

Recreation and Parks Commission – May 10, 2021

**Attending:**

Brian Payst (presiding), Chris Colvin, Debby Filer, Jeff Laufenberg and Makeda Ma'at (members), Anita Jones-McNair (staff liaison)

**7:05 pm** - Payst called meeting to order

**7:07 pm** - Motion to approve, seconded and unanimous vote to approve minutes of April's meeting.

**7:09 pm** – Commission members reviewed the Comprehensive Plan Goals and Strategies. Recommended changes are in red.



**Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Resources | Vision, Goals & Strategies**

DRAFT 4/23/2021

A fundamentally important component of the comprehensive plan will be developing the plan's visions, goals, and strategies related to each plan element. This draft document, which focuses on recreation, parks, and cultural resources, lays out initial ideas that have been identified in existing plans and programs (e.g. the 2006 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the 2014 Orange County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the Town of Carrboro's Vision 2020 Plan), discussions at Task Force meetings, input from the Community Workshop held on November 19, 2020 and interviews with various stakeholders. Items that have come from a particular source are identified below.

Other items paraphrase input that has been raised or are best practices from other communities working on similar challenges and initiatives. The following terms are used in the document:

**Vision** – the big picture of what Carrboro wants to be

**Goal** – outcome-focused “what” Carrboro is trying to achieve

**Strategy** – “how” Carrboro will achieve the goal

**Project** – specific initiatives that will be undertaken to implement the strategy

**Other terms that require clarification**

- 1) Passive and active gathering spaces
- 2) Passive and active recreation
- 3) Multigenerational wellness opportunity
- 4) People-based programming
- 5) Open space facilities (Goal 2 reads as though "park" is one category and "open space facilities" are another category)

- 6) Green space, greenspace, open space, natural areas, conservation areas, greenways are all used, but it's not clear what the differences/overlap are among these terms, if there are any?
- 7) Recreational providers
- 8) Extra Territorial Jurisdiction
- 9) Active facilities
- 10) Nature play

**Town of Carrboro Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Resources Mission Statement**

*To enrich the leisure needs and quality of life for citizens by providing accessible facilities, creative and diverse recreation opportunities and a safe public park system.*

**DRAFT Carrboro Connects Vision Statement**

*All people in Carrboro, of all races and backgrounds, will have safe and equitable access to recreational and cultural opportunities, including a connected network of parks and green space. The Carrboro community comes together year-round through creative programming and events that celebrate the Town's history, unique spirit, and diverse range of cultures with high-quality festivals, music, and the arts.*

**Goal 1: Promote recreational programming and cultural resources across all ages, genders, races, and abilities with affordable opportunities.**

**Strategy 1.1:** Evaluate recreational programming to identify any gaps in activities for all interests, age groups, and ability affordability levels.

- a) Periodically survey the public and conduct needs assessments on recreation services to identify new opportunities, changing priorities and barriers (e.g. affordability). (Orange County Parks and Recreation Master Plan)
- b) Consider a communications campaign that focuses on targeted outreach in communities that are not currently utilizing RPCR programs.
- c) Expand and promote affordable options through the FAP (Financial Assistance) Program.
- d) Conduct a feasibility study and/or needs assessment for a public swimming pool or other water features in Town.
- e) Consider installing outdoor exercise amenities in more parks and along trails for affordable and easy access.
- f) Provide activities and spaces geared towards teenagers with passive and active gathering spaces and programs that would appeal to their age level.
- g) Conduct programs that offer health education, physical training and nutritional lifestyle behaviors.

**Strategy 1.2:** Identify and promote opportunities for both passive and active recreation for younger and older populations.

- a) Preserve existing open spaces and natural areas that provide passive recreation.
  - a. Install emergency/911 emergency phones throughout areas.

- b) Plan at least one multigenerational wellness opportunity each year.
- c) Encourage neighbor-organized community gardens in public parks.
- d) Improve park and trail accessibility for people with different abilities.
  - a. Survey existing recreation and parks facilities to identify and improve currently inaccessible spaces.
  - b. Install needed amenities for persons who use wheelchairs or those with different abilities.
  - c. Provide benches on greenways and trails.
  - d. Plan and implement activities for people with different abilities.
- e) Improve park and trail accessibility for people with different abilities.

(d & e duplication)

**Strategy 1.3:** Continue to adapt and expand cultural resources and programming to align with community needs.

- a) Capitalize on the 203 Project and the new ArtsCenter to plan for arts and cultural programming that reaches underserved populations.
- b) Aim for consistent coordination between the Town, County, and other

Jurisdictions to collectively provide programming that represents and serves all segments of the population.

- c) Identify partnerships and opportunities for cross-pollination with other organizations providing people-based programming

**Goal 2: Ensure all people in Carrboro have safe, equitable, and connected access to parks and open space facilities.**

**Strategy 2.1:** Strive for a park, play field, or other green space within walking distance (e.g. half-mile or 15-minute walk) and physically accessible to all residents in Carrboro. (Vision 2020)

As an important first step in order to know where to focus efforts under this strategy, ADD as first item under this strategy:

x) Identify which communities of Carrboro residents do not currently have a park, play field, or other green space within a half-mile or 15-minute walk that is physically accessible.

- a) Prioritize Encourage access for immigrant, BIPOC<sup>1</sup> and other underserved communities in siting new park and recreation facilities or improving access to existing parks and facilities.
- b) ~~Consider ways that the Town of Carrboro can~~ Coordinate with Orange County to implement plans for Twin Creeks Park.
- c) Consider innovative and cost-effective solutions to expand public access to open spaces and natural areas (e.g. a rotating Play Streets program across different neighborhoods).
- d) Partner with homeowners' associations and other landowners for joint use agreements for public access.

- e) Adopt criteria for evaluating potential land acquisition for recreation and park facilities in cooperation with other regional park providers. (Orange County Parks and Recreation Master Plan)
- f) Open space should be available to all cultures.

**Strategy 2.2:** Continue to maintain and pursue new opportunities for coordination and shared-use agreements with Orange County, Chapel Hill, Chapel-Hill Carrboro City Schools, Interdepartmental Park Work Group and other recreational providers to connect park and greenway systems.

- a) Expand existing parks partnerships and consider the need for any new agreements that can improve access across different park systems.
- b) Encourage and participate in a regional Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan to guide future parks planning and help leverage outside funding. (Orange County Parks and Recreation Master Plan)

**Strategy 2.3:** Preserve, enhance and promote access to additional parks and open spaces not within the Town's jurisdiction.

- a) Continue to work with other agencies such as the County, UNC, OWASA, and Town of Chapel Hill to maintain and expand opportunities in Carolina North Forest and University Lake.
- b) Monitor progress and coordinate planning efforts in conjunction with UNC's campus expansion.
- c) Consider new recreational opportunities as part of future development in the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction.
- d) Continue to promote Chapel Hill facilities, especially those that closely border Carrboro such as Homestead Park, Hargraves Community Center, and Southern Community Park.

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<sup>1</sup> BIPOC stands for "black, Indigenous and people of color."

**Strategy 2.4:** Focus on community outreach and education about parks and recreation opportunities, especially to those without access to the Internet or for whom English is a second language.

- a) Connect with community ambassadors / neighborhood liaisons to help with translation and outreach.
- b) Collaborate with school districts, community organizations, and businesses to promote park resources and programs.
- c) Add multilingual park signage that also uses pictures and icons.
- d) Engage new and existing parks users through targeted events that serve multiple purposes (i.e. food distribution and programming for children).

**Strategy 2.5:** Encourage and support the development of greenways and trails for

public use, creating a complete network<sup>2</sup> of connected greenways connecting parks, open spaces and conservation areas for biking, walking, and wildlife corridors. (Vision 2020)

- a) Identify specific needed improvements for sidewalks, bike paths, and transit routes to enhance multi-modal access to parks. (See Transportation)
- b) Collaborate across Town departments and other jurisdictions (i.e. Chapel Hill and Orange County) to strategically and efficiently implement planned greenway improvements in tandem with needed park and neighborhood linkages.

**Goal 3: Ensure that recreation and park facilities and programming are environmentally responsible and help further climate change related goals.** (Orange County Parks and Recreation Master Plan)

**Strategy 3.1:** Utilize best management practices in maintenance and future upgrades to Carrboro's park facilities.

- a) Treat recreation and park facilities as functional and exemplary landscapes that can employ green stormwater infrastructure, include native vegetation, flood mitigation, and other resiliency measures.
- b) Install educational components in park facilities to share information with the public about stormwater management, sustainable practices, and nature preservation.
- c) [Provide incentives for partnership organizations using a sliding scale for park reservations.](#)

**Strategy 3.2:** Enhance public access to parks and natural areas while balancing environmental protection and locating active facilities away from ecologically sensitive sites.

- a) Support planning and development of a linear park and rustic trail system that preserves much of the natural state while still advancing connectivity goals.

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<sup>2</sup> The term "complete" here is meant to describe a robust network without many major gaps, and also suggests a "Complete Streets approach" which, according to Smart Growth America, "integrates people and place in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of our transportation networks. This helps to ensure streets put safety over speed, balance the needs of different modes, and support local land uses, economies, cultures, and natural environments."

- b) Explore options for future "nature play" areas.

**Goal 4: Strengthen a sense of community and inclusion through the arts, events, and cultural programming that celebrates the diversity in Carrboro.**

**Strategy 4.1:** Continue activation and flexible programming of public spaces in partnership with businesses or other private entities.

a) Build on flexible events spurred by the COVID pandemic that increased access to public spaces for things like exercise classes, dining, outdoor meeting spaces and gatherings, etc. (also see Economic Sustainability)

**Strategy 4.2:** Celebrate the diversity of the Town's residents through events, festivals, and programming that honors the variety of cultural backgrounds and traditions in Carrboro. (Vision 2020)

a) Conduct outreach with different segments of the population to identify new opportunities for town wide events that honor and share a variety of cultural traditions.

**Strategy 4.3:** Support, fund, and install public artwork by local artists in strategic locations throughout Town to celebrate the history and story of Carrboro. (Vision 2020)

a) Seek ideas for interactive and culturally representative public artwork to be installed in parks and along greenways.

**Strategy 4.4:** Encourage expanded compatible uses of the Farmers Market to include year-round programming such as a crafts and artisan markets.

a) Recruit new and emerging vendors and entrepreneurs selling a range of goods.

**Strategy 4.5:** Support placemaking projects that promote the Carrboro story and brand.

- a) Pursue installations that promote Carrboro as a creative community to attract arts-related tourism and economic development. (Creative Carrboro 2014)
- b) Incorporate historical elements and context to share the Town story.
- c) **Continue the Truth Plaque Project.**

**7:55 Reports**

Chair Updates (Payst): None to report.

Department Updates (Jones-McNair): Preparing for summer programs and camps.

**8:06 6pm** - Motion to Adjourn, seconded and vote was unanimous.