Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation
PLANNING FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
By The Numbers....

- Serving Mecklenburg County - includes City of Charlotte & six Towns
- Population 1,000,000+ (as of Sept. 2013) covering 523 sq. miles

- MCPR owns and manages 20,800+ acres
- 305 Full Time (437 in FY10) / 500+ PT & Temp Employees
- $28M County Funding + $6M Revenue = $34M Total Budget (FY15)
- 210+ parks & special facilities:
  - 240 Athletic Fields
  - 158 Picnic Areas
  - 149 Tennis Courts
  - 196 Miles of Trails
  - 115 Playgrounds
  - 109 Basketball Courts
  - 18 Recreation Centers
  - 14 Disc Golf & 5 Golf Courses
  - 12 Boat Ramps
  - 10 Historic Sites
  - 8 Community Gardens
  - 6 Spraygrounds & 3 Pools
  - 6 Dog Parks
  - 3 Nature Centers
  - 56-site Campground, Equestrian Center, BMX Track, Skate Park, Model Airplane Field, Senior Center, special venues such as Grady Cole & Memorial Stadium, and unique partnerships such as US National Whitewater Center, Carolina Raptor Center, Rural Hill, Historic Latta Plantation, NC Sailing Center...
Programming

• **Recreation Centers**: programming for 188,000 participants yearly
• **Aquatics**: 3,100 aquatic programs for 345,000 participants yearly
• **Nature Centers**: 2,400 nature programs for 140,000 participants yearly
• **Therapeutic Rec**: 1,300 TR programs for 10,700 participants yearly
• **Athletics**: 1,300 athletic events yearly for 270,000 participants
• **Special Facilities**: 80,000 patrons yearly to special facilities
• **Volunteers**: 13,000 volunteers yearly donating 97,000 hrs valued at $2.1M
The Impact of Parks

Access is Key: Living close to parks and recreation facilities is consistently related to higher physical activity levels for both adults and youth. One study showed children living within 1/2 mile of park or playground are 5 times more likely be a healthy weight, rather than overweight, as compared to children who didn’t have a park nearby. Another 3-year study concluded children have a much better chance of avoiding the obesity epidemic if they live in neighborhoods where they can safely bike, walk and have access to parks.

Significant health care cost savings are realized by individuals living near parks and utilizing them. Adults under 65 who are moderately active in parks experience approx. $300 in health savings per year. This rises to $700/year for individuals over 65.

Parks and open spaces create community, strengthen relationships & build caring qualities. Park users who are more physically active and make frequent contact with friends during their leisure are less likely to report feeling depressed.

Close proximity to green spaces and parks is associated with less depression, anxiety, and other health problems.

Increased Social Capital: Research shows residents who live near outdoor green space and parks are more familiar with their nearby neighbors, socialize more with them, and express greater feelings of community and safety than residents lacking nearby parks.
Q13. Level of Agreement with the Benefits Being Provided by Parks, Nature Preserves, and Greenways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide healthy recreational opportunities</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve physical health and fitness</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve the quality of life in Mecklenburg County</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preserve open space and the environment</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribute to a sense of community</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase property values in surrounding area</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help attract new residents and businesses</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve water and air quality</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protect historical attributes</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help reduce crime</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2013)
The Impact of Parks
Initiatives – Access

Community Parks - Service Area Analysis

This map illustrates distribution and gaps in the service capacity of current Community Park facilities.
Initiatives – Access

Total of Mecklenburg County Population, served by a developed Nature Preserve, determined by a 5 Minute Drive Time at a Normal Speed Limit

- Total Mecklenburg County population for 2013: 969,110
- Total Mecklenburg County population living within a 5 minute drive time of a developed Nature Preserve: 210,572
- Total percentage of Mecklenburg County residents that live within a 5 minute drive time of a developed Nature Preserve: 21.7%
Initiatives – Access

Total of Mecklenburg County Population, served by a developed Community Park, determined by a 5 Minute Drive Time at a Normal Speed Limit

Total Mecklenburg County population for 2013: 969,110
Total Mecklenburg County population living within a 5 minute drive time of a developed Community Park: 676,620
Total percentage of Mecklenburg County residents that live within a 5 minute drive time of a developed Community Park is 70%
Initiatives – Access

Parks & Recreation - Access Analysis

Developed Recreation Amenities
- COMMUNITY PARK
- DIRTWAY
- GREENWAY
- NATURE PRESERVE
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- POOL
- RECREATION CENTER
- REGIONAL PARK
- SPECIAL FACILITY

Greenways

DIRT Ways
- Complete
- Future

Analysis for Recreation Amenity A to L

0 - 5 Minutes
Initiatives – Fit Zones & Prioritization
Initiatives – Access

15 Park Sites Prioritized

Methodology Included:
- Population Density
- % Low Income
- % Obese Children
- Diabetes Mortality Rate
- Heart Disease Mortality Rate
- Access to Fitness
- Likelihood of Adult Physical Inactivity
**Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks**

**Leading Causes of Death**

- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- Stroke
- Chronic lower respiratory disease
- Unintentional injuries
- Diabetes
- Pneumonia/influenza
- Alzheimer’s disease
- Kidney disease

**Percentage (of all deaths)**

**Actual Causes of Death**

- Tobacco
- Poor diet/lack of exercise
- Alcohol
- Infectious agents
- Pollutants/toxins
- Firearms
- Sexual behavior
- Motor vehicles
- Illicit drug use

**Percentage (of all deaths)**

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† Adapted from McGinnis Foege, updated by Mokdad et. al.
Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

U.S. Deaths Attributable Each Year to Cigarette Smoking*

- Lung Cancer: 128,900 (29%)
- Ischemic Heart Disease: 126,000 (28%)
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: 92,900 (21%)
- Other Diagnoses: 44,000 (10%)
- Stroke: 15,900 (4%)
- Other Cancers: 35,300 (8%)

About 443,000 U.S. Deaths Attributable Each Year to Cigarette Smoking*

*Estimates from the Surgeon General's report on the health consequences of involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke.
Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

TRENDS in ADULT CIGARETTE CONSUMPTION—U.S., 1900–2011

Annual adult per capita cigarette consumption and major smoking and health events

Year | Event
--- | ---
1900 | U.S. entry into WW I
1910 | Great Depression
1920 | End of WW II
1930 | First modern reports linking smoking and cancer
1940 | Marketing of filtered cigarettes
1950 | 1964 Surgeon General’s Report
1960 | Federal cigarette tax doubles
1970 | Nonsmokers’ rights movement begins
1980 | Broadcast ad ban
1990 | Master Settlement Agreement; California first state to enact ban on smoking in bars
2000 | OTC Nicotine Medications
2010 | Cigarette price drop

This is a man-made epidemic

Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

Proven Strategies with Most Impact to Reduce Tobacco Use

Public Policy
- Expand tobacco-free policies to all workplaces and community establishments
- Increase the price of tobacco

Community level interventions
- Expand smoking bans and restrictions
- Mass media campaigns
- Access to cessation resources
Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

The Impact of smoke-free policies

Findings:

Reduces exposure to secondhand smoke

Increases the number of tobacco users who quit

Reduces the initiation of tobacco use among young people

Reduces tobacco-related morbidity and mortality, including acute cardiovascular events

Reduces healthcare costs substantially.

No adverse economic impact on businesses, including bars and restaurants.

http://www.thecommunityguide.org/Tobacco/smokefreepolicies.html
Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

The NC Smoke-Free Restaurants and Bars Law

Emergency room visits for heart attacks reduced by 21 percent!
Smoke-Free Policies Work

Helena, Montana:
Hospital admissions for heart attacks fell by 40% during the first six months after a smoke-free workplaces law was implemented (2002).

After the law was struck down in court, the rates returned to their previous level within 6 months.
Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

Why is it Important to De-normalize Tobacco Use?

Nearly 90% of adult smokers begin smoking by age 18.

- Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults, USDHHS, Centers for Disease Control, 2012.

Preventing youth from starting tobacco is the key to changing norms.
Creating tobacco-free zones outdoors encourages smokers and other tobacco users to quit and changes social norms to support tobacco-free living.

Less role modeling of tobacco use de-normalizes the behavior to youth.


Studies show that tobacco smoke is detected as far as 30 feet or more from the smoking source. *Hwang & Lee, Nicotine Tobacco Research, 2013 and Stafford, Daube & Franklin, Health Promotion Journal of Australia, 2010.*

Cigarette butts are dangerous to small children and animals who may eat them.

Citizens go to parks to enjoy fresh air and healthy physical activity. Parks are intended to be family friendly venues.
Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

Q18. How Supportive Would You Be for All Mecklenburg County Parklands, Including Parks, Greenways, Nature Preserves and Golf Courses to Be Tobacco Free?

by percentage of respondents

- Very supportive: 72%
- Somewhat supportive: 10%
- Not sure: 9%
- Not supportive: 9%

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2013)
Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

Mecklenburg may ban smoking from government grounds, parks
Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

National 2020 Goal – 10% smoking rate

If Mecklenburg County adult smoking rate decreased from current 20% to 10%:

582 Mecklenburg County lives would be saved per year

$4,357,280 cost savings per year to Mecklenburg County government due to savings in direct medical costs and lost productivity caused by smoking ($3,856 per smoker per year saved).
P&R Master Plan  – Progress Since 2007

2007
Population 852,657

2014
Population 956,904 (12% ↑)

Significant Progress & Investment

- 8 Neighborhood Parks Opened
- 10 Community & Region Parks Opened
- 13 Miles of Greenways Opened
- 2 Nature Preserves Opened

Signature Venues Completed & Opened
- Little Sugar Creek Urban Sections
- Romare Bearden Park
- Revolution Sports Academy
- Mecklenburg County Sportsplex
Q8a. Estimated Number of Households in Mecklenburg County That Have a Need for Recreation Programs

by number of households based on 362,213 households in Mecklenburg County

- Adult fitness and wellness programs: 181,831
- Special events/festivals: 166,980
- Water fitness programs: 139,452
- Education/Life skills programs: 126,050
- Outdoor Adventure programs: 123,877
- Nature Education programs: 121,341
- Senior programs: 101,420
- Adult art, dance, performing arts: 100,333
- Adult swim programs: 99,971
- Adult sports programs: 95,624
- Tennis lessons, clinics and leagues: 90,915
- Youth Learn to Swim programs: 88,018
- Martial arts programs: 83,671
- Programs for people with disabilities: 82,222
- Youth/teen summer camp programs: 81,860
- Youth/teen sports programs: 81,136
- Youth/teen fitness and wellness programs: 80,049
- Youth/teen art, dance, performing arts: 77,876
- Golf lessons: 74,978
- Before and after school programs: 68,458
- Gymnastics and tumbling programs: 65,198
- Pre-School programs: 61,576

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2013)
Q6. Parks and Recreation Facilities That Households Have a Need For

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)

Paved walking and biking trails: 73%
Park shelters and picnic areas: 63%
Nature trails: 62%
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities: 52%
Playground equipment and play areas: 46%
Indoor swimming pools/leisure pool: 44%
Indoor running/walking track: 44%
Nature center: 44%
Outdoor swimming and spray grounds: 43%
Community Recreation Center: 41%
Outdoor tennis courts: 40%
Community gardens: 38%
Off-leash dog park: 35%
Outdoor amphitheaters: 34%
Outdoor basketball courts: 34%
Indoor basketball/volleyball courts: 33%
Mountain bike trails: 31%
Golf courses: 29%
Lake swimming areas: 28%
Youth/teen soccer fields: 27%
Youth/teen baseball and softball fields: 26%
Outdoor sand volleyball courts: 24%
Youth/teen football fields: 21%
Adult softball fields: 20%
Adult soccer fields: 20%
Campground (RV and/or tent): 16%
Skateboard park: 16%
Lacrosse and cricket fields: 13%
Equestrian trails: 8%
ATV or dirt bike course: 6%

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2013)
P&R Master Plan – 2014 Major Recommendations

- Access: Goal is a public recreation amenity (includes greenway or nature preserve) within 5 minutes or ¼ mile walk of every resident. (Currently 15.47% of public has such access)
- Household Program Participation: Increase from 21% to 30%
- Programs & Program Lifecycle
  - Keep 50-60% of programs in the Introductory, Take-Off, or Growth stages to meet evolving community needs, 40% in Mature stage for stability & retire Saturated/Declining programs
- Increase cost recovery (currently 27% cost recovery)
- Marketing: Develop a Branding Plan & begin strategic Marketing. Greatly increase marketing efforts (to aid in both Program Participation & Cost Recovery Goals)

Master Plan Calls for:
- Acquiring 2,810 acres of additional parkland by 2018 (485 acquired in FY15)
- 30 new Neighborhood Parks, 3-5 new Community Parks, 3-4 new Regional Parks
  - 120 picnic pavilions, 55 athletic fields, 35 playgrounds, 34 tennis courts, 25 basketball courts, 24 community gardens, 14 off leash dog areas, 6 disc golf course, 3 skateboard areas, etc.
- 33 miles of new Greenway trails w/in 10 years. (40 existing - 200 more miles over next 30 yrs)
- Expand 7 Rec Centers & build 4 new Regional Rec Centers (100,000+ sq. ft. each)
- 14 new spraygrounds & 9 new outdoor family aquatic centers
- 3-4 new Nature Centers
THERE'S NO APP FOR THIS
Mecklenburg County
Park & Recreation

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