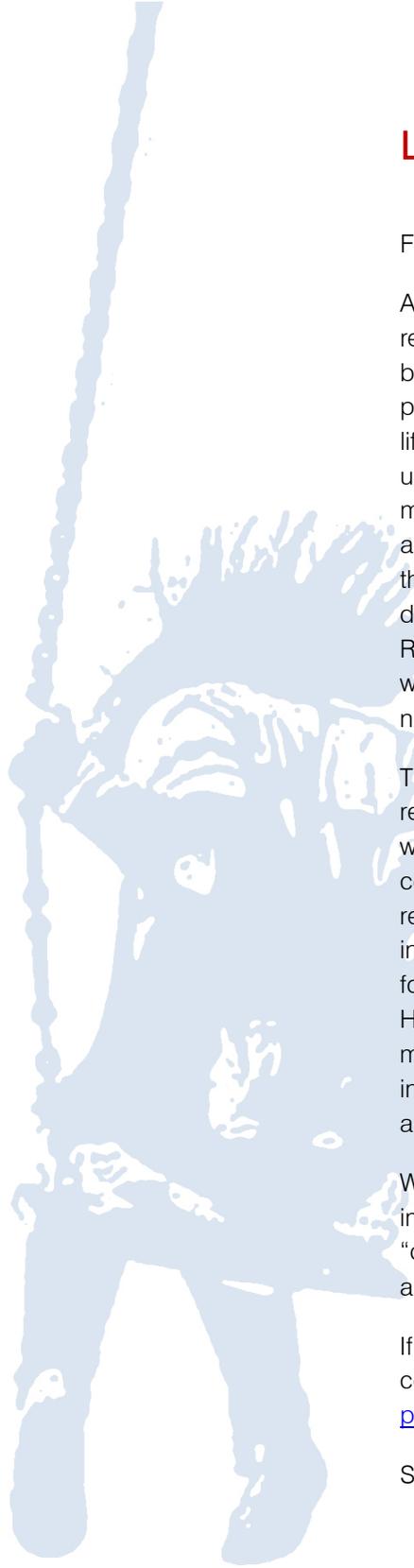




CITY OF CARROLLTON PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

2016 - 2036





Letter from the Director

Friends of Carrollton Parks and Recreation,

A community's quality of life is largely determined by the recreational opportunities it provides for its citizens. The benefits derived from participating in recreational programs and enjoying parks are multidimensional and life-affecting. And, as our community becomes more urbanized, places to retreat and relax will become even more important to our quality of life. Carrollton's reputation as a city that supports parks and recreation is evident throughout our town. As Carrollton grows and its demographic distribution changes, the Parks and Recreation Department is challenged to provide the public with recreational experiences which reflect their changing needs and desires.

The department's Master Plan encompasses many recommendations, concepts and strategies developed with the assistance of KPS Group, citizens in the community, staff, elected officials, and our parks and recreation commission. It incorporates valuable information and gives the department a plan going forward. Will we be able to do everything presented? No. However, this will at least give us the proper tools for moving forward as a community. We are indebted to these individuals and organizations for their meaningful input and express our sincere appreciation for their assistance.

We look forward to working with you throughout the implementation of this dynamic 20-year plan and as we "create and connect communities through people, parks and programs."

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at (770) 832-1161 or email me at pmaierhofer@carrollton-ga.gov.

Sincerely,

Peter Maierhofer
Director
Carrollton Parks and Recreation Department



Mayor

Mr. Walt Hollingsworth

City Council

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Prepare with the assistance of



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Purpose of the Plan



Carrollton's parks, recreation and cultural arts facilities and programs are a service of the City to its residents, businesses and visitors. They assure families safe, quality places to play and—in addition to Carrollton's great schools—for children to develop physically, intellectually and socially through free play, competitive sports and arts programs. They provide adult residents places to exercise, interact with others and to relax in Carrollton's great outdoors. For older residents, Carrollton's provides parks, recreation and arts facilities where they may enjoy leisure time together and stay connected with the community around them.

The parks, recreation and cultural arts system reflects Carrollton's values, self-image and quality of life. A robust, well-planned and designed parks and recreation system projects a message that Carrollton cares deeply for its people and provides the best for them. This is valuable in efforts to attract and retain businesses and a talented employment base. High quality parks, recreation and cultural arts facilities also add to the local economy through tourism, increasing activity in area hotels, restaurants and shopping destinations.

Parks are also part of the city's 'green' infrastructure—not just a quality of life amenity—but a part of the city's essential systems. Parks are one of only a few uses of land that can be located in sensitive environmental areas without damaging the land's natural functions, while still providing a whole other meaningful service to residents.

Using the Plan

This Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed by the Carrollton Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department (CPRCAD) as a guide for improving, expanding and managing the City of Carrollton parks, recreation and cultural arts system over the next 20 years. Maintaining and growing parks, recreational and arts facilities are essential investments by the City of Carrollton that provide an exceptional quality of life to its residents, businesses and visitors. The Master Plan is put into action by the CPRCAD with the support of the Carrollton Recreation Commission and other city officials, boards and community stakeholders. This master plan also serves as an extension of the City's comprehensive plan.

Plan recommendations are based on the expectation that Carrollton will continue to grow in population; and thus the parks system must grow. Targets for expansion of the parks system are not prescriptive. They are intended to give the City a sense of the type and amount of facilities that *may* be needed over the next twenty years. This will help CPRCAD to work proactively to meet those needs.

CPRCAD Mission Statement

To provide comprehensive diverse leisure programs and facilities enhancing the quality of life of our citizens

There are many variables that must be taken into account in acting on this plan: the degree to which the community *actually* grows; where new growth occurs; recreation trends and changing local interests; changes to the city's overall economy; and of course future citywide funding priorities, of which parks, recreation and cultural arts are but one part.

Process

The parks planning process began in January 2016 and continued through Fall 2016. The process began with an analysis of existing city parks and recreation facilities, private recreational offerings, natural and developmental conditions of the city. The planning team, CPRCAD staff and the Carrollton Recreation Commission reviewed the assessment in the context of National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) traditional standards, annual PRORAGIS reports, data from the Trust for Public Land's *City Park Facts* publications and stakeholder assessments. Two community workshops were held to further refine the needs assessment and document the community's overall parks and recreation priorities. The planning team, in coordination with CPRCAD staff, prepared initial recommendations that would become the backbone of the plan. Draft recommendations were reviewed with staff and the commission. The final plan was assembled and submitted to the Recreation Commission and City Council for approval.



Goals of the Planning Process

1. Inventory and evaluate the current conditions of Carrollton's parks, recreation and cultural arts facilities
2. Assess future parks, recreation and cultural arts needs based on projected population growth and community values
3. Establish an overall vision for the Carrollton parks system to serve the community's recreational needs and help accomplish other goals for the community's physical, cultural and economic development
4. Foster development of a parks system that builds on Carrollton's unique character and quality-of-life
5. Set priorities for how and where funding is allocated in the future to best meet the needs and desires of the community

Community Profile



The county seat of Carroll County, Carrollton is a small town—in the greatest sense of that term—just 50 minutes west of Georgia’s largest city, Atlanta. With a slowly but steadily growing population of about 25,700, Carrollton is home to the University of West Georgia, Tanner Health Systems and one of the world’s largest wire and cable manufacturers, Southwire Company.

With a long history dating back to its incorporation in 1829, the community is centered around a downtown and adjacent historic neighborhoods. US Highway 27 connects Carrollton to Interstate 20 nine miles to the north. Other major roads include State Route 166, Alabama Street (State Route 16), and Newnan Street/Bankhead Highway, and Northside Drive.



The Little Tallapoosa River flows through the northern part of the City, feeding Lake Carroll in northeast Carrollton. Buffalo Creek runs through south Carrollton and feeds into Richards Lake.

CPRCAD

The Carrollton Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department is responsible for the planning, operation and maintenance of the city’s parks and recreation facilities and the Carrollton GreenBelt. CPRCAD also manages a wide variety of athletic, leisure and senior programs enjoyed by the community.

CPRCAD is not your usual parks and recreation department though. In addition to the customary facilities and programs that typical parks and recreation departments manage, CPRCAD includes a cultural arts program and the Carrollton Main Street Program. The department contributes to local historic preservation efforts by maintaining several historic structures and making them available for use by the community (WPA Building, Stallings Community Center and the Bradley Street Train Depot). City beautification is another role played by CPRCAD. The department maintains city cemeteries, civic building plazas and green spaces along Park Street (Triangle, Kramer and Memorial Parks). Finally, the department is also involved in tourism activities through the cultural arts program, visitors’ center and various parks and recreation facilities that are used for events that draw visitors from outside the community.

Demographics

Carrollton has a notably low median age (26 years) owing in part to its substantial college student population and popularity with young professionals and families with young children. The percentage of Carrollton's senior population (adults 65 years and over) decreased from 11.3% in 2000 to 9.9% in 2010 while statewide senior population has increased slightly. Meanwhile, the city's youth population (17 years and under) hovered around 20.5% in the 2000 and 2010 US Decennial Census. However, annual Census estimates depict Carrollton's youth population to be closer to 23%.

- Carrollton is an ethnically diverse community and a well-educated one. Nearly one-third of adults have at least a bachelor's degree, compared to one out of five adults nationally.
- Despite a modest median household income (\$32,969), the median income for married-couple families in Carrollton is high (\$81,713). In fact, it is the highest in Carroll County.
- The median value of owner-occupied homes in Carrollton (\$134,800) is the highest in Carroll County yet is lower than the state's median home value (\$148,000).



For the purposes of this plan, Carrollton's historic growth pattern has been used to estimate the growth of the city over the next 20 years to guide projection of facilities needs. Over the last twenty years, the city has grown by an average annual rate of about 2%. Because Carrollton is relatively isolated from the economic and development dynamics of the Atlanta metropolitan area, its growth rate is more closely tied to Carrollton's own economy, which is diversified and stabilized (in part by the presence of the University of West Georgia, one of the city's larger employers). Therefore, Carrollton's

slow, steady historic growth rate appears a reasonable basis from which to consider future parks and recreation demands.

Recent Planning

In the last several years, the City and others have invested in planning efforts that have been evaluated to inform the development of this plan:

Carrollton Comprehensive Plan 2008-2028

The Carrollton Comprehensive Plan establishes a long-term framework to manage and support growth responsibly through public investment and speaks to the importance of parks, recreation and cultural arts in the future Carrollton envisioned in the plan. The plan also referenced the importance of community walkability and of the planned development of the now mostly-complete Carrollton GreenBelt. The plan included the following recommendations to emphasize the role of parks and recreation in the community's growth:

- Parks and community facilities should be located and designed as focal points in neighborhoods.
- New residential development should be master-planned to include a mix of uses, including parks and recreation spaces.

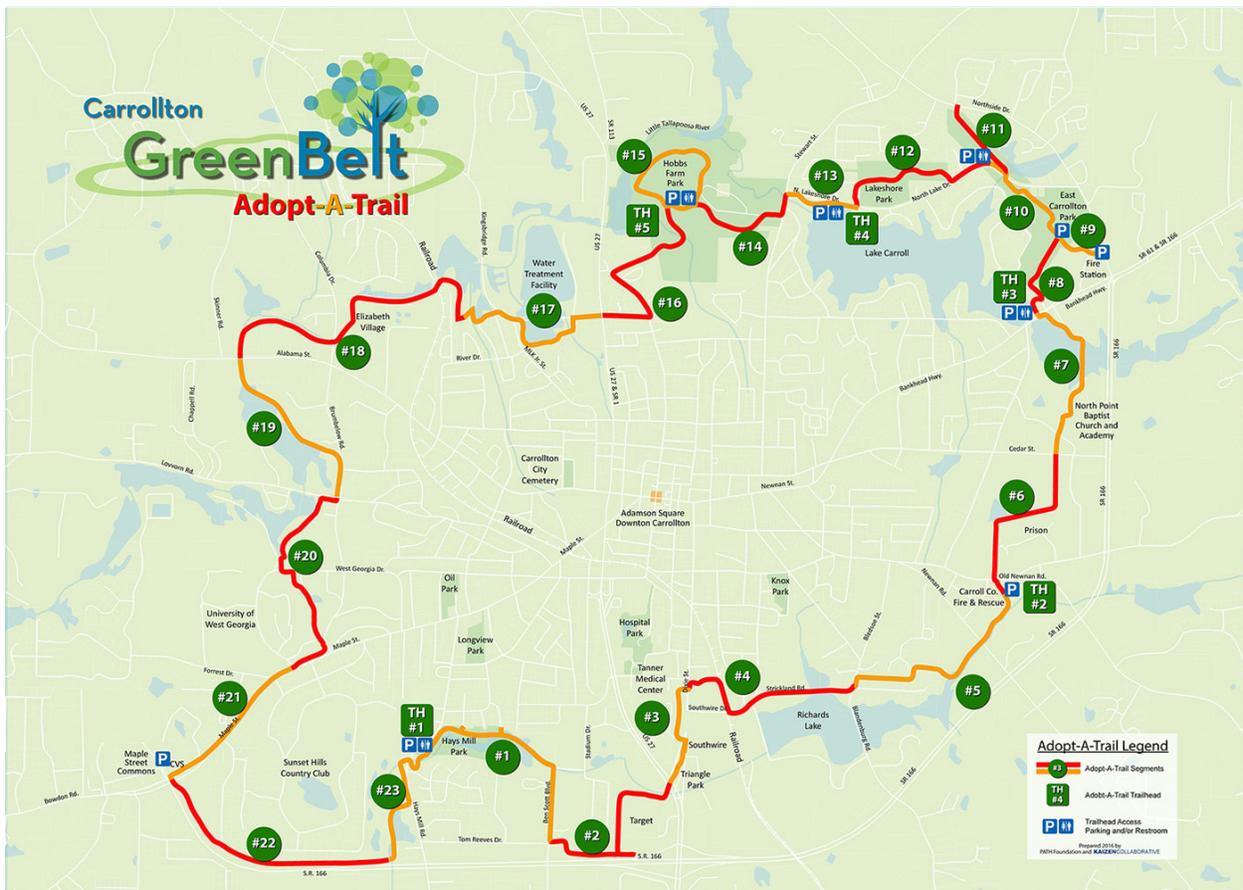
- Investments in the Carrollton GreenBelt and parks and open spaces should continue to encourage private investment in downtown and nearby areas.

The plan also identified a number of park renovations and other capital projects slated to be carried out by CPRCAD including improvements to the Bonner Center, East Carrollton Park and Lakeshore Park.

Carrollton GreenBelt Master Plan

The Carrollton GreenBelt is a 18-mile bicycle and pedestrian trail system that encircles the community and connects schools, parks and shopping areas with city neighborhoods. Nearing completion, the paved trail was built through a combination of private and public funds. The plan was developed by the Friends of Carrollton GreenBelt in coordination with the City of Carrollton.

CPRCAD is responsible for maintenance of the greenbelt, which interconnects city parks and includes trailheads owned and maintained by CPRCAD, some of which are located within park facilities.



The Parks System Today



The City of Carrollton operates high quality, well-maintained parks, recreation and cultural arts facilities and programs. The parks system includes 410 acres of parkland¹, including 18 mini parks, 5 neighborhood parks, 3 community parks and 16 other special parks and facilities. Altogether this affords Carrollton approximately 16 acres of parks and recreational land per 1,000 residents. This is well above the 6.25-10.5 acre/1,000 residents recommended traditionally by the NRPA.

In addition, the community enjoys an 18-mile greenbelt trail, most of which is contained in easements on private property but which is maintained by CPRCAD. Taking into account the land area of the greenbelt, Carrollton maintains over 450 acres of parkland, or 17.5 acres per 1,000 residents.

This ratio of park space to population also puts Carrollton ahead of cities evaluated in the Trust for Public Land's City Parks Facts 2015 report—the median park acreage per 1,000 residents for cities included in the publication was 12.5. The report reveals that lower density cities on average provide more park space by population than denser cities. Compared to similarly low density cities—Carrollton has approximately 1,100 residents per square mile—Carrollton is above the median of 14.8 acres/1,000 residents. About 2.9% of Carrollton's land area is park land compared to a median of 5.9% among the low density cities in the report.

Park Classifications

The City of Carrollton's parks and recreation facilities have been classified into standard categories established by the NRPA. These categories reflect the size of parks, their service area and relationship to surrounding neighborhoods and districts, and the types of recreational activities each provides. This allows Carrollton's parks to be compared to traditional benchmarks that allow a finer-grained understanding of how Carrollton's parks serve the community.

Traditional parks classifications established by the NRPA include:

- Mini parks are small (generally under 1 acre), specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population within a small service area
- Neighborhood parks are moderately sized (5-10 acres) parks with multiple activities that serve one or more surrounding neighborhoods.

¹ This includes all parks and recreation lands, under the ownership of the City and maintained by the CPRCAD, and sites on which recreation, community and cultural arts buildings are located. This also includes land leased specifically to the City for parks and recreation use. It includes only those segments of the Carrollton GreenBelt that are owned by the City. It *does not include* city-owned cemeteries, of which CPRCAD maintains 36 acres..

- Community parks are large (30 acres or more) parks with a variety of recreational activities that serve several neighborhoods within a service area of up to three miles.
- Linear parks include greenways, pedestrian trails and other linear spaces sometimes located along old railroad beds, streams, highways, or utility corridors.
- Special use parks are facilities dedicated to specialized or single purpose recreational activities that vary from historic parks, zoos, and golf courses to marinas, nature preserves and arboreta. Special use parks tend to have a community-wide or larger service area depending on the type of activities involved.

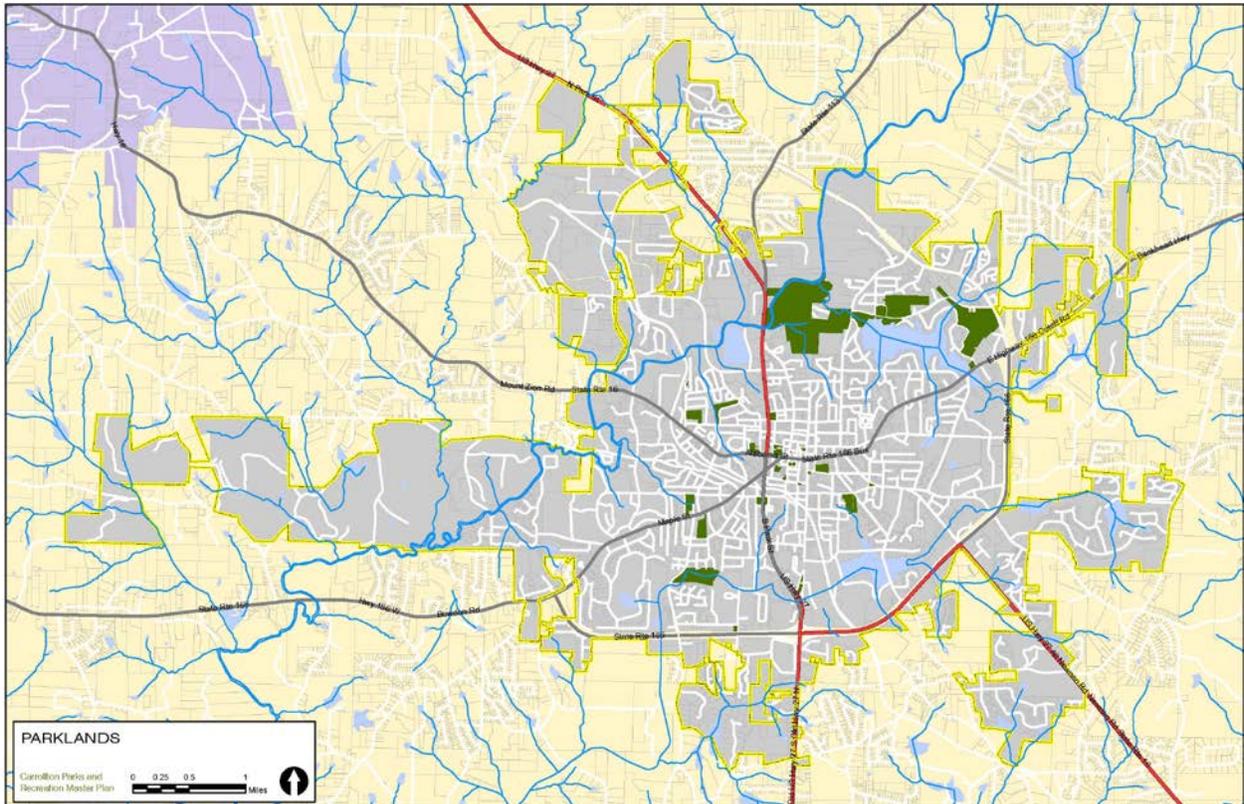


Figure 1: Parklands. This map shows the overall amount and distribution of park land provided and managed by the Carrollton Parks and Recreation Department.

Studies show that being within 1/10th of a mile of a park or permanent open space adds 5-10% to the total value of a home.

Mini Parks

While mini parks are generally an acre or less in size and are typically located in urban or higher density residential areas, Carrollton's mini parks vary in size from under a tenth of an acre to over two acres. They are also located in many different community contexts though most are located near the center of town. They range from building plazas and landscaped open spaces with seating and walking paths to parks outfitted with playgrounds and picnic facilities.

Mini parks tend to be accessed most frequently on foot or by bike and thus have a smaller "park shed," or service area, than larger parks that attract more people, some of whom will travel by car. Generally, mini parks serve an area roughly ¼ mile in radius, or about a five minute walking distance. Locations and "park sheds" of Carrollton's mini parks are shown in Figure 2. This map illustrates the number of these small parks throughout central Carrollton.

NRPA standards have historically recommended cities provide 0.25-0.5 acres of mini parks per 1,000 residents. With a total of 19.2 acres of parkland devoted to 18 mini parks, Carrollton is above the NRPA standard.

Due to the costs of outfitting, maintaining and managing a large number of mini parks, nationally, cities have taken a shrewder stance toward mini parks, in particular, by limiting public investments in new mini parks.

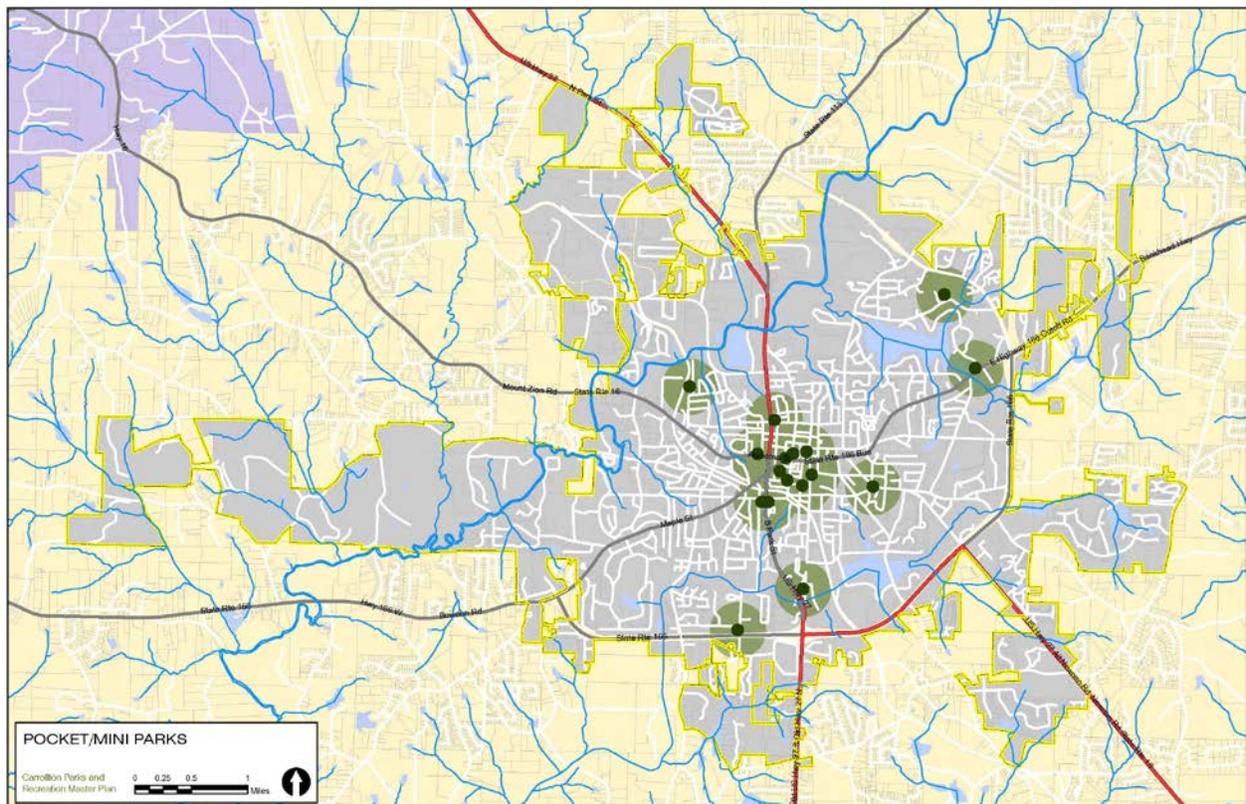


Figure 2 Mini Parks

Neighborhood Parks

Carrollton's five neighborhood parks, together accounting for 39.8 acres, each fall within the size criteria included in NRPA standards, which recommend a size of at least five acres. NRPA standards have traditionally recommended cities provide 1-2 acres of neighborhood parks space per 1,000 residents. Carrollton's collection of neighborhood parks falls within this range at 1.58 acres per 1,000 residents. The average size of Carrollton's neighborhood parks is 8 acres.

In contrast with other neighborhood parks, which contain mostly playgrounds and other passive recreational spaces, Catherine Hardy Lavender Park includes a recreation center and a small amphitheater is being constructed on the western portion of the park. In addition to the CH Lavender Recreation Center, active recreational uses are accommodated at Longview Park (tennis) and Oil Park (baseball).

Because of the increased amenities and activities normally available at neighborhood parks compared to mini parks, users will choose to walk or bike from a slightly greater distance, up to ½ mile or a ten minute walk. Some users from further away may even choose to drive. As can be seen in Figure 3, as with mini parks, there is a reasonable distribution of neighborhood parks in Carrollton while there is a perceived lack of coverage in the northeastern portion of the city. The presence of the two large community parks in this part of the city more than makes up for the lack of a neighborhood park in the area.

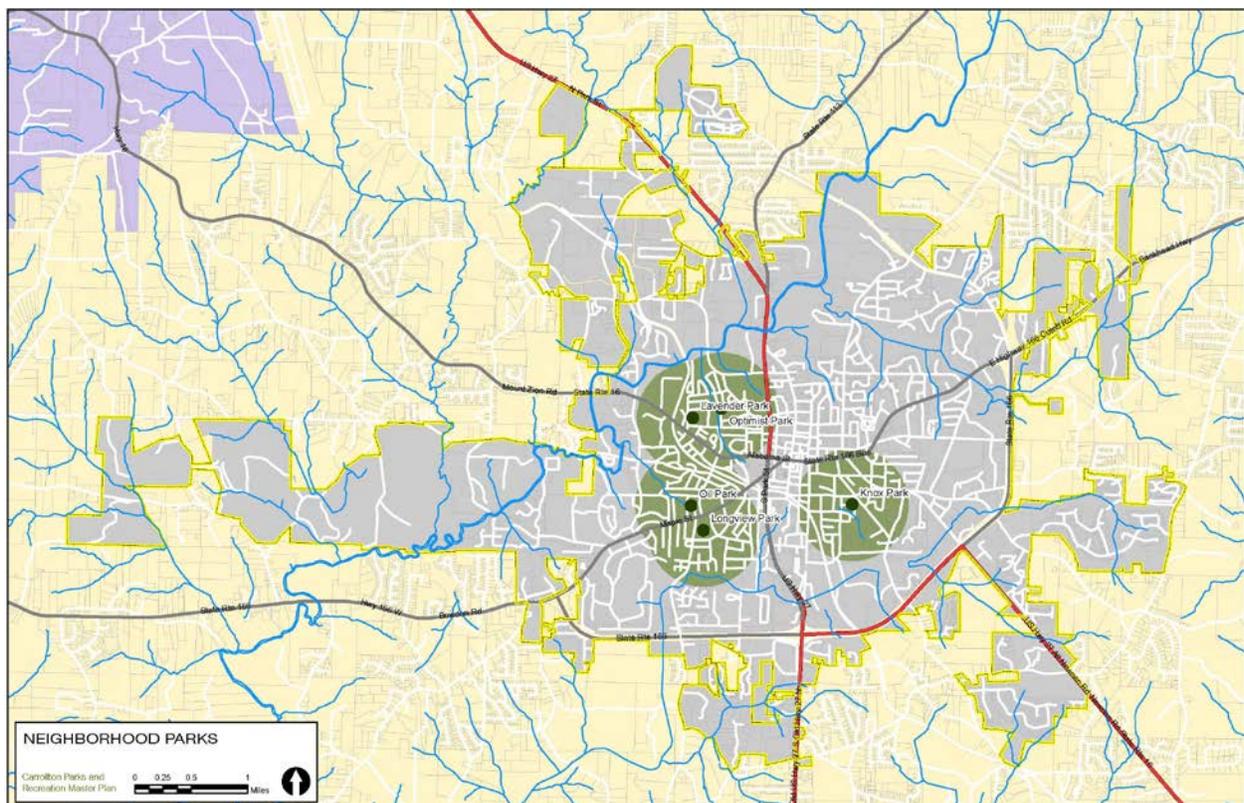


Figure 3: Neighborhood Parks

Community Parks

Community parks are of considerable size—generally at least 30 acres in size—because they often contain a mix of natural open spaces, active recreational fields and courts, and structures appurtenant to such uses, including anything from concession stands to community centers. Carrollton’s community parks easily meet NRPA size standards. NRPA standards recommend 5-8 acres per 1,000 residents whereas Carrollton currently offers 11.7 acres of community park space per 1,000 residents.

Because of their unique functions—particularly as hubs for organized sports, community parks tend to serve a much larger area and their patrons often drive. Still some park users, given a mix of activities and amenities will walk or bicycle from nearby neighborhoods. Figure 4 shows a 3-mile park shed around Lakeshore, East Carrollton and Hobbs Farm Parks.

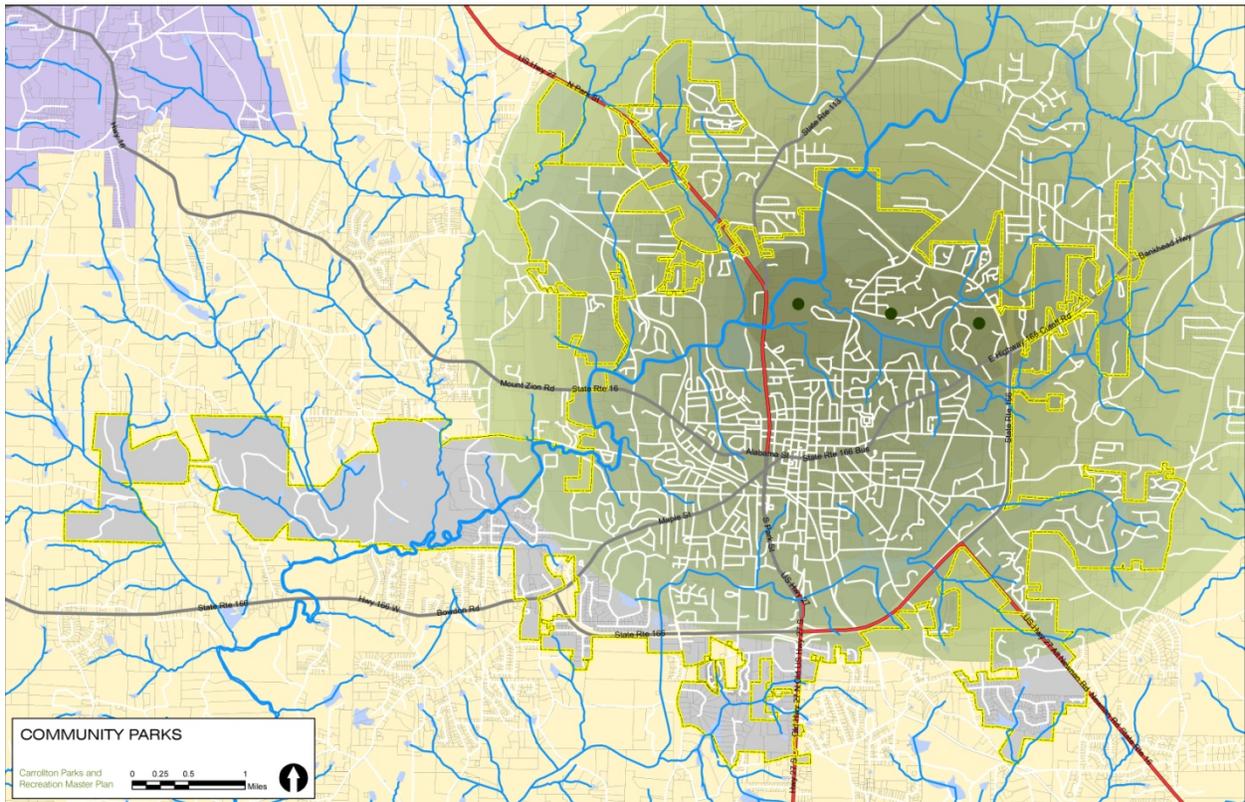


Figure 4 Community Parks

East Carrollton Park is the larger of the city’s two fully-developed community parks—at 61.9 acres. The park contains the East Carrollton Recreation Center, a softball complex, soccer complex and Skate Park. Adjacent to the soccer fields is CPRCAD’s facilities shop. The park is almost exclusively devoted to active recreational uses. It is connected to the Castle Playground—only a short walk away—by the Carrollton GreenBelt.

Recently renovated Lakeshore Park (39.4 acres), though smaller than East Carrollton, provides a stronger mix of passive recreational space and active recreation facilities—baseball fields, tennis courts, a 400m-track, fitness center and indoor swimming pool. A wooded space on the west side of the park contains playground and picnic area. Complementing the amenities at Lakeshore Park are the Lake Carroll boat launch and shoreline park areas.

Hobbs Farm Park is a 200 acre park in north Carrollton. A recent addition to the parks system, only a small portion of the park property have been improved—including a trailhead and 18-hole disc golf course. Although one-third of the site contains wetlands, limiting the ability to improve the site for active recreational uses, the park represents a unique opportunity to accommodate a variety of passive recreational uses.

Table 1: CPRCAD Parks and Facilities

Community Parks			
Lakeshore Recreation Center and Park	39.4 ac	East Carrollton Recreation Center/Park	61.9 ac
Hobbs Farm Park	200.1 ac		
Neighborhood Parks			
Optimist Park	7.15 ac	Catherine Hardy Lavender Park	7.45 ac
Knox Park	9.7 ac	Longview Park	8.45 ac
Oil Park	7.1 ac		
Mini Parks			
Hutchens Park	0.06 ac	Smith Park	0.39 ac
Alice Park	0.27 ac	Kramer Park	1.81 ac
Safari Park	2.43 ac	Bankers Park	0.88 ac
Castle Playground	2.52 ac	Grace Park	0.41 ac
Rome Street Park	0.08 ac	City Hall Park	0.52 ac
Worthy Park	0.30 ac	Memorial Park	1.18 ac
Triangle Park	2.13 ac	Log Cabin Park	1.80 ac
Avalon Park	0.31 ac	Shay Hill Park	1.64 ac
Presbyterian Park	1.47 ac	Courthouse Park	1.02 ac
Linear Parks			
Carrollton GreenBelt			
Special Parks and Facilities			
Amp Park	Bonner Recreation Center	Lake Carroll Boat Launch & Dam	
Midtown Water Park	Log Cabin Visitor's Center	WPA Center	
Carrollton Cultural Arts Center	Carrollton Senior Center	Bradley Street Train Depot	
East Carrollton Recreation Center	CH Lavender Recreation Center	Carrollton GreenBelt	
Skate Park	Stallings Community Center	Hays Mill Park/trailhead	
Lakeshore Recreation Center			

Linear Parks

The **Carrollton GreenBelt** is an 18-mile bicycle-pedestrian trail that encircles the city. It is slated for completion in 2016 and a significant portion of the trail's construction was privately funded. Several city parks are located along the trail and serve as trail heads providing parking and public restroom facilities. The GreenBelt connects city parks, neighborhoods, schools and shopping areas. On its completion, it is expected to be the longest paved loop trail in the state.



Train Depot



Amp Park in Downtown Carrollton



Carrollton Cultural Arts Center



Log Cabin Visitors Center



Stallings Community Center



Carrollton Senior Center

Regional and Special Use Parks

There are no regional parks in Carrollton, however, there are a number of special use parks:



The **Midtown Water Park** is a 1.7 acre facility with an outdoor recreational pool (40-60 ft X 140 ft), water slide and splash pad.

The **Lake Carroll boat launch and dam**, adjacent to Lakeshore Park, is a 14-acre open space on the north shore of Lake Carroll, containing a dock and picnic facilities.

Hays Mill Park is a large trailhead along the GreenBelt in southwest Carrollton.

Community, Recreation and Cultural Arts Facilities

CPRCAD operates and maintains a variety of community facilities, some of which stretch the typical role of parks and recreation programs:

Amp Park is an 800-1,000 seat, outdoor covered amphitheater located in downtown Carrollton occupying a site just under one acre in size. A popular music and special event venue, the Amp is operated by Carrollton Main Street.

The **Carrollton Cultural Arts Center**, located in downtown Carrollton, includes a 262-seat auditorium, large-ensemble rehearsal spaces, dressing rooms, scene shop, art gallery and exhibition space, classrooms, and offices. The 40,000-sf arts center opened in 2001 and has become a popular destination for theater enthusiasts in west Georgia.

Bonner Recreation Center is a 12,000 sf indoor recreational facility located adjacent to the Carrollton Senior Center and Stallings Community Center. The facility includes an indoor soccer field and space for aerobics. The center recently underwent interior renovations that will allow basketball and volleyball to be played in the gym space currently used for indoor soccer.

The **Log Cabin Visitors Center** is a 950 sf facility located on Lake Carroll in east Carrollton. The cabin serves as a visitors' center operated by the Carrollton Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The 5,700 sf **Carrollton Senior Center** is centrally located adjacent to Bonner Recreation Center and the Stallings Community Center. The center includes a cafeteria and rooms for billiards, crafts and other activities. The senior recreation program offers programs both on- and off-site.

The **Stallings Community Center** (c. 1921), adjacent to downtown Carrollton, is a 14,500 sf historic school building now housing offices of the CPRCAD and meeting spaces available for rent.

The **WPA Center** (c. 1940) is a 2,000 sf former gymnasium that can be rented for community functions. The WPA Center is located at Safari Park.

The **Train Depot** (c. 1875) is a 17,700 sf building acquired from the Central of Georgia Railway. The depot contains the offices of Carrollton Main Street, a museum space, and a 5,000 sf Grand Hall that is available for event rental.

Athletic Facilities and Programs

CPRCAD provides active recreation facilities in several community and neighborhood parks, including four indoor recreation centers—Lakeshore, East Carrollton, Bonner and Catherine Hardy Lavender. Athletic facilities include baseball and softball fields, basketball/volleyball and tennis courts, soccer fields and an indoor aquatics facility. Lakeshore Park includes a 400m-track. Lacrosse games are played on a soccer field at East Carrollton Park.

In addition to the youth athletic programs using these facilities, CPRCAD also manages youth gymnastics, lacrosse, cheerleading and track. The Carrollton youth football program is played on Carrollton schools football fields. CPRCAD also runs a men’s adult basketball program and co-ed volleyball program at the East Carrollton recreation center.

In a comparison with NRPA standards, Carrollton has a sufficient number of basketball, softball, soccer and pool facilities but is lacking in baseball and tennis facilities.

Location/Type of Fields	No. of fields/ courts	Size of fields/courts	Lighted
Baseball	4		
Lakeshore			
JC #1		180ft	yes
JC #2		240 ft	yes
Civitan field		180 ft	yes
Barry Carroll		300 ft	yes
Basketball	5		
Lakeshore	1		
East Carrollton	2	standard/ indoor	yes
CHL	1		
Bonner	1		
Tennis	8		
Lakeshore	6	standard	yes
Longview	2		
Softball	5		
East Carrollton	4	300 ft	yes
Oil Park	1	280 ft	no
Soccer	17	300 ft	yes
East Carrollton	3	300 ft	yes/no
Bonner Center (indoor)	1	standard	yes
East Carrollton youth	13	100 ft	no
Pool	1		
Lakeshore	1	50 m	yes
Track			
Lakeshore	1	400 m	yes

Vision

During the master planning process, the Project Team met with the community to solicit opinions on current programs and facilities provided by CPRCAD as well as to gain an understanding of what the community foresees as the future of parks, recreation and cultural facilities in Carrollton. Workshop participants were asked to consider the parks and recreation system—the way they would like it to be in 15 or 20 years. While it was clear that participants appreciate the many programs and facilities that CPRCAD offer today, they did see ways in which the parks system could be made more robust. In summary, the community envisions:

- Facilities and programs that bring people of all ages, incomes and abilities together
- Coordination and support for regional efforts that expand local opportunities for recreation
- A parks system that contribute to a healthier, more walkable and bike-able city
- Additional outdoor recreation and athletic facilities to keep pace with the growing community
- Continued stewardship of natural and historic resources and the arts

A record of community input from the visioning workshop held on March 10, 2016 is provided in the Appendix.

Goals

With the community's vision in mind, the following goals were identified to guide CPRCAD's efforts over the tenure of this master plan:

1. Provide programs and facilities to meet the diverse needs and interests of the community
2. Support community health by enabling active living and access to nature
3. Maintain welcoming, high quality facilities
4. Support local tourism through recreational and arts programs/facilities
5. Assist in citywide conservation and preservation efforts



Trends

Understanding emerging parks and recreation trends is critical to planning a parks system that can accommodate new recreation concepts as new parks investments and reinvestment in existing parks occur. Parks and recreation trends may reflect shifts in community development. Research conducted during the planning process uncovered the following national trends in parks and recreation, several of which Carrollton is already on the forefront:

1. Demand for walkable/bike-able communities

Interest in places where people can walk or bike has increased rapidly over the last decade. Surveys conducted by 'smart growth' advocacy groups as well as the National Association of Realtors indicate people are willing to spend more to live in walkable and bike-friendly communities. There is likely no better evidence than the impact and popularity of the Carrollton GreenBelt. The sentiment—to continue to enhance and expand on pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Carrollton—was repeated, often in different ways, in community meetings.

Carrollton can do this through the parks and recreation system by working with the Friends of the Carrollton GreenBelt and other city departments to optimize pedestrian and bicycle access between parks and neighborhoods and by developing trailheads and other amenity areas along the greenbelt.



2. Using parks and cultural facilities to support tourism and economic development.

This has been a growing trend for many years as youth sports programs have brought new revenue to communities that offer quality facilities for regional and state tournaments. Cities take economic advantage of sports-related family day and weekend trips by connecting visitors to dining, retail and lodging amenities. It is especially helpful when these amenities are located close to tournament sites. Even when restaurants, hotels and shopping areas are not nearby, print and online promotional materials and wayfinding signage can encourage visitors to explore Carrollton.

*Between 2000 and 2009,
nature-based outdoor
recreation grew by 7.1%
nationally.*

*-Outdoor Trends Publications: A Research
Brief in the IRIS Series 2, March 2013*

Passive recreational activities can draw travelers in the same way that sports tournaments do. This is particularly

true for communities that offer hiking, biking, and camping opportunities. Such outdoor activities can either be a destination unto themselves or part of a larger menu of options that draws visitors to Carrollton and encourages them to stay longer.

Carrollton is already experiencing some tourism activity generated by programs at the Cultural Arts Center. The center is located downtown with a hotel and restaurants within walking distance, making it easy for patrons to dine and potentially stay the night in Carrollton when attending a performance.

3. Incorporating health and wellness into parks and recreation programs/facilities

Community parks and recreation amenities have long been an important resource in encouraging more active living, an important focus for public health efforts. Today, parks and recreation systems not only foster physical activity through leisure play, sports and exercise, but are also contributing to other avenues of health and well-being through partnerships with health departments and other public and private entities:

- Community gardens, summer lunch programs and other healthy eating and nutrition initiatives
- Trails and walking tracks (walking can improve overall health, reduce obesity rates and related chronic conditions, reduce arthritis pain and prevent cognitive decline such as Alzheimer's disease)
- Access to nature—studies have shown access to and play in natural settings improves childhood cognitive development and may reduce attention deficit disorders
- Tobacco cessation (i.e., prohibiting smoking at parks and recreation facilities)
- Fitness and therapeutic recreation programs for special populations, including veterans recovering from physical injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder

4. Growing interest in environmental programs, access to nature, gardening

City parks are playing increasingly important roles in preserving the environment and the way urban and suburban communities interface with nature. Parks are an important part of a city's "green infrastructure," a network of preserved or lightly developed places that provides habitat, stormwater management, cleaner air and cleaner water by retaining or mimicking natural environmental processes. Parks offer access to nature in cities where those experiences—particularly for the youth—are too limited. This is true for apartment dwellers as well as residents of dense, single-family subdivisions with small but well-manicured lawns. Parks and preserves with streams, wetlands, ponds, lakes and forest areas provide a setting for environmental learning programs. Parks and recreation systems are also incorporating gardening programs, including community gardens that increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables in "food deserts."

5. Programming in parks

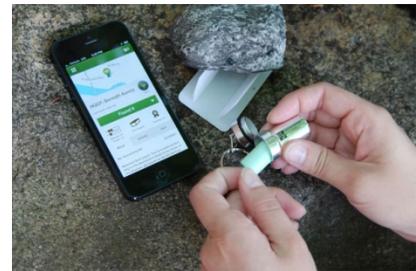
More and more parks departments are using programmed activities to draw users. Special programs include classes, tours, exhibits, and special events such as music, dance, theater and cultural festivals. Programs can be administered by parks departments, private organizations, volunteers depending on the type and scale of activities. There can be numerous benefits with increasing special programming in parks, some of which will depend on the type of activity. But overall, programming parks can be geared to optimize use (and enjoyment) of parks and recreation facilities throughout the day, week or month. Regularly scheduled activity in parks can then increase the overall sense of security and satisfaction with parks.

Other notable trends in parks and recreation:

- Dog parks and off-leash areas within existing parks provide space for people and their canine companions to get outside away from home. While this trend originated in urban communities as amenities for people living in multifamily housing, townhouses and other dense housing types with no or little outdoor space for dogs, it has spread to lower density communities as well. Off-leash areas separated from other park amenities allow dogs to play more freely while reducing or eliminating safety issues. Dog-friendly parks offer water access and cleanup stations.



- Geocaching is a relatively new outdoor recreational activity in which enthusiasts take part in GPS-aided treasure hunts. The advent of smart phones has enabled geocaching to grow rapidly. Participants navigate to a set of GPS coordinates to find a geocache, which can be a hidden container, object, location or event. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources participates in a national geocaching program with caches at over 60 parks and historic sites.



- Paddleboarding includes propelling a surfboard or paddleboard while lying, kneeling or standing. While it has traditionally been performed in the ocean, the activity is now being enjoyed on lakes and rivers. Paddle boards can be rented at the George Sparks Reservoir in Sweetwater Creek State Park outside Atlanta.
- Water trails or blueways are water paths or trails with launch points, camping areas and other amenities for kayakers and canoeists. According to the Georgia River Network, there are over 1,000 miles of established water trails in the state and many more under development. The Georgia Water Trail program establishes guidelines for trails including sponsorship and maintenance by a local entity, legal public access, maps and other information provided through a website, and signage and information provided at access points.

The city is currently exploring a potential blueway along the Little Tallapoosa River with a canoe launch and trailhead where the river crosses Alabama Street/Mt. Zion Road and connections to the GreenBelt.

- Millennials are looking for parks and recreation areas that accommodate impromptu group activities and access to WiFi.
- Zip lines, ropes courses, rock climbing and other “extreme” activities are growing in popularity. Public parks organizations and private businesses alike are trying to take advantage and meet the demand while ensuring safety and fun in these emerging recreation activities.



- Providing parks and recreation information on-line and for mobile devices has become a standard for parks organizations. More and more people seek on-line information to make choices about...well, almost anything, including how and where they spend their leisure time. Keeping the city parks website up-to-date, detailed information (and mobile-friendly) is nonetheless an inexpensive way to get the word about all of the wonderful amenities available in Carrollton.
- With the widespread popularity of video games, social media and other electronic distractions available to American youth, it is assumed that children are less likely to participate in recreational activities. Research by the national Physical Activity Council (PAC) indicates that the picture is more complicated than that. Participation in individual sports has declined roughly 5% over the last five years while participation in team and outdoor sports has remained strong. Winter and water sports participation are increasing slightly in popularity as are fitness sports. PAC research also indicates that among “non-participants” ages 6-17, camping, swimming and bicycling are of the most interest and that being able to participate with or go to activities with friends is the mostly likely way to drive their participation.



Needs Assessment

On evaluating Carrollton’s parks and recreation facilities against national standards and then comparing that to local demand, parks and recreation standards were calibrated specifically to the values and priorities in Carrollton. This established a set of localized standards through which CPRCAD can forecast recreational needs as the city’s population grows. The following table represents the projected need for different types of park space, fields, courts and other recreational facilities over the next several years.

The recommended standards should not be seen as rigid measures but guidelines to help the City prioritize its investments over the next decade. In several cases, the standards assume continued partnering with Carrollton City Schools in providing adequate facilities to meet the community’s recreational needs. Finally, they are not fixed and should be re-evaluated over the years as the City updates its parks and recreation plans.

Population Projections

In the last 25 years, Carrollton has grown at an average annual rate of about 2.0%. Since the 1990 Census Carrollton’s population grew from 16,439 to approximately 25,700 in 2015. The community is likely to continue growing at this pace—barring any unforeseen circumstances that would cause growth to either stall or increase more rapidly. Using this past trend as a way to estimate future growth, by 2025 Carrollton is likely to have population of just over 31,300 and by 2035, 38,200. The following needs assessment uses these population projections to forecast future parks and recreation needs so that the CPRCAD can work proactively to plan for and develop facilities as the city grows.

Future Parkland Needs

The table below indicates future demand for total parkland, mini/pocket parks, neighborhood parks and community parks. Future demand is shown based on two metrics—an NRPA recommended target and the ratio of park space to population currently provided in Carrollton.

Table 3: Future Parkland Needs						
		2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
	Population	25715	28390	31350	34610	38210
total parkland						
NRPA target	@6.25-10.5 ac/1,000		177-298 ac	196-329 ac	216-363 ac	239-401 ac
Adjusted target	@13.3 ac/1,000	410 ac	378 ac	420ac	460 ac	510 ac
mini/pocket parks						
NRPA target	@0.25-0.5 ac/1,000		7.1-14.2 ac	7.8-15.7 ac	8.7-17.3 ac	9.6-19.1 ac
Adjusted target	@0.5 ac/1,000	19.2 ac	14.2 ac	15.7 ac	17.3 ac	19.1 ac
neighborhood parks						
NRPA target	@1-2 ac/1,000		28.4-56.8 ac	31.4-62.7 ac	34.6-69.2 ac	38.2-76.4 ac
Adjusted target	@1.4 ac/1,000	39.8 ac	39.7 ac	43.9 ac	48.5 ac	53.5 ac
community parks						
NRPA target	@5-9 ac/1,000		142-255 ac	157-282 ac	173-311 ac	191-344 ac
Adjusted target	@9 ac/1,000	301.3 ac	255 ac	282 ac	311 ac	344 ac

Total Parkland

Based on NRPA's historic standards, Carrollton currently has sufficient overall parkland to serve the growing community over the next 20 years. The total parkland target calibrated for Carrollton is 13.3 acres per 1,000 residents. In pursuing this target, CPRCAD would need to add only seven acres to the system by 2025 or just over 100 acres in the next 20 years.



Mini/pocket parks

Today, Carrollton maintains a ratio of 0.7 acres of mini/pocket parks per 1,000 residents, which exceeds NRPA standards. The locally adjusted mini-park target is 0.5 acres per 1,000 residents. Based on this target, the City need not add any mini parks in the next 20 years but may choose to add these types of parks should reasonable opportunities arise over time.

Neighborhood parks

Carrollton's current neighborhood parkland is within the range recommended by NRPA. The neighborhood park target identified in this planning process is 1.4 acres per 1,000 residents. In pursuing this target, CPRCAD would need to add 13-14 acres of neighborhood park land in the next 20 years, which could result in two new neighborhood parks or one larger park.

Community parks

Compared to the range recommended by NRPA, Carrollton is well served by community park space. The community park target established for Carrollton is nine acres per 1,000 residents. Maintaining this standard over time will require the addition of 43 acres of community park space in the next twenty years. It is recommended that CPRCAD pursue the addition of one community park within the next 10-15 years of a size to accommodate demand for athletic fields and facilities as the population grows.

Parks Coverage

Figure 5 Parks Coverage shows areas in the city that are within a 5-10 minute walk of city parks. This reflects neighborhoods and other areas of the city that are near enough that residents (or employees, patrons, etc.) are likely to utilize a park frequently...provided of course there are appropriate and interesting amenities there.

One-quarter mile is considered the effective service area or "park shed" for mini parks. This equates to a five-minute walk or about 1.5 minutes on a bicycle. A neighborhood park shed extends up to one-half mile—a ten minute walk or three minute bike ride. Community parks that provide passive recreational space serve residents within a park shed similar to neighborhood parks. Though due to the concentration of athletic

facilities often found in community parks, they serve residents from much larger sections of the city and who will typically travel there by car.

The map also illustrates parts of the city that are far from existing parks. The far western side of Carrollton is a mostly undeveloped and rural area. Over 1,700 acres of land in west Carrollton are owned by the City, a portion of which is used for waste water spray irrigation. The northwestern part of Carrollton is mostly industrial and therefore not a priority area for park development.

Underserved areas particularly those with existing neighborhoods and/or areas of future residential development, should be considered when weighing opportunities for any new neighborhood or community parkland acquisitions. These include a few locations along the city's edges as well as a notable pocket in east-central Carrollton along Newnan Street/Bankhead Highway.

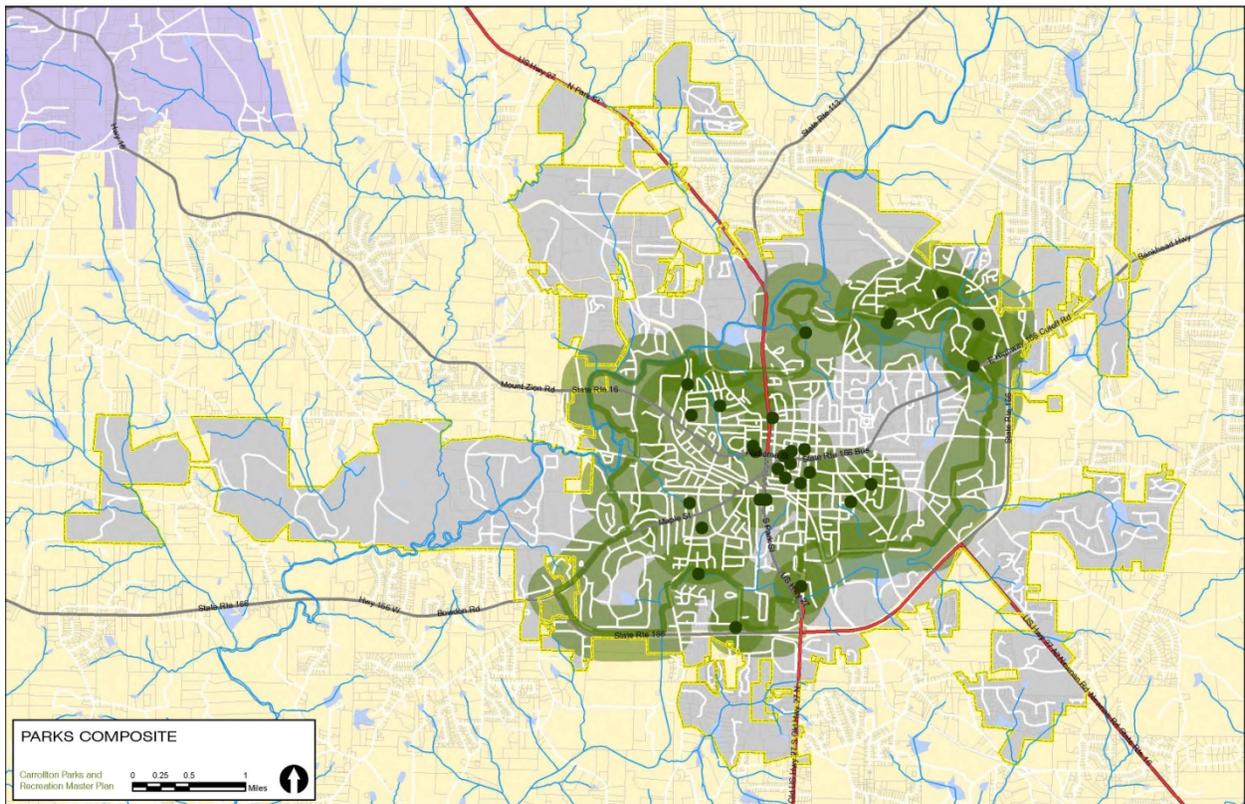


Figure 5: Parks Coverage

Given that the city's largest parks facilities—Lakeshore Park, East Carrollton Park and Hobbs Farm Park—are located in the northeastern portion of the city, future park space in south Carrollton should be given particular consideration. This would greatly help to balance parkland distribution geographically and provide parks facilities in an area of the city experiencing new residential growth. It should be noted that the Carroll County athletic complex is located in southeast Carrollton.

During community meetings, the possibility of the City's waste water spray irrigation fields ultimately being converted to park use was discussed.

Athletic Facilities

The table below illustrates future athletic facility needs using level of service targets calibrated for Carrollton by comparing traditional NRPA standards against local demand and trends. The targets in Table 4 are discussed in more detail in the following section.

		2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2035
Population		25715	28390	31350	34610	38210	'needs'
Baseball fields							
NRPA target	1 per 5,000	4 ex.	4	5	6	6	2
Adjusted target	1 per 6,000						
Basketball courts							
NRPA target	1 per 5,000	5 ex.	3	3	3	4	0
Adjusted target	1 per 10,000						
Tennis courts							
NRPA target	1 per 2,000	8 ex.	6	6	7	8	0
Adjusted target	1 per 5,000						
Softball fields							
NRPA target	1 per 5,000	5 ex.	4	5	6	6	1
Adjusted target	1 per 6,000						
Soccer fields							
NRPA target	1 per 10,000	3 of 17 ex.	5	6	7	8	5
Adjusted target	1 per 5,000 ¹						
Pool							
NRPA target	1 per 20,000	1 ex.	1	1	1	1-2	1 ³
Adjusted target	1 per 25,000						
Football fields							
NRPA target	1 per 20,000	n/a	1	1	1	2	2
Adjusted target ²	1 per 20,000						
Volleyball courts							
NRPA target	1 per 20,000	3 ex.	4	4	5	5	2
Adjusted target	1 per 7,500						
Lacrosse fields							
NRPA target	n/a	1 ex.	2	2	3	3	2
Adjusted target	1 per 12,500						
Track (1/4-mile)							
NRPA target	1 per 20,000	1 ex.	1	1	1	2	1
Adjusted target ²	1 per 20,000						
¹ target is for lighted fields							
² assumes continued sharing of city schools football fields							
³ to be addressed through partnerships with others							

Athletic Facilities

These recommendations are based on the projected needs in Table 4. With each recommendation, it should be noted that if there is any noticeable change in city population growth, positive or negative, and similarly in sport participation rates, the targets in Table 4 and as described below should be adjusted.

1. Baseball

NRPA has traditionally recommended one baseball field per 5,000 residents. However, given recent trends in local participation rates, a slightly lower standard (1:6,000) has been established for Carrollton. Based on this, CPRCAD should be planning for two new baseball fields over the next 15-20 years. However, it is most effective to develop baseball fields in complexes containing more than two fields, for a variety of reasons, not financial alone. If the city is able to acquire land in the future for a community park (See Key Recommendations) to accommodate the projected athletic facilities needs identified in this plan, a thoughtfully planned baseball complex (i.e., wagon wheel) can be developed in phases over time as demand increases with population growth. NOTE: The projected need for baseball fields is exclusive of the recommendation for a “miracle league” field addressed elsewhere.



2. Basketball

The traditional NRPA target has been 1 basketball court per 5,000 residents; however, interest in basketball, particularly non-school youth basketball has trended downward nationally for years. The adjusted target of 1 court per 10,000 residents means Carrollton has sufficient courts today (five altogether) to meet demand as the community grows over the next 20 years.



3. Softball

Carrollton is experiencing more modest participation in softball compared to its steadily rising popularity nationally over the last 40 years. With an adjusted target of 1 field per 6,000 residents, Carrollton will likely only need to add one additional softball field over the next 20 years. Any new softball field(s) should be part of a ball complex in a new community park (see Key Recommendations) rather than as a lone field. A new wagon wheel complex might contain both baseball and softball fields. Softball fields can be designed and used interchangeably with younger baseball divisions.



4. Soccer

Soccer has risen in popularity dramatically over the last 30 years in the United States and worldwide for even longer. In the US this increase can be attributed in part to a growing preference over football for reasons ranging from entry cost to perceived potential for injury. Carrollton has more than kept pace with demand providing 17 soccer fields currently. To optimize the use of the available fields, adding lights will allow games to be scheduled later in the day during Fall seasons, which have shorter days. The target in Table 4 recommends lighting five existing fields so that there is a total of eight lighted fields by 2035.



5. Football

Through a long-standing partnership, youth football programs have been able to use Carrollton City Schools fields and will continue to do so in the future. However, as the community population and football participation grows, dependence on city school fields could become a constraint. Having fields available for football practice—in the near term—and perhaps games—in the long term—would help to avoid scheduling conflicts. The same fields can also be used for lacrosse as the two sports require similar accommodations but are played at different times of the year. New fields used for football and lacrosse programs should be developed as part of a future community park (see Key Recommendations). A target of 1 field per 20,000 residents has been established, which suggests CPRCAD develop two fields in the next 20 years.



6. Volleyball

Volleyball has grown to be a popular program offered by the parks and recreation department. With three existing courts provided (within the gymnasiums at Lakeshore and Bonner Recreation Centers, which are shared with basketball), CPRCAD foresees the need for additional courts as the city grows. The recommended target is 1 court per 7,500 residents resulting in a projected need of two additional courts by 2035. Because the preference is for indoor courts, the facilities will be provided in a new recreation structure possibly as part of the recommended future community park.



7. Tennis

Like basketball, demand for tennis courts has waned over the years, and Carrollton has experienced modest community interest in tennis. The recommended target of 1 court per 5,000 residents suggests Carrollton need not add to its existing supply of eight tennis courts within the next 20 years, unless there is a spike in community interest.



8. Lacrosse

Lacrosse has grown in popularity in Carrollton in recent years. An existing field at East Carrollton Park is currently used for lacrosse. A target of 1 field per 12,500 residents calls for the addition of two new fields by 2035, which would be shared with football as described above. The logical siting of these shared fields would be within a future community park (see Key Recommendations).



9. Track

Carrollton's current quarter-mile track is located at Lakeshore Park. Consistent with the customary NRPA target of one track per 20,000 residents, Carrollton will likely not see a need for a new track in for roughly twenty years contingent on population growth. A new track should be collocated with other athletic facilities in a future community park (see Key Recommendations).



10. Aquatics

Interest in competitive swimming has increased steadily across the nation, particularly in school swimming programs. The city currently maintains an indoor pool at the Lakeshore Recreation Center and a recreational pool at the Midtown Water Park. The target recommended in Table 4 suggests that a new pool would only be warranted outside the 20-year timeframe of this plan. However, community input during the planning process indicated rising interest in a competitive swimming facility. Because these facilities represent significant capital and long-term maintenance costs, they should be approached cautiously. A collaborative strategy involving partnerships with the school system, Carroll County and/or nearby communities would be reasonable, if such a project is pursued within the next ten or so years. Such a strategy seems achievable since several schools outside of Carrollton use the pool at the Lakeshore Recreation Center.





Legends West ribbon-cutting



Youth baseball



Track and field competition



Carrollton Special Olympics



Youth volleyball



Youth football

Master Plan Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from discussions during community meetings and field observations. They do not represent all of the needs that will emerge among existing parks and facilities over the next twenty years but reflect strategies, some of which may be applied in other locations, to optimize the use and enjoyment of existing facilities.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

1. Bonner Recreation Center

The city has recently reinvested in the center's gymnasium, adding basketball goals and improving the floor. The center is in need of a new roof and some interior and exterior renovations. The extent of these renovations will depend on whether a proposed expansion of senior programs into the building will be involved (see Key Recommendations).



2. Oil Park

Oil Park contains a baseball field, tennis court (no longer used), some play equipment and a covered picnic area. The baseball field is no longer used for youth baseball though it is used intermittently as a practice space for travel ball teams. Given the size and location of the property, Oil Park can be of much greater use to the community if re-programmed. During the planning process, the strong desire to provide adapted athletic facilities for persons with disabilities, particularly youth, emerged. Converting the Oil Park baseball field for adapted use and other improvements to the property would address two goals simultaneously. See Key Recommendations for more information on this concept.

3. Hobbs Farm Park

The 200-acre Hobbs property, recently added to Carrollton's parks system, represents a unique opportunity to provide a range of recreational opportunities suited to the property. Hobbs Farm Park is bordered on the north by the Little Tallapoosa River and includes large wetland areas. Curtis Creek, which feeds into Lake Carroll to the east, flows through the park. The park has been sensitively developed to conserve the natural character and hydrologic functions of the site. The park includes an 18-hole disc golf course, segments of the GreenBelt, a trailhead and pavilion. A long-term plan should be prepared to assure that the remainder of the property is used thoughtfully and in a way that takes full advantage of its inherent, natural assets. Potential activities that could be accommodated while conserving the site would include natural trails, gardens, environmental education, ropes courses, and similar functions with a limited physical impact.

4. Safari (Lions) Park

With a large playground and picnic shelter, Safari Park is a popular playtime destination for families. While there are several tall, older trees on the site, they are too far removed from the playground to provide adequate shade when most needed. Canopy trees should be planted—though it will take years for them to provide adequate shade. Shade sails or other outdoor shading devices can be installed and used as canopy trees mature. Also, pedestrian access to the park is limited. The only

sidewalk connecting to the park is along Park Street. The sidewalk is narrow and not adequately separated from traffic on Park Street to feel safe. And, the Spring Street intersection is not signalized, which makes it difficult to walk to the park from the neighborhoods on the west side of Park Street. A new, wider sidewalk should be installed on the Park Street side and set back further from the roadway, with street trees installed between the road and sidewalk. As the community explores ways to connect the greenbelt into the center of the community and improve overall walkability, this location should be considered to address the Park Street crossing and other opportunities to provide safer walking access.

5. Midtown Water Park

Midtown Water Park is a popular facility during the hot summer months for users from the city and beyond. However, there is limited parking, the pool house is in disrepair and the visual relationship between the pool and adjacent cemetery is...*not ideal*. The proposal to address these issues was considered a top priority by community meeting attendees. See Key Recommendations for more information on this proposal.

6. Knox Park

Building renovations are needed as well as court resurfacing. Costs to renovate the existing building should be compared against costs to construct a new building.

7. Optimist Park

The playground and basketball court needs to be updated. Track should be paved.



Community and Cultural Facilities

1. Carrollton Cultural Arts Center

The Cultural Arts Center is the hub and crown jewel of Carrollton's performing and visual arts programs. While only recently constructed, the center—because of the public nature of the building—will require interior upgrades within the tenure of this plan. Center staff noted that storage space has become an issue for the various programs housed in the Center.

2. Carrollton Senior Center

The Senior Center provides meals, transportation and a wide variety of recreational programs on- and off-site for Carrolltonians age 55 and older, which represents over 17% of the city's population. Carrollton has made itself an attractive retirement destination and so that percentage could increase over the years. Based on US Census estimates over 4,500 residents are eligible for the services provided at the Senior Center. By 2035, with modest yet steady growth, that population



could be over 6,500. The size of the facility limits the programs that can be offered on-site; and center staff has noted space issues in the kitchen to support the current size of the meal program. Under a grant obligation, the Senior Center must remain in its current location until 2020. It is possible for senior programs to expand into the adjacent Bonner Recreation Center. This would help address space issues, particularly in the near term, while the program is tied to the current building. See Key Recommendations for more information.

Other Recommendations

Adamson Square Renovation. Over the years the city has considered several concepts to re-imagine the layout and improve traffic movement through Adamson Square in downtown Carrollton. Goals for the project include beautification, increased pedestrian safety, maintaining traffic flow and maintaining downtown parking. While this capital project will not be led by CPRCAD, the department will ultimately be responsible for the maintenance of landscaping and public areas around the square. CPRCAD should be involved as a key stakeholder in this effort as it moves forward.



Adamson Square. Photo by Dan Lineback

Key Recommendations

The following recommendations are considered primary objectives for enhancing Carrollton's parks, recreation and cultural arts facilities over the next several years. These recommendations are listed in order of priority identified by participants in the community workshop.

1. Expand Carrollton Senior Center

Senior Centers should be planned to serve at least ten percent of the eligible senior population. For Carrollton, that means the center should be sufficient to support dining and other programs for at least 450 people. In its current location the center is straining to serve a lower number due to space limitations. But by 2035, the center must either expand in its current location or a new center developed elsewhere to accommodate 650 people.



The center is obligated to remain in its current location until 2020 due to requirements of a grant that helped fund its construction in 2000. Adjacent to the facility is the Bonner Recreation Center, both of which share the same parking lot. In fact, senior program participants already use the fitness room at Bonner when available. The recreation building, which includes fitness and aerobics rooms, gym, and indoor batting cage, could be more fully utilized throughout the week by placing existing or new senior programs into the building. The building is in need of improvements, including the roof and some interior and exterior renovations. Plans for these needed improvements should be developed with consideration to the needs of senior programs that would move into Bonner.

Expanding into Bonner represents a short-term opportunity but an important decision and investment. Because of the size of the recreation building (12,000 sf), if fully absorbed by senior programs—which could take place in stages—it would allow considerable expansion of senior activities. The gym space, for example, could be renovated into a performance space, an element that has long been desired for the senior program. However, this would mean that basketball moves away from Bonner (again). Perhaps by this time though a new community park would be in the pipeline where the basketball function can be moved to (along with two future indoor volleyball courts).



2. Renovate Midtown Water Park

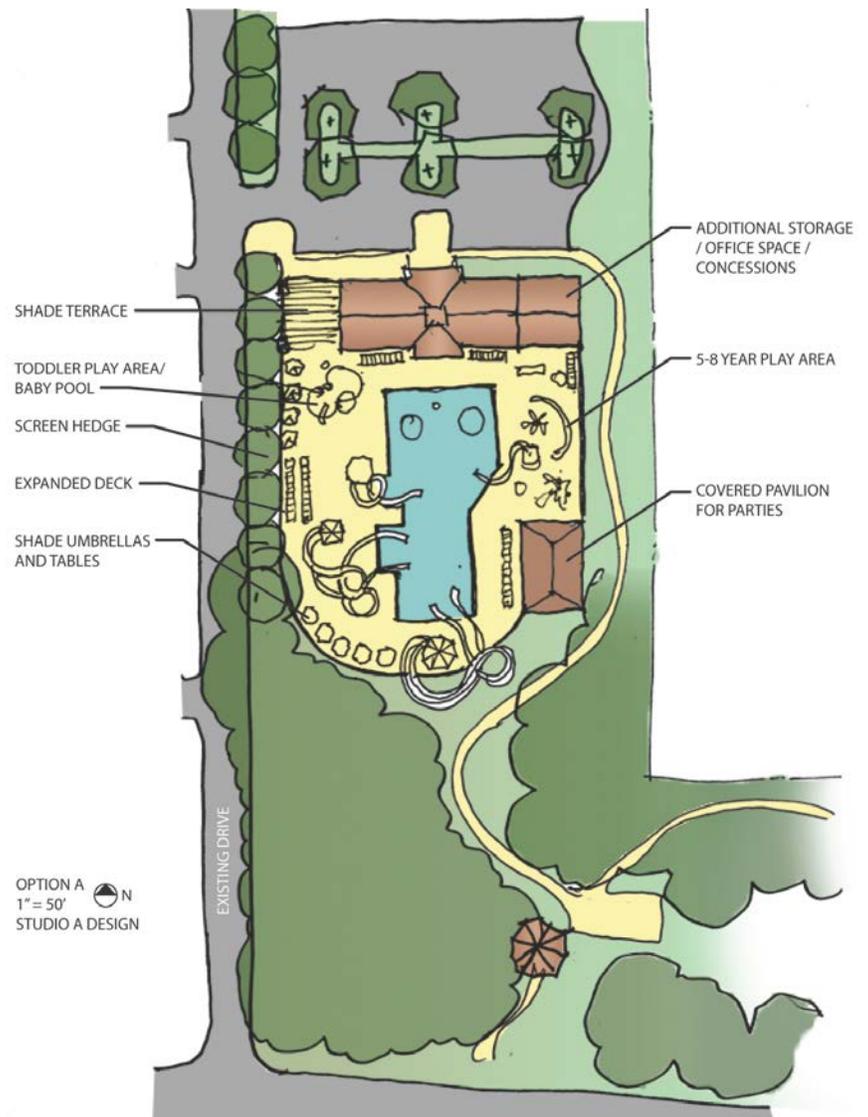
Midtown Water Park is a popular destination during the summer months and is overflowing with activity. However, the pool building/bath house is in need of renovation, the pool deck area is limited and lacking in shade; and a larger parking area is needed. Direct views between the park and the cemetery can create an unpleasant experience for park users and cemetery visitors.

North of the park is a former city school now partly used by the Carroll County Boys & Girls Club, including two buildings currently used by Carrollton schools for storage. These two buildings are immediately adjacent to the park's pool building. West of the park is the Carrollton City Cemetery, with which the park shares access from Alabama Street by way of Leroy Childs Street.

A concept to renovate Midtown Water Park was developed to address these issues. The concept proposes acquisition and removal of the storage buildings immediately to the north of the pool building to allow for the relocation and expansion of parking. The existing parking area can then be retrofitted to accommodate an enlarged pool deck and landscape screen (between the pool and cemetery). Additional recommendations include:

- Renovated bath house with additional storage and concessions
- Expansion of pool deck toward west and south
- Designated tot play area with kiddie pool and slide/splash area
- Designated children's area (for ages 5-8 yrs) with zero entrance pool, splash pad activities/ pool slides
- Designated advanced swimmers area with additional pool deck, slides, splash and mist areas
- Covered pavilion
- Terrace with shaded arbor at children's area
- Tables with umbrellas and additional lounge chairs
- New ornamental fence at perimeter

A second option was considered in which a separate driveway access from Alabama Street would be constructed along the west side of the park to further separate the park and



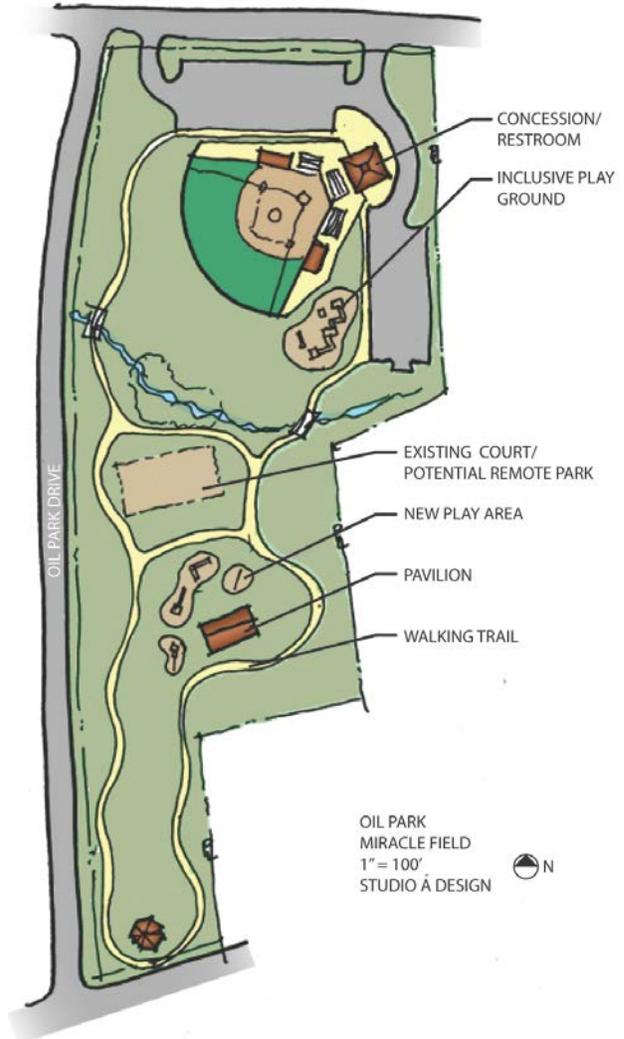
cemetery. However, this option limited capacity of the proposed parking area and expansion of the pool deck.

3. Develop adapted athletics/Miracle League facility

Oil Park, in need of reinvestment, has been identified as a possible location for a Miracle League field—a baseball field designed for use by persons with disabilities. The current baseball field is only used as a practice space for travel ball and the remainder of the park is in disrepair. Renovation of the park for this purpose will require additional parking with ADA access to the field.

A concept to adaptively reuse Oil Park was prepared to assess the viability of an accessible field. The new field would be developed at the north end of the park. A new outfield fence is located along the edge of the slope in the area of the existing outfield fence. The new field would have 125 ft foul lines and 50 ft base lines with covered, accessible dugouts. A concession and restroom building is located near home plate. An inclusive playground is located within viewing area of the field so it can be utilized by siblings during games.

A new 50-space parking area is proposed around the field for easy access. An accessible trail winds through the park, connecting the field to a picnic pavilion and play area. The existing tennis courts can be removed or renovated into a remote control park. The existing creek bed could be modified to create a pond for remote control boats.



4. Build a new community park

While Carrollton has a generous amount of community park land, as the community grows, more land may be needed for projected athletic facility needs. The most effective way to develop these facilities will be in the form of a new community park. The park should be planned to accommodate a 3-4 field baseball/softball complex, two fields shared between football and lacrosse, a ¼-mile track, and a covered or indoor space for two volleyball courts. These facilities along with requisite parking and complementary green space would require 50-75 acres.



Given the longer term need for this facility, a specific site was not identified during this planning process. Targets of opportunity should be studied with a goal of identifying the future site within the next 5-10 years. Consideration should be given to locating a new community park on the west or south sides of town, which have few large parks. Should the community continue to grow to the south and southeast, the need for a conveniently located park in this area will increase...as will land prices.

Because the various athletic facilities associated with this recommendation will not be needed

at the same point in the future, the park can be developed in phases so long as a site large enough is acquired and the development of the site is guided by a phased master plan. Depending on how and where residential growth occurs in the future, it may be appropriate for this park to be developed jointly between the City and Carroll County.

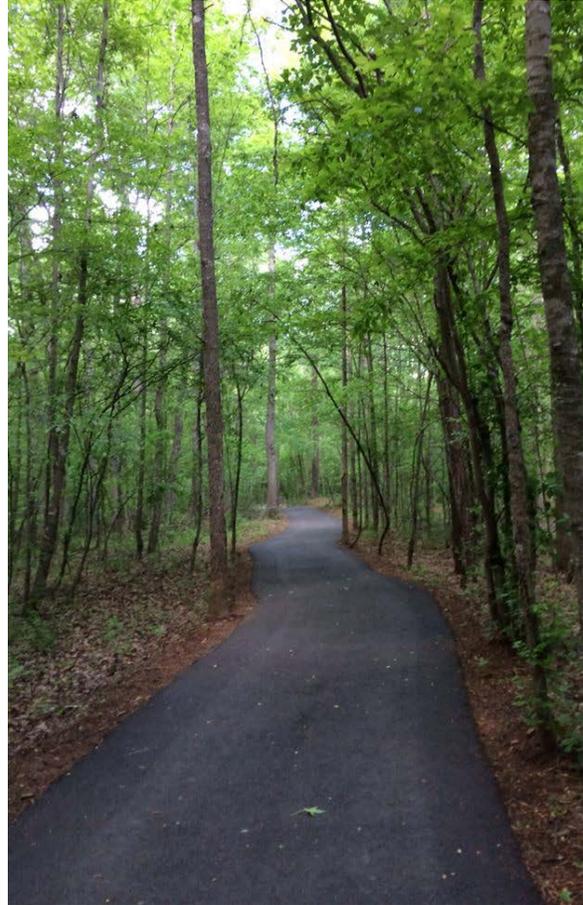
5. Enhance the Carrollton GreenBelt

Additional bicycle and pedestrian linkages, trailheads, lighting, and other amenities along the greenbelt are desired by the community to build on this extraordinary amenity. Such enhancements include spurs from the recently completed GreenBelt to connect into Downtown Carrollton, parks and other points of interest near the center of the community.

All existing trailheads offer parking and those that are located in a city park typically also offer access to bathroom facilities and recreational space. Additional trailheads should be located so that eventually there is a relatively even distribution along the corridor. The trail can also be enhanced through lighting and other security features, which must be planned strategically. Seating areas, interpretive signage (such as those identifying areas of historic or environmental importance), wayfinding signage, trash receptacles and other investments will improve on the greenbelt and assure a safe, pleasant experience for users.

Opportunities should be sought to connect the greenbelt to any future blueway trails, such as along the Little Tallapoosa River.

Enhancements to the GreenBelt will likely continue to be a partnership between the City of Carrollton and the Friends of Carrollton, but, given the success and popularity of the constructed greenbelt, it is likely additional partners will emerge to help with future investments.



Implementation

Carrollton maintains a strong parks, recreation and cultural arts system but steps must be taken over the coming years to assure that CPRCAD programs and facilities continue to meet the needs and interests of the changing community. To achieve these objectives the City of Carrollton and its parks department must consider parks funding very carefully. Is annual funding for parks consistent with the community's interest and demand for a quality parks system? Are there savings that can be found in the way that current funding is used? Are there additional sources and partnerships that can be leveraged to assist in growing and maintaining Carrollton's parks system?

As described in the introduction to this plan—plan recommendations are based on forecasted population growth. These recommendations should not be construed prescriptively but as guides to help CPRCAD work proactively to meet future needs. In implementing this plan, consideration must be given to actual population growth (including changing demographics); locations of future development; recreation trends and changing local interests; the future state of the city's economy; and city funding priorities as they evolve over time.

Action Plan

The following recommendations are based upon the needs assessment, community input, and analysis of local trends. Projects have been categorized into Tier 1 Recommendations (within 10 years) and Tier 2 Recommendations (within 20 years). Recommended projects or tasks should be underway or complete within the timeframe indicated—contingent on availability of funds and other variables mentioned above.



Tier 1 Recommendations

- Renovate Midtown Water Park
- Expand Carrollton Senior Center/renovate Bonner Recreation Center
- Renovate Oil Park for adapted athletics/Miracle League
- Add shading devices, plant trees at Safari Park playground
- Prepare master plan for Hobbs Farm Park
- Identify potential locations for a future community park
- Add lighting to soccer fields at East Carrollton Park

Tier 2 Recommendations

- Renovate/replace Knox Park building
- Renovate Optimist Park

- Develop new community park in one or more phases
- Renovate interior of Carrollton Cultural Arts Center
- Expand storage at East Carrollton Parks and Facilities compound
- Add 14 acres of neighborhood park space (one or two parks)



Parks Funding

Funding to build, maintain and operate Carrollton’s parks, recreation and cultural facilities is provided through two primary budget sources: the city’s capital improvements program, which includes a wide variety of municipal construction projects, and CPRCAD’s annual budget, which is used to staff, maintain and operate facilities and programs. The department’s budget is relatively constant (except for increases over time to accommodate inflation and related factors) while capital improvements funds vary from year to year.

SPLOST

Carrollton has traditionally used a portion of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds to build or renovate parks, recreation and cultural facilities. The one cent sales tax is imposed following approval by referendum, which identifies the capital projects to be funded. Upon approval the tax is levied for 5-6 years. Carrollton’s current SPLOST approval will run out in 2019 at which time the City may propose a renewal to contribute to selected capital projects. The recommendations of this plan will guide CPRCAD in identifying its priorities for future SPLOST renewals. CPRCAD initiatives are among many other capital expenditures that the City considers when developing spending plans for SPLOST funds. However, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides CPRCAD a considered, rational basis upon which to communicate its priorities as citywide SPLOST spending plans are developed.

User Fees

Another consideration in raising parks and recreation funds is charging and/or increasing fees for the use of certain parks and recreation facilities and participation in parks, recreation and cultural arts programs. Not only do user fees raise needed revenue, they can also help track community interests in different facilities and activities. However, overdependence on user fees can place residents of modest means at a

Overdependence on user fees can place residents of modest means at a disadvantage in accessing public facilities.

disadvantage in accessing public facilities. It can also skew the parks and recreation system’s focus toward activities and facilities that generate the greatest revenues, whether or not those are the types of facilities most desired by residents.

A poll conducted by CPRCAD during the development of this plan indicated the community supports user fees particularly for adult recreational programs but that programs for low income residents and special populations should be subsidized.

Grants

The City can complement local funding with grants to cover the cost of parks, recreation and cultural arts projects. Federal and state programs as well as private foundations offer funding that can be used for parks, playgrounds, trails and other CPRCAD facilities. Some of these include:

- Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF). These funds originate from the National Park Service and are locally managed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP) from the Federal Highway Administration and are locally managed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds are another federal transportation funding source that can be used for sidewalk, streetscape, and multiuse path projects. TAP funds are managed by the Georgia Department of Transportation.
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program funds are made available by the National Park Service and are locally managed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Other potential resources include the US Department of Agriculture, EPA, Department of the Interior/National Parks Service, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the National Recreation and Parks Association.

The private sector contributed significantly to construction of the Carrollton GreenBelt and may be a source for GreenBelt-related projects and other parks improvements in the future.



Maintenance and Operations

CPRCAD facilities and grounds staff is responsible for maintenance of Carrollton's parks, recreation and cultural arts facilities as well as landscape maintenance in other public open spaces. The facilities and grounds division estimates there is a current need for additional personnel. And, as the parks and recreation system grows in the future, staffing will need to increase to maintain current and future facilities at the level of quality expected today.

Parks	26.4%
Facilities	34.3%
Facilities grounds	4.8%
GreenBelt	3.4%
Other greenspace	31.2%

Facilities and grounds staff includes 20 full-time employees, a community service supervisor and five seasonal employees. A prison detail and community service workers are also used for facilities and grounds maintenance.

Current personnel needs, estimated by the facilities division, include an additional four full-time staff, four seasonal employees and a second prison detail (for maintenance of Hobbs Farm and GreenBelt). The percentage of labor allocated to maintain the GreenBelt (shown above) represents the 9.1 mile portion that had been completed in 2015 included in the Parks and Facilities Division Labor Analysis. With completion of the GreenBelt in 2016, labor required to maintain the GreenBelt will nearly double. Future enhancements to the GreenBelt, development of a new community park and creation of a Miracle League Field at Oil Park will all increase maintenance needs in the future.

Operation of parks, recreation and cultural arts programs will also have an impact on CPRCAD staffing needs over time. Staffing for current senior programs is limited and expansion of the facility, additional programs and a growing senior population will require additional staff for the Senior Center.



Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2016

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CITY OF CARROLLTON PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

