



01 | Introduction

Albemarle is becoming an increasingly urban area, and how the City addresses the parks and recreation offerings will impact future growth. The stretch between the Charlotte metropolitan area and Greensboro used to be largely comprised of smaller cities and towns; however, in recent years, the interstate 85 corridor has become a seemingly unending stretch of urban development. With an increase of urbanization, Albemarle is becoming an attractive refuge for those who are looking for a City with a strong sense of community that has easy access to nature.

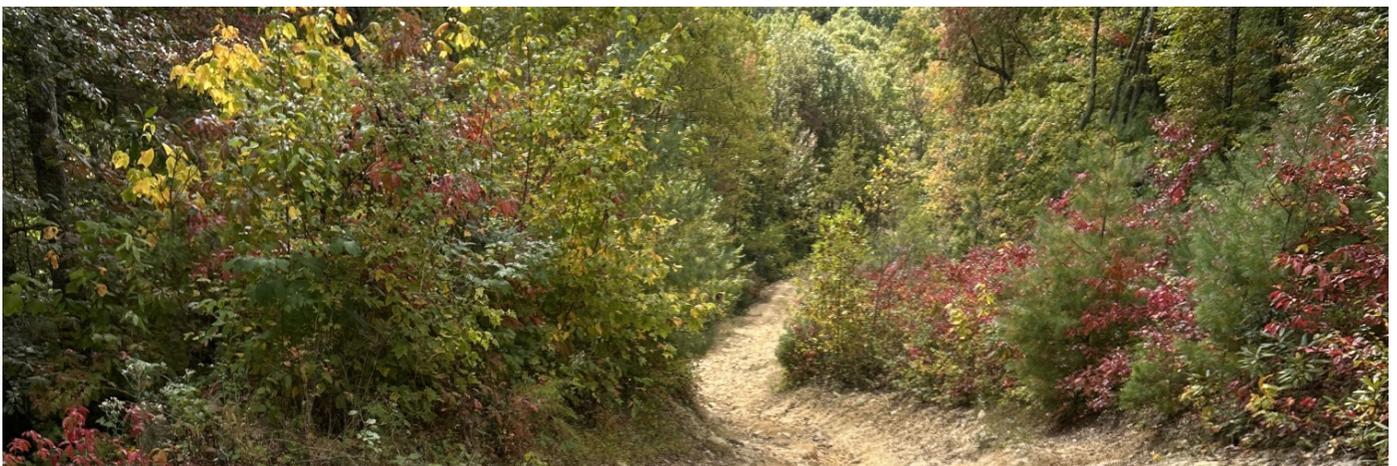
This Ten-Year Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan is intended to help the City understand the current state of the recreation system and use public input to craft a vision for the future. This plan provides the framework for guiding the City's Council and staff. It is based on an inventory of the existing park system, site observations, City-established needs, and public comments received through community engagement efforts. We also used state and national benchmarks as guides to support the recommendations we made for the City. In assessing the existing park system, we were able to identify what the community's immediate needs are and help predict future needs. With this plan, we analyze existing park facilities and recommend additions and renovations. In our recommendations, we note which projects should be prioritized, which we determined through population needs,

Albemarle is the western gateway to “North Carolina’s central park district,” which includes Uwharrie National Forest, Morrow Mountain State Park, Lake Tillery, Badin Lake, and the third largest zoo in the world!

community input, and recreational benchmarks. We also recommend certain partnerships, policies, and marketing considerations.

As Albemarle continues to grow, the existing recreation facilities will shift to meet the changing community needs. The expansion will require the City to acquire property and grant funding, which can come through the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), Great Trails State Funding, Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF), and other leveraging sources. Grant funding will help mitigate the costs of the recommended recreation improvements, and this master plan will help the City be competitive in seeking funding assistance.

This plan is an action-oriented guide that will help the City enhance its facilities and programs while also fostering community spirit, recreation-based economic development, and grant funding.

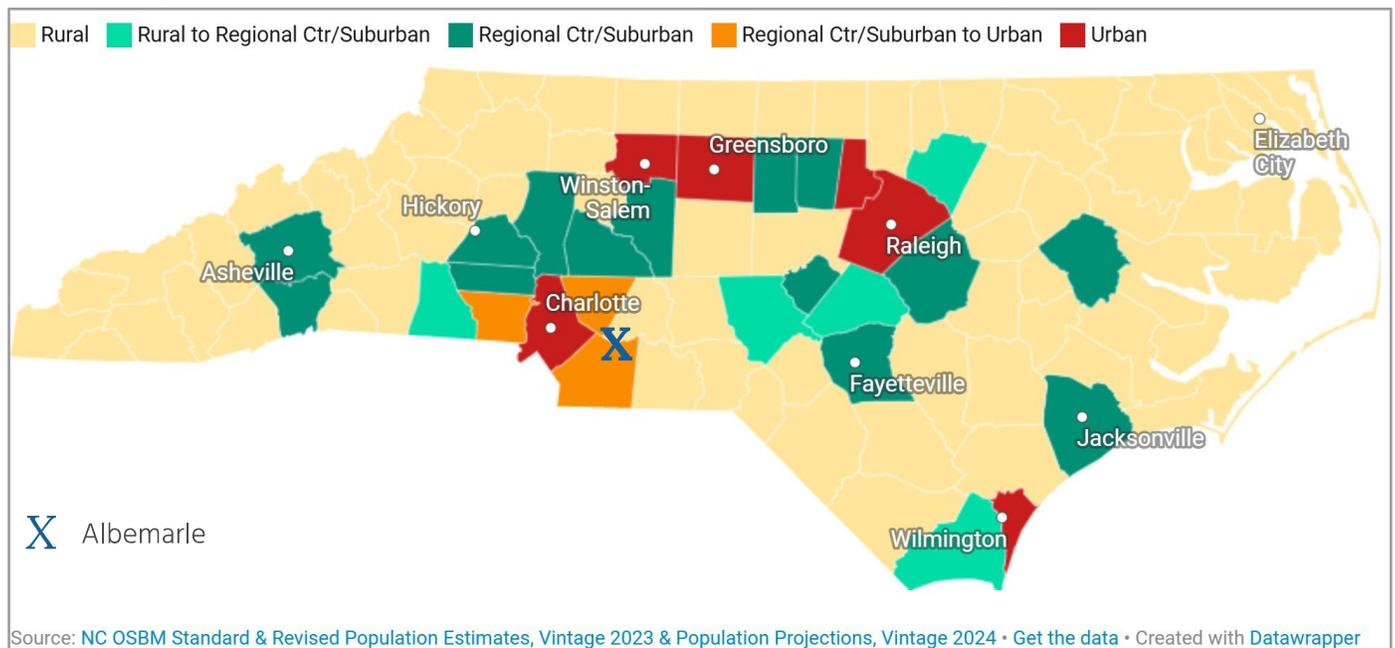


Trail in the Uwharrie National Forest, which is located east of Albemarle

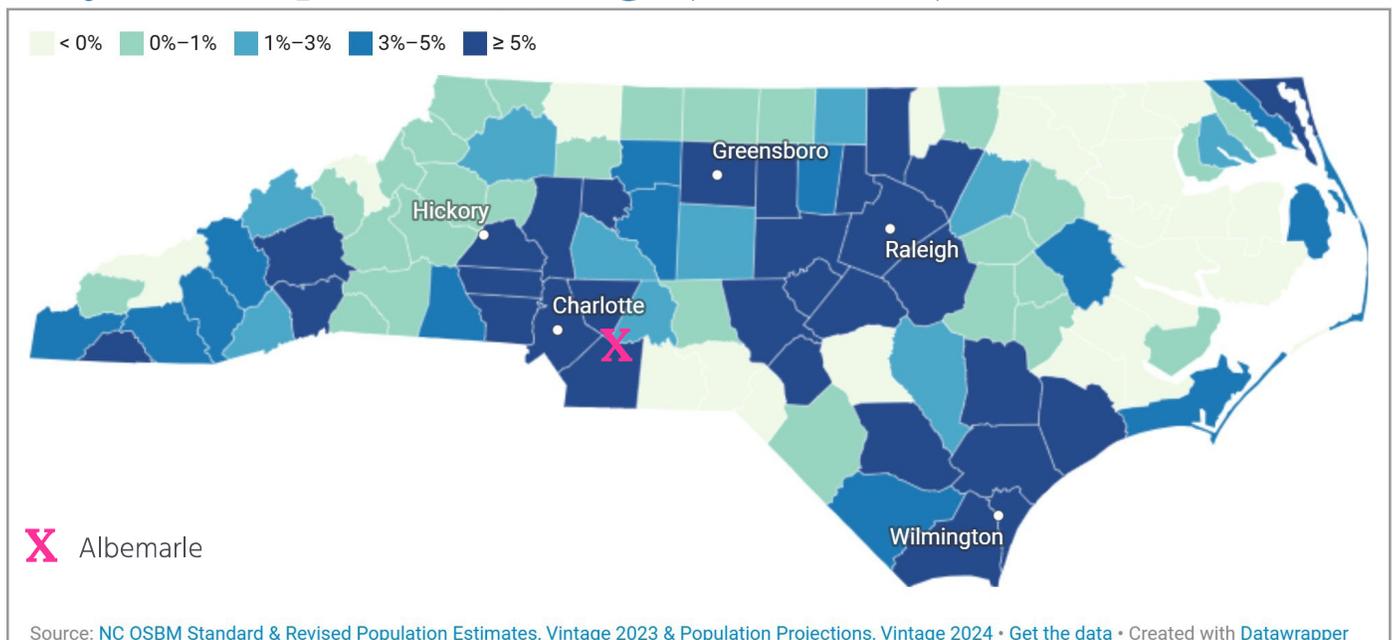
Based on US Census estimates, Albemarle has seen a 7% population increase over the past few years. Since North Carolina is one of the fastest-growing states, Albemarle will inevitably continue growing—likely at an increased rate. The anticipated development along I-85 and Highway 27 will create demand for public service opportunities with sewers, water, schools, roads, and recreation.

The North Carolina State Demographer projects that North Carolina will become more urban as the state rises to the seventh most populous state in the Country by 2030.

Urban / Rural Classifications (2020 vs 2060)



Projected Population Change (2025-2030)



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