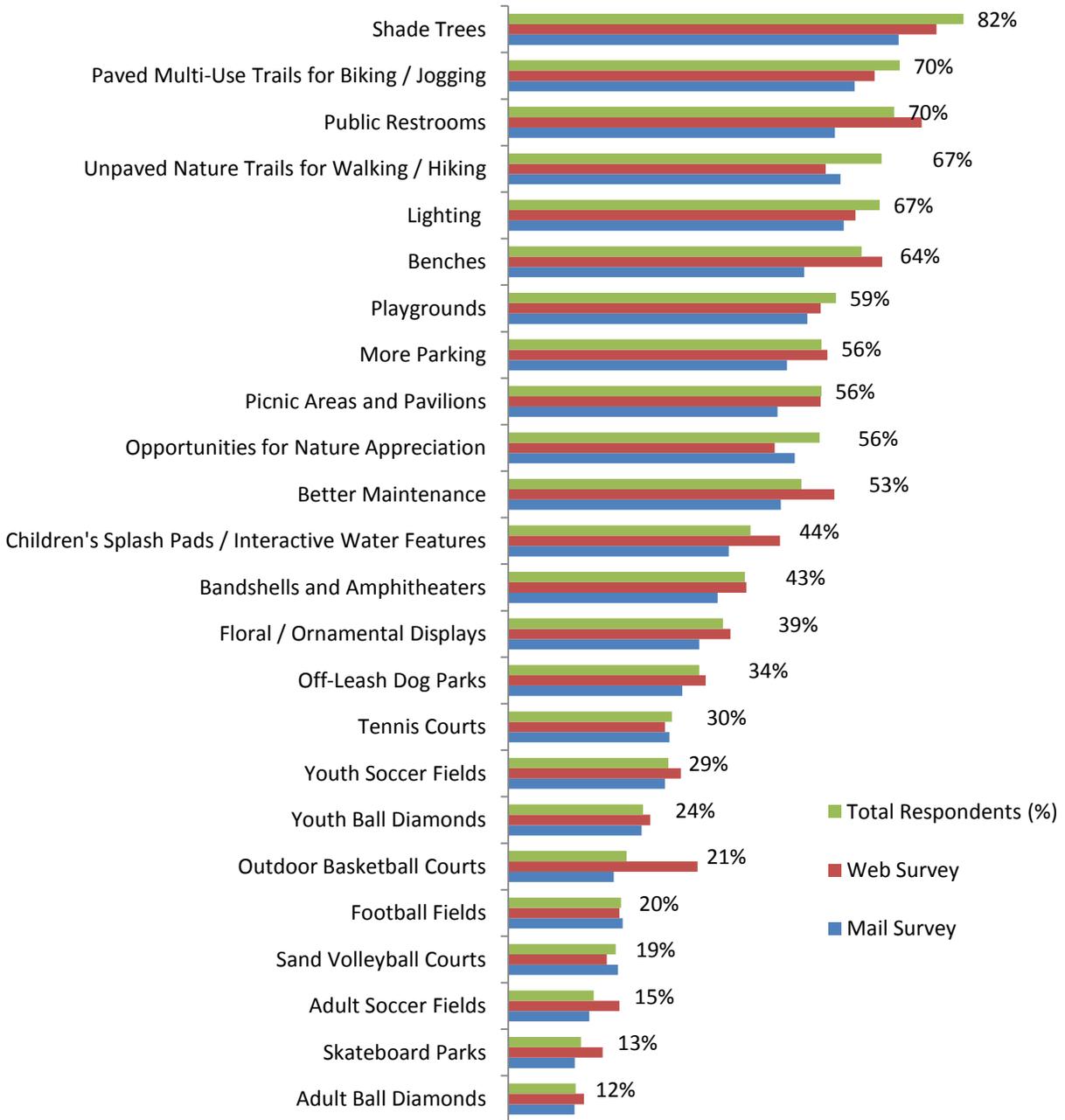


Note: 'Don't know', and 'No Responses' were not included.

To assess more specifically where respondents felt the City's resources should be allocated, they were asked which park amenities should receive additional public funding (either for new construction or improvements). Respondents were asked to answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant 'don't spend' and 5 meant 'definitely spend'. **82% of respondents stated that 'shade trees' were most in need of additional public spending**, followed by 'paved multi-use trails for biking/jogging' (70%), and 'public restrooms' (70%), 'Unpaved Nature Trails for Walking/Hiking' (67%), and 'Lighting' (67%). These figures represent the sum of respondents that responded with either a 4 or 5 on the scale of 1 to 5, with respondents who answered 'don't know' omitted from calculations.

Active sports, such as tennis, soccer, baseball, softball, and football all rank relatively low with 30% or fewer households who support additional public funding. As mentioned earlier, it is important to note that nearly half of all respondents had no children under the age of 20.

Percent that Support Additional Public Spending to Improve Parks, Trails, and Green Space



Note: 'Don't know' responses were not included.

Respondents were then asked to prioritize which items were most important to them and their households to be improved. Respondents who stated that ‘none of these items are important to my household’ were also included in the calculations. **The most common item respondents stated that was a priority to them or their household is ‘paved multi-use trails for biking/jogging’,** followed by ‘unpaved nature trails for walking/hiking’, ‘shade trees’, ‘playgrounds’, and ‘public restrooms’.

The following is a list the 10 most important park items and amenities based on the priorities of respondents.

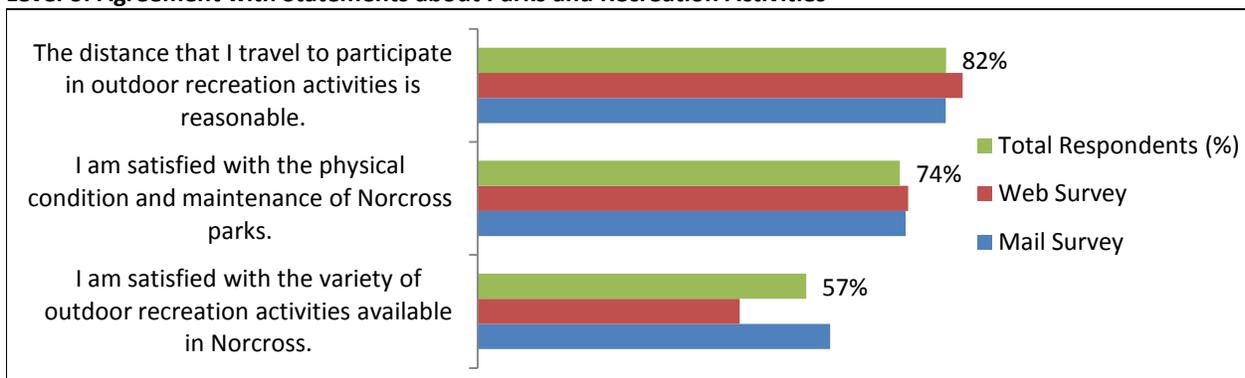
Highest Priorities for Spending in Norcross Parks, Trails, and Green Spaces

1. Paved Multi-Use Trails for Biking/Jogging
2. Unpaved Nature Trails for Walking/Hiking
3. Shade Trees
4. Playgrounds
5. Off-Leash Dog Parks
6. Public Restrooms
7. Lighting
8. Opportunities for Nature Appreciation
9. Picnic Areas and Pavilions
10. More Parking

Another question dealt with the specific statements relating to travel time to participate in outdoor recreation, satisfaction with the variety of outdoor recreation in Norcross, and the physical condition and maintenance of Norcross parks. Respondents were asked to respond to a series of statements, using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 was ‘strongly agree’. The percentage of respondents that answered that they ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with each statement is listed in the figure below (those that answered ‘don’t know’ have been excluded from the calculation).

There was a good degree of agreement to all of these statements, with the possible exception of ‘I am satisfied with the variety of outdoor recreation activities available in Norcross’, which received 57% agreement and 13% disagreement (22% were neutral).

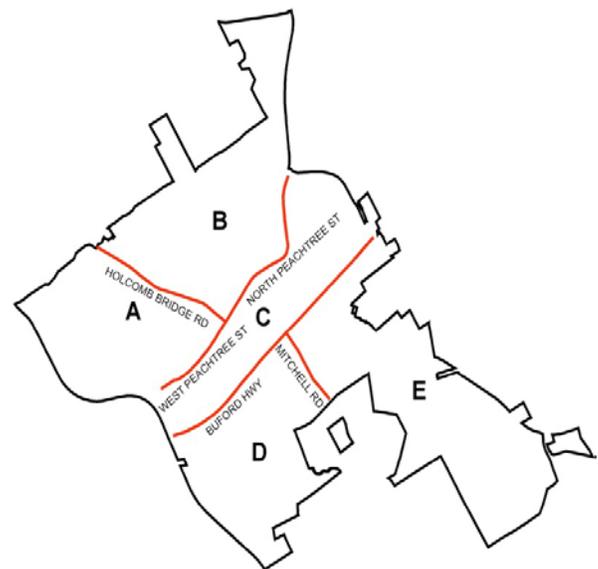
Level of Agreement with Statements about Parks and Recreation Activities



Note: ‘Don’t know’ responses were not included.

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

- The average survey respondents' household was approximately 2.59 persons per household, which is lower than the 3.14 persons per household that is estimated for the entire City.
- The respondents' average age was 50 years old.
- 25% of members of surveyed households were aged 19 and under (compared to 26% in the 2000 Census). 54% were aged 20-54 (59% in most recent population estimates) and 34% were 55 years and older (15% in most recent population estimates).
- 19% of households contained children or youth age 19 or younger.
- 75% of respondents identified themselves as White/Caucasian, 16% as Black/African American, 8% as Hispanic/Latino, 8% as Asian, and 2% as other (multiple responses allowed). As mentioned earlier, the most recent demographic data suggests that approximately one-half of the Town's residents have Hispanic or Latino ethnic backgrounds, although anecdotal evidence indicates that this percentage is declining. Nevertheless, the opinions of the Hispanic and Latino community would appear to be severely under-represented in the community survey results.
- 28% of respondents have lived in Norcross for 6 to 10 years, followed by 23% of respondents living in Norcross for 2 to 5 years.
- Most respondents lived in Area B (31%), followed by Area C (24%), Area E (22%), Area D (12%), and Area A (11%). See map at right.
- As an optional question, respondents were asked about their household income. The breakdown of responses from those that chose to respond do this question (68% of the sample) is as follows:
 - 34% were over \$100,000
 - 14% were between \$40,000 and \$59,999
 - 11% were between \$80,000 and \$99,999
 - 10% were between \$20,000 and \$39,999
 - 3% were under \$20,000



Note: Various open-ended comments were also received through the surveys, most of which represented very specific viewpoints. Please see **Appendix A** for an account of these comments.

3.3 Youth Survey

The community survey was also distributed to the 7th Grade class at Summerour Middle School and the 11th Grade class at Norcross High School in August 2010. It is believed that the youth survey provides better insight into the needs of families, the Hispanic community, and youth in general, as all three of these groups were under-represented in the Community Survey.

In total, 706 survey responses were received from students (ranging in ages from approximately 12 to 19). It should be noted that – due to the self-administered nature of the survey instrument – students skipped several questions, leading to varying response rates to each question; these skipped questions were not included as response choices and have been removed from the results.

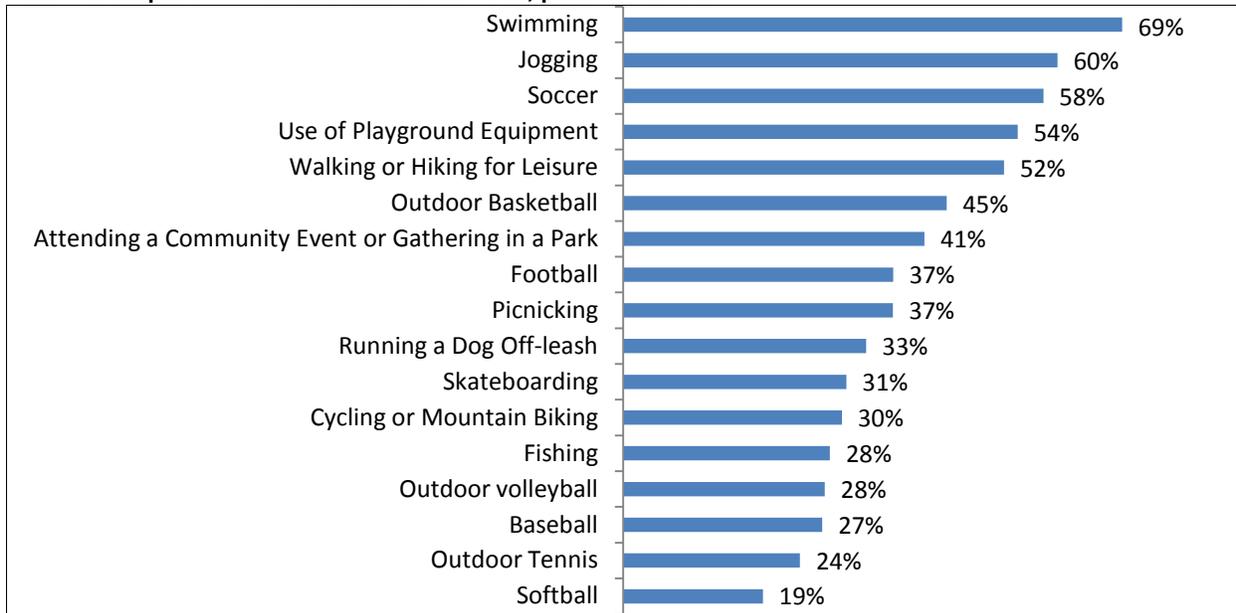
Like the community survey, the youth survey is not intended to be statistically significant, but provides a very good balance of input to the Master Plan through the eyes of youth – many of which are the primary users of local parks. The following sections include a summary of the Youth Survey data, with comparisons to the Community Survey, where appropriate. Detailed results from the youth survey can be found in **Appendix B**.

Youth Participation in Recreation Activities

Youth respondents were asked to indicate whether they or their households, in the past 12 months, participated in particular leisure and cultural activities. Compared to the results found in the Community Survey of households, **swimming (69%) was found to be the most popular activity**, followed by jogging (60%), soccer (58%), the use of playground equipment (54%), walking or hiking for leisure (52%), and outdoor basketball (45%).

The respondents of this survey, who are in 7th and 11th Grade, illustrate that youth participate more in a variety of active recreation activities than the respondents who completed the Community Survey, where the average age of respondent was 50. The top activities found in the Community Survey were more passive activities such as walking and hiking for leisure (78%), attending a community event or gathering (73%) and picnicking (48%). The following figure displays the most popular leisure activities identified in the youth survey.

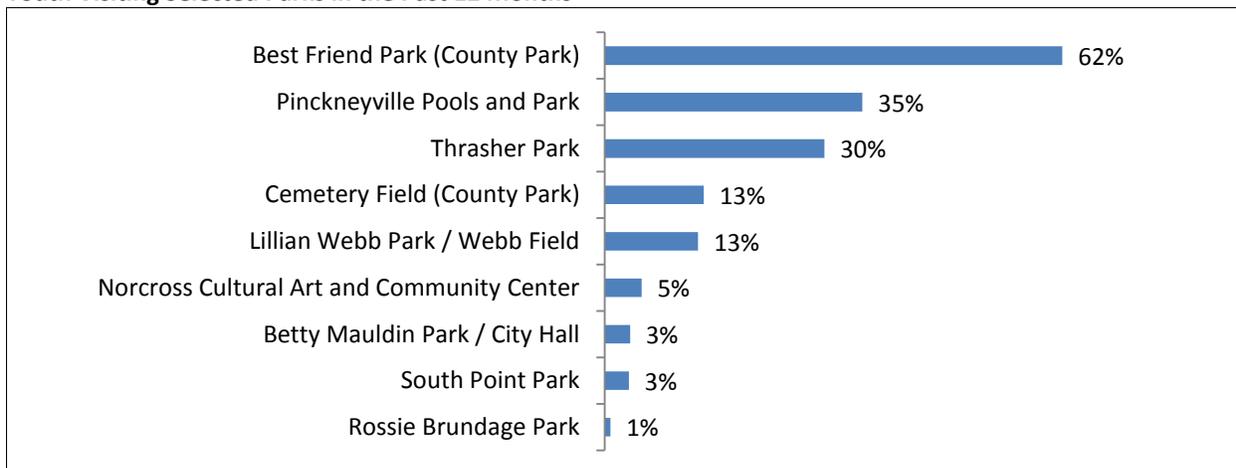
Youth Participation in Various Leisure Activities, past 12 months



The students were also asked about specific parks they have visited within the past 12 months. **The park that was most visited was ‘Best Friend Park’ (62%)**. The second and third most visited parks by youth in Norcross was ‘Pinckneyville Pools and Park’ (35%) and ‘Thrasher Park’ (30%), respectively.

For the Community Survey, ‘Thrasher Park’ was the most visited park at 86%. ‘Best Friend Park’ ranked fifth with 30% of households. The larger, more active community parks would appear to be more popular with local youth.

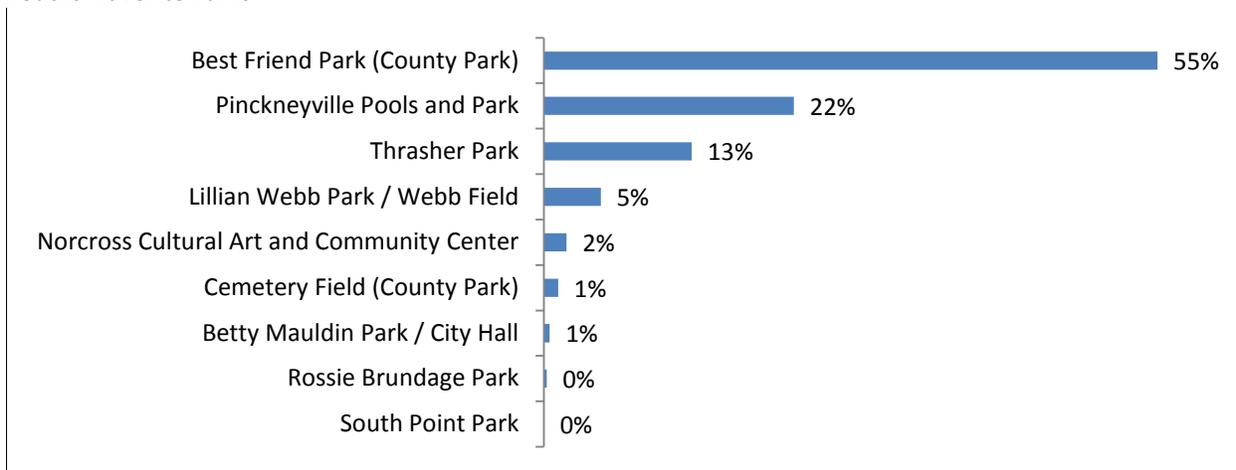
Youth Visiting Selected Parks in the Past 12 Months



Note: ‘No Responses’ and ‘Did not visit and parks in Norcross’ were not included.

Of these parks, students were asked which park was their favorite and their responses were similar to those they had visited most frequently, that being **‘Best Friend Park’ (55%)**, Pinckneyville Pools and Park (22%) and Thrasher Park (13%).

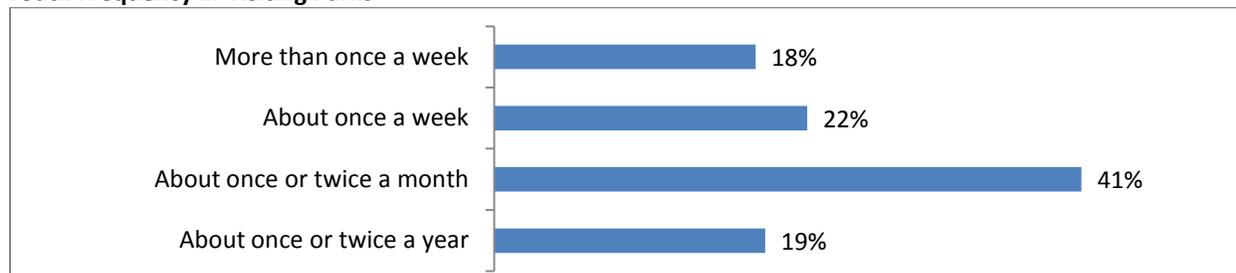
Youths' Favorite Parks



Note: 'Don't Know' and 'No Responses' were not included.

Students who have visited parks in the past 12 months were then asked how often they or their household visited parks in the Norcross area. **The most common frequency in which respondents visited parks in the Norcross area was 'about once or twice a month' (41%),** followed by 'about once a week' (22%). These results are similar to the results found in the Community Survey where respondents also visited parks "about once or twice a month" (34%) and 'about once a week' (27%). 18% of youth respondents who completed this survey have not visited a local park in the past 12 months.

Youth Frequency in Visiting Parks



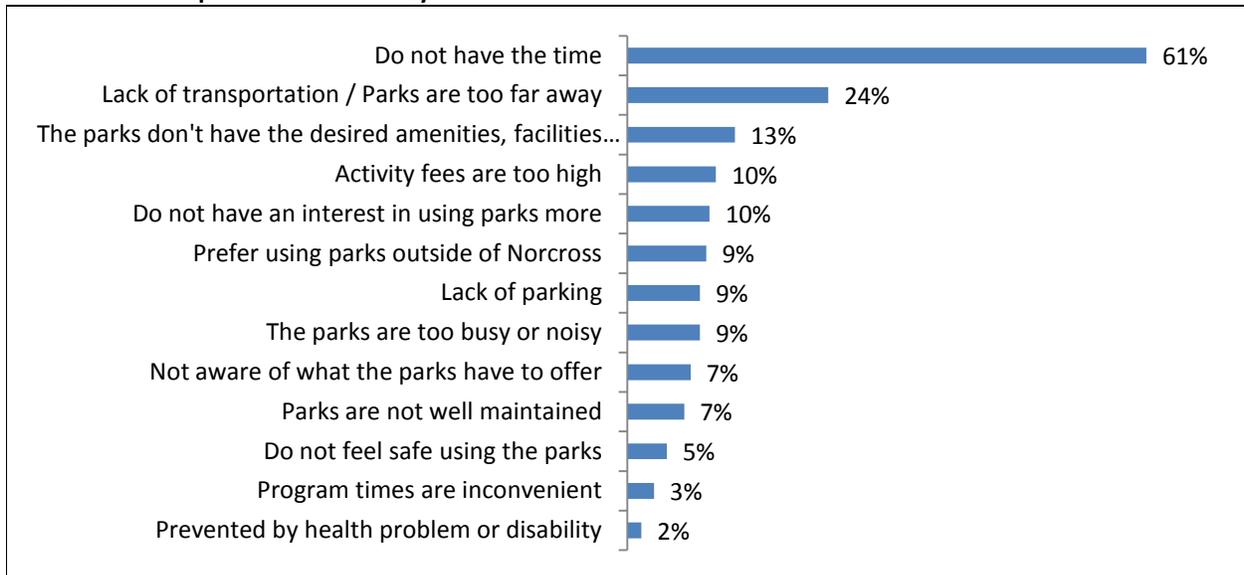
Note: 'Don't Know', 'No Responses', and 'Did not visit and Norcross Parks' were not included.

Barriers to Participation

Students were asked about whether they were able to use parks in Norcross as often as they would like. **The most common reason given was 'do not have the time' (61%),** followed by 'lack of transportation or parks are too far away' (24%), and 'the parks don't have the desired amenities, facilities or activities' (13%).

Similarly, the most common reason given in the Community Survey was also 'do not have the time' (47%).

Barriers to Participation- Youth Survey



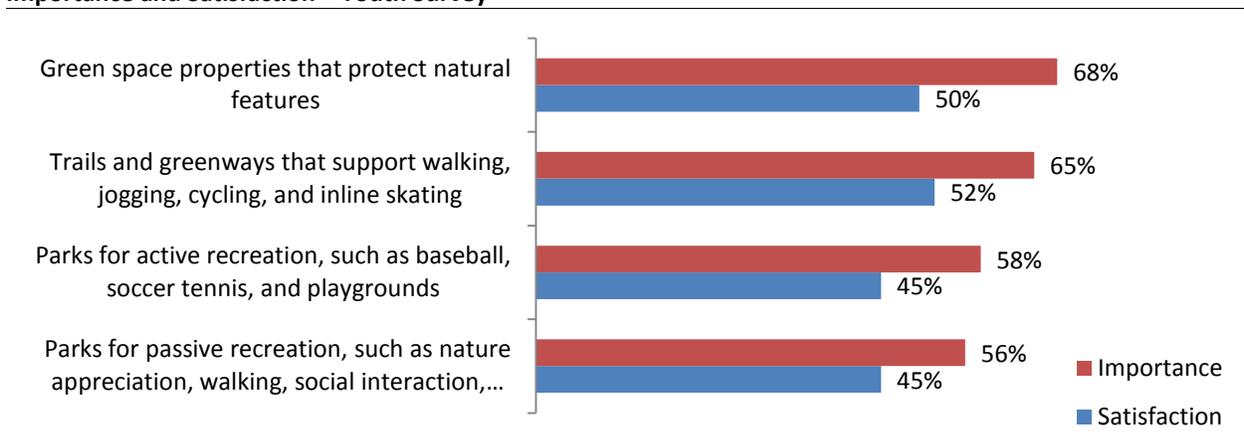
Note: 'Don't Know' and 'No Responses' were not included.

Importance, Satisfaction & Priorities

Students were asked to rate how important various park items were to them and their households, as well as their level of satisfaction with these items, both on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 meant 'not at all important/satisfied' and 5 meant 'very important/satisfied'). The following figures represent the sum of respondents recording either a 4 or a 5, with respondents that answered 'don't know' removed from calculations. Categories include parks for active recreation, passive recreation, green spaces, and trails/greenways.

The students rated 'green space properties that protect natural features' as the most important to them (68%); this category received a satisfaction rating of 50%. 'Trails and greenways that support walking, jogging, cycling, and inline skating' received the second highest importance rating (65%) with a satisfaction rating of 52%.

Importance and Satisfaction – Youth Survey

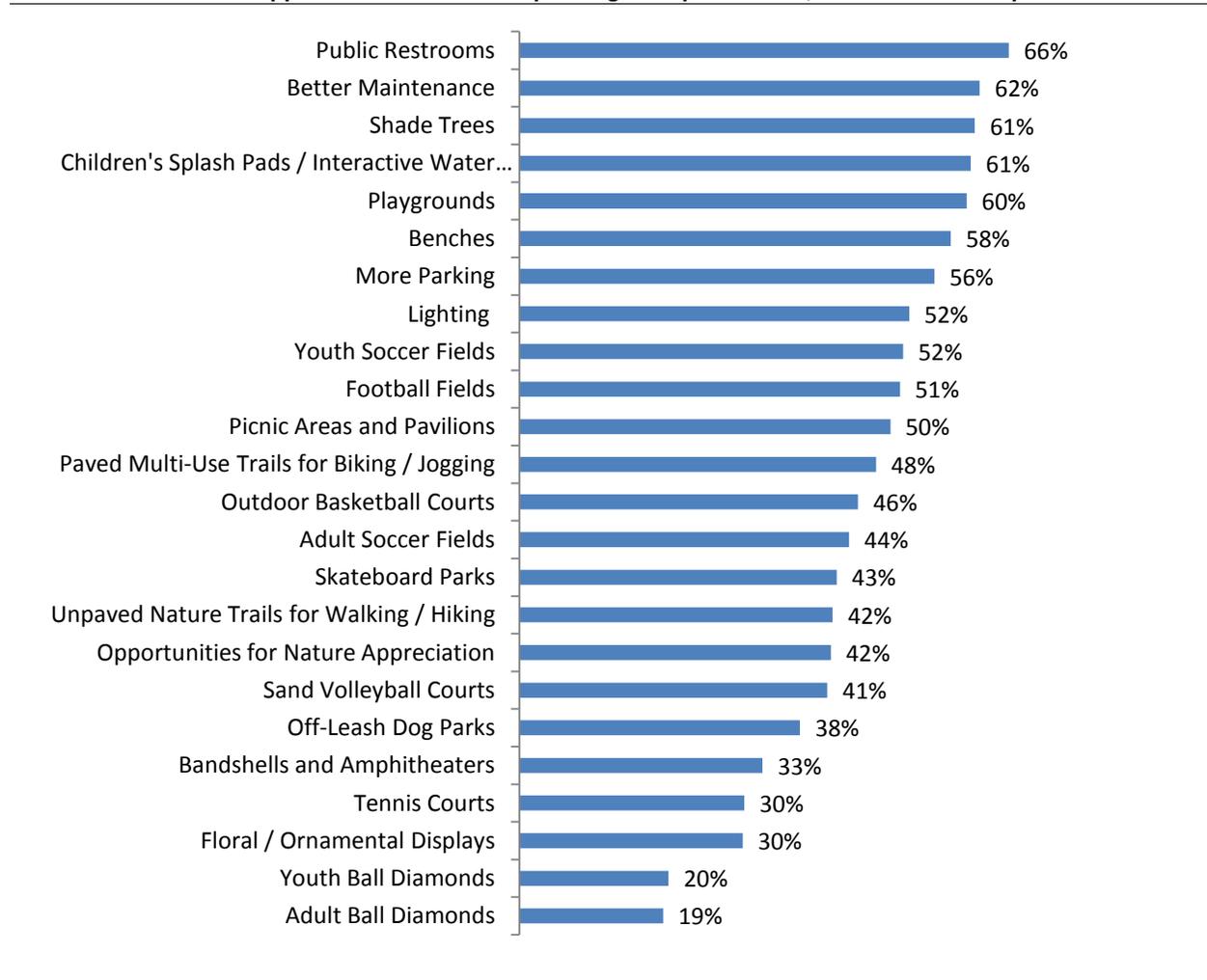


Note: 'Don't Know' and 'No Responses' were not included.

Based on these results, the youth are suggesting that there are considerable gaps/needs for each item, especially for green space properties that protect natural features.

To assess more specifically where the students felt the City’s resources should be allocated, they were asked which amenities should receive additional public funding (either for new construction or improvements). They were asked to answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant ‘don’t spend’ and 5 meant ‘definitely spend’. **66% of youths stated that ‘public washrooms were most in need of additional public funding**, followed by ‘better maintenance’ (62%), shade trees (61%), and ‘children’s splash pads/interactive water features’ (61%). The figures represent those that responded with either a 4 or 5 on the scale of 1 to 5, with respondents who answered ‘don’t know’ removed from calculations.

Percent of Youth that Support Additional Public Spending to Improve Parks, Trails and Green Space



Note: ‘Don’t Know’ and ‘No Responses’ were not included

The results from the Community Survey indicated that the park amenities most in need of public spending were ‘shade trees’ (82%), followed by ‘paved multi-use trails for biking/jogging’ (70%), and ‘public restrooms’ (70%). A higher percentage of youth indicated that more money should be spent on active recreation fields, such as youth soccer fields (34%), football fields (34%) and outdoor basketball courts (30%), whereas the Community Survey found that the demand for active recreation amenities to be much lower.

The students were then asked to prioritize which amenities were most important to them and their households to be improved. **The highest priorities for students were ‘playgrounds’,** followed by ‘youth soccer fields’, and ‘public restrooms’.

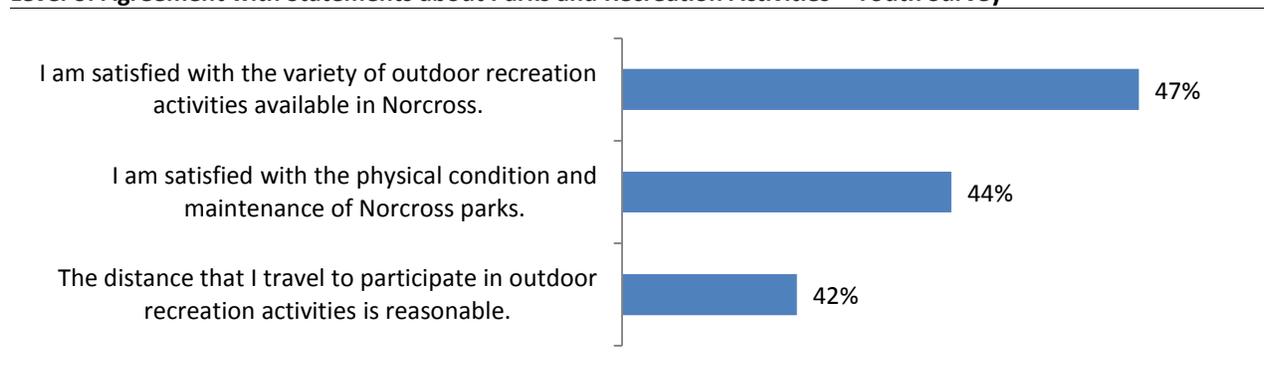
This question yielded different results in the community survey, where the highest priorities were ‘paved multi-use trails for biking/jogging’, ‘unpaved nature trails for walking/hiking’, and ‘shade trees’. Comparing the results of both surveys again confirms that youth participate in more active sports as they find sport amenities more of a priority than respondents who have completed the Community Survey (average age: 50) and list more passive activities as a priority. Although both surveys vary in responses; ‘playgrounds’, ‘public restrooms’, and ‘paved multi-use trails for biking/jogging’ are found to be a priority to all respondents.

The following table lists the 10 most important park items and amenities to youth respondents and their households in comparison to the most important park items and amenities to respondents of the community survey.

Youth Survey	Community Survey
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Playgrounds 2. Youth Soccer Fields 3. Public Restrooms 4. Children’s Splash Pads 5. Football Fields 6. Better Maintenance 7. Shade Trees 8. Outdoor Basketball Courts 9. Adult Soccer Fields 10. Paved Multi-Use Trails for Biking/Jogging 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paved Multi-Use Trails for Biking/Jogging 2. Unpaved Nature Trails for Walking/Hiking 3. Shade Trees 4. Playgrounds 5. Off-Leash Dog Parks 6. Public Restrooms 7. Lighting 8. Opportunities for Nature Appreciation 9. Picnic Areas and Pavilions 10. More Parking

The students were also asked their level of agreement with specific statements relating to travel time to participate in outdoor recreation, their satisfaction with the variety of outdoor recreation in Norcross, and the physical condition and maintenance of Norcross parks. The percentage of respondents that answered that they ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with each statement is listed in the figure below (those that answered ‘don’t know’ have been excluded from the calculation).

Level of Agreement with Statements about Parks and Recreation Activities – Youth Survey

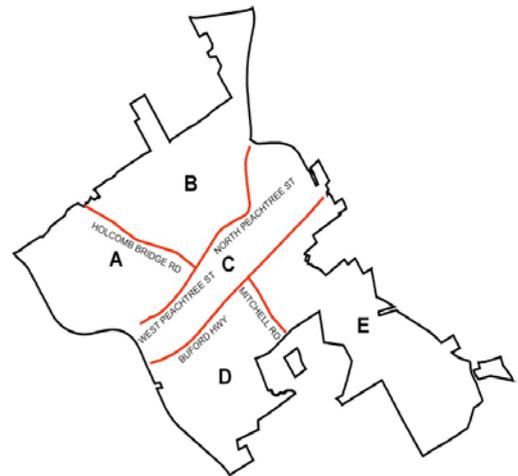


Note: ‘Don’t Know’ were not included.

There was a relatively low level of agreement with each statement where less than half of respondents agreed with each statement. These findings are different from those of the Community Survey, which found a higher level of agreement with each statement.

Demographic Characteristics of Youths

- The average students' household size is 5.17 persons per household, considerably more than the 3.14 persons per household average that is estimated for the entire City. The results from the Community Survey found that respondents' average household size was 2.59 persons per household. This survey appears to be reflective of families with children and crosses all cultures.
- The students' average age was 15 years old. The average age of the Community Survey respondent age was 50.
- Most students live in Area D (37%), followed by Area E (22%), Area A (17%), Area B (13%), and Area C (12%). Most respondents who completed the Community Survey lived in Area B (32%) and Area C (24%).
- A majority of students identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino (52%), followed by Black or African American (32%), White (16%), Asian (8%), and American Indian (3%) (multiple responses allowed). These results differ considerably from the Community Survey where a majority of respondents identified themselves as White (77%).



Note: Various open-ended comments were also received through the surveys, most of which represented very specific viewpoints. Please see **Appendix B** for an account of these comments.

3.4 Focus Groups & Key Informant Interviews

To provide opportunity for candid discussion on major topics from a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders, a combination of one-on-one interviews and small group focus groups were held on July 19 and 20, 2010. In total, approximately 40 individuals representing several organizations were identified by the Project Steering Committee and Consultants as being key stakeholders to this Master Plan. A listing of these individuals and groups can be found in **Appendix C**.

Given the personal and/or confidential nature of these sessions, individual responses have not been identified within this section. Rather, key concerns, ideas, and themes emerging from these discussions have been integrated into needs assessments and have informed the development of the Plan's recommendations.

3.5 Public Meetings

Two public information meetings were undertaken for this project:

- (1) An initial meeting on September 22, 2010 to present the preliminary findings of the research phase of the project (Environmental Scan) and give residents the opportunity to raise issues, pose questions, and offer suggestions to the Consulting Team; and
- (2) A final meeting on November 11, 2010 to present the draft Master Plan and to receive feedback on the recommended directions and priorities.

The public input from these meetings has been documented within **Appendix D** of this Master Plan. Pertinent input and comments have been integrated into the analysis within the Plan.

Section 4: A 'Vision' for Parks, Green Space, and Trails

4.1 Key Issues and Opportunities

Through the Terms of Reference and initial consultation stage, several key issues and opportunities pertaining to parks, green space, and trails in Norcross have emerged. Direction on many of these topics (described briefly below) will be addressed in the complete Parks Master Plan. The following list is not intended to be exhaustive nor indicative of future actions; it is merely a brief summary of issues commonly referenced during this initial planning phase. As the planning process advances and further assessments and consultations are undertaken, responses to these and other issues and opportunities will be developed and refined.

Distribution of Parks and Green Spaces:

Most of the City's developed parks are located northwest of Buford Highway. As a result, the area southeast of Buford Highway is under-served, but there is potential to address a portion of these needs through the use of existing green space and new park development (e.g., Mitchell Road Parcel).

Hispanic Community:

The most recent demographic data suggests that over half of the City's citizens identify themselves as being Hispanic or Latino, which represents a significant increase over the past two decades. As stated earlier, however, the economic downturn and slow recovery have likely reduced the size of the local Hispanic community, many of whom are more transient due to employment opportunities.

Although there are many similarities, the leisure pursuits and priorities of the Hispanic community may also be very different from those of residents with other ethnic backgrounds. Updating the local parks system to ensure that local leisure opportunities are reflective of all community needs is a key objective of this Master Plan.

Meaningful engagement of the Hispanic community in this Parks Master Plan also remains an ongoing challenge. The following excerpt (extracted from the Norcross Comprehensive Plan) describes the issue well: *"There are essentially two communities within Norcross; these are aligned spatially east and west of Buford Highway. The City of Norcross and various citizen groups' efforts to reach out to the diverse population within Norcross have been met with limited success."*

Continued Growth and Increased Densities:

The City is actively planning to revitalize several areas of Norcross, initiatives that will likely result in population increases and higher land use densities. Parks and green space go hand-in-hand with attracting residents to the area as they are seen as "quality of life makers". Yet, as development pressures become more severe, so too does the scarcity of land for parks and green space purposes (which may also become more costly for the City to purchase). Identifying future park requirements so that the land can be protected and/or acquired early on is the best way to ensure that it will be available to serve the long-term needs of the community.

Connectivity:

The City of Norcross has no multi-use trails, but Gwinnett County has been rapidly expanding its greenway system and there is a desire to connect this system with Norcross. At the same time, connectivity within Norcross is also seen as a high priority and opportunities exist through utility corridors and other rights-of-way to establish formal greenways that connect key destinations within the City. Signage and wayfinding must also be key components of any connectivity plan.

Green Communities Certification:

The City is currently pursuing the ARC Green Communities Certification (application was submitted in May 2010) and wishes to incorporate qualification items into the Parks and Green Space Master Plan.

Access to School Fields:

Schools provide some of the best located lands in the City and many contain outdoor sports fields that are in local demand. Unfortunately, community access to school facilities is limited due to extended school usage and issues related to liability, maintenance, and costs. More work needs to be done to establish long-term agreements for community access to these fields after school hours.

Buchanan School Site:

As identified in the Norcross Activity Center LCI, *"the low-scale use of this land, combined with the age of the facilities and the large amount of land that surrounds it, makes this an attractive redevelopment site. The School System would like to maintain some level of programming here, but has been amenable to partnered redevelopment. Some of the surrounding land is aging apartment complexes in poor condition, which would potentially allow for an even larger scale project. The Norcross 2030 Plan has identified the area as a potential arts and culture district, which would be compatible with an educational program and a mixed-use redevelopment scenario."*

The potential redevelopment of this site could result in the loss of some sports fields, but also create opportunities to enhance other recreational activities and to better connect green spaces.

Cemetery Field:

Cemetery Field is the last remaining park within Norcross that is operated by Gwinnett County. Despite being divided by a road, it also sits on the same legal parcel of land as the City Cemetery. Consideration needs to be given to the most appropriate long-term solutions for this site.

Lack of Programming:

Much of the locally available recreational programming is offered by the County, youth sports associations, and church/private organizations, including the YMCA. Many of these activities are focused on the younger and older demographics.

Over-utilization of Parks:

The City has recently redeveloped Lillian Webb and Thrasher Parks, to rave reviews, so much so that there is concern that these parks will end up being over-utilized to a degree that outstrips the City's ability to properly maintain them.

Innovations in Park Design:

The addition of user-friendly elements that increase the attractiveness, functionality, and comfort of parks has been identified as an area that requires growing attention. Seating, shade structures, public art, tables with chess/checker boards, and other amenities that give parks a 'wow factor' have all been suggested.

Partnerships:

In addition to working more closely with the Board of Education, there is a need to foster and nurture partnerships with other community providers (e.g., Police, YMCA, Churches, Boys and Girls Club, etc.) when it comes to connecting parks, maintaining them, programming them, and keeping them relevant to the community.

Cycling:

The City would benefit greatly from having bicycle friendly streets connecting residences to businesses and green spaces including parks. Although connectivity covers some of these aspects, the residents of Norcross appear to be very interested specifically in cycling. The provision of additional bike racks, safety signage, bike lanes, etc will likely be important to the future of Norcross's transportation plans.

Un-Programmed Green Spaces / Informal Play Fields:

There is a clear interest in the provision of more "un-programmed" green spaces. In particular, this refers to level grassed fields suitable for team sports which are not regularly utilized by organized teams or private sporting clubs. There is a significant need for fields that can be used for "pick-up" games at any time including evenings. Play would likely include soccer as a major usage of such fields.

4.2 Proposed Vision

"Lead with your parks." *The two blockbuster infill parks of the 21st Century — Millennium Park in Chicago and The High Line in New York — have each generated well over a billion dollars of redevelopment and renewal, not to mention tourist revenue and all-around "buzz."*
- Peter Harnick - Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities

Parks provide countless benefits to the social, economic, environmental, and physical dimensions of individuals and communities. The following points provide a very good introduction to the many ways that parks and open space contribute to personal and community wellness. These references have been excerpted from two sources: (1) the Trust for Public Land's *"The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space"*, written by Paul Sherer in 2006; and (2) the Atlanta Regional Commission's *Green Infrastructure Toolkit*.

Health Benefits

"City parks and open space improve our physical and psychological health, strengthen our communities, and make our cities and neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work." (1)

"Strong evidence shows that when people have access to parks, they exercise more. Regular physical activity has been shown to increase health and reduce the risk of a wide range of diseases, including heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer, and diabetes. Physical activity also relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety, improves mood, and enhances psychological well-being. Beyond the benefits of exercise, a growing body of research shows that contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health." (1)

"Trees and greenspace help to clean the air, which lessens respiratory ailments such as asthma, particularly in children and the elderly. All of these health benefits have a positive economic bottom line, reducing healthcare costs." (2)

Social and Community Benefits

"City parks also produce important social and community development benefits. They make inner-city neighborhoods more livable; they offer recreational opportunities for at-risk youth, low-income children, and low-income families; and they provide places in low-income neighborhoods where people can feel a sense of community. Access to public parks and recreational facilities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and in particular to reduced juvenile delinquency." (1)

"Parks contribute to neighborhood character and identity acting as gateways and landmarks. They can also enhance neighborhood and community aesthetics by providing visual relief and landscape variation within the urban framework." (1)

Economic Benefits

"Numerous studies have shown that parks and open space increase the value of neighboring residential property. Growing evidence points to a similar benefit on commercial property value. The availability of park and recreation facilities is an important quality-of-life factor for corporations choosing where to locate facilities and for well-educated individuals choosing a place to live." (1)

"Greenways, parks and open spaces, and historic sites generate economic activity as tourist destinations. Ecotourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry." (2)

Environmental Benefits

“Green space in urban areas provides substantial environmental benefits. Trees reduce air pollution and water pollution, they help keep cities cooler, and they are a more effective and less expensive way to manage stormwater runoff than building systems of concrete sewers and drainage ditches.” (1)

“Green infrastructure and the preservation of greenspace protects life-sustaining forests and wetlands that not only provide habitat for diverse and numerous species, but also supply people with food, medicine, and shelter.” (2)

The overall goal of this Master Plan is to “increase the amount, quality, connectivity, and accessibility of parks and green space in the City of Norcross”.

In addition to the many benefits of parks, the principles of equity and accessibility were particularly important in guiding the development of this report. Based on our knowledge of the local parks system and best practices employed in other communities, we believe the following:

The City of Norcross should strive to provide and maintain parks and recreational greenways that:

- a) are visible and accessible by local residents (including neighborhood parks that encourage users to walk or cycle to them) regardless of a person’s physical ability or financial resources;
- b) are integrated with the broader open space system and that create stronger connections between parks, trails, neighborhoods, and natural areas;
- c) meet the general interests and needs of a diverse population;
- d) present residents with choice, and contribute to the creation of a more vibrant and livable community through park planning and design;
- e) are located adjacent to and provide connectivity to compatible uses (such as schools) and serve as focal points and destinations within the community;
- f) are maintained in a safe and reasonable condition;
- g) protect environmentally sensitive areas and features;
- h) promote community partnerships, stewardship, and improved levels of health and fitness; and
- i) are developed and maintained in a fiscally responsible manner.

Section 5: Inventory

5.1 Parks, Green Space, and Greenway Inventory

This section contains a listing of all known parks and recreation amenities within the City of Norcross and its immediate vicinity, including those owned and/or operated by the City, Gwinnett County, local schools, places of worship, homeowner associations, and private business. The focus is on outdoor recreation amenities, however, significant indoor facilities have also been listed.

City Parks & Facilities

Parks and green space are key elements of a community, as they add safe areas for children to play, families and friends to gather, and increase property values by making neighborhoods more desirable. Each park and green space will serve a specific purpose (or purposes) by providing amenities targeted at a certain group or activity. The patchwork of these parks is what makes the City unique.

The City of Norcross compiled an extensive park inventory in 2009, providing acreage, amenities, photographs, mapping, and locational data for each City-owned park. According to the Park and Green Space Inventory (2009), the City of Norcross owns approximately 53.6 acres of green space, with 24 acres of that land having already been developed into parks. As of 2009, Norcross had a total of 13 parks and green spaces, averaging 4.2 acres each, with the smallest being Lion's Club Park (0.1 acres) and the largest being the City Cemetery and Cemetery Field (11.75 acres). Approximately 28 acres of green space are located south of Buford Highway and 26 acres are on the north side. While the acres of land are distributed evenly on both sides of Buford Highway, the southern properties are undeveloped.

The inventory breaks parks down into categories based upon their primary uses: gathering spaces (e.g., Thrasher Park); organized sports (e.g., Cemetery Field); green space (e.g., Water Tower Park); preserves (e.g., Betty Mauldin Park); and beautification (South Point Park). Park facilities rented by the City of Norcross include: amphitheatre (Thrasher Park), gazebo (Thrasher Park), pavilions (Thrasher Park, Rossie Brundage Park), and ball diamond (Rossie Brundage Park).

To date, renovation efforts have transformed three of Norcross' existing parks, including a dramatic makeover of the old ball field into a state-of-the-art park facility renamed after Norcross' Mayor Emeritus, Lillian Webb. Both Thrasher Park and Betty Mauldin have just completed major renovations and the City's newest addition – Heritage Park (between City Hall and the Community Center) – will open this fall.

Summary Table of City-Owned Parks

Park Name and Location	Acreage	Type	Description
Betty Mauldin Park Jones and Lawrenceville Street	0.32	Passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information kiosk - Benches - Fountain - State Champion American Elm tree
Cemetery Field Cemetery Street (owned by the City, but operated by the County)	7.00	Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Football Field and Support Structures
City Cemetery South Cemetery Street	4.75	Passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cemetery
Heritage Park Lawrenceville Street	0.10	Passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gardens - Outdoor Wedding Venue - Benches - Art - Paths and Sidewalks
Johnson-Dean Park Barton Street	7.20	Passive – undeveloped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concept plans have been completed - Proposed to include a small pavilion and restroom, trails, natural heritage features and interpretive opportunities - Norcross City Water works building is located on the site
Lillian Webb Park College Street	4.1	Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Splash pad - Walking trail - Interactive fountain - Gazebo - Benches - Washrooms - Parking - Large lawn
Lion's Club Park Wingo Street	0.10	Passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 concrete picnic tables
Rossie Brundage Park Autry Street	4.00	Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baseball field - Full basketball court - Playground - Pavilion with washrooms
South Point Park South Peachtree and North Norcross Tucker	1.00	Passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Picnic table

Park Name and Location	Acreage	Type	Description
Thrasher Park NE Peachtree Street	2.17	Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amphitheatre - Picnic pavilion - Playground - Pavilion with washrooms - Open space - Gazebo - Benches/Swings - Sidewalks
Water Tower Park Kelly and W Peachtree	0.20	Passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Picnic table
Total	31.0		

Summary Table of Other City-Owned Parcels with Potential for Park Development

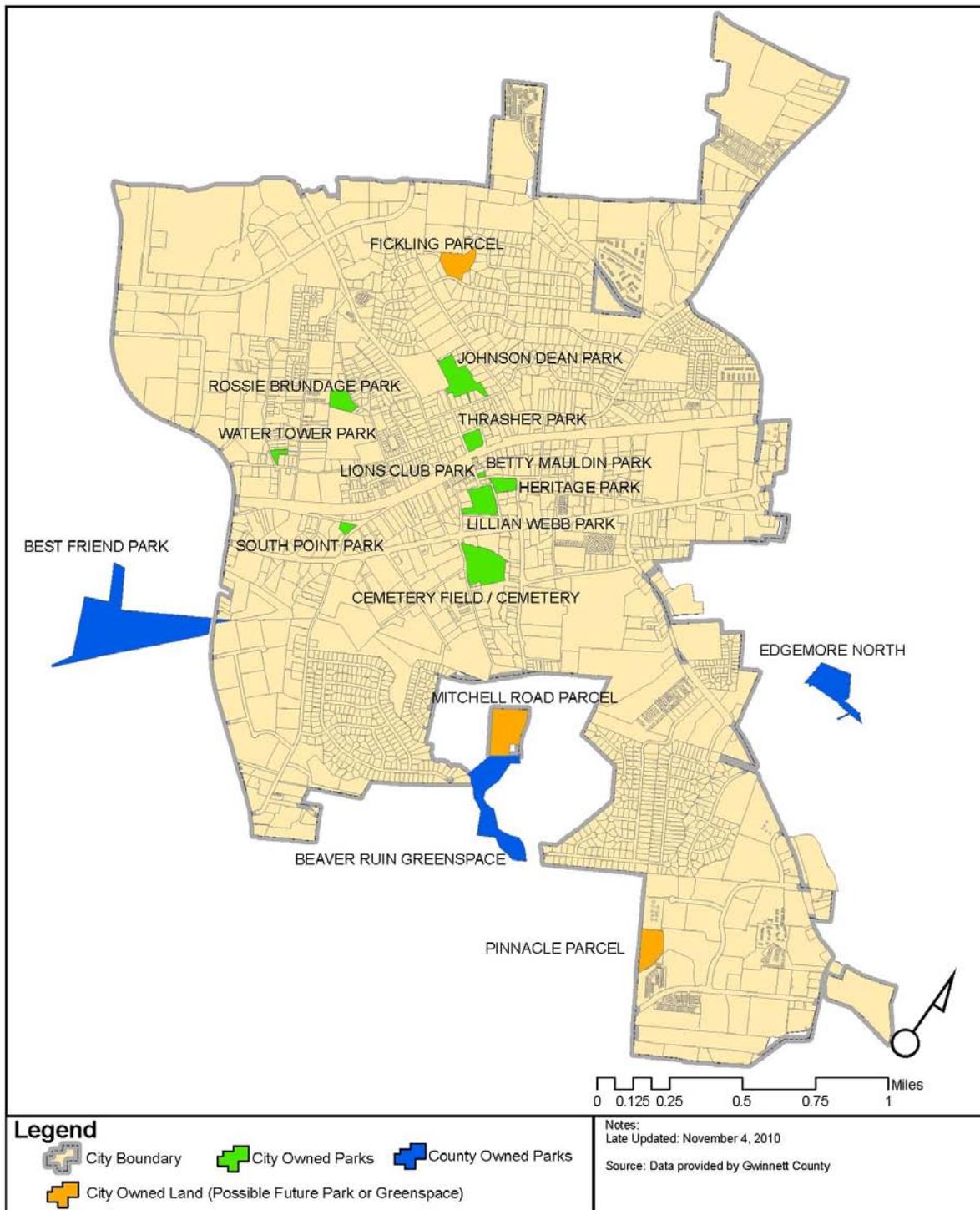
Parcel Name and Location	Acreage	Type	Description
Fickling Parcel Longview Drive	6.46	Undeveloped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undeveloped green space
Mitchell Road Parcel Mitchell Road	10.49	Undeveloped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undeveloped green space (brownfield site)
Pinnacle Parcel Pinnacle Way	5.69	Undeveloped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undeveloped green space
Total	22.6		

There is a total of 31.0 acres of City-owned parks in Norcross; this translates into an average of 2.8 acres per 1,000 residents. If the three parcels with potential for park development (Fickling, Mitchell Road, and Pinnacle) are included, this increases the supply to 53.6 acres and an average of 4.9 acres per 1,000 residents. The City currently falls well short of the Green Communities Certification Program benchmark of 20 acres per 1,000 population.

The locations of City of Norcross and Gwinnett County parks and green spaces are shown on **Map 2**. Descriptions of each City-owned park can be found below. Where applicable, potential future considerations listed in the Park and Green Space Inventory (2009) are included.

Betty Mauldin Park

The primary purpose of Betty Mauldin Park is to protect a unique national treasure, a Champion American Elm (*Ulmus Americana*), thus limiting its other uses. The park is a significant focal point in the downtown and contains an information kiosk as well as benches and a fountain. Downey Tree Service has adopted the tree and cares for it, promoting the continued good health of the main element of the park. The park has recently been refurbished and improved. The purpose was to address the protection of the tree and reestablishment of the fountain, which had been turned off for some time. The Park and Green Space Inventory (2009) suggests that the on-site information narrative about the Champion Elm could be improved, as well as details provided about the City's flora and fauna (perhaps it could be the beginning of a guided walk thru the City's significant tree and plant inventory).



Parks Master Plan

Map 2 - City and County Parks and Greenspaces



Cemetery Field (operated by County)

Cemetery Field is owned by the City and maintained by the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Department and includes a lit football field (available by permit only) with bleachers, washrooms and other facilities. There is very little parking on site and most visitors must park on adjacent streets. The field is the home of the Norcross Blue Devils and also hosts the annual Fourth of July fireworks celebration. The property is included in the Redevelopment Area Overlay District as a Tier Two property. The park is currently planned to have a renovation completed, including upgrading the natural turf to artificial. The County has stated that it plans to increase the usage of the park following the upgrades.

City Cemetery

The City Cemetery contains many old plots dating back 100 years or more, but is also still used today. There is a small historical pavilion located in the cemetery that is in need of renovation and preservation efforts. A substantial portion of this property is in a power transmission easement. The Cemetery is on approximately seven acres of land and is located on the same parcel as Cemetery Field. There is no parking for the cemetery. The Park and Green Space Inventory (2009) suggests that the Downtown Development Authority is considering putting a fence around the site (to deter vandalism) and that the field and the cemetery needed to be subdivided.

Fickling Parcel (potential park / green space)

Fickling Pond is an undeveloped parcel of land surrounding a detention pond, located in northern Norcross. The property has low visibility as it backs into residential backyards and commercial parcels to the west. The park has limited pedestrian access and no current vehicular access for service. Any future vehicular access would require a stream crossing. The dam for the pond is failing and needs significant work to repair. The pond has been partially filled with silt and will soon require dredging in order to function properly.

Heritage Park

Heritage Park has only just been completed, and rests on the hill between the Norcross Community Center and City Hall. The park includes green space, extensive floral plantings, a gravel terrace, an outdoor wedding venue, pathways and benches. It is anticipated that the space will serve as a gathering spot for those utilizing the Community Center, theater and City Hall or as a resting location for those passing between these two facilities.

Johnson-Dean Park

The City of Norcross purchased this land in 2003 with a grant from the Georgia Greenspace Program, which limits potential uses to trails, picnic facilities, restrooms, playgrounds, parking and access; these uses can only account for 15% of the land area. The preferred concept put forth by the Johnson-Dean Park Master Plan Report (2010) includes four parking spaces, a vehicular gate, and a small pavilion and restroom facility. There are a number of natural heritage features within the park that may be used for education, interpretation and preservation activities. In addition, the Norcross City Water works building is located on the site – its future use is yet to be determined. Much of this park will be allowed to naturalize to allow for preservation. Any development within the 7-acre park will require consideration of nearby homes.

Lillian Webb Park

Through the efforts of the Downtown Development Authority, an underutilized ball diamond was redeveloped into Lillian Webb Park, which reopened in 2009. Lillian Webb Park is 4.1 acres in size and has over 50 parking spaces, washrooms, benches, a gazebo, a walking trail, a splash pad/interactive fountain, and a large lawn for passive recreation. In the future, the park's master plan calls for almost all of the land surrounding the park to be developed with mixed use retail and office buildings. These buildings may help define the park and enhance its urban character. The Park and Green Space Inventory (2009) anticipated that future uses of the park may include special events. The park is already being used for major events, including viewing the Fourth of July fireworks and several concerts. There has been a great deal of discussion amongst staff and organizers about how the park's program can be planned to share some events previously held at Thrasher Park. This sharing may help both locations "recover" from the heavy usage during these events. Prior to 2009, this park was operated by Gwinnett County.

Lion's Club Park

The City of Norcross' event board is located within this park, which was erected in 1986 near the railroad tracks. The park also contains three concrete picnic tables with umbrellas, hedges, flower beds, and refuse containers. According to the Park and Green Space Inventory (2009), ownership of this park is uncertain; the park is either leased from the railroad or owned by the City.

Mitchell Road Parcel (potential park / green space)

The Mitchell Road Parcel is an undeveloped City-owned parcel of land that is in an isolated location that does not fall within the City's contiguous incorporated boundary. It is located along a substantial portion Mitchell Road from Everglades Trail to Ballard Way. The back side of the property is bisected by a small unnamed creek that requires state and city buffer protection. A significant portion of this park falls within the FEMA 100 year floodplain. This property has the potential for future park development, but currently lacks the pedestrian linkages to the downtown and other neighborhoods. The property currently contains a significant amount of debris including, imported soil, concrete and asphalt waste from the offsite demolition of roads and requires some amount of remediation before it can be used effectively.

Pinnacle Parcel (potential park / green space)

Pinnacle Parcel is an undeveloped City-owned piece of land located in the most southeastern area of Norcross. This land abuts the hydro corridor to the west and is located in a commercial/business park area.

Rossie Brundage Park

This park was remodeled a few years ago and is located in a transitional neighborhood with many new homes. Rossie Brundage Park includes a baseball field, full basketball court, small playground, pavilion with washrooms, refuse containers, and landscaping. Parking overflows onto the street during baseball practice or games, but the City has reported that the playground and pavilion seem to be underused. Usage is reported only to be one team practicing on the ball field periodically during baseball season. Suggestions made in the Park and Green Space Inventory (2009) include: utilizing an adjacent church parking lot for overflow; and the addition of a bicycle rack to encourage park usage and alleviate parking issues.

South Point Park

This park serves as a gateway to the downtown and includes relatively young trees, a shaded picnic table, and landscaping. Growth may occur in the areas near the park as it is located in a desirable corridor, but the amount of vehicle traffic surrounding the park and its limited size make it a less desirable location for developing extensive amenities.

Thrasher Park

Through a complete renovation in 2008-2009, Thrasher Park now has upgraded facilities and landscaping that will help better meet the needs of the community. The renovation involved the removal of the tennis court and allotment of more space to the playground. In addition, the park contains a picnic pavilion, amphitheatre, washrooms, gazebo and open space. Thrasher Park is a high use park that is a central feature of Norcross, thus requiring ongoing consideration of maintenance issues and the suitability of current facilities to handle growing events (e.g., Summer Concert Series and the Whistle Stop Farmer's Market).

Water Tower Park

In 2009, this small park was cleaned up and now includes a picnic table and refuse container. The Park and Green Space Inventory (2009) suggests that there is not currently demand for further development of this park as many of the potential uses are addressed at nearby Rossie Brundage Park. The location of the park is somewhat isolated, although it would serve several nearby neighborhoods including Seven Norcross and others.

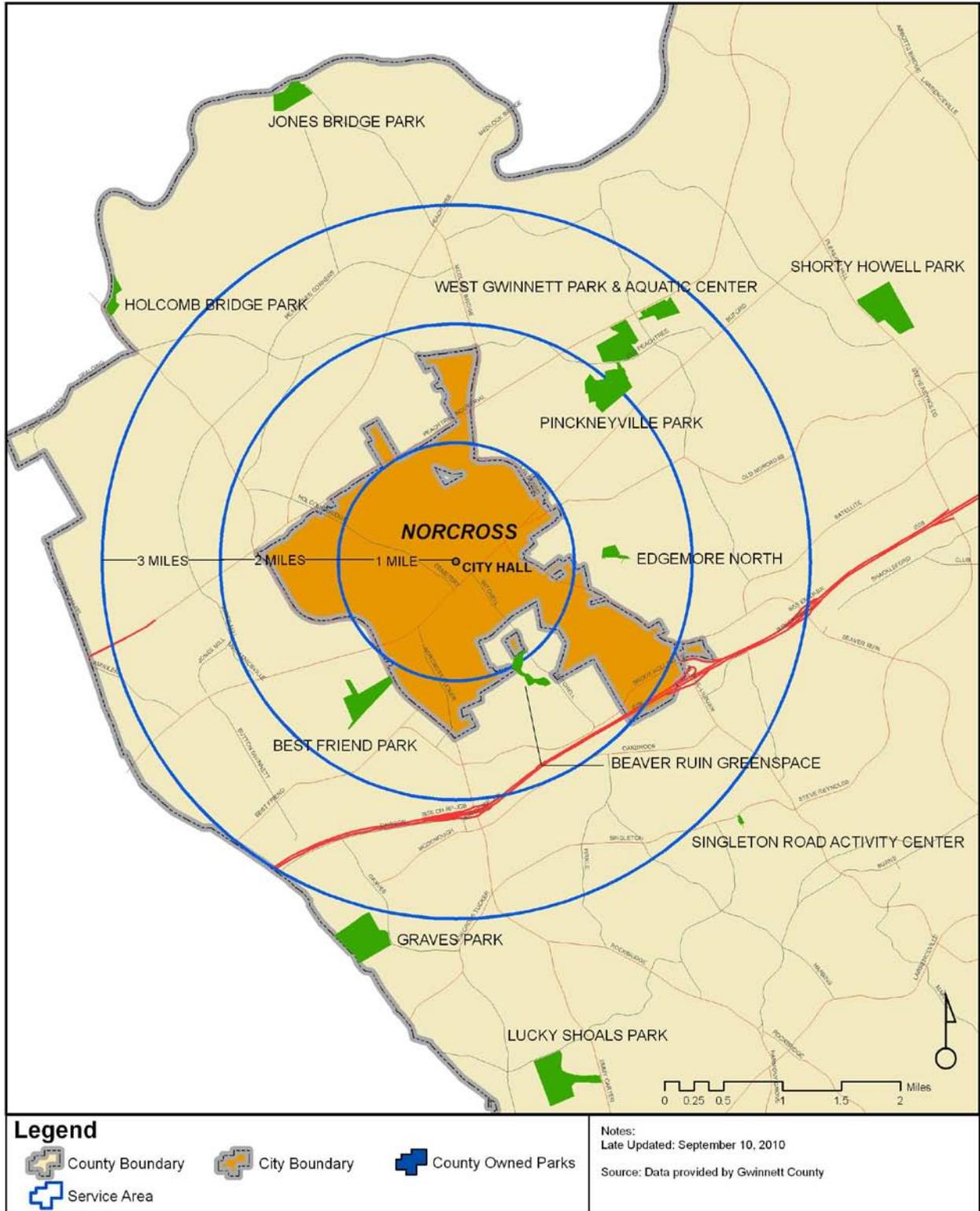
County Parks & Facilities

Residents of the City of Norcross also have access to a number of County-owned and other parks and outdoor recreation facilities. The City does not have control over the ownership, maintenance or booking of any of the following facilities; as such, they are not included in the City inventory of parks and green space. Summary tables can be found below for County parks, schools in the Norcross area, places of worship that have recreational facilities, and other providers of outdoor recreation facilities.

County Park	Proximity to Norcross (approximate)	Acreage	Description of Outdoor Amenities
Beaver Ruin Greenspace Mitchell Road	adjacent to Norcross and Mitchell Road Parcel	23.6	- undeveloped greenspace
Beaver Ruin Park Site Satellite Boulevard	1.0 mile to the southeast	57.9	- undeveloped - park is planned to include an extensive boardwalk around a wetland area; funding has not yet been allocated to this project
Best Friend Park 6224 Jimmy Carter Boulevard	adjacent to Norcross	43.4	- 17 tennis courts - 2 ball diamonds - Play structures - 2 full basketball courts - 2 leisure pools - 1 informal playing field - Indoor gymnasium
Edgemore North Windmere Drive/ Bailey Drive	0.25 miles to the east	10.2	- undeveloped greenspace
Graves Park 1540 Graves Road	3 miles to the southwest	70.2	- 2 tennis courts - 1 sand volleyball court - Play structures - Dog park area - Pavilion - 1.25 mile paved multi-purpose trail
Holcomb Bridge Park 4300 Holcomb Bridge	2.75 miles to the northwest	11.6	- Playground - Amphitheater - 0.25 mile soft surface trail
Jones Bridge Park 4901 East Jones Bridge Road	3.5 miles to the north	29.7	- 3 soccer fields - Playgrounds - 1 sand volleyball court - Picnic area - Activity building

County Park	Proximity to Norcross (approximate)	Acreage	Description of Outdoor Amenities
Lucky Shoals Park 4651 Britt Road	3.75 miles to the south	68.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 outdoor basketball courts - 4 multi-purpose youth fields - 1 multi-purpose adult field - 2 lit tennis courts - Pavilions - Playground - 1 mile paved multi-purpose trail - Indoor basketball courts and walking track - Adjacent to golf course
Pinckneyville Park and Soccer Complex 4650 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard	1 mile to the northwest	108.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7 ball diamonds - 5 soccer fields - Play structures - Off leash dog park - Skateboard park - Roller hockey rink - Outdoor classroom - 2.4 mile trail - Community recreation center (pottery studio, dance/aerobics room, classrooms, etc.)
Singleton Road Activity Building 5220 Singleton Road	2.75 miles to the southeast	1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Play structures - Activity building with community room
West Gwinnett Park & Aquatic Center 4488 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard	1.5 miles to the northeast	22.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 indoor pools - Outdoor leisure pool - 2 soccer fields - Lit walking track

The locations of City of Norcross and Gwinnett County parks and green spaces are shown on **Map 2**. County parks in the vicinity of Norcross are shown on **Map 3**.



Parks Master Plan

Map 3 - County Parks and Greenspace in the vicinity of Norcross

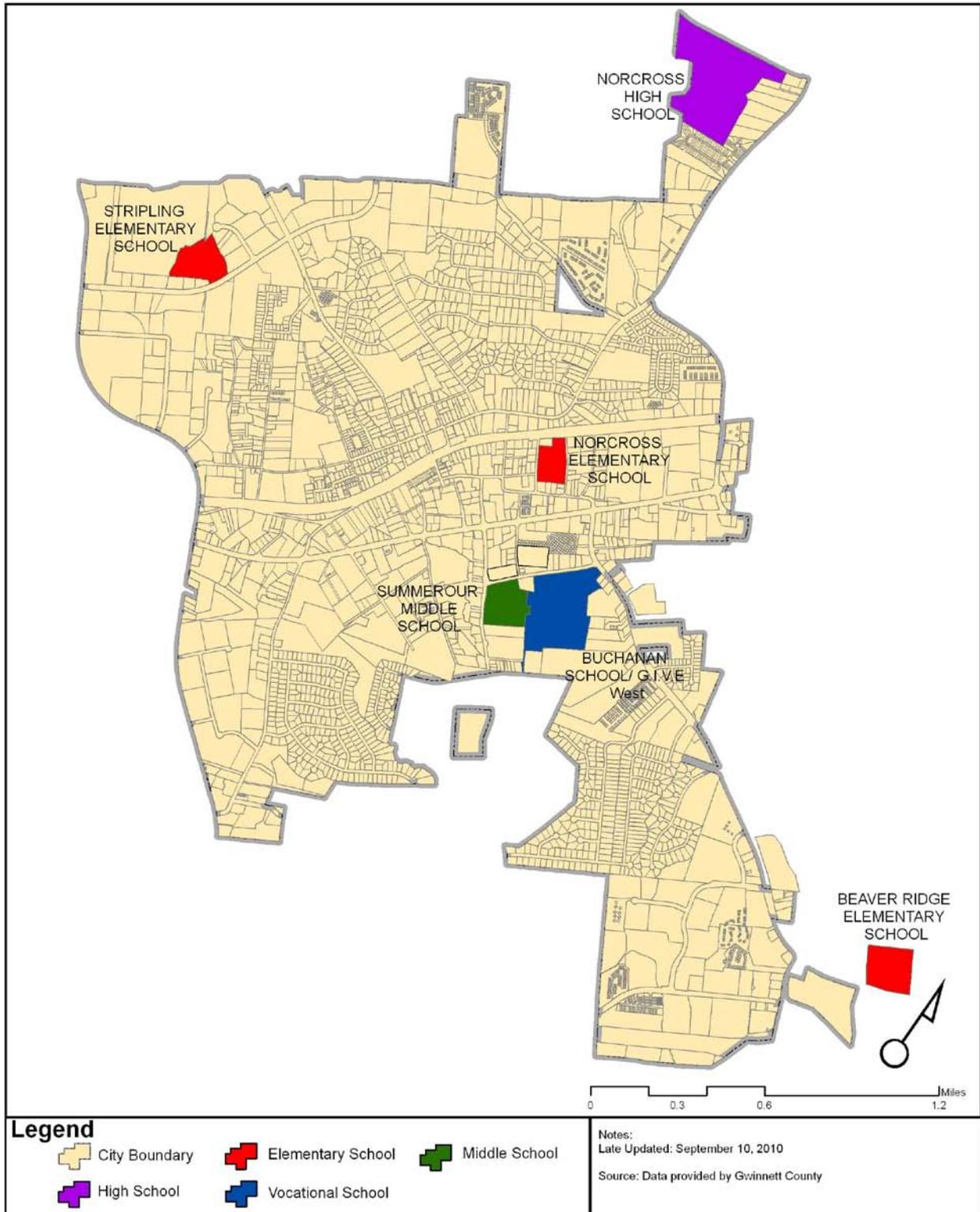


Local Schools (public & private)

Schools	Proximity to Norcross	Description of Outdoor Amenities
Norcross Elementary School 150 Hunt Street	in Norcross	- Play structures
Stripling Elementary School 6155 Atlantic Boulevard	in Norcross	- 2 play structures
Summerour Middle School 585 Mitchell Road	in Norcross	- 1 scrub ball diamond (used for community soccer) - 2 ball diamonds (including Ted Watts field)
Norcross High School 5300 Spalding Drive	in Norcross	- 3 soccer fields - 1 football field - 2 ball diamonds - 4 tennis courts - 8-lane track
Buchanan High School of Technology* 2595 Beaver Ruin Road	in Norcross	- 2 ball diamonds - 2 football fields - 1 track
Norcross Christian Academy (private) 706 N Peachtree Street	in Norcross	- Preschool / kindergarten as part of Norcross First Baptist Church - 1 ball diamond - Play structure
Country Brook Montessori School 2175 Norcross Tucker Road	in Norcross	- Play structures
Beaver Ridge Elementary 1978 Beaver Ruin Road	adjacent to Norcross	- 2 play structures (possibly only 1) - Swings - 2 full basketball courts - 1 scrub baseball diamond
Wesleyan Secondary School (private) 5405 Spalding Drive	adjacent to Norcross	- Football stadium / soccer field - 2 baseball diamonds - 2 soccer fields - 2 lacrosse fields - 7 tennis courts - 6-lane track and discus/shot put field
Peachtree Elementary School 5995 Crooked Creek Road	1.5 miles to the northwest	- 1 full basketball court - 1 soccer field - 4 play structures - Swings

*currently houses GIVE Center West— an alternative program for middle and high school students— and Gwinnett County Online Campus; note: the GCPS has identified a site for the future GIVE Center West (5550 Peachtree Industrial Blvd.), timing dependent upon SPLOST funding

The locations of local schools are shown on **Map 4**.



Parks Master Plan
 Map 4 - Schools



Places of Worship with Recreational Facilities

Places of Worship	Proximity to Norcross	Description of Outdoor Amenities
Christ Episcopal Church 400 Holcomb Bridge Road	in Norcross	- Play structure - Open space
First Baptist Church – Norcross 706 N Peachtree Street	in Norcross	- Ball diamond - Play structure
Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church 182 Hunter Street	in Norcross	- Play structure - Fitness center
Norcross First United Methodist Church 2500 Beaver Ruin Road	in Norcross	- Ball diamond - Picnic pavilion
Northeast Community Church 5395 Light Circle	in Norcross	- Play structures
Myung Sung Presbyterian Church 631 Mitchell Road	in Norcross	- Play structure

Several other places of worship exist just outside of Norcross; these were not included in the inventory.

Homeowner Associations with Recreational Facilities

Organization	Proximity to Norcross	Description of Outdoor Amenities
Olde Town Park Home Owners Association Olde Town Park Drive NW	in Norcross	- One tennis court
Seven Hedgewood Home Owners Association Gaines Street NW	in Norcross	- Outdoor pool
Stanford Village Apartments Stanford Village Lane	in Norcross	- Outdoor pool - Multi-use court

Several homeowners associations with outdoor pools and tennis courts exist just outside of Norcross, particularly to the northwest; these were not included in the inventory.

Other Not-for-Profit / Private Agencies with Recreational Facilities

Organization	Proximity to Norcross	Description of Outdoor Amenities
A. Worley Brown Boys & Girls Club 5360 Old Norcross Road	in Norcross	- No outdoor facilities - Indoor pool & Gymnasium
Robert D. Fowler Family YMCA 5600 West Jones Bridge Road	3 miles north of Norcross	- No outdoor facilities - Indoor Facilities: Fitness center, Sauna / hot tub, Indoor 6-lane pool, Media center, Nursery, Basketball court / gymnasium, Senior center
The Lodge at Simpsonwood Jones Bridge Circle NW	4 miles north of Norcross	- 2 tennis courts - Outdoor pool - Basketball court

Several other private organizations servicing interests in martial arts, dance, gymnastics, etc. may also exist within or near Norcross; these were not included in the inventory.

5.2 Program Inventory

The following is a preliminary listing of local organizations that are known to provide recreational programming to residents of Norcross.

- The Norcross Youth Athletic Association (NYAA) is an age-based youth football and cheerleading league for children ages 6 through 8th grade. The NYAA uses Cemetery Field for its games and West Gwinnett Park for its practices.
- The Norcross Soccer Academy offers both Recreational and Select programs for boys and girls ages 4 to 18. The Academy uses Pinckneyville Soccer Complex for its activities. In July 2010, the Norcross Soccer Academy announced that it plans to open an indoor soccer training center in an existing 12,000 square foot building near Pinckneyville Park (located at 4541 S. Old Berkeley Lake Road). The new facility will include their operating offices, a video training room, restrooms and an approximate 7,000 square foot artificial turf soccer field for practices and games.
- The Norcross Youth Baseball and Softball Association provides programs for children ages 5 to 18. The group plays most of its games at Pinckneyville Park and uses the Dan Watts baseball field (in front of Summerour Middle School) mainly for practice.
- The Peachtree Booster Club provides fall and spring soccer (youth and adult) seasons at Jones Bridge Park, winter and spring roller hockey (youth and adult) programs at Pinckneyville Park, and winter basketball (youth) at Pinckneyville Middle School. The Club is run by volunteers with the support of the Gwinnett County Parks & Recreation Department.
- The A. Worley Brown Boys & Girls Club offers several programs and activities, including: A.C.E. tennis, flag football, soccer, street hockey, computer education, basketball, martial arts, softball/baseball, track and field, tutoring, homework help, and an annual poetry and short story contest.
- Although indoor recreation activities and facilities are outside the scope of this Master Plan, because of its significance in the City, the Norcross Cultural Arts and Community Center (NCACC) bears noting. The NCACC hosts many indoor programs and activities, such as theatrical performances, youth summer camps (in association with the YMCA), yoga, zumba, and specialty classes. The Community Center has facilities available for rent to host family reunions, monthly meetings, youth groups, weddings, receptions and corporate events.
- The City also offers a free Summer Concert Series in Thrasher Park, running from Memorial Day to Labor Day (every other Friday).
- The Whistle Stop Farmers' Market (located on Buchanan Street by Thrasher Park) runs on Tuesdays from June to October and – in addition to offering locally grown fresh produce and other treats – the festivities include crafts, kids' activities, live music and more.
- Several churches also offer sports and recreational programming (both indoor and outdoor) as part of their services.

Section 6: Park and Outdoor Facility Analysis

This section identifies infrastructure and active parkland needs by examining current and projected demographic data, public input, and service gaps. Also recommended are future capital park projects, including changes to existing City park assets.

6.1 Outdoor Facility Standards & Needs

Prior to assessing overall parkland requirements, it is critical that outdoor recreation facility needs be identified. Once there is an understanding of facility gaps and needs, a determination can be made if there are opportunities to accommodate them within the existing parkland supply or if additional land is required.

The identification of a community's recreation needs is an important, complex, and somewhat imprecise exercise in the development of a Parks Master Plan. For this study, needs are assessed based on:

- (1) overall supply per capita (provision standards);
- (2) distribution (radii mapping); and
- (3) other factors such as
 - alignment with the goals and strategies established for this Plan;
 - expressed public input;
 - socio-demographic trends and participation patterns; and
 - park-specific information that needs to be brought forward based on usage patterns or simply recognition of opportunities and physical constraints.

The following table identifies the standards derived by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) through documents dating back to 1996 and earlier, as well as facility standards for Gwinnett County from their 2007 Capital Improvement Plan. While these standards can be useful in determining local needs, they are best used as guidelines and not as absolute targets. After reviewing local geographic and demographic characteristics – as well as public input and local participation rates (where available), standards that are appropriate for Norcross have been established.

Outdoor Facility Provision Targets

Facility Type	Common NRPA Standards	Gwinnett County Standards (County & City facilities combined)	Proposed Targets for Norcross (City facilities only)
Soccer Fields for organized play	1 per 10,000 population (1 to 2 mile radius)	1 per 8,700 population	none – Community Park-level facility; County 'level of service'
Informal Play Fields	n/a	n/a	1 per 3,000 population (monitor and adjust over time)
Baseball / Softball Diamonds	1 per 2,500 population (1/4 to 1/2 mile radius)	1 per 5,600 population	none – Community Park-level facility; County 'level of service'
Football Fields	1 per 20,000 population (1 to 2 mile radius)	1 per 37,000 population	none – Community Park-level facility; County 'level of service'

Section 6: Park and Outdoor Facility Analysis

Facility Type	Common NRPA Standards	Gwinnett County Standards (County & City facilities combined)	Proposed Targets for Norcross (City facilities only)
Tennis Courts	1 per 2,000 population (1/4 to 1/2 mile radius)	1 per 7,500 population	none – Community Park-level facility; County ‘level of service’
Basketball Courts	1 per 5,000 population (1/4 to 1/2 mile radius)	1 per 10,500 population	1 per 750 population (ages 10-19)
Volleyball Courts	1 per 5,000 population (1/4 to 1/2 mile radius)	1 per 35,000 population	Determined through specific evaluation
Playgrounds	n/a (1/4 mile radius)	1 per 750 children ages 0-9	Within 0.5-miles of every residential area, with adjustments made for physical barriers
Splash Pads	n/a	n/a – offered as an element in outdoor leisure pools	1 per 1,000 population (ages 0-9)
Skate Parks	n/a	1 per 17,500 youth ages 10-19	none – Community Park-level facility; County ‘level of service’
Outdoor Swimming Pool	1 per 20,000 population (15-30 minute travel time)	1 per 40,000 population	none – Community Park-level facility; County ‘level of service’
Community Gardens	n/a	n/a	1 per 3,000 population
Other Facilities	--	Determined through specific evaluation	Determined through specific evaluation

These Norcross-specific provision targets are described in the following subsections, according to facility type. Further analysis regarding future needs, distribution, and potential locations are also discussed.

Soccer Fields

The City of Norcross does not currently provide any soccer fields or informal play areas. Local soccer organizations use the nearby Pinckneyville Soccer Complex, West Gwinnett Park, and Jones Bridge Park (each of which are operated by the County). There is also an unprogrammed soccer field at Best Friend Park, a County park that is adjacent to the western boundary of the City. Norcross High School has 3 soccer / multi-use fields; however, access is limited to student athletics. There is also a run-down baseball outfield in front of Summerour MS that is heavily used by the local community for pick-up soccer.

Soccer rated higher than baseball in terms of recent activities (as identified in both the community and youth surveys). Furthermore, soccer fields were viewed by students to be the second greatest capital priority, behind only playgrounds (in contrast, ball diamonds were the lowest priority).

Public input, demographic data, and trends suggest that there is demand for informal / unprogrammed play fields, capable of being used for pick-up sports such as soccer. In particular, the southern half of the City – which is currently home to many children and youth – is under-served in many park categories, including access to open space lands and informal play spaces. This is a community that is currently less able to drive to recreational programs, thus increasing their need for local play opportunities.

Informal play fields require flat, open, and grassed parcels of land, but do not necessarily need to be of 'regulation' size for organized sports. Usage of the fields would be 'first come, first served' and occasional monitoring or enforcement may be required to ensure that the fields are not regularly being used for activities sponsored by a sports organization. Given the current demographics and lack of available fields in Norcross, a provision target of one informal play field per 3,000 population is recommended. This target should be monitored as it may require adjustment over time in order to reflect changing community needs and characteristics.

Based on a current population of 10,984, this translates into a need for 3-4 informal play fields. There are presently no such fields in the City, although the baseball field/school ground in front of Summerour MS is used as one by the community. This field is in very poor condition and a partnership with the school (and the Norcross Cluster Schools Organization) to improve the quality of this field (for both school and community use) should be a high priority. Once improved, this field at Summerour could function as one of the required informal play fields.

In addition, the development of one or more informal play fields should be considered at the Mitchell Road Parcel, in the City's south end. A Master Plan for the Mitchell Road Parcel (complete with public consultation) should be developed to confirm the amenities recommended in this study.

There is also an opportunity to meet a substantial portion of these needs through utilizing the utility corridor lands along and across Mitchell Road. With this Master Plan in hand, discussions should be held with the utility companies and holders of land located in power and gas easements. The goal of any such discussion should be to obtain approval for the usage and/or purchase of land in order to permit the development of at least two informal play fields (grass turf, no lighting, no support buildings, possibly a small parking lot). Such a proposal may also offer improved access to the City's Mitchell Road Parcel, where an additional informal play field is recommended. Even though any informal play fields built on the utility corridors could be outside City boundaries, these fields would still be ideally situated to serve residents in south Norcross, particularly if they are near Mitchell Road, which represents a major north-south link in the City.

Another option for meeting community sports field needs is to achieve greater public access to the fields at local schools, such as the former Buchanan School (although these fields could be lost to the long-term redevelopment of the site). Sustainable options for improving community access and maintenance of these assets need to be discussed with the Gwinnett County Public Schools, as well as opportunities for future field development. To maximize access to the supply of local fields for casual use, further partnerships with Norcross area schools should be considered as an option for meeting longer-term needs as well.

Some suggestions have been received through this Master Plan process to consider the need for artificial turf fields. Artificial turf fields are more costly to install than grass fields, but they do not require the same degree of maintenance (e.g., watering, seeding, etc.) and can be more cost effective over the long-run (although they must be replaced every 10-15 years). The primary benefit of artificial turf is that it allows for a consistent surface throughout the year, regardless of how frequently it is used. Artificial turf would also help the City in limiting its water usage, as irrigation is not required. To allow for usage into the evening, lights are often installed on artificial turf fields and they can often be designed to serve multiple sports.

Unfortunately, due to their cost, artificial turf fields are typically fenced and supervised to discourage damage. As such, they are not good candidates for informal play fields, but rather work best as 'permitted fields' for organized use. Because the direction in Norcross is to develop more informal play fields (rather than fields for organized play), artificial turf would only be recommended if sufficient free community access and staff supervision of the field could be guaranteed.

Between its spring and fall sessions, the Norcross Soccer Association has over 2,200 youth registrants (as of 2006). The needs of the organized soccer community appear to be met at nearby County, limiting the need for the City to duplicate what is already being provided. No new 'programmed' soccer fields are recommended for Norcross.

Baseball/Softball Diamonds

Despite greater demand for soccer (there are approximately 4 organized soccer players for every 3 organized ball players in Norcross), the supply of ball diamonds is larger than the supply of soccer fields. There is one City of Norcross ball diamond (Rossie Brundage Park), as well as diamonds at nearby County parks (Best Friend Park and Pinckneyville Park). In addition, there are 4 ball diamonds in the Summerour / Buchanan School block, 2 diamonds at Norcross High School, and 1 diamond at Norcross Christian Academy. Informal ball diamonds are also provided at several local churches.

The public consultation program for this Master Plan did not reveal any pent-up demand for ball diamonds; in fact, they were some of the lowest ranked facility priorities for the City. Given this, the conversion of under-utilized and lower quality ball diamonds, particularly those at local schools and churches, to more in-demand uses (such as unprogrammed soccer fields) should be encouraged. Discussions with the landowners would be required to gauge interest and to explore implementation options.

Despite there being a ball diamond at Rossie Brundage Park, ball diamonds are generally considered to be a County 'level of service'; no new ball diamonds are recommended for Norcross.

Football Fields

Organized football activities are largely accommodated at Cemetery Field (County park), West Gwinnett Park (County park – outside the City), and at Norcross High School and the former Buchanan School. Registration in Norcross Youth AA Football has increased steadily over the years, and involves more than 200 youth.

The County is planning to convert the Cemetery Field grass turf to artificial turf in the very near future. With this conversion, the field will be available more frequently and has the potential to accommodate sports other than football, effectively increasing local access to sports fields.

The redeveloped Cemetery Field should meet football field needs for the immediate future. As football fields are considered to be a County and school 'level of service', no new football fields are recommended for Norcross.

Tennis Courts

Local tennis players rely on the 17-court complex at Best Friend Park (County park – adjacent to the City). 4 courts are also available at Norcross High School and some Homeowner Associations offer single or multi-use courts. Until 2009, there was a tennis court in Thrasher Park; due to low utilization and the park's redevelopment, this court was removed in favor of other amenities.

The demand for tennis courts rated low in the Master Plan surveys. No new tennis courts are recommended for Norcross; these are considered to be a County 'level of service'.

Basketball Courts

There is a regulation size basketball park in Norcross' Rossie Brundage Park, as well as 2 courts at Best Friend Park (County park – adjacent to the City), and 2 courts at Beaver Ridge Elementary School (several other schools may have single hoops).

Basketball courts, unlike major sports fields and tennis court complexes, are often found in neighborhood-level parks that encourage users to walk or bike to them. As such, basketball courts are considered a level of service that should be evaluated by the City of Norcross, both in terms of their quantity and distribution. They are particularly desirable amenities in areas with high population densities and neighborhoods with high concentrations of youth. For issues of safety and noise, basketball courts should have good visibility and not be located directly adjacent to residential properties.

As outdoor basketball courts are predominantly used by youth, linking their provision to the number of teens in the area is the preferred approach. Typical provision targets are in the range of one court for every 750 youth (ages 10-20). With an estimated 1,300 residents in this age cohort, local provision should be in the range of 1 to 2 basketball courts. The courts at Rossie Brundage and Best Friend Park help the City to meet this standard.

In terms of distribution, the existing basketball courts are located mostly in the City's west end and there are gaps in the northeast and southeast, as there are for nearly all outdoor recreational amenities. Future park development in these areas, including at the Mitchell Road Parcel, should consider the installation of outdoor basketball courts (one per site). Should a basketball court not be part of the approved Master Plan for the Mitchell Road Parcel, another option would be to seek a partnership with the Myung Sung Presbyterian Church (which is located to the immediate south of Summerour MS) to develop a basketball court that could be used by the local community.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds are a prominent feature in two City parks (Thrasher Park and Rossie Brundage Park), every nearby County park, public and private elementary schools, and several churches. Playgrounds are viewed by residents to be a high capital priority in Norcross – ranking in the top tier of survey requests – suggesting that more needs to be done.

Quality playgrounds are an essential amenity in all residential neighborhoods as they provide for unstructured play, physical activity, and socialization from a very early age. Research has shown that children from socially disadvantaged households or neighborhoods are more vulnerable to health problems related to physical inactivity. For young people in particular, easy access to recreation opportunities – including playgrounds and open space – is an important contributor to adequate physical activity levels.

The design of playgrounds has changed significantly in the last two decades, with traditional features such as the stand-alone slide and climber giving way to creative play structures that combine several elements, often through a design that is accessible to persons with disabilities. The City should continue to ensure that all of its new playgrounds are developed with a degree of accessibility that allows children with disabilities to use them. Examples include accessible swings, play structures with ramps, curb cuts on playgrounds, rubber safety surfaces, etc.

Most communities use a distance measurement rather than a per capita catchment to evaluate the supply of playgrounds. In urban areas, 0.3 to 0.5-miles is deemed to be a suitable service radius for playgrounds; this radius should be unimpeded by major barriers such as rail lines, waterways, highways/major roads, or valleys. This is generally equivalent to a 5 to 10 minute walk for most people (of those using playgrounds, most typically walk to them).

At 0.5 miles, there are several gaps in playground distribution in Norcross, with the most prominent being in the southeast areas of the City south of the utility corridor, west of Beaver Run Road. Smaller gaps exist in the south end (south of the utility corridor, east of Jimmy Carter Boulevard) and in the northeast (north of the rail tracks, between North Peachtree Street and Langford Road). Two of these gap areas (southeast and south) could be served by a future playground at the Mitchell Road Parcel, leaving the northeast as the only residential area without suitable access to a municipal playground. Options for land acquisition or partnerships (the First Baptist Church is located in this gap area) allowing for public access to play equipment in this neighborhood should be explored.

Skateboard Parks

Over the past several years, skateboarding has become a mainstream activity that has demonstrated sustained longevity and is a popular pursuit among children, youth, and to a lesser extent, young adults. Skate parks are increasingly being viewed as positive venues that respond to the interests of a number of youth. The unstructured, unscheduled, and low cost nature of the sport also adds to its appeal. As a result, the municipal provision of skate parks is becoming more widespread as demand has increased.

The nearest skateboard park is located at Pinckneyville Park (County park). Due to their high design/construction costs and noise impacts, skate parks are best situated in community-level parks, making them County 'level of service'. No new skateboard parks are recommended in Norcross at this time.

Splash Pads / Waterplay Features

The City recently built its first and only splash pad/waterplay feature at Lillian Webb Park, which has been well received by the community. Outdoor pools are provided at Best Friend Park and by several local homeowner associations. The closest indoor pools are located at the Boys and Girls Club (in Norcross), YMCA, and West Gwinnett Park.

Splash pads come in many different designs and sizes. Their basic purpose is to provide a fun and meaningful venue for interactive play amongst children, while providing an opportunity to cool off on warm days. Splash pads do not require lifeguards as they have no standing water. Motion sensors can be installed on splash pads in the interest of water conservation. In terms of location, splash pads are most appropriate in parks that are adjacent to staffed facilities and locations with washrooms and parking, such as community centers.

Splash pads are well used by pre-school and school-aged children, generally under the age of 12. The ability to walk to splash pads is desired by many residents; however, their high capital and operating costs prohibits the City from offering them in every neighborhood. Although splash pads are not necessarily neighborhood-level facilities, they can be offered at a small number of locations in the City in order to maximize accessibility and to complement key destination parks. Children's splash pads (or interactive water fountains) received relatively strong support through the student and community surveys.

A provision target of 1 splash pad per 1,000 population (ages 0-9) is recommended for Norcross. The most recent demographic data suggests that there are approximately 1,500 children residing in Norcross. As such, there is currently insufficient demand for the development of a second splash pad. However, as the City grows and achieves higher population densities through the redevelopment of various neighborhoods, the need for another splash pad is likely to become apparent. The City should consider developing another splash pad as a longer-term project (possibly at the Mitchell Road Parcel in south Norcross), subject to meeting the recommended provision target (1 splash pad per 1,000 population, ages 0-9).

Splash pads are preferred over outdoor swimming or wading pools as they are more cost effective and less land intensive, while still providing a means of engaging young children in play and for cooling off on warmer days. Indoor and outdoor pools at nearby County parks, the YMCA, and the Boys and Girls Club offer adequate opportunities for swimming instruction and competition.

Picnic Areas & Pavilions

Gazebos/pavilions serving multiple and different uses exist at Thrasher Park, Lillian Webb Park, and Rossie Brundage Park. The rental of these facilities for community events, family gatherings, weddings, etc. is quite high. Attending a community event or gathering in a park ranked as the second most popular activity in the community survey (73%).

Countless outdoor community events are held each year in the City, mostly taking place in local parks (e.g., concerts in the park, Fourth of July fireworks, etc.). The size and scope of these events ranges considerably, and many draw not only locals but also tourists. With a population that is aging and becoming more multi-cultural at the same time, the demand for community events is on the rise.

One example of this growing demand can be seen through the Hispanic community. “La Quinceañera” celebrations (a coming of age ceremony held in some Latin American cultures on a girl's fifteenth birthday) are becoming increasingly popular in the area. These events need a location with both inside and outside spaces as they are large family events involving food, dancing, music, and socializing.

Existing park pavilions are not suitable at all locations. Rentals and community events have neighborhood impacts and can displace regular park users for a period of time and occasionally cause damage to parks due to the amount of foot traffic that is produced by the events (wet weather conditions can often exacerbate this problem).

Due to increasing demand and supporting trends, a larger pavilion (capable of accommodating larger family gatherings) should be considered in any development of the Mitchell Road Parcel or nearby areas. A large pavilion would fit well with the informal play area fields and splash pad recommended for the area.

Off-leash Dog Areas

Dog parks are fenced facilities where residents have the opportunity to exercise their dogs off-leash within a controlled environment without being in contravention of municipal by-laws that regulate such activity. The nearest off leash dog areas are located at Pinckneyville Park and Graves Park, both of which are operated by the County. 23% of total respondents to the Community Survey (33% in the youth survey) indicated that they or someone in their household has run a dog off-leash in the past 12 months

Leash free parks provide pet owners with the opportunity to exercise and socialize their dogs and also facilitate interaction between pet owners. In many communities, leash free parks are created in cooperation with an affiliated organization that is willing to take responsibility for their operation and/or enforcement, with the goal of making them financially self-sustaining. This is the approach recommended for Norcross.

There was not sufficient interest expressed through the Norcross community survey to fully support the implementation of a dog park at the current time. The City should consider waiting for a “grass roots” pro-dog park organization to show itself and be strong enough to support and maintain such a facility before endeavoring to implement one on its own. As an integral step, the City should be sure to include numerous dog-pot style pet waste stations and appropriate signage in the downtown area and also to aggressively enforce pet policies in place for parks.

Demand for leash free parks is most notable in denser urban environments where private backyards are smaller and apartment buildings are more prevalent. As Norcross evolves as an urban center, the demand for off-leash dog parks is expected to increase.

While the interest in developing a leash free park in Norcross is limited – the topic was raised at a public meeting and received moderate support through the community survey – identifying an appropriate site is often the greatest challenge in establishing such a park.

The following are guidelines that may be used in the establishment, design, and management of off-leash dog areas:

- (1) Suburban off-leash dog areas should be a minimum of 1 acre in size; 2 acres is preferred. In more urban parks, a smaller size may be appropriate; however, limits on dogs may be required.
- (2) Environmentally sensitive sites are not appropriate.
- (3) Sites that, due to their unique properties, attract high volumes of visitors are not appropriate. While the City will endeavor to accommodate residents and their dogs, people come first.
- (4) The impact of off-leash dog areas on surrounding residents and park users should be minimized. Compatibility with adjacent land uses is paramount (e.g., lands next to a school are not appropriate).
- (5) Off-leash dog areas should, wherever possible be located on arterial or collector roads in order to minimize traffic impacts on surrounding communities (physical separation from all roadways is a requirement for any site). These parks are largely 'drive-to' types of facilities and, therefore, adequate parking is required; proximity to a primary trail route is also preferred.
- (6) Off-leash dog areas within larger parks must be provided with a physical barrier (man-made or natural) which will provide all park users with a clear delineated boundary. Fencing is required for all off-leash dog areas and should be at least 5 feet in height.
- (7) Adequate signage must be provided at every entry point to the zone to alert park users of their existence.
- (8) Off-leash dog areas should avoid backing onto residential properties without a substantial buffer.
- (9) All off-leash dog areas must be subject to periodic evaluation including input from surrounding residents to ensure that they continue to adhere to the guidelines.
- (10) Off-leash dog areas should strongly consider the surfacing. Sites in heavy shade will not support turf/grass and require mulch or gravel surfacing. Also sites that are small and receive heavy use will not support turf. Decomposed granite fines are often the best surfaces.
- (11) When possible, provide for separation of small and large breed dogs.
- (12) Shade is essential to a pleasant and healthy experience. Provide trees around the dog park where possible.

At the appropriate time and in consultation with the community, the City should evaluate potential sites for the establishment of an off-leash dog area. Dialogue with utility owners may also result in the identification of potential sites within the utility corridors (where there is sufficient buffering from adjacent land uses and the proposed greenway). Subject to the identification of a suitable site, the City should engage a community organization that would be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and management of this off-leash dog area; this may require the establishment of an appropriate cost-sharing agreement between this group and the City.

Community Gardens

A community garden is a piece of land that is planted and gardened by an organization or collection of residents. While not a new idea, more and more municipalities are allocating space in parks for garden plots. The City provides support to a non-profit community garden – Norcross Charity Garden on Wingo Street.

Community gardens encourage social interaction, horticultural education and awareness of the benefits of healthy diets. Community gardens can be administered by a municipality, a local organization or an interested group of citizens and may include flowers, fruit, vegetables and/or herbs.

Community gardens are needed most in areas with vulnerable populations (e.g., those with low income or foreign-born residents) and high residential densities (i.e., areas that are least likely to have access to backyard gardens). The establishment of community gardens (along with educational classes) would assist the City in its bid for Green Community certification. In the stakeholder survey, gardening was identified as an activity that was important to the Hispanic or Latino community.

Gardening is one of the most popular forms of leisure activity in North America and interest in urban agriculture is on the rise as the population ages, the demand for home-grown produce and food security increases, the number and size of residential backyards shrink, and the financial climate worsens. Support can also be found for community gardens as part of a broader poverty reduction strategy; in Roswell and Dunwoody, community garden participants must assist with a community plot that donates its harvest to the food bank.

As with dog parks, the expectation for most community gardens is that they are sponsored by a community organization and that they be financially self-sufficient once established. Community stewardship and partnerships are required for successful community gardens. Through partnership agreements, the City should provide space/land, shade, nearby free parking, a water source (consideration could be given to cisterns or wells if there is a nearby source), and administrative/financial support.

Community gardens, unlike major sports fields and other complexes, are often found in neighborhood-level parks that encourage users to walk or bike to them. As such, community gardens are considered a level of service that should be evaluated by the City of Norcross, both in terms of their quantity and distribution. Within the context of this Master Plan, a provision target of one community garden for every 3,000 residents is recommended. With a population of nearly 11,000, this translates into a need approaching 4 community gardens in Norcross. Accounting for the one existing venue, this leaves the City and its partners to investigate possibilities for establishing three additional community garden sites.

Therefore, it is recommended that the City work with local residents / organizations to evaluate potential sites and establish a community garden in the short-term, with additional sites in subsequent years. In particular two sites should be strongly considered for community gardens:

- (1) The Mitchell Road site could potentially be well suited with its adjacent natural water source (creek), alluvial soils, and the community Co-op. However, the use of the Mitchell Road Parcel for a community garden should be secondary to the other higher priority items including play fields and a large pavilion. Securing a garden at this site may also be more challenging than

other locations. Soil contamination testing should be undertaken prior to seriously considering this site for use as a community garden.

- (2) The second site includes land currently not held by the City, but well suited for preservation and use for agricultural purposes. The land in the estate of Colonel Adams (Reps Miller and North Peachtree Farm Parcels) in the northeast quadrant of Norcross has been used historically for agriculture and is one of the last remaining examples of terraced farm land in close proximity to the City. This site could make an excellent home for a community garden in conjunction with other farm, preservation, and educational programming.

A policy should also be developed to guide partnership and management requirements (i.e., roles and responsibilities of the City and the sponsoring organization) for any community gardens to be implemented in the City.

Recommendations for Outdoor Recreational Facilities

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Soccer Fields	1. To address the local demand, the development of four informal play fields is recommended, primarily in the City’s south end. This includes one field at the Mitchell Road Parcel, two fields along the utility corridors near Mitchell Road, and the improvement of the field in front of Summerour Middle School; the two latter projects will require partnerships to achieve.	High
	2. Maintain and seek to enhance Norcross’ partnerships relative to the maintenance, community access, and future development of sports fields on school properties (including, but not limited to, Summerour MS and the former Buchanan School/GIVE West; working with the schools and the Norcross Cluster Schools Organization).	High
Ball Diamonds	3. The conversion of under-utilized and lower quality ball diamonds, particularly those at local schools and churches, to more in-demand uses (such as unprogrammed soccer fields) should be encouraged.	Medium
Basketball Courts	4. Any future park development in northeast and southeast areas of the City should consider the installation of outdoor basketball courts (one per site). This includes the Mitchell Road Parcel.	Medium
Playgrounds	5. Apply a target of one playground within a 0.5-mile service radius from all built-up residential areas, without crossing any major barriers such as waterways, railway lines, highways, etc. This will require the installation of playgrounds in existing gap areas (at the Mitchell Road Parcel and in northeast Norcross; the latter may require land acquisition or partnerships).	High

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Splash Pads	6. The City should consider developing another splash pad as a longer-term project at the Mitchell Road Parcel, subject to meeting the recommended provision target (1 splash pad per 1,000 population, ages 0-9).	Medium
Picnic Areas & Pavilions	7. A larger pavilion (capable of accommodating larger family gatherings) should be considered in any development of the Mitchell Road Parcel or nearby areas.	High
Off-Leash Dog Areas	8. At the appropriate time and in consultation with the community, the City should evaluate potential sites for the establishment of an off-leash dog area. Dialogue with utility owners may also result in the identification of potential sites within the utility corridors (where there is sufficient buffering from adjacent land uses and the proposed greenway). Subject to the identification of a suitable site, the City should engage a community organization that would be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and management of this off-leash dog area; this may require the establishment of an appropriate cost-sharing agreement between this group and the City.	Low
Community Gardens	9. The City should work with local residents / organizations to evaluate potential sites and establish a community garden in the short-term, with additional sites in subsequent years. A policy should also be developed to guide partnership and management requirements (i.e., roles and responsibilities of the City and the sponsoring organization).	High

6.2 Assessment of Existing Parks

As identified in the Norcross Parks and Green Space Inventory Report (2009), the size, use, and location of each park is vitally important to its function and value. The role each park plays must be understood in order to determine if there are gaps or overlaps in service. Some of the key roles a park can play were identified through previous research and include:

- Parks as gathering spaces (e.g., Thrasher Park)
- Parks for organized sports (e.g., Cemetery Field)
- Parks as green space (e.g., Lillian Webb Park)
- Parks as preserves (e.g., Johnson-Dean Park)
- Parks as beautification (e.g., South Point Park)

The public consultation program and recent changes to the City's parks system both support a continued broadening of the range of recreation opportunities within local parks. Passive use facilities, such as trails and pavilions, are particularly high demand. Although some new parkland is required in Norcross

(especially to improve distribution), the focus should be on making the best use of existing park sites and improving connectivity within the City.

Based on public input, past studies, trend information, and the consultants' assessment, current City parks and green spaces have been evaluated and various improvement options identified. As part of this assessment, the following questions and ideas were considered:

- Do parks offer enough passive recreational opportunities? Event programming?
- Do they have appropriate visibility (safety)? Sufficient lighting?
- Do they have enough tree cover? Enough seating? Enough parking?
- Are they connected by sidewalks and other links?
- Is there adequate signage?
- Are there recycling facilities in parks?
- What possibilities exist with regard to public art?

The following is a site-specific account of recommended changes to each of the City's parks.

Betty Mauldin Park

Betty Mauldin or "Mauldin Park" as it is called by many residents is strictly a passive park. It offers users the opportunity to sit and relax while enjoying the shade of the City's State Champion American Elm tree and the splashing water of the corner fountain. The maintenance requirements, programming and protection of the Elm and other large trees in the park, the park's relatively small size, and its proximity to City Hall make the park unsuitable for most active recreation or the expansion of uses. The park has sufficient parking and is well connected to surrounding facilities by sidewalks. Recent improvements including lighting of the American Elm tree, additional street lighting, rehabilitation of the fountain, an additional bike rack, pads for public art, and additional benches and landscaping have brought Mauldin Park to a condition where there is little need for additional significant improvements. .

Suggested Programming:

- This park could be used as either a point of interest, beginning or termination to a self-guided tour of Norcross' points of interest.
- This park should be protected from any event or use that would place significant foot traffic, equipment, or animals in or on the critical root zone of the American Elm tree. Climbing of the tree should not be encouraged.
- The park's high visibility requires a program of intensive maintenance. This park, above most, must be well maintained in order to positively impact the surroundings. Landscaping including annual and perennial flowers, turf, and mulch coverings should be kept up to a high standard. Shrubs and hedgerows should be encouraged to screen the parking lot from the adjacent businesses and the park greenspace.

Recommended Improvements:

- Improve the on-site information narrative about the Champion American Elm tree, and provide details about the City's significant tree and plant inventory (perhaps it could be the beginning of a self-guided walking tour and route).
- Complete the installation of one or more objects of public art. In particular large (bigger than a person) colorful or bright and eye-catching sculptures would be very complimentary to the green canopy above.

Special Considerations:

- Should the American Elm tree ever have to be removed, the City should re-evaluate the best use of this park at that time.
- No construction should ever be undertaken near the American Elm tree that will require trenching through the critical root zone.

Cemetery Field

Cemetery Field is a single football field and associated parking located adjacent to a cemetery. The field and buildings are over 40 years old and the parking spaces are substantially less than adequate for regulation games. The site is physically challenged by extreme difference in grades from one side to the other and a stream that borders the property. The field and facilities are currently maintained and programmed by Gwinnett County's Parks and Recreation Department. The field is closed to the general public. It is home of the Norcross Blue Devils (a private recreational league) during the season. The park is currently not used during the week and is not used for practice. It is used for weekend games only and is lighted for night usage. During a game, players and attendees park in every available greenspace, right of way and parking lot surrounding the field. The parking shortage is a major issue for this field. In the stakeholder interviews, the County's interest in replacing the field's grass with artificial turf was introduced.

Suggested Programming:

- This park has been recently been programmed to host Independence Day fireworks displays but that function will have to be relocated if the grass is replaced with artificial turf.
- The County provides programming for this park, which should be expanded to include other uses besides football. If a transition is made to artificial turf, additional use(s) could take place and perhaps organized team sports such as lacrosse and soccer could also be played at this field at times when not in use by the football program. Such added uses should be limited to well organized practice and games.

Recommended Improvements:

- The parking lots are not lighted (either end of the field) and should be lighted to conform with night game usage of the field.
- The parking spaces are completely inadequate for the games that take place at this park. Additional onsite parking could be developed in the power easement. The City should also consider available adjacent property for parking expansion.

Special Considerations:

- The site is bounded by an unnamed creek that is severely degraded and has little or no stream buffers. The creek should undergo restoration/rehabilitation and be included as part of an overall greenway development plan. The creek on this site could become the terminus of a greenway-trail corridor that runs southeast along Mitchell Road towards I-85.
- This site has a close relationship with the adjacent City cemetery. The cemetery has a number of historic grave sites and a historic structure. Care should be taken to buffer and protect the cemetery from inappropriate activities.
- Provisioning this site with adequate parking will be nearly impossible without the purchase of adjacent land. Major improvements to the existing facilities will also have a high cost relative to the number of users. The City may want to consider negotiating with the County

to encourage additional uses for the park including soccer. Given the value of this site to the local athletic community, it should remain within the City's parkland inventory (under County operation).

- Improved visual separation from the adjacent City Cemetery is recommended through the installation of a fence surrounding the City Cemetery property (see below).

City Cemetery

The City Cemetery is an active cemetery with some plots dating back over 100 years. It contains some of the town's founders and prominent family members and has structures of historical significance. The cemetery has recently been integrated into a historical tour of Norcross.

Suggested Programming:

- The City Cemetery is a place for reverence and reflection and its use as anything other than a traditional cemetery would likely not be well received by family members of those who are interred there. However, the inclusion of the cemetery in historical tours is a passive use that is typically well received. The City should continue to develop programming relationships with citizen volunteers, third-party private businesses and not-for-profit groups to offer regular or seasonal tours of the cemetery as interest dictates. The size of this cemetery and the lack of significant tourism in Norcross will mean that tours will likely need to be part of a greater area tour or seasonal only. Some older cities of the U.S., like Savannah, offer seasonal "Ghost Tours" (tastefully done) which are well received and add to the seasonal charm of the cities that play host.

Recommended Improvements:

- The cemetery could benefit from safety and security lighting.
- The site could be more secure with the installation of a six foot picketed boundary fence and gates. Fencing would also create more appropriate visual separation from athletic activities at the adjacent Cemetery Field.
- Preservation, restoration and cleaning of headstones, monuments, statues, etc., would be beneficial to the aesthetic appeal and longevity of the cemetery.
- Curb and gutter would be a beneficial addition to the roads running around and through the cemetery. The curb would help keep automobiles in the lanes and off grounds.
- The single wood and masonry structure in the cemetery needs to be thoroughly restored. In particular the paint is peeling off badly. Most of the masonry appears to be in fair condition. A penetrating masonry sealant would help to ensure the continued stability and integrity of the mortar.
- Provide parking for cemetery.

Special Considerations:

- The City should continue to explore partnerships with various local volunteer based historic societies and organizations to record, catalog, research the various graves and to improve maintenance and usage as a recreational and/or historic asset.
- The Georgia DNR's Historic Preservation Division (HPD) offers a Historic Cemetery Heritage Tourism Grant. Eligible projects included research and documentation; interpretation and public information; advertising and marketing; or workshops and training. "Bricks and mortar" projects are not eligible for this program. The reimbursable grant funds are 50-

percent state/50-percent local match and will be awarded on a competitive basis. The maximum grant award will be \$2,500; however, there is no minimum amount, and HPD encourages applications for small projects. Information can be found on their website (<http://www.gashpo.org>).

Heritage Park

Heritage Park is actually a small portion of the larger property surrounding the Norcross Community Center. The major portion of this park is a terrace located on the hillside between City Hall and the Community Center. The park is mostly a passive park functioning previously as a place of rest for those crossing between City Hall and the Community Center. Today, following the completion of recent improvements, the park now also functions as a picnic area and with a quiet reflective garden for employees and visitors of adjacent public buildings. It is also designed to support outdoor weddings with up to 100 guests.

Suggested Programming:

- Heritage Park has been designed to accommodate regular usage as an outdoor wedding venue. Its proximity to the Community Center, meeting rooms, reception hall and other facilities – plus its proximity to City Hall – provide all the amenities needed to hold a complete wedding ceremony. The City’s parks and recreation department should manage the calendar and use of this park. Furthermore, they should set the usage fees based on corresponding preparation and cleanup requirements.
- The park may also be programmed for use by local garden club, etc.

Recommended Improvements:

- Continued development and improvement of the landscaping in the park will require thorough maintenance. Special care of flowering plants ensures this space will remain desirable to wedding planners and ‘would-be brides’.
- The plan provided a pad for public art. This art should be a large sculpture of approximately five to eight feet in height.
- An added bench along the sidewalk/ramp that accesses the park from the parking lot above would be a benefit.

Special Considerations

- The park is adjacent to the historic ‘Parsonage’ home that is purported to be slated for a future restoration (schedule unknown). Any future plans for the parsonage site should be carefully coordinated with the landscaping of Heritage Park.
- There are significant greenspaces surrounding the Community Center and adjacent to Heritage Park. As a part of a larger redevelopment master plan, these spaces may need to be redesigned. If such a plan were to be developed it should extend, complement and reinforce the designs of Heritage Park.

Johnson-Dean Park

Because the Johnson-Dean lands were purchased with State Green Space Funds, their use is limited to mostly passive activities, which will retain much of the natural characteristics of the land. Preservation and restoration are permitted uses as well as education and limited passive activities such as hiking, bird watching, gardening, etc. A master plan was developed for the park in 2009 and has not yet been implemented.

Suggested Programming:

- This park will be well suited for a nature center of mostly an educational nature. An adaptive re-use of the historic 1940s (or earlier) facility could potentially provide a classroom, office and/or bathrooms to support such an endeavor.
- The park and facilities could play host to a number of citizen groups and third party private organizations interested in habitat restoration and preservation. Both outdoor and indoor meeting facilities would be suitable program elements.
- Organizations requiring their members to participate in outdoor projects including restoration could schedule and hold regular work days in this park. Organizations to partner with could include: Boy and Girl Scouts, local garden clubs, County Master Gardner Program, Land Trust, and many others.
- The park is well suited for a natural surface loop trail and educational interpretive signage. Walking trails ranked very high in the surveys and thus trails at this location would meet a significant interest of the citizens of Norcross.
- The site could play host to a “bee keeper.” The need for bees in the pollination of plants in the U.S. and Georgia is extreme. For more information, contact the Georgia Bee Keepers Association.

Recommended Improvements:

- Provide parking for eight to ten vehicles. Design the parking to match the sensitive nature of the site. Pervious pavers would be advisable.
- Rehabilitate the existing structure (if possible) to an adaptive re-use as a classroom, offices, and/or bathrooms. This is a perfect opportunity to educate the public by doing a LEED-rated restoration.
- Construct a loop trail that emphasizes significant plants, geographic elements and artifacts of the site.
- Complete a wayfinding and interpretive signage package for the site.
- Create a gardeners volunteer work area for planting, potting and other restoration efforts. Include soil storage, potting area, greenhouse, etc.
- Enhance the boundary between private residences and public spaces with native evergreen plants and buffers.

Special Considerations:

- The park is adjacent to a number of well maintained private residences and a church recreation field. It will be important to engage the neighbors in any plans and discussions for proposed changes and/or redevelopment of this park. Privacy issues will need to be figured prominently in any master plan.
- Although not consistent with serious plant and wildlife preservation and restoration efforts, if that direction was not chosen, then this park could potentially be an acceptable location

for an off-leash dog park (as long as such facility was well buffered from neighboring residences).

Lillian Webb Park

“Webb Field” as it is affectionately called by many Norcross residents, is no longer home to the City’s historic ball field. It now contains a major public green, a significant fountain system, a splash pad, sidewalks, a gazebo and restroom facilities. The park is designed to be the core of a redevelopment including multi-story mixed use buildings featuring retail on the lower floors and offices on the upper levels. The intent of the DDA was to develop a park that would anchor and kick start development along the Buford Highway corridor. The park is lighted and well used as both an active destination and a passive park. On warm nights, couples and families can be found sitting near the fountains enjoying the music played through landscape speakers provided by the City. On hot summer days, the splash fountain is full of young children running and playing while their parents seek shade in the surrounding spaces.

Suggested Programming:

- This park is suitable for hosting major events from concerts to fireworks. Its location is visible from Buford Highway which may afford an increased level of interest from passersby.
- With a wall to inhibit noise from entering neighborhoods of the downtown area and a large commercial artery to the east, this site is perfect for loud events such as concerts which would typically disturb residential areas. Taking into account the impacts on the neighborhoods, this park should be considered a viable alternative for holding concerts, particularly those that are louder than usual.
- This park may help to balance the use of Thrasher Park and alleviate the damage often inflicted on Thrasher Park by regular weekly use during the concert and event season. It is advisable for the City to implement an alternating schedule for the use of these two parks. Such a schedule would help to ensure the turf grass has time to adequately recover after each use.
- This location is well suited as a starting point for races including joggers, cyclist and wheelchair racers. Staging areas, bathrooms, power, etc., are all available.

Recommended Improvements:

- The site, especially the fountain area, is in need of shade. Although eventually the many large Willow Oaks will provide more than adequate shade for the park, those trees may take ten years to fill out sufficiently. In the meantime, the need for temporary or permanent shade structures is immediate. Freestanding artistic “shade sails” would be a suitable solution.
- Provide a sidewalk connection around the park with ramps, etc. There is no route to the lower portion of the park from the upper section that does not require the use of a significant set of steps or an adjacent road. This discourages persons with strollers and physically challenged individuals from moving from one level to the other.

Special Considerations:

- The park is integral to the success of the ‘out parcels’ that surround it and ultimately to the success of the entire block. It is imperative that programming of the park is complementary and not competitive to the business interest of the establishments that will eventually fill the retail, office and even residential spaces around the park.

- This park is the only large unprogrammed flat or relatively level greenspace in the City. This makes the site desirable for “pick-up games” including soccer. However, the use of this site for a soccer field or any similar use is not compatible with the intended use of the field in context with its future surroundings. It will be incumbent on the City to enact and enforce a policy to prohibit organized play on this field as such play could have a negative impact on the City’s ability to market the site.

Lion’s Club Park

The Lions Club Park is a small parcel of railroad right of way that has been reclaimed by the City as a pocket park. It lies directly adjacent to an active railroad line and crossing point. It contains a City information kiosk and three concrete picnic tables covered by metal umbrellas. The park is primarily used as a resting spot during major City events such as Art Fest when adjacent streets are full of visitors. On a typical day it is often not used more than a few times and in winter months it may not be used at all on most days.

Suggested Programming:

- This park could be used to support a “food court” staging area during major events. The area could easily support 10 or more folding tables added to provide a substantial amount of seating.

Recommended Improvements:

- The picnic tables are dated and reminiscent of the 1950s period style. The tables do not relate well to the other public site furnishing elements in the general area of downtown. The City may want to consider replacing the tables and umbrellas with elements that are more cognizant of the context.
- Shade trees would make a significant impact on the usability and interest in this site in the summer. Currently there is no natural shade in the summer months for this park.
- A three or four-sided boundary fence with several gate or openings would make the site safer for use by families with young children.

Special Considerations:

- As this park is not well used, it could potentially be leased to the adjacent restaurant for use as a seasonal outdoor seating area or beer garden. The relatively limited traffic on the street beside the park makes this option viable. By implementing a boundary fence and adding tables, the area could become an income-generating element for the City (or at least be revenue-neutral).

Rossie Brundage Park

Considering its larger size, Rossie Brundage Park is perhaps the most underutilized park in the City’s inventory. Though it contains a ball field, basketball court, playground, large pavilion and newly installed stage for use as an amphitheater, it is not well known to City residents. In the survey it ranked near the bottom of parks visited by residents. Part of the reason for this is clearly the location of the park. Where other more popular parks are located near the activity centers of the City on major arteries, Rossie Brundage Park sits hidden from view on a relatively untraveled neighborhood street. It is also relatively inaccessible from neighborhoods to the west.

Suggested Programming:

- The recent addition of a stage at the edge of the outfield suggests that this park could be used for a number of “show” or “stage based” events such as small concerts. Programming several small events each year in this park would raise the awareness of this park and its facilities.
- The ball field at Rossie Brundage could be used by additional teams. In particular, the City should consider partnering with a local group or agency to offer T-ball, leagues, or additional practice usage by other teams.
- The outfield of the existing ball field is suitable for use as a youth soccer field for practice sessions. Its use as an informal play field for community use should be encouraged (when not required for organized baseball activities).
- The City may want to consider partnering with a local league to provide some programmed usage of the basketball court (only if court is renovated)

Recommended Improvements:

- The Park’s signage is poorly located. A remote monument style directional sign should be located at Autry Street and West Peachtree Road to help with visibility of this park.
- Park Rules signs are needed for the pavilion, field usage, and basketball court.
- Landscape improvements are needed to cover the vast areas of mulch.
- The retaining wall along Autry Street should be replaced as funds are available.
- The steeply sloped grass area overlooking the ball field could be terraced for seating.
- The well used basketball court would benefit from an upgrade in surfacing. The existing surface is cracked and not well marked for the various configurations that are possible (including two half courts played perpendicularly to the regulation court).
- Basketball goals could be modernized to include at least one set of adjustable height goals to facilitate games for younger children.
- Fencing and lighting at this park could benefit from upgrades. Lighting appears to be more than 20 years old. Fencing is beginning to show signs of oxidation and rust. A colored vinyl clad fence would be much more pleasing.
- The park contains a considerable amount of heavily wooded areas with mature trees and borders a small creek. A small natural surface walking trail could be introduced on the south and west sides of the park.
- There is a considerable flat area just south of the existing basketball court that, if partially cleared of trees, could support a second small to medium-sized picnic pavilion or possibly an additional basketball court (a wall might be required for a court).
- If the relationship regarding shared usage of parking areas at the adjacent private Hopewell Church is strong, the City should consider installing directional signage on Autry Street for the parking area behind the pavilion. Additional wayfinding signs directing visitors to the appropriate lot may be warranted within the church property.
- Improved connections to Hunter Street to the west are recommended. This may require the acquisition of adjacent land to the west, as well as a small bridge over the stream.
- The Connectivity Strategy identifies the development of a recreational trail along the adjacent north-south stream corridor as a longer-term priority.

Special Considerations:

- This park, because of its size and location is not likely to ever see the amount of use seen at Thrasher Park and Webb Field. However, with effective programming, minor improvements and better signage it could see a significant increase in use. At a minimum, the City will need to program events in the park throughout the year that cater to various demographics in order to increase awareness.
- Parking is a substantial issue for this park. With less than enough spaces for one full team of ball players, the majority of users must park on the adjacent residential streets or private property. If there were ever a situation where one set of teams was playing and a second set was waiting, the parking would require players and their families to walk hundreds if not thousands of feet from the nearest available public parking. The City must endeavor to maintain and solidify its current relationship with the adjacent church to use their parking for game days.

South Point Park

South Point Park is a triangular piece of land at the intersection of two roads. It serves as the gateway to the Downtown area and although not often used, it contains sidewalks, landscaping and a single picnic table.

Suggested Programming:

- This park could be the termination or the beginning to a tour (self-guided or otherwise) that includes historic homes, significant trees, etc. As recommended, it could be linked to Betty Mauldin Park and the City Cemetery.
- This park could become a sculpture garden for the City with temporary and permanent works of public art.
- If a greenway/trail is developed along the railroad corridor as part of the vision of several studies and this Master Plan, this park could become an integral rest stop and require more furnishings such as added seating, bike racks, small shelter, waste and recycle receptacles, and a water fountain.

Recommended Improvements:

- If the site is to continue to contain a picnic table it should also contain a waste receptacle.
- The vertex at the intersection to the streets is quite visible. This location could include a piece of public art such as a large 3D sculpture.
- The vertex of the two streets should be landscaped as “a gateway statement” with more perennial color and seasonal interest.

Special Considerations:

- This site should be seen as part of a long term vision that connects the downtown area to outlying neighborhoods via greenways, trails and bicycle paths. If and when such a corridor passes beside this park, the park will become an important resting place.

Thrasher Park

Thrasher Park is perhaps Norcross's premier neighborhood park with the most active use. Containing a large and recently renovated playground, an amphitheater, restrooms, pavilions and lots of passive recreational opportunities, it is Norcross's most beloved park.

Suggested Programming:

- According to the analysis, this park is currently "over programmed" and suffering from overuse. The amount of use is creating undesirable conditions in the park. Conditions include declining turf, abnormal wear on equipment, and migration of playground mulch at a faster rate than usual. The programmed usage for this park should be carefully coordinated with other parks now in the inventory of the Parks Department. Use of Thrasher Park for larger and louder concert events should be weighed against the potential for damage on the park, conflicting usage of the adjacent playground and impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. As Norcross has and will continue to grow in population, this park will soon not be suitable for the larger events that draw from the entire City and points beyond.
- If not already used for such, the park could host outdoor weddings. Specifically at the gazebo.
- Any existing children's events should be continued and future programming of the band shell, amphitheater, pavilion and the park in general should focus on younger children's events, family events, senior events and smaller gatherings. Examples of appropriate events for this park include storytelling, puppet shows, yoga and tai-chi demonstrations, small acoustic concerts, concerts that draw a specific smaller demographic of the City, etc.
- Children's birthday parties are and will continue to be important events for Thrasher Park. Reservations for the pavilion should continue to be managed by the City.
- The park should be an integral stop for a tour of historic features of the City. Placards and interpretive signs could be added around the perimeter describing homes and or buildings that do or once did surround the park.
- The park should be an integral part of any tour of significant trees (see below).
- Every Tuesday, the Park's parking lot is used for the successful Whistle Stop Farmers Market. Although parking for park users is temporarily lost to accommodate this event, the awareness and additional traffic that the Farmers Market creates is beneficial to both the Park and the Downtown area. The Farmers' Market should remain at Thrasher Park for the foreseeable future.

Recommended Improvements:

- The park has recently undergone a major renovation and is not in need of significant upgrades. However, additional shade trees would be beneficial in some areas. The recent loss of several large shade trees has created a hole in the canopy of the west side of the park. Additions should follow a plan and trees should be carefully placed to maintain a maximum amount of open space for park users while replacing the aging canopy. In particular, trees should be added to shade play structures.
- There are a number of concrete pads set aside for donated benches. These benches should be installed as soon as practical.
- There are a number of areas identified in the park for public art. In particular the paving circle near the pavilion is ready to be used for a 2D ground based art project.

- Consider an effort to label the significant trees and plants in the park for educational purposes.

Special Considerations:

- This park is perhaps the most important park in the minds of many in Norcross. Its enhancement, protection and improvements must be properly vetted among citizens. Its maintenance and beauty should reflect the spirit of the community. As such, it should be maintained to the highest level of service.
- Playground technology and elements are evolving at a fast pace. Playground elements must be carefully maintained and the City should put in place a plan for periodic maintenance and replacement with newer elements as they come available. Specific emphasis should be placed on replacing elements that appear to be less used. A five year plan is probably wise with the intent to replace older and less used or broken equipment with new. Several of the systems that are installed are component or add-on systems where new elements can simply be added to the existing frame or replace older elements.

Water Tower Park

Water Tower Park is a small piece of land shaded by three large oak trees adjacent to the City's water tower (currently managed by Gwinnett County). It contains only a single picnic table and is fenced on three sides. It has no parking, no sidewalks, no lighting, no signage, and only one waste receptacle. From inspections and interviews it appears the park is virtually never used. This park is not sufficient in size to support any significant field sports and the mature trees would greatly limit the installation of smaller sporting venues such as a basketball or tennis court. The park, however, is well positioned to provide a needed green space amenity in the middle of residential neighborhoods that are being redeveloped.

Suggested Programming:

- This park would be appropriate for a small neighborhood level playground that residents could walk to. However, with Rossie Brundage and the Seven Community playgrounds both essentially less than a half-mile away and currently under-utilized, this may not be the most beneficial use (at least until the neighborhood is fully built out).
- The park contains several sizeable mature oaks of different species. The park could be included a tour of Norcross Trees and could be linked with other parks and greenways discussed in this Master Plan. This would help raise awareness of the park.
- This park, assuming trees were thinned out, could support a small community garden. A community garden is an element that would not require substantial parking or other improvements to this park. A garden with perhaps 10-12 plots would be appropriate for this location. The appropriateness of this location for use as a community garden should be discussed with local residents / organizations.

Recommended Improvements:

- Consider having a mural painted on the water tower facing the park as a "public art piece".
- Consider dedicating a portion of the currently enclosed asphalt area to parking for the park. A minimum of two spaces (one ADA) for a park of this size would be advisable. The existing fencing could be reconfigured to support this effort.
- Replace aging chain link fence with a more attractive picket or vinyl clad chain link,

specifically adjacent to the park area.

- Sign the park appropriately with a monument sign and park rules.
- If a community garden is implemented, install water fountain and frost-proof yard hydrants for watering the garden. As appropriate, install a small shade shelter or pavilion.

Special Considerations:

- This site is at the western limits of the residential area of Norcross and sits on a “cut-through” street. Security may be challenging for this site and traffic along the southern boundary of this park may create safety concerns for small children using the park.
- The water tower is a functioning element requiring regular maintenance and security. Any use of the park must complement the requirements of the water tower. Such elements are often targets for graffiti. The introduction of park elements that would increase visibility of the area would be advantageous to the City.

Recommendations for Existing Parks

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Betty Mauldin Park	10. Add additional interpretive signage on elm tree and install public art on newly constructed pad(s).	Medium
Cemetery Field	11. Work with the County to increase the programming and usage of the field by local residents and groups, including for sports such as soccer and lacrosse.	High
	12. Work with the County and utility owners to create additional parking in the power easement to the southeast and to light existing parking lots.	Medium
City Cemetery	13. Refurbish the historical pavilion and install fencing and gates around the site.	High
	14. Endeavor to solidify new relationships and partnerships with third party private and public organizations to offer historically-based programming and tours of the cemetery.	High
	15. Provide parking for cemetery.	Low
Heritage Park	16. Install public art on provided pad.	High
Johnson-Dean Park	17. In the short-term, secure the existing structures to assist with their future preservation.	High
	18. In the longer-term, implement the master plan recently proposed for this park.	Low

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Lillian Webb Park	19. Install shade structures around splash pad.	High
	20. Provide sidewalk connection without steps to lower park from upper terrace.	Medium
Lions Club Park	21. Install shade trees.	Low
Rossie Brundage Park	22. Install wayfinding and park signs at the corner of Autry and West Peachtree Street.	High
	23. Consider options for improving access from neighborhoods to the west, including land acquisition and the development of a small bridge over the adjacent stream.	High
	24. Promote park through added programming and usage of field and stage.	High
	25. Throughout the park, add rules and regulations signage for use of various facilities.	Low
	26. Expand the development of the park into the wooded areas to include a trail or additional basketball court.	Medium
South Point Park	27. Install waste receptacle.	Medium
	28. Install public art and flowers at prominent gateway location.	Low
Thrasher Park	29. Replace recently lost shade trees.	High
	30. Install missing benches on existing pads.	Low
	31. Install public art in locations supported by the Thrasher Park Master Plan.	Medium
Water Tower Park	32. Along with residents and local organizations, consider establishing a small community garden at this site.	Medium
	33. Install signage that matches with other City parks.	High
	34. Provide parking at this park by reconfiguring existing land and fencing as needed.	Medium

6.3 Park Design & Programming Considerations

How the City plans, designs, and programs its parks and park amenities affects how they are used. The following are key findings and suggestions relating to park design and programming considerations:

- 1) Norcross' population characteristics are changing, which is leading to a shift in interests and park uses. The City's uniqueness and evolving diversity are creating a rise in non-traditional uses of its parks. Ethno-cultural communities are frequent users of parks as they are an ideal location for social gatherings, picnics, and casual sport; many cultures view recreation and leisure as family events. This changing diversity also creates the need for a wider range of activities that can place considerable pressure on park infrastructure. Many of the City's underserved areas contain high densities and large ethnic populations, particularly Hispanic/Latino and Asian. The City must design its park system so as to accommodate the needs of these underserved areas, which may require special and different approaches to help people feel included and to reduce barriers to participation.
- 2) Great parks have a 'wow factor' and are flexible and responsive to user trends and preferences. Time-pressed individuals of all ages and families are also looking for parks that they can enjoy at their own convenience. As a result, greater emphasis will need to be placed on informal park spaces that can be used for unstructured activities. The community survey results suggest that many Norcross residents are looking for more variety out of their parks. Accommodating local cultural performances and celebrations, public art, activities such as outdoor fitness classes, walking loops, and community gardens in selected parks are just a few ways Norcross can meet this need, while also enhancing community engagement. The concept of parks as 'living community centers' (i.e., a way of bringing parks to life – of animating them – by optimizing their use through special events and features such as those suggested above) is one that Norcross has embraced through its redesign of Thrasher and Lillian Webb Parks and deserves continued consideration.
- 3) Better park signage and wayfinding for parks is needed. The Norcross Imagination Task Force (2009) identified 'signs and signage' as one of its top priorities. The intention would be to aid in unifying the overall look and feel of Norcross and to help residents and visitors alike feel connected with "all things Norcross". Specific suggestions included the installation of prominent and creative park/trail signs and 'Park Rules' signs in each park (in English, Spanish).
- 4) The Norcross Imagination Task Force (2009) identified 'art in or public spaces' as one of its top priorities. The intention would be to use public art as an aesthetic, as a way of reinforcing historic roots, as information/ direction, and as a method of continuing the community's development as a cultural destination. Specific suggestions included the installation of art (including statues, plaques, etc.) in parks, at gateways, and throughout the City.
- 5) Norcross will experience a significant increase of older adult residents over the next two decades. All indications are showing that the "new older adult" will continue to be more physically active and may look for more adventurous activities to stimulate their interests. This may lead to increased daytime use of parks, trails, and community centers. At the same time, more residents will be participating in less vigorous activities and will seek relaxing, flexible spaces for quiet reflection and an escape from urban life. Park amenities such as shade, water, and washrooms will be needed to accommodate use by these groups. Amenities such as

restrooms, shade trees, lighting, benches, and improved parking were identified as capital priorities through the surveys.

- 6) Water conservation is quickly increasing in importance in Norcross and Gwinnett County due to growing demands and a decreasing supply of fresh water from Lake Lanier. This needs to be considered in park design and can be partially addressed through the use of drought-tolerant plants, grey water, reduction in irrigation, and installation of artificial turf.

Recommendations for Park Design

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Park Design	35. Engage in creative and a broad range of outreach efforts to deliver services to diverse groups (e.g., pilot programs) and engage a representative range of residents in the development of new and the review of existing programs and services.	High
	36. Work with community groups and stakeholders to expand their capacity to include all residents regardless of their backgrounds.	Medium
	37. Continue to foster the development of existing, new and emerging sport, cultural, recreational, and learning activities that may be popular with diverse populations and ensure that these opportunities are available to all residents.	Medium
	38. Seek the assistance of local clubs and shared leadership with residents and resident groups to increase the programming and ‘animation’ of parks.	Medium
	39. Continue to include park amenities such as shade, water and washrooms to accommodate use by older populations when designing new and refurbishing existing parks, trails and green spaces.	High
	40. Seek to increase the diversity of the recreation experience by developing passive and unprogrammed park space and unique outdoor facilities.	High
	41. In higher density residential areas, the form of parkland may adopt more of an urban character, with hardscape surfaces, sitting areas, public art, water features, etc. that support more passive use.	Medium
	42. Include more interpretive signage along trails and in parks that speak to environmental efforts and the positive results of being environmental stewards.	High
	43. Improve the gateways to the City through open space design and appropriate entry features.	Medium

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Park Design (continued)	44. Create opportunities to “cross-culturalize” park activities to increase participation by the City’s diverse populations.	Medium
	45. Collaborate with local health agencies to create programs and activities in parks that promote healthy lifestyle and active living choices.	Medium

6.4 Park System Concept

A successful parks classification system provides guidelines for various types of parks (e.g., function, size and location), while at the same time, recognizing the unique nature and potential of a particular site. Most categories have service radii, population targets, and development criteria to ensure that the parks respond to the needs of the market they are intended to serve. Such a system also allows for consistent planning and budgeting, as well as managing public expectations.

A key goal in the provision of parkland is providing adequate geographic coverage and accessibility of both active and passive park sites for all Norcross residents. A well-balanced park system not only engages people of all ages, denominations, and ethnic backgrounds, but it also enhances the overall quality of life. The definition of a park system concept that encourages a broad range of park types and facility combinations is an important first step in meeting the varied needs of the public. Through a classification framework, a consistent management approach can be created that improves equity and responsiveness to community needs.

In Gwinnett County, decisions relating to the future planning, acquisition, development, and management of park resources are guided by a "concept" of the County's park system. This system concept establishes park classifications and defines that various aspects of each park type, including such items as the general intensity of development, intended service area, and potential complement of facilities.

County Park classifications include:

- Community Parks
- Passive Community Parks
- Open Space Parks
- Special Purpose Parks
- Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks
- Green Space Parks
- Linear Parks
- Other

Several of these categories are relevant and appropriate to consider for the City of Norcross’ parks system, particularly those that emphasize connectivity, social gatherings, sense of place, and compact urban forms. Larger landholdings (such as those offered by Community Parks, Passive Community Parks, and Open Space Parks) are not applicable to the local municipal context, but will continue to be offered by the County in surrounding areas.

In order to take advantage of the consistency and local understanding of the County’s parks system – and to facilitate future coordination with the County – the establishment of a City parks system concept should build upon the classifications used by Gwinnett County. For the City of Norcross, a parks system that consists of the following park types is recommended:

- Special Purpose Parks
- Neighborhood Parks (similar to the County’s Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks)
- Linear Parks
- Green Space

Special Purpose Parks

Special Purpose Parks and facilities serve special interest recreation or leisure interests and are generally single purpose and located on small sites.

<i>Examples in City Inventory:</i>	• Betty Mauldin Park, Cemetery Field, City Cemetery, Heritage Park, Lion’s Club Park, Water Tower Park
<i>Facility Types:</i>	• variable
<i>Recommended Size:</i>	• dependent upon need
<i>Service Area:</i>	• variable
<i>Existing Supply:</i>	• 12.47 acres at 6 sites; 1.2 acres per 1,000 population
<i>Recommended Provision Level:</i>	• not specific to park type – part of overall parkland target

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks are intended to serve residential areas that :

- are deficient in park and recreation opportunities; and
- wish to develop more active recreational uses than permitted by Special Purpose Parks.

Neighborhood Parks will generally be in the range of 5 to 10 acres and may be developed on vacant commercial or previously developed sites in cases where more suitable options do not exist. A desirable location characteristic is within close proximity to multi-family complexes or higher density single detached areas. Park users will be encouraged to walk to Neighborhood Parks, thereby limiting the amount of on-site parking space to be provided.

Neighborhood Parks can generally contain active and passive recreational activity areas. This park type would serve various age groups with emphasis on youth and should be tailored to fit the existing and anticipated characteristics of the surrounding population. Limited non-organized sport group activities are encouraged.

<i>Examples in City Inventory:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lillian Webb Park, Mitchell Road Parcel (once developed), Rossie Brundage Park, Thrasher Park
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<i>Facility Types:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informal play field (soccer, baseball, etc.), open play area, game court area, playground, walking/jogging path, picnic areas, pavilions, passive areas
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<i>Recommended Size:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 to 10 acres
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<i>Service Area:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two or more neighborhoods (approximately 2,000 to 4,000 people)
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<i>Existing Supply:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20.77 acres at 4 sites; 1.9 acres per 1,000 population
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<i>Recommended Provision Level:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not specific to park type – part of overall parkland target
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Linear Parks

Linear strips of land typically developed along waterways, utility easements, and roadways that provide corridors for trails and greenways, open space, and physical buffers. Linear Parks are located outside of other public parks, but connect those parks and other points of interests, such as schools, residential neighborhoods and business districts.

Linear Parks provide an emphasis on walking, jogging, and bicycling; usage for motorized transport is prohibited. Such parks should be of sufficient width to protect from adjacent infringements and maintain environmental integrity of the corridor.

The level of development of Linear Parks can range from minimal to extensive and may include trailhead (parking and amenity) areas. If parking is provided then associated facilities including rest rooms, playground, and picnic or pavilion area should be included. Linear Parks may also include adjacent pockets of open space.

<i>Examples in City Inventory:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none
<i>Facility Types:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-use trails, nature trails, boardwalks, trailheads, playgrounds, picnic areas and pavilions
<i>Recommended Size:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable – depends on length
<i>Service Area:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • several neighborhoods to City-wide (as part of Greenway network)
<i>Existing Supply:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none
<i>Recommended Provision Level:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within 1 mile of any location in the City

Green Space

Properties that are municipally owned, are largely undeveloped (e.g., woodland, wetland, meadow, etc.), do not contain any developed recreation areas, and may or may not be open to the public. In most cases, the location, size, or topography of Green Space lands is such that these parcels cannot and will never be developed as usable 'parkland'.

<i>Examples in City Inventory:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fickling Parcel, Johnson-Dean Park, Pinnacle Parcel, South Point Park
<i>Facility Types:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not applicable – undeveloped lands generally left in their natural state (allowing for an appropriate degree of management)
<i>Recommended Size:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • variable
<i>Service Area:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not applicable
<i>Existing Supply:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20.33 acres at 4 sites; 1.9 acres per 1,000 population
<i>Recommended Provision Level:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not specific to park type – part of overall parkland target

Recommendations for the Parks System Concept

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Park System Concept	46. Implement the recommended park classification system.	High

6.5 Future Parkland Requirements

With a total of 53.6 acres of City-owned parks and green space in Norcross, there is currently an average of 4.9 acres per 1,000 residents. This supply includes three undeveloped parcels (Fickling, Mitchell Road, and Pinnacle) and is supplemented by County parks adjacent to and near the City; however, these County parks cannot be included in the inventory calculations as they are located outside of Norcross’ boundaries.

As stated in previous sections, the development of the Mitchell Road Parcel as a public park is integral for the improved distribution of parkland in south Norcross and is a high priority recommendation of this Plan. Furthermore, the Fickling Parcel is important to achieving the City’s green space distribution goals and the Pinnacle Property is vital to the development of a greenway system in the City’s south end. All three of these undeveloped parcels are recommended for future use as City parks and green space.

The provision targets adopted by Gwinnett County amounts to 20 acres of publicly accessible parkland per 1,000 population (this included County, City, and Federal parks and greenspaces). The County is not currently meeting this level of provision, instead achieving a rate closer to 15 acres per 1,000 population; however, this remains a long-term goal. The Green Communities Certification Program also sets benchmarks of 20 acres per 1,000 population or 8% of the City’s entire land area; however, there are alternatives to these standards that may be more achievable for Norcross, such as ensuring that all residents live within a 0.5 mile walking distance of a park.

With few (but some) land acquisition options in Norcross, it is unlikely that the City will ever achieve a parkland provision rate of 20 acres per 1,000 population – this would require a 300% increase to existing levels (165 acres). Population growth would further add to this requirement. However, from the previous analysis, past studies, and public input, it is evident that Norcross is in need of additional parkland in several neighborhoods. The City must seek to increase its parkland and green space supplies and a target of 6 acres per 1,000 population – representing a 20% increase to the existing inventory – is reasonable as a long-term goal.

Parkland Provision Standards

Common NRPA Standards	Gwinnett County Standards	Proposed Targets for Norcross (City facilities only)
past standard was 6.25 to 10.5 acres per 1,000 population	20 acres per 1,000 population (County, City & Federal parks combined) 15 acres per 1,000 population (County parks only)	6 acres per 1,000 population

Application of a target of 6 acres per 1,000 population suggests that the City currently has a shortfall of 12.1 acres, growing to 37.3 acres in 2020 and 68.6 acres in 2030 if the population continues to increase at the expected rate. These deficits are considerable and will require aggressive efforts to secure land in the short-term before it becomes unavailable or too costly. As the City grows, it will become increasingly difficult to secure larger tracts of land for parks and the City must be proactive in its efforts to secure parkland to meet future needs.

Parkland and Green Space Requirements, 2010-2030

Year	Population	Requirements (6 acres per 1,000 residents)	Existing Parkland Supply (acres)	Parkland Deficit (acres)
2010 (estimate)	10,946	65.7	53.6	12.1
2020 (forecast)	15,150	90.9		37.3
2030 (forecast)	20,360	122.2		68.6

Population forecasts are from the 2030 Norcross Comprehensive Plan and are based on a growth rate of 3% increase per year. The economic downturn may delay the City’s ability to achieve these population levels, at least in the short term.

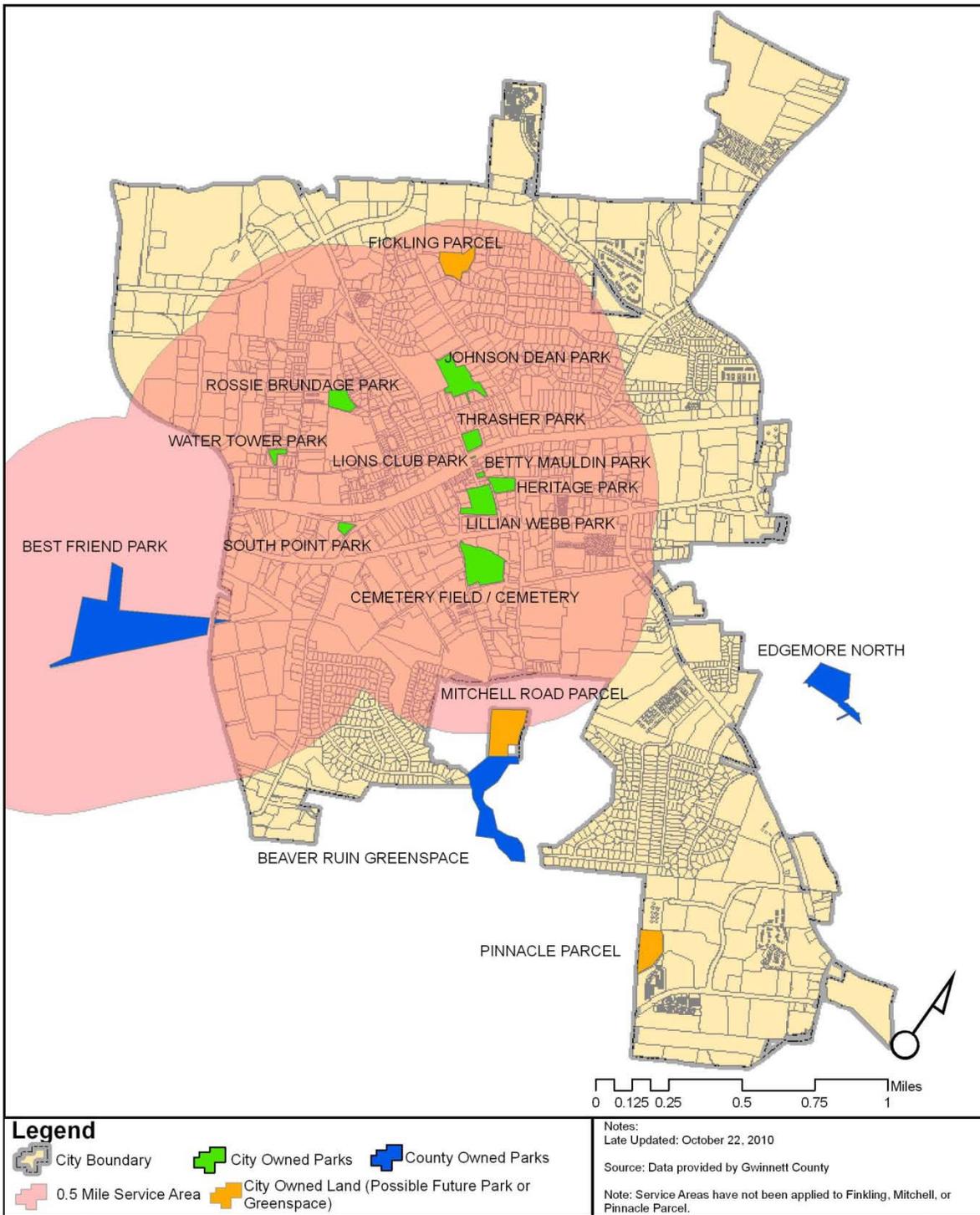
Although the amount of parkland is a critical benchmark in assessing local opportunities for outdoor recreation, equity and accessibility are also key elements of any parks system. In this regard, it is imperative that the City strive to provide parkland in populated areas that are void of any park facilities, as well as those that are under-supplied. Only 42% of youth agreed that the distance they travel to participate in outdoor recreation activities is reasonable. This suggests that the distribution of parks is less than ideal.

Map 5 that follows illustrates those areas that do not have a public park or green space located within 0.5 miles, a distance that has been established as a target by the ARC Green Communities Certification program. Because many of the City’s parks are unique and serve more than just the surrounding neighborhood, this benchmark is not an indicator of the quality of local parks, but rather a general indicator of overall accessibility.

This map illustrates two significant gaps; parkland acquisition or partnership agreements in these areas should be a priority for the City:

- South/Southeast Norcross (generally south of the Georgia Power corridor) – this area has the potential to be served by the Mitchell Road Parcel, once developed (as recommended); and
- Northeast Norcross (north of the rail tracks, between North Peachtree Street and Langford Road).

The other gaps are small and in commercial/industrial areas at the edge of the City.



Parks Master Plan
 Map 5 - City and County Parks (with 0.5 mile service area)



Planned residential intensification will also result in increased demand for parks. For decades, Norcross' development outside of its historic core has been typical of suburban communities – low-density, automobile-dependent. There now exists considerable redevelopment potential in the many subdivisions that were built in the 1970s and 80s, particularly in the southern portion of the City – these offer opportunities for new park development. Residential intensification will result in a more compact urban form, defined by dense populations, high-rise buildings, mix of land uses, access to transit, pedestrian linkages, and vibrant streetlife. Intensification will increase the need for recreation, social events, and nature appreciation. While this trend may not be noticeable for a number of years, the advance planning needs to be started now. Strategies for park and greens pace provision in these intensified areas are required, approaches that reflect the premium on land, the unique composition of residents that will live there, and the social implications of urban residential built form.

The previous analysis has found that there are gaps in both the amount and distribution of parks and green spaces in Norcross. Needs are greatest for Neighborhood Parks near the City's northeastern and southeastern boundaries (the latter has the potential to be addressed by the Mitchell Road Parcel), as well as for Linear Parks (greenways).

Because they are very different in their acquisition, composition and uses, the analysis of open space and greenway (linear trails) needs have been separated from that of parks (this section addresses 'parks', Section 7 addresses 'open spaces', and Section 8 addresses 'greenways and trails').

The City has several options for increasing its parks supply:

- 1) **Acquire land for parks in underserved areas.** This is the most obvious choice for improving parkland supplies, but potentially the most challenging and costly, particularly when the land is acquired after development has occurred.
- 2) **Acquire land for parks when subdivisions are being developed or redeveloped.** The Norcross 2030 Comprehensive Plan encourages parks to be located as focal points in neighborhoods, so as to serve as accessible public gathering places. Mechanisms and policies (e.g., conservation subdivision ordinance) need to be in place to properly plan for and secure these lands.

The following objective is referenced in the Norcross Comprehensive Plan and remains a reasonable direction for the City: *"New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation."* In the City's existing conservation subdivision ordinance, the number of acres required to allow for a conservation subdivision should be lowered to encourage the construction of small projects such as co-housing developments.

- 3) **Expand existing parks by purchasing adjacent lands.** This option can also be costly and does not address gap areas, but does offer opportunities to add new features to existing destinations.
- 4) **Leasing land.** Norcross is surrounded by commercial and light industrial properties. Some of these may contain vacant lands or vacant buildings; the latter is increasingly prevalent due to the economic downturn. Through long-term leases, the City could turn these lands into parks (red fields to green fields). This is a growing movement that has been recently initiated in Atlanta and being implemented through CIDs. As the economy improves, a portion of the land can then be returned to commercial use and the remaining parkland maintained by the developer.

- 5) **Accept undevelopable land as open space** (through donation or land swap). This option does not improve the active park supplies, but does assist in the long-term preservation of environmental lands. This and other land conservation options are discussed in Section 7.
- 6) **Obtain conservation easements for public access onto private lands.** This can be especially effective for establishing greenways and open space parks.
- 7) **Establish partnerships with local schools, churches, or other major landholders (e.g., Georgia Power).** While this option does not increase the City's parkland supply, it has the potential to improve public access to recreational amenities through agreements that address items such as capital improvements, maintenance, and liability.

As mentioned earlier, the parkland acquisition needs are greatest for Neighborhood Parks near the City's northeastern boundary (assuming that the Mitchell Road Parcel will be developed into a park). Options for meeting this need should be explored over time. Should a parcel of land be acquired, this park should be capable of accommodating a playground, open space, and other local features identified through a site-specific master plan and public consultation process.

Aside from northeast Norcross, neighborhood revitalization projects may also create opportunities for the establishment of parks or trail connections. These opportunities should be evaluated as redevelopment proposals come forward, with the City taking an active role in ensuring that local parkland requirements are met. One example of this is the Norcross Activity Center LCI, which identified three development nodes, each of which would require greenspace connections and potentially parks: Buchanan School Site; Jimmy Carter at Brook Hollow (currently outside the City of Norcross); and Indian Trail at Brook Hollow. The Buchanan School Site in particular is of key interest due to its central location, existing sports fields, and substantial land base.

A number of parcels for consideration in the Master Plan were identified during the process. Many parcels were suggested by stakeholders and others became clearly relevant through the analysis of the overall needs and greenway systems. **Appendix E** (under separate cover) contains an extensive set of data tables for the parcels that were identified during the process. These tables provide information on the suitability of each parcel for use as a park or green space element in conjunction with the Master Plan recommendations. In particular, parcels that were considered included land that was mostly undeveloped and adjacent to other lands that could help to form a connected greenway or system of parks and green spaces. It is worth noting that there are virtually no substantially large undeveloped parcels left in Norcross which are not significantly challenged by environmental or other factors or already targeted for a significant development. Also it was noted that a large number of the parcels considered are currently listed for sale. With the state of the economy at the drafting of this document being what it is, now would be a perfect opportunity for the City to take advantage of reduced land values.

When deciding to purchase or accept a particular property for park purposes, there are several criteria that need to be considered, including (but not necessarily limited to):

- Size & Configuration
- Topography
- Vegetation / Natural Features
- Location
- Hydrology
- Scenic features
- Partnership potential
- Visibility
- Accessibility & Connectivity
- Ownership

Although an important consideration, the size of park site should not be the most important factor in deciding whether or not to acquire new land – the level of community satisfaction should be the ultimate goal. While park size is not an indicator of customer satisfaction, it is often correlated to maintenance costs. Too many small park parcels will result in increased travel time and less productivity from maintenance crews for the dollars spent. Another consideration is that parkland that is more “landscaped” and less “naturalized” is more maintenance intensive and, therefore, more costly.

Recommendations for Parkland Requirements

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Future Parkland Requirements	47. The City and its partners should work toward ensuring that there are parks or green spaces within a half-mile walking distance of all residents.	High
	48. Secure land in the northeastern portion of the City for Neighborhood Park development. This parcel should be capable of accommodating a playground, open space, and other local features identified through a site-specific master plan and public consultation process.	High
	49. A minimum amount of parkland or open space should be required in all new developments within Norcross, including redevelopment proposals that increase population densities. To enable this, the City should make consistent use of its conservation subdivision ordinance and ensure that it remains up-to-date and in effect.	High
	50. The City should strongly encourage any redevelopment plans for the former Buchanan School site to retain a portion of the lands for active community recreation.	High

Section 7: Open Space & Natural Area Analysis

As defined in Section 1:

'Open spaces' are undeveloped lands that have been disturbed by humans, but still provide habitat for floral and faunal species, non-significant natural features, and/or passive unprogrammed recreational opportunities.

'Natural Areas' are lands that have not been recently disturbed by human activity. They are not generally intended to be publicly accessible due to their sensitive natural features (e.g., densely wooded, flood and erosion prevention, wetlands, wildlife habitat, etc.).

Along with local parks, public open space and natural area properties were identified and mapped in Sections 5 and 6. Although these lands contribute to the overall supply of recreational space, they are often acquired for different purposes and through different means than parkland that is used for sport fields, playgrounds, or programmed recreational activities. For these reasons, the tools through which open space and natural area lands are acquired and managed have been dedicated their own section in this report.

7.1 The 'Greening' of Norcross

Open space and natural areas serve numerous functions: they protect and conserve natural features; they provide buffers to development; they provide visual breaks within an otherwise urban/suburban landscape; and they enhance air and water quality. Open space is a critical resource because – as growth pressures rise – it is rapidly disappearing. Yet, planning and funding for open space acquisition is often a secondary concern, after traditional infrastructure is put into place. As noted in the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC's) Green Infrastructure Toolkit, *"it takes a willing government, a supportive community, a sustainable funding source and a commitment to an integrated and comprehensive planning process to achieve success."* Many of these pieces are already in place in Norcross, and this Parks Master Plan seeks to tie them together.

To assist the City in its green community and sustainability efforts, City Council has established the Sustainable Norcross Commission, a five member citizen panel that advises the Mayor and Council on sustainability and environmental matters. In addition, there is Sustainable Norcross, a volunteer grassroots non-profit organization committed to education, communication, and implementation of strategies and initiatives that foster sustainable living. Sustainable Norcross has identified "Trees and Green Space" as one of their top two priorities.

Of key relevance to this Plan is the Green Communities Program developed by ARC to assist local governments in reducing their overall environmental impact. Local governments achieving certification (of which there are three levels) will receive region-wide recognition for their leadership. Within Gwinnett County, to date the City of Suwanee has achieved Bronze certification, in part for their improvements to pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, policies on landscaping and tree preservation, and protected greenspace areas. In May 2010, the City of Norcross completed its application for Green Communities; the results of the evaluation should be known in late 2010.

The Green Communities Program identifies specific measures that communities can implement to

become more sustainable. In total, the Green Communities Program identifies ten categories that are considered when assessing a community’s environmental sustainability; two of these ten categories are particularly relevant to this Parks Master Plan – “Trees and Greenspace” and “Transportation and Air Quality”. Other categories may be indirectly addressed in this Plan, including “Green Building”, “Energy Efficiency”, “Land Use”, and “Innovation”. While there are many steps that need to be taken toward receiving “Green Community” status, this Master Plan seeks to assist the City of Norcross toward this goal (the Certification Program allots points for cities with a Greenspace Plan that provides for connectivity of protected greenspace within and among communities).

Also of note, Norcross has been designated as a Tree City USA Community since 2005. To maintain this designation, the City has established a Tree Commission, a community tree ordinance, a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita, and organized an annual Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

In order to maintain and enhance the tree canopy, Norcross should seek grants to develop a Community Forest Master Plan for City-owned properties. This initiative could form part of the City’s ongoing pursuit of Green Community Certification and should build upon existing resources (e.g., tree inventory on rights-of-way and parks).

Recommendations for ‘Greening’

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
The ‘Greening’ of Norcross	51. To assist with Green Communities Certification, ensure that all City parks and green spaces are registered in the ARC Regional Inventory.	Medium
	52. In order to maintain and enhance the tree canopy, Norcross should seek grants to develop a Community Forest Master Plan for City-owned properties.	Medium
	53. Establish a landscaping policy for City parks and facilities that provides focus for reducing the use of pesticides and chemicals, adopting integrated pest management practices, encouraging the use of native and drought tolerant plants, etc. This will assist the City in its efforts toward becoming a certified Green Community.	High
	54. Establish programs that support litter-free parks sites, zero waste, and increase recycling and environmentally friendly practices in parks and facilities.	Medium

7.2 Open Space & Natural Area Land Conservation

Open space needs can be met through both acquisition and the regulatory process. Purchasing property is the most expeditious approach to protecting undeveloped land, while zoning and land use policies – although equally effective – can take longer to ensure the long-term protection of privately held lands (land conservation tools are discussed later in this section).

The tools available for the conservation of open space and natural lands are more extensive than outright acquisition, which is typically the most common technique for securing active parkland. Not all lands need to be publicly owned in order to be permanently protected. Although acquisition is the best way to ensure that lands are protected in perpetuity, it is can sometimes be the most costly option. Fortunately, most open space lands have development restrictions due to their natural features or landforms, thereby reducing their market value. Furthermore, the current economic downturn may also present an opportunity to purchase key properties at reduced rates.

Similar to options available for parkland acquisition (see Section 6.5), options that are largely effective for the protection of open space and environmentally significant lands include:

- land exchange
- donation / land trusts
- conservation easement / purchase of development rights
- leasing
- partnerships

Conservation easements are particularly useful when protecting open space lands. This mechanism allows the title to the land to remain in private ownership, but development rights to be restricted based on the specific conservation requirements. Development rights may be severed from only a portion of the property (i.e., to protect a specific area or to allow access for a greenway through a defined corridor), leaving the remainder of the property available for development.

The City and County are not the only public agencies involved in the preservation of green space. Organizations such as the Georgia Piedmont Land Trust (formerly Gwinnett Open Land Trust) and Trust for Public Land are non-profit organizations that seek to permanently preserve land through conservation easements, acquisition/donation, etc., in order to protect the quality of waters and woodlands, as well as save farmland and historic sites. Organizations such as this could be key partners to Norcross and assist in achieving the City's green space goals.

Options for meeting the greenspace benchmarks of the Green Community Certification Program were discussed in the previous section, with a recommendation that the City work toward ensuring that there are parks or green spaces within a half-mile walking distance of all residents. While there is a need for active parkland in northeast Norcross, as well as the development of the Mitchell Road Parcel to meet several recreation needs in south Norcross, the acquisition or conservation of open space lands and natural areas is much more opportunity-driven and dictated by natural features and landforms.

Specifically, key priorities for open space and natural area land conservation include:

- areas that protect important natural resources;
- areas that protect significant historic and archaeological resources; and
- areas that provide greenway connections between parks, schools, and other public areas.

The following are some selection criteria identified in ARC’s Green Infrastructure Toolkit for prioritizing green spaces to acquire and conserve¹¹:

- Size – larger tracts tend to provide more benefits, particularly when it comes to species protection
- Diversity – more variety is better
- Naturalness – less human intervention is better
- Representation – those areas/species that are not well represented by existing conservation efforts should be given higher priority
- Rarity – sites with rare elements (e.g., protected floral and faunal species and their habitat, historic sites, etc.) should be given priority
- Fragility – more fragile environments should be higher priorities
- Commonality – common species also have a right to be protected
- Recorded history – it is easier to make the case to protect a scientifically well researched and documented site
- Landscape position – connectivity and integration are important features, as well as attention to development patterns
- Potential value – sites that do not rate as high in the above criteria but have the capacity to be restored or enhanced should be considered
- Intrinsic appeal – it can be easier to protect species or sites that have broad public appeal
- Accessibility – the value of active and passive recreational sites increases with the potential number of people served
- Connectivity – important for both animals and people although not always at the same time or on the same piece of land. Connectivity applies both to the overall network of green spaces as well as to accessibility by people.

Planning ahead for land conservation is smart and cost-effective over the long run; unfortunately, green space planning, acquisition and preservation rarely happen quickly.

Recommendations for Open Space & Natural Area Land Acquisition

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Open Space Acquisition	55. As opportunities arise, seek to convert more public and private undeveloped land into passive open space; this includes the Mitchell Road Parcel, Fickling Parcel, and Pinnacle Parcel.	High
	56. Partner with large-scale residential land developments to obtain conservation easements for additional permanent open space.	Medium
	57. Explore and expand partnerships with land trusts and other conservation organizations as a means to permanently protect green space.	Medium

¹¹ Benedict, M.A. and McMahon, E. T.(2006). *Green Infrastructure: Linking Landscapes and Communities*. Washington: Island Press.

7.3 Growth Management Policies

Growth management – a process that guides the development and redevelopment of land through policies such as the City’s 2030 Comprehensive Plan or projects such as the Livable Centers Initiative – plays a very important role in the acquisition, rehabilitation, and conservation of parks, open space, and greenways.

The Norcross 2030 Comprehensive Plan contains the following policies relative to greenspace and open space:

- Incorporate the connection, maintenance and enhancement of greenspace in all new developments.
- Encourage more compact urban development and preservation of open space.

As areas of the City are redeveloped and revitalized, there will be opportunities to enhance the supply of public and private open space. Opportunities may also be available during transitional stages through the use of brownfield and greyfield/redfield sites (i.e., underutilized or abandoned lands that were once used for industrial or commercial activity). Given the near “built out” status of the City and its many aging and vacant properties, the potential exists to convert some of these into productive use to meet local needs, should a funding program become available (and depending on cost of remediation).

Recommendations for Growth Management

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Growth Management Policies	58. Land use policies, ordinances, and regulatory measures should continue to be a key implementation tool in protecting open space and natural areas.	High
	59. Policies and guidelines encouraging the conversion of greyfield and brownfield sites into parks and open space should be considered in the City of Norcross’ next Comprehensive Plan.	Medium

7.4 Assessment of Existing City Owned Green Space for Park Usage

The City’s Park and Green Space Inventory identified three significant parcels that were owned outright by the City and which were likely to be targeted for future development as parks or green space because of one or more constraints which would limit other types of development. It is important to note though, that there is no requirement to convert any of these parcels into a park or green space. The following assessment, however, is based on the assumption that they would be used as such.

Fickling Parcel / Fickling Pond

The parcel of land known by most as Fickling Pond is a 6.5 acre lot that contains a substantial detention facility that is in poor condition. The surrounding land is steeply graded and heavily covered in both native species of mature trees and understory including invasive species such as privet. The streams that run through this property (two) are degraded and in need of bank stabilization. The pond is currently

overtopping its bank on a regular basis as the original outfall structure is broken, clogged and or missing. In addition, the pond has filled with silt and no longer functions to retain the volume that it once did. The dam is small and overgrown with young trees. Trees are not typically permitted on dams and this dam does not currently meet any known minimum standards for quality and condition. The small size and volume of the pond and dam make it exempt from the Safe Dams Act. Two recent reports solicited by the City offer various options and budgets for dealing with the dam.

Based on the location, grades and size of this parcel the site will not support any substantial amenities such as a soccer field. However, the location does appear to meet the requirements of the ARC guidelines in that it provides a location for a neighborhood park within a half-mile of a large number of homes. In particular, many homes in the far north of Norcross Hills are more than a half-mile from Thrasher and Johnson-Dean Parks.

A neighborhood park at this location would be appropriate and based on the needs and survey results could or should include walking trails, green spaces and potentially a small play area. Although the provision of a few off-street parking spaces would make the site more advantageous for some users, it is not a requirement. In fact, having only on-street parking would help to keep the focus of this park on service to the adjacent homes and neighborhood, which is very appropriate given the location.

The City should endeavor to obtain a master plan for a park at this location and implement the standard public input requirements as part of the process. The plan should address the issues and budgets identified in the various reports the City has already undertaken for this parcel as well as the needs and recommendations in this Parks Master Plan.

Suggested Programming:

- This park would be most appropriately used for passive recreation and possibly limited active uses such as a fitness circuit or small play area.
- One option might be to link this park with the activities and management plan for the Johnson-Dean parcel and include a remote outdoor classroom and educational areas within this park (since this park offers a new and different type of environment; i.e., wetlands/pond).

Recommended Improvements:

- Install a fence around the detention pond for safety and to limit liability.
- Install a temporary inexpensive outfall structure to stop current overtopping of the dam.
- Install a pedestrian bridge and trail system to access the park.
- Install a loop trail.
- Install an outdoor fitness circuit paralleling the trail.
- In consultation with the local community, consider the installation of an appropriate (low impact) style nature themed playground. The design should fit well in the natural setting and be minimal in size and capacity (e.g., a design with more climbing elements, raised balance beams coursing through the trees, and nature and earth tone colors, etc.).
- A tree house / nature observatory would be a good fit for an alternative play area in this park.
- Install benches, bench swings, signage and trash receptacles as appropriate.

Special Considerations:

- This site has a special concern in the existing pond and earthen dam. The Master Plan does not take a position on whether or not the removal of the dam is in the best interest of the City or its residents. However, it is important to point out that saving the pond would create a water hazard that would greatly increase safety concerns for the City. Typically, most detention ponds are fenced in to limit liability. However, the pond is certainly an important part of why many residents purchased the adjacent property and its removal would likely bring about litigation.
- This parcel of land abuts the rear yards of several homes. Privacy and security are likely to be important issues. Unlike a highly visible park surrounded by roads and fronting a number of homes, this park will not be readily visible for security. Policing it would require an officer/ranger to get out of his patrol car and physically walk the site or trails. Any active play areas should be visible to the street if possible.

Mitchell Road Parcel

The Mitchell Road parcel is a 10.5 acre piece of land in an isolated location south of the City. The land is relatively flat and substantial parts flood once or twice annually.

The site is well positioned to fulfill many of the active recreational needs identified in this Master Plan. Located in the southern service area of the City, this site could well serve the mostly Hispanic population of the area. Its size would support two regulation soccer fields (or informal play fields) and the associated facilities suggested previously in this Master Plan. The remaining spaces could easily support additional amenities include basketball courts, bathrooms, pavilions, and even a community garden. In fact, this land is large enough to provide a group of related recreational services that would meet many of the needs and desires of neighboring citizens.

Suggested Programming:

- Programming of the park must include the provision of at least one if not two full soccer fields (largely for informal, unorganized usage) or one large and two small fields. Events focused on the Hispanic community may be also programmed in these open greenspaces.
- Programming should also consider opportunities to place basketball and volleyball courts in remaining adjacent land.
- If the interest is deemed to be high enough, provisions for a community garden space maybe warranted in this location.
- The City should approach local Hispanic organizations to consider teaming partnerships for some limited programming of the amenities in this park including courts, fields and pavilions.

Recommended Improvements:

- Install soccer fields / informal play fields.
- Install basketball courts.
- Install fencing, lighting and other security features, as deemed appropriate.
- Install bathrooms and a pavilion.
- Install parking, sidewalks, etc.
- Install a playground.
- The appropriateness of this location for use as a community garden should be discussed

with local residents / organizations.

- Due to its proximity to utility corridors and other green spaces, this site has the potential to be a key destination and linkage in the recommended Connectivity Strategy. Recreational trail development is recommended.

Special Considerations:

- Much of the property is in the FEMA 100 year flood plain and the western side includes a blue line stream that is deeply incised with eroding banks. The nature of the 'flood zone' and 'flood way' will greatly restrict the developable areas of the site for structures, etc. The site development will likely require a "no-rise" certificate from FEMA to alleviate any concerns over impacts to down-stream flood zones.
- Required state and local Stream Buffers will greatly reduce the usable area of the site. The City may want to endeavor to have these buffers reduced as the existing functioning buffers are certainly less than current requirements.
- The land has clearly been used as a waste dump for concrete, asphalt and other construction related waste. In many places along the creek, the concrete, soil, etc. is more than ten feet deep and covered with kudzu. The cost to remove this debris will be many thousands if not hundreds of thousands of dollars and no substantive use of this property will be able to take place until such a cleanup has been completed.
- The City, if it has not already done so, may need to perform in-depth environmental assessments of this property to determine the extents and makeup of the materials dumped on the site. It is possible that hazardous materials could also be present given the depth of materials witnessed on site.

Pinnacle Parcel

The 5.7 acre parcel of land bordering Pinnacle Office Park is an undeveloped landlocked tract that is currently difficult to access. The land sits south and west of a beautiful piece of land that contains a lake and perimeter trails and is adjacent to an actively used commercial parcel (north). Southward lies a townhome development that was recently built and an overhead transmission corridor of a substantial nature.

The usefulness of this land is greatly tied to the redevelopment of the area surrounding it and the consideration of the transmission corridors for future multi-use trails. The various studies undertaken recently for the area calls for the adjacent commercial lands to be redeveloped into an "Asian Village".

Suggested Programming:

- Green space preservation until redevelopment occurs.
- Given its proximity to utility and green space corridors, this site has the potential to become part of the recommended linked trail network over the longer-term.

Recommended Improvements:

- Secured, minimum improved access for periodic inspection, safety, and security.
- Recreational trail development is recommended as part of the long-term Connectivity Strategy.

Special Considerations:

- The property is difficult to access and security may become an issue. Establishing some point of secured entry would be advantageous to monitoring the property.
- The usefulness of this property is directly tied to adjacent developments. At present there is not a practical way to utilize this property. Future parks designs and plans undertaken on this parcel should be well coordinated with master plans for the area. At the time this Master Plan was drafted, the TAD #2 plans for the area show this property as “green space”.

Recommendations for Existing Green Spaces

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Fickling Parcel	60. Implement an action plan to have this park designed, including a public input process.	Low
	61. Construct amenities at the Fickling Parcel (as per the proposed park design), with a focus on trails and passive activities.	Low
	62. Determine what course of action should be taken regarding the maintenance of the existing pond/dam.	High
Mitchell Road Parcel	63. Undertake a detailed cost analysis and environmental assessment of the efforts that will be required to make the site usable. Evaluate the cost vs. benefits of using this site vs. another.	High
	64. Remove waste materials from the site.	High
	65. Pending the outcome of the above steps (assessment and clean-up), implement an action plan to have a park designed for the Mitchell Road Parcel, including a public input process involving the Hispanic Community.	High
	66. Construct amenities at the Mitchell Road Parcel to complete a park including soccer fields / informal play fields and other recreational amenities.	High
Pinnacle Point Parcel	67. Improve secured access to the site and monitor plans by others for the surrounding area, with a view towards connecting this site to a City-wide trail system in the longer-term.	Low

7.5 Natural Features Review

Important natural features are to be considered for preservation and/or inclusion with active or passive park usage. Factors to be analyzed include environmental significance, importance to greater environmental systems, and conditions that warrant protection for the health, safety, and welfare of residents.

There are only a handful of significant natural features in Norcross that are worthy of special consideration. The most prominent are the two tributaries to Crooked Creek and Beaver Ruin Creek (potential greenway and trail connections are discussed in Section 8). In addition, there is an historic farm in the northeast quadrant of Norcross, a “late successional forest” in the Johnson-Dean estate, and the State Champion American Elm Tree that make up the remaining well known features. A lesser known, but very important natural feature, is the Eastern Continental Divide (ECD), which crosses through Norcross and divides watersheds between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Finally there are a number of significant trees throughout Norcross that are relevant to the historic qualities and setting of the City.

Tributaries of Crooked Creek in Norcross

There are several tributaries to Crooked Creek that begin in Norcross. Perhaps the most important includes a section of stream (FEMA Trib. No. 2.1.1) that passes behind Rossie Brundage Park. This particular stream reach was identified in a Gwinnett County Watershed Implementation Plan as an important creek and riparian zone that needs to be protected and/or perhaps purchased to ensure its preservation. This tributary, its flood zones, riparian buffers, and wooded acreage are significant and could potentially support a future trail connection running from Norcross to the Chattahoochee River National Wildlife Area. As the creek trends north and crosses Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, its flood zone becomes significant and more than ample to support trails and preservation. Preservation of the section within Norcross would, at a minimum, require strict enforcement of existing stream buffers. However, guaranteeing its protection would require the purchase of land behind a number of homes and businesses in the northwest quadrant of the City. Such a purchase could also be used to connect western neighborhoods of the city to Rossie Brundage Park via connecting trails. Use of this tributary as a preserved greenway would help retain corridors for wildlife movement in and out of the City.

The other significant tributary to Crooked Creek (FEMA Trib. No. 2.1) is a section that joins both Fickling Pond and the Johnson-Dean estate (via a wet weather conveyance). This tributary drains a smaller basin and is less degraded than the previously discussed tributary. This section of stream could potentially be used to connect the proposed park at Fickling Pond to other areas of the City. At a minimum, the stream should be preserved as a greenway connecting greenspace at Fickling Pond to the Chattahoochee River corridor.

There is a unique possibility to connect Rossie Brundage, Johnson-Dean and Fickling by using these corridors and crossing Holcomb Bridge Road.

Beaver Ruin Creek and Tributaries

Just southeast of the ECD is the headwaters of Beaver Ruin Creek. It physically begins a few hundred feet north of Buford Highway and quickly becomes a deeply incised and fast flowing creek with flood zones over 100 feet in width. Hundreds of miles from Norcross, the creek eventually becomes part of the Altamaha River and drains into the Atlantic Ocean around St. Simons Island.

The drainage basin for Beaver Ruin Creek is critically over-developed and resulting flooding from high-intensity rainfall events are frequent, but short in duration. Adjacent to the northern edge of Cemetery Field, the creek is narrow and shallow, typically having only one or two inches of water. However, as it flows south paralleling Mitchell Road, Beaver Ruin Creek becomes wide and deep with pools of water that are several feet deep and stream banks that are ten feet high. Sand deposits and collapsed banks

are evidence clearly showing the creek is rapidly degrading.

Tributary No. 2 to Beaver Ruin Creek parallels Lancelot Drive and connects southwestern neighborhood drainage basins into the main branch of Beaver Ruin Creek. This corridor provides opportunities to connect a greenway from the west side of the City near Best Friend Park to the main greenway of the main branch of Beaver Ruin Creek.

Despite the challenges, the opportunities that Beaver Ruin Creek present are great. This creek parallels a heavily used collector road and runs through mostly underused and/or vacant transitional residential properties and industrial sites. Due to frequent flooding and expansive wetland habitats, much of these parcels cannot be fully developed. There is a great opportunity here to create a significant greenway and multi-use trail system that could connect the center of the City to its southernmost boundary and future gateway at the Asian Village, which is planned for Pinnacle Point. The development of this “vision” can only be accomplished through land donations and acquisitions.

Reps Miller and North Peachtree Farm Parcels

A set of parcels lie in the northeastern quadrant of the City that are held in a few estates, including Colonel Adams. The combined lands include more than 14 acres of well preserved residential farm land and includes houses, several small out buildings, barns and more than 12 acres of both active and fallow farm land. Remnants of farm terraces, once prevalent throughout the area, are the only known examples that remain in the City limits and one of very few examples left in the County. Combined with an adjacent parcel of land that is still being actively farmed, the lands would create a substantial opportunity for greenspace preservation.

If this land is not purchased for preservation, it is highly likely that it will be purchased for a residential-style development. The parcel’s location and surroundings make other uses inappropriate. The current market for residential development in Norcross should result in a substantially reduced price. The parcel is currently listed for sale and a sign is posted on the property.

Appropriate uses for this parcel include a senior activity center, nature education center, a working CSA Farm (i.e., Community Supported Agriculture –share based farming), a community garden, educational gardens, preservation, or some combination of these uses. Additionally, the location of this parcel could fill a gap indicated in the ARC requirements for a having a park within 0.5 miles of all residents. Perhaps most importantly though, this land would be well suited as a turning point or major destination along the planned multi-use path, which is part of both the Norcross Town Center LCI study and Gwinnett County long-range Greenway Plan.

Johnson-Dean Forests

There are approximately six-and-a-half acres of wooded lands that are part of the Johnson-Dean parcel. The quality and age of these woods is considered unique and current plans call for this acreage to be preserved as required with the purchase of the land. Please see the extensive studies and reports prepared in the Johnson-Dean Master Plan for details. Also see previous sections of this report on Johnson-Dean Park for opportunities in regards to these beautiful wooded areas.

State Champion Elm Tree

The state champion elm tree is perhaps the most notable and clearly visible natural element the City has within its borders. Its protection and preservation is currently well programmed and managed by the City. The opportunities with regard to the state champion elm tree are addressed in previous sections of this plan (see Betty Mauldin Park).

Eastern Continental Divide (ECD)

“The ECD, in conjunction with other continental divides of North America, demarcates two watersheds of the Atlantic Ocean: the Gulf of Mexico watershed and the Atlantic Seaboard watershed. Prior to 1760, the ECD represented the boundary between British and French colonial possessions in North America. The ECD runs south-southwest from the Eastern Triple Divide in Pennsylvania to the watershed of the Kissimmee River, which drains via Lake Okeechobee and the Okeechobee Waterway to both the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean” (Information Source: Wikipedia).

In Norcross, the ECD runs roughly north-to-south and in particular along the eastern side of Thrasher Park. The ECD is essentially the highest point running between the two watersheds and meanders through the City mostly along the railroad line. Other than ensuring that no major grading takes place along the ECD to disturb the ridge, there is little in the way of preservation that is needed. However, there are great opportunities to introduce this interesting geological feature into the City’s efforts to increase tourism and interest in the area.

Opportunities include the addition of interpretive signs and perhaps a unique interactive art piece. An interactive feature might encourage a user to place their feet on icons, with one icon on each side of the ECD and signage describing the significance of the user’s activity. Several of these features could be placed throughout the City where sidewalks, etc., cross the ECD. If nothing else, this impressive fact should be prominently included in various locations that list the City’s cultural, environmental and historical facts, including the City’s website, historical signs, tours, etc.

Norcross Significant Trees

The City has endeavored to perform an urban forestry survey and has located and collected data on most of the significant trees located on City property. Some of these trees are over a hundred years old and are many inches in diameter. Although all trees ultimately need to be replaced, many trees live for hundreds of years without significant problems. Protection, preservation, and planning for replacement of large and historical trees are always high priorities with residents. Of the trees inventoried, there does not appear to be a large area, other than the Johnson-Dean property, with a significantly high number of special trees that would warrant particular consideration for preservation as a greenspace or park. However, the continued preservation of street trees and other trees in various parks and public spaces is very important to the overall health of the City.

Currently the City is doing an exceptional job in preserving its important trees. Its efforts include contracts with arborists to maintain the State Champion Elm, implementing and enforcing a tree ordinance, and obtaining the opinion of a certified arborist on the conditions of damaged City trees before acting is exemplary. As mentioned earlier, Norcross has been designated as a Tree City USA Community since 2005.

The largest opportunity in this area would be to inventory specimen or special character trees in the City that are located on private property. This effort could start on a macro-level by reviewing aerial photograph and conducting inspections from outside these properties. As potentially significant trees are identified, the owners could be approached to obtain permission to access the property for the purpose of data collection. The data collected could be used to help guide development and enforce provisions of the tree ordinance pertaining to special trees.

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Tributaries of Crooked Creek and Beaver Ruin Creek	68. Undertake a scoping study, including an in-depth field analysis of the Crooked Creek and Beaver Ruin tributary corridors, to determine the likely cost and feasibility of creating a functioning greenway and trail system along these creeks. (see also Section 8)	High
	69. Pending the outcome of the above study (Crooked Creek and Beaver Ruin tributaries), establish a policy and budget and obtain public input in support of the acquisition and preservation of the land that would be required to create an effective greenway and trail system. (see also Section 8 of this Master Plan)	Medium
	70. Once the land along the Crooked Creek and Beaver Ruin tributaries has been secured, the City should endeavor to obtain a master plan for this corridor including the specific trail alignments, trail heads, and points of interest to be preserved. (see also Section 8 of this Master Plan)	Low
Reps Miller and North Peachtree Farm Parcels	71. The City should attempt to acquire or otherwise preserve the Reps Miller and North Peachtree Farm Parcels as part of the long range needs of this Master Plan. The offer should be contingent on a due diligence period including public input.	High
	72. If the Reps Miller and North Peachtree Farm Parcels can be acquired, the City should endeavor to obtain a master plan for the future development of the property that includes a substantial amount of public input.	Low
State Champion Elm Tree	73. Protect, preserve and bring attention to the State Champion Elm Tree in Betty Mauldin Park.	High
Eastern Continental Divide	74. Call attention to the Eastern Continental Divide in Norcross by using signage, inclusion in various informative texts (e.g., City website, etc.), and implementation of interactive artistic features that focus on this natural feature.	Low
Significant Trees	75. Inventory significant trees on private property and implement policies to actively protect significant trees on both public and private property. Aggressively enforce the tree ordinance.	High

Section 8: Trail/Greenway Analysis

Building on concepts and recommendations from previous sections of this Plan, this section establishes a connectivity plan for trails and greenways (also referred to as linear parks) within Norcross and surrounding lands. As defined in Section 1:

'Greenways' are linear corridors composed of protected open space used for conservation and recreational purposes. While the "riparian buffer" area adjacent to most rivers and creeks can also be considered a greenway, this Plan focuses on areas that are enhanced for recreational uses, such as multi-use trails for pedestrian and non-motorized cycling uses.

'Trails' is a broader term that encompasses greenways and can also include corridors, such as city streets, public utilities, or abandoned rail lines.

8.1 The Need for a Trails and Greenway System

The benefits of trails and greenways are many. In addition to recreational uses, multi-use trails can also provide active transportation routes. As noted by the ARC in its 2040 Regional Resource Plan, *"Travel by bicycle or foot creates a more physically active population, reduces motor-vehicle related congestion, and creates a stronger sense of place for local residents."*

Recently, the Norcross Imagination Task Force (2009) identified 'walkways/pathways' as one of its top priorities. The intention would be to connect the Norcross community and provide a way for residents and visitors to enjoy the outdoors either via bicycle or on foot, all the while promoting more active lifestyles and a healthier environment. Specific suggestions included the development of well maintained pathways, sidewalks, walking trails and bike paths that would help to build upon the City's old town feel, promote walking, and enhance local live/work opportunities.

Trails and greenways received the second highest importance rating in the community survey; however, this item received the lowest satisfaction rating, indicating a significant service gap. Walking or hiking for leisure ranked as the most popular activity in the community survey (78%) and trails – particularly paved multi-use trails – were seen to be a very high priority as well. Many students also indicated a lack of transportation as a key barrier in participating in activities. Improved access by way of greenways and trails to existing and future parks could potentially lead to greater participation in recreational activities.

From a policy perspective, it is important to note that the Norcross 2030 Comprehensive Plan contains the following policies relative to greenways, trails, bike lanes, and connectivity:

- Promote walkable, safe neighborhoods.
- Encourage walking, biking, car-pooling, and/or sustainable transportation choices.
- Ensure connectivity between road network, public transit, and pedestrian/bike paths.
- Our neighborhoods will be interactive communities where people have easy access to schools, parks, residences and businesses through walkways, bike paths, roads and public transportation.
- Transportation and greenway corridors will be supported by the community standards of aesthetics, urban design and environmental stewardship.
- Encourage common open space, walking paths and bicycle lanes that are easily accessible.

8.2 Trails and Greenway Context

While there may be many informal trails in the City – those established by residents as footpaths and cut-throughs – there are no formal trails or greenways inside the City’s boundaries.

The only formal trails connecting Norcross to other areas were completed by the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation (GDOT). A multi-use path in the form of a paved trail along the road (separated by a curb) extends between the northeast corner of the City (near Norcross High School) and Pinckneyville Park. To the northwest of the City, another multi-use path runs along Peachtree Parkway from Holcomb Bridge Road to just south of the Chattahoochee River.

Gwinnett County’s greenway system is not nearly as well developed as its parks; its first two greenway projects were led by the cities of Suwanee and Lilburn. However, the County does maintain several lengthy multi-use and nature/walking trails within many of its larger open space and community parks (such as Graves Park to the south).

Norcross is a partner in the implementation of the Gwinnett County Open Space and Greenway Master Plan, which was prepared in 2002 to guide development, maintenance and acquisition of land for the proposed trails system. The responsibilities for the Plan’s implementation are shared, depending on the project. However, no progress has been made on any proposed trails in Norcross as many of these projects were deemed to be lower priorities within the County-wide context, while others are more challenging to realize.

Nevertheless, the County’s emphasis on greenway development is changing. The primary goal of the Gwinnett County Parks & Recreation Capital Improvement Plan (2007) related to greenways. Specifically, it was recommended that the County “*work toward achieving pedestrian and bicycle linkage or connectivity between parks and other points of interest such as schools, libraries, institutional land uses, and commercial nodes.*” In addition, the County was to “*work with the Department of Transportation to encourage the construction of sidewalks and/or the paving of wider shoulders to assist in the development of a ‘linked Gwinnett’, wherever feasible and where full trail development is not reasonably achievable.*”

The development of greenways is often, but not always, a lengthy and costly affair, with the resolution of land assembly and/or easements involving dozens of land-owners requiring the most effort. As such, the expansion of the County’s greenway system has been phased in over a period of time, with the easiest and most obvious routes being implemented first. These routes are generally those that build upon existing greenways, follow established corridors, and link County parks together. None of the proposed greenway projects identified in the Gwinnett County Parks & Recreation Capital Improvement Plan (2007) are within two miles of Norcross.

In addition to its off-road greenway system, the GDOT is pursuing some off-road, multi-use trails that run parallel to roads (similar to the one that connects to Pinckneyville Park). These are typically installed when roads are reconstructed; the GDOT does not currently have any plans for new off-road trails in Norcross.

There are no on-road designated bicycle lanes within the City’s road network. Bike lanes are one element in promoting active transportation, and are often the only viable way to create connections between destinations for cyclists. Bicycle “lanes” are designated lanes located on shared roadways,

separated from traffic by marked lines. They are considered to be safer than bicycle “routes”, which also share roadways, but do not have their own lane of travel. Posted signs are used instead. Nevertheless, traffic levels and speeds experienced in Norcross can create safety concerns for cyclists, and the use of bike lanes should be restricted to collector roads and lower-speed arterial roads. Off-road trails or cycling tracks that are separated from travel lanes and sidewalks, through curbing or similar applications, are the preferred solutions for accommodating cycling and pedestrian travel.

Another concern in Norcross is that sidewalks do not operate as a complete network. Many roads in the City have sidewalks along only one side, intermittent sidewalks, or no sidewalks at all. Furthermore, at many signalized intersections, crosswalks are not available or limited to one side of the street. Improvements to pedestrian connections were a key recommendation of the Norcross Activity Center LCI. The 2030 Comprehensive Plan also suggested that this lack of connectivity could be alleviated by establishing policies to require connections in new developments, as well as modifications to older areas where there are not currently connections.

8.3 Planning for Trails and Greenways

The Gwinnett County Open Space and Greenway Master Plan uses two categories for off-road trails: primary and secondary. Primary trails are those that run for long distances and are served by many branch trails; most follow major streams or utility corridors and connect to prominent destinations. Secondary trails are generally shorter than primary trails and connect neighborhoods, commercial districts, and/or single facilities to the primary trails.

Like parks, a hierarchy of trail types can be established to guide the development and recognition of trails that embody different designs and accommodate different uses and intensity of use(s). The following classification system is recommended for Norcross:

- Greenways (Multi-use trail) – This primary trail designation applies to major greenways and trails that accommodate a variety of trails uses and provide important connections through multiple neighborhoods within the City. These trails attract a high intensity of use and are designed to the highest standard, including paved surfaces, trailside amenities, parking, and sufficient widths to accommodate multi-modal users (12 feet, wherever possible). Greenway corridors should be about 50 feet wide, but as narrow as 25 feet in width through neighborhoods.
- Recreation Trails – Recreational trails are generally located in green spaces and open space properties that permit pedestrian access. As these trails occur most often in natural settings, they have a different character than greenways, including pervious surfaces and few trailside amenities. Where green corridors do not exist, recreational trails can be placed along roadways (with appropriate separation and curbing), similar to the off-road pathway established by GDOT that connects Norcross High School to Pinckneyville Park. This latter type of recreational trail tends to have an impervious surface and can accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists.
- Cycleways (Bike Lanes & Routes) – Cycleways include designated bike lanes on roadways, as well as bike routes that are shared with other vehicles (where bike lanes are not achievable). Cycleways should be located on collector roads and lower-speed arterial roads and contribute to the City’s active transportation goals. Although they are encouraged, Cycleways are the responsibility of transportation departments and are beyond the scope of this study.

- Walkways – Walkways are short connections located within parks, boulevards, unopened road allowances, etc. that improve pedestrian access between streets, parks, and/or trails. Due to the minor nature of these connections, walkways are not comprehensively addressed through this Master Plan.

Recommendations for the development of Greenways and Recreational Trails are contained later in this section.

The selection of greenways and trails routes involves the identification of land constraints, opportunities, and key destinations.

Aside from trails that can be developed along roadways, opportunities to establish trails and greenways are closely linked to the protection of linear and natural corridors. Major opportunities with possible value or contribution to greenway or trail development include:

- Stream corridors and floodplain buffers (Crooked Creek and Beaver Ruin Creek)
- Utility corridors (e.g., electrical power lines)
- Abandoned rail lines ('rails to trails') or rail corridors with sufficient width and separation
- Areas in need of redevelopment / revitalization (CIDs)
- Future development areas
- Areas of scenic interest

In Norcross, utility conveyances have a high potential for greenway and trail development. The major benefit is that utility usage typically forbids the construction of homes and buildings leaving a relatively wide undeveloped corridor. The second benefit is that because the land cannot be built upon and usage is severely restricted, it is very often considered less valuable land making it easier to buy should the need arise.

However, these benefits do not come without corresponding challenges. The first challenge is that most often utility companies do not own the property and instead have only restricted easements across private properties. The second and more difficult challenge is that private property owners generally are not permitted to have publicly accessible amenities on their property. In most cases, homeowners insurance will not allow this due to liability issues. In these cases, each individual residential property owner must either convey or otherwise transfer the required property to the ownership of a public entity. The final challenge is overcoming the public perception that greenways lead to increased crime and decreased property values (despite considerable research to the contrary). An effective public informational/educational program is key to addressing these concerns and gaining the support of neighbors and residents.

Some items that can be seen as constraints to greenway or trail development include:

- Highways and arterial roads with few signalized crossings or pedestrian over/underpasses
- Creeks/rivers without suitable crossings
- Active railways with narrow corridors and insufficient separation
- Areas of environmental sensitivity
- Areas of heavy industry

Key destinations for trail routing includes parks, open space properties, downtown Norcross, schools, and religious institutions, all of which should have connections to residential and commercial/employment areas.

In terms of trail and greenway planning, design, and development, some key principles include:

- Trail routes should be safe, accessible, identifiable, and connected.
- Trails should be located on public property unless suitable long-term agreements (ideally in the form of an easement) can be reached with private landowners. Greenway development cannot begin until all land is assembled and, therefore, a continued focus on land acquisition is required.
- The trail system should accommodate both destination-oriented and looped routes. Looped trails should be accessible at more than one point. Trails should maximize connections between residential, institutional, and commercial areas, including key civic destinations such as parks and schools.
- Consideration should be given not only to trails within the City, but also creating connections to networks beyond Norcross` boundaries, including County parks and the Chattahoochee River.
- Greenways should accommodate non-motorized users, including walkers, joggers, and cyclists of all ages. Recreational trails may or may not accommodate cyclists, depending on the design of the trail and the environmental sensitivity of the area through which it transects. Cycleways are intended for cyclists only (and vehicles where it is a shared roadway).
- When designing trails and road crossings, mid-block crossings should be avoided wherever possible. Safety of road crossings is paramount.
- Areas of ecological importance and sensitivity shall be respected and honored.
- The terrain should be suitable for trail construction and minimizing vegetative loss. Where slopes are excessive, handrails and/or steps should be considered.
- Trailside amenities (e.g., trash receptacles, benches, shade, etc.) and access to safe parking are critical design considerations for greenways. Signage should be provided for all trail types, with opportunities for interpretive kiosks at key points.
- Lighting of greenways can be considered (to improve safety, where appropriate) but is not a required element.

Recommendations for the Planning of Greenways and Trails

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Greenway and Trail Planning	76. Create “walkable” communities through the development of attractive, safe, convenient and practical walking trails and sidewalks that connect neighborhoods to local parks, recreation, culture, and civic facilities and that make the choice to walk or cycle the preferred options for all residents.	High
	77. During the planning stages, foster stakeholder partnerships to enhance the long-term stewardship of trails and greenways.	High
	78. The City should consider developing a community bicycle and pedestrian plan that builds upon this Parks Master Plan by assessing policies, standards, education/awareness initiatives, and current and future infrastructure requirements. In the interim, and to assist the City in its efforts toward becoming a certified Green Community, the City should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate bicycle racks at all parks and community facilities (e.g., recreation centers, libraries, schools, etc.); and • Encourage business to provide bicycle parking (Suwanee requires businesses to have one bike parking space for every five parking spaces). 	Medium
	79. New roadway construction and improvements to existing roadways should include consideration of adequate and safe infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians (i.e., on-road bike lanes, pedestrian sidewalks, and crosswalks at signalized intersections), where appropriate and feasible.	Medium

8.4 Connectivity Strategy

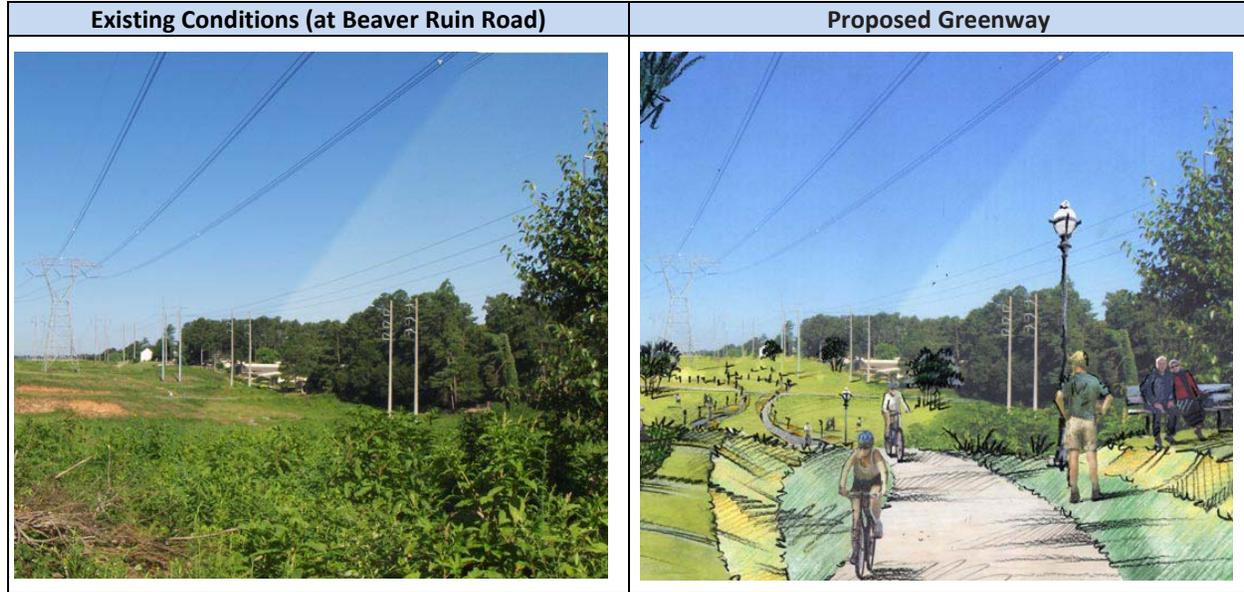
The system of greenway and recreational trails proposed for Norcross is largely predicated on the use of utility corridors and stream easements, with a focus on connecting key community focal points. The only exception to this is in the connection of the downtown area to the southern portion of the City across Buford Highway where connectivity relies on sidewalks and proposed bike lanes.

Due to undeveloped utility and stream corridors, trail opportunities are greatest in south Norcross, but connections are also possible in north Norcross; pedestrian movement through downtown will primarily rely on the existing sidewalk network. The rail line that transects Norcross also presents an opportunity for trail or greenway development.

Many of the recommended routes have been proposed through previous studies (e.g., Norcross Activity Center, Livable Centers Initiative; Norcross Town Center, Livable Centers Initiative; Jimmy Carter / Buford Highway Redevelopment Plan; Gwinnett County Open Space and Greenway Master Plan; etc.),

but have not been examined within the context of the entire City of Norcross and its recreational needs. In fact, the following graphic (taken from the Norcross Activity Center, Livable Centers Initiative) provides an illustration of what a greenway could look like along the Georgia Power corridor.

Example of Greenway Development along a Powerline Easement



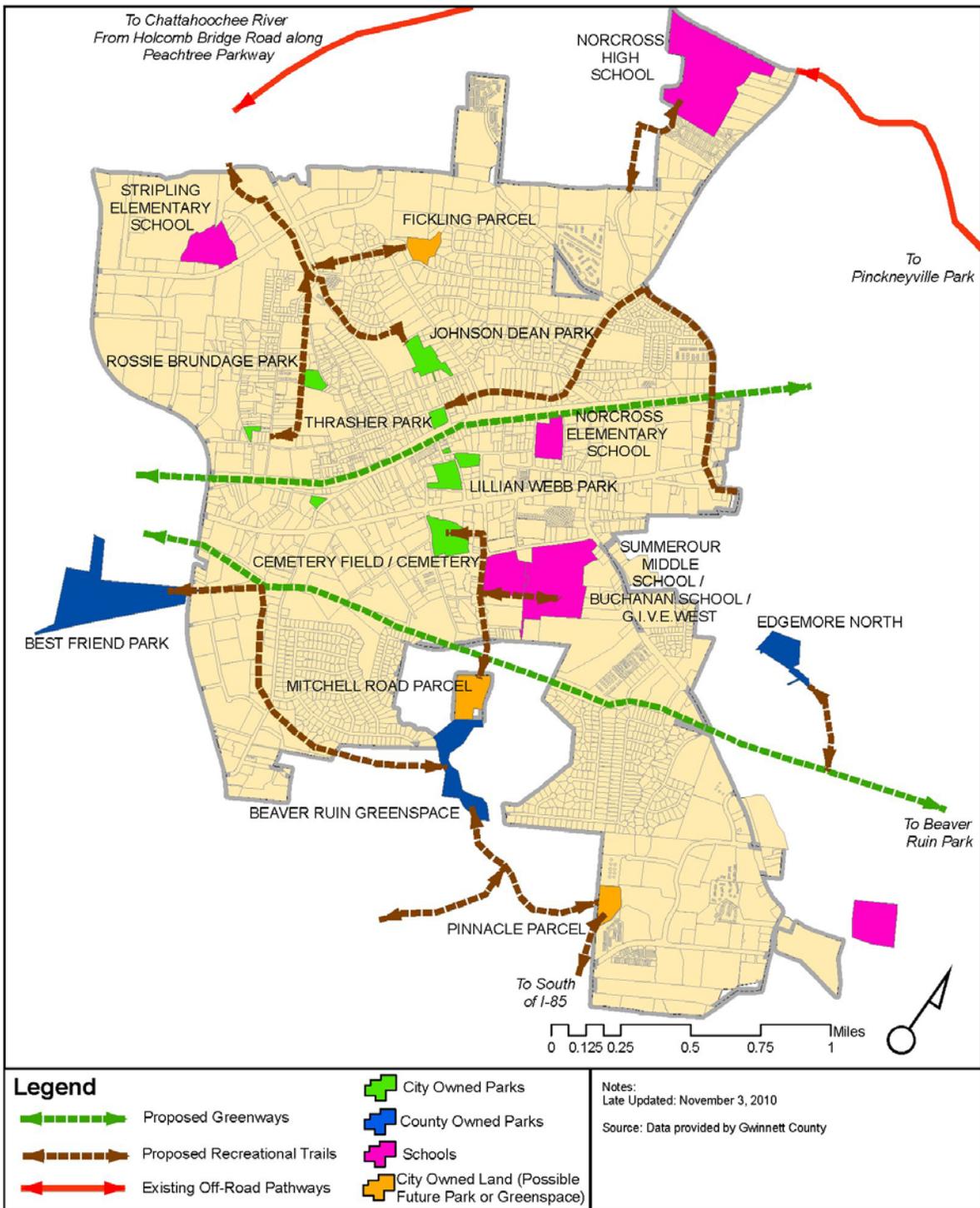
Source: Norcross Activity Center, Livable Centers Initiative (2008)

The intent of the pedestrian and bicycle Connectivity Strategy is to use greenways and recreational trails to link together parks and other points of interests, such as schools, residential neighborhoods and business districts. The opportunities, constraints, and principles discussed in the previous pages have been taken into account in establishing the connectivity plan. Another consideration relates to the goal established for “Linear Parks”, which are intended to provide corridors for trails and greenways. A greenway system should be developed such that it can be accessed from approximately one mile of any residence in the City of Norcross. This goal can be achieved in south Norcross but is a challenge in the north, where viable corridors are not as prevalent.

In terms of implementation, it bears noting that the greenway/trail system will be developed incrementally, as funding and opportunities permit. The long-term goal is to eventually connect the City’s trails to the regional system that is gradually being built by Gwinnett County. Realignment and adjustments to Norcross’s connectivity plan may be necessary due to challenges relating to terrain, cost, and agreements/easements. Furthermore, additional evaluation and agreements/acquisition will be required in order to implement most of the recommended trails and greenways.

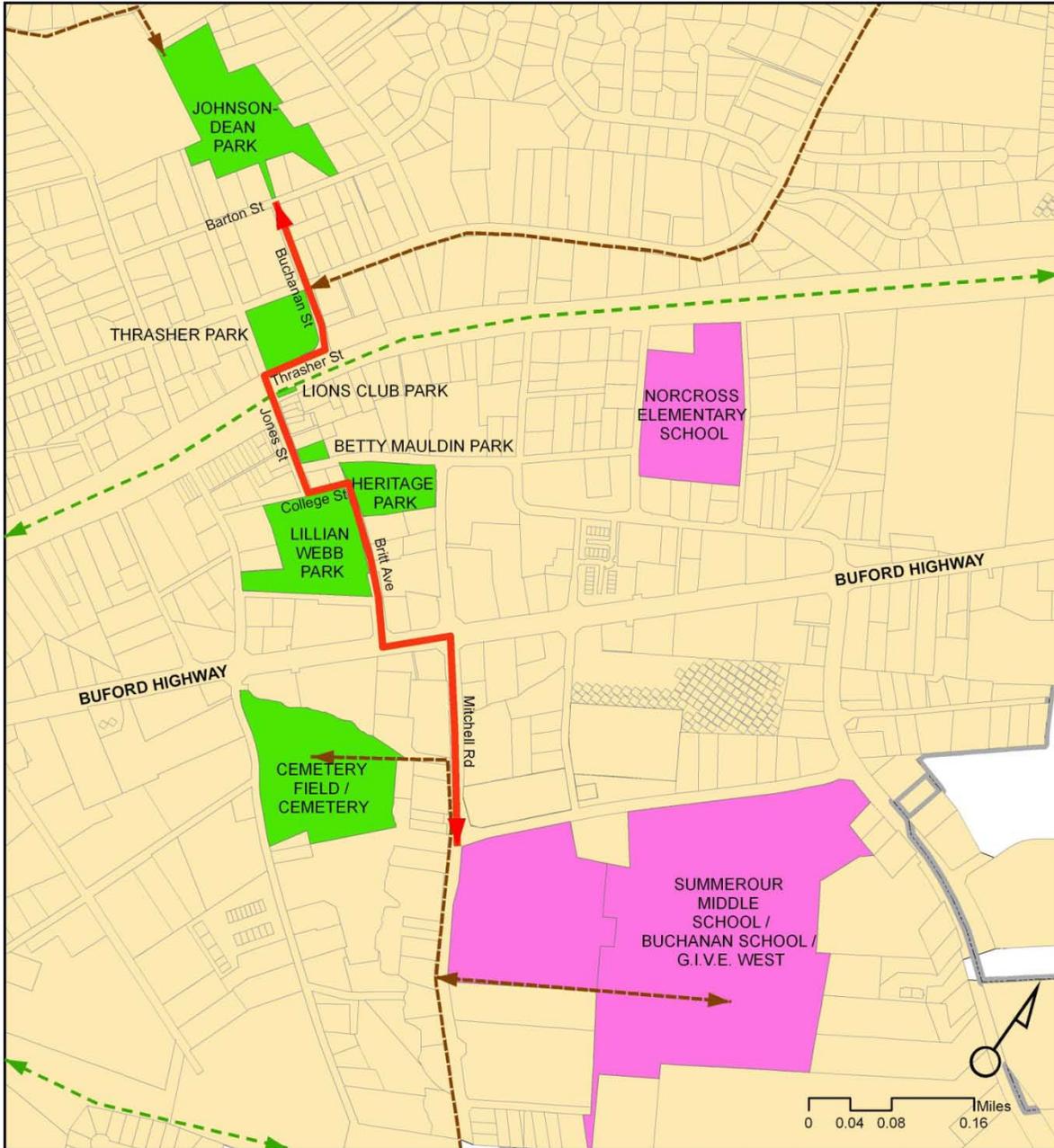
In particular, one element seen as important to creating a high quality link from downtown to the southern portions of the City is some form of pedestrian overpass for Buford Highway near the intersection of Mitchell Street. However the cost of such a project is likely to be in the millions of dollars and subject to both State and GDOT involvement for oversight and funding. **As such, the Connectivity Strategy is intended to be conceptual only and subject to change.**

The proposed Connectivity Strategy is illustrated on **Map 6**. And 6a.



Parks Master Plan
Map 6 - Connectivity Strategy





Legend

- Primary North-South On-Street/ Sidewalk Pedestrian Connection
- Proposed Greenways
- Proposed Recreational Trails
- City Owned Parks
- Schools

Notes:
 Late Updated: January 26, 2011
 Source: Data provided by Gwinnett County



Parks Master Plan
 Map 6a - Connectivity Strategy (Downtown Area)



Potential Short-term Connections – Greenways

Proposed Greenway Section	Description	Key Destinations	Approximate Distance
Georgia Power corridor	From Jimmy Carter Blvd. to Beaver Ruin Rd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitchell Road Parcel (north end) • Connections to proposed recreational trails 	2 miles
Rail Corridor	From Jimmy Carter Blvd. to Langford Rd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thrasher Park • South Point Park • Downtown • Norcross ES • Pinckneyville Park (longer-term) 	2 miles

Potential Short-term Connections – Recreational Trails

Proposed Recreational Trail Section	Description	Key Destinations	Approximate Distance
Best Friend Park - East	From Best Friend Park to Georgia Power corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Friend Park • Proposed Greenway 	1/4 mile
Beaver Ruin Greenspace	From North Norcross Tucker Road at Georgia Power corridor to Beaver Ruin Greenspace (along Beaver Ruin Creek tributary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Greenway • Beaver Ruin Greenspace 	1 mile
Pinnacle Parcel	From Beaver Ruin Greenspace to Pinnacle Parcel (along Beaver Ruin Creek tributary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaver Ruin Greenspace • Pinnacle Parcel • Employment Centers • Indian Trail park and ride lot • Future rail transit station and Asian Village (tbd) 	2/3 mile
Cemetery Field / School District	From Cemetery Field to Georgia Power corridor along Mitchell Road (and Beaver Ruin Creek tributary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Greenway • Summerour MS* • Former Buchanan School* • City Cemetery* • Cemetery Field* • Downtown/Lillian Webb Park (through on-street connections) <p>* connections require pathway installation</p>	2/3 mile
Johnson-Dean	From Peachtree Industrial Blvd. to Johnson-Dean Park parallel to Holcomb Bridge Rd. (along Crooked Creek tributary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chattahoochee River (though existing off-road pathway along Peachtree Pkwy) • Market Place Shopping Center • Johnson-Dean Park • Christ Episcopal Church • Near Stripling ES • Downtown/Thrasher Park (through on-street connections) 	1 mile
Rossie Brundage	From Holcomb Bridge Rd. to Hunter Street at West Peachtree St. (along Crooked Creek tributary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rossie Brundage Park • Hopewell Church • Water Tower Park (nearby) 	2/3 mile

Proposed Recreational Trail Section	Description	Key Destinations	Approximate Distance
Fickling (Pond) Parcel	From Holcomb Bridge Rd. to the Fickling Parcel (along Crooked Creek tributary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fickling Parcel 	1/3 mile
North Peachtree Street / Langford Road	Along N. Peachtree St. and Langford Rd., connecting to Old Norcross Rd. <i>Note: This route was identified in the Norcross Town Center LCI. Further study is required to determine its feasibility/design.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thrasher Park Proposed Greenway (along rail line) 	2 miles
Norcross High School - South	From Norcross High School to Peachtree Industrial Blvd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norcross High School Pinckeyville Park (though existing off-road pathway) 	1/2 mile

Note: Further evaluation is required for any proposed trail along a stream corridor (see recommendations in Section 7).

Potential Long-term Connections – Greenways

Proposed Greenway Section	Description	Key Destinations	Approximate Distance
Georgia Power corridor – East	East of Beaver Ruin Rd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edgemore North Beaver Ruin Park Site (not yet developed) Points beyond (regional connections) 	n/a
Georgia Power corridor – West	West of Jimmy Carter Blvd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> former landfill at Corley Road and Old Peachtree Road – if developed as a park space (note: landfill is currently active) Points beyond (regional connections) 	n/a

Potential Long-term Connections – Recreational Trails

Proposed Recreational Trail Section	Description	Key Destinations	Approximate Distance
South of I-85	From Pinnacle Parcel to South of I-85 (along Beaver Ruin Creek tributary); note: assumes below grade crossing of I-85 is possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pinnacle Parcel Vulcan site south of I-85; it is understood that this site could be a future park years from now Greater Atlanta Christian School Meadowcreek HS 	n/a
Brook Hollow	From Pinnacle Parcel to Brook Hollow Pkwy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Places of worship Employment centers 	n/a
Edgemore North	From proposed greenway to Edgemore North (County parcel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Greenway Edgemore North (County parcel) 	1/3 mile
Crooked Creek North	From Peachtree Industrial Blvd., northeast along Crooked Creek (note: this is outside of the City boundaries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recreation areas of the Chattahoochee National Forest multiple public facilities 	n/a

Note: Further evaluation is required for any proposed trail along a stream corridor (see recommendations in Section 7).

Recommendations for Greenway and Trail Development

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Connectivity Strategy	80. Pursue the short-term Greenway and Recreational Trail projects recommended in this Plan (see table for details), with priority placed on Greenway development and recreational trails linking to the proposed Greenway to parks and school sites.	High
	81. Coordinate trail and greenway projects with Gwinnett County where linkages are expected to extend beyond the City of Norcross.	High
	82. Phase in development of the full greenway network over time, in association with resources, development, and infrastructure improvement projects (both local and county).	High
	83. Encourage the voluntary allocation of land in a development that is part of a conceptual greenway or trail route identified in this Plan.	High

Section 9: Implementation

This Master Plan is a multi-year phased plan to guide the actions, responsibilities, and budget decisions of the City with regard to parks, open space and trails. To assist in carrying these recommendations forward, this section identifies the highest priority recommendations relative to infrastructure and land acquisition. Also discussed are funding opportunities and a process for monitoring and updating the Master Plan.

9.1 Priority Recommendations

It is in the City's best interest to balance limited resources and strategically allocate them to projects that would meet the most severe deficiencies and future needs. To be identified as a priority, each project must be aligned with expressed community demand, demographic indicators, trends, and broader civic strategies.

The following list identifies the priority of major capital projects recommended by this Parks Master Plan (with "timing" generally being synonymous with "priority", meaning that projects identified in earlier years should generally be higher priorities for the City). Budget pressures, changes in participation rates or demographics, population growth rates, grant programs, and other factors may impact upon the implementation of this Plan.

Based on the foregoing analysis, the following represents the highest priority recommendations for land acquisition and infrastructure improvements. They are listed in general order of priority and timing of implementation, although it is recognized that development will occur as funding and opportunity permit.

1. Mitchell Road Parcel Development

- a. Clean-up and remediate existing site
- b. Develop park master plan, with a focus on active recreation uses (informal play field, playground, off leash dog park, splash pad, etc.)
- c. Complete park development

2. Greenway Development – Phase 1

- a. Explore partnership with Georgia Power (for use of corridor for greenway, as well as the establishment of informal play fields)
- b. Establish conservation easements with key landowners
- c. Develop proposed greenway along the utility corridor

3. Recreation Trail Development – Phase 1

- a. Generally occurring at the same time as the first phase of Greenway development, the first phase of recreational trail development should focus on trails in south Norcross that connect the proposed Greenway to parks and school sites (linking to Best Friend Park, Road Parcel, Cemetery Field/School District)
- b. Complete detailed evaluation of routing, land acquisition/agreements, design, and costs

4. Explore Partnerships with Schools

- a. Maximize community access to existing sports fields (working with the schools and the Norcross Cluster Schools Organization)
- b. Seek to improve key sports fields for greater community use (e.g., conversion of ball field in front of Summerour MS to soccer field)
- c. Retain a recreational presence on the lands occupied by the former Buchanan School, should it be redeveloped

5. Address Gaps in Parkland Distribution – Acquire Parkland in the Northeast (or establish suitable partnerships)

- a. Establish site for a public playground and open space

6. Greenway Development – Phase 2

- a. Explore options and partnerships to establish a greenway along the length of the rail corridor through Norcross
- b. Discuss the long-term extension of this greenway into Gwinnett County, including access to Pinckneyville Park
- c. Develop proposed greenway along the rail corridor, while ensuring appropriate safety measures for users (e.g., fencing, plantings, buffers/setbacks, etc.)

7. Recreation Trail Development – Phase 2

- a. Second phase of trail development should focus on trails in south Norcross that connect the proposed Greenway to green space parcels (linking to Beaver Ruin Greenspace, Pinnacle Parcel)
- b. Complete detailed evaluation of routing, land acquisition/agreements, design, and costs

8. Continue Development and Environmental Stewardship Efforts at key Open Space sites

- a. Fickling Parcel
- b. Johnson-Dean Park
- c. Other opportunities, as they arise (such as the Reps Miller and North Peachtree Farm Parcels)

9. Recreation Trail Development – Phase 3

- a. Third phase of trail development should focus on trails in north Norcross (linking to Johnson-Dean, Rossie Brundage, Fickling Parcel, Norcross HS, Thrasher Park)
- b. Complete detailed evaluation of routing, land acquisition/agreements, design, and costs

10. Pursue Longer-Term Greenway and Recreation Trail Projects

- a. Cooperation and partnership with County required to extend trails to points north (Chattahoochee Forest recreation areas), east (Edgemore North, Beaver Ruin Park site), south, and west of Norcross

High priority recommendations of an ongoing nature include:

1. **Require Additional Parkland, Open Space, and Trail Connections through Development and Redevelopment Proposals**
2. **Maximize Existing Parks and Greenspaces** (see site-specific analyses in Sections 6 and 7)
3. **Continue to Implement Enhanced Park Designs** (i.e., installation of washrooms, benches, shade, trail loops, landscaping, etc.)

To achieve many of these projects, land acquisition and/or easements will be required. **Appendix E** (under separate cover) contains an evaluation of several parcels of land that may be important to the development of the linked parks and trails system.

9.2 Funding Opportunities

Funding for the infrastructure projects and land acquisitions recommended through this Master Plan will likely come from a variety of sources. It is also possible that adequate funding will – at times – be difficult to secure. Nevertheless, the City and its residents should remain diligent in working towards the implementation of this Plan as the long-term dividends will be numerous and far reaching.

Funding sources may include, but are not limited to, the following (note: not all will be appropriate for all types of park development or operation):

- SPLOST Funds
- GDOT Transportation Enhancement Funds (TE)
- Norcross General Fund (taxation)
- Community Improvement Districts
- Bonds
- User Fees (to offset maintenance costs or certain facility types)
- Impact Fees (not currently levied in Norcross)
- Conservation Subdivision Ordinance/Subdivision Extraction (for land, not amenities)
- DDA provided loans
- Private Donations
- Partnerships; examples include:
 - YMCA and Boys & Girls Club
 - Private athletic focused businesses
 - Gwinnett County School Board
- Grant Programs:
 - Georgia Wetlands and Streams Trust Fund
 - Georgia Forest Legacy Program
 - Georgia Department of Transportation
 - Georgia Department of Natural Resources
 - Historic Cemetery Heritage Tourism Grant
 - Georgia Land Conservation Program
 - U.S. Land and Water Conservation Fund
 - Safe Routes to School Program
- Red Fields to Green Fields Funding (currently a program in its infancy)

9.3 Monitoring and Updating the Plan

Although the Master Plan is comprehensive in nature, it can only respond directly to a limited “snapshot” in time. In particular, census data and demographic trends are based on the most recent information available and cannot predict major changes such as those brought about by the recent economic downturn. Therefore, the City should continue to review and assess the recommendations of the Parks Master Plan in order to ensure that they remain relevant. This will require monitoring of activity patterns, conducting annual reviews of the achievements of the Plan, tracking satisfaction levels of residents, and undertaking a more detailed five or ten-year update to the Plan.

Recommendations for Implementation

Subject Area	Recommendation	Priority
Creating an Action Plan	84. Create an action plan for this Parks Master Plan that identifies specific priorities for implementation and their resource requirements. The action plans should be linked with the Short Term Work Plan, as per the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.	High
Monitoring the Master Plan	85. Undertake an annual review of the recommendations in this Master Plan as part of the City’s budgeting process, including a description of recent achievements and future objectives.	High
Updating the Master Plan	86. Undertake a scoped update of the Parks Master Plan following the full release of the 2010 Census data.	High
	87. Undertake a comprehensive update of the Parks Master Plan prior to the end of the ten-year timeframe of the Plan (2020).	High

APPENDIX A:

- **Community Survey Results (received through the Mail)**
- **Community Survey Results (received through the Web)**

1. In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household participated in any of the following parks and outdoor recreation activities at any location?

	Yes		No		Don't Know/No Response		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Walking or Hiking for Leisure	258	77%	63	19%	13	4%	334	100%
Jogging	126	38%	162	49%	46	14%	334	100%
Cycling or Mountain Biking	81	24%	195	58%	58	17%	334	100%
Swimming	110	33%	171	51%	53	16%	334	100%
Football	24	7%	242	72%	68	20%	334	100%
Soccer	38	11%	226	68%	70	21%	334	100%
Softball	14	4%	249	75%	71	21%	334	100%
Baseball	26	8%	243	73%	65	19%	334	100%
Outdoor Basketball	26	8%	243	73%	65	19%	334	100%
Outdoor volleyball	23	7%	243	73%	68	20%	334	100%
Outdoor Tennis	48	14%	218	65%	68	20%	334	100%
Skateboarding	23	7%	240	72%	71	21%	334	100%
Use of Playground Equipment	149	45%	138	41%	47	14%	334	100%
Running a Dog Off-leash	72	22%	201	60%	61	18%	334	100%
Picnicking	151	45%	122	37%	61	18%	334	100%
Attending a Community Event or Gathering in a Park	242	72%	68	20%	24	7%	334	100%
Fishing	49	15%	214	64%	71	21%	334	100%

<i>Other Activities (if volunteered):</i>	#
<i>Farmer's Market</i>	3
<i>Company picnics</i>	1
<i>Golf</i>	1
<i>Sight Seeing</i>	1
<i>Karaoke</i>	1
<i>Roller Hockey</i>	1
<i>Live music outdoor concerts</i>	1

2. a) In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household visited any of the following parks in the Norcross area? (multiple responses allowed)

	#	% of sample
Best Friend Park (County Park)	92	28%
Betty Mauldin Park / City Hall	96	29%
Cemetery Field (County Park)	38	11%
Thrasher Park	259	78%
Pinckneyville Pools and Park	111	33%
Lillian Webb Park / Webb Field	235	70%
Norcross Cultural Art and Community Center	74	22%
Rossie Brundage Park	38	11%
South Pointe Park	2	1%
Did not visit any Norcross Parks / No Response	30	9%
Don't Know	1	0%

2. b) Of these parks that your household visited, which one is your favourite park?

	#	%
Best Friend Park (County Park)	18	7%
Betty Mauldin Park / City Hall	2	1%
Cemetery Field (County Park)	0	0%
Thrasher Park	164	60%
Pinckneyville Pools and Park	32	12%
Lillian Webb Park / Webb Field	50	18%
Norcross Cultural Art and Community Center	2	1%
Rossie Brundage Park	4	1%
South Pointe Park	0	0%
Total	272	100%
Did not visit any Norcross Parks / No Response	36	
Don't Know	24	

2. c) In the past 12 months, how often have you or other members of your household visited parks in the Norcross area?

	#	%
About once or twice a year	49	16%
About once or twice a month	100	33%
About once a week	72	24%
More than once a week	80	27%
Total	301	100%
Did not visit any Norcross Parks / No Response	26	
Don't Know	7	

3. a) If anything, what prevents you or members of your household from using parks in Norcross as often as you would like? (multiple responses allowed)

	#	% of sample
Do not have an interest in using parks more	25	7%
Do not have the time	124	37%
The parks don't have the desired amenities, facilities or activities	49	15%
The parks are too busy or noisy	20	6%
Do not feel safe using the parks	13	4%
Lack of transportation / Parks are too far away	8	2%
Prevented by health problem or disability	14	4%
Lack of parking	42	13%
Activity fees are too high	10	3%
Program times are inconvenient	8	2%
Parks are not well maintained	4	1%
Not aware of what the parks have to offer	28	8%
Prefer using parks outside of Norcross	12	4%
Don't Know/No Response	71	

<i>Other Barriers (if volunteered):</i>	#
<i>Too hot to visit parks</i>	15
<i>Not allowed to walk dogs</i>	8
<i>Lack of proper park amenities eg walking, biking, signage</i>	3
<i>Lack of proper park equipment for youth and children</i>	4
<i>Unsupervised and badly behaved children</i>	2
<i>Racial groups</i>	2
<i>Lack of activities</i>	1
<i>Lack of wheelchair accessibility at Lillian Web Park</i>	1
<i>Lack of playground visibility due to landscaping</i>	1
<i>Not a priority</i>	1
<i>Location of parks unknown</i>	1
<i>Not a household</i>	1

4. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "low" and 5 is "high", please rate how important the following items are to your household and then rate your general level of satisfaction with them.

IMPORTANCE	Not at all Important (1)		Not Important (2)		Neither Important nor Unimportant (3)		Somewhat Important (4)		Very Important (5)		Don't Know / No Response (0)		Total		AVG
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Parks for active recreation, such as baseball, soccer tennis, and playgrounds	49	15%	24	7%	53	16%	51	15%	107	32%	50	15%	334	100%	3.50
Parks for passive recreation, such as nature appreciation, walking, social interaction, and community events	13	4%	11	3%	33	10%	75	22%	165	49%	37	11%	334	100%	4.24
Green space properties that protect natural features	12	4%	11	3%	38	11%	64	19%	175	52%	34	10%	334	100%	4.26
Trails and greenways that support walking, jogging, cycling, and inline skating	21	6%	9	3%	34	10%	62	19%	171	51%	37	11%	334	100%	4.19

SATISFACTION	Not at all Satisfied (1)		Not Satisfied (2)		Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (3)		Somewhat Satisfied (4)		Very Satisfied (5)		Don't Know / No Response (0)		Total		AVG
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Parks for active recreation, such as baseball, soccer tennis, and playgrounds	10	3%	24	7%	62	19%	88	26%	83	25%	67	20%	334	100%	3.79
Parks for passive recreation, such as nature appreciation, walking, social interaction, and community events	12	4%	23	7%	70	21%	101	30%	76	23%	52	16%	334	100%	3.73
Green space properties that protect natural features	12	4%	26	8%	94	28%	92	28%	61	18%	49	15%	334	100%	3.58
Trails and greenways that support walking, jogging, cycling, and inline skating	29	9%	45	13%	101	30%	64	19%	40	12%	55	16%	334	100%	3.15

5. a) In order to build or improve parks, trails, and green space, City tax dollars and other funding sources are often required. Keeping this in mind, to what degree should the City of Norcross spend ADDITIONAL public funds to improve or expand the following?

	Don't Spend (1)				Definitely Spend (5)				Don't Know / No Response		Total		AVG		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Youth Ball Diamonds	114	34%	36	11%	49	15%	36	11%	27	8%	72	22%	334	100%	2.34
Adult Ball Diamonds	124	37%	53	16%	51	15%	20	6%	11	3%	75	22%	334	100%	2.00
Youth Soccer Fields	102	31%	35	10%	51	15%	44	13%	30	9%	72	22%	334	100%	2.48
Adult Soccer Fields	119	36%	47	14%	56	17%	25	7%	13	4%	74	22%	334	100%	2.10
Football Fields	118	35%	37	11%	49	15%	32	10%	21	6%	77	23%	334	100%	2.23
Tennis Courts	95	28%	26	8%	67	20%	45	13%	32	10%	69	21%	334	100%	2.60
Outdoor Basketball Courts	114	34%	38	11%	61	18%	30	9%	20	6%	71	21%	334	100%	2.25
Sand Volleyball Courts	113	34%	43	13%	51	15%	31	9%	20	6%	76	23%	334	100%	2.23
Playgrounds	57	17%	12	4%	62	19%	63	19%	90	27%	50	15%	334	100%	3.41
Children's Splash Pads / Interactive Water Features	87	26%	26	8%	54	16%	52	16%	58	17%	57	17%	334	100%	2.88
Off-Leash Dog Parks	117	35%	36	11%	42	13%	28	8%	61	18%	50	15%	334	100%	2.58
Skateboard Parks	144	43%	40	12%	51	15%	17	5%	15	4%	67	20%	334	100%	1.95
Paved Multi-Use Trails for Biking / Jogging	47	14%	14	4%	50	15%	69	21%	115	34%	39	12%	334	100%	3.65
Unpaved Nature Trails for Walking / Hiking	55	16%	24	7%	40	12%	57	17%	120	36%	38	11%	334	100%	3.55
Opportunities for Nature Appreciation	59	18%	26	8%	53	16%	44	13%	103	31%	49	15%	334	100%	3.37
Floral / Ornamental Displays	96	29%	38	11%	53	16%	42	13%	56	17%	49	15%	334	100%	2.73
Bandshells and Amphitheaters	93	28%	30	9%	57	17%	55	16%	54	16%	45	13%	334	100%	2.82
Picnic Areas and Pavilions	59	18%	24	7%	71	21%	67	20%	78	23%	35	10%	334	100%	3.27
Benches	52	16%	20	6%	69	21%	77	23%	84	25%	32	10%	334	100%	3.40
Shade Trees	39	12%	17	5%	34	10%	67	20%	146	44%	31	9%	334	100%	3.87
Public Restrooms	50	15%	17	5%	57	17%	67	20%	110	33%	33	10%	334	100%	3.56
More Parking	57	17%	32	10%	55	16%	66	20%	79	24%	45	13%	334	100%	3.27
Lighting	51	15%	14	4%	49	15%	72	22%	102	31%	46	14%	334	100%	3.56
Better Maintenance	55	16%	17	5%	67	20%	68	20%	66	20%	61	18%	334	100%	3.27

Other Priorities (if volunteered)	#
New Opportunities (roller skate, green space, activities)	6
Safety and Security	5
Public Swimming Pool	3
Generate city revenue (sell ad space and alcohol at even	2

5. b) Which three (3) of the items from Question 5a are most important to your household?

	Priority #1		Priority #2		Priority #3		Total		AVG.
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Youth Ball Diamonds	7	3%	3	1%	2	1%	12	4%	1.58
Adult Ball Diamonds	3	1%	2	1%	0	0%	5	2%	1.40
Youth Soccer Fields	0	0%	9	3%	6	2%	15	6%	2.40
Adult Soccer Fields	3	1%	2	1%	6	2%	11	4%	2.27
Football Fields	4	1%	5	2%	11	4%	20	7%	2.35
Tennis Courts	10	4%	5	2%	5	2%	20	7%	1.75
Outdoor Basketball Courts	5	2%	2	1%	1	0%	8	3%	1.50
Sand Volleyball Courts	5	2%	2	1%	1	0%	8	3%	n/a
Playgrounds	32	12%	11	4%	17	6%	60	22%	1.75
Children's Splash Pads / Interactive Water Features	8	3%	13	5%	3	1%	24	9%	1.79
Off-Leash Dog Parks	23	8%	10	4%	11	4%	44	16%	1.73
Skateboard Parks	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%	1.00
Paved Multi-Use Trails for Biking / Jogging	52	19%	37	14%	18	7%	107	39%	1.68
Unpaved Nature Trails for Walking / Hiking	35	13%	47	17%	22	8%	104	38%	1.88
Opportunities for Nature Appreciation	7	3%	14	5%	20	8%	41	15%	2.32
Floral / Ornamental Displays	1	0%	6	2%	8	3%	15	6%	2.47
Bandshells and Amphitheaters	9	3%	8	3%	11	4%	28	10%	2.07
Picnic Areas and Pavilions	6	2%	17	6%	16	6%	39	14%	2.26
Benches	6	2%	13	5%	11	4%	30	11%	2.17
Shade Trees	15	5%	23	8%	35	13%	73	27%	2.27
Public Restrooms	6	2%	13	5%	18	7%	37	14%	2.32
More Parking	15	5%	10	4%	13	5%	38	14%	1.95
Lighting	14	5%	10	4%	20	8%	44	16%	2.14
Better Maintenance	5	2%	5	2%	10	4%	20	7%	2.25
Other	3	1%	4	1%	1	0%	8	3%	1.75
Total	276	100%	271	100%	266	100%	813	300%	
None of these items are important to my household	58								

6. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree (1)		Disagree (2)		Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)		Agree (4)		Strongly Agree (5)		Don't Know / No Response		Total		AVG
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
The distance that I travel to participate in outdoor recreation activities is reasonable.	7	2%	10	3%	37	11%	86	26%	163	49%	31	9%	334	100%	4.28
I am satisfied with the variety of outdoor recreation activities available in Norcross.	15	4%	24	7%	76	23%	83	25%	100	30%	36	11%	334	100%	3.77
I am satisfied with the physical condition and maintenance of Norcross parks.	6	2%	9	3%	62	19%	85	25%	140	42%	32	10%	334	100%	4.14

7. Please provide any additional comments relating to parks, green space and trails in Norcross.

Various comments on the existing parks
 Need more trails for walking, biking, and hiking
 Need more dog friendly parks or dog park
 Bathrooms need to be improved (dirty, unventilated)
 Parking needs to be improved
 Security, safety and cleanliness needs to be improved
 Need more shade and seating in parks
 Need more activities and events in parks
 No need to build new parks, maintain the ones we have
 Spend money in other areas besides parks
 Need for a water park and pool
 Need for a skate park
 Need tennis and basketball courts, and soccer fields
 Need an indoor community centre
 Spending too much on parks
 No tax credit for not using parks
 Thrasher Park is too crowded
 Support the purchase of Langley Farm for preservation
 Surrounding houses are really run down
 Enjoy renovations to Thrasher and Lillian Webb Park
 Need to leave Norcross Hills Pond alone
 Keep existing forestation intact for shade
 Bike lanes along Peachtree Blvd and Peachtree Industrial
 Connecting to Downtown

DEMOGRAPHICS

8. How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

	#	%
1	50	16%
2	138	44%
3	61	19%
4	35	11%
5	19	6%
6	11	3%
7 or more	2	1%
Total	316	100%
No Response	18	
Average Household Size	2.61	

9. Please indicate the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories.

	#	%
under 10 years	95	12%
10-19 years	79	10%
20-34 years	115	15%
35 to 54 years	245	31%
55 and over	255	32%
Total	789	100%
No Response	27	

10. In what year were you born?

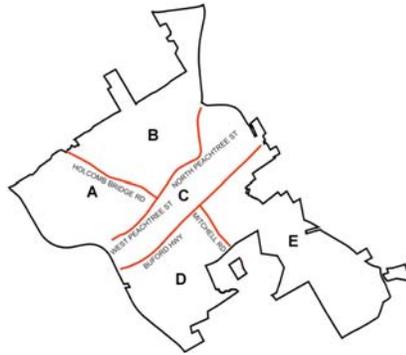
	#	%
1929 or earlier (81yrs or older)	8	3%
1930 to 1939 (71 to 80 yrs)	17	6%
1940 to 1949 (61 to 70 yrs)	49	18%
1950 to 1959 (51 to 60 yrs)	73	27%
1960 to 1969 (41 to 50 yrs)	43	16%
1970 to 1989 (31 to 40 yrs)	57	21%
1980 or later (16 to 30 yrs)	20	7%
Total	267	100%
No Response	67	
Average Year	1958	
Average Age	52	

11. How many years have you lived in the City of Norcross?

	#	%
Less than two (<2) years	35	11%
Two to five (2-5) years	64	20%
Six to ten (6-10) years	71	22%
Eleven to twenty (11-20) years	68	21%
More than twenty (>20) years	84	26%
Total	322	100%
Don't Know	12	

12. Please mark with an 'X' the approximate location of your residence on the map below OR identify the area in which you live.

	#	%
Area A	37	12%
Area B	101	33%
Area C	73	24%
Area D	35	11%
Area E	59	19%
Total	305	100%
Don't Know	9	
No Response	17	
Live outside of the City of Norcross	3	



13. Which of the following categories best describes your household's racial or ethnic background(s)? (multiple responses allowed)

	#	% of sample
American Indian or Alaska Native	5	2%
Asian	21	7%
Black or African American	37	13%
Hispanic or Latino	24	8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%
White	213	74%
Total	300	
Don't Know / Don't Wish to Answer	48	

14. In 2009, what was your household's total annual income before taxes?

	#	%
Under \$20,000	7	3%
Between \$20,000 and \$39,999	28	12%
Between \$40,000 and \$59,999	40	17%
Between \$60,000 and \$79,999	30	13%
Between \$80,000 and \$99,999	31	13%
\$100,000 or more	95	41%
Total	231	100%
Don't Know / Don't Wish to Answer	103	

1. In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household participated in any of the following parks and outdoor recreation activities at any location?

	Yes		No		Don't Know		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Walking or Hiking for Leisure	52	85%	8	13%	1	2%	61	100%
Jogging	21	34%	33	54%	7	11%	61	100%
Cycling or Mountain Biking	18	30%	33	54%	10	16%	61	100%
Swimming	24	39%	28	46%	9	15%	61	100%
Football	6	10%	46	75%	9	15%	61	100%
Soccer	11	18%	41	67%	9	15%	61	100%
Softball	2	3%	49	80%	10	16%	61	100%
Baseball	6	10%	46	75%	9	15%	61	100%
Outdoor Basketball	7	11%	45	74%	9	15%	61	100%
Outdoor volleyball	5	8%	48	79%	8	13%	61	100%
Outdoor Tennis	11	18%	42	69%	8	13%	61	100%
Skateboarding	5	8%	45	74%	11	18%	61	100%
Use of Playground Equipment	33	54%	20	33%	8	13%	61	100%
Running a Dog Off-leash	18	30%	35	57%	8	13%	61	100%
Picnicking	37	61%	18	30%	6	10%	61	100%
Attending a Community Event or Gathering in a Park	47	77%	11	18%	3	5%	61	100%
Fishing	7	11%	44	72%	10	16%	61	100%

<i>Other Activities (if volunteered):</i>		#
<i>Indoor tennis</i>		1
<i>Geocaching</i>		1
<i>Child's birthday parties</i>		1
<i>Farmer's market</i>		1
<i>Radio Control Cars</i>		1

2. a) In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household visited any of the following parks in the Norcross area? (multiple responses allowed)

	#	% of sample
Best Friend Park (County Park)	16	26%
Betty Mauldin Park / City Hall	23	38%
Cemetery Field (County Park)	6	10%
Thrasher Park	49	80%
Pinckneyville Pools and Park	24	39%
Lillian Webb Park / Webb Field	45	74%
Norcross Cultural Art and Community Center	15	25%
Rossie Brundage Park	8	13%
South Pointe Park	4	7%
Did not visit any Norcross Parks / No Response	4	7%
Don't Know	0	0%

2. b) Of these parks that your household visited, which one is your favourite park?

	#	%
Best Friend Park (County Park)	3	5%
Betty Mauldin Park / City Hall	0	0%
Cemetery Field (County Park)	0	0%
Thrasher Park	31	55%
Pinckneyville Pools and Park	10	18%
Lillian Webb Park / Webb Field	12	21%
Norcross Cultural Art and Community Center	0	0%
Rossie Brundage Park	0	0%
South Pointe Park	0	0%
Total	56	100%
Did not visit any Norcross Parks / No Response	5	
Don't Know	0	

2. c) In the past 12 months, how often have you or other members of your household visited parks in the Norcross area?

	#	%
About once or twice a year	6	11%
About once or twice a month	20	35%
About once a week	14	25%
More than once a week	17	30%
Total	57	100%
Did not visit any Norcross Parks / No Response	0	
Don't Know	4	

3. a) If anything, what prevents you or members of your household from using parks in Norcross as often as you would like? (multiple responses allowed)

	#	% of sample
Do not have an interest in using parks more	1	2%
Do not have the time	25	41%
The parks don't have the desired amenities, facilities or activities	13	21%
The parks are too busy or noisy	4	7%
Do not feel safe using the parks	4	7%
Lack of transportation / Parks are too far away	4	7%
Prevented by health problem or disability	2	3%
Lack of parking	5	8%
Activity fees are too high	1	2%
Program times are inconvenient	2	3%
Parks are not well maintained	1	2%
Not aware of what the parks have to offer	7	11%
Prefer using parks outside of Norcross	1	2%
Don't Know	4	

<i>Other Barriers (if volunteered):</i>		#
<i>Lack of dog parks</i>		4
<i>Lack of free/nearby tennis courts</i>		2
<i>Lack of parks on the South/East side of Buford Hwy</i>		1
<i>Lighting of the Xmas Tree should be Saturday (not Friday)</i>		1

4. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "low" and 5 is "high", please rate how important the following items are to your household and then rate your general level of satisfaction with them.

IMPORTANCE	Not at all Important (1)		Not Important (2)		Neither Important nor Unimportant (3)		Somewhat Important (4)		Very Important (5)		Don't Know / Don't Use (0)		Total		AVG
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Parks for active recreation, such as baseball, soccer tennis, and playgrounds	4	7%	5	8%	12	20%	8	13%	17	28%	15	25%	61	100%	3.63
Parks for passive recreation, such as nature appreciation, walking, social interaction, and community events	0	0%	0	0%	2	3%	11	18%	27	44%	21	34%	61	100%	4.63
Green space properties that protect natural features	2	3%	4	7%	2	3%	10	16%	21	34%	22	36%	61	100%	4.13
Trails and greenways that support walking, jogging, cycling, and inline skating	2	3%	1	2%	2	3%	5	8%	28	46%	23	38%	61	100%	4.47

SATISFACTION	Not at all Satisfied (1)		Not Satisfied (2)		Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (3)		Somewhat Satisfied (4)		Very Satisfied (5)		Don't Know / No Response (0)		Total		AVG
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Parks for active recreation, such as baseball, soccer tennis, and playgrounds	1	2%	5	8%	10	16%	13	21%	9	15%	23	38%	61	100%	3.63
Parks for passive recreation, such as nature appreciation, walking, social interaction, and community events	2	3%	1	2%	7	11%	11	18%	13	21%	27	44%	61	100%	3.94
Green space properties that protect natural features	2	3%	1	2%	8	13%	11	18%	10	16%	29	48%	61	100%	3.81
Trails and greenways that support walking, jogging, cycling, and inline skating	11	18%	5	8%	14	23%	8	13%	4	7%	19	31%	61	100%	2.74

5. a) In order to build or improve parks, trails, and green space, City tax dollars and other funding sources are often required. Keeping this in mind, to what degree should the City of Norcross spend ADDITIONAL public funds to improve or expand the following?

	Don't Spend (1)		←		→		Definitely Spend (5)		Don't Know		Total		AVG		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Youth Ball Diamonds	15	25%	7	11%	10	16%	6	10%	5	8%	18	30%	61	100%	2.51
Adult Ball Diamonds	18	30%	14	23%	6	10%	5	8%	1	2%	17	28%	61	100%	2.02
Youth Soccer Fields	17	28%	2	3%	12	20%	9	15%	5	8%	16	26%	61	100%	2.62
Adult Soccer Fields	20	33%	9	15%	7	11%	6	10%	3	5%	16	26%	61	100%	2.18
Football Fields	18	30%	11	18%	7	11%	5	8%	4	7%	16	26%	61	100%	2.24
Tennis Courts	16	26%	4	7%	13	21%	8	13%	5	8%	15	25%	61	100%	2.61
Outdoor Basketball Courts	13	21%	8	13%	8	13%	10	16%	5	8%	17	28%	61	100%	2.68
Sand Volleyball Courts	18	30%	12	20%	7	11%	4	7%	4	7%	16	26%	61	100%	2.20
Playgrounds	11	18%	1	2%	9	15%	8	13%	19	31%	13	21%	61	100%	3.48
Children's Splash Pads / Interactive Water Features	12	20%	5	8%	7	11%	10	16%	13	21%	14	23%	61	100%	3.15
Off-Leash Dog Parks	18	30%	2	3%	9	15%	7	11%	9	15%	16	26%	61	100%	2.71
Skateboard Parks	21	34%	9	15%	9	15%	6	10%	2	3%	14	23%	61	100%	2.13
Paved Multi-Use Trails for Biking / Jogging	5	8%	2	3%	9	15%	11	18%	20	33%	14	23%	61	100%	3.83
Unpaved Nature Trails for Walking / Hiking	11	18%	3	5%	7	11%	9	15%	19	31%	12	20%	61	100%	3.45
Opportunities for Nature Appreciation	8	13%	7	11%	11	18%	9	15%	15	25%	11	18%	61	100%	3.32
Floral / Ornamental Displays	12	20%	7	11%	11	18%	8	13%	12	20%	11	18%	61	100%	3.02
Bandshells and Amphitheaters	8	13%	11	18%	9	15%	9	15%	12	20%	12	20%	61	100%	3.12
Picnic Areas and Pavilions	7	11%	6	10%	8	13%	10	16%	17	28%	13	21%	61	100%	3.50
Benches	3	5%	3	5%	10	16%	13	21%	20	33%	12	20%	61	100%	3.90
Shade Trees	1	2%	4	7%	6	10%	9	15%	28	46%	13	21%	61	100%	4.23
Public Restrooms	2	3%	5	8%	5	8%	12	20%	23	38%	14	23%	61	100%	4.04
More Parking	6	10%	3	5%	11	18%	12	20%	15	25%	14	23%	61	100%	3.57
Lighting	6	10%	1	2%	11	18%	12	20%	18	30%	13	21%	61	100%	3.73
Better Maintenance	6	10%	0	0%	13	21%	13	21%	14	23%	15	25%	61	100%	3.63

Other Priorities (if volunteered)	#
Lit tennis courts in downtown Norcross	1
Outdoor pool for adults	1
Well lit areas and emergency phones	1
Radio Control Car track	1

5. b) Which three (3) of the items from Question 5a are most important to your household?

	Priority #1		Priority #2		Priority #3		Total		AVG.	Other Priorities (if volunteered)	#
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Youth Ball Diamonds	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1.00	Indoor tennis courts	1
Adult Ball Diamonds	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%	3.00	Safe Parks	1
Youth Soccer Fields	3	6%	1	2%	0	0%	4	3%	1.25	Nice overall décor	1
Adult Soccer Fields	0	0%	2	4%	0	0%	2	1%	2.00	Indoor swimming pool	1
Football Fields	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%	3.00	Radio Control Car Park	1
Tennis Courts	3	6%	0	0%	0	0%	3	2%	1.00		
Outdoor Basketball Courts	0	0%	3	7%	0	0%	3	2%	2.00		
Sand Volleyball Courts	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	n/a		
Playgrounds	5	10%	1	2%	5	12%	11	8%	2.00		
Children's Splash Pads / Interactive Water Features	0	0%	1	2%	1	2%	2	1%	2.50		
Off-Leash Dog Parks	11	23%	1	2%	0	0%	12	9%	1.08		
Skateboard Parks	2	4%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%	1.00		
Paved Multi-Use Trails for Biking / Jogging	8	17%	6	13%	2	5%	16	12%	1.63		
Unpaved Nature Trails for Walking / Hiking	0	0%	11	24%	1	2%	12	9%	2.08		
Opportunities for Nature Appreciation	0	0%	3	7%	3	7%	6	4%	2.50		
Floral / Ornamental Displays	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%	3.00		
Bandshells and Amphitheaters	1	2%	1	2%	5	12%	7	5%	2.57		
Picnic Areas and Pavilions	2	4%	2	4%	3	7%	7	5%	2.14		
Benches	2	4%	0	0%	1	2%	3	2%	1.67		
Shade Trees	2	4%	6	13%	6	14%	14	10%	2.29		
Public Restrooms	2	4%	3	7%	8	19%	13	9%	2.46		
More Parking	1	2%	2	4%	0	0%	3	2%	1.67		
Lighting	2	4%	0	0%	2	5%	4	3%	2.00		
Better Maintenance	2	4%	1	2%	1	2%	4	3%	1.75		
Other	1	2%	2	4%	2	5%	5	4%	2.20		
Total	48	100%	46	100%	43	100%	137	100%			

None of these items are important to my household 13

6. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree (1)		Disagree (2)		Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)		Agree (4)		Strongly Agree (5)		Don't Know		Total		AVG
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
The distance that I travel to participate in outdoor recreation activities is reasonable.	1	2%	1	2%	5	8%	17	28%	21	34%	16	26%	61	100%	4.24
I am satisfied with the variety of outdoor recreation activities available in Norcross.	4	7%	9	15%	12	20%	18	30%	3	5%	15	25%	61	100%	3.15
I am satisfied with the physical condition and maintenance of Norcross parks.	1	2%	2	3%	9	15%	16	26%	20	33%	13	21%	61	100%	4.08

7. Please provide any additional comments relating to parks, green space and trails in Norcross.

Various compliments on the existing parks system (4).
 Don't believe that spending more money on parks should be a priority for the City right now.
 Don't see the need for trails/paths in Norcross because there are sidewalks everywhere.
 Lillian Webb Park should be open to the public at all times (not available for private rental).
 Most of the parks and green space is used by non-residents of Norcross.
 Need an off-leash dog park / more pet-friendly parks.
 Need kids playground surrounded by a walking/jogging trail.
 Need more parking in the City.
 Need tennis courts (public and lit).
 Passive recreation and trails are both very important.
 Provide more free movie nights in the park and music in Lillian Webb Park.
 Safe walking trails are important.
 There are enough parks downtown - need more in other areas.
 Would be nice to have an outdoor lap pool/diving well for adults.
 Would like more options for bike riding.

DEMOGRAPHICS

8. How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

	#	%
1	12	24%
2	19	37%
3	12	24%
4	2	4%
5	5	10%
6	1	2%
7 or more	0	0%
Total	51	100%
No Response	10	
Average Household Size	2.45	

9. Please indicate the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories.

	#	%
under 10 years	22	17%
10-19 years	14	11%
20-34 years	31	24%
35 to 54 years	43	34%
55 and over	18	14%
Total	128	100%
No Response	9	

10. In what year were you born?

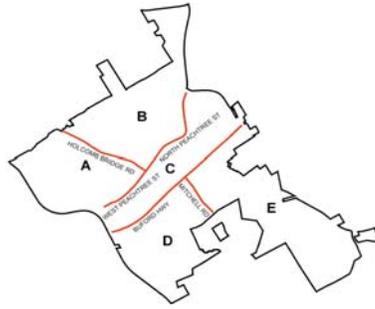
	#	%
1929 or earlier (81yrs or older)	1	2%
1930 to 1939 (71 to 80 yrs)	0	0%
1940 to 1949 (61 to 70 yrs)	3	6%
1950 to 1959 (51 to 60 yrs)	6	12%
1960 to 1969 (41 to 50 yrs)	12	24%
1970 to 1989 (31 to 40 yrs)	21	42%
1980 or later (16 to 30 yrs)	7	14%
Total	50	100%
No Response	11	
Average Year	1968	
Average Age	42	

11. How many years have you lived in the City of Norcross?

	#	%
Less than two (<2) years	8	15%
Two to five (2-5) years	14	27%
Six to ten (6-10) years	21	40%
Eleven to twenty (11-20) years	4	8%
More than twenty (>20) years	5	10%
Total	52	100%
Don't Know/ No Response	9	

12. Please mark with an 'X' the approximate location of your residence on the map below OR identify the area in which you live.

	#	%
Area A	4	8%
Area B	10	19%
Area C	11	21%
Area D	7	13%
Area E	20	38%
Total	52	100%
Don't Know	9	
No Response / Live outside of the City of Norcross	0	



13. Which of the following categories best describes your household's racial or ethnic background(s)? (multiple responses allowed)

	#	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0%
Asian	6	11%
Black or African American	8	15%
Hispanic or Latino	3	5%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	2%
White	37	67%
Total	55	100%
Don't Know / Don't Wish to Answer	11	

14. In 2009, what was your household's total annual income before taxes?

	#	%
Under \$20,000	0	0%
Between \$20,000 and \$39,999	2	5%
Between \$40,000 and \$59,999	6	14%
Between \$60,000 and \$79,999	7	17%
Between \$80,000 and \$99,999	11	26%
\$100,000 or more	16	38%
Total	42	100%
Don't Know / Don't Wish to Answer	19	

APPENDIX B:

- Youth Survey Results

"Results exclude incidents of "non response"

1. In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household participated in any of the following parks and outdoor recreation activities at any location?

	Yes		No		Don't Know		Total		<i>Other Activities (if volunteered):</i>	#
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Walking or Hiking for Leisure	351	52%	251	37%	68	10%	670	100%	<i>indoor basketball</i>	3
Jogging	402	60%	222	33%	49	7%	673	100%	<i>boxing</i>	1
Cycling or Mountain Biking	198	30%	410	62%	50	8%	658	100%	<i>camping</i>	1
Swimming	460	69%	181	27%	29	4%	670	100%	<i>cheerleading camp & practice</i>	1
Football	247	37%	381	57%	37	6%	665	100%	<i>chill with my friend</i>	1
Soccer	385	58%	254	38%	27	4%	666	100%	<i>community service</i>	1
Softball	125	19%	475	73%	50	8%	650	100%	<i>dodge & kick ball</i>	1
Baseball	179	27%	427	65%	48	7%	654	100%	<i>field trips</i>	1
Outdoor Basketball	296	45%	330	50%	39	6%	665	100%	<i>flag football</i>	1
Outdoor volleyball	180	28%	423	65%	46	7%	649	100%	<i>fountains to get wet</i>	1
Outdoor Tennis	159	24%	445	68%	50	8%	654	100%	<i>hunting/recreational shooting</i>	1
Skateboarding	201	31%	403	62%	51	8%	655	100%	<i>lacrosse</i>	1
Use of Playground Equipment	362	54%	249	37%	56	8%	667	100%	<i>mountain climbing</i>	1
Running a Dog Off-leash	220	33%	406	62%	32	5%	658	100%	<i>race cars</i>	1
Picnicking	243	37%	348	53%	64	10%	655	100%	<i>riding scooter</i>	1
Attending a Community Event or Gathering in a Park	271	41%	314	48%	69	11%	654	100%	<i>singing</i>	1
Fishing	182	28%	401	63%	57	9%	640	100%	<i>visit parks</i>	1
									<i>walk dog</i>	1

2. a) In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household visited any of the following parks in the Norcross area? (multiple responses allowed)

	#	% of sample
Best Friend Park (County Park)	398	62%
Betty Mauldin Park / City Hall	22	3%
Cemetery Field (County Park)	86	13%
Thrasher Park	191	30%
Pinckneyville Pools and Park	224	35%
Lillian Webb Park / Webb Field	81	13%
Norcross Cultural Art and Community Center	32	5%
Rossie Brundage Park	5	1%
South Point Park	21	3%
Did not visit any Norcross Parks	101	16%
Don't Know	25	4%

2. b) Of these parks that your household visited, which one is your favourite park?

	#	%
Best Friend Park (County Park)	216	55%
Betty Mauldin Park / City Hall	2	1%
Cemetery Field (County Park)	5	1%
Thrasher Park	52	13%
Pinckneyville Pools and Park	88	22%
Lillian Webb Park / Webb Field	20	5%
Norcross Cultural Art and Community Center	8	2%
Rossie Brundage Park	1	0%
South Point Park	0	0%
Total	392	100%
Did not visit any Norcross Parks	95	
Don't Know	114	

2. c) In the past 12 months, how often have you or other members of your household visited parks in the Norcross area?

	#	%
About once or twice a year	84	19%
About once or twice a month	182	41%
About once a week	97	22%
More than once a week	81	18%
Total	444	100%
Did not visit any Norcross Parks	81	
Don't Know	103	

3. a) If anything, what prevents you or members of your household from using parks in Norcross as often as you would like? (multiple responses allowed)

	#	% of sample	<i>Other Barriers (if volunteered):</i>	#
Do not have an interest in using parks more	52	10%	<i>just moved here</i>	5
Do not have the time	328	61%	<i>afraid of dogs off leash</i>	1
The parks don't have the desired amenities, facilities or activities	68	13%	<i>don't like being around a lot of people</i>	1
The parks are too busy or noisy	46	9%	<i>everything is dirty</i>	1
Do not feel safe using the parks	25	5%	<i>homework</i>	1
Lack of transportation / Parks are too far away	127	24%	<i>no drivers license</i>	1
Prevented by health problem or disability	9	2%	<i>no indoor pool</i>	1
Lack of parking	46	9%	<i>no soccer fields in all parks</i>	1
Activity fees are too high	56	10%	<i>not enough basketball courts</i>	1
Program times are inconvenient	17	3%	<i>not enough space</i>	1
Parks are not well maintained	36	7%	<i>other interests</i>	1
Not aware of what the parks have to offer	40	7%	<i>parents work late</i>	1
Prefer using parks outside of Norcross	50	9%	<i>sketchy, easy to get hurt, parks messed up</i>	1
Don't Know	101			

4. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "low" and 5 is "high", please rate how important the following items are to your household and then rate your general level of satisfaction with them.

IMPORTANCE	Not at all Important (1)		Not Important (2)		Neither Important nor Unimportant (3)		Somewhat Important (4)		Very Important (5)		Don't Know / Don't Use (0)		Total		AVG
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Parks for active recreation, such as baseball, soccer tennis, and playgrounds	42	6%	55	8%	151	23%	140	21%	206	31%	61	9%	655	100%	3.70
Parks for passive recreation, such as nature appreciation, walking, social interaction, and community events	46	7%	62	9%	152	23%	162	25%	172	26%	59	9%	653	100%	3.59
Green space properties that protect natural features	36	6%	52	8%	97	15%	153	24%	242	37%	71	11%	651	100%	3.88
Trails and greenways that support walking, jogging, cycling, and inline skating	39	6%	40	6%	132	20%	152	23%	239	37%	50	8%	652	100%	3.85

SATISFACTION	Not at all Satisfied (1)		Not Satisfied (2)		Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (3)		Somewhat Satisfied (4)		Very Satisfied (5)		Don't Know / Don't Use (0)		Total		AVG
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Parks for active recreation, such as baseball, soccer tennis, and playgrounds	43	7%	80	12%	180	28%	144	22%	99	15%	102	16%	648	100%	3.32
Parks for passive recreation, such as nature appreciation, walking, social interaction, and community events	44	7%	72	11%	188	29%	137	21%	107	17%	97	15%	645	100%	3.35
Green space properties that protect natural features	46	7%	66	10%	157	24%	156	24%	114	18%	107	17%	646	100%	3.42
Trails and greenways that support walking, jogging, cycling, and inline skating	48	7%	69	11%	153	24%	163	25%	124	19%	88	14%	645	100%	3.44

5. a) In order to build or improve parks, trails, and green space, City tax dollars and other funding sources are often required. Keeping this in mind, to what degree should the City of Norcross spend ADDITIONAL public funds to improve or expand the following?

	Don't Spend (1)		←		→		Definitely Spend (5)		Don't Know		Total		AVG		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Youth Ball Diamonds	183	28%	76	11%	151	23%	53	8%	50	8%	149	23%	662	100%	2.44
Adult Ball Diamonds	195	30%	98	15%	124	19%	56	8%	44	7%	143	22%	660	100%	2.33
Youth Soccer Fields	101	15%	51	8%	130	20%	120	18%	181	28%	75	11%	658	100%	3.39
Adult Soccer Fields	124	19%	69	10%	128	19%	107	16%	149	23%	84	13%	661	100%	3.15
Football Fields	124	19%	49	7%	112	17%	126	19%	173	26%	76	12%	660	100%	3.30
Tennis Courts	163	25%	78	12%	155	24%	101	16%	71	11%	83	13%	651	100%	2.72
Outdoor Basketball Courts	120	18%	63	10%	136	21%	111	17%	156	24%	71	11%	657	100%	3.20
Sand Volleyball Courts	143	22%	75	11%	124	19%	123	19%	119	18%	76	12%	660	100%	3.00
Playgrounds	93	14%	36	5%	112	17%	132	20%	232	35%	54	8%	659	100%	3.62
Children's Splash Pads / Interactive Water Features	86	13%	41	6%	109	16%	114	17%	251	38%	62	9%	663	100%	3.67
Off-Leash Dog Parks	161	25%	61	9%	139	21%	96	15%	123	19%	75	11%	655	100%	2.93
Skateboard Parks	125	19%	78	12%	134	20%	100	15%	151	23%	73	11%	661	100%	3.13
Paved Multi-Use Trails for Biking / Jogging	101	15%	64	10%	143	22%	131	20%	153	23%	72	11%	664	100%	3.29
Unpaved Nature Trails for Walking / Hiking	124	19%	73	11%	138	21%	113	17%	131	20%	79	12%	658	100%	3.09
Opportunities for Nature Appreciation	129	20%	76	12%	125	19%	115	18%	123	19%	89	14%	657	100%	3.05
Floral / Ornamental Displays	175	27%	83	13%	126	19%	95	15%	70	11%	105	16%	654	100%	2.64
Bandshells and Amphitheaters	159	25%	71	11%	134	21%	91	14%	86	13%	106	16%	647	100%	2.77
Picnic Areas and Pavilions	97	15%	60	9%	136	21%	131	20%	161	24%	73	11%	658	100%	3.34
Benches	83	13%	47	7%	118	18%	145	22%	198	30%	66	10%	657	100%	3.55
Shade Trees	86	13%	33	5%	113	17%	136	21%	231	35%	64	10%	663	100%	3.66
Public Restrooms	92	14%	27	4%	87	13%	112	17%	285	43%	57	9%	660	100%	3.78
More Parking	97	15%	46	7%	118	18%	131	20%	199	30%	67	10%	658	100%	3.49
Lighting	89	14%	55	8%	129	20%	122	19%	179	27%	79	12%	653	100%	3.43
Better Maintenance	83	13%	29	5%	97	15%	106	17%	234	37%	90	14%	639	100%	3.69

Other Priorities (if volunteered)	#
water fountains	4
pool	3
vending machines	2
cleaning	1
drag racing tracks	1
volleyball courts	1

5. b) Which three (3) of the items from Question 5a are most important to your household?

	Priority #1		Priority #2		Priority #3		Total		AVG.
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Youth Ball Diamonds	9	2%	6	1%	2	0%	17	4%	1.59
Adult Ball Diamonds	11	2%	5	1%	0	0%	16	4%	1.31
Youth Soccer Fields	76	17%	33	8%	11	3%	120	27%	1.46
Adult Soccer Fields	27	6%	25	6%	12	3%	64	14%	1.77
Football Fields	42	9%	20	5%	22	5%	84	19%	1.76
Tennis Courts	4	1%	4	1%	4	1%	12	3%	2.00
Outdoor Basketball Courts	27	6%	24	5%	17	4%	68	15%	1.85
Sand Volleyball Courts	11	2%	14	3%	18	4%	43	10%	2.16
Playgrounds	37	8%	44	10%	43	10%	124	28%	2.05
Children's Splash Pads / Interactive Water Features	33	7%	38	9%	24	6%	95	21%	1.91
Off-Leash Dog Parks	11	2%	20	5%	25	6%	56	13%	2.25
Skateboard Parks	18	4%	14	3%	25	6%	57	13%	2.12
Paved Multi-Use Trails for Biking / Jogging	21	5%	13	3%	24	6%	58	13%	2.05
Unpaved Nature Trails for Walking / Hiking	11	2%	18	4%	14	3%	43	10%	2.07
Opportunities for Nature Appreciation	7	2%	9	2%	8	2%	24	5%	2.04
Floral / Ornamental Displays	1	0%	3	1%	10	2%	14	3%	2.64
Bandshells and Amphitheaters	10	2%	6	1%	10	2%	26	6%	2.00
Picnic Areas and Pavilions	8	2%	18	4%	22	5%	48	11%	2.29
Benches	4	1%	16	4%	17	4%	37	8%	2.35
Shade Trees	15	3%	25	6%	28	6%	68	15%	2.19
Public Restrooms	29	6%	36	8%	33	8%	98	22%	2.04
More Parking	11	2%	14	3%	12	3%	37	8%	2.03
Lighting	11	2%	16	4%	16	4%	43	10%	2.12
Better Maintenance	21	5%	18	4%	31	7%	70	16%	2.14
Other	4	1%	1	0%	4	1%	9	2%	2.00
Total	459	100%	440	100%	432	100%	1331	300%	
None of these items are important to me / no response	2								

6. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree (1)		Disagree (2)		Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)		Agree (4)		Strongly Agree (5)		Don't Know		Total		AVG
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
The distance that I travel to participate in outdoor recreation activities is reasonable.	61	9%	62	10%	202	31%	123	19%	115	18%	88	14%	651	100%	3.30
I am satisfied with the variety of outdoor recreation activities available in Norcross.	51	8%	77	12%	173	27%	142	22%	122	19%	86	13%	651	100%	3.37
I am satisfied with the physical condition and maintenance of Norcross parks.	55	8%	76	12%	181	28%	144	22%	104	16%	94	14%	654	100%	3.30

7. Please provide any additional comments relating to parks, green space and trails in Norcross.

Comments	#
Improve maintenance / cleanliness (washrooms, fields)	37
Compliments	30
Need more sport fields	13
Need more playgrounds/activities	12
Need more walking/hiking/biking trails	10
Need to improve greenery and trees for shade	8
Need a skatepark	8
Need a cold water fountain	7
Improve security (lights, police, visibility)	6
Need pools	4
Too busy/noisy	3
Need more parking	3
Need dog parks	2
Need more seating	2

DEMOGRAPHICS

8. How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

	#	%
1	0	0%
2	28	5%
3	98	16%
4	137	22%
5	127	21%
6	100	16%
7 or more	122	20%
Total	612	100%
Average Household Size	5.17	

9. Please indicate the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories.

	#	%
under 10 years	398	18%
10-19 years	824	37%
20-34 years	323	15%
35 to 54 years	596	27%
55 and over	67	3%
Total	2,208	100%

10. In what year were you born?

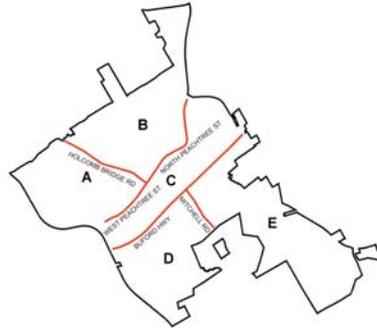
	#	%
1991	8	1%
1992	26	5%
1993	67	12%
1994	117	22%
1995	81	15%
1996	17	3%
1997	107	20%
1998	115	21%
Total	538	100%
Average Year	1995	
Average Age	15	

11. How many years have you lived in the City of Norcross?

	#	%
Less than two (<2) years	122	22%
Two to five (2-5) years	148	26%
Six to ten (6-10) years	120	21%
Eleven to twenty (11-20) years	162	29%
More than twenty (>20) years	8	1%
Total	560	100%
Don't Know	71	

12. Please mark with an 'X' the approximate location of your residence on the map below OR identify the area in which you live.

	#	%
Area A	56	17%
Area B	42	13%
Area C	39	12%
Area D	120	37%
Area E	71	22%
Total	328	100%
Don't Know	282	
Live outside of the City of Norcross	93	



13. Which of the following categories best describes your household's racial or ethnic background(s)? (multiple responses allowed)

	#	% of sample
American Indian or Alaska Native	16	3%
Asian	49	8%
Black or African American	190	32%
Hispanic or Latino	307	52%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	0%
White	95	16%
Total	659	
Don't Know	49	

APPENDIX C:

- Key Informant Interviews - Listing

Key Informant Interviews - Listing

The following individuals were interviewed by the Project Consultants for the purposes of informing this Master Plan.

Name	Organization / Interest
Arlene Beckles	Arts Alliance and Imagination Chair
Scott Musko	Bike Shop Owner – Local
Kenneth Wickham	Chief Judge / Avid Cyclist
Dallas Stidd	City of Norcross Chief of Police
Susan Wuerzner	City of Norcross City Clerk
Rudolph Smith	City of Norcross City Manager
Mayor Johnson	City of Norcross City Mayor
Philomena Robertson	City of Norcross Code Enforcement
Rusty Robertson	City of Norcross Code Enforcement
Chris McCrary	City of Norcross Community Development Director
Ross Kaul	City of Norcross Councilman
Charlie Riehm	City of Norcross Councilman
Bob Wilkerson	City of Norcross DDA Chair
Chuck Cimarik	City of Norcross DDA Redevelopment Chair
Brant Aden	City of Norcross DDA, Civil Engineer
Craig Mims	City of Norcross Director of Public Works
Tixie Fowler	City of Norcross Downtown Manager
Vernae Martin	City of Norcross Economic Development Manager
Jeff Mueller	City of Norcross Engineer
Meryl Wilkerson	City of Norcross Parks and Greenspace Commission Co-Chair/P.T. Parks and Rec. staff
Erin Taylor	City of Norcross Records Clerk
Rip Robertson	City of Norcross Recreation & Parks Division Superintendent
Gail Newton	Hopwell Baptist Church
Ann Barker	Hopwell Baptist Church
Nolly Dyste	Latin American Association
Edna Berkshire	Local Business Owner
Blake Manton	Local Business Owner and resident/ Landscape Contractor on several City Parks
Beauliere Champagne	Local neighborhood representative
Linda McPherson	Medlock Corners representative
Jim Scarbrough	Member Zoning Board of Appeals and Sustainable Norcross Commission
Jennifer R. Kunda	NDA, Creekside representative
Kirk Barton	Norcross High School Athletic Director
Harvey Snider	Norcross High School sports parent
Terri Hoyle	Norcross Methodist Church
Chuck Paul	PDC Chair, Norcross Business Assoc, local business owner
Nadine Depass	PTA Board / Parent
Alex Pilson	Spike Street Representative / Xtreme sports rep
Connie Weathers	Steering Committee Chair Person
Mark Ranalli	YMCA Marketing Director
Lisa Pierce	YMCA Wellness Director

APPENDIX D:

- Public Meeting Notes

Public Input Meeting # 1 – Agenda

- Parks Master Plan Project Introduction
- Team Introduction
- About the Master Plan
- The Planning Process
- Community Profile
- Key Trends
- Surveys (Community and Youth)
- Inventory
- City vs. County
- Key Considerations
- Next Steps
- Q&A
- Public Input Period



Location: Norcross Community Center

Date: 9/23/10 – 7pm -9pm

Summary:

Prior to the public input section of the meeting, consultant Sean Murphy of SEI provided a Power Point slide show (By MBPC) and a 30 minute presentation of the first phase of the Master Plan – The Environmental Scan and touched briefly on the future phases of the plan and next steps. The presentation followed the outline of the power point and touched on the major points of the Draft Master Plan. (See Agenda) The presentation was followed by a brief question and answer session and then a time for Public Comments.

Public Comment Section

All comments made by the public were recorded by digital recorder and notes taken by SEI Staff. The comments below are summarized and not exact quotes. In some cases we did not get the name of the commenter and or could not find the name on the sign in sheet.

Charlie Reihm – Wants to see what we would recommend for Fickling Pond parcel

Marilyn Michum – Re Fickling – Would want to see Fickling used as a Bird Sanctuary – Wild Life preserve with pedestrian access around pond.

Terry Bowie– RE Fickling – Thinks city should breach pond/dam, turn pond back to natural land.

John Heald – Wants climbing rocks or bouldering features in parks. Saw them in Montana and like them.

Marilyn Michum – Wants to see what we can do with Johnson Dean Park (doesn't like to see it sitting unused) – Wants a pedestrian passive use for Johnson Dean – Wants a dog park somewhere in Norcross. Wants connectivity for all parks.

Terry Bowie – RE: Johnson Dean thinks we need a maintenance plan for the park to include removal of invasive privet plants and kudzu.

Connie Weathers – RE: Johnson Dean – Current Plans for the park address these issues. Community work days have been progressing on this.

Seth Pratt – Shade in Lillian Webb Park desired. Around fountain especially.

Bob Wilkerson – Other side of Buford Highway – Privately held parcel of land that connects Mitchell Parcels to Norcross Tucker road. Has creek through it. Thinks this should be included in any plan for that area. Suggest soccer and trails in the Mitchell Street parcel/s. Also look at old Buchanan fields. Also look at the apartments adjacent to Buchanan School.

Charlie Reihm – Plan and efforts should put a strong emphasis on working with school board on the Buchanan School parcel as a possible relationship to build for shared use.

Lynn Hannan – Sidewalks connectivity without crossing streets. Contiguous sidewalks with ramps. Can't get to Rossie Brundage with a stroller, Holcomb Bridge road also a problem. Bike paths connecting downtown to Peachtree parkway. Accessibility along Holcomb Bridge important.

Meryl Wilkerson – “Redfields to Greenfields” movement to be contemplated in master plan. How can Norcross potentially use this concept for development of parks. See GA Tech Research institute – City Cemetery should or could be used as park. Jean Ramsey (Oakland Cemetery – Public/Private partnership for maintenance) we have historical cemetery. Plan to suggest how we can form a partnership to run/maintain this.

Greg McFarland – Include LCI Study in Master Plan considerations – Buchanan area and cemetery addressed in these studies. Be sure we include these recommendations in our assessment for usage of these areas. Col Adams passing leaves a nice piece of historical agricultural land. We should consider adding this land to the City's holdings for future parks needs. Farm Terraces, etc “shows lots of history of what the area used to be”. The apartments (mentioned by Bob Wilkerson) have been an issue for years and need to be cleaned up.

Keith Shewbert - Would like to see downtown dog park for people to gather with their animals. Norcross Activity Center LCI study, we need to synchronize with this study because projects planned that are in alignment with this study can be fast tracked through the ARC and possibly be funded more easily. Re the Greenway project, we need to “push” for cooperation with utility companies. Previous efforts met resistance and died quickly.

NOTE: Sean pointed out that one of the significant challenges of trails in power easements is not necessarily the power company but instead the fact that many of these utility easements are easements across large numbers of privately held lots. Each requiring purchase of right of way or condemnation etc in order to get a trail across. Making the cost associated with these types of projects very high.

Meryl Wilkerson – Pocket parks desired in some of our neighborhood. Opportunities in Sheffield Forrest. Nice places for sitting and enjoying the outdoors. Don't have to have a specific activity.

Bob Wilkerson – Pinnacle Point area likely to receive high density redevelopment in the future. Contains a large pond and land surrounding it that could be used. The owner has offered to donate this land to the city but it has tax liens on it. Area around pond could be used as a park.

Terry Bowie – RE: Pinnacle Point Pond needs to be dredged, lots of liability, maintenance, Public Trust for land could be partner in this type of endeavor instead of the City. Also the west side of Thrasher Park needs more shade trees.

Unknown resident(Lynn Hannan) – Large tree in Seven development could be incorporated into a park

Chirs Iso (Sp?) - Keen on a dog park for the City but not having dogs in other parks with sports activities.

Charlie Reihm – LCI studies – The master plan should include policy decisions and funding options.

NORCROSS CULTURAL ARTS & COMMUNITY CENTER

EVENT: Park Master Plan Public Meeting

Sept 22, 2010

NAME	CITY	EMAIL
MARILYN Meacham	NORCROSS	MARILYNMREACHAM.COM
Barbara Renz	NORCROSS	ZNERB93@comcast.net
JIM RENZ	"	"
Anlene Beckles	NORCROSS	
Miss Sarah		
Alexis Sear		
Lynk Hannan	NORCROSS	
Seth Bratt	"	
Meryl & Bob Wilkerson	"	
Ross Kauf		
DWAYNE HIGGINS	NORCROSS	
Keith Sheehy	NORCROSS	
David McLeron	NORCROSS	
John Heald	NORCROSS	
Charlie Keelin	"	
Linda & Dick Dwyer	"	

NORCROSS CULTURAL ARTS & COMMUNITY CENTER

EVENT: Park Master Plan Public Meeting

Sept 22, 2010

NAME	CITY	EMAIL
Jane Halbrook	Norcross	JaneH@brooks182Bulworth.net
MERY BOWIE	"	
Brian Noel	Norcross	
GENE RAMSAY	"	

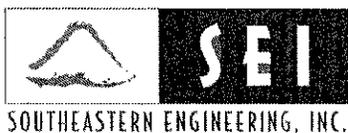


CITY OF NORCROSS – PARKS MASTER PLAN
PUBLIC MEETING NUMBER 2

AGENDA

7pm Thursday November 11 Upstairs NCACC Ballroom

1. Introduction of project
 - a. RFP process
 - b. Key directives/scope
 - c. History of what lead city to desire a plan
2. Introduction of Project Team
 - a. Rip Robertson – Staff Project Manager
 - b. Chris McCrary – Staff advisor
 - c. Connie Weathers – Steering Committee Chairperson
 - d. Steering Committee Members
 - i. Andrew Hixson
 - ii. Arlene Beckles
 - iii. Brian Mock
 - iv. James Scarbrough
 - v. Ken Hixson
 - e. Consultants
 - i. SEI- Sean Murphy
 - ii. MBPC- Jean Monteith
3. Summary of past and future phases
4. Power point summary
5. Q&A session
6. Closing Remarks



Location: Norcross Community Center

Date: 11/11/10 – 7pm -9pm

Summary:

Prior to the public input section of the meeting, consultants Jean Monteith and Sean Murphy provided a Power Point slide show (By MBPC) and a 1.5 hour presentation of the first and second phases of the Master Plan – The Environmental Scan and Analysis phases. They also touched briefly on the final phase of the plan and next steps. The presentation followed the outline of the power point and touched on the major points of the Draft Master Plan. (See Agenda) The presentation was followed by a brief question and answer session and then a time for Public Comments.

There were about 30 attendees at the second and final public input meeting. They included 3 city council members: Ross Kaul – Mayor Pro Tem, Craig Newton and Charlie Riehm. Also present were DDA Chair Bob Wilkerson, Parks and Green Space Chair Meryl Wilkerson, new online newspaper editor Laura Sullivan and various new and long term residents. The exchange was mostly positive and inquisitive.

Public Comment Section

All comments made by the public were recorded by notes taken by SEI Staff. The comments below are summarized and not exact quotes. In some cases we did not get the name of the commenter and or could not find the name on the sign in sheet.

Michelle Crofton – Lives behind Johnson Dean and was not aware of the previous public meetings, voiced her concern that they were not included in the public process prior to this meeting. Said she and her friend represented 12 children. Was worried about homeless people moving into Jonson-Dean if it became a park. Does not want anything in Johnson Dean property. Wants it left as natural greenspace. Doesn't want the city to spend any more money on parks at this time.

Charlie Rheim – Followed up with question on security in parks. Asked : Does usage of vacant land as park increase or decrease safety issues. Jean responded that it typically decreases safety issues according to published parks statistics.

No other specific requests or comments were made. However several questions on clarifications of points illustrated on the maps, graphics and locations of information in the Master Plan were answered.

There appeared to be a general consensus of acceptance by the audience of the major points of the draft master plan. No points or recommendations were specifically challenged.

NORCROSS CULTURAL ARTS & COMMUNITY CENTER

EVENT: Park Master Plan Public Meeting

Nov. 11, 2010

NAME	CITY	EMAIL
E. Ann Barker	✓	
Gail Newton	✓	gail316@bellsouth.net
Ellen Arnold	✓	ejaarc@broadband.com
Joji Sturgess	✓	Joji.sturgess@twoVital.com
Dennis Wilson	✓	mistyden@concast.net
Bobbi Mervol Wilkerson	✓	
Betsy Hillson	✓	

NORCROSS CULTURAL ARTS & COMMUNITY CENTER

EVENT: Park Master Plan Public Meeting

Nov. 11, 2010

NAME	CITY	EMAIL
CYNDI CURLEAD	Norcross	Ccurleand@gmail.com
Michelle Crofton	Norcross	mcrafton@comcast.net
Donna Stanford	Norcross	
Jane Holbrook	Norcross	
Tixie Fowler	Norcross	
CHRIS McEDDY	Norcross	CMCEDDY@NORCROSSGA.NET
TERRY BOWIE	Norcross	

APPENDIX E:

- Parcel Evaluation Sheets (under separate cover)