

Park Classifications and Recommendations

A primary task of the master plan team was to evaluate the existing park facilities. Individual site-based assessments and inventories were conducted on existing county facilities to determine maintenance practices, age, condition and accessibility of those facilities. After site visits and inventories were complete, recommendations were made based upon National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines, staff response, public input and national trends around the country. The guidelines and community trend comparisons were then used to identify deficiencies within the system, whether by acreage, facility or distribution.

NRPA Guidelines

In 1995, the NRPA published Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines. The book laid out a template of typical park classifications, number of acres a system should have, and recommended service levels based on population. Strictly intended as a guideline, the book did not take into account the unique character of each community throughout the country. Local trends and the popularity of some activities over others often dictate a greater need for particular facilities. The guidelines serve as a good baseline for determining a minimum standard. These guidelines, coupled with input received from the community, analysis of participation numbers for various activities and comparisons to similar communities, provide the necessary additional information for determining the number of facilities that are appropriate.

The guidelines suggest, "A park system, at a minimum, should be composed of a 'core' system of park lands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population." (Mertes, 1995) The types of parks that can be included to meet open space standards can be a combination of the following classifications as determined by the NRPA:

- Mini-park
- Neighborhood Park
- School Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Special Use Park
- Private Park/Recreation Facility
- Natural Resource Area/Preserve
- Greenway

Critical to the service delivery system of any department is the provision of the four basic park categories: mini, neighborhood, community and regional. Each is classified differently based upon the types of amenities, size, service area, and how access is gained to the facility. The following gives a description of the different types of parks common to a system.

Mini Park

The smallest type of park, a mini park, is typically a site less than five acres. In recent years, another term, “pocket park”, has been used in some instances to identify a mini park.

The park is designed primarily to attract residents who live within a quarter mile of the park. The park is generally a walk-to type park, meaning no parking facilities for autos are normally found. Mini parks service levels are one thousand per every .25 to .5 acres.

Size normally prescribes these parks to be passive, with benches, play facilities, tables and attractive landscaping. The parks are sometimes themed to blend in with the surrounding neighborhood. Designs sometimes match the existing homes, fencing, sidewalk pavers, etc. A park of this size is not developed with fields for league play or community-wide events.

Prototype

Average Size:	.3 to 5 acres (target size, 3 acres)
General Concept:	Playgrounds for children; benches, tables for adults
General Purpose:	Passive use, serves immediate neighborhood, no parking
Programs:	Unorganized activities

Proposed Play Facilities and Requirements

Children’s Play Area	1.75 acres
Apparatus Area	1.75 acres
Shelter	Approximately 1,000 sq. ft.
Game/Tennis Area	1-2 acres (if needed)
Walking Trails	Varies
Landscaping and Fencing	Varies
Utilities	Varies

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood parks are found in most county and city systems. The park normally has 5 to 20 acres and typically serves a population living within 1/2 mile of the park. Neighborhood parks conceptually concentrate intense recreation activities and facilities into a limited amount of space. Facilities typical to this park include:

- Playing Fields
- Playgrounds
- Shelters
- Walking Paths
- Restrooms/Concessions
- Swimming Pool
- Parking Facilities

As you will note, parking is necessary for this type of facility due to its scope of activities and size. The standard for parking is a minimum of seven spaces for the first ten acres and one additional space for each additional acre. This may vary based upon the activities and program appeal.

Although the park is classified as a neighborhood park, the scope of people served can vary based upon densities and the number of other parks available. Typically, one neighborhood park should serve between 10,000 to 20,000 residents, or one to two acres per thousand people.

Prototype

Average Size:	5 to 20 acres
General Concept:	Active and passive recreation amenities
General Purpose:	Intense active recreation for daytime use within 1/2 mile radius
Programs:	League practice and play; open space play; not recommended for festivals or large-scale events on a regular basis

Proposed Play Facilities and Requirements

Soccer Fields	2 acres per field
Sports Fields	2 to 5 acres per field
Football Fields	2 acres per field
Running Track	5 acres
Swimming Pool	Varies
Trail System	Varies
Shelters	Approximately 2,000 sq. ft.
Basketball Courts	10,000 sq. ft.
Skate Park Area	Varies
Walking Paths	1 mile

Community Parks

Community parks are needed within a system to ensure that all users’ recreation needs and interests are addressed and included. This type of park expands beyond a local neighborhood and may sometimes include several communities. The concept behind community parks is to include, basically, a one-stop shop for all recreation users. It should include a mix of active and passive activities and attract users of all ages. From a youth sports field to a multi-generational facility, the park should provide as many recreation and support services as possible. A park of this size and scope has from 20 to 75 acres; approximately 60 acres is considered a good size for such expansive activities.

The service area for such a facility can vary based upon the size and scope of activities offered. However, a facility of this type may serve anywhere from 50,000 to 80,000 people, or 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 people. Some user analyses are based upon a service radius where others, in more urban areas, may be based upon drive times.

Community parks have both day and night activities. Large facilities, such as a large indoor fitness/recreation center or cloverleaf sports complex, can be placed in such a facility because of the amount of space available and ability to buffer from the surrounding community.

Prototype

Average Size	20 to 75 acres (target 60 acres)
General Concept	Combine passive and active activities into one locale and retain passive areas for non-organized recreation
General Purpose	Provide a full range of recreational activities for the entire population
Program	Active sports and multi-generational activities and passive areas with nature viewing, lake activities, and walking

Proposed Play Facilities and Requirements

Lighted Adult Softball Complex	15 acres per field
Lighted Youth Baseball Complex	8 to 10 acres per field
Football Field	2 acres
Community Center/Multi-generational area	50,000-80,000 sq. ft.
Trail System	Varies
Shelters	Approximately 2,000 sq. ft.
Outdoor Basketball Courts	1 to 2 acres
Volleyball	2 to 4 acres
Picnic Areas	10 acres
Lighted Tennis Complex	2 acres
Skate park Area	Varies
Lake	1 to 4 acres
Maintenance/Support Facility	1 acre
Walking Paths	1 mile
Parking	Varies

Regional Parks

The largest park typically found within a system is the regional park. These parks are normally found in large county systems. The size of a regional park varies from 50 to 250 acres, depending on the type of activities and the amount of use.

The service radius for this type of facility is based upon drive time and is typically within an hour drive of most residents. Conceptually, the regional park is to provide large natural areas that can be accessed through a variety of means, from roadways to hiking and biking. Also, based upon the locale, it can have unique recreation areas, such as a water park or equestrian facility coupled with natural areas.

Regional parks are unique to the general area. Prototypical or preferred amenities vary.

Special Use Parks

Special use parks are designed to meet the needs of a specific user group. An example of a special use park would be a golf course, zoo, or a museum.

These facilities can vary in size according to the demand and type of layout. For example, a regulation size, par 72 golf course would need at least 140 acres while an executive style (par 60) layout may only require 100 to 120 acres, based upon amenities such as driving range and practice facilities.

A typical feature of these parks is that they are normally good revenue generators. If maintained and properly staffed, these parks can provide a substantial cash flow for the designated entity.

Natural Resource Area/Preserve

According to the NRPA, natural resource areas are defined as “lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering.” These lands consist of:

- Individual sites exhibiting natural resources
- Lands unsuitable for development but offering natural resource potential (examples: parcels with steep slopes and natural vegetation, drainage ways and ravines, surface water management areas--man-made ponding areas--and utility easements)
- Protected land, such as wetlands, lowlands and shorelines along waterways, lakes and ponds

Acquisition of natural resource areas and preserves serve to enhance the quality of the community by maintaining a portion of its natural amenities.

Greenways

Greenways have become one of the most popular family recreation activities across the country. The value of greenways in terms of recreation, education, and resource protection is invaluable. Greenways serve as linkages between cities, parks, schools, commercial areas and neighborhoods. They provide a safe mode of transportation that preserves the environment.

Typically, greenways can be anywhere from 10 to 12 feet wide and can be paved or natural surface. When developing a greenway system, corridors should be identified where people will access the area easily and connect elements within the community and incorporate all the characteristics of the natural resource areas. Greenway corridors should be no less than 50 feet in width except in neighborhoods, where 25 feet may be acceptable. Julius Fabros, a professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Massachusetts, divides greenways into three categories: Ecological, Recreational and Cultural.

Greenways can be located in a variety of settings and can be utilized for active and passive recreation activities. Ecologically speaking, they are typically located along natural environments such as rivers, ridgelines and coastal areas. These trails provide connec-

tions to nature, protect and maintain biodiversity, minimize development and provide for wildlife migration across natural and manmade boundaries.

Recreation greenways commonly link elements that have diverse and significant landscapes. Many link rural areas to more urban locales and range from local trails to larger systems.

Another type of greenway is the cultural trail, which connects areas of significant historic value and culture. In Georgia, one such proposal will link historic battlefields in the state with trail markers and interpretive signage. Economic benefits from these types of trails may be significant if linkages can be directed toward areas of commerce to provide an infrastructure for commuting.

School Parks

School park sites are an excellent way to combine resources and provide accessible recreation amenities to the community. Depending on the school type (i.e. elementary, middle, high school) the size of the park will be dictated by the land available adjacent to the school. Typically, middle and high schools are constructed with youth athletic fields to support team sports. These facilities provide the basis for developing a community park or, at the very least, youth athletic fields for recreation programs. The selection of school sites is determined by the school district and is located according to the county or citywide distribution of students. The school site selection criteria may or may not meet the needs for parkland distribution. When development of school parks is possible, guidelines for neighborhood/community parks should be followed to meet the needs of residents. When joint developments occur, features common to other parks in the county (i.e. signs) should be used to identify the property as a public facility.

Private Park/Recreation Facility

The private park and recreation facility, as described by the NRPA, meets one of the two following characteristics:

- “Private Parks, such as swimming pools, tennis courts, and party houses, are generally within a residential area developed for the exclusive use of residents and are maintained through a neighborhood association. They are not, however, a complete substitute for public recreation space, and
- Private Recreation Facilities that are for-profit enterprises, such as health and fitness clubs, golf courses, water parks, amusement parks and sports facilities.”

These facility types can be entirely private or, in many cases, be a joint venture between a public entity and a private organization. Partnerships of this kind allow for the provision of facilities and programs at a reduced cost to the public sector.

Cherokee County Park Providers

The largest provider of park and recreation services in Cherokee County is the Cherokee Recreation and Parks Authority. Other municipal providers include the cities of Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock. Private groups providing organized programs include the Cherokee Outdoor YMCA, many local churches, civic organizations, recreation associa-

tions and other private companies. Each provider offers recreation programming and facilities for the spectrum of ages with some overlap of activity. **Figure 7.1** provides a location map for all existing county and city parks.

County Parks

The Cherokee Recreation and Parks Authority oversees the maintenance and programming of 23 park facilities, with four additional properties to be developed, on over 1,300 acres of land. Facilities are found throughout the county with the largest concentration in the southern portion of the county along the Interstate 575 corridor—the most densely populated region. County park facilities comprise a variety of elements from sports fields to tennis courts and picnic areas to playgrounds.

Other Municipal Parks

In addition to the County parks, the cities of Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock also provide parks for public use. The city parks account for an additional 14 developed parks on over 150 acres of land. The total park acreage between county and city parks is 1,554 acres of land. The following provides a more detailed description of city parks found in Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock.

City of Canton

The City of Canton has seven parks on over 100 acres. With a combination of passive and active elements, Canton's parks include ballfields, walking trails, gazebos and playgrounds. The city, which does not have a parks and recreation department, maintains the parks through their Street and Parks Department.

Boling Park

Boling Park is Canton's premiere park. The 77-acre park houses four lighted tennis courts, four handball courts, four soccer fields, two baseball fields, one softball field, a basketball court, volleyball court, playground and concession/restroom building. The park also includes a pavilion and 13 miles of nature trails, which are often used for jogging, walking and biking.

Brown Park

Brown Park is a small, one-acre park in downtown Canton. This mini-park includes a handicap accessible playground, gazebo and picnic tables.

Central Park

Located in the heart of downtown Canton, Central Park is a small public square that hosts many special events. The park includes several benches and a gazebo, which is often used by bands during special events.

Crisler Park and McCanless Park

Crisler and McCanless Parks are small parks located in subdivisions. Crisler Park offers a basketball court and playground, while McCanless has picnic pavilions and a small building.

Harmon Field

Harmon Field is a 4.6-acre active park located in southern Canton. The park has two lighted baseball fields and a concession/restroom building.

Heritage Park

Heritage Park, the first phase of Canton's Etowah River Greenway, is located near the middle of the city. The park includes a multi-purpose cement trail, an outdoor amphitheater and open passive space. An additional 60 acres, north of the park, will make up Phase II of the Etowah River Greenway. The additional land will include active recreation fields for soccer, baseball, tennis and softball. Canton's goal with the greenway is to create a linear park that runs through the city connecting parks, residential communities, the downtown business district and the busy shopping complex at Riverstone near Interstate 575.

City of Holly Springs

The City of Holly Springs maintains four parks, two of which are located in subdivisions. The parks are primarily comprised of passive elements, though some active elements are available.

Barrett Memorial Park

Barrett Memorial Park is Holly Springs' first major recreational area. Located in Barrett Farms subdivision, the park features a playground and a one-mile walking trail, which meanders through a scenic natural area. The 13-acre park is located on Park Lane, just off Hickory Road across from Holly Springs Elementary School. The park also includes a playground and basketball court. The city is currently working on plans for additional facilities in the park.

Bracket Plaza

Bracket Plaza is a small area located in downtown Holly Springs. The park has a gazebo and limited open space.

J.C. Mullins Field

J.C. Mullins Field features Holly Springs' only baseball field, which is home to several area teams. Located off of Holly Springs Parkway, the park includes a perimeter walking trail, playground and picnic pavilion.

Taylor's Farm

Taylor's Farm is the second park located in a subdivision. The only amenity featured at this park is a tot-lot.

City of Woodstock

Cherokee County's largest city, Woodstock, has three parks, which comprise 66 acres of land. Woodstock provides a balance of passive and active recreation elements, including plans for a future greenway system along the Little River.

DuPree Park

At 25 acres, DuPree Park is the city's second largest park. It is home to several amenities, including two softball fields, which hold spring and fall softball leagues, four tennis courts and two basketball courts. It also has several passive elements, such as a pavilion, walking trail, lake and picnic areas.

Woodstock City Park

Located in downtown Woodstock, the City Park includes a passive area and gazebo. This mini-park is often used for the farmer's market and special events, such as summer concerts.

Woodstock Park North/Old Rope Mill Park

As Woodstock grows, city leaders are planning for the future by constructing a new 40-acre nature park and greenway system along the Little River. In addition to bike and pedestrian trails, Woodstock Park North (or Old Rope Mill Park) will have fishing piers and canoe landings along the river, educational kiosks, comfort stations, parking and a competition off-road bike trail. The park will also include open space along streams and large open areas of land for the preservation of natural features and scenic vistas. Construction on the first phase of the park began in April 2004, but the city's future plan is to create a network of multi-use trails throughout the city.

Cherokee County Board of Education Parks and Schools

The Cherokee County Board of Education owns and operates two small parks in Woodstock. The parks, located near elementary schools, are primarily active. Located on Trickum Road, Little River Park includes two lighted tennis courts, a pavilion and playground. Mountain Road Park is located next to Mountain Road Elementary and includes three baseball/softball fields, a soccer practice area, playground, pavilion and volleyball court.

Cherokee County has 22 elementary schools, four middle schools and four high schools. The high schools have a total of seven lighted baseball/softball fields, four lighted football/soccer fields, an additional four multi-purpose/practice fields, four tracks, 22 tennis courts and five gymnasiums. The middle schools have four gymnasiums and four large multi-use fields. All 22 elementary schools have multi-purpose fields, gymnasiums and playgrounds.

Reinhardt College, in Waleska, is home to 1,084 students. The college provides its students and faculty with a gymnasium, two indoor basketball courts, a lighted baseball field, lighted softball field, two soccer fields, two racquetball courts, weight room, volleyball courts and tennis courts. The college's John Rollins Wellness Complex also includes space for aerobics and instruction.

United States Army Corps of Engineers

Lake Allatoona is situated on the Etowah River in Cherokee County. It is one of the most frequently visited Corps of Engineers lakes in the nation. More than 6 million visitors

a year enjoy picnicking, swimming, camping, hunting, fishing, boating and observing wildlife. Over 11,000 acres of the lake and its shore lie within Cherokee County. There are four day use areas, Galts Ferry, Kellogg Creek, Knox Bridge and Cherokee Mills, which have amenities such as boat ramps, playgrounds, picnic areas with grills and fishing jetties. The Cherokee Recreation and Parks Authority plans to lease 85 acres at the Cherokee Mills site and develop additional amenities, including another boat ramp, restrooms and trails. There are also three campgrounds, Sweetwater Creek, Victoria and Payne, with over 250 campsites. The campgrounds include campsites with and without hookups, showers and restrooms, boat ramps, playgrounds, picnic areas with grills and swimming beaches.

The Corps of Engineers also owns the land on which the Little River Trail is located. This 15-mile, single-track trail is popular among mountain bikers. Depending on the route, the three sections of the trail run along the banks of the Little River, railroad tracks and to the 30-foot falls of Blankets Creek. The trail is unpaved and is not maintained.

Wildlife Management Areas

There are over 5,000 acres of wildlife management area in Cherokee County. The land is not publicly owned, but the public has access to the land for hiking, biking, hunting, fishing and other activities. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources leases the land from private landowners, the Corps of Engineers and the Georgia Power Company.

The 2,056-acre McGraw Ford Wildlife Management Area is located entirely within Cherokee County. It is on land owned by the Georgia Power Company and private landowners. Its acreage has been decreasing as the Georgia Power Company reclaims some of its land for additional facilities and as private landowners sell their land to developers. The Lake Allatoona and Pine Log Mountain Wildlife Management Areas straddle the Bartow and Cherokee County line. They, too, have lost significant acreage to development.

Private Providers

There are several private providers of recreation services in Cherokee County. They include the YMCA, public golf courses, health clubs, equestrian centers, planned communities and aquatic facilities.

The Cherokee Outdoor YMCA is part of the Metro Atlanta YMCA system. Located on 225 acres along four miles of Lake Allatoona's shoreline, the Cherokee Outdoor YMCA operates its own camps and rents out some cabins to large groups, such as the Boy and Girl Scouts and cheerleading camps. It also offers youth retreats, swim lessons, soccer and outdoor education workshops in association with the Cherokee County School System. The YMCA has several amenities, including a six-lane outdoor pool, large multi-purpose field, boat ramp and docks, canoe/kayak docks, two outdoor basketball courts, a tennis court, a barn and stables, and three miles of trails. YMCA members may use some of the facilities, such as the outdoor pool.

Other significant private recreation providers include private and public golf courses, South Cherokee Recreation Association, World of Cheer, World of Gymnastics, World of Swim and several equestrian centers. The South Cherokee Recreation Association (SCRA) is located in Woodstock, adjacent to J.J. Biello Park. This facility maintains 14 ballfields and a football field. The SCRA operates baseball leagues and football and cheerleading leagues and camps.

Each of the 'World of' facilities is dedicated to a specific activity. The World of Cheer has a large gym and party room. The World of Gymnastics is a 21,000 square foot facility with two gyms, two parent observation rooms and a party room. The third and most recently opened facility is the World of Swim, which has an indoor pool.

Cherokee County is home to several equestrian centers ranging from training centers and trails to boarding facilities and show rings. Chukkar Farm, Falcon Ridge Stables, Double Aught and Sonora Farms are only a few examples of the more than 20 equestrian facilities in Cherokee. Cherokee has many golf courses, two of which, Cherokee Golf Center and The Golf Club at Bradshaw Farm, are public.

There are five prominent planned communities within Cherokee County that provide several facilities and amenities to their residents. Towne Lake is the largest with approximately 7,500 households, two golf courses, neighborhood swim and tennis clubs, a performing arts center, tot lots and playgrounds. With the exception of the Towne Lake Arts Center, these facilities and their programs are reserved for residents of the community. The same is true for the other planned communities, including Bridgemill, Woodmont, Bradshaw Farm and River Green.

The 1,700-acre Bridgemill community will include 2,700 households when completed. Residents have access to several facilities, including a 6,000-square foot recreation center with gymnasium, basketball courts, volleyball courts and classrooms for fitness instruction. Bridgemill also offers a two-acre aquatic center with three pools, a 250-acre golf course and driving range, 25 lighted tennis courts and four clay courts. As discussed in Section 5, the community provides its residents with several instructional courses, tournaments, summer camps and childcare.

Woodmont and Bradshaw Farm are smaller communities at about 950 and 165 households, respectively. Bradshaw Farm provides residents with a golf course and driving range, tennis courts, playgrounds and two pools. Woodmont also includes a golf course, driving range and practice green, tennis courts, pools and playgrounds.

The newest development is River Green in Canton. When complete the community will include approximately 1,350 homes. Located on the Etowah River, the community's facilities include a golf course, park, clubhouses with pools, two aquatic centers and ten tennis courts. This 600-acre development also includes 200 acres of passive open space.

Since these facilities are only available to the residents of the planned communities, they were not included in the county inventory. These communities are home to several thousand people who are well served by these amenities and, according to NRPA stan-

dards, actually have a surplus of many facilities. They do, however, lack athletic fields for soccer, football, baseball and softball.

Cherokee County Park Facilities

As mentioned, the county park system is made up of a variety of park elements and amenities. The county parks system comprises 36 athletic fields. In addition to the county athletic fields, the cities of Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock provide 12 athletic fields. Inventories of athletic fields included all baseball/softball fields, soccer fields and multi-use fields, which are used by a variety of athletic teams.

Other active recreation amenities such as tennis, basketball, volleyball and multiple recreation courts are more numerous with 22 county-owned tennis courts, four basketball courts, four volleyball courts and five multiple recreation courts. The cities of Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock add eight tennis courts, three basketball courts and one volleyball court to the overall inventory.

Assessments revealed that parks found in the county system display a primarily active nature with limited passive opportunities. With the exception of Calvin Farmer Park, Lewis Park, Field's Landing and Hickory Trails, which is in phase one of development, no other park in the county system has a true passive character. Lewis Park has picnic areas, a primitive walking trail and outdoor classroom. Field's Landing Park has recently undergone extensive improvements, including a new playground, gazebo, three new pavilions and shoreline stabilization. When complete, Hickory Trails will take on a passive character and will include such amenities as trails, a gazebo and pavilion. Cherokee Mills, discussed previously, will add an additional 85 acres of passive park, with trails connecting it to Lewis Park. With the exception of Hickory Trails and Calvin Farmer Park, the passive parks are located near Lake Allatoona.

The cities of Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock add to the county's active parks. Boling Park, in Canton, has several active elements. DuPree Park in Woodstock is the city's only active park. The cities of Canton and Woodstock do, however, have large passive parks. As part of the Etowah River Greenway, Canton's Heritage Park includes an amphitheater and walking trails. When construction is completed on Woodstock's Old Rope Mill Park, the park will include trails and access to the Little River.

Facility Standards and Distribution

One of the primary tasks of the park assessment was to determine the level of service that is provided under the current system as well as to make recommendations for future levels of service. An inventory, located in the Appendix, was completed for all existing county and city parks. This inventory was evaluated based on existing NRPA standards as well as standards developed during the Steering Committee Workshop in the public input phase of the master plan (see Section 3). The Steering Committee had been asked to evaluate existing NRPA standards to determine if those standards were appropriate for Cherokee County based on community trends and desires.

As previously discussed the National Recreation and Parks Association, in 1995 published Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines, a book intended to provide communities with baseline standards to follow when evaluating their park system. The NRPA developed these standards for some of the most common elements found in the typical park system. In addition, they reviewed the park service areas of parks based on their size and the amenities they offer.

Utilizing park service areas as described by NRPA, existing parks in Cherokee County were classified as Mini, Neighborhood, Community, Special Use or Regional Parks. **Figure 7.2** shows the classification, acreage, location and provider of the 27 properties overseen by CRPA, both existing and to be developed, and the 14 municipal parks. While many of these facilities may not meet NRPA standards for size or amenities, the number of citizens they serve, within a certain service area, often dictates the classification.

**Figure 7.2
Facility Classification and Acreage**

Mini Parks	Acres	Provider/Location
Brown Park	1	City of Canton
Bracket Park	0.5	City of Holly Springs
Central Park	1	City of Canton
Crisler Park	0.25	City of Canton
McCanless Park	0.25	City of Canton
Taylor's Farm	0.5	City of Holly Springs
Woodstock City Park	1	City of Woodstock
Total	4.5	
Neighborhood Parks	Acres	Provider/Location
Ball Ground, Calvin Farmer Park	9	CRPA/Ball Ground
Ball Ground, City Park	3	CRPA/Ball Ground
Ball Ground, Lions Field	2	CRPA/Ball Ground
Barrett Park	13	City of Holly Springs
Bryan Walker Field	3	CRPA/Holly Springs
Buffington Park	5	CRPA/Canton
Cline Park	12	CRPA/Waleska
Harmon Field	4.6	City of Canton
J.C. Mullins Field	4	City of Holly Springs
North Canton Park	5	CRPA/Canton
Priest Road Property	11	CRPA/Woodstock
Riverchase Park	6	CRPA/Woodstock
Total	77.6	
Community Parks	Acres	Provider/Location
Barnett Park	25	CRPA/Canton
Boling Park	77	City of Canton
Cherokee Mills (to be developed)	85	CRPA/Woodstock
Ray Park (to be developed)	15	CRPA/Ball Ground
DuPree Park	25	City of Woodstock
Dwight Terry Park	30	CRPA/Woodstock
Field's Landing Park	10	CRPA/Canton
Heritage Park	30	City of Canton
Hickory Trails (under construction)	24	CRPA/Hickory Flat
Hobgood Park	60	CRPA/Woodstock
J.J. Biello Park	470	CRPA/Woodstock
Kenney Askew Park	10	CRPA/Canton
Lewis Park	20	CRPA/Woodstock
Sequoyah Park	38	CRPA/CRPA
Waleska Park	15	CRPA/Waleska
Weatherby Park (to be developed)	17	CRPA/Waleska
Woodstock North Park/Old Rope Mill Park	40	City of Woodstock
Total	991	
Special Use	Acres	Provider/Location
Activities Center	n/a	CRPA/Woodstock
Blankets Creek Bike Trails	430	CRPA/Woodstock
Recreation Center	13	CRPA/Woodstock
Rubes Creek Park (greenspace)	36	CRPA/Woodstock
Union Hill Community Center	2	CRPA/Union Hill
Total	481	

Four types of park classifications were found in Cherokee County: mini, neighborhood, community and special use. Mini parks were those parks one acre and less that provided few amenities to visitors. These parks included four in Canton, two in Holly Springs and one in Woodstock. **Figure 7.3** provides a look at the existing mini parks as well as their NRPA-recommended, 1/4-mile service area.

Twelve parks fall under the neighborhood park classification. Of those, nine are county parks, one is a Canton park and two are Holly Springs parks. Using a recommended 1/2-mile service radius, **Figure 7.4** shows the existing neighborhood park service areas throughout the county.

Community parks found in Cherokee County accounted for the greatest number of parks. A total of 17 city and county parks fell under the community park classification. Of those, 13 are county parks, two are Canton parks and two are Woodstock parks. **Figure 7.5** shows the existing community park service areas using a recommended 2-mile radius.

Special use facilities in Cherokee County account for five parks, all of which are county parks. These facilities have a specific focus and typically draw visitors for a single activity. Blanket Creek Bike Trails is a good example where visitors travel to the park specifically to ride bikes. Rubes Creek Park is reserved as greenspace with no public access and therefore falls under the special use classification. The remaining parks primarily provide meeting, office and program space. Special use facilities do not have a service radius due to the fact that visitors may come from all distances for the specific activity that is offered in that location.

The distribution of parks throughout Cherokee County is primarily limited to the southern end of the county along the Interstate 575 corridor. As shown in **Figure 7.6** and described in Section 2, the south end of the county is densely populated; however, a look at the distribution of parks reveals that residents in the most densely populated areas are currently underserved by a facility within two miles of their home. While it is not always possible to provide a park located within two miles of all residents, the population in this portion of the county truly merits additional facilities. For example, a look at Hobgood Park, which includes 10 baseball/softball fields, shows that 26,431 residents (2004 estimate, Demographics Now) live within the park's suggested two-mile service radius. According to NRPA standards and the standards developed by the Steering Committee, Hobgood Park has a sufficient number of fields for its designated service radius. If you were to increase that service radius to four miles it would cover the areas that are not currently served by a park; however, the population more than doubles to 64,993, or 37 percent of the total county population. If you were to include the population within a four-mile radius the park would need an additional 16 fields to meet the recommended standard.

The community park service area map shown in figure 7.5 reveals areas throughout the north and east that do not have parks within two miles of all residents. Based on survey comments, many residents in the eastern portion of the county, east of Hickory Flat Highway and south of State Route 20, utilize recreation facilities in Fulton County

because they are closer. This area is served by the Union Hill Community Center, but there are no parks. In addition, many survey respondents from the northern portion of the county feel neglected by the Authority. There are few parks and facilities in the northern and eastern portions of the county; however, these areas are very different from the previous example of southern Cherokee County. This can be seen with Dwight Terry Park, which has two ballfields. The population within a two-mile radius of this park is 1,348 (2004 estimate, Demographics Now). According to the NRPA standard of 1 ballfield per 2,500, the population only requires one field. However, due to the rural, mountainous nature of north Cherokee County, this area is not as densely developed and people drive farther distances to utilize facilities. A four-mile service radius at this park would include 6,360 residents.

The northern and eastern portions of the county should not be ignored because of smaller, widely dispersed populations. Recent acquisitions, such as Ray Park and Weatherby Park, show that the Authority is aware of the need for facilities in the north. When looking at the population dispersal, one must keep in mind some of the factors that influence it. The mountainous terrain in north Cherokee County limits and scatters development, resulting in lower population density. On the other hand, the southern portion of the county has few limitations for development and is also the Metropolitan Atlanta area, which has seen prolific growth for several decades. **Figure 7.7** shows the portion of the county with the highest population density. This area, southeast of Lake Allatoona, south of Holly Springs and west of Hickory Flat Highway, makes up nearly 52 percent of the entire county population. This area is continuing to grow and is stretching north to Canton, which is projected to grow by as much as 68 percent over the next five years.

As previously stated, the county maintains 1,356 acres of parkland while the city parks add another 198 acres for a total of 1,554 acres. According to the NRPA standards of 10.5 acres per 1,000 people, this puts the county at a 288-acre deficit for 2004 and an 834-acre deficit in 2014; however, the Steering Committee developed a standard of 4.5 acres per 1,000 people. This standard was developed in consideration of the land owned by the Corps of Engineers, which is over 10,000 acres. Using this standard, the county has a 765-acre surplus of parkland. The public has access to much of this land, but with the exception of the designated day-use areas, campgrounds and swimming beaches, there are no facilities. In addition, the Corps-owned land, which is primarily around Lake Allatoona and the Etowah and Little Rivers, is an asset to those who live nearby, but it does not eliminate the need for the acquisition of more land in other portions of the county.

Figure 7.8 provides a look at the existing facility inventory as well as surpluses and deficiencies based on the 2004 population and the projected population for 2014. The figure shows NRPA recommended standards as well as those developed in the workshop by the Steering Committee. Facility totals were derived from inventories of all existing county and city parks and the facility surplus/deficit calculations were based on the desired level of service as developed in the workshop. Deficiencies are seen in every recreation amenity with the greatest found in baseball/softball fields, soccer fields, aquatic facilities and trail systems.

The deficiencies shown in the chart do not take into account those facilities found on elementary, middle, high school and college campuses, private home owners associations, church properties, YMCA or other private recreation providers. If totals were included for playgrounds, swimming pools, tennis courts and other amenities found at these facilities, inadequacies throughout the county would be less. Although facilities found in private neighborhood, church and school properties alleviate the need for some amenities, they do not provide opportunities for the community as a whole.

The popularity of certain sports and activities often dictates the need for additional facilities. This can be seen in the changing standard developed for soccer fields. The original standard developed for soccer fields in the early 1980s recommended 1/10,000 people, but growth of the sport over the last two decades has seen a need for additional fields. The new standard developed by the planning team is 1 per 4,000 people. Other standards not available by NRPA but proposed by the planning team based on experience in other communities are for trail systems, indoor courts/gymnasiums, community centers, cultural centers, skate parks and outdoor skate courts.

NRPA Standards for Park Facilities	NRPA Recommendations	Existing Number of Cherokee County Park Facilities	Existing Number of City of Canton Park Facilities	Existing Number of City of Holly Springs Park Facilities	Existing Number of City of Woodstock Park Facilities	TOTAL Existing Number of Park Facilities	Current Facility Need based on Cherokee County estimated 2004 population of 175,398	Current Facility Deficit/ Surplus (using Desired Level of Service)	Facility Need based on Cherokee County estimated 2014 population of 227,401	2014 Facility Deficit/ Surplus (using Desired Level of Service)	Desired Level of Service
Acreage	10.5/1000	1356.0	114.1	18	66	1554.1	1841.7	-287.6	2387.7	-833.6	10.5/1000 local
							789.3	764.8	1023.3	530.8	4.5/1000 w/Corps
Outdoor Basketball	1/5,000	4	2	1	2	9	17.5	-8.5	22.7	-13.7	1/10,000
Tennis	1/2,000	22	4	0	4	30	43.8	-13.8	56.9	-26.9	1/4,000
Volleyball	1/5,000	3	1	0	0	4	17.5	-13.5	22.7	-18.7	1/10,000
Baseball/Softball	1/2,500	32	5	1	2	40	70.2	-30.2	91.0	-51.0	1/2,500
Football	1/20,000	0	0	0	0	0	8.8	-8.8	11.4	-11.4	1/20,000
Soccer	1/10,000	0	4	0	0	4	70.2	-66.2	91.0	-87.0	1/2,500
Swimming Pool	1/20,000	0	0	0	0	0	8.8	-8.7	11.4	-13.2	1/20,000
Aquatic centers		0	0	0	0	0					
Outdoor pools		0	0	0	0	0					
Running Track	1/20,000	0	0	0	0	0	1.8	-1.7	2.3	-2.6	1/100,000
Indoor Roller Hockey	1/100,000	0	0	0	0	0	1.8	-1.7	2.3	-2.6	1/100,000
Golf Course (18 Hole)	1/50,000	0	0	0	0	0	1.8	-1.7	2.3	-2.6	1/100,000
Golf Driving Range	1/50,000	0	0	0	0	0	1.8	-1.7	2.3	-2.6	1/100,000
Multiple Recreation Field		4	0	0	0	4					
Multiple Recreation Court	1/10,000	5	0	0	0	5	8.8	-3.8	11.4	-6.4	1/20,000
Developed Standards for Park Facilities	Developed Standard	Existing Number of Cherokee County Park Facilities	Existing Number of City of Canton Park Facilities	Existing Number of City of Holly Springs Park Facilities	Existing Number of City of Woodstock Park Facilities	TOTAL Existing Number of Park Facilities	Current Facility Need based on Cherokee County estimated 2004 population of 175,398	Current Facility Deficit/ Surplus (using Desired Level of Service)	Facility Need based on Cherokee County estimated 2014 population of 227,401	2014 Facility Deficit/ Surplus (using Desired Level of Service)	Desired Level of Service
Trail System	1mile/3,000	11.25	13	1	0	25.25	116.9	-91.7	151.6	-126.4	1/1,500
Indoor Courts	1/20,000	2	0	0	0	2	17.5	-15.5	22.7	-20.7	1/10,000
Playground	1/1,000	13	3	3	1	20	35.1	-15.1	45.5	-25.5	1/5,000
Cultural Center	1/100,000	0	1	0	0	1	1.8	-0.8	2.3	-1.3	1/100,000
Community Center	1/50,000	3**	0	1	0	4	3.5	0.5	4.5	-0.5	1/50,000
Picnic Pavilion	1/2,000	21	1	1	1	24	35.1	-11.1	45.5	-21.5	1/5,000
Soccer	1/4,000*	0	3	0	0	3	70.2	-67.2	91.0	-88.0	1/2,500
Outdoor Roller Hockey	1/25,000*	0	0	0	0	0	3.5	-3.5	4.5	-4.5	1/50,000
Inline Skating Court	1/25,000*	1	0	0	0	1	7.0	-6.0	9.1	-8.1	1/25,000
Skate Park	1/100,000*	0	0	0	0	0	1.8	-1.8	2.3	-2.3	1/100,000

* Standard developed by Lose & Associates, Inc. to respond to recreation trends and growth in certain sports since 1983.
 **Activities Center is leased, it is not County owned.

Figure 7.8
NRPA Standards

The review of existing baseball/softball fields shows that current fields are well distributed throughout the county; however, the desired level of service is 1 field per 2,500 residents indicating a current deficit of 30. This deficit increases to 51 by 2014 assuming the population increases to 227,401. Park assessments revealed that many of these fields are in varying degrees of quality. Recommendations have been made to renovate and update some of the fields to bring them up to a level of higher quality.

A review of soccer fields finds that there are only four within the entire county. There are, however, an additional four fields designated as multi-purpose, which are used for soccer and football. The county maintains no fields specifically dedicated to soccer, which is in high demand. The desired level of service determined during the workshop is 1 soccer field per 2,500 residents, which indicates a deficit of 66 fields increasing to 87 fields by 2014. Future plans for J.J. Biello Park include the development of soccer fields, but several additional fields will be needed throughout the county to alleviate the deficit.

The largest existing deficit is for a trail system. The desired level of service indicates a current need for 92 miles of trails increasing to 126 miles in 2014. In addition, the majority of the existing trail system is for bikers. The other existing trails are primarily loops within parks.

The assessment of existing aquatic facilities, such as indoor and outdoor swimming pools, shows that there is a current deficit of nine pools increasing to 13 in 2014. Aquatic facilities were one of the most demanded items in both the survey and the workshop.

While the chart shows that there is an adequate supply of community centers, only three are maintained by the county. Of these three facilities only the Recreation Center and Union Hill Community Center are county owned; the Activities Center is leased to the county by a private owner. There is limited program space in these centers and all non-athletic programs, such as dance and arts and crafts, are only offered at the Recreation Center and Activities Center in Woodstock. Residents from the north end of the county must drive 20 - 30 minutes to get to these facilities.

Growth of the county population has created a severe shortage of some specific facilities, especially in the south. Areas of known needs include additional baseball and softball fields, soccer fields, aquatic facilities, a trail network, program space and additional land. The county also lacks a large, multi-purpose, multi-generational recreation center that provides indoor recreation activities, such as a fitness center, indoor and outdoor pools, indoor track, gymnasiums and program space. A skate park would also make a valuable addition to the park system.

The review of existing facilities by distribution and national standards revealed consistencies with what was heard during the public input stage of the master plan. Community surveys distributed as part of the public input process asked participants to prioritize implementation of capital improvement planning, the top 5 highest priorities were:

1.	Large Community Center	63.5%
2.	Bike/Pedestrian Trail Network	61.0%
3.	Regional Park with Multiple Activities	46.5%
4.	Large Playgrounds	42.0%
5.	Indoor Aquatic Leisure Pool	41.4%

Existing park assessments and recommendations and new park recommendations were based on these desires as well as the needs determined in the level of service analysis. Park distribution was also a determining factor for locating new parks. While the desired level of service standard may not have dictated additional facilities, the distribution and community outcry may have directed recommendations in specific areas.

General Park Evaluations, Observations and Recommendations

The completion of the existing facility assessments revealed a general lack of refinement at many of the county parks. Several common issues have come up in many of the parks. Severe erosion has occurred in several parks due to drainage issues and lack of a vegetative cover. Most parks lack a system of connecting pathways and ADA accessibility. This has caused park visitors to walk in the grass, resulting in large bare spots. These issues appear to be the result of trying to provide too many additional facilities, which are demanded by the public, on a limited budget. In the Authority's attempt to maximize the number of facilities, critical elements are being omitted, which will increase cost and maintenance in the long run. In addition to these concerns, interviews and comments revealed that the current concession building prototype does not provide adequate storage space for surplus concession supplies.

Park assessments revealed problems that were consistent throughout the system and are common among parks nationwide. Some issues noticed include:

- Universal accessibility is lacking at many parks and indoor facilities.
- There is a general lack of connecting pathways between park elements.
- Many playgrounds are not ADA accessible or safety compliant.
- Several ballfields and parks had major drainage issues, including severe erosion on steep banks, infield mix washing onto the wrong parts of the fields and standing water.
- Lights used at many of the facilities are outdated in design and features. Many support columns are wooden, which are not recommended due to the concerns of splintering, collapse and grounding.
- Many outdoor tennis and basketball courts are in need of resurfacing, restriping and new nets.
- Support facilities are in need of renovation (e.g. paint, new trim, new roof) in many parks.
- Many parks lack signage, both at the entrance and within the park. A county standard should be developed and used at all county facilities.
- The current concession building prototype lacks sufficient storage space.
- There is no dedicated area for skateboarding.

Not all observations and evaluations of the parks were negative. Some of the new park developments and renovations have been successful and should be used when developing standards for new facilities and renovations. The new and renovated facilities have dealt with many of the issues that were noted at other sites. For example, the Union Hill Community Center provides a ramp for ADA access into the building while Field's Landing Park has a system of connecting pathways between elements. In addition, the amenities at Lewis Park are well constructed and could be used in other parks, while the new tennis courts at J.J. Biello Park could set the standard for renovation of other tennis courts in the county park system.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

A large issue facing both public and private recreation providers is the ability to enhance access for disabled patrons. Park and recreation departments are not exempt from his requirement, and legislation dictates that primary park amenities be barrier-free.

Primary access routes as described in the Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines: Recreation Facilities and Outdoor Developed Areas, by the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB), are defined in the following manner:

“Outdoor recreation access routes are the paths that connect the primary developed spaces and elements that are basic to the recreation experience being offered at the site. For example, the outdoor recreation access routes at a picnic ground are the paths linking the parking area, restrooms, picnic units, and water hydrants. While many of these elements – parking area, restroom and water hydrant – are not the primary reason for a person to visit the site, they are basic developed elements that serve all visitors.

Designers and managers, in consultation with users, must determine which of the developed activities and elements at a recreation site are basic to the recreation experience being offered. Further, they must secure that there is a comprehensive system of outdoor recreation access routes that connect all primary elements and spaces with each other and with accessible parking spaces and facility entrances. This determination should be based upon visitor expectations as well as the level of development at the site.”

The ADA regulations that govern design standards can be left up to some interpretation where athletic facilities are concerned; however, they are very specific in their requirements of restroom and pathway design. Before renovation of old facilities, or construction of new ones, the Cherokee Recreation and Parks Authority should seek counsel of the County/City legal department to interpret the laws and develop a standard by which they will begin to create a system that is sensitive to the needs of all users.

Playground Safety Standards

Another prominent issue within some park systems is the non-compliance of playground equipment to safety standards by organizations such as the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and the International Play Equipment Manufacturers' Association (IPEMA). The standards proposed by these organizations are meant to serve as a guideline to help create atmospheres that are safe and pose a minimal threat of injury. Studies show that the majority of injuries sustained on public playgrounds are to the head—a result of falls from the play structure to the ground. For this reason, consideration has been given as to what the critical fall height would be in which a fatal head injury might occur.

Guidelines have been established measuring the impact performance of various materials. As with ADA issues, alternatives should be studied and a standard established for implementation of safe play environments throughout the parks system.

Vandalism

Individual park assessments and evaluations revealed some issues with vandalism, especially Riverchase Park. Recommendations to improve site-based problems that create atmospheres for criminal activity have been made to reduce the threat of vandalism and other illicit behavior. The addition of lighting in parks and the practice of clearing thick vegetative growth to improve visibility into and around the park are two methods that should be employed. Whenever possible, parks should be oriented towards the road to allow maximum visibility into the park and eliminate areas where vandals can hide or congregate. Providing materials that are resistant to destruction reduces the frequency of repairs or replacement. Facilities that offer something for everyone increase the number of visitors to the park, thus reducing the potential actions of a criminal.

Park Facility Assessments

The following are individual park assessments and recommendations. Information has been provided according to size, location and amenities provided within each park. Facilities were analyzed for their age, functionality and condition and recommendations were made accordingly.