

## CHAPTER 2

# ANALYSIS OF EXISTING PARK & RECREATION POLICIES AND FACILITIES

This chapter provides an inventory of existing parks, recreation facilities, and open space sites in the Chapel Hill area. Most of the facilities and properties described are Town owned and are primarily provided for recreation purposes. Additional sites or facilities that are included in this report exist primarily for some other purpose but can also be used for recreation (for example facilities owned by the Chapel Hill/Carrboro City Schools). Inventory information such as the size of the site and the number of individual facilities (fields, courts etc.) is presented in Table 2-1 “System-Wide Facility Inventory” at the end of this chapter. This information was provided to the consultant for comparison with standards and for use in gathering more specific information from individual site visits performed in August 2000. The findings from the site visits are summarized for each location in this chapter and specific recommendations related to existing facilities are found in Chapter 4, pages 4-11 through 4-15.

## Facility Related Policies

The following information describes five key current and/or recommended policies or mandates affecting the use of Town facilities. There are many more, but the five are important because they show the Town ‘s commitment to making sites available to the public through cooperative planning practices, limiting impact to neighboring properties, and improving sites for disabled accessibility.

### Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires municipalities to make reasonable accommodations for any person who is limited by a physical or mental disability. To meet legal requirements, recreation facilities must meet minimum physical standards related to access and use.

In 1992, the Town performed an ADA self-analysis and found that most facilities met minimum requirements. The Town made several changes and improvements since the study. Several areas of concern remain, including access to and within the Hargraves Center building, several play areas, and some toilet facilities.

The Parks and Recreation Department staff reviewed the self-evaluation materials in 2001 and based on this review believes it is in compliance with the ADA. The Department is prepared to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with special needs when requests are made for assistance. The Town is committed to upgrading any facilities that are found to be non-compliant with the ADA and will assure that all new construction complies fully with ADA standards.

### Availability of Town Facilities

All Town facilities should be open and available for use by Town and Orange County citizens on an equal basis. An Open Facilities Policy has been adopted by all the Towns and County. Because the Town does not charge or monitor use at most parks, there is a de facto open access policy that extends to anyone regardless of place of residence. Some facilities monitor residency of patrons

and charge appropriate non-resident fees. In addition, non-resident fees are charged for all programs offered by the Department.

Private groups can rent many Town facilities. Examples of facilities available for rent include picnic shelters, meeting rooms, fields, gymnasiums, and pools. The Council approves rental policies each year as part of the annual budget process.

## **Light Control**

This Master Plan recommends that the Town attempt to minimize light spillover onto adjacent properties by using the proper size and type of light poles, attachments, equipment, and fixtures for each situation. When needed, certified engineers should be used who have the expertise to balance safety considerations with the goal of preventing excessive light from spilling onto adjacent properties.

## **Pedestrian/Bike Access and Standards**

The Town Comprehensive Plan outlines strategies for developing improved pedestrian and bike access within the Urban Services District. Development plans are encouraged to provide a variety of safe pedestrian and bike routes to promote connectivity within the community. Methods of improving connectivity include the use of “Smart Growth” policies that emphasize the use of sidewalks along connected streets and restrict the use of dead-end or cul-de-sac streets. Additional connectivity can be obtained by developing greenway trails and separated pedestrian paths that connect parks and recreation facilities and other public spaces. This Master Plan endorses these concepts and recommends that the Town develop a coordinated plan that provides a system of connecting neighborhoods to parks and public spaces and other pedestrian destination points such as downtown, the library or commercial centers.

In addition, this plan recommends that all facility development be accomplished in compliance with Town adopted bicycle standards. Design of multi-purpose pedestrian/bicycle trails should be accomplished using American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and/or North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) bicycle standards. Natural surface trails should adhere to Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards and guidelines to the greatest extent possible.

## **Percent for Art Program**

All parks and trail capital projects are subject to the provisions of the Percent for Arts Ordinance and policy resolution.

## **Facility Inventory – Town Facilities**

Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department facilities were reviewed during August 2000. The purpose was to review the number of facilities provided and determine how effectively the facilities are serving the public. The findings are summarized in the text that follows.

The following parks and facilities are public properties that are owned, leased, or used by the Town for park and recreation activities or purposes. The locations include park facilities, greenways, and open space lands made available to the public and maintained by the Town. They are grouped into category headings of Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Mini-Parks, Special Use Sites, Trails, and Joint Town/School Sites. Definitions for the park types are provided in Chapter 3.

## Analysis of Bus, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Access

As part of the inventory phase of the Master Plan development process we examined the degree of non-automobile access for each Town-owned facility. Recommendations for improvements are found in Chapter 4.

### **Burlington Park**

- Bus Access: Excellent. Stop located near the park entrance.
- Sidewalk Access: Excellent access along Ephesus Road.
- Greenway and Trail Access: None. Potential exists for trail along Burlington Road Right of Way.

### **Cedar Falls Park**

- Bus Access: Excellent. Stop located at the park entrance.
- Sidewalk Access: Good access from the east. Sidewalk missing on the south side of Weaver Dairy Road to the west.
- Greenway and Trail Access: Excellent trail access from the south and to individual lots that border the park. Dry Creek Greenway on the north side of Weaver Dairy Road is still under construction.

### **Community Center Park**

- Bus Access: Excellent. Stop located at the park entrance and at Plant Road.
- Sidewalk Access: Excellent access along Franklin Street and portion of Estes Drive. Sidewalk sections are missing on the west side of Estes Drive and along Plant Road. These missing sidewalk sections appear to be a hazardous situation.
- Greenway and Trail Access: Excellent trail access via the Bolin Creek Trail to the west and to UNC Campus to the southwest. Proposed Bolin Creek Greenway extension to the south is missing.

### **Ephesus Park**

- Bus Access: Excellent. Stop located near the park entrance.
- Sidewalk Access: Excellent.
- Greenway and Trail Access: Informal trail access exists to Legion Road.

### **Hargraves Park**

- Bus Access: Excellent. Bus stop is located adjacent to the park.
- Sidewalk Access: There are sidewalks on all neighboring streets.
- Greenway and Trail Access: The Tanyard Branch Trail is located about .2 miles from the park and leads to Umstead Road.

### **Homestead Park**

- Bus Access: Bus stop is located adjacent to park on Airport Road.
- Sidewalk Access: There are sidewalks on all neighboring streets except for the north side of Homestead Road west of the park entrance.
- Greenway and Trail Access: The Upper Booker Creek Greenway is proposed to link the park to neighborhoods north to Weaver Dairy Road and west to the proposed Rail Trail. There are planned trail links west to two approved developments.

### **Jones Park**

- Bus Access: Bus stop is located within .25 mile.

- Sidewalk Access: There are no sidewalks in this neighborhood. However, traffic flows probably do not warrant sidewalk construction for park access.
- Greenway and Trail Access: Informal trail access exists to Purefoy Road to the east.

### **Lincoln Center**

- Bus Access: Excellent. Bus stop is located adjacent to the complex.
- Sidewalk Access: Sidewalks directly serve the facility on Merritt Mill Road.
- Greenway and Trail Access: An access leads to the Pine Knolls Community Center.

### **North Forest Hills Park**

- Bus Access: Bus stop is located within .15 mile.
- Sidewalk Access: There are no sidewalks in this neighborhood. However, traffic flows probably do not warrant sidewalk construction for park access.
- Greenway and Trail Access: Informal trail access to OWASA open space and adjacent residents.

### **Phillips Park**

- Bus Access: Excellent. Bus stop is located adjacent to park.
- Sidewalk Access: Sidewalk is missing on the north side of Estes Drive adjacent to the park.
- Greenway and Trail Access: None.
- Oakwood Park
- Bus Access: Good. Stop located about .15 miles from park on parallel street.
- Sidewalk Access: There are no sidewalks in this neighborhood. However, traffic flows probably do not warrant sidewalk construction for park access.
- Greenway and Trail Access: No opportunities exist for direct connections. Bicycle/pedestrian trail along Fordham Boulevard is a short distance from the park.

### **Umstead Park**

- Bus Access: Excellent. Bus stop is located adjacent to park.
- Sidewalk Access: There are sidewalks on Umstead Drive.
- Greenway and Trail Access: The Tanyard Branch Greenway links the park to the Northside neighborhood. However, the trail is in poor condition in several locations. The Bolin Creek Greenway is proposed to extend east of the park to merge with the existing Bolin Creek Greenway and to continue west to the Carrboro line and the proposed Rail Trail.

## **Community Parks**

There are four (4) community park sites located in Chapel Hill. Homestead Park and Cedar Falls Park are developed. The other two locations, Meadowmont Park and Southern Community Park, are Town-owned properties planned for future park development.

### **Cedar Falls Park**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to 11:00 p.m.

Location: western end of Weaver Dairy Road, south of East Chapel Hill High School

Approximate Size: 64 acres

#### Facilities:

- Parking (paved and gravel for ±160 cars), contains a recycling center
- (2) Softball/baseball fields (300-ft. to center field, lighted)
- (2) Youth softball/baseball fields (±200-ft. to center field, lighted)
- 3-seasons restroom/concession building (at ball field location)
- Picnic facilities (7 tables, no grills)
- Lighted tennis courts (6)
- Unpaved nature trail (1.5-mile loop)

Cedar Falls Park Evaluation: Visual quality is fair in the northern part of the site and excellent in the southern undeveloped portion. Parking is adequate. The 4 ballfields have lights and irrigation. The play area is located near the walking trail and picnic facilities in a natural setting that provides ample shade. An extensive trail system connects all park facilities and nearby neighborhoods. Overall, the park is in fair to good condition but it needs improvements to expand and enhance use. Problems with the site include:

- The view into the park from Weaver Dairy Road could be improved with landscape plantings.
- The recycling center is not adequately screened.
- The parking area could be more efficient if it were paved and lined. However, the gravel parking surface does provide a more “natural feel” that complements the wooded/passive area of the park.
- The field and tennis lights are outdated.
- The spectator viewing areas at the fields are very limited.
- The wood play equipment is small, lacks sufficient active play stations, is not wheelchair accessible, and likely does not meet current safety standards.
- Paved and unpaved trails within the park are in need of repair.
- Park and trail signage is inadequate.
- The tennis courts are in such poor condition that without resurfacing they may have to be closed for use in the near future.

#### **Homestead Park**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to 11:00 p.m.

Location: 100 Northern Park Drive, west of Airport Road and north of Homestead Road

Approximate Size: 40 acres (there is an additional 25 acres of entrance drive right-of-way)

#### Facilities:

- Paved parking (236 cars)
- (2) Athletic fields suitable for soccer, flag football, rugby, etc. (lighted and irrigated)
- (2) Softball/baseball fields (300 ft. to center field, lighted and irrigated)
- Skateboard park
- All seasons restroom/concession building (at skate park)
- Batting cages (6 stations)
- Large play structure with swings and a stand-alone slide
- Picnic shelter/ 3-seasons restroom structure
- Picnic facilities (12 tables, 8 grills)

- Paved walking trails
- Dog Park (20,000 SF)

Homestead Park Evaluation: The visual quality of the site is good to excellent. The parking area appears adequate; however it is far from some of the use areas. The site furnishings are in good condition and are well coordinated. The overall condition of the park is very good. The level of use is moderate to high depending on the season, but is expected to be very high once all the facilities are completed. The skateboard and batting cage facilities are managed and maintained through a private concession agreement with the Town. The site has room for greenway connections and a recreation center/aquatics facility. Turf at many common areas is failing and the athletic/soccer fields have also experienced turf problems.

**Meadowmont Park**

Special Note: At the time this Master Plan was adopted Meadowmont Park was under construction. All information below will be relevant upon completion of the project.

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to dusk

Location: North side of Meadowmont Lane adjacent to future school site

Approximate Size: 70 acres

Facilities:

- Shared parking with school (120 spaces)
- Community access gymnasium
- (2) Athletic fields suitable for soccer, flag football, rugby, etc. (lighted and irrigated)
- Termination point of Meadowmont Greenway Trail
- Natural surface trails throughout the park
- All seasons restroom as part of the gymnasium
- Picnic shelter
- Shared outdoor basketball court

Meadowmont Park Evaluation: Upon completion the site should be good to excellent. The parking area appears adequate; however it is far from the athletic fields.

**Southern Community Park**

Hours of Operation (Park): NA

Location: West side of highway 15-501, south of Southern Village.

Approximate Size: 73 acres

A conceptual plan was being developed at the time this report was being prepared.

**Neighborhood Parks**

The following neighborhood parks were reviewed as part of the inventory process:

Burlington Park

North Forest Hills Park

Community Center Park

Oakwood Park

Hargraves Park

Pritchard Park

Jones Park

Umstead Park

## **Burlington Park**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to dusk

Location: Off of Ephesus Church Road just east of Ephesus School

Approximate Size: 5 acres

Facilities:

- Off street parking (gravel, ±15 spaces)
- Youth play field (150'x 90' open field with soccer goals)
- Play area (single play structure and separate swings)
- Picnic facilities (2 tables, 1 grill)
- Benches

Burlington Play Area Evaluation: The park is an example of a good use of a parcel of previously underutilized public land. The visual quality of the site is very informal, which allows users to feel comfortable at the site. The parking appears adequate because most patrons live in the surrounding neighborhood and walk to the site. There are no restrooms. The site furnishings are minimal but are appropriate for the park. Vandalism does not appear to be a problem and the overall condition of the park and its components is very good for the moderate level of use that it receives.

## **Community Center Park**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to 11:00 p.m.

Hours of Operation (Center): 5:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; 8:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., Saturday; 11:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m., Sunday. The Center is open most holidays, but is closed for an annual 2-3 week maintenance shutdown each August/September.

Location: 120 South Estes Drive, south of Franklin Street and north of Fordham Boulevard

Approximate Size: 10 acres

Facilities:

- Parking in two locations (for approximately 90 cars)
- Asphalt basketball court (4 goals)
- Bocce courts (2)
- Rose Garden with small gazebo/shelter
- Interactive display garden
- Large play area/structure
- Volleyball area (sand base)
- Greenway connection/trailhead for Bolin Creek and Battle Branch trails
- Picnic facilities (5 tables, 1 grill)

Community Center/ Interior/ Facilities:

- See Special Facilities heading for information on the Center and Administrative Offices

Community Center Park Evaluation: Community Center Park has two entrances and parking areas. The main parking area (±60 cars) located near Estes Drive is used primarily for access to the Center, Rose Garden, play area and greenway trails. The second parking area is located off

Plant Road ( $\pm 28$  cars to serve the park and administrative offices). Parking is inadequate during peak use periods. The play area is heavily used. The gardens provide space for special events and educational programs. The Bolin Creek Trail extends approximately 1.5-miles upstream to Airport Road. The Battle Branch Trail extends another 1.5-miles to the UNC campus. The visual quality of the park is good. Although there is some room for expansion, much of the site is located in the Resource Conservation District (RCD), which restricts development options. The park is in overall good condition. However, the following conditions were noted:

- The interactive gardens are marginally maintained and out of character with the adjacent Rose Garden.
- The trail/maintenance road system is not well integrated and fails to provide efficient interior connections for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The retaining wall near the play structure is leaning and could fail at some time in the future.
- The poured-in-place fall surface is poorly anchored.

### **Hargraves Park**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to 11:00 p.m.

Hours of Operation (Center): 1:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

Hours of Operation (Northside Gym): 10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m., Monday – Saturday; 1:00 – 9:00 p.m., Sunday

(Both indoor facilities are usually open 50 weeks per year)

Location: 206 North Roberson Street, north of Rosemary Street

Approximate Size: 10 acres

#### Exterior Facilities:

- Off street parking ( $\pm 100$  cars at 4 non-contiguous locations)
- Lighted tennis courts (3)
- Picnic areas (1 shelter, 10 tables)
- Softball/baseball field (275 ft. to center field, lighted)
- Basketball court
- Play area

#### Center and Pool Facilities:

- See Special Facilities heading for information on Hargraves Center, Northside Gym, and A.D. Clark Pool

Hargraves Park Evaluation: The park is a heavily used facility with a mix of facilities. It appears that the site is at capacity or over programmed. Perhaps because the site has been developed in stages since the 1940s without a coherent site plan, the layout of the park is not ideal. Major implications of this scattershot development has been construction of several non-contiguous parking lots, a difficult pedestrian system, construction of the play area in a natural drainage way, and the inability to construct the new gymnasium as an addition to the older Center building.

The park buildings (gym, center, and pool) are centrally located within the site, which unfortunately makes access difficult to some areas of the park. There are four (4) parking

areas/lots, however the lots located at the rear of the center and near the baseball field are not often used due to their isolation, distance from major activity centers, and inadequate lighting. The park furnishings are in overall good condition. However, the designs for most of these elements should be updated to improve their function and use. Specific recommendations are found in Chapter 4. The play area is well used but should be further evaluated for safety issues. It appears that the fall surface may require renovation or upgrading as soon as possible.

### **Jones Park**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to dusk

Location: Off of Holland Drive in close proximity to the intersection of Columbia St. and the 54 Bypass (Fordham Blvd. South).

Approximate Size: 10 acres

Facilities:

- Paved Parking
- Play structure
- Benches and picnic table

Jones Park Evaluation: The park is very natural and provides excellent visual quality. The facilities are in very good condition. The site lacks adequate benches and the play structure lacks challenging features. Park signs are inadequate and there are no restroom facilities.

### **North Forest Hills Park**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to dusk

Location: Collums Drive in the general area between Airport Road and Piney Mountain Road

Approximate Size: 10 acres

Facilities:

- Off street parking (6 cars)
- 3-seasons restroom/shelter building
- Picnic facilities (5 tables, 5 grills)
- Play area/apparatus
- Paved access trail
- Nature trail (approximately ½ - mile)
- Basketball half court
- Benches

North Forest Hills Park Evaluation: The park's visual quality is good and the site furnishings appear adequate for current use. The park receives moderate use. It has experienced some vandalism problems. The walking trail connects to an informal open space owned by OWASA. Overall, the park is in good condition.

### **Oakwood Park**

Hours of Operation: Dawn to dusk

Location: Intersection of Oakwood Drive and Berkley Road.

Approximate Size: 2 acres

Facilities:

- Play area (2 structures, fenced)
- Picnic facilities (2 tables)
- Open play field (small youth field suitable for pee-wee baseball/kickball)
- Tennis court (not lighted)
- On-street parking

Oakwood Park Evaluation: Oakwood Park is an interesting neighborhood facility that is located on three corners of a four-way intersection. The park primarily serves pedestrian traffic from the local neighborhood but on-street parking is available. The visual quality of the site is good and matches the residential character of the neighborhood. The site furnishings are adequate at the play area although additional seating could be provided. There are no restroom facilities. The tennis court lights have been out of service for awhile and should be removed. The undeveloped corner of the park has space to install new facilities. Most likely, any development would need to be “passive” so that it does not conflict with the adjacent residential properties.

**Pritchard Park (Library site)**

Hours of Operation

Park: Dawn to dusk

Chapel Hill Public Library:

Monday-Thursday	10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Friday	10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Sunday	1:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Location: 100 Library Drive, off of South Estes Drive, north of Franklin Street

Approximate Size: 5 acres open space (total site=34 acres includes library, parking, and drive)

Facilities:

- Walking/biking trail (connects library with sidewalks and streets)
- Art Exhibition area
- Benches/sitting areas
- All seasons restrooms (inside the Library, these are convenient and available for park users)

Pritchard Park Evaluation: The park surrounds the Chapel Hill Public Library, which is located along Library Drive, near the intersection of Franklin Street and Estes Drive. A trail connects the library with surrounding neighborhoods. The Council has approved a conceptual plan for the site that includes expanded trails, a play area, a gazebo, an art garden, and a community meeting space. A Special Use Permit for the park is anticipated to start in FY 2002-03.

**Umstead Park**

Hours of Operation: Dawn to dusk

Location: Umstead Drive, east of Estes Drive Extension

Approximate Size: 16 acres

#### Facilities:

- Parking ( $\pm$ 30 cars)
- Tennis court (not lighted)
- Play area (large ADA accessible structure with stand-alone play features and swings)
- Picnic shelter, small (1)
- Picnic shelter medium size with 3-seasons restroom structure (1)
- Youth softball/baseball field ( $\pm$ 200- ft. to center field)
- Pedestrian bridges (2 creek crossings)
- Trailhead for Tanyard Branch Trail

Umstead Park Evaluation: Overall the park is well maintained and the visual quality is very good to excellent. The park is heavily used and the future expansion of the Bolin Creek greenway will likely attract more users. Parking appears to be adequate; however there are occasions when the lot is full. The play area/structure is the Town's most wheelchair accessible play structure, although it does not offer challenging activities for fully mobile older children.

Although the park functions reasonably well it would be difficult to improve or expand any of the amenities because of the current site design, the location of Umstead Drive (the road bisects the park), and the extensive RCD adjacent to Bolin Creek. Most of the park facilities are built within the Bolin Creek Resource Conservation District. Indeed the play area is located partially within the stream's floodway. This situation has resulted in repeated flood damage over the years.

### Mini-Park Sites

The Town has four mini-park sites that have limited park amenities for adjacent neighborhoods.

#### **Fire Station #2 Park**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to dusk

Location: Intersection of Franklin Street and Elliott Road

Approximate Size: 500 SF

#### Facilities:

- Decorative fountain
- Bench

Fire Station #2 Park Evaluation: This park consists of a shaded and landscaped seating area on the Fire Station #2 property at the northwest corner of Franklin Street and Elliott Street. The visual quality is very good. The site is negatively impacted by noise from nearby Franklin Street. There are no public restroom facilities.

#### **James C. Wallace Plaza**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to 11:00 p.m.

Location: Top of the James Wallace Parking Deck on Rosemary Street

Approximate Size: 1 acre

Facilities:

- Performance area
- Benches
- Restrooms

James C. Wallace Plaza Evaluation:

The site is in good condition. The overall visual quality of the site is good. The performance area provides a downtown venue for music and other performance arts.

**Town Hall Property**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to dusk

Location: North Columbia Street and Airport Drive

Approximate Size: 1 acre

Facilities:

- Benches
- Tables
- Walks/path connections to street sidewalks

Town Hall Property Evaluation: The site is in very good condition. The overall visual quality of the site is good. However, shade from large trees on the site contributes to difficulties with grass establishment.

**Westwood Park**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to dusk

Location: Off Dogwood Drive

Approximate Size: 1 acre

Facilities:

- Play structure
- Benches and picnic table

Westwood Park Evaluation: The wooded neighborhood site is within a short walking distance of local residents. On street parking serves the relatively few residents who drive to the site. The play equipment is in good condition and the overall visual quality of the site is excellent. There are no restroom facilities.

Deficiencies include:

- Poor signage
- Lack of seating/benches.

## Special Use Facilities

### Chapel Hill Community Center

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to 11:00 p.m.

Hours of Operation (Center): 5:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; 8:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., Saturday; 11:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m., Sunday. The Center is open most holidays, but is closed for an annual 2-3 week maintenance shutdown each August/September.

Location: 120 South Estes Drive, south of Franklin Street and north of Fordham Boulevard

Approximate Size: 20,000 SF

#### Interior/Community Center Facilities:

- Gymnasium (wood floor for basketball)
- Climbing Wall (adequate for competitions, instruction, and open climbing)
- Center office (with storage room)
- Locker/changing rooms
- Meeting/activity room (875 SF)
- 183,000 gallon, 25-meter X 25-yard pool (with outdoor patio space)
- Small staff kitchen
- All seasons restrooms (these are convenient and available for park users)

#### Exterior Park Facilities:

- See Neighborhood Parks heading for Community Center Park for information on exterior/park facilities

Community Center Evaluation: The 20,000 SF center building receives extensive use. Using the center for concurrent multiple programs is very difficult due to the lack of space and the design of the building. Examples of design problems are listed below.

The gymnasium is used for basketball, the climbing wall, summer camp, and other activities. The indoor pool is used for recreational, competitive, and instructional swimming programs. The meeting/activity room is used for day camp programs, community meetings, as a game room, and houses the buildings' vending machines. The center also offers locker rooms and a very small kitchen to facilitate staff and day camp lunches.

This building is over twenty years old and has numerous problems created by the original design and the natural effects of aging. Problems noted include:

- The HV/AC system is inadequate.
- Ventilation in locker rooms is poor.
- Lacks air conditioning (or adequate ventilation) in the gym. Current conditions limit summer use.
- Inadequate office space for full-time and seasonal staff.
- Inadequate storage areas.
- Insufficient views from the office to the lockers for proper visual control/security

- Wood gymnasium floor is buckling.
- Portions of the building that appear to require renovation or replacement include the pool area roof, operable glass doors and windows, concrete block support walls, overhead lighting, and pool decking.
- Front entry area is insufficient for large crowds and vending machines. Single door system hampers efforts to maintain climate control.
- Gym cannot be segregated for multiple programs.
- Room sizes and acoustic problems in the gymnasium limit the Department's ability to program large group meetings, dances, or music-related programs.
- Kitchen is not connected to the activity room
- Vending machines are located in the meeting room which cause disruption of scheduled activities in the room

### **Hargraves Center/ Northside Gym / AD Clark Pool**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to 11:00 p.m.

Hours of Operation (Center): 1:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

Hours of Operation (Northside Gym): 10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m., Monday – Saturday; 1:00 – 9:00 p.m., Sunday

(Both indoor facilities are usually open 50 weeks per year; the pool is open May–September)

Location: 206 North Roberson Street, north of Rosemary Street

Approximate Size: Hargraves Center – 11,000 SF

Northside Gym – 9,800 SF

AD Clark Pool – 166,000 gallon pool and 2,000 SF bath house

#### Exterior Facilities:

- See Neighborhood Parks heading for Hargraves Park for information on exterior/park facilities and evaluation.

#### Interior & Pool Facilities:

- Community Center building (11,000 SF building that includes a 2,000 SF auditorium area, 210 SF computer room, 312 SF kitchen, and 740 SF meeting room.)
- Northside Gymnasium (9,800 SF including a 6,100 SF gym and 830 SF meeting room)
- AD Clark Pool (82 FT x 40 FT / 166,000 gallon outdoor lap pool and 20 FT diameter baby pool)
- All seasons restrooms (convenient and available for park users)

Special Note: The Center, pool, and bathhouse were undergoing a major capital repair program at the time this report was adopted. Completion of the renovation was scheduled for January 2003.

#### Hargraves Center, Pool and Gymnasium Evaluation:

Hargraves Center: The 11,000 SF center building is heavily used. The upper portion of the center building houses office space, game room/lounge space, education/computer room and a large open room with a stage area that is used for various programs. Acoustics are poor and hamper most programs. The lower portion of the building is leased for use as a daycare. The space used for this activity appears to be very crowded and storage space is at a premium. Disabled access to the building is poor, especially to the upper floor, restrooms, and stage.

Overall the facility is well maintained, however it would need to be expanded and improved if program growth is to be accommodated.

Northside Gymnasium: The gym is in very good condition and is heavily used; but it lacks the ability to accommodate multiple programs at any one time. The gym lacks storage space for equipment and supplies and could use additional meeting rooms. The gym has potential for expansion but increasing the size of its footprint would affect exterior facilities such as the pool, ballfield and basketball court.

AD Clark Pool: The bathhouse is in very poor condition. The building has inadequate lighting, rotting wood, poor ventilation, poor circulation patterns, and a lack of family changing facilities. Repairs to the bathhouse and pool have been identified in the Town's capital improvement program.

### **Lincoln Center**

Hours of Operation: varies by program need

Location: Merritt Mill Road next to the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Administration office

Approximate Size: Gym – 10,700

Art shop – 5,200 SF.

Facilities:

- Arts Center (pottery studio)
- Gymnasium building (includes a stage)
- All season restrooms

Lincoln Center Evaluation: This former school site houses the Chapel Hill/Carrboro City Schools Administration Offices. The arts building and gym are used for Parks and Recreation Department programs. They are in good condition and are adequate for their current use. The future use of these facilities by the Parks and Recreation Department is in question because the lease expires in 2007.

### **Meadowmont Gymnasium**

Special Note: The gymnasium was under construction at the time this Master Plan was adopted.

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to 11:00 p.m. (upon completion)

Hours of Operation (Gymnasium): To be determined

Location: Meadowmont Lane

Approximate Size: 7,000 SF

Interior/Gymnasium Facilities:

- Gymnasium (wood floor for basketball)
- Center office (with storage room)
- Locker/changing rooms
- All seasons restrooms (these are convenient and available for park users)

Exterior Park Facilities:

- See Community Parks heading for Meadowmont Park for information on exterior/park facilities

Gymnasium Evaluation: The 7,000 SF gymnasium was under construction at the time this report was adopted. It is expected to be used for basketball and other activities. The gym will also offer community restrooms and a small storage space.

## **Parks & Recreation Department Administrative Offices**

Hours of Operation: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays

Location: 200 Plant Road, adjacent to Community Center Park.

### **Facilities**

- Staff offices
- Conference room
- Small lobby/reception area
- Large storage area (former repair area with roll-up doors)
- Fenced storage yard and storage shed (for use by Public Works Department)
- Parking for staff and visitors (also overflow for Community Center Park)

Park Administrative Offices Evaluation: The approximately 4,000 SF metal “Butler Building” was a former Transportation Department vehicle maintenance facility/garage that was subdivided into offices in 1978. Offices are adequately sized for the staff and they provide sufficient privacy to accomplish individual work tasks. The former garage works well as a storage area for recreation equipment. The parking lot and access to the building appear adequate for the facility. Overall the facility is in fair to good condition but there are building deficiencies such as:

- Insufficient number of offices to meet current needs.
- Insufficient meeting/conference room space.
- Interior layout is not efficient.
- Inadequate reception/lobby space for visitors.
- Inadequate heating/ventilation system.
- The exterior of the building is unattractive, out-of-place in a park setting, and fails to promote a positive image for the Department.
- The surrounding landscape plantings, while not totally inadequate, fail to soften the poor aesthetics of the building.
- The fenced storage area has insufficient landscaping to block views from adjacent residences and Community Center Park.

## **Joint Town/School Recreation Sites**

There are four (4) school sites with recreation elements that are jointly operated by the Schools and Chapel Hill. Various agreements describe how the facilities are to be shared and who provides maintenance. Each of the agreements has an expiration date.

### **Culbreth School**

Hours of Operation (Park): after school to 11:00 p.m.

Location: Culbreth Road

Agreement Expiration Date: 2007

Facilities: Softball/Baseball field (350 ft. to center field, lighted)

Culbreth School Evaluation: The ballfield lights are relatively old and on wood poles. The field is not irrigated.

### **Ephesus Park (Ephesus Elementary School)**

Hours of Operation (Park): Dawn to 11:00 p.m.

Location: On Ephesus Church Road adjacent to Ephesus Elementary School

Approximate Size: 16 acres (Park and school site combined. Park site alone is 10 acres)

Park Facilities:

- Paved parking (12 cars)
- Lighted tennis courts (6)
- 3 seasons restroom building

Shared school facilities:

- Softball/Baseball field (280 ft. to center field, lighted and irrigated)

Ephesus Park Evaluation: The visual quality of the site is good due to the mature trees and vegetation that surround the courts. Increased landscape maintenance such as tree trimming/pruning and weed control would further improve the visual quality. The seasonal restroom facilities are in very poor condition and do not meet ADA accessibility standards. The tennis courts were resurfaced in July 2000 and are in excellent condition. The ballfield lights are relatively old and mounted on wood poles.

### **Phillips Park (Phillips Middle School)**

Hours of Operation: Dawn to 11:00 p.m.

Location: South Estes Drive, part of the Phillips Middle School property

Approximate Size: 1 acre

Location: Phillips Park is a small site of approximately 1-acre located off Estes Drive adjacent to Phillips Middle School.

Agreement Expiration Date: This agreement has expired; however the Town and the Schools are operating the facility under the terms of the expired agreement.

Facilities:

- Off Street Parking (8 cars)
- Tennis Courts (4-lighted)
- Seating/Bleacher pads

Phillips Park Evaluation: Overall the condition of the site is fair to good. The facility receives moderate use. Parking is adequate. There are no restroom facilities. Accessibility to the courts appears adequate. Trees heavily shade the site, which is good for spectators and aesthetics, but a problem for maintaining the tennis court surface. Tree roots have caused the court pavement to uplift and debris from the trees (leaves and branches) has contributed to poor drainage and a discolored tennis court surface. The lighting and fencing are relatively old and are nearing

replacement. Tree shade has also made turf establishment difficult and bare ground and eroded areas are prevalent around the courts. Problems identified at the site include:

- Lack of site furnishings such as benches and picnic table.
- Damaged tennis court surface
- Eroded areas.

### **Scroggs School**

Hours of Operation: Dawn to 11:00 p.m.

Location: Southern Village

Agreement Expiration Date: 2029

Facilities:

- Athletic/soccer field (lighted/irrigated)
- Play Structure (available when not in use by the school)
- Greenway trail (a portion of the Fan Branch Trail crosses the school property)

Scroggs School Evaluation: Overall the condition of the site is good to excellent. The site receives heavy use. Parking facilities are adequate. There are no restroom facilities. Accessibility to the field appears adequate. Although the field is new, the turf is showing signs of overuse.

## **Open Space**

Chapel Hill has used a variety of tools to acquire a relatively large inventory of open spaces (including greenways). In 1996, the voters approved a \$3 million open space bond for additional land purchases. In 2000, the Town Council approved a plan to acquire open space properties throughout Town. Although the Town's open space holdings are extensive they are not large enough to adequately link parks, protect watersheds, preserve important biological habitats, preserve wildlife corridors, provide passive parks, and link all greenways identified in the *Chapel Hill Greenways Comprehensive Master Plan*.

## **Trails and Greenways**

Detailed information is listed in the Town's adopted *Chapel Hill Greenways Comprehensive Master Plan* concerning the existing trail system. The following brief descriptions are provided for general identification purposes.

### **Battle Branch**

- Dedicated in 1989
- Located partially on UNC campus next to Forest Theater
- One of longest protected natural areas in Chapel Hill
- Isolated upland forest of approximately 60-acres, recognized in the 1988 *Inventory of Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats of Orange County North Carolina*.
- Combination of University-owned and Town-owned land (Emily Braswell Perry Park & Greendale Park)
- The 1.5-mile long unpaved greenway with some boardwalk sections and paved sidewalk is a combination of University controlled footpaths and Town maintained trails

- Connects Community Center Park, Bolin Creek Trail and UNC Campus

### **Bolin Creek Greenway**

- Ten-foot wide paved woodland and meadow trail approximately 1.5-mile long
- Designed for multi-use, pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- Connects Airport Road with Community Center Park

### **Cedar Falls Trails**

- Completed in 1979
- 1.2-mile unpaved woodland trail within Cedar Falls Park with some steep slopes
- Connects with the park's internal trail network such as the Jo Peeler Nature Trail
- Trail spurs connect the main loop with Lake Forest and Cedar Falls neighborhood, providing access to East Chapel Hill High School

### **Dry Creek Trail**

- Unpaved trail
- Eagle Scouts completed the section from Perry Creek to Silver Creek and half of the section from East Chapel Hill High School to Silver Creek

### **Fan Branch**

- Phase I completed 1996
- Paved woodland trail approximately 1-mile long along Wilson Creek and Fan Branch; both tributaries of Morgan Creek
- Additional phase to connect with future Southern Community Park

### **Lower Booker Creek Greenway**

- Completed in 2002
- Ten-foot wide paved trail approximately 1-mile long with a bridge crossing Booker Creek
- Connects Booker Creek Road and Franklin Street

### **Tanyard Branch**

- Dedicated in 1986
- .4-mile unpaved woodland trail within the Bolin Creek corridor
- Connects Northside neighborhood with Umstead Park

## **School Facilities**

The Chapel Hill/Carrboro City School system services the towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro and some surrounding areas. Both towns rely on school sites for some recreation programs. The following school sites are included in Table 2-1, Park and Recreation Facility Inventory. The towns and private recreation groups use some of the sites. Sites used by the Town are indicated by an asterisk (\*). The schools have priority use of all facilities, especially during school hours and during after school programs. For this reason, the Department's use of school sites is limited. Local community athletic groups may have attained use of school sites for practices and games on an informal basis.

Chapel Hill High  
East Chapel High  
Seawell Elementary  
Phillips Middle \*  
Ephesus Elementary \*  
Scroggs Elementary \*

Frank Porter Graham Elementary  
Culbreth Middle \*  
Estes Hills Elementary  
Smith Middle \*  
Glenwood Elementary  
Meadowmont Elementary (future) \*

## Significant Private Recreation Facilities

The following private sites have been included as part of the inventory of recreation facilities because of their significant impact on public use. There are many other private facilities such as apartment pools, swim clubs, and private play areas that also provide service to the public but on a very limited basis.

### Rainbow Soccer Site:

Facilities:

- Five (5) fields adjacent to Cleland Road with portable toilets, and insufficient parking.

### YMCA:

The YMCA located at the intersection of Estes Drive and Airport Road is the largest private recreation provider open to the general public and includes the following facilities:

- Indoor pool (6 lanes x 25 yards)
- Gymnasium (6,000 SF)
- Aerobics/exercise room (3,000 SF)
- Weight and cardio room (1,300 SF)
- Steam room
- Sauna
- Outdoor play area (3,500 SF)
- Sports field area (21,600 SF)
- Camp Clearwater (24 acres off Mt. Carmel Road)

## UNC – Recreation Facilities

University of North Carolina (UNC) recreation facilities are noted below because they provide recreation opportunities to anyone affiliated with UNC including faculty, staff, and students. (Note: the sites are not included in Table 2-1, Park and Recreation Facility Inventory because most of the sites are not generally open to the public). Facilities that are generally available to the public include Finley Golf Course, NC Botanical Garden, portions of the Adventures Outdoor Education Center, and the frisbee golf at Carmichael Field.

- Finley Golf Course – 18-hole course with practice areas, driving range and putting greens.
- Woollen Gym – (8) basketball courts, golf practice area, weight training facility, physical education classrooms, (2) racquetball courts, lockers, and Campus Recreation Office.
- Bowman Gray Pool – (extension of Woollen Gym) 50-meter pool with (50-meter, 25-meter and 25-yard swim lanes).
- Women’s Gym – (behind Bowman Gray) dance studios A and B, and HEELS for Health, the university's faculty/staff wellness program.

- Kessing or Navy Outdoor Pool – L-shaped pool for recreational lap swimming (spring break through fall break, weather permitting).
- Fetzer Gym – (2) large gyms (for basketball, volleyball, badminton and team handball), gymnastics gym, indoor climbing wall, fencing/multi-purpose room, wrestling room, (6) squash courts, (15) racquetball courts (4 can be converted to wallyball), and locker rooms.
- Student Recreation Center –20,000 sq. ft. weight training/fitness facility, (2) large aerobics/dance studios, administrative offices, and the Wellness Resource Center.
- Carmichael Field – large multi-purpose field for intramural soccer, softball, flag football, and ultimate frisbee (2- lighted fields).
- Carolina Adventures Outdoor Education Center – (outdoor education component of the Campus Recreation Program) 18-hole frisbee golf course, high and low element challenge ropes course, mountain bike trails, sand volleyball courts, tennis courts, horseshoe courts, bouldering wall, resource center, and equipment rental building
- Ehringhaus Field – large lighted multi-purpose field for sport club use.
- Cobb/Joyner Tennis and Basketball Complex – (11) tennis courts, and (6) basketball goals.
- Hinton-James Tennis Courts – (8) tennis courts.
- Roller hockey surface - located at the Craige overflow parking lot.
- North Carolina Botanical Gardens – Extensive trails and interpretive center located off of Fordham Boulevard.