



03 | Master Plan Process

Overview

The degree of need for parks, recreation, and open space is most directly influenced by the quality of life that Albemarle residents and visitors expect. This plan addresses, as its first priority, what the City's residents and visitors envision for the future of the its parks and recreation.

The City of Albemarle's Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan 2025-2035 provides a framework for the City's board and staff. This plan is based on an inventory of the existing park system, recorded site observations, discussions of needs with the City staff, and public comments gathered through community engagement efforts. Additionally, we used NRPA metrics to guide the recommendations for the City recreation facilities.

Methodology

With assistance from City staff and team site visits, this study documents the existing City-owned facilities, programming arrangements, and growth projects. We also provide a listing of the recreation opportunities available through local municipalities, Stanly County, state land, and other recreation facilities in the area.



Children enjoying recreation opportunities in Albemarle

Plan

While recommendations lay a solid foundation for improvement, staffing and roll-out strategy are critical for meaningful progress. In this plan, we provide high-level strategic and staffing considerations that guide the City as it manages the improvements and changes outlined in the recommendations section.

Process

Discovery + Data Collection

Understanding the community requires examining current demographics and identifying City-owned recreation facilities and City-led programs. Inventory and analysis of this information are used to improve the current parks and recreation system. Whom the City serves correlates with what improvements may be appropriate.

A multi-modal approach: Gathering public input in different ways allows community members the chance to express their needs in a way that feels comfortable. While one group may like the structure of a survey, another may like the dialogue and ease of a drop-in public input meeting. Offering variety allows for more robust input.

Assessment

The future of the City's parks and recreation system is determined by listening and understanding what has worked in the past and what should be improved in the future. After discovering who the community is and what facilities and programs exist, the needs of City residents and staff are considered. Through analysis of open conversations with residents, public survey input, staff input, and typical standards, a picture of how to move forward develops. We also evaluated recreation trends and provided information on what could be possible for Albemarle's future. We designed surveys to determine the demand for outdoor recreation and facilities, which were conducted on the federal and state levels by private, nonprofit, and governmental agencies. This information is important because it sets a precedent for what activities the typical park user would expect.

Assessment toolbox: We used the following assessment methods to understand Albemarle's recreation – staff and leadership SWOT analysis, park system amenity matrix, park system conditions analysis, national and state benchmarking, level of service calculations, staffing analysis

Recommendations

Resident and staff input identified in the discovery phase and needs assessment are evaluated and analyzed to identify actions that will benefit the City in the future. Based on community needs and desires and departmental and consulting team experience, recommendations for improvements are made. These recommendations are presented and prioritized based on immediate needs (0–5 years), short-term needs (5–10 years), and long-term future needs (10 years and beyond).

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