



Gwinnett County



2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation MASTER PLAN

March 2004



Monteith + Brown
planning consultants

in
association
with



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Commissioners on April 20, 2004



GWINNETT COUNTY

2004 COMPREHENSIVE PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

MARCH 2004

Prepared by:

The Gwinnett County Department of Community Services

with the assistance of:

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants
The Jaeger Company



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SECTION 1: Introduction / Executive Summary

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Gwinnett County, with a current estimated population of 676,284 people, is a dynamic, progressive and increasingly diverse community that continues to attract new residents and investment at a record pace. The County's excellent parks system provides a significant contribution to the community's high quality of life. As residents continue to demand more and better recreational opportunities efforts must be made to expand and improve the wide range of leisure services within the County.

The 2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan is an update to the County's 1996 Master Plan and 2000 Capital Improvement Plan. Considerable progress has been made since these plans were developed – the County has doubled its parkland inventory and countless facilities have been built, expanded and renovated in order to keep pace with the demands of a growing population. In fact, the need for an updated Master Plan has been partly precipitated by recent park system improvements that have created heightened expectations among residents and investors. Proactively addressing the changing needs of its residents has been a characteristic of the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Division since its inception. This Master Plan proposes to continue the excellent work that the County has done over the years.

The time is right to re-examine and evaluate the recreational needs of Gwinnettians. At the end of 2004, County residents will be asked if they want to extend the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) for another four years. The SPLOST is a self-imposed County-wide sales tax, part of which may be allocated to fund improvements to the parks system. In order to ensure that these funds are spent wisely and in those areas with the greatest needs, this Master Plan has proposed a prioritized list of capital projects that are consistent with the current and emerging needs of residents.

Specifically, this updated Master Plan accomplishes three major tasks. It:

- 1) evaluates the current status of the County's ability to provide service based upon its enhanced array of capital facilities;
- 2) analyzes service gaps and needs within the County due to changes in population and distribution of existing facilities, and
- 3) proposes a refined Capital Program for the period following the current (2001) SPLOST program.

The Master Plan is comprehensive and strategic in nature. It provides Gwinnett County with a roadmap for addressing its parks and recreation issues and needs by providing solutions for improving the provision, quality and quantity of parks, facilities, and services. Although the process of developing this Master Plan is more complex than it was for the previous

master planning efforts due to considerable expansion of the County's park system in recent years, the process for creating this Plan remains quite similar. The master planning process remains a product of extensive research, technical expertise, and – first and foremost – consultation with the public.

The Plan was prepared by the Gwinnett County Department of Community Services, under the direction of the Citizen Steering Committee, and with the assistance of Monteith Brown Planning Consultants and The Jaeger Company.

**1.2 SCOPE OF
THE PLAN**

The Master Plan will guide the delivery of parks and recreation services in Gwinnett County for a period of four to five years. This Plan also examines needs for specific recreational facilities and parkland to the year 2010 to provide an understanding of longer-term need in relation to projected populations. The Study Area for the Master Plan is the entire County.

The 2004 Master Plan addresses the full range of facilities and spaces that fall under the broad definition of "leisure" or "recreation" (e.g., community centers, gymnasiums, soccer fields, aquatics, cultural space, playgrounds, nature trails, etc.), as well as all associated services.

**1.3 IMPETUS FOR
THE PLAN**

Recreation plays a vital role in Gwinnett County and there is a need to continue to enhance the quality of life through improvements to the parks and recreation system. A number of factors have necessitated the need for an updated Master Plan:

- The County's population is growing at a very rapid pace and is also aging and becoming more culturally diverse.
- The County's high growth rate requires that sufficient parkland be acquired before it is lost to development.
- Leisure trends are shifting and new approaches in recreation planning are emerging.
- The "bar has been raised" through previous efforts and residents have greater expectations for parks and recreation services.
- There is a need to coordinate the Master Plan with other recent initiatives, such as the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan.
- The County has a history of proactively addressing its parks and recreation needs and planning for the future in a forward-thinking, fiscally responsible manner and this must continue to be a high priority.

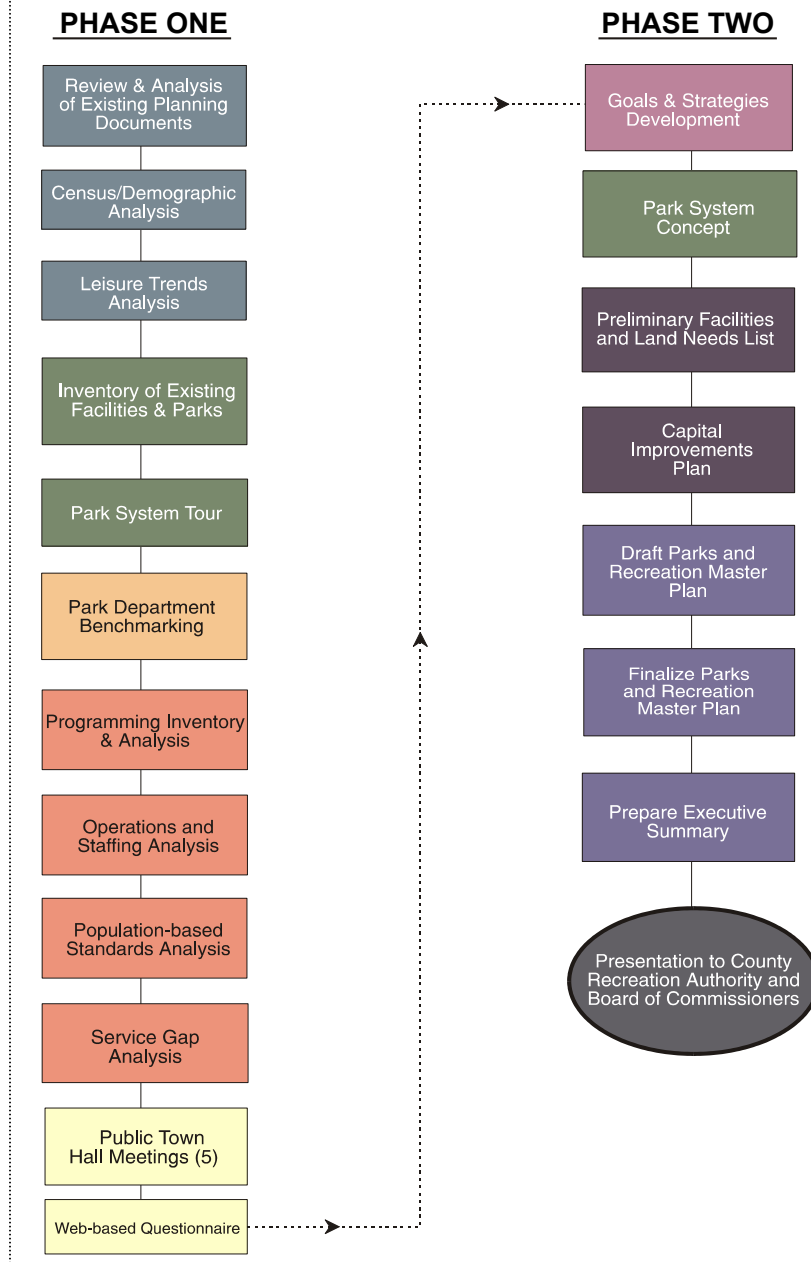
The County has succeeded in responding to many of these challenges. The 2004 Master Plan builds upon this momentum and refocuses the County's future efforts through a comprehensive review and assessment of needs and priorities.

1.4 SUMMARY OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Master Plan process commenced in May 2003 with the first meeting of the Citizen Steering Committee and Consultants. This planning process was constructed to capitalize on past efforts and initiatives, to be comprehensive in nature, and to provide clear and justifiable direction for the future provision of recreation facilities and services.

A schematic of the planning process and its various components is shown below (Figure 1-1). Numerous meetings with County staff and the Citizen Steering Committee were held throughout the duration of the project in order to gather information, review the Plan's progress, and to provide direction for the Plan's goals and recommendations.

Figure 1-1: The Planning Process



**1.5 CITIZEN
STEERING
COMMITTEE/
PUBLIC INPUT
PROCESS**

The Master Plan is most certainly a product of community input and participation. County staff and officials, partners (affiliated external agencies), stakeholders, and the community at large have been consulted and asked to participate throughout the process through meetings, surveys, workshops/focus groups, interviews, and a variety of other methods.

Public consultation efforts have been concentrated near the beginning of the planning process in order to focus on information gathering and issue identification. In particular, five public meetings were held at various locations in the County and those attending were invited participate by expressing their opinions and completing a questionnaire. The questionnaire was also posted on the County's web-site to allow for additional input from residents regarding the County's parks and recreation needs. Furthermore, the Master Plan Update incorporates and builds upon the community needs, values and preferences identified in the 2002 Needs Assessment Survey prepared by the A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service (Kennesaw State University).

Regular meetings with the Citizen Steering Committee assisted in developing the overall goals and objectives for the Master Plan, providing feedback on completed work and deliverables, and prioritizing the park and facility recommendations.

**1.6 PLAN GOALS
AND PRIORITY
RECOMMEND-
ATIONS**

With the assistance of the Citizen Steering Committee, a set of goals was developed to guide the Master Plan's recommendations and capital improvement plan. Specific strategies to realize each of the goals were also formulated. The goals and strategies address the most appropriate range of means to ensure service expansion to:

- meet the needs of a growing population;
- manage and maximize the capacity of existing facilities; and
- provide for new or expanded facilities and efficient operations.

The goals and strategies are based upon public input, the analysis of facility and parks needs, and the experiences of similar agencies and are described below in priority order. Goals sharing the same number (e.g., 4a, 4b, and 4c) share the same level of priority.

1. Work toward achieving pedestrian and bicycle linkage or connectivity between parks and other points of interest such as schools, libraries, institutional land uses and commercial nodes.

Not every one of the many connecting links identified in the 2002 Open Space and Greenway Master Plan will be achieved. However, the highest priority efforts should be made to link parks, libraries, schools and communities to increase biking, walking and jogging opportunities (not only for recreation but also as an alternative mode of transportation).

To achieve this goal, the County should refer to the specific projects identified in the 2002 Open Space and Greenway Master Plan and proceed to develop the highest priority greenways while being cognizant of the fact that priorities may shift slightly as opportunities present themselves.

2. Maintain a balanced approach to the continued acquisition and development of both passive and active parkland to the greatest extent possible.

The main theme emerging from the Citizen Steering Committee prioritization meeting was to seek a balance between both passive and active parkland acquisitions as well as a balance between the acquisition of land and the development of the land for recreational activities.

To achieve this goal the County must address parkland acquisition in a multi dimensional manner. Land that is suitable for playing fields will need to be acquired, as well as land that is suitable for open space or passive uses (i.e. woodlands, wetlands, valleylands, etc.). In addition land in areas that are currently under-served and/or experiencing rapid growth will need to be acquired.

3. Provide for the needs of all age groups including adults. This should include both structured and unstructured recreational opportunities.

Previous studies have indicated that the needs of adults, seniors and youth/teens (ages 10 to 18) are not being met as well as those of children. Although it was agreed that these age groups needed attention, the Committee recognized that the child population in Gwinnett will continue to increase as a result of overall growth and, as a result, additional recreational demands will be placed on the community. There will also be a need for more active adult recreational opportunities (e.g., slow pitch and soccer).

The Committee also discussed the issue of unstructured play requirements and, in particular, adult pick-up soccer. This unstructured or unscheduled non-league play results in over-utilization of the fields and often conflicts with scheduled field usage. The need for unstructured soccer opportunities is expected to increase with the popularity of the sport.

Goals 4a, 4b, and 4c share the same level of priority:

4a. Complete the construction of planned phases of development within existing parks.

There was concern among some Committee members that new parks would be developed before existing planned parks were fully developed. It was generally felt that just acquiring land did not

automatically make it parkland if the community could not utilize the space.

4b. Proceed with the acquisition of parkland in under-serviced areas.

There continues to be a concern about the areas of the County that do not have favorable parkland to population ratios. Although the Committee acknowledged that equity amongst the Recreation Planning Areas will never be fully achieved, attempts need to continue to be made to address parkland needs in under-served areas.

4c. Continue with the acquisition of parkland in developing areas.

While there is a need to address under-serviced areas, the newly developing areas will also require parks and there is no better time to acquire parkland than before residential development occurs. This is particularly true if the County wishes to acquire and develop a site suitable for bolstering sports tourism (e.g., softball or soccer tournaments).

Goals 5a and 5b share the same level of priority:

5a. Utilize the development of parks to help revitalize existing under-served communities.

The Committee suggested that under-utilized and vacant commercial or industrial/brownfield sites be explored as options to providing parkland and recreation facilities in areas deficient in parkland and experiencing high population densities and growth. County investment in the redevelopment of these sites could help rejuvenate older areas in need of revitalization.

5b. Investigate the incremental costs associated with a competitive or sports tourism standard of service versus a community standard of service.

The Committee perceived there to be many economic benefits to bolstering sports tourism in the County (e.g., swim meet, softball tournament, soccer tournament, bike rally, etc.). In order to accommodate these events, however, larger and more specialized facilities are often required, such as a 50-meter swimming pool or multiple adult softball diamonds at one location. Alternative sources of capital funding might be required to bridge the difference in construction cost between a facility that meets community standards of service and one that aspires to a sports tourism standard of service.

Goals 6a, 6b and 6c share the same level of priority:

6a. Continue to integrate and coordinate with other departments and agencies to leverage the public's disposable dollars for recreation.

There was a desire to see the County continue to work with not only the School Boards and State and Federal agencies, but also with utility companies and other County departments to increase resources and optimize the impact of every dollar spent.

6b. Continue to maintain and renovate existing parks and recreation facilities.

6c. Maintain adequate parks and recreation staffing in keeping with growing demands and facilities.

7. Maintain security at parks and recreation facilities through the use of park police. Use planning and design methods to increase user security, to the extent possible.

**1.7 RECREATION
PLANNING
AREAS / PLAN
AREAS**

Gwinnett County has employed a service area/district approach for a number of years. The purpose of these districts, which divide the County into distinct geographic areas, is two-fold: (1) to create efficiencies in management and operations; and (2) to improve the effectiveness of parks and facility planning.

Prior to 1996 there were a total of 11 service areas in Gwinnett County operating out of two operational districts. The 1996 Master Plan recommended that the County reevaluate these boundaries, after which three programming and maintenance districts (North, South and West) were formed. The three-district model proposed in the 1996 Master Plan called for the creation of a satellite field office for parks and recreation staff in each district.

For the purposes of analyzing park and facility needs only, this Master Plan has departed from the three-district model and created in its place five recreation planning areas. This change need not be reflected at the operational level.

The following are just some of the reasons why the Master Plan has adopted a system of five recreation planning areas:

- The interstate and highway system that traverses the County, while a barrier to pedestrian flows, is an aid to the County's operational division in that it increases their ability to move through the County and creates economies relating to costly maintenance equipment. That being said, the highway system also creates physical barriers that severely limit the ability to connect trails and to travel by foot or bicycle across these roads. With a greater emphasis now being

placed on limiting automobile travel and encouraging pedestrian travel and the development of greenway corridors, it would make sense to reduce the geographic scope of the recreational districts.

- Gwinnett County's population is increasing at a rapid pace and the County has "outgrown" its existing model. At the time that the three-district model was developed, each area had an average population of approximately 145,000 people. Given existing population estimates, a five-district model lowers this average to 130,000 people, which represents a much more reasonable "community" around which facility and park requirements can be established.
- The geographic size of the County creates challenges relates to transportation and access to parks and recreation facilities. By increasing the number of recreation planning areas, the result is a more accurate representation of reasonable "travel times" to parks and recreation facilities.
- There are "pockets" or areas of the County that contain high proportions of children, teenagers, seniors, or ethnic communities. By developing geographically smaller units of analysis, it is possible to develop recommendations that target the specific needs of each area.

Through an examination of the socio-demographic characteristics of the County's population at a census tract level, combined with the knowledge of land area, park locations, major thoroughfares, and transportation barriers, the boundaries of the five recreation planning areas (RPAs) were established and vetted through the Citizen Steering Committee. RPAs were assigned letters from A through E and are illustrated on Map 1-1. Based on 2000 Census data, the populations of the RPAs range from 90,124 to 150,202.

Although population projections have not been assigned to geographic areas, discussions with the County's Planning Department indicate that growth is anticipated along the I-85 and Highway 316 (University Parkway) corridors. The result will be continued population growth in RPAs A, B and C. RPAs D and E in the eastern portions of the County are expected to experience growth as well due to the availability of developable land at lower densities.

The Recreation Planning Areas, otherwise referred to as Plan Areas, are referenced throughout this Plan, most notably in relation to the projection of park and facility requirements and recommended locations for new recreational infrastructure.



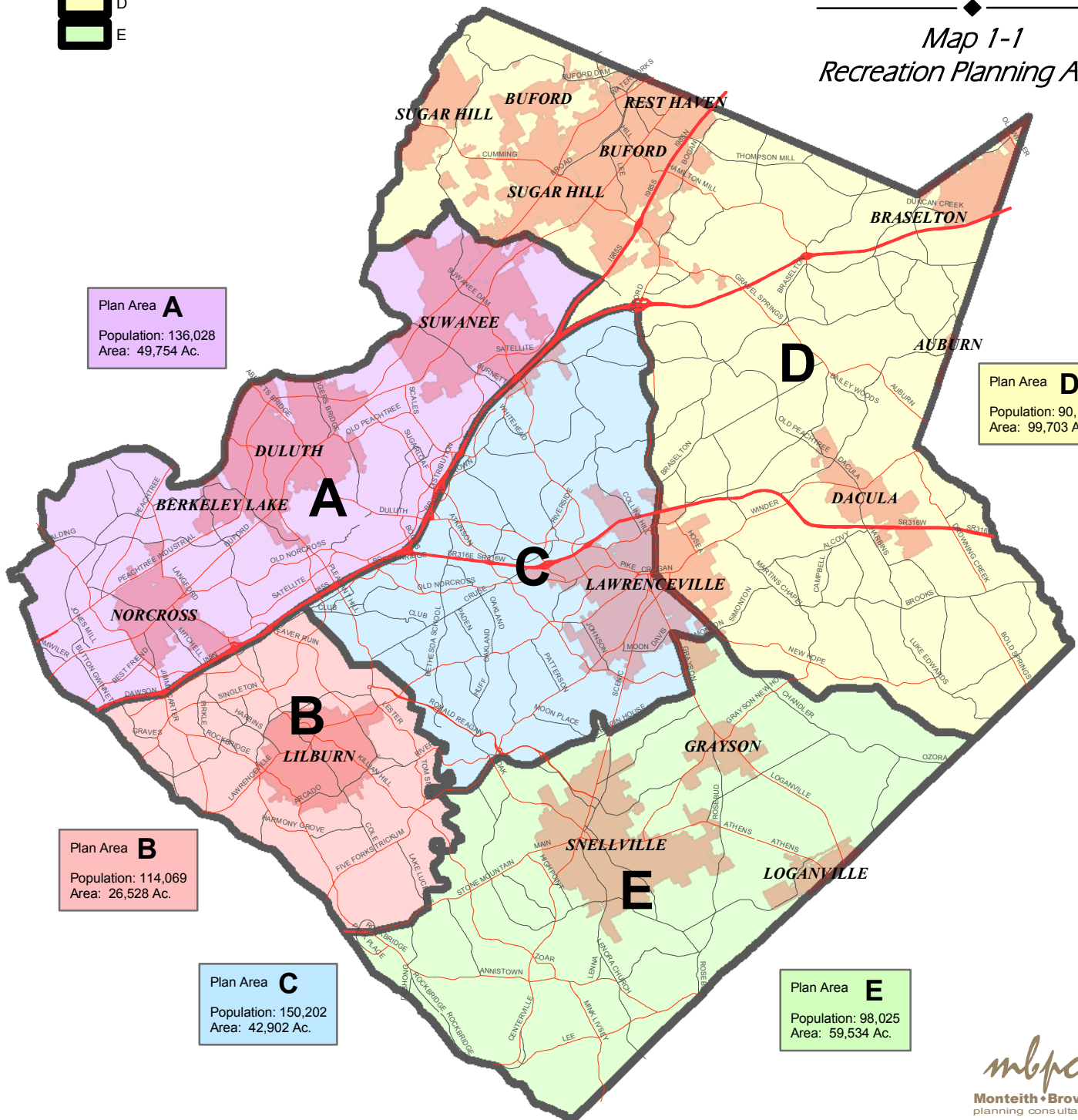
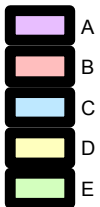
**GWINNETT COUNTY,
GEORGIA**

2004
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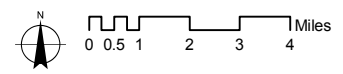
*Map 1-1
Recreation Planning Areas*

Legend

Recreation Planning Area



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SECTION 2: History of Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation

2.1 THE 1970s

The Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Department was formed in 1971 when the Pinckneyville Militia District enacted a referendum to authorize a recreation tax levy. Other militia districts eventually joined the recreation district, although only 25% of the County's land area would be under the Department's control until 1986 when this was expanded to include the entire County.

Since its inception, the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Department has undertaken numerous planning efforts to develop the County's parks system to the point it is today. The County's first Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed in 1973, but was never adopted. Nevertheless, the Plan's findings and recommendations provide insight into the issues and concerns confronting the County at that time. For example, the Plan recommended that park development be focused in the denser population zones, which then were located along the DeKalb/Fulton County Lines and Interstate-85. Under an agreement between the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners and the Gwinnett County Board of Education, school lands were used for the provision of ballfields, tennis courts and neighborhood playgrounds. Although recreation amenities were to be provided for all age groups, an emphasis was placed on young adults and adults in order to encourage their civic participation and leadership. The Plan also anticipated action to acquire some properties along the Chattahoochee River. One significant quote highlights a key strategy that would be implemented by the County over the coming decades:

"The larger the county grows, the more its citizens will need and seek open space. Today's open space will be tomorrow's subdivision or shopping center if Gwinnett fails to acquire land now. The projected growth in the county indicates the need for planning, acquiring, and preserving open space today."

Some County parks that were acquired and/or developed during the 1970s included: Best Friend Park, Dacula Park, Pinckneyville Arts Center, Harmony Grove Park, Jones Bridge Park, Mountain Park Park, Shorty Howell Park, and the Singleton Road Activity Building.

In 1970, the County's population was 72,349, however this would more than double in ten years to 166,808 in 1980 (an increase of 131%). Gwinnett County was the second fastest growing county in Georgia during the 1970s and the eighth fastest growing county in the United States.

2.2 THE 1980s

The Parks and Recreation Department began to resemble its current structure in 1986 when, in November of that year, voters in Gwinnett County approved the concept of a countywide recreation department as

well as its 1 mill Recreation Tax. Around this time, the structure of the Recreation Authority was altered to 9 appointed members. As it does today, the Recreation Authority served as an advisory body and oversees the dispersed revenue of bonds and funds for park and recreation facility development.

1986 also brought the first County-wide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This document provided the direction for development of the county park system from 1986 through 1996. The plan inventoried existing recreational facilities, incorporated the results of a previously accomplished assessment of the recreational needs and desires of the County residents, and recommended the future development of parks in Gwinnett County. A series of revenue bonds were issued by the Recreation Authority to address the land acquisition and facility construction needs identified in this master planning effort. The highlights of the Plan included:

- definition of a classification for parks (regional, community, special use, and neighborhood parks with school sites used for neighborhood parks);
- establishment of 11 service zones based on a 15-minute drive time to a community park (which contained both active and passive opportunities);
- recommended improvements for each park;
- emphasis on land acquisition in strategic growth areas - focus was on equity in park distribution; and
- development of a formal cooperative agreement with the Board of Education to develop neighborhood parks at elementary school sites.

In 1988, the Parks and Recreation Department (as it was then known) became a division of the Department of Human Services (now Community Services). Other significant events in the 1980s included the purchase of Springbrook County Club and the adoption of master plans for Lucky Shoals Park, Bethesda Park, Collins Hill Park, George Pierce Park, Lenora Park, and Tribble Mill Park. Spurred on by \$30 million in revenue bonds approved by the Recreation Authority, phase 1 of Lucky Shoals, Bethesda and Collins Hill Parks were all opened on the same day in 1991. These new parks contributed greatly to the success of the County's park system in the 1990s.

Once again, Gwinnett's population more than doubled over the course of ten years, from 166,608 in 1980 to 352,910 in 1990 (an increase of 112%).

2.3 THE 1990s

In August of 1990, the Recreation Authority issued \$10 million in revenue bonds. These bonds were used to purchase, enlarge and development a number of community parks, as well as to begin development of Tribble Mill Park. That same year, the Vines Botanical Gardens site, valued at \$3.9 million, was donated to the County. In 1992, Gwinnett County assumed

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operation of Lawrenceville city parks with the stipulation that Rhodes Jordan Park be expanded and new facilities constructed. Other significant events in the early 1990s included the opening of the Gwinnett Senior Center at Bethesda Park, Tribble Mill Park, and the reopening of the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse.

Despite witnessing dramatic population growth in the 1970s and 80s, it was not until the 1990s (specifically the latter half of the decade) that the County would aggressively pursue the acquisition of parkland. Not coincidentally, it was the development of a new Comprehensive Master Plan in 1996 that would help direct the County in achieving new goals for the provision of parks and recreation facilities.

The 1996 Master Plan, which was borne out of a needs assessment survey conducted by the A.L. Burruss Institute at Kennesaw State University in 1995, contained specific capital investment recommendations through the year 2003.

The purpose of the 1996 Master Plan is not very different from that of this Plan:

- to provide a conceptual framework and description of the existing parks and recreation system in Gwinnett County;
- to develop a baseline of leisure services delivery; and
- to provide information on the recreational priorities and needs of Gwinnett County citizens.

The recommendations and findings of the 1996 Comprehensive Master Plan provided a detailed assessment of recreation facility and parks needs, as well as management and operational strategies. Some key recommendations included:

- the development of community centers at Lenora Park, Rhodes Jordan Park, Bogan Park, and Pinckneyville Park;
- continued reliance on community parks as the foundation of the parks system;
- the acquisition and development of four new community parks and the redevelopment and expansion of numerous existing parks;
- park system redistricting (from 11 service areas to 3 park districts - West, North and South);
- the development of a Greenway Plan to formalize linkages between parks, neighborhoods and schools; and
- projects totaling approximately \$140 million were called for between 1997 and 2003.

To help pay for many of the recommended improvements, County voters approved a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) in the fall of 1996 that included \$60 million for land acquisition and park project development through the year 2001. Additionally, during the four-year period of the 1997 SPLOST, the County's Board of Commissioners expended over \$40 million from general funds for the acquisition of

recreation open space and for the enhancement of the park facilities development program.

Another significant accomplishment was the opening of Bogan Park Community Center and Family Aquatics Center in December 1997 -- this was the first community recreation center and indoor leisure pool facility in the County's park system. Furthermore, the Parks and Recreation Division was recognized as a National Gold Medal Award Finalist by the National Recreation and Parks Association in 1999. The Georgia Recreation and Park Association (7th District) would select the Division as Agency of the Year in 2000.

Gwinnett's population increased by 67% between 1990 and 2000 (from 352,910 to 588,448). Gwinnett was the 31st fastest growing county in the nation over this period.

2.4 THE 21st CENTURY

Rapid population growth and the anticipated renewal of the SPLOST for the period of 2001 through 2004 necessitated the development of the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation 2000 Capital Improvements Plan. The purpose of the 2000 Plan was to review and update the capital program contained in the 1996 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The 2000 Capital Improvements Plan updated the park and facility inventory, evaluated changes in demographics and development trends, reassessed service gaps, and updated and prioritized the recreational desires of the citizenry. This study continued to recommend a very ambitious greenspace acquisition and park construction program. Other key recommendations included:

- continued emphasis on providing parks and facilities within under-served areas; replacement of "neighborhood/school parks" with "passive community parks" as a method to address the needs of under-served & densely populated areas;
- expansion of passive recreation opportunities and open space acquisition;
- expansion of programs for teens, young adults and seniors;
- development of aquatic centers at Mountain Park Park, Bethesda Park, and the West District; and
- development of community centers at Lenora Park, George Pierce Park, Bogan Park, Bethesda Park, and Bay Creek Park.

The Board of Commissioners adopted the 2000 Capital Improvement Plan and its capital improvements recommendations became the primary source of the list of projects included for Parks and Recreation on the ballot for the extension of the SPLOST in November of 2000. The County's voters approved the sales tax extension and the Department embarked on the 2001 SPLOST Program that included a minimum of \$192 million for parks and recreation over a four-year period (with some \$10 million going to

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support parks and recreation capital projects within Gwinnett County's cities).

In implementing the 1996 Master Plan, Gwinnett County completed a Open Space and Greenway Master Plan in May 2002. This Plan is a comprehensive document intended to inform and guide the County's ongoing greenspace preservation program. The primary goals of the Plan are to increase recreational opportunities, protect and improve water quality, improve connectivity via a system of greenway trails, and reduce the environmental impacts of development. The Georgia Planning Association recognized the excellence of this plan with a "Best Planning Document" award in September 2002, and in November 2002 Gwinnett County was granted an "Outstanding Community" award by the Georgia Urban Forestry Council.

In the fall of 2002, the County's Parks and Recreation Division embarked on a process to update the 1996 Master Plan and 2000 Capital Improvements Plan. Like it did in 1995, the County contracted the A.L. Burruss Institute at Kennesaw State University to prepare and implement a Needs Assessment Survey. The results of this project were delivered in April 2003. The Burruss report includes a section of the changing demographics of Gwinnett County, which is now considered to be the most ethnically diverse county in Georgia with one out of six adult residents having been born outside the United States.

Significant capital projects completed during this timeframe include the development of the County's first free skate plaza and outdoor hockey rink at Pinckneyville Park, the opening of aquatic centers at Collins Hill, Rhodes Jordan and Mountain Park parks, as well as numerous land acquisitions (the most noteworthy being Harbins/Alcovy River Park Site at nearly 1800 acres). The County was also successful in applying for funds through the Georgia Greenspace Program to assist in open space acquisition and preservation initiatives.

Population growth in the County shows no signs of slowing. In only three years (2000 to 2003), Gwinnett's population has grown by an estimated 13% (or 26,500 persons per year) to 676,284. Forecasts indicate that, for the period of 2000 to 2010, the County will match or slightly exceed the total growth of nearly a quarter-of-a-million people that it experienced in the 1990s. Although this represents a slowing of the growth rate, the County is projected to top the one million population mark by the year 2018.

The past few years have seen the most aggressive park development strategy in Gwinnett County's history and, with population growth constantly exceeding projections, capital improvements to the parks system must continue to be a high priority for the County and its citizenry. In late 2004, the County's voters will be given an opportunity to express their views when they go to the polls to vote on the renewal of the SPLOST.

SECTION 3: Demographic and Leisure Trends

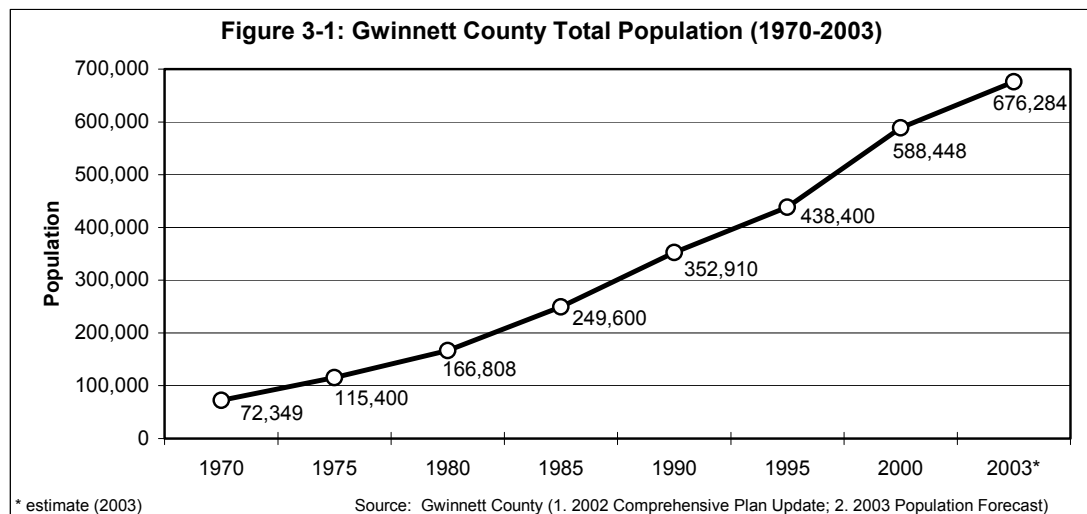
The Master Plan is a forward-looking strategic document that will guide the provision of parks and recreation facilities and services within Gwinnett County to the year 2009 and beyond. In order to understand the current and future needs of the County's citizenry, we must first examine the composition of the existing population and delve more deeply into the trends affecting recreational participation. Most notably, this section of the Plan examines population projections and the implications of leisure trends on the future of recreation services in Gwinnett County.

3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Prior to commencing this Master Plan project, a Needs Assessment Survey was undertaken by the A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service at Kennesaw State University in 2002 on behalf of Gwinnett County. While the details of the household survey will be discussed in the next chapter of this report, the Needs Assessment also compiled a demographic profile of Gwinnett County. The following analysis incorporates the key findings of the demographic profile contained in the 2002 Needs Assessment and contains a more detailed examination of key variables using data generated by the U.S. Census and Gwinnett County.

3.1.1 Population - Past

Gwinnett County's population has been experiencing tremendous growth since the 1970s, having grown by over 900% since 1970 (see Figure 3-1). Although Gwinnett County's growth rate has declined in relative terms in recent years, it remains one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. The Gwinnett County Department of Financial Services estimates that there are 676,284 people living in Gwinnett County in 2003.



Section 3: Demographic and Leisure Trends

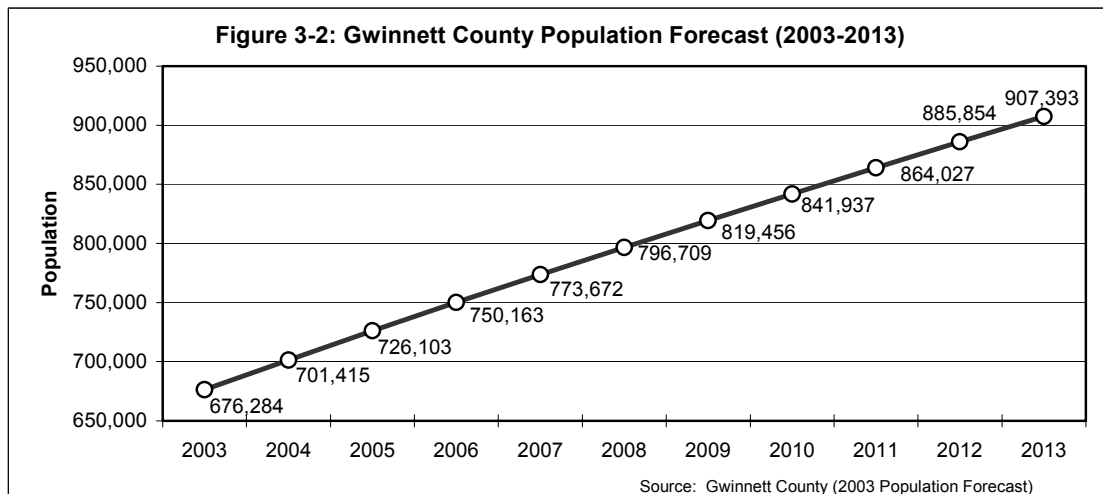
Gwinnett County 2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Since 1970, Gwinnett County has attracted a significant portion of the growth in the Atlanta Region. Proportionally, Gwinnett County's population growth has accounted for over one-quarter of the Atlanta Region's growth in the past three decades. In 1970, 5% of the Region's population lived in Gwinnett County; by 2003, it is estimated that this figure increased to 18%.

The Gwinnett County Comprehensive Plan (2002 Update) indicates that the largest population gains in the 1990s occurred in the central and northeastern areas of the County. Significant neighborhoods experiencing higher than average growth include the area northeast of Lawrenceville, Harbins, Loganville, Alcovy River, Centerville, and Grayson. While growth occurred throughout all areas of Gwinnett County during the 1990s, the County's primary population growth pattern has followed the I-85, I-985, and Georgia Highway 316 corridors into the northeast and eastern-most portions of the County. Continued population growth and intensification is expected to continue along these highway corridors into the near future. Population densities by census tract are shown on Map 3-1.

3.1.2 Population - Future

Based on the population forecast generated by the Gwinnett County Department of Financial Services, it is estimated that the County's population will continue to increase, but at a slightly declining rate (see Figure 3-2).



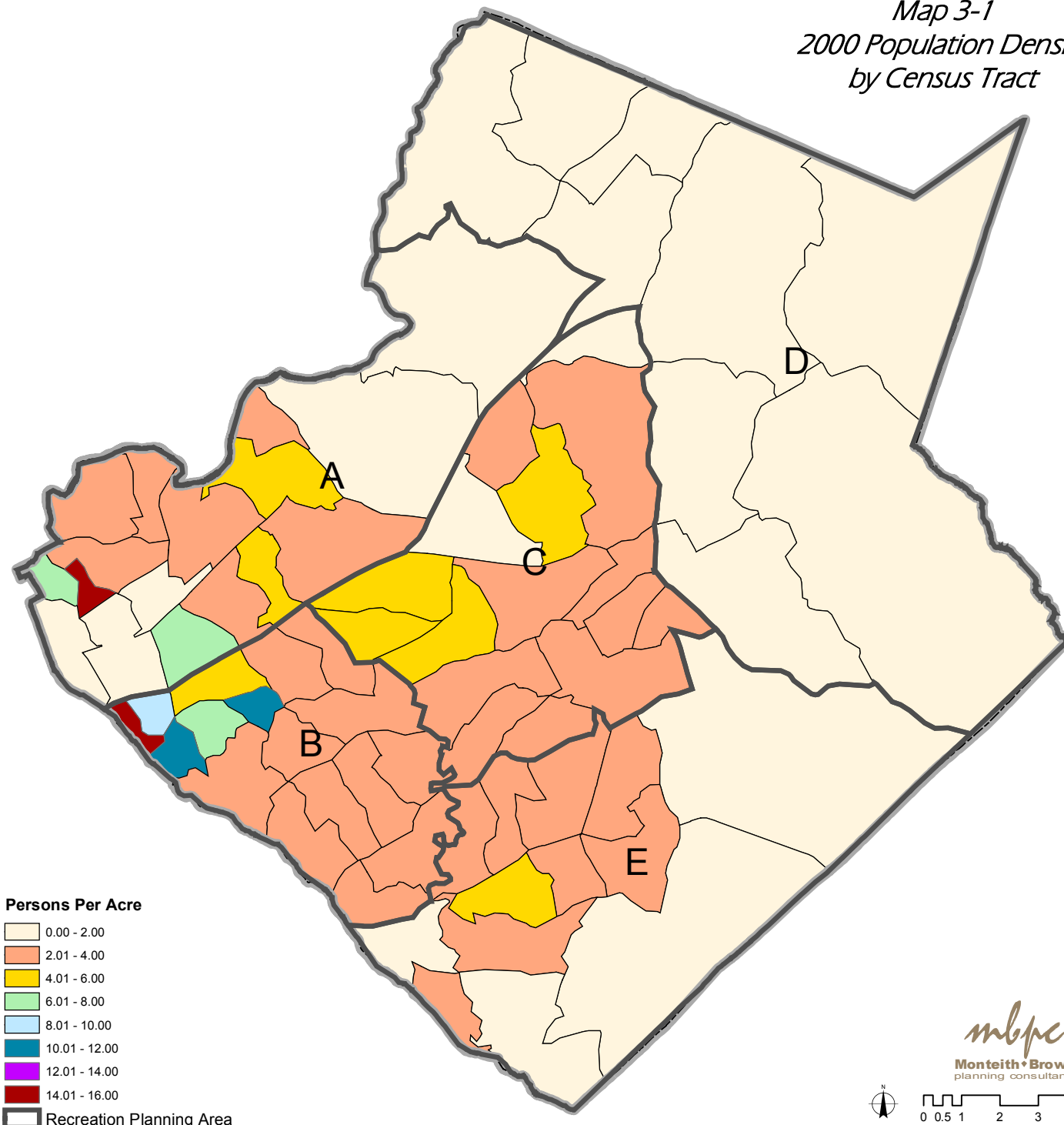
For the period of 2003 to 2013, the County's population is forecasted to grow by 231,000 people (an average of over 23,000 people per year), representing a 10-year growth rate of 33%. Table 3-1 illustrates Gwinnett County's declining growth rate over the years.



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*Map 3-1
2000 Population Density
by Census Tract*



0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles

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**POPULATION DENSITY
BY RECREATION PLANNING AREA**

Planning Area	Land Area (Acres)	Total Population	Population Distribution (Persons per Acre)
A	49754	136028	2.73
B	26528	114069	4.30
C	42902	150202	3.50
D	99703	90124	0.90
E	59534	98025	1.65
TOTAL	278420	588448	2.11

Table 3-1: Historical and Projected Growth Rates (Gwinnett County, 1970-2013)

Time Period	Population Growth	Growth Rate
1970 to 1980	94,459	131%
1980 to 1990	186,102	112%
1990 to 2000	235,538	67%
2000 to 2010	253,489	43%
2003 to 2013 (timing of Master Plan)	231,109	33%

Intense population growth over the past thirty years has also resulted in increased densities and declines in the availability of developable land. Another contributing factor to the declining growth rate is the aging of the population.

Population projections are not currently available by geographic area or recreation planning area. As noted earlier, however, population growth is expected to continue along the major interstate and highway corridors through both new greenfield development and intensification of existing neighborhoods. The establishment of greater densities in built areas will only intensify the need for additional and appropriate parks and recreation facilities in these areas, many of which are currently deficient and have little to no land readily available for acquisition and/or leisure facility development.

3.1.3 Age Composition

The vast majority of Gwinnett County's population increases over the past thirty years have been a result of in-migration rather than births. Due to the County's strong and diverse economic base and excellent infrastructure, thousands of people, including many families and young adults, have been attracted to the area. The result has been a population that has a relatively low median age and that, despite the aging of the baby boom generation and declining birth rates nationwide, has not aged as rapidly as most established communities. This is quite common among jurisdictions that are experiencing significant population growth.

Table 3-2 indicates that Gwinnett County's median age increased from 30.5 years to 32.5 years between 1990 and 2000. Significant population increases have been experienced in all age categories during the 1990s, with those age 45 and over more than doubling in population (112% increase). In contrast, the 0 to 17 year age cohort increased by 68%, while the 18 to 44 age group grew by 48%. This demographic profile indicates that there is likely to be continued demands for child and teen recreation, while greater demands for recreational opportunities for older adults and senior citizens are likely being experienced due to greater than average population growth in these groups.

Table 3-2: Gwinnett County Population by Age (1990-2000)

	1990		2000		Change (1990-2000)	
Under 5 years	30,491	8.6%	47,075	8.0%	16,584	54.4%
5 to 17 years	68,223	19.3%	118,918	20.2%	50,695	74.3%
18 to 24 years	34,050	9.6%	51,004	8.7%	16,954	49.8%
25 to 44 years	149,075	42.2%	220,407	37.5%	71,332	47.8%
45 to 54 years	35,915	10.2%	81,237	13.8%	45,322	126.2%
55 to 64 years	18,380	5.2%	38,208	6.5%	19,828	107.9%
65 years and over	16,776	4.8%	31,599	5.4%	14,823	88.4%
Total	352,910	100.0%	588,448	100.0%	272,320	67.2%
Median Age	30.5 years		32.5 years			

In the coming years, it is anticipated that Gwinnett County's growth rate will decline, in-migration will begin to slow, and the median age will increase. Much like the past decade, the result will be considerable growth in the 55-plus age group and relatively steady growth in the younger age cohorts. Figure 3-3 illustrates the population forecast by specific age groups for the period of 2000 to 2030 (note: this 30-year time period has been shown in order to highlight the significant increases in the 55-plus age group).

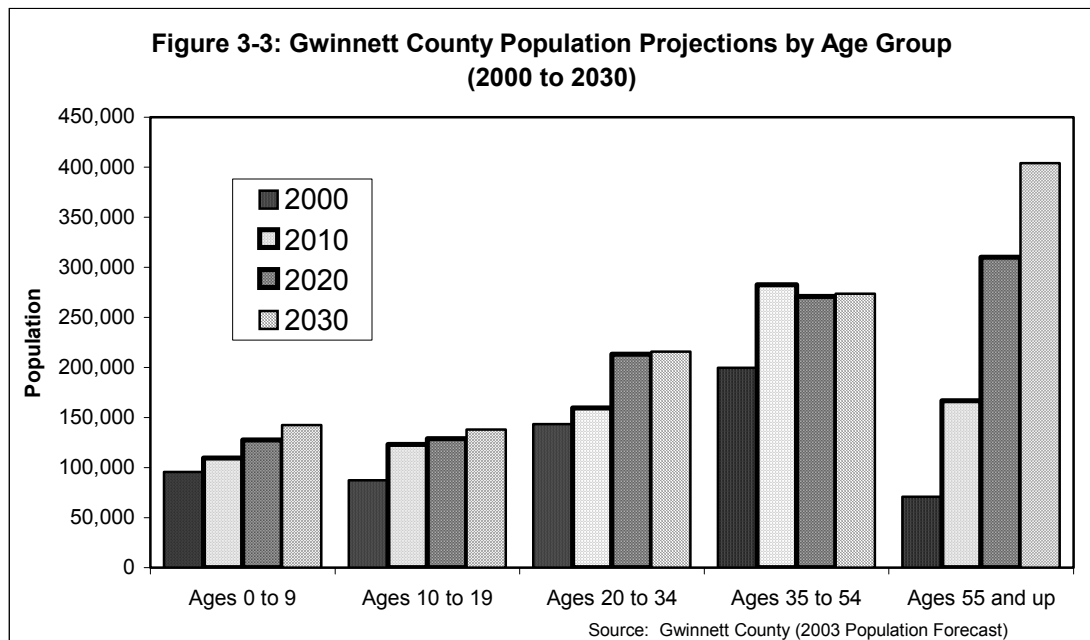


Figure 3-4 illustrates the age composition of each recreation planning area for the year 2000. Currently, Areas C and E have the greatest proportion of children and teens (32.6% and 32.4% respectively), while Area E has the greatest percentage of persons age 55 and over (14.1%).

Maps 3-2 to 3-6 show age-specific population densities by Census tract.



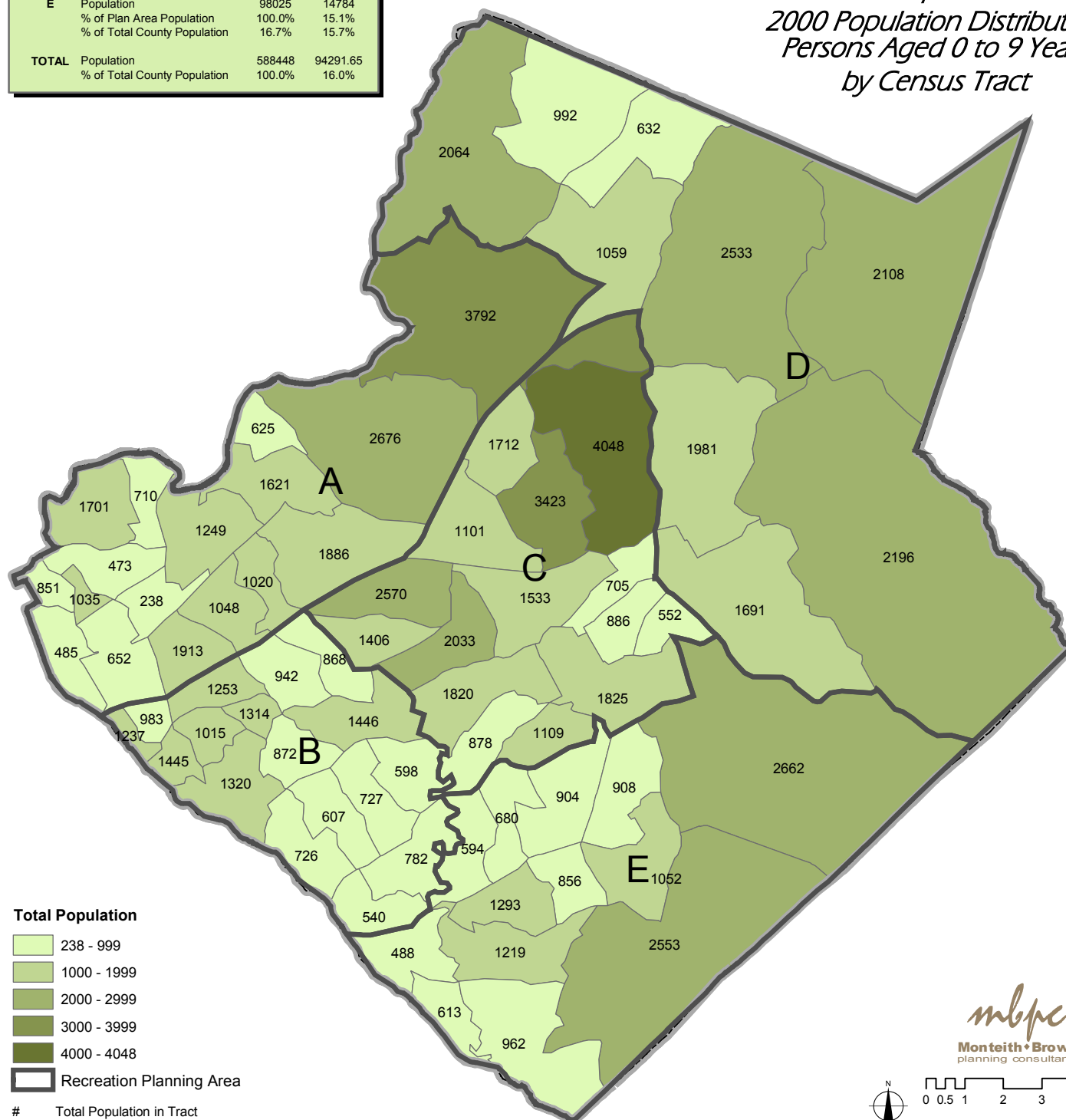
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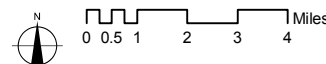
Map 3-2 2000 Population Distribution Persons Aged 0 to 9 Years by Census Tract

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY RECREATION PLANNING AREA

Planning Area		Total Population	0 to 9 Years
A	Population	136028	21463
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	15.8%
	% of Total County Population	23.1%	22.8%
B	Population	114069	16675
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	14.6%
	% of Total County Population	19.4%	17.7%
C	Population	150202	26113
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	17.4%
	% of Total County Population	25.5%	27.7%
D	Population	90124	15256
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	16.9%
	% of Total County Population	15.3%	16.2%
E	Population	98025	14784
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	15.1%
	% of Total County Population	16.7%	15.7%
TOTAL	Population	588448	94291.65
	% of Total County Population	100.0%	16.0%



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**POPULATION DISTRIBUTION
BY RECREATION PLANNING AREA**

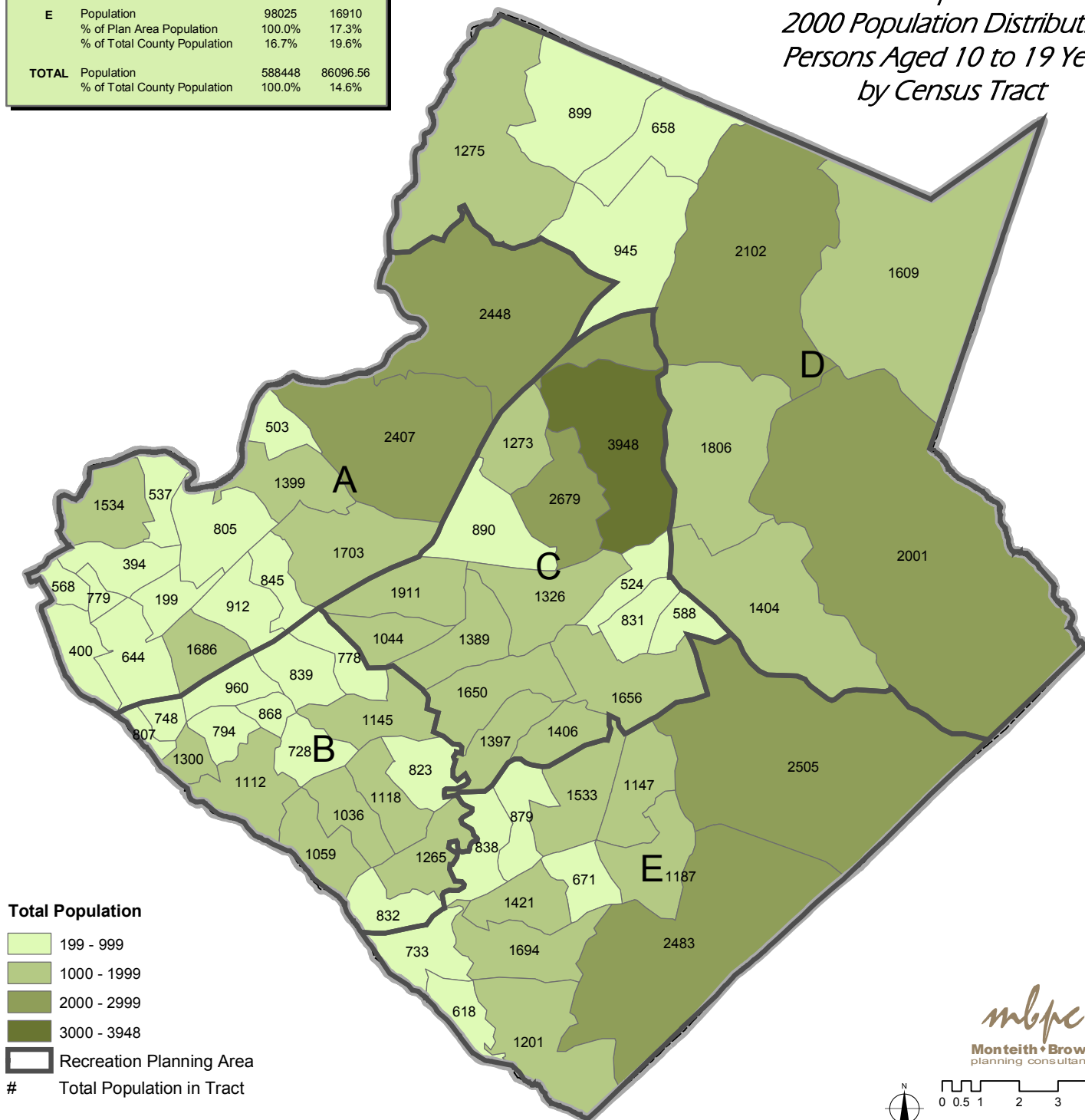
Planning Area		Total Population	10 to 19 Years
A	Population	136028	17432
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	12.8%
	% of Total County Population	23.1%	20.2%
B	Population	114069	16212
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	14.2%
	% of Total County Population	19.4%	18.8%
C	Population	150202	22843
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	15.2%
	% of Total County Population	25.5%	26.5%
D	Population	90124	12699
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	14.1%
	% of Total County Population	15.3%	14.7%
E	Population	98025	16910
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	17.3%
	% of Total County Population	16.7%	19.6%
TOTAL	Population	588448	86096.56
	% of Total County Population	100.0%	14.6%



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*Map 3-3
2000 Population Distribution
Persons Aged 10 to 19 Years
by Census Tract*



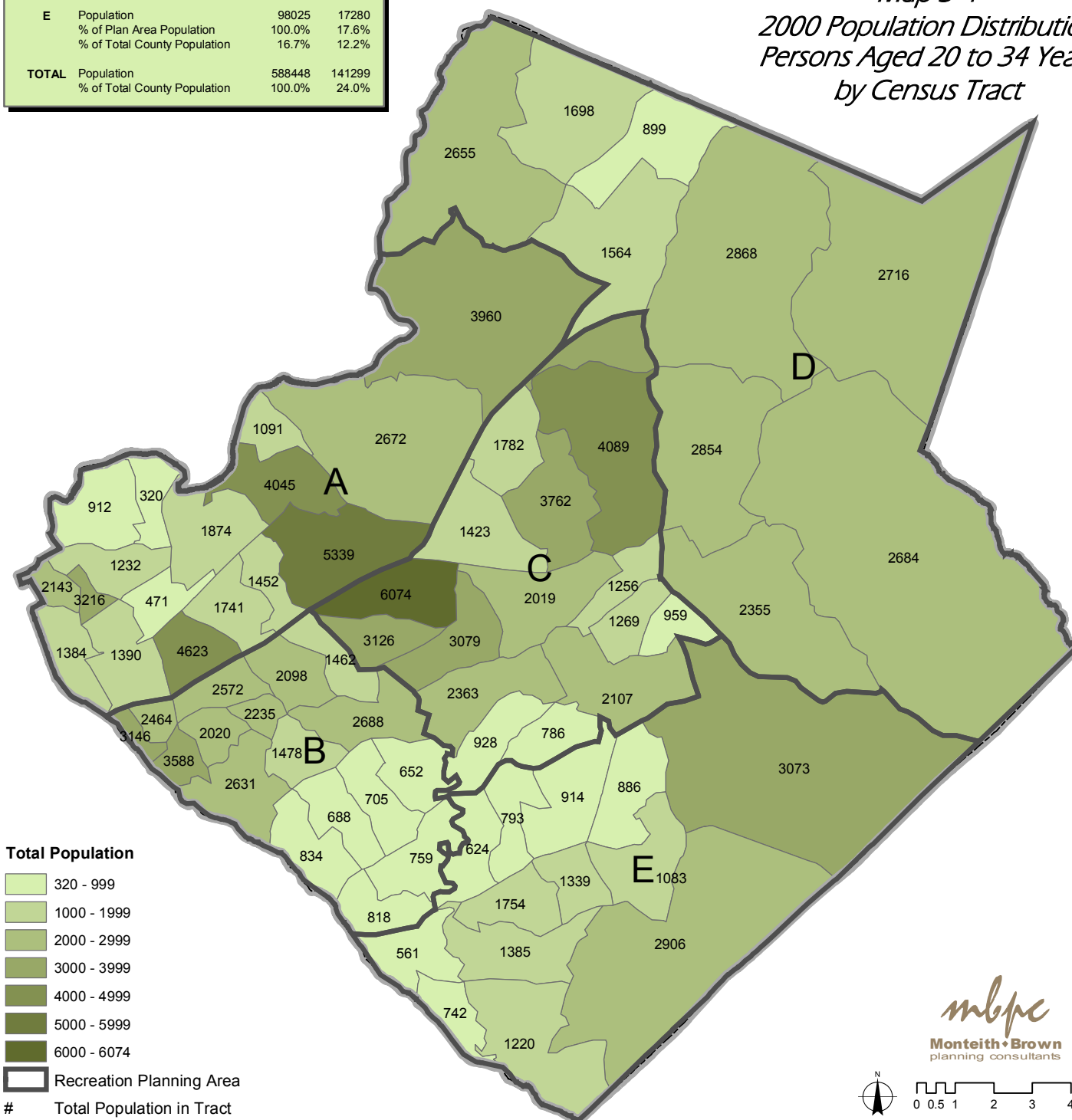


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Map 3-4 2000 Population Distribution Persons Aged 20 to 34 Years by Census Tract

Planning Area		Total Population	20 to 34 Years
A	Population	136028	37330
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	27.4%
	% of Total County Population	23.1%	26.4%
B	Population	114069	30838
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	27.0%
	% of Total County Population	19.4%	21.8%
C	Population	150202	35557
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	23.7%
	% of Total County Population	25.5%	25.2%
D	Population	90124	20293
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	22.5%
	% of Total County Population	15.3%	14.4%
E	Population	98025	17280
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	17.6%
	% of Total County Population	16.7%	12.2%
TOTAL	Population	588448	141299
	% of Total County Population	100.0%	24.0%



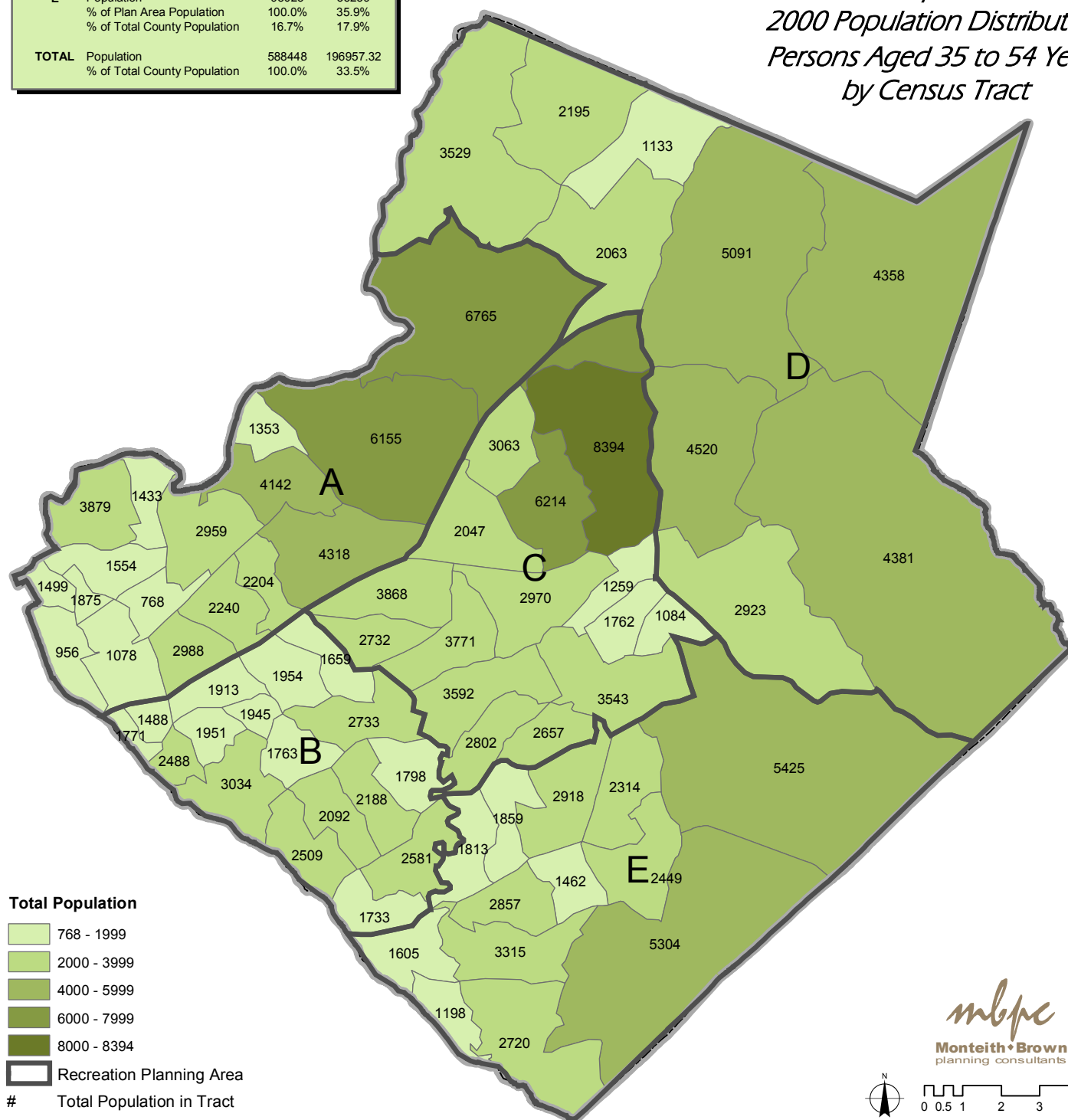


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Map 3-5 2000 Population Distribution Persons Aged 35 to 54 Years by Census Tract

Planning Area		Total Population	35 to 54 Years
A	Population	136028	45252
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	33.3%
	% of Total County Population	23.1%	23.0%
B	Population	114069	35600
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	31.2%
	% of Total County Population	19.4%	18.1%
C	Population	150202	50672
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	33.7%
	% of Total County Population	25.5%	25.7%
D	Population	90124	30193
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	33.5%
	% of Total County Population	15.3%	15.3%
E	Population	98025	35239
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	35.9%
	% of Total County Population	16.7%	17.9%
TOTAL	Population	588448	196957.32
	% of Total County Population	100.0%	33.5%





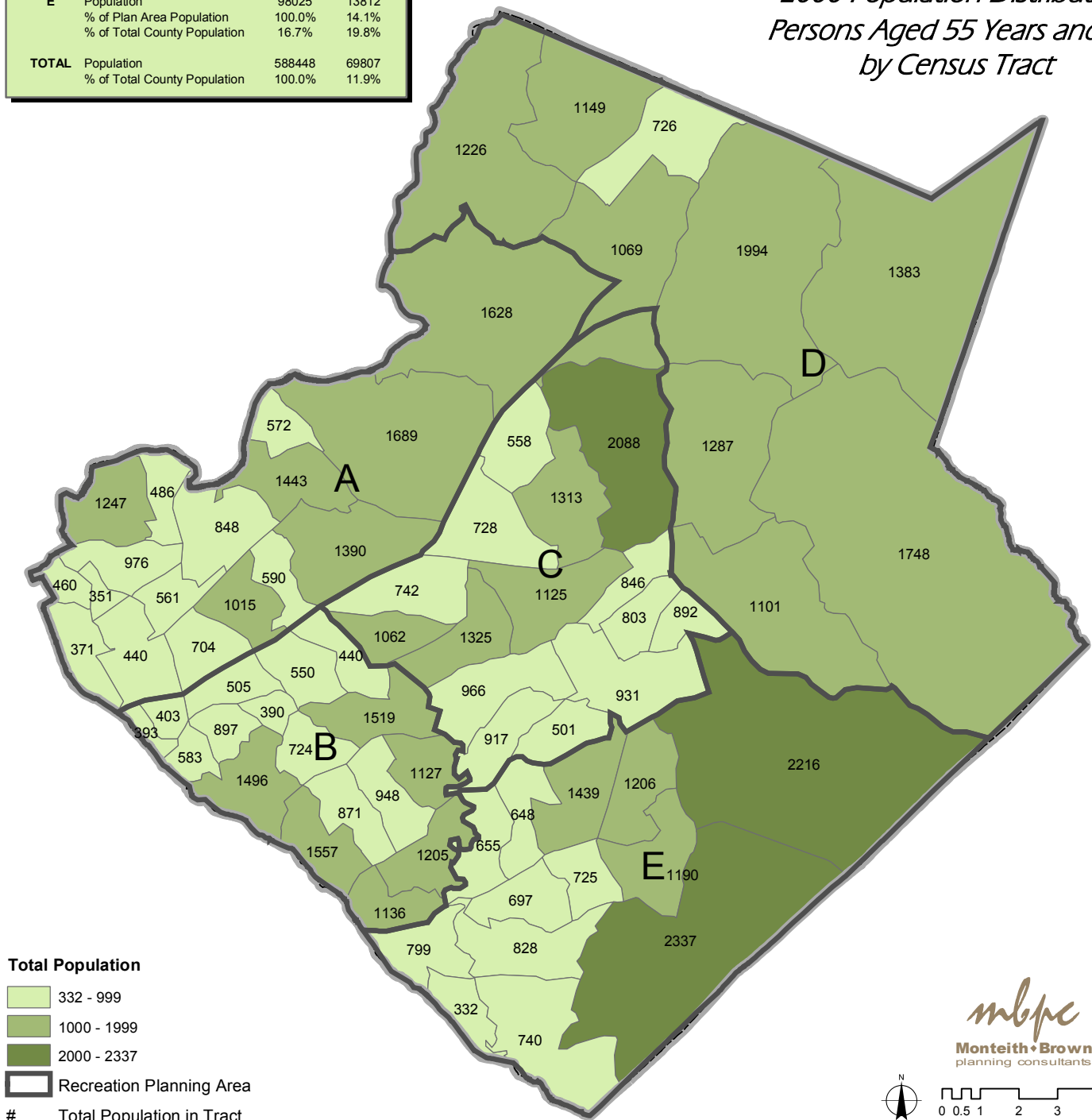
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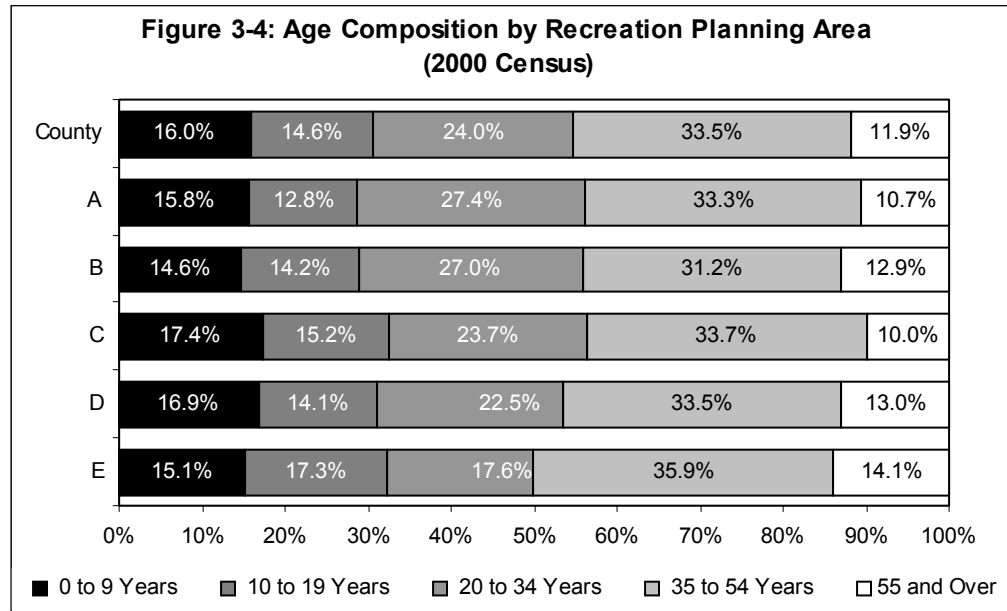
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Map 3-6
2000 Population Distribution
Persons Aged 55 Years and Up
by Census Tract

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY RECREATION PLANNING AREA

Planning Area		Total Population	55 and Over
A	Population	136028	14551
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	10.7%
	% of Total County Population	23.1%	20.8%
B	Population	114069	14744
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	12.9%
	% of Total County Population	19.4%	21.1%
C	Population	150202	15017
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	10.0%
	% of Total County Population	25.5%	21.5%
D	Population	90124	11683
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	13.0%
	% of Total County Population	15.3%	16.7%
E	Population	98025	13812
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	14.1%
	% of Total County Population	16.7%	19.8%
TOTAL	Population	588448	69807
	% of Total County Population	100.0%	11.9%





Note: Population forecasts by age cohorts are only available in 5-year increments. Since the immediate term of this Master Plan is 2004 to 2009, the forecast years of 2000 and 2010 will be the focus of this analysis. Projections by age group are not currently available by geographic area or recreation planning area.

Table 3-3 contains the population forecasts by age group for the 10-year period of 2000 to 2010.

Table 3-3: Projected Growth Rates by Age Group (Gwinnett County, 2000 to 2010)

Age Group	Population Forecast		Change (2000 to 2010)	
	2000	2010	Growth	%
0 to 9	95,605	109,650	14,045	14.7%
10 to 19	87,297	123,197	35,900	41.1%
20 to 34	143,268	159,516	16,248	11.3%
35 to 54	199,701	282,743	83,042	41.6%
55 and up	70,781	166,830	96,049	135.7%
Total	596,652	841,936	245,284	41.1%

As indicated earlier, significant population growth is anticipated in the 55-plus age group, which is expected to increase by 136% between 2000 and 2010. More modest (but still considerable) growth is also forecasted for the 10 to 19 and 35 to 54 age groups during this same time period, while the 0 to 9 and 20 to 34 age cohorts will experience slower growth. Of note, Figure 3-3 indicates that the 55-plus age group is expected to continue experiencing rapid growth well beyond 2010, however, the size of the 35 to 54 age group will level off and actually decline slightly past 2010. Growth among the 0 to 9 and 10 to 19 age groups should remain moderate, but steady over the long-term.

3.1.4 Household Composition

The composition of households experienced significant changes in the 1980s with a dramatic decline in "traditional" households (households with married adults and at least one child under the age of eighteen) and an increase in the number of single parent households. Household composition changed very little in the 1990s, however, with only slight declines in the percentage of "traditional" households and married couples without children at home.

According to the 2002 Needs Assessment Survey, 55% of Gwinnett County's households contain no children. Coupled with a dramatic aging of the population, it is imperative that Gwinnett County re-examine its ability to meet the recreational needs of the adult and senior markets.

3.1.5 Income and Education

Gwinnett County remains an affluent community, with the mean household income level increasing from \$48,541 to \$70,206 between 1990 and 2000. Furthermore, the percentage of persons 25 years and older with a bachelor's degree or higher increased from 29.6% in 1990 to 34.1% in 2000. Both college attendance and median household income levels in Gwinnett County continue to exceed Atlanta Region and State averages.

With education and income both being key indicators of recreational participation levels, it is anticipated that Gwinnett County will continue to experience high levels of interest and demand for leisure facilities and programming.

3.1.6 Ethnic Communities

Tremendous increases in the ethnic and racial diversity of Gwinnett County is one of the most significant trends witnessed during the 1990s and into the 21st century. While Gwinnett's total population increased by 67% between 1990 and 2000, the County's minority population increased by nearly 400%. The percentage of the County's population identifying themselves as White decreased from 90.9% to 72.7% over this span, while the Black population increased from 5.2% to 13.3%, and Asians increased from 2.9% to 7.2%. The Hispanic population (of any race) increased from 2.4% to 10.9%, although this group is historically undercounted in every census.

Figure 3-5 illustrates the various ethnic communities that are present within each Recreation Planning Area. RPAs B and A are by far the most ethnically diverse areas of the County, with both having considerable Black, Asian and Hispanic communities. Maps 3-7 to 3-10 show the population densities of the various ethnic communities by Census tract. The large concentration of these ethnic communities along the I-85 corridor is particularly evident.

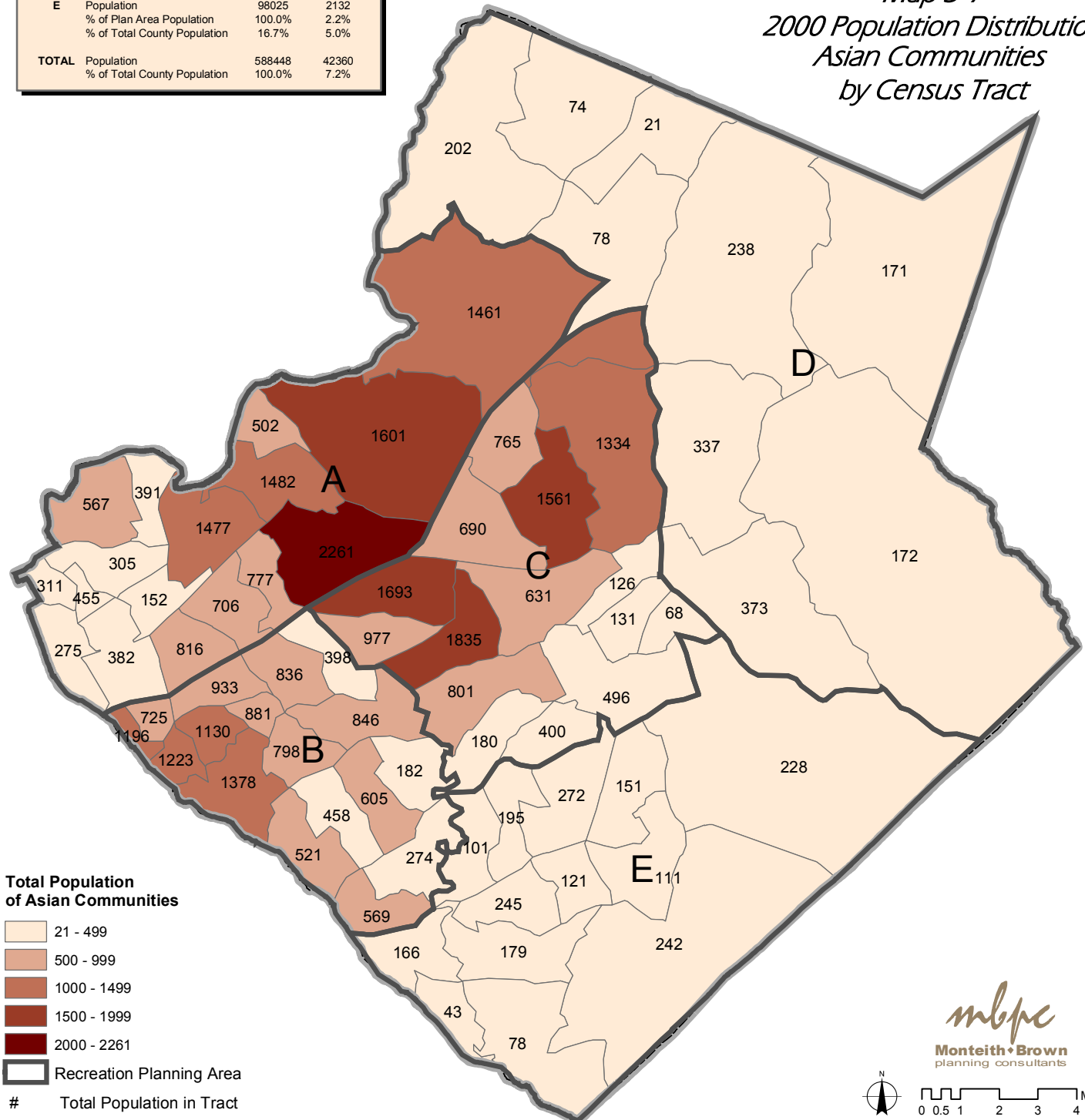


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*Map 3-7
2000 Population Distribution
Asian Communities
by Census Tract*

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY RECREATION PLANNING AREA			
Planning Area		Total Population	Asian Population
A	Population	136028	13724
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	10.1%
	% of Total County Population	23.1%	32.4%
B	Population	114069	12953
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	11.4%
	% of Total County Population	19.4%	30.6%
C	Population	150202	11885
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	7.9%
	% of Total County Population	25.5%	28.1%
D	Population	90124	1666
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	1.8%
	% of Total County Population	15.3%	3.9%
E	Population	98025	2132
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	2.2%
	% of Total County Population	16.7%	5.0%
TOTAL	Population	588448	42360
	% of Total County Population	100.0%	7.2%



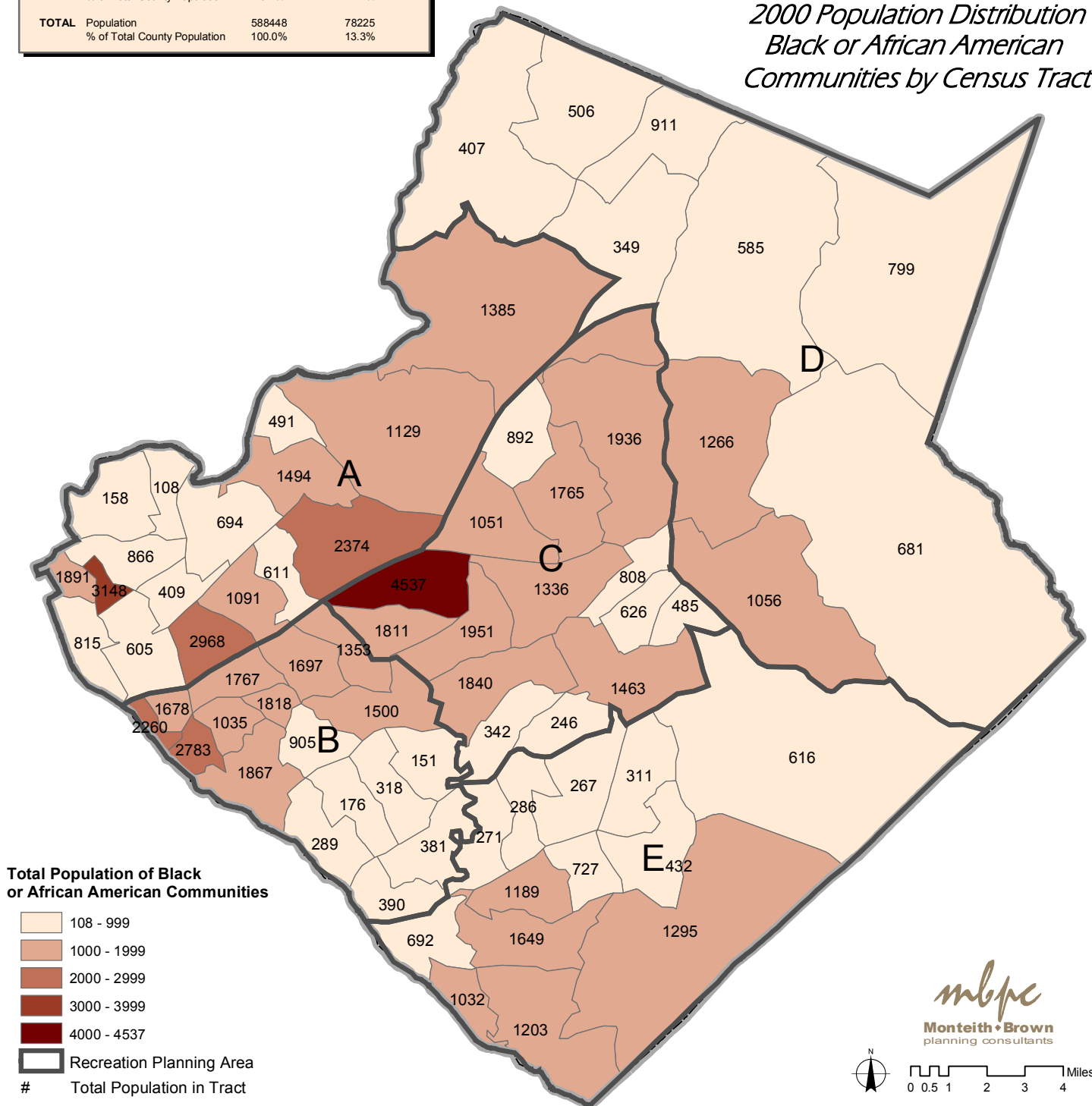


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Map 3-8
*2000 Population Distribution
Black or African American
Communities by Census Tract*

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY RECREATION PLANNING AREA			
Planning Area		Total Population	Black or African American Population
A	Population	136028	20050
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	14.7%
	% of Total County Population	23.1%	25.6%
B	Population	114069	20368
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	17.9%
	% of Total County Population	19.4%	26.0%
C	Population	150202	21276
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	14.2%
	% of Total County Population	25.5%	27.2%
D	Population	90124	6560
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	7.3%
	% of Total County Population	15.3%	8.4%
E	Population	98025	9970
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	10.2%
	% of Total County Population	16.7%	12.7%
TOTAL	Population	588448	78225
	% of Total County Population	100.0%	13.3%



**POPULATION DISTRIBUTION
BY RECREATION PLANNING AREA**

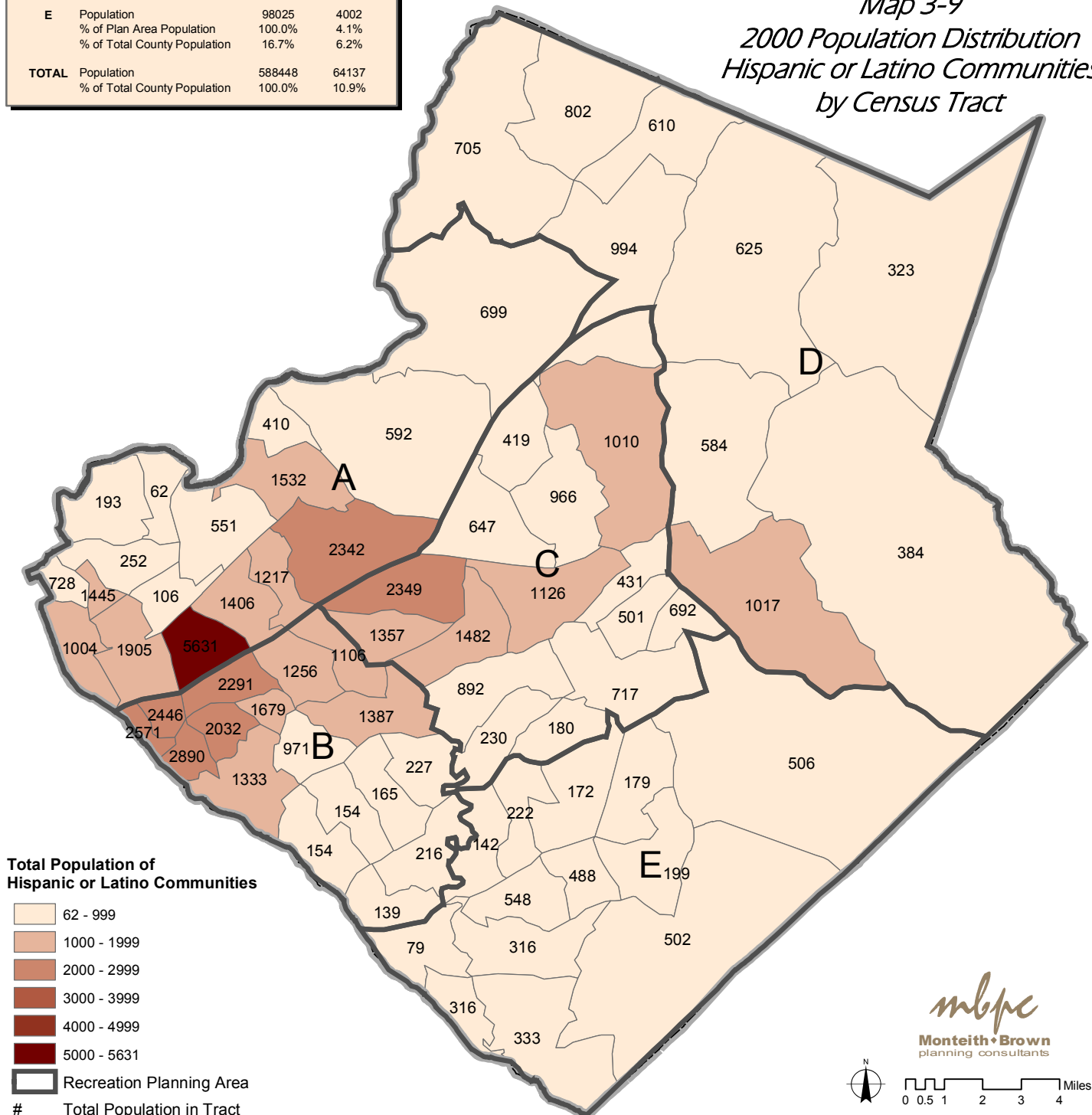
Planning Area		Total Population	Hispanic Latino Population
A	Population	136028	19981
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	14.7%
	% of Total County Population	23.1%	31.2%
B	Population	114069	21017
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	18.4%
	% of Total County Population	19.4%	32.8%
C	Population	150202	13093
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	8.7%
	% of Total County Population	25.5%	20.4%
D	Population	90124	6044
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	6.7%
	% of Total County Population	15.3%	9.4%
E	Population	98025	4002
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	4.1%
	% of Total County Population	16.7%	6.2%
TOTAL	Population	588448	64137
	% of Total County Population	100.0%	10.9%



**WINNETT COUNTY,
GEORGIA**

2004
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*Map 3-9
2000 Population Distribution
Hispanic or Latino Communities
by Census Tract*



**POPULATION DISTRIBUTION
BY RECREATION PLANNING AREA**

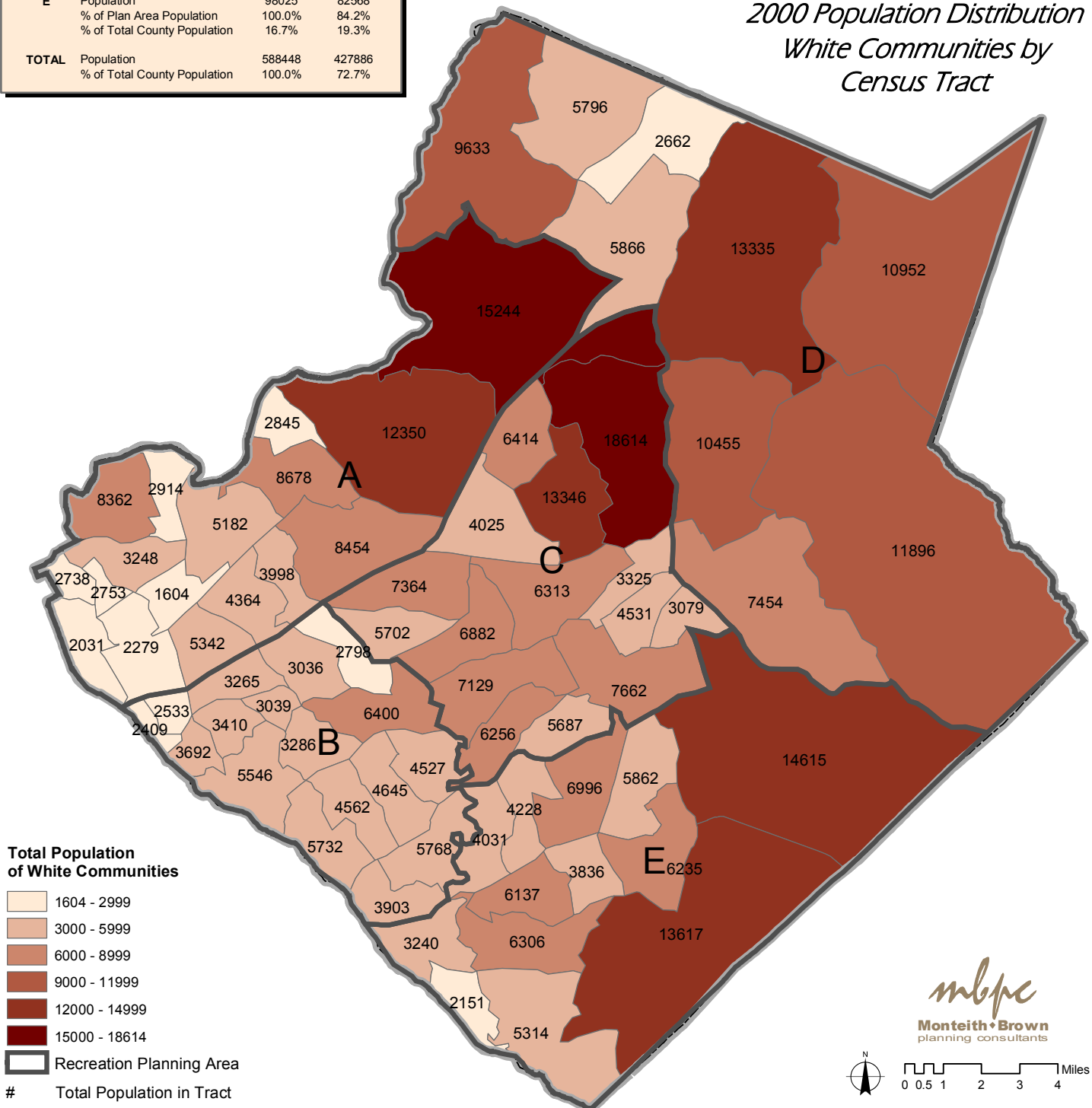
Planning Area		Total Population	White Population
A	Population	136028	90327
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	66.4%
	% of Total County Population	23.1%	21.1%
B	Population	114069	68551
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	60.1%
	% of Total County Population	19.4%	16.0%
C	Population	150202	108388
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	72.2%
	% of Total County Population	25.5%	25.3%
D	Population	90124	78049
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	86.6%
	% of Total County Population	15.3%	18.2%
E	Population	98025	82568
	% of Plan Area Population	100.0%	84.2%
	% of Total County Population	16.7%	19.3%
TOTAL	Population	588448	427886
	% of Total County Population	100.0%	72.7%

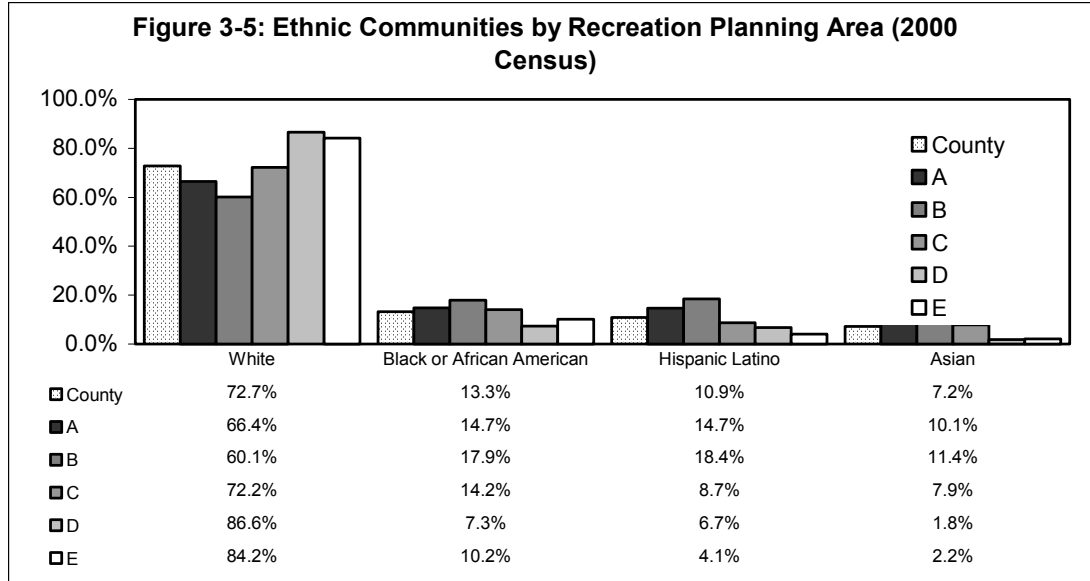


**GWINNETT COUNTY,
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*Map 3-10
2000 Population Distribution
White Communities by
Census Tract*





3.2 LEISURE TRENDS

The analysis of trends is a critical factor in parks and recreation planning. An understanding of national and local trends will help Gwinnett County anticipate future demand for recreation facilities and programming. These trends are not just limited to those affecting participation in leisure activities. Values and attitudes that people place on leisure also influence the environment, willingness to pay for services, and special needs.

The following trends are based on extensive research of National, State/Regional studies and published research from individual sport federations. To provide a "Gwinnett" face to these trends, local trends have also been identified using the participation data that has been provided by the County and by drawing comparisons between the County's 1995 and 2002 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Surveys.

Note: The reader will note some differences in the relative priority of some sports and activities. The discrepancies in some cases relate to differences in the age of the survey population, the frequency of participation, survey design, sampling methodology, etc. For the purposes of this analysis, which is intended to identify major trends and influences, these differences are not considered to be significant. The intent of documenting the trends is to provide a base for the Master Plan of the major trends and influences that will affect the programs, services and facilities that need to be provided for residents.

3.2.1 Leisure Trends – DemographicsAging and Household Composition

Nationally, the trend towards early retirement combined with an older age cohort that is living longer, is fitter and healthier, and has a higher disposable income than previous generations indicates that there will be a growing need to consider older adults in recreation facility planning. Trends research indicates that the new senior citizen is maintaining many of the exercise and fitness habits of their youth, although at a gentler pace.

Relative to national trends, Gwinnett County has a significantly more youthful demographic profile. While Gwinnett may not be aging at the same rate as some other communities, the needs of adults and seniors will continue to be an important aspect of recreation and facility planning. In 2002, 55% of the households in Gwinnett County contained no children. In Gwinnett, the percentage of total households with children under the age of eighteen has remained relatively constant between 1990 (44%) and 2000 (45%)¹. Long term predictions for Gwinnett anticipate that the County will continue to maintain its younger profile as older residents move out when they reach retirement age.

From a recreation facility and programming perspective, Gwinnett County will have to plan for the needs of a significant number of young households with children as well as adults. Those young households are the traditional users of recreational facilities; however as the trends data indicates, older adults are becoming more active and are expected to be greater consumers of recreational programming and facility users than in the past.

Income and Education

Participation in recreation has a high correlation to both the income and education of the participant. The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment 2000² found that higher income earners have higher levels of participation and participate in a wider range of activities. Education is also a factor – participation in recreation increases with education levels. In Gwinnett, the mean household income in 2000 was \$70,206, significantly above the mean household incomes of Georgia and the United States (\$56,625 and \$56,604 respectively). As the average income and education levels of Gwinnett's population are higher than national averages, Gwinnett should continue to anticipate high levels of interest and demand for leisure facilities and programming.

The Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey (2002) reported low levels of County facility use by lower income households (under \$20,000). Barriers to participation for lower income

¹ Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation 2002 Needs Assessment Survey, A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia, April 2003

² 1999-2002 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, (Versions 1 to 13), USDDA Forest Service and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Tennessee.
<http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends/>

households should be addressed in the Master Plan; specifically policies with respect to subsidies and aspects of recreational programming such as location of facilities should be considered in order to improve accessibility among lower income households. The issue that was identified in the 2002 survey was difficulty in accessing some neighborhood parks due to a lack of sidewalks and heavy traffic. The sheer physical size of Gwinnett makes access to parks difficult without the use of an automobile (there is only one park on a bus route). Linkages of multi-purpose trails into communities have yet to be fully achieved. This is an issue that is addressed in some depth in the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan. To the extent that is possible, the Master Plan should also be supportive of park planning policies and improvements that work to reduce physical barriers which impede access to county parks.

Increased Racial and Ethnic Diversity

The American demographic profile is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. This trend is also present in Gwinnett County. For example, 2000 Census data indicates an increase in the percentage of Hispanic, Asian, and African-American residents in Gwinnett. How does this influence recreation and leisure participation? Individual sport federations with declining numbers (e.g., USA swimming and USA Tennis) have developed programs that seek to attract a more diverse ethnic mix to their respective sports. While certain demographic variables may have more significance in terms of participation (e.g., income and education), sports such as soccer, which is the most popular sport internationally, serve to gain from the trend towards a more ethnically diverse population.

Ethnic diversity in other communities has resulted in increased demands for more educational programming for children and teens and - in areas experiencing growth in Asian communities - requests for more table tennis, tennis and badminton, to name a few. The Hispanic population of Gwinnett has specified a desire for locations and settings that enhance social interaction for the family as a unit. Park plaza designs, walkways, picnic areas, and informal play fields meet many of the needs of this ethnic community.

Work and Leisure Patterns

Lack of time is one of the main factors affecting participation in recreation. While older adults may have more time and money to participate in recreation, working age households are finding themselves to be increasingly "time-stressed" (the average travel time to work for Gwinnettians increased by 6 minutes to 32.2 minutes between 1990 and 2000). This impacts directly on recreational providers by demands for longer hours of access and for multi-purpose facilities where more than one family member can participate at the same time (e.g., swimming, fitness, library, gymnasium activities, etc.). Study after study confirms that "lack of time" is one of the major factors influencing recreational participation;

other factors include access to convenient facilities, safe environments, income and education.

The time crunch also affects children and, as children have traditionally been the major target group of recreation providers, this is a significant issue for any recreation department. Free time, defined as "time left over after eating, sleeping, personal care, attending school, preschool or day-care", has decreased from 40 percent to 25 percent of a child's day according to a 1998 study of American children 12 and under³. That study also found that the average amount of time spent outdoors each day has also declined dramatically. For the 9 to 12 age bracket, the average amount of time spent outdoors declined 50% between 1981 and 1998, from 95 minutes to 47 minutes. What does this mean to Gwinnett County? Given the pressures of school, homework and housework (believe it or not, kids are spending more time doing housework!), programs and facilities must be convenient and accessible for children as well as adults.

Americans have been taking shorter vacations and are staying closer to home, a trend first observed by the Outdoor Recreation Industry Association in 1997⁴. This is a trend that continued in 2003 for reasons attributed to U.S. economic factors and the Iraq war⁵. Sport and recreation facilities that serve as entertainment venues are gaining ground as a result. In Gwinnett, facilities and venues such as the Gwinnett Civic and Cultural Center/Arena and Lake Lanier Islands are ideally suited to capitalize on this trend.

Cyclical Nature of Sport and Leisure Participation

What's in? What's out? Events and individuals play a role in the popularity of sport. Basketball's growth in the 90s has been attributed to the popularity of Michael Jordan and the promotional and marketing efforts of the NBA. The Olympics and the performance of a given athlete or team can also influence participation. For example, gold medal wins in the last two summer Olympics have spurred interest in women's fast-pitch softball. World-class facilities in and around Gwinnett as a result of the 1996 Summer Olympics have also helped to promote certain sports.

A fairly recent trend is non-motorized scooter riding (in Gwinnett County parks, only non-motorized scooters are permitted). Introduced (or re-introduced) in the late nineties, the latest Superstudy of Sport Participation

³ University of Michigan, Press Release, "America's Children--- Part 1, How they Spend their time", November 6th, 1998 and Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, published excerpt from Outdoor Recreation in America 2002,

<http://www.umich.edu/~newsinfo/Releases/1998/Nov98/r110998a.html>

⁴ Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association and the Outdoor Industry Association, Trends Impacting Outdoor Recreation, 1997,

http://www.outdoorindustry.org/market_research_articles/97soi/trends.htm

⁵ The Christian Science Monitor, Summer Travel Survey, May 27, 2003 edition, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0527/p13s02-wmcn.html>

(2003 edition)⁶, reveals that it is the 5th most popular activity for children over the age of six.

As noted earlier, the marketing programs of specific sport organizations can also influence sport participation. For example, USA Tennis has in the past offered free tennis lessons and is actively promoting their sport among populations that have historically not played the game. USA Baseball has similar plans in place.

From a recreation provider's perspective, it is essential that participation trends for sport and leisure activities be closely monitored in order to determine if the activity is emerging, has peaked, or on the decline.

3.2.2 Leisure Trends – Participation

Outdoor Participation Trends

Table 3-4 shows the percentage of persons 16 years and older in the United States who participated in twelve different categories of outdoor recreation activities. The factors that link the most popular activities are their low cost, minimal physical exertion and that no special equipment or developed skills are required. Of the ten most popular activities, four focus on viewing and learning.

Table 3-4: National Participation Levels in Outdoor Activities (1999-2002)

Type of Activity	Percent of Population 16 or older (millions)
Participated in Any Activity	98.5
Trail/Street/Road Activities*	90.3
Traditional Social Activities (e.g. picnicking)	83.4
Viewing and photographing activities	80.5
Viewing and learning activities	72.6
Driving for pleasure	66.9
Swimming activities	66.3
Outdoor Adventure activities	61.5
Boating/floating/sailing activities	41.3
Fishing	34.1
Snow and Ice Activities	29.2
Outdoor Team Sports	29.6
Hunting	12.3

* includes bicycling, mountain biking, walking, horse riding and hiking.

Source: 1999 –2002 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, USDA Forest Service and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee,
<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/trends/Nsre/update032502.pdf>

The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE), which is the oldest on-going outdoor participation survey in the U.S. (first survey in

⁶ Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, Press Release, "Children's Sports Interest Run the Gamut", May 30, 2003; <http://www.sgma.com/press/2003/press1054214405-13555.html>

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1960) has shown an increase in the proportion of Americans who are participating in outdoor activities. Looking at the activities that have grown the slowest, this list includes outdoor team sports (which have risen by only 10.6% between 1982 and 2000), compared to substantial growth in bird watching (235.9%) and walking (91.2%)⁷.

Gwinnett County residents have also signaled their interest in parks and open spaces in the 2002 Needs Assessment Survey. Eighty-four percent (84%) of respondents said they support the use of SPLOST monies for parkland acquisition and development⁸. This is consistent with the results of the 1995 Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey at that time 82% of respondents support renewal of the 1% local option sales tax to improve or expand county parks.

Trails and Linkages Best Bet for Meeting Fitness/Leisure Needs

The single most popular outdoor activity according to the most recent NSRE study (1999-2002) is walking outdoors⁹. When it comes to trail, street and road activities, bicycling is second to walking according to this study.

Of the top five most popular sports in the USA in 2001 according to the Superstudy of Sports Participation (2002 edition), recreational walking (84.2 million participants) was ranked second, surpassed only by recreational swimming (93.6 million participants). While there is a difference in ranking between the NSRE studies and the Superstudy reports, walking is clearly a favored activity. As previously noted, recreational walking, bicycling and recreational swimming were not included in the most recent (2003 edition) Superstudy report. Table 3-5 shows the relative ranking of sports that use trails and linkages for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002 using data drawn from the Superstudy of Sports Participation for those years. Fitness walking, day hiking and running/jogging have risen in popularity. Regardless of the survey instrument, walking and trail related activities are among the favored activities of the American public.

⁷ Cordell, K., G. Green (US Forest Service, Athens Georgia) & B. Stephens (University of Tennessee) Trends 2000:Outdoor Recreation: An American Lifestyle Trend, <http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends>

⁸ Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation 2002 Needs Assessment Survey, The A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia

⁹ 1999-2002 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, USDA Forest Service and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Tennessee. <http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends>

Table 3-5: Ranking of Sports in the US that use Trails and Linkages (2000 - 2002)

Sports Activity	Rank in 2000	Rank in 2001	Rank in 2002
Recreational Walking	2	2	n.a.
Recreational Bicycling	4	4	n.a.
Day Hiking	9	12	8
Fitness Walking	13	13	7
Running/Jogging	14	14	10
In-Line Skating	16	18	18
Horseback Riding	27	28	28
Scooters (non-motorized)	n/a	29	n.a.

Note: Ranks are based on those 5 years of age or older, participating at least once

Source: Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, Press Release. "Sports and Activities which Dominate U.S. Participation", April 4th 2002 and "Top 30 Participation Activities in the U.S.", April 9, 2003, <http://www.sgma.com/press/2003/press1049911418-10230.html> and http://www.goodnewsforsports.com/NewsRelease/current/0502_ActivitiesDominate.htm

The Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation 2002 Needs Assessment Survey also found trails and open space parks/greenways to be very important to Gwinnett residents. When asked about favored activities at County Operated facilities, walking emerged as a clear favorite (38% of respondents), significantly above the next favored activity (swimming 8%). Walking was the single most frequent activity for each of the following age groups in Gwinnett County:

- 18-30 year olds (29%)
- 31-54 year olds (37%)
- 55+ (45%)

Based on the Needs Assessment Survey and national trends, Gwinnett County should continue to focus on trails and greenways as the County's network of trails and open spaces collectively address many of the preferred recreational activities of its residents.

Importance of Community-Owned Facilities for Youth Sports

The National Council of Youth Sports 2001 membership survey indicates that 52% of indoor programs rely on community-owned facilities. For outdoor programs, 83% rely on community-owned facilities, suggesting that nationally, local jurisdictions play an important role in providing facilities for youth sports.¹⁰ According to the Gwinnett County 2002 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, 74% of respondents used a county park facility for recreational or leisure activities which indicates that, in Gwinnett, the public at large rely heavily on community owned facilities.

¹⁰ National Council of Youth Sports, Report on Trends and Participation in Organized Youth Sports (2001 edition); <http://www.ncys.org>

Health and Fitness Levels

One in four adults engage in little or no regular physical activity according to the 2000 National Health Interview Study¹¹. As noted previously, education and income are positive predictors for higher levels of activity, which suggests that Gwinnett residents are likely to exceed this national average.

Levels of “frequent fitness participation” (defined as participation in one or more individual physical activities on 100 or more occasions annually) have been essentially stagnant since 1990. In 1990, 51.5 million Americans were frequent fitness participants. In 1999, this level had declined to 50.4 million.¹²

Obesity levels are a concern nationally. The “epidemic” of childhood obesity is fuelling new federal initiatives to increase activity and fitness levels among American youth. The President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Strategy targets improved levels of activity within the school system. However, the strategy also identifies the need for “communities to develop and promote the use of safe, well maintained and close to home sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle paths, trails, parks, recreational facilities”¹³.

Historically, teenagers have been the fittest age group, however, trends research shows declining participation numbers for the 12-17 year age bracket. According to the 2001 Superstudy Report, seniors were the most physically active age group (26% of those over the age of 55 were frequent fitness participants) whereas only 18% of the 12-17 age bracket were frequent fitness participants. This statistic has two implications for Gwinnett: one being that adults and older adults in particular, are going to be using County facilities in increasing numbers; the other that the County should anticipate greater efforts on the part of local community organizations to engage the inactive teenager in active recreation. As a direct provider of recreational programming, the County should also ensure that its own programming helps youth get the “fitness hook” or get hooked on fitness.

In Gwinnett, the 2002 Needs Assessment Survey reported that the majority of families of households with young children believe that the county is doing an excellent job of meeting the needs of their children. The Survey concluded that a “substantial” number of respondents believe that the county could be doing a better job of meeting the needs of teenagers, young adults (20 to 30) and seniors. Facilities and programs aimed at young adults, seniors and teens therefore need to be given additional consideration during the Master Plan process. Note: only 14% of

¹¹ “Physical Activity among Adults: United States 2000”, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control and Prevention; <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>

¹² Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, Press Release, “Booming Health Clubs, Slipping Fitness Participation and Healthier Diets All Coexist in Overweight Society”; http://www.americansportsdata.com/pr_08-28-00.asp

¹³ Presidents Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Fact Sheet, http://www.fitness.gov/physical_activity_fact_sheet.html

respondents over the age of 54 felt that the county was doing an “excellent job” meeting their needs.

Planning for the “New “ Senior

Looking specifically at the facility/programming needs of older adults, the trends research suggests that the recreational pursuits of the “new” and future” senior citizen are going to be different from previous generations. While the senior citizen of past generations pursued more passive activities, today’s senior citizen is, as previously mentioned, fitter and more interested in maintaining their current exercise habits, albeit at a more leisurely pace. The traditional dedicated seniors’ facility typically does not permit a range of active recreational pursuits. To better meet the needs of the “new” senior, Gwinnett should look to a multi-purpose facility model where a range of active and passive recreational opportunities can be provided.

Some of the specific facility and programming trends associated with older adults:

- increased demand for computer centers in recreation centers to meet the growing interest of older Americans in digital technology, web design, emailing, etc.;
- fitness pools for water walking, water aerobics and lap swimming with warmer water;
- a re-thinking in terminology; the aging baby boomers don’t consider themselves to be “Seniors”; terms to use instead of "senior center" include adult center or social center;
- some trend watchers anticipate lower time commitments to volunteering which could have an impact on parks and recreation agencies who rely on older volunteers;
- life long learning / interest in short courses/workshops; and
- The shortage of time factor will continue into retirement; evening and weekend time slots will be used by this age group more than previous senior citizens.¹⁴

Teen Recreation/Leisure Needs Rising to the Top of the Agenda

Survey after survey finds that the needs of teenagers are less well served than other age groups. Due to the sheer size of the age cohort at this time (children of the baby boomers), the voices of teenagers have become louder. The trend research indicates that individual sports such as skateboarding and in-line skating are popular with teens as well as activities such as wall-climbing.

¹⁴ Ziegler, J. “Recreating Retirement: How will Baby Boomers reshape leisure in their 60s? National Park and Recreation Association, http://www.nrpa.org/story.cfm?story_id=1222&departmentID=18&publicationID=11

In research undertaken by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants in other jurisdictions the message from teens and the list of facility “wants” have been consistent:

- dedicated space for teens which provides an opportunity for casual socializing and a range of active and passive recreational activities;
- basketball;
- skateboarding; and
- age segregated opportunities at recreational facilities; for example, the 17 year old doesn’t want to swim or play basketball with a 12 year old.

Female Participation Increasing

Girls and women are participating in outdoor recreation and sports generally in greater numbers. The National Council of Youth Sports Annual Survey (2001 edition) reported that girls are participating at younger ages but that the overall percentage of boys and girls participating has remained the same since 1997 (63% for boys and 37% for girls). Female participation increased for every age group other than the 16-18 year age group¹⁵. When it comes to organized sport, the 2000 Survey of Organized Youth Team Sports Participation in the U.S.A indicates that there is greater gender parity (59% boys, 48% girls)¹⁶.

Looking to the future, Gwinnett can anticipate increased numbers of girls and women participating in sports and recreation.

3.2.3 Leisure Trends - Team Sports

General

The Annual Superstudy of Sports Participation (2002 edition) identified that the largest gains in sport participation between 1998 and 2001 were in wakeboarding, artificial wall climbing, paintball and snowboarding. The largest number of active participants, however, are still engaged in team sports; approximately 26 million Americans (ages 6 to 24) were “frequent” participants in team sports (25+ days a year) compared to 14.2 million “frequent” participants in identified “extreme” sports.¹⁷ This suggests that despite the emphasis on more individual activities, the provision of facilities to meet the needs of team sports will continue to be a focus for recreation departments. From a facility provider’s perspective, there is a need to recognize the diversity of recreation pursuits and to promote a variety of opportunities.

¹⁵ National Council of Youth Sports, Report on Trends and Participation in Organized Youth Sports (2001 edition); <http://www.ncys.org>

¹⁶ Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, Press Release, “New Survey: 54% of U.S. Youngsters Play Organized Sport”; <http://www.sgma.com>

¹⁷ Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, Press Release. “Growth of New Millennial Pursuits Outpaces Traditional Activities”, August 1, 2002; http://www.americansportsdata.com/pr_08-01-02_3.asp

Table 3-6 shows that participation levels in team sports declined between 1998 and 2001 for all major team sports except soccer and fast pitch softball. The single most popular sport team sport for all ages is basketball. Lacrosse (not classified as a major team sport due to lower participation numbers), has also grown (see also sub-section on lacrosse). A decline in participation in pick-up games is one of the major factors that industry experts attribute to the decline in team sports.

Table 3-6: Participation Levels in “Traditional” Sports (participated at least once in last 12 months)

Team Sport	Participants, 2001 (thousands)	3-year change (1998-2001)	14-year change (1987-2001)
Softball (fast pitch)	4,117	11%	n.a
Soccer	19,042	5%	24%
Football (touch)	16,675	-4%	-18%
Softball (total)	20,123	-6%	-35%
Baseball	11,405	-7%	-25%
Basketball	38,663	-9%	8%
Volleyball	24,123	-9%	-33%

Source: Sporting Goods Association of America, Press Release “Growth of New Millennial Pursuits Outpaces Traditional Activities”, August 1, 2002, <http://www.americansportsdata.com/pr-08-01-02-3.asp>.

Youth Sport Participation

Basketball and soccer are the most popular team sports (refer to Table 3-7).

Table 3-7: Most Popular Organized (team) Sports for Youngsters (6-17) in 2000

Rank	Sport	Total Participants (millions)
1	Basketball	10.0
2	Soccer	9.6
3	Baseball	7.5
4	Slow Pitch Softball	3.6
5	Tackle Football	2.9
6	Swimming/diving	2.7
7	Track and Field	2.6
8	Volleyball (court)	2.4
9	Cheerleading	1.9
10	Touch Football	1.4
11	Fast-pitch Softball	1.4
12	Tennis	1.1

Source: Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, excerpt from Organized Youth Team Sports Participation in the US, Press Release “New Survey: 54% of U.S. youngsters Play Organized Sports”, May 1, 2001 http://www.daconline.net/press_release's.htm

A distinction is made between “Sport” and “Organized (Team) Sport” by SGMA. The most recently released survey of the most popular sports for youth rising out of the 2003 Superstudy of Sports study (based on frequent participation defined as 25+ days a year), found that 6 of the top 15 sports

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were team sports, the most popular being basketball (see Table 3-8). In-line skating, non-motorized scooter riding, skateboarding and fishing are some of the more popular individual sports or activities for American youth.

Table 3-8: Most Popular Sports (individual and team) for Youth (age 6+) in 2002

Rank	Sport	Total Participants (millions)
1	Basketball	10.1
2	Soccer	6.1
3	In-line skating	4.9
4	Baseball	4.0
5	Scooter riding (non-motorized)	3.6
6	Calisthenics	3.2
7	Running/jogging	3.1
8	Skateboarding	2.9
9	Freshwater fishing	2.9
10	Stretching	2.6
11	Court Volleyball	2.4
12	Touch Football	2.4
13	Slow-Pitch Softball	2.0
14	Billiards/Pool	1.9
15	Tent Camping	1.6

Source: Sporting Goods Association of America, Press Release, Excerpt from the Superstudy of Sports Participation - Frequent Sport Participant, 2003 edition, "Children's Sports Interests Run the Gamut", May 30, 2003; <http://sgma.com/press/2003/press1054214405-13555.html>

Generally, Gwinnett children and teens mirror the sport and recreational pursuits identified in national trend surveys. There are some differences; swimming for children under and over 13 is more highly favored in Gwinnett and bicycling was identified as a preferred activity. Perhaps both can be attributed to the quality of Gwinnett's bicycle trails and the high "fun quotient" at the family aquatic centers. Table 3-9 provides a summary of the favored activities by Gwinnett County children and teenagers.

Table 3-9: Favored Recreational Activities of Gwinnett Children & Teenagers

Gwinnett Children (under 13)		Gwinnett Teenagers (13 to 17)	
Activity	Percentage	Activity	Percentage
swimming	31%	basketball	27%
playgrounds	24%	swimming	24%
soccer	20%	baseball	20%
baseball	20%	soccer	18%
bicycling	20%	football	17%
basketball	17%	softball	9%
softball	9%	running/jogging	9%
tennis	9%	cheerleading	8%
gymnastics	4%	--	--
skating	4%	--	--

Source: Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation 2002 Needs Assessment Survey, The A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia

The Survey of Organized Team Sports Participation (2000) also identified the relationship between income and sport participation. Nationally, households with organized youth team sport members have an average annual income of \$64,500, 15% higher than the average household income of \$56,200 for all families with children ages 6 to 17. One third of youth sport participants had an average annual income of \$75,000 or more.¹⁸

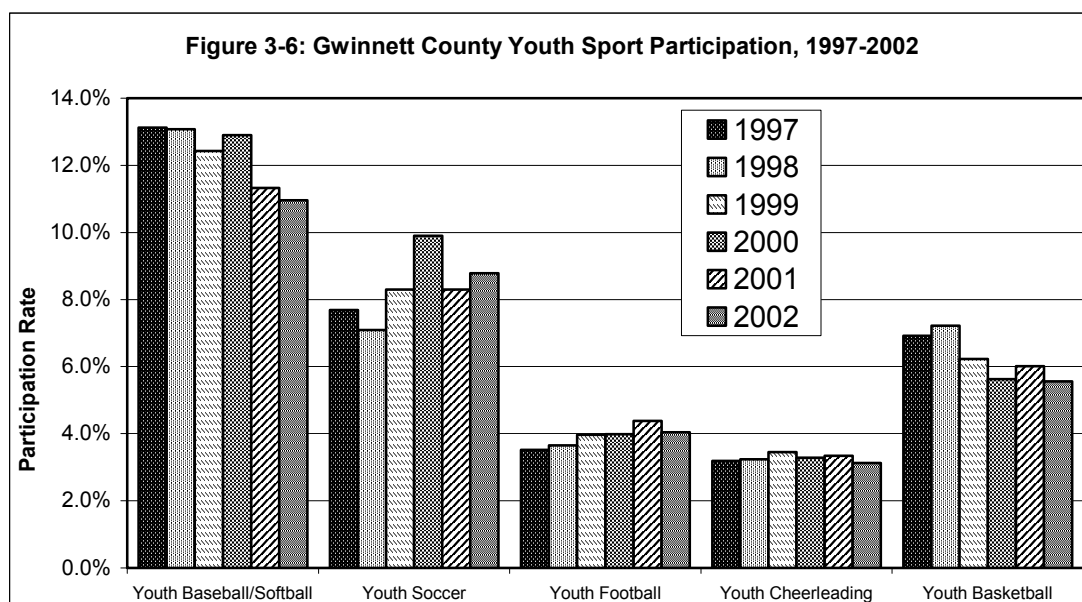
Soccer

After years of tremendous growth, soccer participation may have peaked. Reported data from the 2003 Superstudy of Sports Participation (2002 participation data) shows a decline in soccer participation from 2001, both in terms of frequent participants and those who played at least once during the year. Participation among core players (those who play 52 days or more), however, increased by 8.2 percent between 2002 and 2003. From a recreation facility provider's perspective this indicates that while the number of players may be registering a slight decline, field use may in fact be increasing due to an increasing number of players with greater numbers of practices and games.

In Gwinnett, soccer participation numbers declined slightly between 2000 and 2002 according to statistics provided by the Community Services Department. Between 1997 and 2002, however, soccer registration figures increased by nearly 50% in Gwinnett, illustrating the rapid growth in the late 90s. While the numbers of participants in baseball/softball are still higher than soccer in Gwinnett, the 2002 household survey found that there was no difference in the relative popularity of soccer and baseball (not including softball) amongst children under 13.

Figure 3-6 illustrates the cyclical nature of youth team sports in Gwinnett County over a six-year period. This graphic shows that, while registrations have increased in all sports, relative to the population only soccer and football have seen increases, while youth baseball/softball and basketball have been capturing fewer and fewer of the youth population in recent years.

¹⁸ Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association and the National Council of Youth Sports, Press Release, "New Survey: 54% of U.S. youngsters play Organized Sports", May 1, 2001; http://www.daconline.net/press_release's.htm



The 2003 national data that is available indicates that adult participation in soccer is growing. A 30% increase was observed between 2002 and 2003 for adults 18 years and older, while a 97% increase was tracked for the 25-34 age bracket¹⁹. This is likely tied to youth participants aging into adult age groups and continuing to pursue the sport. There is limited evidence that this trend exists in Gwinnett, however, this may be due to a lack of "adult quality" fields. Looking to the future, however, the County should anticipate an increase in adult players.

Although more men than women play soccer, an increasing number of girls and women are playing the sport, spurred on no doubt by the success of the American Women's soccer team.

While soccer participation levels appear to have peaked (nationally and in Gwinnett), the physical aspects of the game, its high fitness quotient and its popularity amongst ethnic communities suggest that soccer will remain a popular activity.

Baseball/Softball

Baseball and softball have been in decline in the U.S. since 1993. The one exception to this has been fastpitch softball, which has been growing for a number of years. Recent reports indicate that approximately 62% of fastpitch players are women.²⁰ In absolute terms, 2001 baseball participation numbers are 28% below 1987 levels. When population

¹⁹ Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, Press Release, "Soccer, Not just for Children", June 9, 2003, <http://www.sgma.com/press/2003/press1055170659-6754.html>

²⁰ Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, Press Release, "Fast-Pitch Softball Becoming Popular" June 30, 2003, <http://www.sgma.com/press/2003/press1056985416-14826.html>

growth is factored out, the loss deepens to 37% according to an SGMA sponsored study, the 2001 Baseball Participation Study²¹.

In Gwinnett, baseball and softball have the highest participation levels amongst team sports. The spring baseball and softball sessions, which attract the largest number of participants, however, registered a 14% decline between 2000 and 2002. The trend data suggests that Gwinnett should anticipate continued declines in baseball and softball.

That being said, the number of children and teens participating in baseball remains significant. For those athletes that are seeking a competitive edge, a variety of privately-operated specialized training facilities existing in the County that provide instruction, camps, and even travel leagues.

Football

Tackle Football experienced marginal growth between 1987 and 1997 according to published results from an SGMA sponsored report, the Football Participation Study (2001). An increase of 15% was, however, experienced between 1999 and 2000 (of those reporting that they had played at least once).²² During the same time frame (1987 and 2000) touch football declined by 24%, a decline attributed to a general decline in pick-up sports. At the high school level, football is the number one participant sport (for boys).²³

Participation rates for youth football in Gwinnett County have increased slightly over the past few years to approximately 4% of the 6 to 14 age group, suggesting that in the cyclical nature of sport participation, football may be on the upswing in the County.

Basketball

While basketball remains a popular team sport, growth appears to be leveling off. Within the sport, the fastest growing segments are young children (6 to 11) and adults. Further growth in the sport is anticipated as more girls take up the sport. In Gwinnett, basketball participation rates have been steady over the past three years, capturing nearly 6% of the 5 to 18 age group.

²¹ Note: Limited results published on-line from the 2001 Baseball Study. This study is derived from the 2001 Superstudy of Sports Participation.

²² Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, excerpt from The Football (tackle) Participation Report (2001 edition), <http://www.sgma.com/reports/2001/report991756651-28430.html>

²³ National Federation of High School Association, High School Participation Rates 2001-2002, <http://www.laxpower.com/common/ParticipationRates2002.php>

3.2.4 Leisure Trends - Individual Recreation ActivitiesCheerleading

Cheerleading was ranked ninth in terms of participation numbers among organized sports for youth 6 to 17 in 2001. In Gwinnett there was a 5% increase in participants between 2000 and 2002, which can be attributed to overall population growth. Gwinnett's participation rate (3% of the 5-14 population) is in line with national averages.²⁴

Lacrosse

Lacrosse does not rank in the top ten team sports but it is one of the few team sports that is actually growing in America. US Lacrosse reports that participation doubled between 1999 and 2002 (to 60,000 players under 14); to put this in context, there were 10 million basketball players between the ages of 6 and 17 in 2000²⁵. Across the age spectrum there are 250,000 lacrosse players, according to US Lacrosse. At the high school level, lacrosse is also one of the fastest growing sports, although participation numbers are low compared to football and basketball.

Lacrosse does not have a strong presence in Gwinnett at this time, with no public high schools offering the sport. The sport is growing nationally, however, and additional demand in Gwinnett may be anticipated in the future.

Aquatics

Swimming activities rank in the top six most popular types of outdoor activities (12 years of age or older) in the NSRE Survey of Recreation (1999 to 2002) and, as previously noted, the 2002 Superstudy of Sports Participation, found that recreational swimming was more popular than walking²⁶.

The 2002 Superstudy of Sports Participation identified a 1% decline in swimming participation between 1998 and 2001. An analysis of recreation participation trends from 1980 to 1996, confirmed that swimming is in a "slow or no-growth" situation, although increases were seen in seniors' participation (age 65+)²⁷. "The Loaf Book 2: How Americans Spent Their

²⁴ Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, Press Release "New Survey: 54% of U.S. Youngsters Play Organized Sport", May 1, 2001, <http://www.sportlink.com/press/2001/press988721108-300622.html>

²⁵ US Lacrosse, 2002 US Lacrosse Participation Survey, http://www.lacrosse.org/the_sport/index.phtml

²⁶ Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, Press Release, "Top 30 most popular Sports in the U.S.A.", April 4th, 2002; http://www.goodnewsforsports.com/NewsRelease/archive/1202/0502_ActivitiesDominate.htm

²⁷ Warnick, R.B. "Recreational Participation Trends: Generational Patterns and Change", University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst Massachusetts; http://www.prr.msu.edu/trends2000/pdf/warnick_generations.pdf

Free Time Between 1990 and 2000” also identified that fewer persons are swimming²⁸.

Swimming is promoted by aquatics enthusiasts as a “cradle to the grave” activity. The greatest demand is typically from the younger ages who are participating in learn to swim programs. Participation in swimming often drops off in the teen years. Adult participation, however, is growing and trend data has identified new seniors (aging baby boomers) as the “new fit generation”. Therapeutic and fitness swimming (aerobics and laps) are also emerging as popular activities for adults. Fitness swimming ranked number 29th out of 30 participation sports in 2002 in the latest reported Sports Participation Study (2003) published by SGMA.²⁹

Nationally, USA Swimming has programs in place to promote increased participation in competitive swimming amongst economically disadvantaged groups. Gwinnett’s demographic profile (higher than average income levels) is a good fit for competitive swimming. According to USA Swimming, it costs swimming families approximately \$1000-\$2000 annually per child to participate in the sport. Gwinnett’s swim teams and schools have produced many state champions over the years.

In Gwinnett, the 2002 Needs Assessment Survey found that swimming (8%) ranked second to walking (38%) as a most frequent activity in a county park. Swimming was identified as the favorite activity of children under the age of 13 in Gwinnett, and was ranked just below basketball as a favorite activity for teens.

The most significant trend in recent years in aquatic facility development and design has been the leisure pool. This trend, which began in the 1980s, continues with the addition of an increasing number of interactive play features that have turned the indoor and outdoor pool into entertainment facilities.

The challenge for pool operators is to maximize programmable space: accommodating programming and activities for all ages. Features such as body and drop slides, lazy rivers, splash/spray pads, etc. are becoming standard items in family aquatic centers. The diving board is also making a resurgence. Incorporating shade features (sun umbrellas/sunshade structures) for staff and patrons at outdoor facilities is now standard practice. Some jurisdictions are also developing “adults only” tanks.³⁰ Gwinnett’s family aquatic centers are very much in line with these trends.

²⁸ The Leisure Trends Group, The Loaf Book 2: Americans at Leisure; <http://www.leisuretrends.com>

²⁹ Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, Press Release, “Top 30 Participation Activities in the U.S., April 9, 2003, <http://www.sgma.com/press/2003/press1049911418-10230.html>

³⁰ Bales, Beth “The water is Great, Come on In! The latest trends in pool design”, Parks and Recreation (Journal of the Nation Recreation and Parks Association), November, 2002 http://www.nrpa.org/story.cfm?story_id=1278&departmentID=18&publicationID=11

Tennis

The Superstudy of Sports (2001) indicates that tennis participation has declined by 29% over the past 14 years (for those participating at least once a year)³¹. The tennis industry however, sees some evidence that this trend is correcting itself. The tennis industry has been conducting their own surveys for a number of years and their database shows some positive growth in tennis; 19.5 million players in 1996, 20.8 million in 1999 and 19.7 million in 2000 (players over the age of 12). A newly released study (March 2003) using a larger sample, indicates that there were 23.5 million Americans playing tennis in 2002. That study found that 75% of players rely on public courts and that female participation is growing (52% of new players are women). There is also growing ethnic diversity on the court (one out of every three new players are Hispanic or African-American). This latest study also reported that the average age of new players is 18, while the average age of all players is 29.³²

The Tennis Association 2003 Study identifies the states with the highest levels of tennis participation as California, New York, Florida, Texas and Illinois. However, the 2001 State-by State index prepared by the National Sporting Goods Association, reports that Georgia has above average participation in tennis. As noted previously, tennis is identified as the 12th most popular sport for youth across the nation.

Demographically, tennis is a sport that has an association with income; a majority of tennis players come from higher income households. This is a good fit with Gwinnett, suggesting that the current popularity of tennis in Gwinnett will continue.

Golf

Golf is identified as the 14th most popular sport in the U.S., according to the 2003 Superstudy Report. A study of frequent participants (25 days or more) indicated that frequent golf participants rose 14% from 1999 to 2001. Overall, however, absolute numbers of golf participants did not increase appreciably between 1990 and 2000; there were 28.9 million players in 1990 and 30.4 million in 2000, indicating that the number of golf participants did not keep pace with overall population growth nationally.³³

³¹ American Sports Data, Inc. Sector Analysis Report, Press Release "Growth of New Millennial Pursuits, outpaces traditional activities", August 1, 2002; http://www.americansportsdata.com/pr_08-01-02_3.asp

³² United States Tennis Association, Press Release, March 20, 2003, "USA and TIA Complete Most Comprehensive Research in Sports" <http://www.mtatennis.com/HmpgArticles/USTA%20facts/USTATIAPARTICIPATIONSTUDY3.20.03FINAL.doc>

³³ Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, Press Release, "Golf: Play is Steady While Sales Struggle", Feb. 22 2002; <http://www.sportlink.com/press/2002/press1013021504-19389.html>

60% of frequent golf participants are over the age of 45 and 80% of the frequent players have an average household income in excess of \$50,000. The largest playing group is college educated according to the SMGA study of frequent sport participants.

The golf industry, as represented by the National Golf Foundation, anticipates continued popularity in golf although the Foundation recorded a slight decline (1.1%) in total participants between 2001 and 2002. While overall participation dipped slightly, there was an increase in the number of junior participants. The golf industry anticipates future growth as children of the baby-boomers take up the sport.³⁴

The Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association reports that there has been some scaling back of new golf course construction and a reduction in the number of new courses being built.

From a recreation department's perspective, the industry reports suggest that demand for junior golf programs will be high. Gwinnett's youthful demographic profile combined with its higher household income and education levels suggest that demand for golf instruction programs will be strong in Gwinnett.

According to the 2002 Needs Assessment Survey, golf was identified as a favorite activity by 12% of households, behind tennis (13%) and ahead of fishing, watching TV and hiking.

In-line Skating

In 2001, in-line skating, which had been growing in popularity since 1989, began to reach saturation levels according to industry reports. In 1998, 32 million Americans had in-line skated at least once a year; in 2001, the first decline since 1989 was registered (a decline of 19% to 26 million). There was also a decline in the number of frequent participants. In-line skating, however, remains a very popular activity, second only to basketball for children over the age of six.³⁵

Skateboarding

Skateboarding is the fastest growing "extreme" sport in the U.S. registering a 54% increase in participants between 1998 and 2002. Three quarters of all skateboarders are male and the vast majority are under the age of 18.³⁶ The sport was ranked 8th in popularity nationally for children over the age of 6 in 2002. Interestingly skateboarding was not on the list of favored

³⁴ National Golf Foundation and the National Golf Course Owners Association, Golf 20/20; <http://www.Golf2020.com>

³⁵ Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, Excerpt from Trends in Inline Skating Participation Report, August, 2002, <http://www.sgma.com/press/2002/pdf/inline2002.pdf>

³⁶ Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association, Press Release, "Skating- Riding a Wave of Popularity", July 2, 2003, <http://www.sportlink.com/press/2003/press1056987137-26038.html>

Section 3: Demographic and Leisure Trends

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activities for 13 to 17 year olds in Gwinnett and was on the bottom of the list for children under 13 in the Gwinnett County Needs Assessment Survey (2002). This should not, however, necessarily be interpreted as evidence that children in Gwinnett are less interested in skateboarding; adults are not always good at translating the needs of teenagers in survey instruments in our experience.

SECTION 4: Public Input Process

4.1 OVERVIEW

The public consultation program for the Comprehensive Master Plan is multi-faceted and has collected extensive input from a variety of sources. The public participated in the process through the following methods:

- a random telephone survey of 895 households in Gwinnett County, conducted by the A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service at Kennesaw State University (2002 Needs Assessment);
- a 24-member citizen steering committee was established to review and assess the Master Plan process;
- 5 open public meetings held in September 2003 at various locations throughout the County;
- a questionnaire distributed and collected at the public meetings in September 2003; and
- a similar questionnaire posted on the County's website from September 10 to September 26, 2003.

Input received from the public consultation process is provided in summary form below.

In addition to the public participation efforts, key Gwinnett County staff were also interviewed and a summary of their comments is contained within Appendix D.

4.2 2002 NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY DATA

In 2002, the A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service at Kennesaw State University prepared a Needs Assessment Survey. The major component of the Needs Assessment was a telephone survey with 895 randomly selected adults living in the county. The purpose of the Needs Assessment was to:

- identify the favorite recreational and leisure activities of Gwinnett residents,
- determine the extent to which they utilize county operated parks and other recreational facilities for these activities,
- obtain residents' general evaluations of various aspects of the county facilities, and
- gauge levels of support for the use of SPLOST monies to pay for future parkland acquisition and park development.

Parkland - Findings

- 50% said there are enough county parks in the area where they live. 39% felt the county should provide more facilities in their areas.

- 63% said it takes them 10 minutes or less to get to the park they use most often. 50% said they would use a county park more often if one were located closer to their home.
- When asked what type of park development should receive top priority if the SPLOST is extended in 2004, 44% preferred “active park development,” 37% said “passive park development,” while 13% prefer to maintain a balance between the two types of development.

Facilities & Activities - Findings

- When asked what types of improvements should receive highest priority for the funds generated by any future SPLOST extension, the responses were:
 - park maintenance and security issues (19%)
 - more trails (walking, jogging, biking) (17%)
 - open-space parks/greenways (15%)
 - athletic fields (15%)
 - after-school programs (14%)
 - children’s programs (12%)
 - swimming facilities (10%)
 - community centers (7%)
 - more parks (general reference)/land acquisition (7%)
 - arts and cultural programs (6%)
 - mixed-use parks (5%)
 - gymnasiums/indoor facilities (5%)
 - preservation of historical sites (5%)
- According to the respondents with children under the age of 13 and/or teenagers (13-17 year olds) living in their households, the favorite activities of these age groups are:

Children under the age of 13

swimming (31%)
using playground equipment (24%)
soccer (20%)
baseball (20%)
bicycling (20%)
basketball (17%)
football/cheerleading (16%)
softball (9%)
tennis (9%)

Teens between 13 and 17 years old

basketball (27%)
swimming (24%)
baseball (20%)
soccer (18%)
football (17%)
running/jogging (9%)
softball (9%)
cheerleading (8%)
watching television (7%)
bicycling (7%)

Other relevant findings

- For those who did express opinions, a majority of respondents indicated the county does only a “fair” or “poor” job of meeting the needs of the physically handicapped. A substantial number of

respondents also believe the county could be doing a better job of addressing the needs of teenagers, young adults ages 20-30 and seniors.

- When asked about the parks' biggest security issues, 21% said the lack of an adequate police presence. 12% mentioned lack of adequate lighting.

The 2002 Needs Assessment also conducted **focus group sessions** with the Hispanic and Korean communities to identify special recreational needs of these minority groups and to identify any potential problems that may dissuade members of these groups from utilizing county recreational facilities. The ethnic and racial diversity of Gwinnett County has grown significantly over the past ten years and there has been a considerable increase in the population of these two communities. The following is a summary of the activity preferences and park/facility needs identified at the focus group sessions.

Hispanic Community Focus Group

- Favorite recreational activities include soccer, running, volleyball, baseball, bicycling, basketball, and fishing. Other popular activities that may be unique to the culture are "socializing with their friends and neighbors" and "danza (native dancing)".
- Would like to more facilities that allow for live music (mostly small bands) and a suitable area for dancing (preferably paved/concrete).
- Several respondents mentioned that they had a hard time finding a suitable location for a "pick-up" game of ball or soccer.
- Often have difficulty getting to parks - more neighborhood-level parks were suggested, as were better/more sidewalks.

Korean Community Focus Group

- Favorite recreational activities include soccer, baseball, basketball, volleyball, tennis, walking, jogging and swimming. Other less traditional activities include ping pong, billiards, watching movies, church activities, Chinese checkers/chess, singing (choral and karaoke), and traditional dancing.
- Utilization of county operated parks appears to be low among members of the Korean community.
- Desired facilities include an inexpensive retreat facility with overnight housing capabilities that could cater to smaller community groups and a Korean Community Center that would serve as a focal gathering place for members of their community.
- There is a desire for more educational and/or informational classes that would provide their community with the skills and knowledge needed to better adapt to the political, economic and social structures in Gwinnett County.

4.3 PUBLIC MEETINGS

In September 2003, the County and Consulting Team organized and facilitated five (5) public meetings. Total attendance at the five public sessions was estimated at 250 persons. The meeting schedule was as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Attendees</u>
September 10, 2003, 7p.m.	Grayson High School	83
September 11, 2003, 7p.m.	Norcross High School	21
September 16, 2003, 10a.m.	Gwinnett Sr. Center at Bethesda Park	68
September 16, 2003, 7p.m.	Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce	30
September 17, 2003, 7p.m.	Bogan Park Community Center	48

The purpose of these meetings was to hear the principal wishes and concerns of citizens regarding park facility development in Gwinnett County. A summary of the emerging needs for parks and recreation facilities, programs and services was presented to the public based on the work completed to date. Following the presentation, the public was given an opportunity to discuss a series of questions posed by the Consulting Team (see below); other specific issues were also raised and discussed by those in attendance.

- What do you like about the parks and recreation in Gwinnett County? What do you dislike?
- What changes should be made to the parks and facilities?
- What parks and facilities are needed and where?
- What are the most important priorities?

Questions and ideas for the County's parks system were abundant, as were compliments for the County's recent park acquisition and development efforts. Overall, the issues and themes that emerged from the discussion period were the same as those that were identified by the questionnaires completed by attendees. The "hot button" issues did, however, vary slightly from one meeting to the next, depending on the needs and priorities of the area in which the session was being held. The following is a brief summary of the issues and suggestions raised at each meeting. A full account of comments received at the public meetings is contained within Appendix G.

Grayson, September 10, 2003

- More soccer fields are needed in the area
- Need to accommodate activities for all ethnic communities
- There are many seniors near Tribble Mill Park - need a senior center and pool in this area; competition pool mentioned several times
- There is demand for more parkland in the southeast area of County
- Trail linkages and connections should be a priority
- Other facilities requested: basketball (indoor and outdoor) and volleyball courts, 10 mile mountain bike trail, trail for long distance runners (10 miles)

Norcross, September 11, 2003

- West District Aquatic Center is much needed and anticipated
- Meadowcreek cluster lacks accessible active parkland
- Better public transit is needed to park sites
- Other facilities/activities requested: skate park, bike trails (like Silver Comet trail), summer camps, fishing opportunities

Bethesda Park, September 16, 2003 (a.m.)

- Meadowcreek cluster lacks accessible active parkland
- More adult softball fields are needed for seniors
- Park linkages needed - would provide opportunity for longer trails for marathon runners
- Field/turf maintenance and overuse are problems
- Other facilities/activities requested: horseshoe pits, shuffleboard courts, mountain biking trails, youth center (hang-out), open space and historic site preservation, equestrian trails, indoor aquatic center

Chamber of Commerce, September 16, 2003 (p.m.)

- There is more demand for unpaved/nature trails in general; specifically, cross-country meet site (1.5 mile unpaved trail), bmx track, mountain biking trails and greenways needed
- Smaller pocket parks should be provided in some underserved areas (e.g., Steeplechase neighborhood)
- A map of parks and their features should be included in Gwinnett LIFE
- Other facilities/activities requested: skate parks, competitive swimming venue, summer camps, BMX track, gardening programs, wetland preserves, canoeing/kayaking, disc golf, handball, adult soccer

Bogan Park, September 17, 2003

- Facilities/activities requested: cross-country trail, open space and historical site preservation (Native American artifacts next to Little Mulberry), tennis wall, BMX track (possibly buy vacant retail plazas), senior softball and basketball, soccer fields, skate parks, water aerobics for seniors, equestrian trails, bucket swings and other play features for children with disabilities, racquetball courts, off-leash dog park,

In addition to the public meeting questionnaire responses, written submissions were received from a number of groups and individuals. Their input is summarized below:

- Yellow River Trail System: There is a need for a greenway and/or pocket park in the area of Highway 78 and Yellow River -the County's Department of Public Utilities currently owns a property near Lake Lucerne that may have the potential to meet this need. A

nature trail and viewing platform should also be developed by the marsh at Yellow River and Highway 29.

- Saving Pool Mountain: a number of sites adjacent to Little Mulberry Park have environmental and historical significance and should be preserved.
- BMX Racing: Request 5 acres of land for a BMX track; national membership has doubled since 1996.
- Skate Park: More skate parks are needed in the County for youth; just need a place to skate - don't need anything elaborate; the community would even be willing to add certain elements (e.g., ramps, rails, etc.).
- Potential New Park: Should consider Old Lee Farm on Five Forks Trickum Road for a County park (it has a farmhouse and outbuildings on the Yellow River).
- Mountain Park Aquatic Center: Should have early morning hours (6 to 7 a.m.) so people can swim before going to work.

4.4 PUBLIC MEETING & WEB-BASED QUESTIONNAIRES

The public consultation program for the Master Plan included two nearly identical questionnaires – one that was distributed to attendees at the five public meetings and one that was posted on the County's web-site. The questionnaires were not intended to yield statistically valid results, but are useful in providing general indications of issues, concerns, needs, and priorities. The results are provided here for information only. For a more accurate and statically valid indicator of needs and participation patterns, the 2002 Needs Assessment should be referenced.

The surveys consisted of a variety of open and close-ended questions, many with multiple parts. It bears noting that the manner in which the surveys were answered varied considerably. Comments did not always pertain to the question that was being asked, nor were all comments pertinent to the scope of the Master Plan. Although the analysis of the close-ended questions was relatively straightforward, a greater degree of judgement was required in analyzing the open-ended questions.

Approximately 90 responses were received to the public meeting questionnaire.

The web-based questionnaire was posted on the County's website from September 10 to September 26, 2003. 719 completed surveys were logged during this time. As the survey results were being analyzed, it quickly became apparent that there were a number of "hot button" issues and that the respondents likely encouraged those with similar views to complete the survey. This is evident not only by the magnitude and similarity of responses, but also by the order in which they were submitted. The primary concerns that were raised through web-based questionnaire, in general order of submittal, include:

- additional mountain-biking trails;
- improvements to Rabbit Hill Park (soccer field lights, play equipment, etc.);
- a BMX track;
- additional adult baseball/softball diamonds;
- improvements to soccer facilities, most notably parking at George Pierce Park and lights and turf maintenance at George Pierce Park, Scott Hudgens Park and Pinckneyville Park; and
- an indoor competition pool.

Input received from the public meeting and web surveys is provided in summary form below and in greater detail in Appendices E, F and G. Comparisons with the 2002 Needs Assessment Survey have been noted, where applicable.

A. In relation to existing parks and recreation facilities and programs, what needs to be changed or improved?

For the public meeting questionnaire, this question yielded a wide variety of responses and significant overlap with Question B and C. Some discretion was used in tabulating the surveys to ensure that Question A dealt with improvements to existing parks/facilities, while Questions B and C addressed additional park/facility needs. Furthermore, where possible, responses were grouped by topic or theme. Changes and improvements suggested through the public meeting questionnaire included:

- Soccer - more soccer fields and lights needed, possibly at George Pierce Park, Dacula Park, Lucky Shoals Park, Shorty Howell Park (13)
- Security - more security / park police (7)
- Maintenance - better park maintenance (5)
- Meadowcreek - active parkland needed in Meadowcreek area (5)
- Pool - competition pool needed in West District (5)
- Skate Park - develop one at Bogan Park; better maintain the one at Pinckneyville Park (4)
- Best Friend Park - develop more/enlarge existing adult ball fields (3)
- General - more drink machines (3)
- General - more water fountains (3)
- Playgrounds - more shade over playground equipment (3)
- Programs - more senior athletic programs (3)
- General - better awareness of County programs, parks needed (2)
- Programs - more youth activities & opportunities needed (2)
- Trails - separate uses on trails (e.g., cycling from walking) (2)
- Tribble Mill Park - longer running trail needed (3 miles) (2)

This question on the web-based questionnaire prompted a wide variation of responses and comments. The detailed results have been incorporated into Appendix F.

- B. What types of parks, recreation facilities or programs does your community need more of? (open-ended)*

Table 4-1: Park & Recreation System Needs Identified Through Public Consultation

Web-Based Questionnaire	Public Meeting Questionnaire
Soccer Fields (300)	Trails - Unpaved for Biking (22)
Parking - more, paved, better access, etc. (144)	Soccer Fields (17)
Soccer Fields - lights (132)	Open Space / Meadow / Woodland (15)
Trails - Unpaved for Biking (93)	Pool - Indoor Competition (12)
Soccer Fields - turf maintenance (91)	Pool - unspecified type (11)
Trails - Paved Greenway / unspecified type (82)	Trails - Paved Multi-Purpose (8)
Pool - unspecified type (53)	Ball Diamonds - Adult (7)
Pool - Indoor Competition (43)	Skate Park (7)
BMX Track (42)	Playgrounds (7)
Skate Park (42)	Trails - Paved for Walking (7)
Playgrounds (34)	Trails - Unpaved for Nature Hiking (7)
Dog Park (33)	Youth Center (6)
Ball Diamonds - Youth/unspecified age (33)	Passive Parks (5)
Trails - Unpaved for Nature Hiking (32)	Basketball Courts - outdoor (5)
Restrooms (more, open, clean, etc.) (27)	Football Fields (5)
Passive Parks / Open Space / Green Space (26)	Picnic Areas (5)
Trails - Paved for Walking (25)	Tennis Courts (5)
Tennis Courts (21)	Trails - Linkages to parks, schools, etc (5)

As mentioned earlier, the web-survey attracted an inordinate number of respondents with similar views -- this is evidenced by the fact that approximately half of those responding felt there was a need for improvements to the existing soccer facilities!

The most commonly requested facilities/improvements were: more soccer fields, paving and expanding the upper parking lot at George Pierce Park, installing lights on County soccer fields; and improving turf maintenance practices/drainage. Developing additional mountain biking trails and greenways were also popular suggestions, as was the development of additional swimming facilities. The public meeting questionnaire provides a more accurate and balanced view of community needs than does the web-based questionnaire (which provides a better indication of current and controversial issues). It is important to note, however, that trails, soccer fields and pools also ranked high on the list from the public meeting questionnaire.

C. From the list you provided above, please list your highest park, facility or program priorities, with #1 being your highest priority.

Table 4-2: Park & Recreation System Needs Identified Through Public Consultation (by Priority)

	Web-Based Questionnaire	Public Meeting Questionnaire
1st Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer Fields (171) • Soccer Fields - lights (58) • Parking - more, paved, better access, etc. (48) • Trails - Unpaved for Biking (46) • Pool - Indoor Competition (33) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer Fields (9) • Pool - Indoor Competition (8) • Open Space / Meadow / Woodland (7) • Trails - Unpaved for Biking (7) • Ball Diamonds - Adult (6)
2nd Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer Fields (56) • Parking - more, paved, better access, etc. (37) • Soccer Fields - lights (25) • Trails - Unpaved for Biking (24) • Trails - Paved Greenway / unspecified type (24) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer Fields (4) • Trails - Unpaved for Biking (4) • Open Space / Meadow / Woodland (3) • Trails - Paved for Walking Only (3) • Trails - Unpaved for Nature Hiking (3)
3rd Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer Fields (22) • Parking - more, paved, better access, etc. (20) • Soccer Fields - lights (19) • Trails - Paved Greenway / unspecified type (19) • Trails - Unpaved for Biking (13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basketball Courts - outdoor (3) • Soccer Fields (3) • Ball Diamonds - Youth/unspecified age (2)

Soccer fields (including practice fields) ranked at the top on both the web-based and public meeting questionnaires, although the issue was clearly more dominant on the web-based survey. 44% of those responding to the web survey indicated that improvements to soccer facilities were their number one priority, whereas 13% suggested improved/additional trails. Although not making the "top five" list, BMX track, off-leash dog areas, skate parks, and playgrounds were also commonly requested items.

D. In the future, should the County develop its new parkland for "active" or "passive" recreational uses?

Table 4-3: Parkland Preferences Identified Through Public Consultation

	Web-Based Questionnaire	Public Meeting Questionnaire	2002 Needs Assessment
mostly passive recreational uses	12%	27%	37%
mostly active recreational uses	34%	26%	44%
both active and passive recreational uses in equal amounts	51%	35%	13%
no response	3%	12%	6%

The responses from the web-based survey showed a clear preference for active parks over passive parks, most likely due to the high response rate from soccer facility users. Despite the partiality to active parks, the results from both the web and public meeting questionnaires indicate that there should be some level of equity between active and passive recreational uses when acquiring and developing new parks.

E. Although all of the following options are important, in order to meet the needs of your household, which options would you like to see the County place the most emphasis on? Please identify your top 5 priorities by placing the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 next to the option, with a "1" being your highest priority.

Again, there were significant differences between the web survey results and public meeting survey results. Most notably, those who participated through the Internet placed a significantly higher priority in "expanding existing parks" (#2) and "building more facilities" (#4), while public meeting survey respondents would like to see more emphasis on "acquiring more parkland for passive recreational uses" (#1) and "providing more services for older adults and seniors" (#3). This is not surprising given the different composition of respondents between the two mediums.

There was, however, some agreement between the two surveys. Specifically, all respondents placed a very high priority on acquiring parkland for active recreational used. Furthermore, providing more opportunities for "structured" recreation was preferred over "spontaneous" recreation and services for children and teenagers placed higher than services for adults. The results also indicate that the preservation of historic sites and the development of more educational/interpretive facilities are lower priorities than the other options.

Table 4-4: Park & Recreation System Preferences Identified Through Public Consultation

	Web-based Questionnaire - RANK	Public Meeting Questionnaire - RANK
Acquiring more parkland for active recreational uses (e.g., sports complexes, community centers, gyms, competition pools, etc.)	1	2
Expanding existing parks	2	9
Offering more opportunities for structured recreation (e.g., team sports, time-sensitive programs, etc.)	3	7
Building more facilities	4	15
Developing more trails to link parks, schools and communities together	5	6
Providing more services for youth (13-18)	6	4
Renovating existing facilities	7	12
Acquiring more parkland for passive recreational uses (e.g., trails, nature appreciation, playgrounds, fishing, picnics, leisure pools, etc.)	8	1
Providing more services for children (0-12)	9	5
Developing more looped trails within park sites	10	8
Offering more opportunities for spontaneous recreation (e.g., trails, drop-in programs, picnics, etc.)	11	11
Providing more services for adults (19-54)	12	17
Preserving more historic sites	13	14
Providing more services for older adults and seniors (55+)	14	3
Developing more educational and interpretive facilities	15	10
Providing more services for special needs populations	16	16

Although "providing more services for special needs populations" was not considered to be a high priority for many, this is not to say that it is unimportant, rather it likely affects only a small percentage of those participating in the survey. Those listing it as a high priority on the web questionnaire were asked to list specific suggestions. Most of the comments were very general, such as "accessible parks and facilities" or "programs and sports for the disabled", however, some specific comments were also received, most notably:

- wheelchair accessible trails / boardwalks along rivers and scenic vistas - pathways where they won't be in the way of cyclists;
- dedicated sports fields, programs and teams (baseball, soccer, etc.);
- more accessible playgrounds;
- more swimming opportunities, such as sensory integration water therapy (requires a separate indoor therapeutic pool);
- community programs for adults with disabilities (e.g., Parkinson's);
- coordination classes for motor skills and strength training / therapy;
- more events and outings; and
- sports for disabled children in the Suwanee, Peachtree Industrial, McGinnis Ferry Road area.

F. What County or City park do you use the most?

Table 4-5: Most Frequently Used Park

Web-Based Questionnaire	Public Meeting Questionnaire	2002 Needs Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Pierce Park (31%) • Pinckneyville Park (18%) • Scott Hudgens Soccer - Duluth (8%) • Yellow River Park (7%) • Bethesda Park (5%) • Rabbit Hill Park (5%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bethesda Park (14%) • Tribble Mill Park (10%) • Bogan Park (9%) • George Pierce Park (9%) • Best Friend Park (8%) • Pinckneyville Park (8%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lenora Park (15%) • Mountain Park Park (14%) • Collins Hill Park (13%) • Bogan Park (11%) • Bethesda Park (10%) • Rhodes Jordan Park (10%)

Users of George Pierce and Pinckneyville Park appears to be over-represented on the web-based survey, however, this explains the large amount of comments pertaining to existing soccer facilities.

G. What issues or concerns do you have that have not been addressed by this questionnaire?

This question prompted a wide variation of responses and comments. The detailed results have been incorporated into Appendices E and F.

4.5 PARK SYSTEM BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS

To assist in developing the Master Plan, five jurisdictions with similarities to Gwinnett County were studied through the administration of a benchmarking survey. The survey collected a wide range of quantitative data and qualitative information on parks, recreation and cultural facilities, services, staffing, expenditures, revenues, and financing.

The purpose of the benchmarking survey was to evaluate how Gwinnett County compares to other jurisdictions that are recognized nationally as leaders in the delivery of recreation services and assist in developing appropriate service levels for Gwinnett County.

With the assistance of Gwinnett County staff, the jurisdictions listed in Table 4-6 were selected to participate in this exercise. Each were national winners and finalists in the National Gold Medal Awards (Class 1 category - population over 250,000) sponsored by the National Sporting Goods Association's Sports Foundation and National Recreation and Parks Association from 1998 to 2003.

These jurisdictions were also selected because they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- they are growing in overall population;
- their population is similar to Gwinnett County's;
- they have a climate that is similar to Gwinnett County's;
- they have a government structure that is similar to Gwinnett County's; and/or

- their current mix/number of parks and facilities is similar to those in Gwinnett County.

TABLE 4-6: Benchmarking Communities

Jurisdiction	Rationale
Fairfax County Park Authority, Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2002 Gold Medal Winner - similar government structure (County) - has a growing population that is 65% larger than Gwinnett's
Lee County, Florida	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2003 Finalist - similar government structure (County) - has a growing population that is 25% smaller than Gwinnett's
Howard County, Maryland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2002 Finalist - similar government structure (County) - has a growing population, but is significantly smaller than Gwinnett's
City of Mesa, Arizona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2000 Gold Medal Winner - City is located in a growth area (grew by nearly 40% from 1990 to 2000) - population is approximately 30% smaller than Gwinnett's
City of Austin, Texas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2001 Finalist - City is located in a growth area (grew by over 40% from 1990 to 2000) - population is similar to Gwinnett's (Austin is 10% larger)

A nineteen (19) page survey, complete with cover letter and glossary, was prepared and distributed to each selected jurisdiction. Gwinnett County was also asked to complete the survey to allow for a basis of comparison.

4.5.1 Key Findings from the Benchmarking Exercise

1. Trends - Many of the other communities are experiencing the same pressures as Gwinnett and are trying to meet growing demand for aquatics, soccer, multi-use trails, skateboard parks, off-leash dog areas, and open space preservation. Conversely, baseball/softball, football, and racquet sports are in decline in many jurisdictions.
2. Parkland - Gwinnett is at the **lower** end of the parkland provision range, with 12.5 acres of County parkland per 1,000 residents; the average is 23.6 acres per 1,000 population. The gap between Gwinnett and the benchmarking average widens further when non-jurisdictional parkland is included in the level of service as state and other local agencies play a considerably larger role in open space preservation and parkland provision in most of the other benchmarking communities. Also of note, each of the benchmarking communities provide neighborhood level parks that are generally less than 20 acres in size; in Gwinnett, it is the responsibility of cities and towns, as well as subdivisions, to provide neighborhood parks.

3. Community/Recreation Centers & Activity Buildings - The provision of community centers and activity buildings in Gwinnett is similar to that of the Fairfax County Park Authority, however, for Gwinnett to employ a standard similar to Austin, Lee and Howard, it would need to double its supply to approximately 20 facilities.
4. Aquatics - Only Fairfax and Gwinnett counties operate indoor aquatic facilities; the warmer climates of Austin, Mesa and Lee County allow these jurisdictions to rely more heavily on outdoor pools, many of which are open year-round. Gwinnett County's provision of aquatic facilities is the most balanced (indoor and outdoor), while in terms of overall provision, Gwinnett has slightly **fewer** pools than the benchmarking average. Also of note, many areas are beginning to develop more leisure pools with interactive play features and are also moving toward developing outdoor splash pads.
5. Hard Courts - Gwinnett's supply of outdoor basketball courts is significantly **lower** than the benchmarking communities, indicating a severe shortage. Gwinnett County's supply of tennis courts is considerably lower than the benchmarking average, although private clubs and local cities help to alleviate this shortage.
6. Playing Fields - Gwinnett County's supply of soccer fields is substantially **lower** than the benchmarking average, although private sector and city fields may assist in meeting some of this demand. Gwinnett offers dedicated fields for football and soccer, while each of the benchmarking communities combine these uses and classify them as "multi-purpose fields". Gwinnett's overall supply of ball diamonds is generally consistent with the other communities.
7. Playgrounds - Compared to the other benchmarking agencies, Gwinnett County (including its cities and towns) offer significantly **fewer** playground locations.
8. Golf Courses - Gwinnett and Lee Counties are the only two jurisdictions that do not operate public golf courses. Public golf courses provide a significant monetary contribution to the governments that provide them, helping to offset losses in other areas.
9. Programming - Aquatics, camps, and sports are some of the most popular activities for children and teens, while fitness/wellness, sports and arts/crafts remain popular with adults and seniors. On the whole, the benchmarking communities provide a greater balance of programming opportunities between children/teens and adults/seniors than does Gwinnett, which focuses more on child and teen services.
10. School partnerships - A wide variety of creative agreements exist between the benchmarking communities and local schools, ranging

from the interim use of future and former school sites to joint facility development and maintenance to permitting.

11. Staffing - Gwinnett County's complement of full-time staff is **well below** that of the other communities, especially within its administrative division. Only Howard County has less total staff per capita than Gwinnett.
12. Expenditures - Gwinnett's per capita capital spending in 2002 was nearly twice as much as the benchmarking average and was heavily focused on land acquisition as opposed to design and construction. Gwinnett's per capita operating expenditures were **lower** than most of the benchmarking communities, largely due to lower than average spending on personnel.
13. Revenues - Gwinnett's per capita 2002 revenues are in line with the benchmarking average, although most other jurisdictions received significantly more money from program and user fees. Gwinnett's revenue covered approximately 32% of its expenditures, ranking it **higher** than most of the other communities; the County's ability to apply both property taxes and the SPLOST give it an advantage over many of the other agencies in this regard.

Benchmarking Survey - Parkland Comparisons

The total number of parks ranges from a low of 47 in Gwinnett to 387 in Fairfax County. Fairfax County, however, along with the cities of Austin and Mesa own a number of smaller, neighborhood-level parks while the other jurisdictions focus more on larger community and regional size parks. Gwinnett is at the lower end of the parkland provision range, with 12.5 acres per 1,000 residents; the average is 23.6 acres per 1,000 population. Gwinnett's ratio of active to passive parkland is relatively consistent with the other counties, which tend to have more passive than active parkland; the opposite is true for the two cities. Table 4-7 summarizes the supply of parkland.

TABLE 4-7: Benchmarking - Parks Owned, Leased and/or Operated by each Jurisdiction (as of August 2003)

	# of Parks	Total Acreage	Acres per 1,000 pop. (Total)
Fairfax Cty. Park Auth.	387	22,543	23.2
Howard County MD	59	8,100	32.7
Lee County FL ¹	70	13,927	31.6
Austin TX	207	16,547	25.2
Mesa AZ ²	63	2,994	7.5
AVERAGE	157	12,822	23.6
Gwinnett County ³	47	7,361	12.5

(...continued)

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(...continued)

TABLE 4-7: Benchmarking -Parks Owned, Leased and/or Operated by each Jurisdiction (as of August 2003)

	% Active	Acres per 1,000 pop. (Active)	% Passive	Acres per 1,000 pop. (Passive)
Fairfax Cty. Park Auth.	39%	9.1	61%	14.2
Howard County MD	26%	8.5	74%	24.2
Lee County FL ¹	21%	6.6	79%	24.9
Austin TX	59%	14.9	41%	10.3
Mesa AZ ²	82%	6.1	18%	1.3
AVERAGE	41%	9.7	59%	13.9
Gwinnett County ³	27%	3.3	73%	9.2

¹ All of Lee County's passive parkland (11,000 acres) is in preserves that are not yet developed for the public (open for walking and nature appreciation).

² The City of Mesa also owns 134 retention basins that are used for passive recreation (not included in parkland total).

³ Only 24 of Gwinnett County's 47 park sites are developed and open to the public; does not include sites that are classified as "Green Space" or "Other". Current as of August 2003.

Considerable amounts of additional parkland are provided by other governmental agencies in Fairfax County, Howard County and Austin, significantly increasing their overall supply of publicly accessible parks and open space (see Tables 4-8 and 4-9). With the exception of Mesa, the four benchmarking communities provide 38 to 94 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents, while Gwinnett only offers 16 acres/1,000 population. It appears that state and other local agencies (e.g., regional commissions, incorporated cities, etc.) play a considerably larger role in open space preservation and parkland provision in Fairfax, Howard, Lee and Austin than they do in Gwinnett. Parks and open space comprise approximately 3.5% of Gwinnett's land base, compared to 14.5% in Fairfax County, despite having similar total land areas.

TABLE 4-8: Benchmarking - Non-jurisdictional Parkland, not including Schools (Acres) (as of August 2003)

	Other Local Agencies ¹	State Agency	Federal Agency	Other ²	Total	Acres per 1,000 pop.
Fairfax Cty. Park Auth.	8,142	1,800	4,102	0	14,044	14.5
Howard County MD	3,180	9,752	0	2,200	15,132	61.1
Lee County FL	96	1,853	713	0	2,662	6.0
Austin TX	20,239	961	0	377	21,577	32.9
Mesa AZ	0	0	0	0	0	0
AVERAGE	6,331.6	2,873.2	963	515.8	10,683	19.7
Gwinnett County	657	51	1,553	0	2,261	3.8

¹ "Other local agencies": Fairfax County Park Authority (County's Community and Recreation Services Dept., the North Virginia Regional Park Authority, and three incorporated towns and cities); Howard County (Columbia Association); Lee County (incorporated cities); Austin (City's Water and Wastewater Dept. owns a large portion of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve); Gwinnett County (Dept. of Public Utilities, incorporated cities and towns).

² "Other": Howard County (Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission); Austin (Travis County).

³ Three significant County, State and National Parks totaling nearly 3 million acres are directly adjacent to the City of Mesa.

TABLE 4-9: Benchmarking - Total Parkland (Acres) (as of August 2003)

	Jurisdiction (Table 4-8)	Other Agencies (Table 4-9)	Total	Acres per 1,000 pop.	% of Total Land Area
Fairfax Cty. Park Auth.	22,543	14,044	36,587	37.7	14.5%
Howard County MD	8,100	15,132	23,232	93.7	14.4%
Lee County FL	13,927	2,662	16,589	37.6	3.2%
Austin TX	16,547	21,577	38,124	58.1	23.6%
Mesa AZ	2,944	0	2,944	7.5	3.7%
AVERAGE	12,811.4	10,682	23,495.2	43.3	9.8%
Gwinnett County ¹	7,361	2,261	9,622	16.1	3.5%

¹ Gwinnett County parkland total includes all Community, Passive Community, Open Space, and Special Purpose Parkland as of August 2003.

It is interesting to note that each community uses a slightly different park classification system (see Table 4-10). "Neighborhood Parks" are provided by all jurisdictions with the exception of Gwinnett County. Austin is the only agency not to use the "Community Park" classification; Gwinnett's standard of 140 or more acres is greater than the 10 to 100 acre range employed by the other communities. The names "District", "Metro", "Countywide" and "Regional" are used nearly interchangeably to describe large parks (i.e., approx. 200 acres) that contain multiple active and passive recreation amenities. Five jurisdictions use a "Special Facility or Park" classification to describe golf courses, stadiums, art centers, museums, ice rinks, horticultural centers, tennis centers, and even aquatic and athletic complexes in some cases. Gwinnett County's "Passive Community Park" classification was unique among the five benchmarking agencies.

TABLE 4-10: Benchmarking - Park Classification Systems

Park Classification	Fairfax	Howard	Lee	Austin	Mesa	Gwinnett
Neighborhood Park	5 acres +; 15 minute walk	1-20 acres	n/a	5-30 acres 1 mile	3-15 acres	--
Community Park - Active	10-50 acres; 5-10 min. drive/ 3mi.	20-100 acres 2 miles	3 miles	--	15-40 acres	140+ acres
District Park	50-200 acres	--	--	30-200 acres; 2 miles	--	--
Metro Park	--	--	--	200+ acres; citywide	40-200 acres; 1.75 miles	--
Countywide/ Regional Park	n/a	over 100 acres 5 miles	n/a	--	200+ acres	--
Open Space / Preserves	under countywide	n/a	n/a	--	--	200+ acres
Special Facilities / Parks	under countywide	yes	--	yes	yes	single purpose only
Other (specify)	urban park (<5 acres, 5 min. walk)	--	boat ramps	greenbelts	retention basis	community park - passive (20+ acres)

Benchmarking Survey - Staffing Comparisons

Table 4-11 indicates that Gwinnett County's complement of full-time staff is well below that of the other communities (0.2 staff per 1,000 residents compared to an average of 0.5 for the other jurisdictions). The lack of full-time staff is most evident in administration, where Gwinnett has 9 staff and the other agencies have an average of 27. Similar differences exist in relation to Gwinnett's full-time operations and facility maintenance staff. Overall staffing levels for part-time and seasonal positions is relatively consistent with the other communities, although it is interesting to note that the more northern climates of Howard and Fairfax Counties have more seasonal park maintenance staff, whereas the park maintenance staff in the southern communities tend to be more full-time. Only Howard County has less staff per capita than Gwinnett, while Austin, Mesa, and Fairfax have two to three times more staff per capita than Gwinnett.

TABLE 4-11: Benchmarking - Staffing Summary

	Full-time Staff			Part-time & Seasonal Staff		
	Total	Staff per 1,000 Population	Acres of Parkland per Staff	Total	Staff per 1,000 Population	Acres of Parkland per Staff
Fairfax Cty. Park Auth.	596	0.6	38	2,088	2.2	11
Howard County MD	123	0.5	66	57	0.2	142
Lee County FL	208	0.5	67	445	1.0	31
Austin TX	419	0.6	39	1,811	2.8	9
Mesa AZ	138	0.3	22	1,101	2.8	3
AVERAGE	297	0.5	43	1,080	2.0	12
Gwinnett County	145	0.2	51	600	1.0	12

Benchmarking Survey - Financial Comparisons

As documented in Table 4-12, per capita annual capital expenditures (2002 fiscal year) for parks and recreation range from \$12.20 in Mesa to \$130.32 in Howard County (most of which was a result of land acquisition). Gwinnett's per capita capital spending of \$81.82 was nearly twice as much as the average and was second to only Howard County. Design and construction costs contributed to nearly 70% of the capital spending for the benchmarking communities, whereas it only accounted for 21% of Gwinnett's spending; conversely, 71% of Gwinnett's capital budget went toward land acquisition.

TABLE 4-12: Benchmarking - Capital Expenditures (thousands, 2002 \$, approximate)

	Design & Constr.	Land	Misc. / Other	Equip.	Debt (Interest)	Total	Per Capita
Fairfax Cty. Park Auth.	10,628	4,210	--	--	--	\$14,838	\$15.30
Howard County MD ¹	10,080	20,051	626	82	1,458	\$32,298	\$130.32
Lee County FL	21,755	n/a	--	--	--	\$21,755	\$49.34
Austin TX	34,807	6,443	--	--	--	\$41,250	\$62.83
Mesa AZ ²	2,284	2,174	--	379	--	\$4,837	\$12.20
AVERAGE	15,911	6,576	125	92	292	\$22,996	\$42.41
Gwinnett County	10,282	34,466	3,010	430	--	\$48,188	\$81.89

¹ Howard County's land acquisition expenses were significantly higher than previous years due to the purchase of a 300-acre park for \$10.7 million.

² Since fall 2001, Mesa began reducing its budget as a result of a weakened economy and lower-than-expected sales tax revenue. Directly affecting the City's ability to proceed with projects such as land acquisition and capital upgrades of existing facilities is the need for a bond authorization approval in 2004. Although the City has the funds to build new facilities, they lack the necessary funds to operate them at this time.

Table 4-13 illustrates gross operating expenditures for each community. Per capita spending on operational elements was more consistent amongst the various jurisdictions than capital spending, with a range of \$31.24 (Lee County) to \$75.80 (Howard County); Gwinnett's per capita spending of \$36.29 ranks second behind Lee County. An average of 50% of the total operational costs for the benchmarking communities is allocated to personnel, whereas personnel account for only 37% of Gwinnett's budget.

TABLE 4-13: Benchmarking - Operating Expenditures (thousands, 2002 \$, approximate)

	Personnel	Operating	Capital Outlay	Debt Service	Other	Total	Per Capita
Fairfax Cty. Park Auth.	36,070	19,154	14,415	1,488	--	\$71,127	\$73.35
Howard County MD	10,274	7,313	26		1,174	\$18,787	\$75.80
Lee County FL	7,125	6,115	423	--	81	\$13,775	\$31.24
Austin TX ¹	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$39,615	\$60.34
Mesa AZ ²	10,840	10,134	--	--	--	\$20,975	\$52.46
AVERAGE	16,077	10,679	3,716	372	314	\$32,856	\$60.59
Gwinnett County	7,930	6,894	3,132	2,503	898	\$21,357	\$36.29

¹ The breakdown of operating expenses for Austin was not available. Austin experienced across-the-board cutbacks in 2002 due to a downturn in the high-tech market, which resulted in reduced property tax and sales tax revenue.

² Mesa continues to face challenges due to national economic downturns, a reduction of state-shared revenues by the Arizona Legislature, slowing local development and new retail development in neighboring communities-lessening our sales tax collections. The City of Mesa relies heavily on sales tax revenue (as the City has no property tax), which has continued to steadily decline.

Parks and recreation related revenues were varied (see Table 4-14). Lee County, which has a philosophy to not cover expenses but to provide a core level of service to the community, had the least amount of overall revenues (\$6.67 per capita), while Fairfax County was able to recover \$68.81 per capita. Gwinnett's per capita revenue of \$38.08 was in line with the benchmarking average of \$36.65. On average, more than half of all revenues came from charges for programs and services, although nearly

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80% of Gwinnett's revenues came from the recreation fund and more than half of the Fairfax County Park Authority's revenues came from County transfers.

TABLE 4-14: Benchmarking - Revenues (thousands, 2002 \$, approximate)

	Charges for Services / Programs	Facility/ Field Rental	Other Govts. & Bonds	Gifts & Donations	Special Fund / Other	Total	Per Capita
Fairfax Cty. Park Auth.	26,635	2,554	36,184	704	650	\$66,727	\$68.81
Howard County MD	8,355	--	341	--	2,361	\$11,057	\$44.61
Lee County FL	1,776	145	380	30	640	\$2,941	\$6.67
Austin TX	10,966	1,249	--	134	26	\$12,397	\$18.88
Mesa AZ	5,926	241	55	78	13	\$6,243	\$15.75
AVERAGE	10,732	838	7,392	175	738	\$19,873	\$36.65
Gwinnett County	3,369	--	854	--	18,188	\$22,411	\$38.08

Fairfax County's revenues covered 78% of their expenditures compared to an average of 36% for all of the benchmarking communities. It should, however, be noted that the Fairfax County Park Authority is not a department of county government, and therefore has slightly different funding arrangements; nonetheless, the County's affluent population allows the Authority to recover a significant amount of its expenses through user fees. Gwinnett ranked second behind Fairfax with a recovery rate of 32%. Gwinnett, however, has the authority to impose both property taxes and a special sales tax, powers that not all of the benchmarking communities have.

A full summary of the benchmarking survey results is compiled in Appendix C. It should be noted that the benchmarking survey is only one input used to develop appropriate standards of supply for Gwinnett; other variables include NPRA standards, trends, public input and demand analysis using participant data and service area analysis.

SECTION 5: Park System Concept

5.1 OVERVIEW

Gwinnett County parks provide a variety of high quality recreational, social, educational, historic, interpretative, and cultural opportunities to citizens and visitors alike. A well-balanced park system engages people of all ages, denominations and ethnic backgrounds and enhances the overall quality of life. The definition of a park system concept that encourages a broad range of park types and facility combinations is an important first step in meeting the varied needs of the public.

In Gwinnett County, decisions relating to the future planning, acquisition, development, and management of park resources are guided by a "concept" of the County's park system. This system concept establishes park classifications and defines that various aspects of each park type, including such items as the general intensity of development, intended service area, and potential complement of facilities.

The inventory of existing parks and facilities, public consultation program, demographic and leisure trends analysis, and goals established by the Citizen Steering Committee have provided a foundation for the review and modification of Gwinnett County's park system concept.

5.2 COUNTY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARKS

Before examining the County's park classification system in detail, a broader perspective on public parkland is warranted.

The Gwinnett County Department Community Services is the primary provider of parks and recreation facilities in the County and its unincorporated cities. The County provides recreation services that are typically associated with urban communities rather than the passive open space preservation role that many county recreation departments play. Although many park amenities provided by the County may also be provided at the local town or city level, there are a number of significant differences between the County parks system and other levels of recreation areas:

- County parks tend to be larger than local level parks and draw users from a larger distance.
- County parks are often designed to incorporate both active and passive recreational opportunities (as opposed to single purpose parks, which are more common at the local level). It is the County's intention to provide a range of facilities at each park in order to serve all age groups and to provide experiences beyond which could be obtained at local parks.
- Park amenities and design standards are generally consistent among most County parks so as to provide users with a common level of service and to provide equity among different areas of the County. Standardized design elements also provide efficiencies when

designing and constructing new parks and create an "identity" for County parks.

- Park planning, acquisition, design and construction occur on an ad hoc basis at the local level. With very few unincorporated cities and towns having their own parks and recreation departments, there is greater reliance on the County parks system.
- In relative terms, the County's park system is younger than the park systems of most local cities and many other similar sized county governments.
- Generally, local level parks tend to have been established years ago as part of traditional village settlement areas, whereas the majority of the landholdings within the County parks system have been developed within the past ten to twenty years. As a result of this and other factors, many city parks are smaller, more urban in nature, and contain aging facilities.
- Many city parks provide activities that are oriented toward visits of relatively short duration (e.g., playgrounds). County parks, on the other hand, are more multi-purpose and provide for activities of an extended nature.
- City parks are generally located in closer proximity to historical population concentrations, thereby allowing many of their users to travel to the park by foot or bicycle. The distance between neighborhoods and the recreation facilities within most County parks is typically greater, prompting more users to drive their cars to these parks. The result is a greater need for support amenities, such as large parking lots, at County parks.

The differences between the County and city park systems are largely apparent. Tremendous population growth in Gwinnett County over the past thirty years, however, has blurred the boundary lines between the County and its unincorporated cities and towns. No longer are there significant differences in population densities and land use patterns between towns, cities and the County – patterns of development are determined more by interstate and road networks than they are by political boundaries. In fact, some of the more densely populated areas of Gwinnett are not found within the cities.

Despite the growth that has occurred, the two-tier government system creates inequalities in service levels for those living within cities and those outside of cities. As such, city dwellers are served by both neighborhood-level parks that are generally in close proximity to their home, as well as County parks, which the County strives to provide on a geographically equitable basis (meaning that there is likely a County park within a reasonable driving distance of their home). Due to annexations and land development patterns, there are even instances where County parks exist within city boundaries. Those living outside of cities, however, do not typically have the luxury of having a smaller neighborhood-level park

located nearby because the only provider in their area would be the County, which generally only provides large-scale multi-use parks.

In many cases, school grounds serve as neighborhood-level parks, however, their facilities (largely playgrounds and athletic fields) do not appeal to all age groups and ethnic communities. Furthermore, community access to school facilities is limited due to extended school usage and issues related to liability, maintenance, and costs. Rapid population growth has also caused schools to occupy much of their land with portable classrooms, thereby disallowing the potential for additional park space for public use. Similar concerns and barriers exist with regard to local subdivision parks and facilities, making both schools and subdivision parks undesirable options for providing appropriate public park space at the neighborhood level.

5.3 COUNTY PARK CLASSIFICA- TION SYSTEM

County park classifications are important because they help to focus planning, development and management efforts in a manner that balances public needs and expectations with dimensions related to physical, natural and financial resources. Through a classification framework, a consistent management approach can be created that improves equity and responsiveness to community needs.

As the County's park system has evolved and expanded, so to has its parkland classification hierarchy. The 1986 County-wide Master Plan established a classification system that was comprised of community, regional, neighborhood/school and special purpose parks. The 1996 Master Plan and 2000 CIP modified this hierarchy to better reflect the needs of the general citizenry and the realities of park development in Gwinnett County. Many aspects of the classification system have remained generally consistent over the years, including:

- A continued reliance on community parks as the focus of active recreation in the County ("backbone of the park system"); as the County has grown, however, there has been a movement to increase the size of these parks and to include more passive recreation opportunities (e.g., trails, picnicking, open space preservation, etc.).
- A special purpose park category that encompasses single purpose recreation facilities.
- A desire to provide smaller scale recreation and park opportunities at the local level. Previous plans have attempted to accomplish this through encouraging agreements between school boards and the County so that school facilities could be improved for greater public usage. Due to rapid population growth, however, most schools do not have the land base to accommodate increased community use.

In 2000, the County approved a Passive Community Park category that enables the acquisition and development of smaller parks in densely

populated and underserved areas. This new category partially satisfies the need for neighborhood-level parks, but is not able to provide the full complement of facilities required in some service gap zones.

One critical area of importance that has emerged over the past decade or two, and in turn affecting the classification and "development" of parkland in the County, is a greater desire for passive recreation opportunities. While the development of community parks has traditionally been the first priority of the County, the acquisition of open space parks has received significantly more emphasis in recent years, as highlighted by the acquisition of the 1795-acre Harbins/Alcovy River Park Site in 2002. Although the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Division is not traditionally in the business of preserving natural resources for the sake of environmental protection, it is responsible for providing public recreation opportunities that require a variety of natural landscapes.

Another concept that has generated considerable support is that of clustering park sites (e.g., Pinckneyville Park, Community Center, Soccer Complex, and West District Pool Site). Clustering (whereby two or more parks with different, but complementary, facilities are located within close proximity of each other) has been largely necessitated by the rapid growth in the County and the resulting lack of available and affordable land. As the recreational demands of Gwinnett County's population continue to increase and land supplies dwindle, there will be a greater reliance on park and facility clustering.

The current park system includes "Community Parks", "Passive Community Parks", "Open Space Parks" and "Special Purpose Parks". Informal and less-defined categories also exist "Green Space" and "Other" parks. Table 5-1 identifies County parks by type.

Table 5-1: Gwinnett County Parks by Park Category

Community Parks	Acres	Area
Alexander Park Site	91.1	C
Bay Creek Park	153.8	E
Best Friend Park	43.4	A
Bethesda Park	158.7	C
Bogan Park	83.1	D
Collins Hill Park & Aquatic Center	91.7	C
Dacula Park	75.9	D
Duncan Creek Park Site	109.7	D
George Pierce Park	304.0	A
Jones Bridge Park	29.7	A
Lenora Park	178.4	E
Lucky Shoals Park	68.3	B
Mountain Park Park & Aquatic Center	61.9	B
Peachtree Ridge Park Site	155.7	A
Pinckneyville Park, Soccer Complex & Community Center	108.9	A
Rabbit Hill Park	74.2	D
Rhodes Jordan Park	162.3	D
Shorty Howell Park	66.9	A
Spriggs Road Park Site	63.8	C
Total	2081.5	

Special Purpose Parks	Acres	Area
Cemetery Field Park	6.0	A
Edgemore North	10.2	A
Gwinnett County Historic Courthouse	1.7	C
Gwinnett County History Museum	0.4	C
Harmony Grove Soccer Complex	15.7	B
Lanier Museum of Natural History	1.0	D
Lillian Webb Field	3.4	A
Singleton Rd. Activity Building	1.6	B
Vines Botanical Gardens	90.1	E
West District Pool Site	22.5	A
Yellow River Post Office	5.1	C
Total	157.7	

Passive Community Parks	Acres	Area
DeShong Park Site	208.2	E
Five Forks Park	25.0	C
Graves Park Site	70.2	B
Sweet Water Park Site	25.4	C
Total	328.8	

Open Space Parks	Acres	Area
Alcovy River Gristmill	11.9	D
Centerville Park Site	60.7	E
Doc Moore Branch Park Site	350.0	E
Harbins/Alcovy River Park Site	1795.2	D
Holcomb Bridge Park Site	11.6	A
Little Mulberry Park	889.7	D
McDaniel Farm Park	133.6	A
Palm Creek Park Site	294.4	D
Settles Bridge Park Site	268.1	D
Tribble Mill Park	700.3	E
Yellow River Park	566.1	E
Total	5081.6	

Green Space Parks*	Acres	Area
Appalachee River Park	7.6	D
Discover Mills Tract	8.2	C
Edgemore North	10.2	A
Riverside Parkway	8.7	C
Yellow River Wetlands	52.1	E
Total	76.6	

Other*	Acres	Area
Collins Hill Golf Course	138.8	C
Environmental & Heritage Center	250.0	D
I-85 Site	32.1	C
Vulcan Site	10.0	A
Total	430.9	

* these categories do not form part of the County's Park Classification System and are categorized as such for internal purposes.

The following narrative characterizes each County park classification. No changes are recommended to the current definitions or programs of Community, Passive Community, Open Space Parks.

Table 5-2: Community Parks

Community Parks are the centerpiece of Gwinnett County's park system. They contain a diverse range of active, passive, team and individual recreation opportunities for all ages. Community Parks are designed to accommodate a large number of users (and vehicles) and intense usage at peak times.

New Community Park development should address both the active and passive recreation needs of the area. Larger parks (e.g., greater than 100 acres) should be designed such that at least one-third of the land area is dedicated for passive recreation and preserved open space. The degree of development within smaller parks (e.g., less than 100 acres) should be determined on a case-by-case basis, but may exceed 67% for active recreation. Community Parks should be located on major roadways and be designed to connect to a County-wide greenway network.

<i>Facility Types:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one or more organized sports field complex (with lighting and sufficient parking), indoor recreation facilities (community centers, aquatic centers, senior centers, gymnasiums), outdoor aquatic facilities, tennis complex, basketball complex, rollerblade hockey rink, passive recreation amenities (see Passive Community Park)
<i>Size:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing range: 30 to 300 acres recommended: 100 to 200 acres
<i>Service Area:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community level to County-wide (approximately 25,000+ population)
<i>Existing Supply:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2,082 acres at 19 sites; 3.5 acres per 1000 population (2000 Census)
<i>Recommended Provision Level:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 acres per 1000 population (together with Passive Community Parks)

As noted above, this park type is the "backbone" of the county park system. The facilities in these parks are exceptional. The only drawback to the Community Park is that utilization is entirely dependent on the ability of users to arrive by automobile. Consideration should be given to providing "bus" access to Community Parks and to connecting the parks to school sites and other public spaces through trails and greenways.

Table 5-3: Passive Community Parks

Passive Community Parks offer a smaller-scale alternative to Community Parks in areas that are underserved, densely populated, and land poor. They offer a similar complement of facilities as Community Parks, with a blend of active and passive recreation opportunities, however, sport field complexes, large community facilities, or other recreation areas requiring hundreds of parking spaces are not permitted. Approximately 25% to 33% of a Passive Community Park may be developed with impermeable surfaces.

Passive Community Parks should provide both pedestrian access as well as vehicular access to the site. In this regard, they should be located on major roadways and be designed to connect to a County-wide greenway network.

<i>Facility Types:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playgrounds, picnic areas and pavilions, nature trails, paved multi-purpose trail, accessible public open space (meadow or woodland), lakes/ponds, tennis, basketball, and sand volleyball courts (single or paired), activity building, outdoor seniors activities, splash ground, skate park, disk golf course, dog park, irrigated turf fields for informal non-organized sport and free play (unlit)
<i>Size:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing range: 25 to 200 acres recommended: 20 to 100 acres
<i>Service Area:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> several neighborhoods
<i>Existing Supply:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 329 acres at 4 sites; 0.6 acres per 1000 population (2000 Census)
<i>Recommended Provision Level:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 acres per 1000 population (together with Community Parks)

The Passive Community Park, as noted, is new to the County park system. It has addressed many pressing needs in the more densely populated areas. The one challenge is that in some of the more densely populated areas, the ethnic composition (see Maps 3-8 to 3-11) creates a need for informal and pick-up soccer opportunities, as well as league play. The Passive Community Park does not permit a range of active playing fields, nor does it allow for park sites less than 20 acres. In the more developed areas of the County, finding a 20-acre site is a considerable challenge.

Table 5-4: Open Space Parks

Open Space Parks are generally large parcels of mostly undeveloped land that embody natural, scenic and cultural values, resources and landscapes. These parks provide passive, non-programmed recreation opportunities in a managed environment.

In order to serve a dual purpose of open space preservation/protection, Open Space Parks are typically developed with only minimal amenities needed to provide public access for low-intensity and dispersed recreation. Open Space Parks are designed for a maximum of 10 to 15% impervious surface coverage. Where possible, Open Space Parks should be located along and/or connected to the greenway system.

<i>Facility Types:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> passive recreation amenities (see Passive Community Park), mountain biking trails, equestrian trails, boardwalks, special event facilities, interpretative elements, group camping, specialized facilities that complement the surrounding landscape and cultural/natural resources
<i>Size:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing range: 10 to 1800 acres recommended: size is dependent upon opportunity, however, Open Space Parks should typically be over 200 acres
<i>Service Area:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County-wide
<i>Existing Supply:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5,172 acres at 12 sites; 8.8 acres per 1000 population (2000 Census)
<i>Recommended Provision Level:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 acres per 1000 population

Table 5-5: Special Purpose Parks

Special Purpose Parks and facilities serve special interest recreation or leisure interests and are generally single purpose and located on small sites. They can provide a special emphasis to a nearby community park or be free standing. Consideration should be given to the ability of such facilities to be self-supporting, however, each should be judged on its own merits.

<i>Facility Types:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> variable
<i>Size:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing range: 1 to 20 acres recommended: size is dependent upon need
<i>Service Area:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> variable
<i>Existing Supply:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 57 acres at 9 sites; 0.1 acres per 1000 population (2000 Census)
<i>Recommended Provision Level:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not applicable

To assist in achieving the objective of creating flexibility within the design of parks in order to meet specific community needs, the County may want to consider modifying the concept of Special Purpose Parks by allowing them to serve more than a single recreational purpose.

"Green Space Park" is not a formal category within the Gwinnett County park system, however, it has been developed internally to identify properties that are owned by the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Division, but that do not contain any developed recreation facilities or areas. Green Space Parks are not open to the public and are not actively publicized by the County. In most cases, the location, size, or topography of Green Space Parks are such that these parcels cannot and will never be developed as usable parkland. These sites are, however, largely undeveloped tracts of woodland, wetland or meadow and, as such, can be included in the calculation of preserved land for the Georgia Greenspace Program. The County currently has 119 acres of "Green Space Parks" at 6 sites.

Similarly, the Parks and Recreation Division has created an "Other" category to account for other department land assets that are developed for uses that are inconsistent with the department's mandate. The County currently has 399 acres of "Other" land at 3 sites.

5.4 NEW CLASSIFICATIONS

Two of the key elements of a parks system are equity and accessibility. In this regard, it is imperative that the County strive to provide parkland in populated areas that are void of any park facilities, as well as those that are under-supplied. Map 6-1 illustrates those areas that do not have a public park located within two miles, which has been established as a reasonable distance to travel to a park in Gwinnett County.

The use of provision standards for the allocation of parkland is a worldwide practice. Open space is often the focal point for city development with the classic civic square or park plaza. As all areas of a community are not similar in either their physical or geographic attributes or the composition or density of their population, provision standards should not be interpreted literally, rather they should be viewed as guidelines. Standards do, however, provide a useful starting point in analyzing park system needs.

When assessing whether or not an area is meeting the "provision standards" for open space a number of other factors must be considered such as:

1. The ability of or existence of alternative facility providers (e.g., local cities, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, private enterprise, ethnic or religious clubs or facilities);
2. The threat of lost opportunity if land is not acquired before the area is completely developed or if a resource is removed/destroyed;
3. The need to respond to pressures from new development with high family demands;

4. The need for appropriate spatial distribution; and
5. The need for acquisition for purely aesthetic reasons.

In any parkland system analysis, it is also necessary to relate the supply of land and its function to the population it serves within a geographically defined area. The primary issue pertaining to the provision of parkland is whether or not the needs of residents are being met by the current supply. This issue also relates to the provision of quality and optimum recreational opportunities.

It is generally felt that the provision of parkland should be geared to socio-demographic variables such as age, socio-economic status, population density, etc. Furthermore, past development patterns, lost opportunities and the spread of new development have impacted, and will continue to impact, the County's ability to acquire appropriate lands. When a community is faced with diverse physical terrain and diverse population characteristics, such as Gwinnett County is, flexibility and choice should be the operative elements in implementing a meaningful open space system.

Fundamental to the park system strategy is the fact that all people will not have equal access to parkland and its associated amenities strictly due to a lack of acquisition and development options. Inequalities exist in Gwinnett County's park system, however, as it is impossible provide parkland equally across the County. In order to address deficiencies in older or more rapidly growing areas, the size of parcels acquired may be smaller and the price per acre may be greater than in the outlying areas of the County.

Size of parkland acquired should not be the most important factor in a park system; the level of customer satisfaction derived from the open space provided should be the ultimate goal. While park size is not an indicator of customer satisfaction, it is often correlated to maintenance costs. Too many small park parcels will result in increased travel time and less productivity from maintenance crews for the dollars spent. Also relevant is the degree of manicure to the park. Parkland that is more "landscaped" and less "naturalized" is more maintenance intensive and, therefore, more costly.

The Master Plan's public consultation program found that 39% of the population supported the need for more parks and recreation facilities in their area and that 50% of those surveyed indicated that they would use County parks more often if one was located closer to their home. In developed areas of the County, few if any opportunities exist to acquire and develop parks of a size that is traditionally associated with the County parks system (e.g., 20 to 50 acres or more). **If the County is to meet the needs of residents living within underserved and densely populated areas, adjustments to its park classification system are in order.**

Furthermore, many of these underserved areas may contain significantly higher densities than what was reported in the past Census reports. **The**

County must also build enough flexibility into its park system in order to accommodate the needs of these ethnic communities, whether located in underserved areas or neighborhoods with existing parks. For example, many of these areas have seen increased demand for both organized and pick-up soccer opportunities.

The existing park system concept has served Gwinnett County well, but it is not necessarily applicable and responsive to every area in the County. To meet the expressed needs of the public requires two new park classifications have been developed: Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks and Linear Parks (as described below).

5.4.1 Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks

The creation of "Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks" could provide an alternative form of parkland for the more densely populated and under-served areas. This park type would be a supplement to the standards already in place and applied to major nodes of development. Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks would generally be 5 to 20 acres in size and be designed in the vein of "special purpose" parks, which are developed on an as needed and opportunity-driven basis. These parks would be active parks with reduced parking standards and would cater to a geographic area with a denser population and a greater potential for "walk to" utilization and/or bussing opportunities. Generally, the denser the population, the greater is the demand for active recreational opportunities such as soccer, basketball and walking paths, therefore, these types of facilities (in small numbers and for unscheduled play only) should be considered for Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks. Such parks may be in the form of either commercial land acquisitions or the assembly of larger land holdings, but are not intended as Community Parks. The minimum Special Purpose Neighborhood Park size should be approximately 5 acres and is intended to serve a population of approximately 5,000 people.

Table 5-6: Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks

Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks are intended to serve densely populated areas that :

- are deficient in park and recreation opportunities; and
- do not contain tracts of land large enough for the development of a Passive Community Park; or
- wish to develop more active recreational uses than permitted by either the Passive Community Park or Special Purpose Park.

Areas where the development of Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks may be considered are shown on Map 6-1.

Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks will generally be in the 5 to 20 acre range and may be developed on vacant commercial or industrial/brownfield sites in cases where more suitable options do not exist. A desirable location characteristic is within close proximity to multi-family complexes or higher density single detached areas. Park users will be encouraged to walk to Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks, thereby limiting the amount of on-site parking space to be provided.

Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks can generally contain active and passive recreational activity areas. This park type would serve various age groups with emphasis on youth and should be tailored to fit the existing and anticipated characteristics of the surrounding population. Limited non-organized sport group activities are encouraged.

<i>Facility Types:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informal play field (soccer, baseball, etc.), open play area, game court area, playground, walking/jogging path, picnic and conversation areas, small picnic pavilion, passive areas
<i>Size:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 to 20 acres
<i>Service Area:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • several neighborhoods (approximately 5,000 people)
<i>Existing Supply:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not applicable
<i>Recommended Provision Level:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not applicable

5.4.2 Linear Parks

The creation of the Linear Park category is to address the public's strong desire for not only more walking and cycling trails, but to link communities together through a comprehensive trail system.

The County's Open Space and Greenway Master Plan identifies in great detail the benefits of acquiring and/or protecting greenway corridors. The number one priority for the community and the Citizen Steering Committee was the creation of linkages and connectivity between communities and public spaces. Linear greenway systems are ideal for trails for recreational use, non-motorized transportation, and linking a community together. Key excerpts from the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan, as well as the Pedestrian, Bicycle and Greenways Plan for Gwinnett County (1995) are reproduced in Appendix H.

In keeping with the need for access and flexibility within the County's park system, a greenway system is required to complement and link public spaces. The County's Open Space and Greenway Master Plan identifies in great detail the benefits of acquiring and/or protecting greenway corridors. The number one priority for the community and the Citizen Steering Committee was the creation of linkages and connectivity between communities and public spaces. Linear greenway systems are ideal for trails for recreational use, non-motorized transportation, and providing community links.

The acquisition and use of land for Linear Parks is one way to implement greenways and off-road segments of bike routes proposed in the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan. On a more localized level these linear parks can provide associated recreation activities and connections either as part of a longer greenway or as a standalone parcel. The "Linear Park" classification will also assist in protecting natural resources such as woodlots, wetlands, ravines, rock outcrops, and other significant or ecologically sensitive natural features. Wherever possible, formal linkages between open spaces should be encouraged to enhance the use of park spaces and to foster the development of community trails.

Table 5-7: Linear Parks

Linear strip of land typically developed along waterways, utility easements, and roadways that provide corridors for trails and greenways, open space, and physical buffers. Linear Parks are located outside of other public parks, but connect those parks and other points of interests, such as schools, residential neighborhoods and business districts.

Linear Parks provide an emphasis on walking, jogging, and bicycling; usage for motorized transport and equestrian riding is prohibited. Such parks should be of sufficient width (25' minimum; 50' preferred minimum) to protect from adjacent infringements and maintain environmental integrity of the corridor.

The level of development of Linear Parks can range from minimal to extensive and may include trailhead (parking and amenity) areas. If parking is provided then associated facilities including rest rooms, playground, and picnic or pavilion area should be included. Linear Parks may also include adjacent pockets of open space.

<i>Facility Types:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-use trails, nature trails, boardwalks, trailheads, playgrounds, picnic areas and pavilions
<i>Size:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 – 50 acres typical (could be larger as part of Greenway network)
<i>Service Area:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> several neighborhoods to County-wide (as part of Greenway network)
<i>Existing Supply:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not applicable
<i>Recommended Provision Level:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> within 2 miles of any location in County

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Acquisition of parcels for Linear Parks should be coordinated with proposed greenway locations in the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan. In addition opportunities may arise to acquire parcels that are not associated with the Greenway Plan that would still meet the requirements outlined for a Linear Park. Highest priority would be given to parcels that provide connection between existing parks, schools, public facilities and residential areas. Currently the rezoning process in Gwinnett County (and to a lesser extent the building permit process) requires easements to be provided for greenways when the property is associated with proposed locations in the Master Plan. Though linear parks will often be associated with rivers or streams, multi-use trails should be located outside of stream buffers and floodplains wherever possible and should follow State and County stream buffer requirements.

SECTION 6: Facilities and Programming Inventory and Analysis

6.1 PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY INVENTORY

Using information in the 1996 Master Plan as a point of departure, the County's parks and facility inventory was updated. The inventory data has been integral to identifying service gaps and projecting facility and parkland needs.

The detailed inventory includes all parks and facilities owned and/or operated by Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation, the cities completely or partly within Gwinnett County, and Federal property (C.O.E. and N.P.S.). The inventory data can be found in aggregated form throughout this section of the Master Plan as well as in the Appendix A. Tables 6-1 to 6-5 provide a brief summary of facilities contained with County parks, local city parks, federal park sites, and private recreation facilities. **The inventory data includes all existing facilities, as well as facilities that are currently under construction or under design.**

An electronic database was created to house and manipulate the inventory data. The database assisted in the analysis of overall parkland and facility supply through the creation of summary data and distribution mapping. The database will also allow the County to monitor and update park inventory data, as well as integrate parcel-specific information into their GIS system.

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Table 6-1: County Parks in Gwinnett County

Park Name	Acreage	RPA	Indoor Facilities							Outdoor Facilities									
			Indoor Lane Pool	Indoor Leisure Pool	Community Center	Activity Building	Gymnasiums	Senior Center	Baseball/ Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Football Fields*	Playground areas	Outdoor Lane Pool	Outdoor Leisure Pool	Outdoor Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Outdoor Volleyball	Skate Parks	
Alexander Park Site	91.1	C																	
Appalachee River Park	7.6	D																	
Bay Creek Park	153.8	E							8		D	4							
Best Friend Park	43.4	A					1		2		O	2		yes	17	2			
Bethesda Park	158.7	C		yes				yes	10	4	D	2							
Bogan Park	83.1	D	yes	yes	yes		1		7		O	2				2	5		
Cemetery Field Park	6.0	A									D								
Centerville Park Site	60.7	E																	
Collins Hill Aquatic Center	18.3	C	yes																
Collins Hill Golf Club (leased)	138.8	C																	
Collins Hill Park	73.4	C							7		O	3		yes	2	2	1		
Dacula Park	75.9	D				yes			7		D	2	yes		4		1		
Deshong Park Site	208.2	E																	
Discover Mills Tract	8.2	C																	
Doc Moore Branch Park Site	350.0	E																	
Duncan Creek Park	109.7	D																	
Edgemore North	10.2	A																	
Environmental & Heritage Center	250.0	D																	
Five Forks Park	25.0	C										3				1		1	
Freeman’s Mill	11.9	D																	
George Pierce Park	304.0	A			yes				10	5	D	1				2			
Graves Park	70.2	B										2			2				
Gwinnett County Historic Courthouse	1.7	C																	
Gwinnett County History Museum	0.4	C																	
Harbins/Alcovy River Park Site	1795.2	D																	
Harmony Grove Soccer Complex	15.7	B								3									
Holcomb Bridge Park Site	11.6	A										1							
Hospital Site	32.1	C																	
Jones Bridge Park	29.7	A				yes				3		1					1		
Lanier Museum of Natural History	1.0	D																	
Lenora Park	178.4	E					1		6		D	2		yes					
Lillian Webb Field	3.4	A							1							0.5			
Little Mulberry Park	889.7	D										2							
Lucky Shoals Park	68.3	B							5		O	1			2	2			
McDaniel Farm Park	133.6	A																	
Mountain Park Aquatic Center	18.4	B	yes			yes								yes					
Mountain Park Park	43.5	B							7		O	2			6				
Palm Creek Park Site	294.4	D																	
Peachtree Ridge Park Site	155.7	A																	
Pinckneyville Park & Community Center	108.9	A			yes				7	5		10						1	
Rabbit Hill Park	74.2	D								6									
Rhodes Jordan Park	162.3	D			yes		1		7		O	3		yes	8				
Riverside Parkway	8.7	C																	
Settles Bridge Park Site	268.2	D																	
Shorty Howell Park	66.9	A				yes			7		D	7							
Singleton Road Activity Building	1.6	B				yes													
Spriggs Road Park Site	63.8	C																	
Sweet Water Park Site	25.4	C										2			2	1	1		
Tribble Mill Park	700.3	E										2							
Vines Botanical Gardens	90.1	E																	
Vulcan Site (leased)	10.0	A																	
West District Pool Site	22.5	A																	
Yellow River Park	566.1	E										4							
Yellow River Post Office	5.1	E																	
Yellow River Wetlands	52.1	E																	
Subtotal	8157		3	2	4	5	4	1	91	26	13	58	1	5	43	12.5	9	2	

* Football Fields - "D" means Dedicated, "O" means Overlay

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Table 6-2: City Parks in Gwinnett County

Park Name	Acreage	RPA	Indoor Facilities							Outdoor Facilities										City
			Indoor Lane Pool	Indoor Leisure Pool	Community Center	Activity Building	Gymnasiums	Senior Center	Baseball/ Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Football Fields*	Playground areas	Outdoor Lane Pool	Outdoor Leisure Pool	Outdoor Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Outdoor Volleyball	Skate Parks		
Baker's Rock	28.5	E																		Snellville
Berkeley Lake Children's Park	1.9	A										2								Berkeley Lake
Berkeley Lake Greenspace	63.1	A																		Berkeley Lake
Betty Mauldin Park	0.3	A																		Norcross
Bona Allen Park Site	16.0	D																		Buford
Buford City Park/Legion Fields	70.6	D							10	1		2			12					Buford
Buford Civic Center & City Gym	8.8	D					1				D									Buford
Buford Nature Preserve	16.6	D																		Buford
Bunten Park	45.0	A			yes		1		4	2		2			4					Duluth
Church Street Park	2.5	A										1				1				Duluth
City Hall Park	0.5	A										1								Suwanee
DeLay Property	25.7	A																		Suwanee
Duluth Greenspace	7.8	A																		Duluth
Duluth Town Green	2.1	A				yes														Duluth
E.E. Robinson Memorial Park	34.0	D							2	1		2			2	1	2			Sugar Hill
Grace Harris Park	0.7	D																		Buford
Grayson Community Park	3.4	E										2								Grayson
Grayson Senior Center	0.8	E					yes													Grayson
Hewell Property	61.4	A																		Suwanee
Hovendick Property	9.8	A																		Suwanee
Jones Property	4.7	E																		Snellville
Lilburn City Park	9.1	B										2			4	1	1			Lilburn
Lilburn Greenspace	13.7	B																		Lilburn
Lilburn Lion's Club Park	15.2	E							5		O									Lilburn
Main Street Park	0.5	A														1				Suwanee
Maple Creek Park	16.6	D																		Dacula
Martin Farm Road Park	6.0	A																		Suwanee
Moore Road Property	4.4	A																		Suwanee
Rogers Bridge Park	12.5	A															2			Duluth
Rossie Brundage Park	3.2	A							1			1				1				Norcross
S. Wayne Odum Senior Center	2.0	E					yes													Snellville
Scott Hudgens Park/Soccer Complex	60.0	A								4										Duluth
St. Albans Recreational Area	10.0	B																		Lilburn
Sterling Trace Park	12.3	A																		Lilburn
Sugar Hill Community Center	1.3	D				yes														Sugar Hill
Sugar Hill Golf Club	167.3	D																		Sugar Hill
Sugar Hill Greenspace	25.0	D																		Sugar Hill
Sugar Hill Town Green	0.8	D																		Sugar Hill
Suwanee Creek Park	85.4	A										3								Suwanee
Suwanee Town Center Park	7.0	A																		Suwanee
T.W. Briscoe Park	34.4	E				yes			1	6		2	yes		8	2	3			Snellville
Taylor Memorial Park	2.4	A										1								Duluth
The Farm	0.0	A																		Suwanee
Thrasher Park	2.2	A										1			1					Norcross
W.P. Jones Mem. Park & Tennis Complex	20.0	A										1			4					Duluth
Subtotal	916		0	0	1	3	2	2	23	14	2	23	1	0	35	7	8	0		

* Football Fields - "D" means Dedicated, "O" means Overlay

Table 6-3: Federal Parks in Gwinnett County

Park Name	Acreage	RPA
Abbotts Bridge South Unit	112.5	A
Bowman's Island Unit	637.6	D
Corps of Engineers Parks	298.0	D
Glass Tract	89.0	A
Medlock Bridge Unit	42.5	A
Rivermore Tract	41.0	A
Settles Bridge Unit	41.7	D
Suwanee Creek Unit	144.9	A
West Tract	79.0	D
Wild Timber Tract	67.0	D
Subtotal	1553	

The sites owned by the Federal government are operated by the National Park Service (with the exception of the Corps of Engineers Parks) and form part of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA). The CRNRA consists of 14 land units along a 48-mile corridor of the Chattahoochee River that stretches from Lake Lanier's Buford Dam to a point near downtown Atlanta. A large number of the CRNRA parks are within Gwinnett County, although not all of these sites are open to the public. Those sites that are accessible provide outdoor recreation opportunities such as hiking, fishing and other unstructured activities.

Table 6-4: Significant Private Facilities in Gwinnett County

Park Name	RPA	Indoor Facilities							Outdoor Facilities										Type
		Indoor Lane Pool	Indoor Leisure Pool	Community Center	Activity Building	Gymnasiums	Senior Center	Baseball/Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Football Fields*	Playground areas	Outdoor Lane Pool	Outdoor Leisure Pool	Outdoor Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Outdoor Volleyball	Skate Parks		
A. Worley Brown Boys & Girls Club	A			yes		1				1								Rec Center	
Atlanta Golf Center	B																	Golf Center	
Atlanta Ice Forum	A																	Ice Arena	
Bear's Best	D																	Golf Course	
Beaver Ruin Creek	A																	Open Space	
Berkeley Hills Country Club	A										yes		8					Golf Course	
Brookeside Swimming & Tennis Inc.	E										yes		2					Tennis Club	
Buford Senior/Human Services Center	D						yes											Senior Center	
Buford Youth Community Center	D					1					yes							Community Center	
Calloway-Garner Cemetery	D																	Open Space	
Castlebrook Subdivision	C																	Open Space	
Cedar Lake Golf Course	E																	Golf Course	
Centerville Community Center	E			yes														Community Center	
Chateau Elan - The Legends	D																	Golf Course	
Chateau Elan Golf Club - The Chateau	D																	Golf Course	
Chateau Elan Golf Club - The Woodlands	D																	Golf Course	
Chattahoochee Event Center	A															2		Event Site	
Collins Hill Athletic Club	C										yes		16					Fitness Center	
Collins Hill Golf Club	C										yes							Golf Course	
Davis Flip Center	D																	Gymnasitics	
Drowning Creek	D																	Open Space	
Espn X Games Skate Park	C																1	Skate Park	
Flat Rock Driving Range	E																	Golf Center	
Flowers Crossing Woodlot	C																	Open Space	
Four Seasons Racquet Club	E										yes		8					Tennis Club	
Four Winds Community Center	E										yes		4					Tennis Club	
GA Gymnastics Academy - Lawrenceville	C																	Gymnasitics	
GA Gymnastics Academy - Suwanee	C																	Gymnasitics	
GSA Complex	B								11									Sports Complex	
Gwinnett Civic & Cultural Center	A																	Cultural Center	
Gwinnett County Fairgrounds	C																	Fairgrounds	
Gwinnett Gymnastics Center	B																	Gymnasitics	
Gwinnett Sports Center	A					3												Sports Complex	
Hamilton Mill Golf Course	D																	Golf Course	
Hanarry Swim & Racquet Club	B										yes		4					Tennis Club	
Heritage Golf Club	B																	Golf Course	

continued...

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Table 6-4: Significant Private Facilities in Gwinnett County (...continued)

Park Name	RPA	Indoor Facilities							Outdoor Facilities											Type
		Indoor Lane Pool	Indoor Leisure Pool	Community Center	Activity Building	Gymnasiums	Senior Center	Baseball/Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Football Fields*	Playground areas	Outdoor Lane Pool	Outdoor Leisure Pool	Outdoor Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Outdoor Volleyball	Skate Parks			
J.M. Tull/Gwinnett Family YMCA	C	yes		yes		2			4		1	yes		4	1			Rec Center		
Lawrenceville Boys & Girls Club	C			yes		1		3			1			2				Rec Center		
Lawrenceville Golf Center	C																	Golf Center		
Lawrenceville Senior Center	D						yes											Senior Center		
Little Tykes Academy	A											yes						Day Care		
Magnolia Racquet Club	D													4				Tennis Club		
Mall of Georgia	D																1	Skate Park		
Mama’s Deuce Indoor Skate Park	E																1	Skate Park		
Mary Kistner Nature Center	E																	Open Space		
Norcross Senior Center	B						yes											Senior Center		
Northwoods Country Club	C											yes		4				Golf Course		
Oak Park on The River	A																	Open Space		
Peachtree Family Golf Center	A																	Golf Center		
Pugh’s Creek in Flowers Crossing	E																	Open Space		
Racquet Club of The South	A											yes		18				Tennis Club		
Rampage Extreme Sports Park	A																1	Skate Park		
Robert D. Fowler Family YMCA	A	yes		yes		2												Rec Center		
SE Side of Arc Way on Bromolow Creek	B																	Open Space		
SGAA Sports Plex	E							11		D								Sports Complex		
Simpsonwood Conference Center	A											yes		2		1		Retreat Center		
Singleton Creek in Northmont	A																	Open Space		
Skaters Xtreme	E																1	Skate Park		
Sugar Hill Golf Club	D																	Golf Course		
Summit Chase Country Club	E											yes		12				Golf Course		
Suwanee Sports Academy	A					7												Sports Complex		
Sweetwater Creek	C																	Open Space		
Swim Atlanta - Lawrenceville	C	yes																Swim Club		
The Hooch Golf Club	A																	Golf Course		
The Soccer Academy	B								2									Sports Complex		
The Trophy Club at Apalachee	D																	Golf Course		
The Trophy Club of Gwinnett	E													4				Golf Course		
TPC at Sugarloaf	A																	Golf Course		
Tucker Golf Range	B																	Golf Center		
Westchester Commons	C																	Open Space		
Subtotal		3	0	10	0	17	3	14	18	1	3	14	0	92	1	3	5			

* Football Fields - "D" means Dedicated, "O" means Overlay

The list of private recreation facilities is not intended to be a complete listing of all providers. Specifically excluded from the private inventory were swim and tennis facilities in subdivisions or apartment complexes, health clubs, aerobic centers, shooting ranges, amusement parks, video arcades, and private fishing ponds, to name a few. Although considerable efforts were expended to identify facilities that mimic the kinds of facilities and programs provided by Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation, other providers may exist.

The table at right provides a summary of all significant recreation facilities in Gwinnett County that are owned and/or operated by the county, its local cities, the federal government, and private enterprise (including not-for-profit agencies). There are no State-owned parks in Gwinnett County.

Table 6-5: Totals of County, City, Federal and Private Parks and Facilities in Gwinnett County

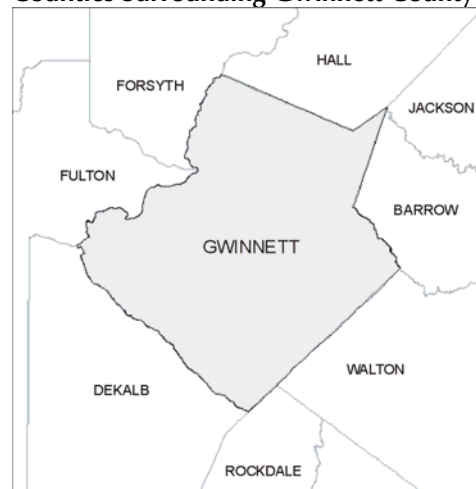
Acreage:	10626
Indoor Facilities:	
Indoor Lane Pools	6
Indoor Leisure Pools	2
Community Centers	15
Activity Buildings	8
Gymnasiums	23
Senior Centers	6
Outdoor Facilities:	
Baseball/ Softball Fields	128
Soccer Fields	58
Football Fields*	16
Playground areas	84
Outdoor Lane Pools	16
Outdoor Leisure Pools	5
Outdoor Tennis Courts	170
Basketball Courts	20.5
Outdoor Volleyball Courts	20
Skate Parks	7

6.2 SIGNIFICANT PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Parks and facilities outside of, but within three miles of, the Gwinnett County boundary were also identified, visited and their key features documented (see Table 6-6). Parks and facilities are listed according to the county in which they are located, beginning with Hall County and proceeding in a clockwise order to Forsyth County.

The purpose of this exercise was to provide an indication of alternative providers in the event that a gap in service was identified along Gwinnett County's boundary. This table is not intended to be considered a definitive database of all parks recreation facilities within a three-mile radius of Gwinnett County.

Figure 6-1: Counties Surrounding Gwinnett County



Although not its intended purpose, the inventory does provide a backdrop for discussion around usage of parks and facilities outside of Gwinnett by County residents. Many adjacent counties offer recreation facilities and programs that may be attracting Gwinnett County residents (and vice versa), especially Dekalb County which has the greatest number and range of parks within a short distance of Gwinnett's borders. On the other hand, Hall, Barrow, Walton, Rockdale and Forsyth Counties have few parks and facilities.

There are a number of unique attractions adjacent to Gwinnett County that are likely to attract many Gwinnettians, including Stone Mountain Park, Lake Lanier Islands, and Road Atlanta to name a few. The large majority of parks within three miles of Gwinnett, however, offer facilities and amenities that are very similar to those contained within Gwinnett County parks. The primary difference is that most of these outlying parks are not as large as the parks typically found in Gwinnett County and, therefore, do not offer as many facilities and programs (although some exceptions can be found in Dekalb and Fulton Counties).

It is possible that some of the larger sports parks attract some level usage from Gwinnett residents living near the County-line, especially those near West Walden Park (8 ball diamonds) in Loganville, which is in an area lacking in sports fields. A number of significant Dekalb County parks are also located just south of the Gwinnett County line along the I-85 corridor; many of these parks contain multiple sports fields and facilities such as outdoor swimming pools that may experience some level of usage by Gwinnettians. Furthermore, the Swim Atlanta facility in Fulton County may satisfy some of the competitive aquatic needs of residents living in the Suwanee area.

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Table 6-6: Inventory of Parks and Facilities within 3-miles of Gwinnett County

County	Park/ Facility Name	Park/ Facility Type	Facilities	Ownership	Nearest City
Hall	Big Creek Park	Passive Park	picnic area, restrooms, boat launch	Federal (COE)	Buford
	Burton Mill Park	Passive Park	picnic area, restrooms, boat launch	Federal (COE)	Buford
	Lake Lanier Islands	Resort Destination	Water Park, Campground, Equestrian Center, Amphitheater, Resort, Conference Center, 18-hole par 72 Golf Course, etc.	State	Buford
	Shoal Creek Day Use/Campground	Passive Park	campground, picnic area, boat launch, restrooms	Federal (COE)	Buford
	Road Atlanta	Racetrack	Road course, campground	Private	Braselton
	Van Pugh South Park	Passive Park	playground, boat launch, picnic area	Federal (COE)	Flowery Branch
Barrow	Braselton Community Center	Community Center	Community Hall, Tennis Courts	Braselton	Braselton
	City Hall Park	Community Park	Tot playground, 2 tennis courts, outdoor full basketball court, grass volleyball court, 7 picnic tables	Auburn	Auburn
	Brell Park	Neighborhood Park	Picnic pavilion, gazebo, train caboose	Auburn	Auburn
	Ball fields	Community Park	Ball fields	Auburn	Auburn
Walton	Anthony Gather Park	Community Park	Outdoor full court basketball court, older children playground, swings	Loganville	Loganville
	West Walton Park (Hoke O'Kelley Fields)	Community Park	8 lit baseball diamonds, storage building, 2 batting cages, 2 football fields, walking trails, picnic area	Walton County	Loganville
	West Walton Senior Citizen Center	Senior Center	2 multi-purpose rooms,	Walton County	Loganville
	Rock Gym	Gymnasium	Single gymnasium (old school)	Loganville	Loganville
Rockdale	Black Shoals Park	Reservoir	fishing piers, lakes & ponds, boat launch, picnic pavilion	Rockdale County	Conyers

(continued...)

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Table 6-6: Inventory of Parks and Facilities within 3-miles of Gwinnett County (...continued)

County	Park/ Facility Name	Park/ Facility Type	Facilities	Ownership	Nearest City
Dekalb	Rock Chapel Park	Community Park	6 lit baseball diamonds, batting cage, playground, picnic area	Dekalb County	Lithonia
	Stone Mountain Park	Amusement Park & Ecological Area	Theme Park, Lincoln Tennis Center (16 courts), waterpark, natural district	State	Stone Mountain
	Smoke Rise School	Community Park	Multi-use field, basketball court, multi-use court, playground, picnic area and trails	Dekalb County	Stone Mountain
	Medlock Park	Community Park	lit football field, 4 lit tennis courts, outdoor full court basketball, outdoor half court basketball, playground, swings, picnic pavilion	Stone Mountain	Stone Mountain
	Leila Mason Park	Community Park	Baseball diamond, outdoor full court basketball, playground, swings, picnic pavilions	Stone Mountain	Stone Mountain
	Veterans Park	Community Park	3 baseball diamonds, picnic pavilion	Stone Mountain	Stone Mountain
	McCurdy Park	Community Park	2 lit baseball diamonds, picnic pavilions	Stone Mountain	Stone Mountain
	Wade-Walker Park	Community Park	multi-purpose court/hockey rink, 6 ball diamonds, 10 soccer fields, 1 football field, 8 tennis courts, swimming pool, playground, picnic area and pavilions, lake, trails	Dekalb County	Stone Mountain
	Henderson Park	Community Park	6 soccer fields (one lit), 4 tennis courts, playground, woodland, fishing piers, lakes & ponds	Dekalb County	Tucker
	Kelly Cofer Park	Community Park	2 baseball diamonds, playground, outdoor lane/leisure pool, paved walking trails, woodland, lakes & ponds, picnic pavilions	Dekalb County	Tucker
	Peters Park	Community Park	multi-use field, basketball court, multi-use court, playground, picnic area	Dekalb County	Tucker
	Tucker Recreation Center	Community Center	recreation center, playground, paved walking trails, 2 outdoor half basketball courts	Dekalb County	Tucker
	Windwood Hollow Park	Community Park	Multi-use field, 2 tennis courts, playgrounds, picnic pavillion, trails, woodland	Dekalb County	Doraville
	Pleasantdale Park	Community Park	7 lit baseball diamonds, playground, paved walking trails	Dekalb County	Doraville
	Bernard Hulpem Park	Community Park	Baseball diamond, 2 tennis courts, 1 half court basketball court, tot playground, woodland, picnic pavillion	Doraville	Doraville
	Brook Park	Community Park	2 tennis courts, tot playground, 7 swings, woodland, picnic pavillion	Doraville	Doraville
	Honeysuckle Park & Fore St. Fleming Arena	Park & Community Center	Double gymnasium, lit football field, 4 baseball diamonds, playground, picnic pavillion	Doraville	Doraville
	Flowers Park	Park		Doraville	Doraville
	Atlanta Rocks! Perimeter	Rock Climbing	6,500 square foot climbing surface	Private	Doraville
	Autumn Park	Neighborhood Park	Tot playground, 15 swings, woodland	Chamblee	Chamblee
	Brook Run Park	Community Park	Scrub baseball diamond, open soccer field, tennis court, outdoor basketball court, playground, paved walking trails, woodland, 2 picnic pavillions	Dekalb County	Dunwoody
	Vanderlyn School Park	Community Park	multi-use field, basketball court, multi-use court, playground, picnic area, trails	Dekalb County	Dunwoody

(continued...)

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Table 6-6: Inventory of Parks and Facilities within 3-miles of Gwinnett County (...continued)

County	Park/ Facility Name	Park/ Facility Type	Facilities	Ownership	Nearest City
Fulton	Holcomb Bridge Unit	Passive Park	undeveloped	Federal (CRNRA)	Roswell
	Jones Bridge Unit	Passive Park	picnic areas, boat launch, fishing, restrooms, trails, NPS Geosphere Environmental Center	Federal (CRNRA)	Roswell
	East Roswell Park	Community Park & Community Center	community center with double gymnasium, meeting rooms, multi-purpose room, arts/crafts room, fitness/weight room. Outside - 4 baseball diamonds, 2 soccer fields, 8 lit tennis courts, sand volleyball court, playgrounds, paved walking trail, woodland, picnic	Roswell	Roswell
	Ocee Park	Community Park	7 baseball diamonds, 2 tennis courts, outdoor full court basketball, playground, swings, paved trail, picnic pavilion	Fulton County	Alpharetta
	Autry Mill Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	Nature trails, historic structure	Fulton County	Alpharetta
	Newtown Park	Community Park	2 ball diamonds, 2 soccer fields, playgrounds, 6 tennis courts, 2 basketball courts, pond, amphitheater, picnic pavilions, paved trail	Fulton County	Alpharetta
	Abbotts Bridge North Unit	Passive Park	undeveloped	Federal (CRNRA)	Duluth
	Shakerag Park Site	Community Park	ball diamonds, soccer fields, multi-use track, tennis	Fulton County	Suwanee
	Suwanee Creek	Passive Park	undeveloped	Federal (CRNRA)	Suwanee
	McGinnis Ferry Unit	Passive Park	undeveloped	Federal (CRNRA)	Suwanee
Forsyth	Swim Atlanta (John's Creek)	Swimming	2 indoor swimming pools	Private	Suwanee
	South Forsyth Soccer Complex	Soccer Complex	4 soccer fields	Forsyth County	Suwanee
	Sharon Springs Park	Community Park	8 ball diamonds, 2 soccer fields, 8 tennis courts, playground, trails, pavilion, basketball courts	Forsyth County	Alpharetta
	Bowmans Island Unit	Passive Park	equestrian trails, unpaved trails and fishing	Federal (CRNRA)	Sugar Hill
	Tidwell Park	Passive Park	restrooms, boat launch	Federal (COE)	Sugar Hill
	Little Ridge Park	Passive Park	boat launch	Federal (COE)	Sugar Hill
	Sawnee Park	Passive Park	campground, restrooms, boat launch	Federal (COE)	Sugar Hill
	West Bank/Overlook	Passive Park	picnic area, restrooms	Federal (COE)	Sugar Hill
	Lower Pool	Passive Park	picnic area, restrooms	Federal (COE)	Sugar Hill

**6.3 OVERVIEW
TO PARK
AND
FACILITY
NEEDS
ASSESSMENT**

The identification of a community's recreation needs is a complex, highly-important, and somewhat imprecise exercise in the development of a system-wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan. **To achieve this objective, this Master Plan examines both the provision (i.e., the total number of each facility type as determined by applying "standards") and distribution (where the facilities are physically located as determined by applying "service areas") of the aforementioned facility types within Gwinnett County.** Provision and distribution are both integral components of the analysis and it is important that each be given equal weight. A greater reliance on total provision could result in facilities being located far away from the population that uses them, while too much emphasis on distribution could result in the oversupply of facilities and unnecessary expenditures.

In order to identify current and future park and facility requirements, two methodologies have been used:

- Provision standard analysis, which identifies the total number of facilities and acres of parkland required both on a County-wide and Recreation Planning Area basis.
- Service gap analysis, which illustrates geographic areas that are over or under-supplied.

The facility and park categories that have been assessed include:

- parkland (community parks, passive community parks, and open space parks);
- soccer complexes;
- baseball/softball complexes;
- community centers, activity buildings, senior recreation centers, and gymnasiums (collectively referred to as recreation centers);
- indoor lane (competition) pools and leisure pools (family aquatic centers);
- outdoor lane (competition) pools and leisure pools (family aquatic centers);
- tennis complexes;
- outdoor basketball courts;
- skate parks; and
- playgrounds.

The analysis of trail and greenway needs has also been incorporated into this section.

The approach to establishing the provision standards and service areas is described below.

**6.3.1 Facility and
Park
Provision
Standards**

Also referred to as level of service standards, provision standards represent a recommended measure of the demand for recreation areas and facilities in an area. They are targets for facility/park provision that are based upon a combination of accepted industry standards (e.g., National Recreation and Parks Association), market-driven factors (such as demand, trends, and demographics), and the past and present circumstances of the community. Provision standards help to identify current and future park and facility requirements in terms of total demand, but do not provide direction on the geographic areas of need.

The first step in the analysis is the identification of overall facility needs through the development and application of population-based standards (e.g., 1 outdoor swimming pool per 40,000 population; 1 playground per 750 children between the ages of 0 and 9). Once the standards were established, they were compared to the supply of facilities (on both a County-wide and Recreation Planning Area basis) to determine the degree of under (or over) supply currently and in the future.

The standards were established by:

- compiling the required demographic data (historic and projected, by age cohort groupings and census tract);
- completing the detailed inventory of all publicly-accessible parks and facilities within Gwinnett County in order to identify the total supply and distribution of each facility type; Appendix B (Updated Inventory Summary Data) contains a background report that correlates park and facility data to the RPAs and their populations;
- reviewing the standards proposed by the National Parks and Recreation Association, as well as those employed by other jurisdictions (as determined through the benchmarking survey);
- identifying key trends in recreation participation and facility design and assessing their implications on facility provision in Gwinnett County; and
- undertaking a public consultation program to identify issues and discuss areas of facility over and under supply (i.e., Are more facilities needed? Where? Why?).

Not all communities and facilities are created equal and this is why population-based standards should be different for each jurisdiction. The analysis of needs incorporates the aforementioned inputs before deciding on an appropriate standard that is unique to Gwinnett County.

The Consulting Team has developed a set of provision standards for Gwinnett County that we believe represent an appropriate balance between standards applied in other jurisdictions and the true needs of Gwinnettians (see Table 6-7). In many instances, Gwinnett's supply is well below the recommended standard, thereby indicating a need for additional facilities. In cases where its supply is above the standard, anticipated population

growth will likely create the need to develop additional facilities in future years in order to maintain the standard. It is important to remember that the recommended provision standards are goals that the County and other providers in Gwinnett should strive to achieve – although many of them may not be realized for a variety of reasons, the key is to continue to work toward meeting them.

Table 6-7: Recommended Provision Standards

Facility / Park Type	Recommended Standard	Current Provision Levels (2003 population)
PARKLAND		
Parkland - County, City, Federal	20 acres per 1,000 population	15.7 acres per 1,000 population
- Parkland - County only (all)	15 acres per 1,000 population	12.1 acres per 1,000 population
- County Parkland (Community)	7 acres per 1,000 population	3.6 acres per 1,000 population
- County Parkland (Open Space)	7 acres per 1,000 population	7.6 acres per 1,000 population
- County Parkland (Other)	1 acre per 1,000 population	0.9 acre per 1,000 population
AQUATICS		
Indoor Lane/Competition Pools	1 per 80,000 population	1 per 112,714 population
Indoor Leisure/Family Pools	1 per 200,000 population	1 per 338,142 population
Outdoor Lane/Competition Pools	1 per 80,000 population	1 per 42,268 population
Outdoor Leisure/Family Pools	1 per 80,000 population	1 per 135,257 population
Outdoor Pools - All	1 per 40,000 population	1 per 32,204 population
INDOOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES		
Community Centers	1 per 100,000 population	1 per 112,714 population
Activity Buildings	1 per 50,000 population	1 per 84,536 population
Senior Recreation Centers	1 per 75,000 population	1 per 112,714 population
All of the above (CCs, ABs, & SRCs)	1 per 30,000 population	1 per 33,814 population
Gymnasiums	1 per 20,000 population	1 per 27,051 population
SPORTS FIELDS		
Baseball / Softball Diamonds	1 per 5,000 population	1 per 5,283 population
Soccer Fields	1 per 6,000 population	1 per 11,660 population
Football Fields	1 per 35,000 population	1 per 42,268 population
OUTDOOR COURTS		
Tennis Courts	1 per 4,000 population	1 per 3,978 population
Basketball Courts	1 per 10,000 population	1 per 32,989 population
Sand Volleyball Courts	1 per 30,000 population	1 per 33,814 population
OTHER		
Playgrounds	1 per 750 children ages 0-9	1 per 1,205 children ages 0-9
Skate Parks	1 per 5,000 youth ages 10-19	1 per 14,256 youth ages 10-19

Note: unless otherwise noted, all recommended and current provision standards include facilities provided by the County, local cities, Federal/State agencies, and private enterprise. School and subdivision providers are not included.

6.3.2 Facility and Park Distribution and Service Gaps

Identifying the total number of each facility type required in Gwinnett County as a whole and by recreation planning area through the use of provision standards is only the first step in analyzing facility needs. The distribution of facilities is equally important, as it is essential that the facilities be located close to the people that use them – 50% of those surveyed for the 2002 Needs Assessment indicated that they would use a county park more often if one were located closer to their home!

In order to assess the distribution of current and proposed/future facilities, service areas were developed for each major facility and park type. The size and shape of each service area was established through an analysis that considered:

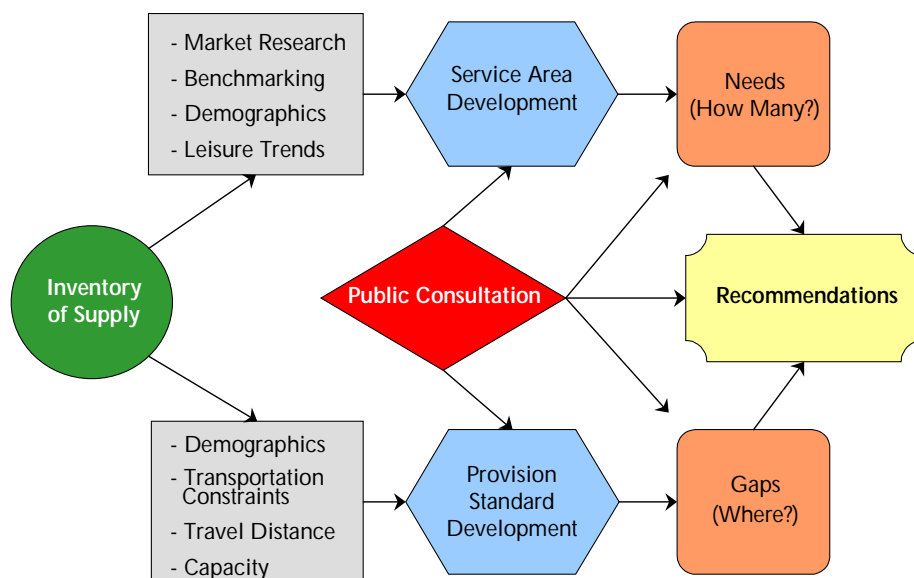
- the capacity of each facility type;
- the population-based standards;
- reasonable distances for walking, cycling, and driving;
- existing and future population densities; and
- the existence of major physical barriers that would disrupt accessibility (e.g., major highways, river crossings, etc.)

Once the service areas were established, a series of maps depicting the location of existing facilities and parks, their service areas, and population density by census tract were produced. The maps and subsequent analysis allow for the identification of areas that are under-served (gaps).

Each "gap" area was then analyzed to determine if and when it will warrant the development of a new facility or the expansion of an existing facility. **By comparing the number of "gap" areas (distribution) to the number of facilities required (provision), recommendations regarding the level and timing of facility development were formulated.**

The following schematic (Figure 6-2) graphically illustrates the relationship of the inputs and outputs in the determination of park and facility needs:

Figure 6-2: How Park and Facility Needs are Determined ...



The inventory of parks and facilities are examined in detail according to facility type in the following pages. The recommendations identified in this section are not intended to imply any level of importance or timing. They are conceptual only and are intended to be a point of departure for discussions on future capital improvement projects. The recommendations are not "adopted" revisions to existing park master plans, nor are they binding on future master plans. Priorities for each topic were established with the assistance of the Citizen Steering Committee and County staff and are described in Section 8.

6.3.3 Key Goals of this Plan

As indicated in Section 1, a set of goals was developed by the Citizen Steering Committee in order to guide the development of the park system recommendations. These goals, presented in priority order below, are reiterated in this section to provide a point of reference for the park and facility recommendations.

1. Work toward achieving pedestrian and bicycle linkage or connectivity between parks and other points of interest such as schools, libraries, institutional land uses and commercial nodes.
2. Maintain a balanced approach to the continued acquisition and development of both passive and active parkland to the greatest extent possible.
3. Provide for the needs of all age groups including adults. This should include both structured and unstructured recreational opportunities.
- 4a. Complete the construction of planned phases of development within existing parks.
- 4b. Proceed with the acquisition of parkland in under-serviced areas.
- 4c. Continue with the acquisition of parkland in developing areas.
- 5a. Utilize the development of parks to help revitalize existing under-served communities.
- 5b. Investigate the incremental costs associated with a competitive or sports tourism standard of service versus a community standard of service.
- 6a. Continue to integrate and coordinate with other departments and agencies to leverage the public's disposable dollars for recreation.
- 6b. Continue to maintain and renovate existing parks and recreation facilities.
- 6c. Maintain adequate parks and recreation staffing in keeping with growing demands and facilities.
7. Maintain security at parks and recreation facilities through the use of park police. Use planning and design methods to increase user security, to the extent possible.

6.4 PARKLAND ANALYSIS

6.4.1 Parkland - Inventory

The County currently owns and/or leases approximately 8,160 acres of parkland at 53 sites. When city and federal parks sites are accounted for, this figure increases to 10,626 acres (approximately 4% of the County's land base). In relation to parkland, Gwinnett County is clearly the most significant landowner in the area with over three-quarters of the base of publicly accessible parkland. The table below provides the breakdown of parkland by RPA for County, City and Federal parks combined, as well as for the County on its own.

ALL PARKLAND (county, city, federal)					COUNTY-OWNED PARKLAND				
Plan Area	All Parkland (County, City, Fed)				Plan Area	All Parkland (County Only)			
	Supply (acres)	City, Fed (acres per 1,000)	Demand (acres)	D-S (acres)		Supply (acres)	Only (acres per 1,000)	Demand (acres)	D-S (acres)
A	1772	13	2721	949	A	907	6.7	2040	1133
B	251	2.2	2281	2030	B	218	1.9	1711	1493
C	645	4.3	3004	2359	C	645	4.3	2253	1608
D	5513	61.1	1802	(3711)	D	4023	44.6	1352	(2671)
E	2454	25	1961	(494)	E	2365	24.1	1470	(895)
Total - 2000	10626	18.1	11769	1143	Total - 2000	8157	13.9	8827	670
Standard		20			Standard		15		
Total - 2003	10626	15.7	13526	2900	Total - 2003	8157	12.1	10144	1987
Total - 2005	10626	14.6	14522	3896	Total - 2005	8157	11.2	10892	2735
Total - 2010	10626	12.6	16839	6213	Total - 2010	8157	9.7	12629	4472

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or deficiency (the latter of which is displayed in brackets).

The table on the next page illustrates the aggregate total of County parkland by park type. Recreation Planning Area D, in large part due to the 1800-acre Harbins/Alcovy Park Site, contains nearly half of Gwinnett County's parkland. In terms of overall parkland, RPAs D and E are very well supplied.

Each RPA contains some Community and/or Passive Community Parks. The lowest per capita supplies of these park categories are in RPAs B and C.

62% of County-owned parkland is classified as "Open Space" - most of these parks are large parcels that are intended to remain largely in their natural state. Despite having significant acreage in Open Space parks, RPAs B and C do not have any such parks, while RPA A has only one (although there are numerous Federal open space parks located in the area).

6.4.2 Parkland - Provision Standards

Provision standards of 15 acres of County-owned parkland per 1000 residents and 20 acres of publicly-accessible parkland (including parks owned by other governmental agencies) per 1000 residents have been proposed. Based on these standards, the County is currently under-supplied, with year 2003 ratios of 12.1 acres and 15.7 acres per 1000 population of County-owned and government-owned parkland, respectively. Projected population growth will only continue to exacerbate this deficiency.

The County as a whole has a current parkland deficit of 2,900 acres, approximately 900 acres of which is encouraged to be supplied from other levels of government (i.e., federal, state, local) or affiliated conservation agencies. Forecasted population growth and increasing ethnic diversity in Gwinnett leave the County with no choice but to continue to acquire and construct new parks and to complete construction of master planned facilities at existing parks. **It is recommended that Gwinnett County continue to support and work with other parkland providers in order to increase the overall supply and to ensure that parks are being acquired in the areas where they are most needed.**

Plan Area	Community & Passive			
	Supply (acres)	Community Parks (acres per 1,000)	Demand (acres)	D-S (acres)
A	709	5.2	952	243
B	200	1.8	798	598
C	455	3	1051	596
D	505	5.6	631	126
E	540	5.5	686	146
Total - 2000	2410	3.6	4119	1709
Standard		7		
Total - 2003	2410	3.6	4734	2324
Total - 2005	2410	3.3	5083	2673
Total - 2010	2410	2.9	5894	3484

Plan Area	Open Space Parks			
	Supply (acres)	(acres per 1,000)	Demand (acres)	D-S (acres)
A	144	1.1	952	808
B	0	0	798	798
C	0	0	1051	1051
D	3259	36.2	631	(2628)
E	1677	17.1	686	(991)
Total - 2000	5081	8.6	4119	(962)
Standard		7		
Total - 2003	5081	7.5	4734	(347)
Total - 2005	5081	7.0	5083	2
Total - 2010	5081	6.0	5894	813

Plan Area	Other Parkland			
	Supply (acres)	(acres per 1,000)	Demand (acres)	D-S (acres)
A	52	0.4	136	84
B	17	0.2	114	97
C	190	1.3	150	(40)
D	259	2.9	90	(169)
E	147	1.5	98	(49)
Total - 2000	665	1.1	588	(77)
Standard		1		
Total - 2003	665	1.0	676	11
Total - 2005	665	0.9	726	61
Total - 2010	665	0.8	842	177

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

The provision standard for County-owned parkland indicates a current overall need for 1,987 acres, all of which is required in RPAs A, B, and C. In actuality, the parkland deficiencies in three planning areas add up to 4,234 acres, which is more than half of the County's current supply. Not only are these areas the most deficient in parkland and open space, they are also the most densely developed areas of the County and, as a result, are the most land poor.

A review of property records and aerial photography indicates that approximately 1,100 acres adjacent to existing parks may have potential for acquisition. RPAs with the largest potential for park expansion are D and E, where surpluses in Open Space Parks exist. Approximately 376 acres, however, may be available to expand existing parks in RPAs A, B, and C. **Given the need for additional parkland in all areas, and especially RPAs A, B, and C, we recommend that the County work to expand existing parks through the acquisition of adjacent parcels.**

Although expansion of existing parks will assist in addressing some of the under-supply in recreation planning areas A, B, and C, a significant deficit

will remain. Unfortunately, it is not achievable for the County to acquire over 1,000 acres of parkland in each of RPAs A, B, and C. This amount of available land simply does not exist, nor would it be economically feasible to acquire already developed land in large quantities, remove existing structures and redevelop the sites as parkland.

Nevertheless, current and projected development and intensification patterns indicate that the demand for parks and recreation facilities in these areas will only continue to worsen. As the outlying County areas become more urbanized, there will not only be a need for the development of additional park facilities in these areas, but there will continue to be a need to meet the changing and intensifying needs of existing urban areas. Although extensive land has been assembled over the years and past Master Plans have recommended substantial parkland improvements, additional efforts are required to meet ever-growing public demand and to mitigate overuse of existing infrastructure. **Aggressive, immediate and continuous action is required to address this matter.**

In terms of parkland acquisition and expansion, the County should place a high priority on RPAs A, B, and C. The "Special Purpose Neighborhood Park" classification was created specifically to address recreation facility needs in these planning areas, all three of which are relatively densely populated and have a very limited supply of land. Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks are smaller than Community and Passive Community Parks, yet they are intended to contain active recreational activity areas with an emphasis on serving youth and those living within a close proximity. Available sites with parkland potential need to be identified, including sites containing under-utilized or vacant commercial structures. The acquisition and redevelopment of abandoned commercial sites presents an excellent opportunity for the County to not only provide parkland to under-served areas, but also to assist in revitalizing and improving the overall quality of life of such areas. The creation of a number of Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) in Gwinnett County offers an appropriate medium through which vacant commercial sites can be transformed into new park sites and integrated into broader revitalization efforts.

At the same time that increasing demands are being placed on parkland in RPAs A, B, and C, population growth will continue in other areas of the County. RPAs D and E are the least densely developed areas of the County and present the most feasible options for parkland acquisition due to a greater availability of land. **In short, the County is in a position where providing parkland in the areas most in need is a challenging and costly option, whereas parkland acquisition is a more feasible and likely option in areas with lesser needs. In order to provide an appropriate supply of parkland, a balanced approach to acquisition is required that is predicated largely on opportunity. Additional parkland should be acquired in all recreation planning areas, with priorities being placed on addressing deficiencies in under-served areas and expanding existing park sites.**

This Plan recommends that the County strive to acquire an additional 300 acres for park purposes in each RPA over the next four years, for a total of 1500 acres. Although the acquisition of 1500 acres does not fully address future (or even current) deficiencies, it is felt that this requirement strikes an appropriate balance between demand, equity, and reality.

With regard to the type of parkland required, provision standards of 7 acres of "Community and Passive Community Parks" per 1000 residents, 7 acres of "Open Space Parks" per 1000 population, and 1 acre of "Special Purpose, Green Space, Other Parks" per 1000 residents are proposed. The two new parkland categories that have been created by this Plan – "Special Purpose Neighborhood Park" and Linear Park" – do not have provision standards associated with them, rather they should be developed as opportunities and needs present themselves.

The County is under-supplied with Community and Passive Community Parks in all RPAs, most notably RPAs B and C. The provision of Open Space Parks is more favorable, bolstered by the large park sites in RPAs D and E. RPAs A, B, and C are, however, severely deficient in Open Space Parks. **As such, acquisition in RPAs A, B, and C should contain a mixture of Community/Passive Community Parks and Open Space Parks (as well as Special Purpose Neighborhood Park in areas where Community/Passive Community Parks development is not possible), while acquisition in RPAs D and E should be predominantly limited to Community Parks.** Further discussion regarding the type of parkland to be acquired and developed is contained earlier in this report (see Section 5).

6.4.3 Parkland - Service Gaps

As mentioned, recreation planning areas A, B, and C are the most deficient with regard to overall parkland acreage. The second level of the analysis, however, requires an examination of the geographic "gap" areas that are not adequately served with parkland.

To arrive at a map illustrating the parkland gap areas, all County (not including "green space" or "other" parks), city and federal park sites were mapped and service radii of 2 miles for parks over 20 acres and 1 mile for parks under 20 acres were applied to the park boundaries. Those areas without park coverage are shown in Map 6-1. The following nine gap areas were identified and have been prioritized based upon factors such as public input, size of gap, and parkland needs:

High Priority:

1. Lilburn North, Meadowcreek area (mostly in RPA B)
2. Lawrenceville West, Hwy 316 corridor (RPA C)
3. Snellville West, along Stone Mountain Hwy (RPA E)
4. Snellville East (RPA E)
5. Lawrenceville North, east of Buford Drive, both sides of I-85 (RPA D)

Lower Priority:

6. Norcross West, near Dekalb County line (RPA A)
7. Lawrenceville Southwest (RPAs D and E)
8. Dacula East, along County line (RPA D)
9. Braselton (RPA D)

When acquiring parkland, it is recommended that the County have regard to the above list of gap areas. Additional consideration should also be given to expanding existing parks and acquiring new ones in areas where significant population growth and intensification is expected to occur, such as along the I-85, I-985, and Georgia Highway 316 corridors into the northeast and eastern-most portions of the County.

6.4.4 Parkland – Recommendations

In an effort to ensure consistency with the County's Open Space and Greenway Master Plan (2002), all parkland (and greenway) acquisition should consider the goals and recommendations of that Plan. The following is a summary of the key goals of this Plan as they relate to the parks and recreation needs of County citizens.

Primary Goals of the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan

- Increase recreation opportunities
- Protect and improve water quality
- Increase connectivity via a system of greenway trails
- Reduce environmental impacts of development

Secondary Goals of the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan

- Enhance aesthetics throughout the County
- Protect plant and animal habitat
- Promote biodiversity
- Enhance air quality
- Improve transportation opportunities
- Mitigate traffic congestion
- Realize economic benefits of open space and greenways
- Enhance tourism opportunities
- Promote good health
- Protect historic and archeological resources
- Protect cultural resources



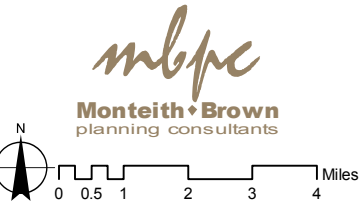
**GWINNETT COUNTY,
GEORGIA**

**2004
Comprehensive
Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

**Map 6-1
Gap Analysis of
Publicly Accessible Parkland**

Feature Legend

- County Park
- City Park
- Federal Park
- Private Facility
- Gaps
- Recreation Planning Area

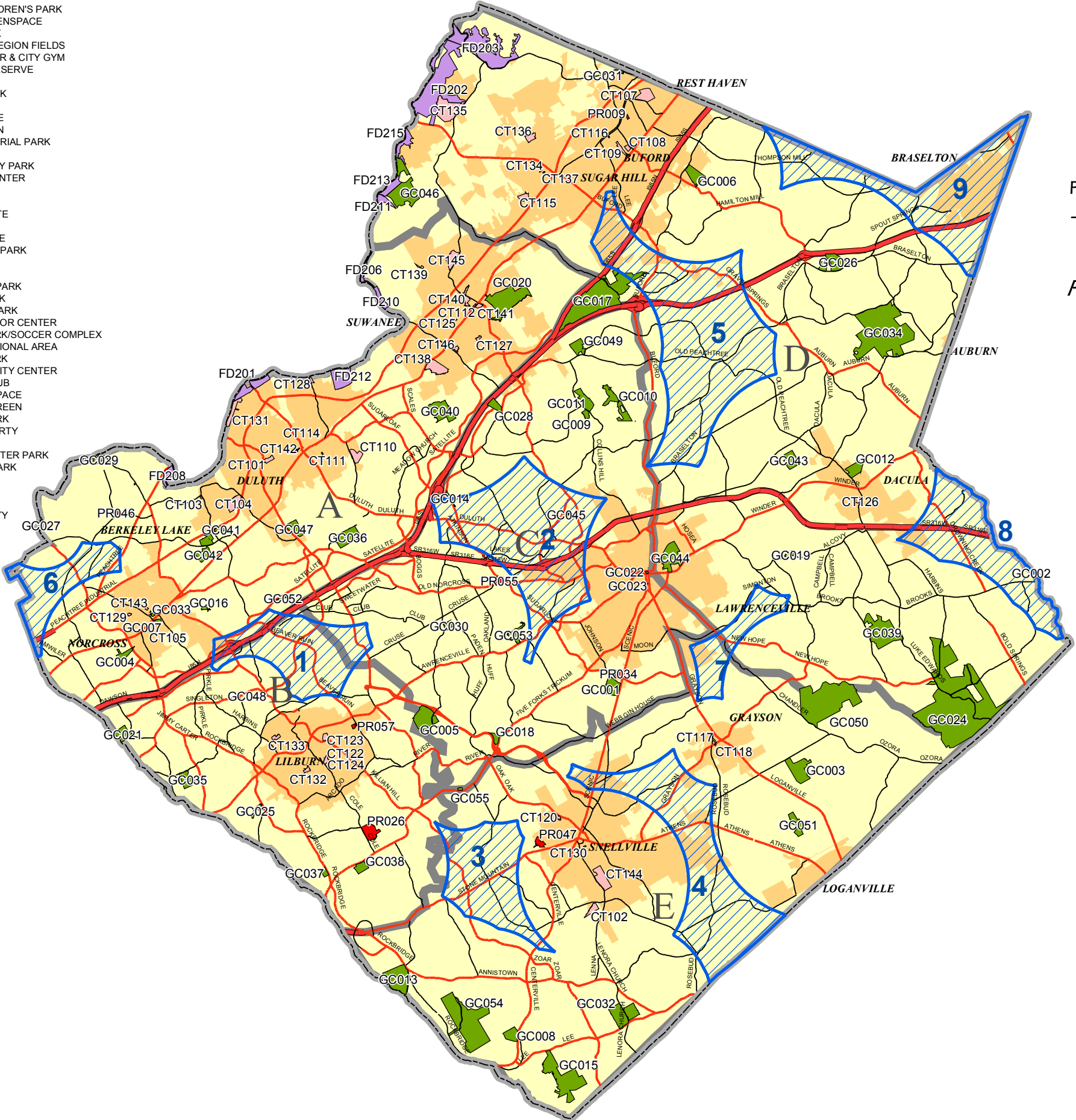


- COUNTY PARKS**
- GC001 ALEXANDER PARK SITE
 - GC002 APPALACHEE RIVER PARK
 - GC003 BAY CREEK PARK
 - GC004 BEST FRIEND PARK
 - GC005 BETHESDA PARK
 - GC006 BOGAN PARK
 - GC007 CEMETERY FIELD PARK
 - GC008 CENTERVILLE PARK SITE
 - GC009 COLLINS HILL AQUATIC CENTER
 - GC010 COLLINS HILL GOLF CLUB
 - GC011 COLLINS HILL PARK
 - GC012 DACULA PARK
 - GC013 DESHONG PARK SITE
 - GC014 DISCOVER MILLS TRACT
 - GC015 DOC MOORE BRANCH PARK SITE
 - GC016 EDGEMORE NORTH
 - GC017 ENVIRONMENTAL & HERITAGE CENTER
 - GC018 FIVE FORKS PARK
 - GC019 ALCOVY RIVER GRISTMILL
 - GC020 GEORGE PIERCE PARK
 - GC021 GRAVES PARK SITE
 - GC022 GWINNETT COUNTY HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
 - GC023 GWINNETT COUNTY HISTORY MUSEUM
 - GC024 HARBINS/ALCOVY RIVER PARK SITE
 - GC025 HARMONY GROVE SOCCER COMPLEX
 - GC026 DUNCAN CREEK PARK SITE
 - GC027 HOLCOMB BRIDGE PARK SITE
 - GC028 I-85 SITE
 - GC029 JONES BRIDGE PARK
 - GC030 SWEET WATER PARK SITE
 - GC031 LANIER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
 - GC032 LENORA PARK
 - GC033 LILLIAN WEBB FIELD
 - GC034 LITTLE MULBERRY PARK
 - GC035 LUCKY SHOALS PARK
 - GC036 McDANIEL FARM PARK
 - GC037 MOUNTAIN PARK AQUATIC CENTER & ACTIVITY BLDG
 - GC038 MOUNTAIN PARK PARK
 - GC039 PALM CREEK PARK SITE
 - GC040 PEACHTREE RIDGE PARK SITE
 - GC041 WEST DISTRICT POOL SITE
 - GC042 PINCKNEYVILLE PARK & COMMUNITY CENTER
 - GC043 RABBIT HILL PARK
 - GC044 RHODES JORDAN PARK
 - GC045 RIVERSIDE PARKWAY
 - GC046 SETTLES BRIDGE PARK SITE
 - GC047 SHORTY HOWELL PARK
 - GC048 SINGLETON ROAD ACTIVITY BUILDING
 - GC049 SPRIGGS ROAD PARK SITE
 - GC050 TRIBBLE MILL PARK
 - GC051 VINES BOTANICAL GARDENS
 - GC052 VULCAN SITE
 - GC053 YELLOW RIVER WETLANDS
 - GC054 YELLOW RIVER PARK
 - GC055 YELLOW RIVER POST OFFICE

- FEDERAL PARKS**
- FD201 ABBOTTS BRIDGE SOUTH UNIT
 - FD202 BOWMAN'S ISLAND UNIT
 - FD203 CORPS OF ENGINEERS PARKS
 - FD206 GLASS TRACT
 - FD208 MEDLOCK BRIDGE UNIT
 - FD210 RIVERMORE TRACT
 - FD211 SETTLES BRIDGE UNIT
 - FD212 SUWANEE CREEK UNIT
 - FD213 WEST TRACT (FEDERAL)
 - FD215 WILD TIMBER TRACT

- SIGNIFICANT PRIVATE FACILITIES**
- PR009 BUFORD YOUTH COMMUNITY CENTER
 - PR026 GSA COMPLEX
 - PR034 J.M. TULL/GWINNETT FAMILY YMCA
 - PR046 ROBERT D. FOWLER FAMILY YMCA
 - PR047 SGAA SPORTS PLEX
 - PR055 SWIM ATLANTA - LAWRENCEVILLE
 - PR057 THE SOCCER ACADEMY

- CITY PARKS**
- CT101 W.P. JONES MEMORIAL PARK & TENNIS COMPLEX
 - CT102 BAKER'S ROCK
 - CT103 BERKELEY LAKE CHILDREN'S PARK
 - CT104 BERKELEY LAKE GREENSPACE
 - CT105 BETTY MAULDIN PARK
 - CT107 BUFORD CITY PARK/LEGION FIELDS
 - CT108 BUFORD CIVIC CENTER & CITY GYM
 - CT109 BUFORD NATURE PRESERVE
 - CT110 BUNTEN PARK
 - CT111 CHURCH STREET PARK
 - CT112 CITY HALL PARK
 - CT113 DULUTH GREENSPACE
 - CT114 DULUTH TOWN GREEN
 - CT115 E.E. ROBINSON MEMORIAL PARK
 - CT116 GRACE HARRIS PARK
 - CT117 GRAYSON COMMUNITY PARK
 - CT118 GRAYSON SENIOR CENTER
 - CT119 THE FARM
 - CT120 JONES PROPERTY
 - CT121 BONA ALLEN PARK SITE
 - CT122 LILBURN CITY PARK
 - CT123 LILBURN GREENSPACE
 - CT124 LILBURN LION'S CLUB PARK
 - CT125 MAIN STREET PARK
 - CT126 MAPLE CREEK PARK
 - CT127 MARTIN FARM ROAD PARK
 - CT128 ROGERS BRIDGE PARK
 - CT129 ROSSIE BRUNDAGE PARK
 - CT130 S. WAYNE ODUM SENIOR CENTER
 - CT131 SCOTT HUDGENS PARK/SOCCER COMPLEX
 - CT132 ST. ALBANS RECREATIONAL AREA
 - CT133 STERLING TRACE PARK
 - CT134 SUGAR HILL COMMUNITY CENTER
 - CT135 SUGAR HILL GOLF CLUB
 - CT136 SUGAR HILL GREENSPACE
 - CT137 SUGAR HILL TOWN GREEN
 - CT138 SUWANEE CREEK PARK
 - CT139 MOORE ROAD PROPERTY
 - CT140 DeLay PROPERTY
 - CT141 SUWANEE TOWN CENTER PARK
 - CT142 TAYLOR MEMORIAL PARK
 - CT143 THRASHER PARK
 - CT144 T.W. BRISCOE PARK
 - CT145 HEWELL PROPERTY
 - CT146 HOVENDICK PROPERTY



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The Open Space and Greenway Master Plan identified the following targets for greenspace preservation in the County:

1. **Streams and Floodplains** (to protect water quality) the County should consider developing a buffer/floodplain acquisition program.
2. **High-Quality Watersheds** (to protect water quality and provide increased recreation opportunities) the County should consider targeting significant open space acquisition toward the Apalachee, Little Mulberry, Alcovy and Big Haynes watersheds in order to protect high quality watersheds and drinking water sources.
3. **Parkland in Urbanized Areas** (to provide increased recreation opportunities) to the extent these are reasonably available, the County should consider identifying and purchasing properties in the highly developed western and central portions of the County in order to provide recreation opportunities. Acquisition in urbanized areas can include development sites that are under-utilized at the present time.
4. **Restoration of Stream Banks in Urbanized Areas** (to improve water quality and provide recreation opportunities) the County should consider coordinating greenspace preservation with restoration projects throughout the County, especially in the more urban areas.
5. **Prime Wildlife Habitat** (to reduce the environmental impacts of development) habitat documented to contain state and federal threatened or endangered species should be considered a priority.
6. **Greenways** -The County should consider establishing greenways in locations providing the greatest connectivity between existing greenspaces and where they can serve as useful transportation corridors.
7. **Distribution of Greenspace** -The County should consider acquiring land in both developed and undeveloped areas of the County.

Gwinnett County has recognized that it cannot meet all its greenspace protection goals by acquisition alone, although purchase of lands will continue to play an important role. In consideration of these facts, the following policy recommendations were developed:

Policy Recommendations: Acquisition

1. The County should consider adopting a system of evaluating properties for fee-simple acquisition based in concordance with the recommended targets for preservation.
2. The County should examine the feasibility of establishing a system for the Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs). The PDR program could be focused on acquiring easements for stream banks and floodplains.
3. The County should consider negotiating multi-purpose easements that combine greenway public access rights with sewer and access easements.

4. The County should consider establishing a system for accepting donations of land. Preparations for receiving such donations could include:
 - enacting an enabling ordinance for land donations
 - establishing a system and responsibility for reviewing and evaluating offers of donations
 - asking the Board of Assessors to evaluate state law regarding the assessment of properties with conservation easements
5. The County should consider establishing its own wetlands/streambank mitigation bank to provide a low-cost mechanism to restore and protect streams and wetlands in the County.
6. The County should consider providing incentives for development projects that provide a public access greenway consistent with the Greenway System Plan.

Policy Recommendations: Planning, Zoning and Regulatory Approaches

1. The County should monitor the effectiveness of the conservation subdivision ordinance in protecting open space, and consider changes as necessary.
2. The County should consider extending the option for conservation subdivisions to other zoning districts.
3. The County should work to increase public awareness of the economic and quality-of-life benefits of mixed-use development, greenways and higher density residential developments.
4. The County should consider mapping priority protection areas and development nodes on future land use maps.
5. The County should consider creating a transferable development rights program, should the state enabling legislation be amended.
6. The County should consider providing redevelopment incentives.
7. The County should consider a program to provide highway buffers.

Key excerpts from the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan, as well as the Pedestrian, Bicycle and Greenways Plan for Gwinnett County (1995) are reproduced in Appendix H.

With the goals and recommendations of the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan in mind – in addition to the goals of this Plan – the following are the recommendations related to the acquisition of parkland. Recommendations are listed alphabetically by RPA and are not in priority order. The priority and capital cost of each recommendation is provided in Section 8.

- Acquire 300 acres in RPA A. Focus on under-served areas and areas of growth, including, but not limited to, the area between Duluth and Suwanee, north of I-85, and the Norcross West area.

The development of Community Parks, Passive Community Parks, and Open Space Parks is desired.

- In RPA A, expand Jones Bridge Park and Shorty Howell Park through acquisition of adjacent parcels (93 acres).
- Acquire 300 acres in RPA B. Focus on under-served areas and areas of growth, including, but not limited to, the Lilburn North/Meadowcreek area and south of I-85. The development of Community Parks, Passive Community Parks, and Open Space Parks is desired.
- In RPA B, expand Mountain Park Aquatic Center/Activity Building and Mountain Park Park through acquisition of adjacent parcels (85.8 acres).
- Acquire 300 acres in RPA C. Focus on under-served areas and areas of growth, including, but not limited to, the Lawrenceville West/Hwy 316 corridor area and south of I-85. The development of Community Parks, Passive Community Parks, and Open Space Parks is desired.
- In RPA C, expand Alexander Park, Bethesda Park, Collins Hill Park, Spriggs Road Park Site and Sweet Water Park through acquisition of adjacent parcels (197.2 acres).
- Acquire 300 acres in RPA D. Focus on under-served areas and areas of growth, including, but not limited to, the Lawrenceville North area, the Lawrenceville Southwest area, the Braselton area, the Dacula East area, and the I-85 and Hwy 316 corridors. The development of Community Parks and Passive Community Parks is desired.
- In RPA D, expand Alcovy River Gristmill, Harbins/Alcovy Park Site, Little Mulberry Park and Rabbit Hill Park through acquisition of adjacent parcels (377.1 acres).
- Acquire 300 acres in RPA E. Focus on under-served areas and areas of growth, including, but not limited to, the Snellville West area and the Snellville East area. The development of Community Parks and Passive Community Parks is desired.
- In RPA E, expand Bay Creek Park, Centerville Park Site, Tribble Mill Park, Yellow River Wetlands and the Yellow River Post Office Historic Site through acquisition of adjacent parcels (352 acres).

**6.5 SOCCER
COMPLEX
ANALYSIS**

There are a total of 58 soccer fields in the County, 26 of which are provided by Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation, 14 by local cities, and 18 by the not-for-profit and private sectors.

Map 6-2 illustrates the locations of soccer complexes (sites with three or more fields) in the County. A 2-mile radius has been applied to each park in order to demonstrate a reasonable service area for this facility. RPAs A and B contain nearly two-thirds of the soccer fields within the County.

SOCCER FIELDS	#	RPA
George Pierce Park	5	A
Jones Bridge Park	3	A
Pinckneyville Park & Community Center	5	A
Bunten Park	2	A
Scott Hudgens Park/Soccer Complex	4	A
A. Worley Brown Boys & Girls Club	1	A
Harmony Grove Soccer Complex	3	B
GSA Complex	11	B
The Soccer Academy	2	B
Bethesda Park	4	C
J.M. Tull/Gwinnett Family YMCA	4	C
Rabbit Hill Park	6	D
Buford City Park/Legion Fields	1	D
E.E. Robinson Memorial Park	1	D
T.W. Briscoe Park	6	E
Total	58	

Plan Area	Supply #	Soccer Fields (per capita)	Demand #	D-S #
A	20	6,801	22.7	2.7
B	16	7,129	19.0	3.0
C	8	18,775	25.0	17.0
D	8	11,266	15.0	7.0
E	6	16,338	16.3	10.3
Total - 2000	58	10,146	98.1	40.1
Standard		6,000		
Total - 2003	58	11,660	112.7	54.7
Total - 2005	58	12,519	121.0	63.0
Total - 2010	58	14,516	140.3	82.3

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

The growth of soccer in the United States in the late 1990's has been well documented. In terms of overall participation, soccer registration has rivaled and even surpassed that of baseball in many jurisdictions. In Gwinnett County, soccer participation increased by 50% between 1997 and 2002 and the sport's growing popularity was reflected in the 2002 Needs Assessment. The result of soccer's intense growth in Gwinnett in recent years is a severe lack of fields for both organized and unorganized play. As a result of this growth, existing fields are used very heavily and are not able to receive adequate rest and maintenance, further impacting on the County's ability to meet soccer needs.

While participation rates appear to have stabilized amongst children and teens, participation among ethnic communities is expected to remain strong and both adult and female participation is anticipated to increase over the coming years. The Master Plan's public consultation program has highlighted the need for additional opportunities for unstructured pick-up soccer opportunities (i.e., informal play fields or unlocked and unallocated soccer fields), as well as improvements and expansions to existing soccer complexes.

A provision standard of one soccer field per 6,000 population has been established for Gwinnett County. There is a current deficit of approximately 55 soccer fields, requiring a near doubling of the existing supply in order to meet today's needs. All Recreation Planning Areas require additional soccer fields, especially RPAs C (which is in desperate need for more fields), E and D.

The following are the recommendations related to soccer complexes. Recommendations are listed alphabetically by RPA and are not in priority order. The priority and capital cost of each recommendation is provided in Section 8.

Recreation Planning Area "A" - Soccer Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| George Pierce Park | • Install lighting on remaining soccer fields |
| Peachtree Ridge Park Site | • Develop three or more soccer fields, one being able to also accommodate lacrosse (subject to Park Master Plan) |
| West District Pool Site | • Develop an outdoor multi-purpose (football, soccer, lacrosse) artificial turf field |

Recreation Planning Area "B" - Soccer Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Harmony Grove Soccer Complex | • Upgrade soccer complex lighting |
| Lucky Shoals Park | • Redevelop as a mixed sports complex to include soccer fields |
| Mountain Park Park | • Develop a soccer complex (land dependent) |
| Singleton Road Activity Building | • Develop three soccer fields under power lines |

Recreation Planning Area "C" - Soccer Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Alexander Park Site | • Develop a soccer complex |
| Land - New Acquisition | • Acquire site(s) for additional soccer fields |

Recreation Planning Area "D" - Soccer Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Duncan Creek Park Site | • Develop soccer fields (subject to Park Master Plan) |
| Harbins/Alcovy River Park Site | • Develop soccer fields |
| Rabbit Hill Park | • Install lighting on soccer fields |
| | • Develop additional soccer fields (land dependent) |

Recreation Planning Area "E" - Soccer Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bay Creek Park | • Develop soccer complex (land dependent) |
| Lenora Park | • Develop soccer complex |
| Land - New Acquisition | • Acquire site(s) for additional soccer fields |

6.6 BASEBALL / SOFTBALL COMPLEX ANALYSIS

Gwinnett County's Parks and Recreation Division provides 91 baseball/softball diamonds, 8 of which are allocated to adults. Other providers in the County bring the total number of ball diamonds to 128. The distribution of baseball/softball complexes (containing 3 or more fields) is illustrated on Map 6-3 using a 2-mile service radius.

Baseball and softball have the highest participation levels amongst team sports in Gwinnett County. The spring baseball and softball sessions, which attract the largest number of participants, however, registered a 14% decline between 2000 and 2002. This data, as well as national studies that have indicated that participation in ball is shrinking, suggests that Gwinnett should anticipate continued declines in baseball and softball.

BASEBALL/ SOFTBALL FIELDS	#	RPA
Best Friend Park	2	A
George Pierce Park	10	A
Lillian Webb Field	1	A
Pinckneyville Park & Community Center	7	A
Shorty Howell Park	7	A
Bunten Park	4	A
Rossie Brundage Park	1	A
Lucky Shoals Park	5	B
Mountain Park Park	7	B
Bethesda Park	10	C
Collins Hill Park	7	C
Lawrenceville Boys & Girls Club	3	C
Bogan Park	7	D
Dacula Park	7	D
Rhodes Jordan Park	7	D
Buford City Park/Legion Fields	10	D
E.E. Robinson Memorial Park	2	D
Bay Creek Park	8	E
Lenora Park	6	E
Lilburn Lion's Club Park	5	E
T.W. Briscoe Park	1	E
SGAA Sports Plex	11	E
Total	128	

Plan Area	Supply #	Ball Diamonds (per capita)	Demand #	D-S #
A	32	4,251	27.2	(4.8)
B	12	9,506	22.8	10.8
C	20	7,510	30.0	10.0
D	33	2,731	18.0	(15.0)
E	31	3,162	19.6	(11.4)
Total - 2000	128	4,597	117.7	(10.3)
Standard		5,000		
Total - 2003	128	5,283	135.3	7.3
Total - 2005	128	5,673	145.2	17.2
Total - 2010	128	6,578	168.4	40.4

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).



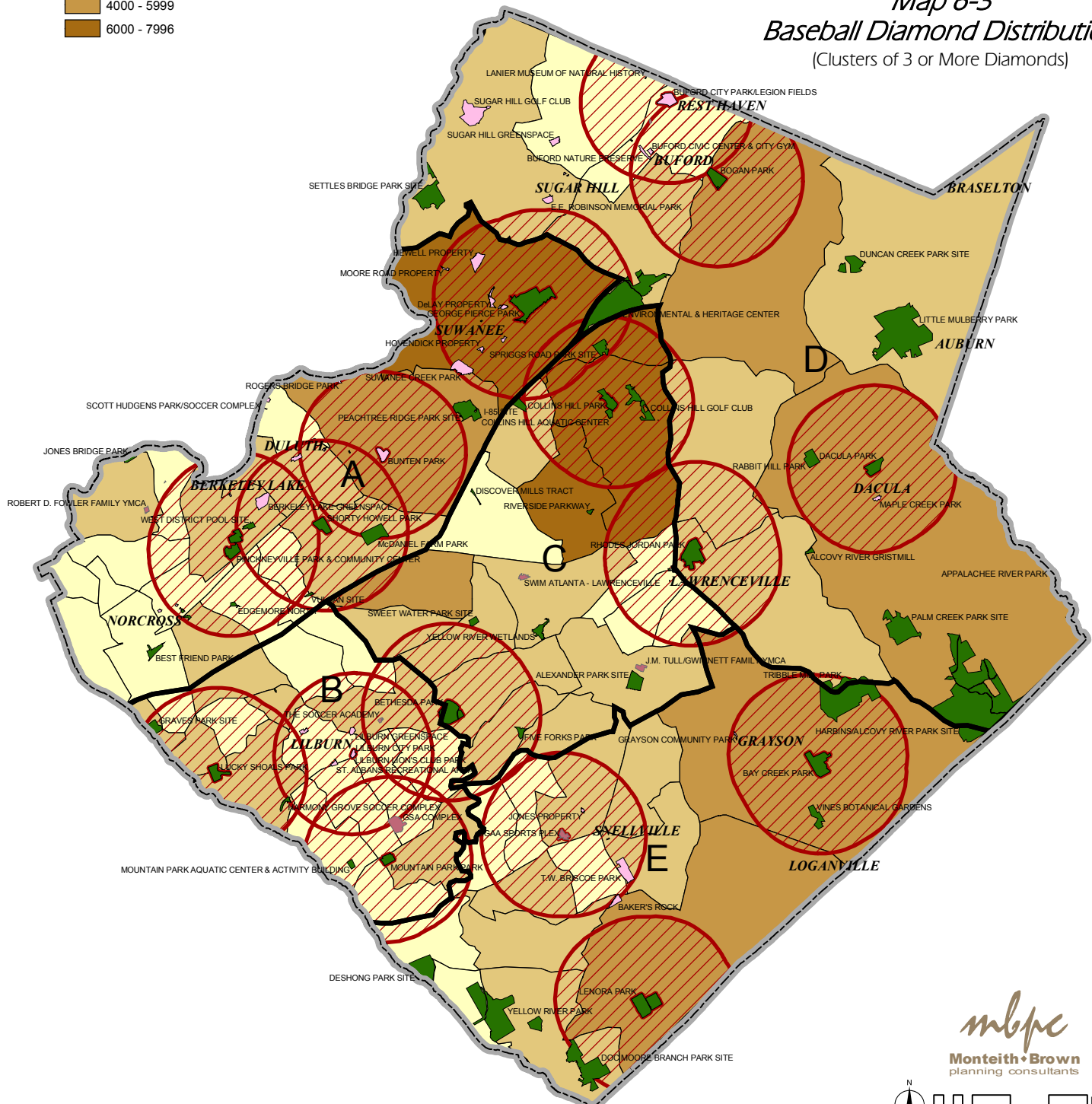
**WINNETT COUNTY,
GEORGIA**

2004
Comprehensive
Parks and Recreation Master Plan

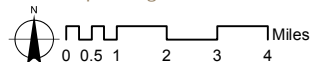
Map 6-3
Baseball Diamond Distribution
(Clusters of 3 or More Diamonds)

Legend

- Recreation Planning Area
- 2mi Service Radius - Existing Baseball/Softball
- City Park
- County Park
- Private Facility
- 2000 Population Distribution Ages 0-19**
- 437 - 1999
- 2000 - 3999
- 4000 - 5999
- 6000 - 7996



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At the same time, demand for adult – and especially senior – ball opportunities remains strong in the County. Many comments pertaining to the need for additional adult softball diamonds were made at the public meetings and through the web-based questionnaire. Although Gwinnett's population profile is quite youthful, it is aging, which could translate into greater demand for adult softball opportunities in the long-term.

With all of this in mind, a provision standard of one ball diamond per 5,000 population is recommended. This service standard compares favorably with provision levels in the benchmarking communities as well as standards recommended by the National Recreation and Parks Association.

Application of this provision standard yields a requirement for approximately 7 more diamonds at present. As Gwinnett grows, so too will the need for ball diamonds. Currently, there are two Recreation Planning Areas that are deficient in baseball and softball complexes, those being RPAs B and C. In response to this need, ball fields are recommended for Alexander Park (RPA C), however, further ball diamond development in these areas will have to come by way of new park acquisition and development. Limited construction of ball diamonds in other RPAs is also recommended in order to alleviate system-wide deficiencies and to serve the needs of future populations. Conversion of some youth diamonds into adult fields may also be required over the long-term to satisfy increasing adult softball needs.

One of the primary goals established by the Citizen Steering Committee was that Gwinnett address the needs of all residents, including adults. Participation data indicates that there has been recent growth in adult baseball/softball demand and demographic projections and trends suggest that adult ball demand will continue to increase. **The County needs to address this issue and consideration should be given to developing an adult-only ball complex. Alexander Park Site may an appropriate site for such a facility due to its centralized location within the County.**

The following are the recommendations related to baseball and softball complexes. Recommendations are listed alphabetically by RPA and are not in priority order. The priority and capital cost of each recommendation is provided in Section 8.

Recreation Planning Area "A" - Baseball/Softball Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Peachtree Ridge Park Site | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a Baseball/Softball Complex (subject to Park Master Plan) |
|---------------------------|---|

Recreation Planning Area "B" - Baseball/Softball Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Land - New Acquisition | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquire site(s) for additional ball diamonds (11) |
|------------------------|---|

Recreation Planning Area "C" - Baseball/Softball Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Alexander Park Site | • Develop 7 youth ball diamonds or 4 adult and 3 youth diamonds (subject to Park Master Plan) |
| Bethesda Park | • Develop a new adult softball parking area |
| Land - New Acquisition | • Acquire site(s) for additional ball diamonds (3) |

Recreation Planning Area "D" - Baseball/Softball Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Bogan Park | • Install lighting on 7th ballfield |
| Harbins/Alcovy River Park Site | • Develop ball complex |
| Rhodes Jordan Park | • Relocation of the softball field from the football field |

Recreation Planning Area "E" - Baseball/Softball Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Lenora Park | • Develop 7th ballfield |
| Land - New Acquisition | • Acquire parkland east and west of Snellville for ball diamonds |

6.7 COMMUNITY CENTER, ACTIVITY BUILDING, SENIOR RECREATION CENTER & GYMNASIUM ANALYSIS

Gwinnett County provides three distinct types of recreation centers: community centers, activity buildings and senior recreation centers. Each facility type differs in its size, facilities, operation, and provision levels.

Community centers are staffed full-time and generally include multiple programmable spaces such as a gymnasium, indoor aquatic facility, dedicated arts space, teen rooms, meeting rooms, etc. Examples of community centers include the Pinckneyville Community Center, Rhodes Jordan, and Bogan Park. In total, Gwinnett's Parks and Recreation Division provides four community centers (one is planned for George Pierce Park). Two additional community centers are provided by the City of Duluth (Bunten Road Park) and the County's Health and Human Services Department (Centerville Community Center) for a total of 6 community centers in the County. It is noted that the County is also home to two YMCAs and two Boys and Girls Clubs, however, these have not been counted in the overall supply of community centers despite offering similar programs and services.

The location and distribution of community centers is illustrated on Map 6-4. Half of the community centers in Gwinnett are located in RPA A, while RPAs B and C do not have any such facilities. Service gaps exist in significant parts of RPAs B, C, D, and E, although activity buildings in RPAs B and E provide for a more limited level of service in these areas.



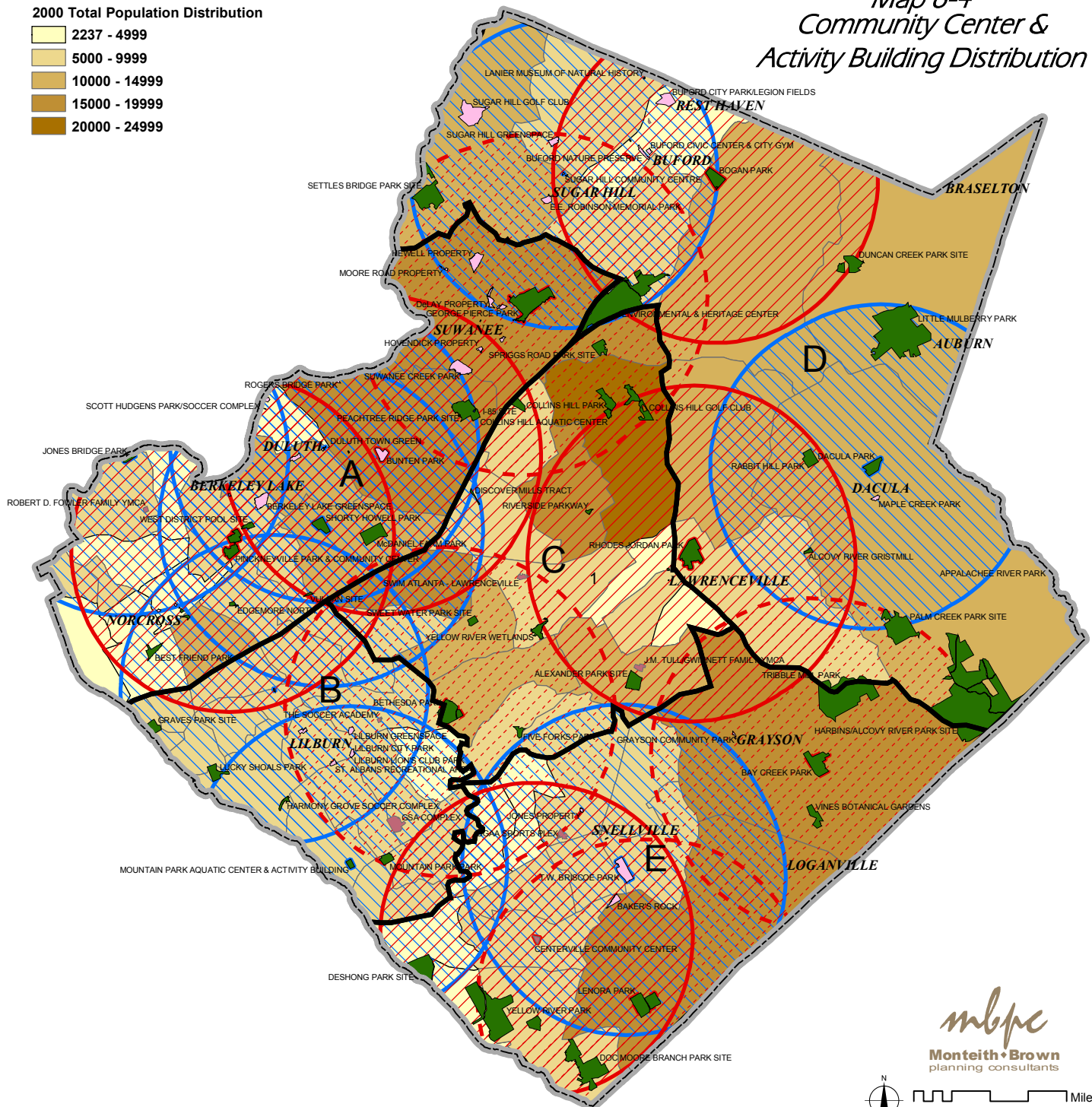
GWINNETT COUNTY, GEORGIA

2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Map 6-4 Community Center & Activity Building Distribution

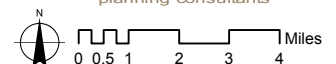
Legend

- Recreation Planning Area
- 4mi Radius - Existing/Funded Community Center
- 4mi Radius - Planned/Not Funded Community Center
- 4mi Radius - Existing/Funded Activity Building
- City Park
- County Park
- Private Facility
- 2000 Total Population Distribution
 - 2237 - 4999
 - 5000 - 9999
 - 10000 - 14999
 - 15000 - 19999
 - 20000 - 24999



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Community centers provide for a wide range of recreation activities, serving the full age and ability spectrum of residents (preschool to seniors). One of the primary goals of this Master Plan is to provide for the unstructured and structured recreational needs of all age groups, which is one of the primary benefits of multi-purpose community centers. The combination of multiple uses and activities at one location provides cross-programming opportunities, which partially addresses the "shortage of time issue" that many Gwinnettians face. Multi-purpose community centers also allow for a number of service agencies to be co-located, thereby creating "one-stop shopping" opportunities. Due to their ability to serve multiple user groups, community centers are prominent and essential facilities that provide focal points for both recreation and social interaction. These facilities, therefore, can play an important role in achieving other local objectives, including community safety, urban revitalization, etc.

Large, high quality, multi-purpose and multi-generational community centers are generally preferred over single purpose, stand alone facilities. Combining indoor aquatic centers, arts facilities, gymnasiums, teen centers, meeting space, libraries, parks, sports fields and similar facilities on one site is a desirable approach because it creates greater financial economies of scale and allows for a much higher level of customer service. This strategy has been achieved to some degree through the Health and Human Services Department's "service centers", as well as through parks and facilities such as the Pinckneyville "cluster" (community/arts center, park, and soccer complex), Bogan Park (park, indoor aquatic facility, community center), Mountain Park "cluster" (park, indoor aquatic facility, activity building), Bethesda Park (senior center, park, indoor aquatic facility), to name a few. "Clustering", which refers to the location of multiple recreation facilities and spaces within a close proximity of each other (such as Pinckneyville and Mountain Park), can be a viable option to locating multiple facilities on one site in situations where one large parcel of land capable of accommodating all facilities is not available. It is imperative, however, that the various recreation areas be connected by trails and/or pathways so that pedestrian may easily travel between them.

One community center should be provided for every 100,000 people. This standard indicates the County is currently deficient by one community center, increasing to a demand for two centers before the year 2010. Geographic service gaps in RPAs B, C, D, and E, however, necessitates that four to five community centers be provided over the next five to ten years. Previous park master plans have proposed community centers at Bethesda and Bay Creek Parks and it is recommended that both of these projects proceed. Additional community centers are recommended at Lucky Shoals, Dacula and Lenora Parks, although the Lenora Park project is likely a longer-term goal. The construction of a community center at Dacula Park could be accomplished through a major addition to the existing activity building.

Not all community centers are created equal, however, it is the intention that the recommended centers be generally similar to the size and scale of existing facilities within Gwinnett. The size and components of the recommended facilities should be confirmed through a community and site-specific study prior to their design and construction. Consideration should be given to accommodating dedicated teen space in every community center.

COMMUNITY CENTERS		RPA
George Pierce Park		A
Pinckneyville Park & Community Center		A
Bunten Park		A
Bogan Park		D
Rhodes Jordan Park		D
Centerville Community Center		E
Total	6	

Plan Area	Supply #	Community Centers (per capita)	Demand #	D-S #
A	3	45,343	1.4	(1.6)
B	0	0:114,069	1.1	1.1
C	0	0:150,202	1.5	1.5
D	2	45,062	0.9	(1.1)
E	1	98,025	1.0	(0.0)
Total - 2000	6	98,075	5.9	(0.1)
Standard		100,000		
Total - 2003	6	112,714	6.9	0.9
Total - 2005	6	121,017	7.3	1.3
Total - 2010	6	140,323	8.4	2.4

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

Activity buildings, unlike community centers, are not staffed on a full-time basis and are typically smaller in size and offer fewer amenities than most community centers. Gwinnett County maintains five activity buildings located at Jones Bridge Park, Shorty Howell Park, Mountain Park Aquatic Center/Activity Building, Singleton Road, and Dacula Park. Three of Gwinnett's cities (Duluth, Sugar Hill and Snellville) provide three more activity buildings for a total of 8 activity buildings in the County.

ACTIVITY BUILDINGS		RPA
Jones Bridge Park		A
Shorty Howell Park		A
Duluth Town Green		A
Mountain Park Aquatic Center		B
Singleton Road Activity Building		B
Dacula Park		D
Sugar Hill Community Center		D
T.W. Briscoe Park		E
Total	8	

Plan Area	Supply #	Activity Buildings (per capita)	Demand #	D-S #
A	3	45,343	2.7	(0.3)
B	2	57,035	2.3	0.3
C	0	0:150,202	3.0	3.0
D	2	45,062	1.8	(0.2)
E	1	98,025	2.0	1.0
Total - 2000	8	73,556	11.8	3.8
Standard		50,000		
Total - 2003	8	84,536	13.5	5.5
Total - 2005	8	90,763	14.5	6.5
Total - 2010	8	105,242	16.8	8.8

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

Map 6-4 illustrates the location of existing and proposed activity buildings in the County. No significant service gaps existing in RPAs A, B or E. The central area of the County, RPA C, does not contain any activity buildings. Since activity buildings are essentially a smaller version of a community center only with more limited hours and usage, the existence of community centers in an area void of an activity building would partially offset the deficit. It is for this reason that community centers and activity buildings are shown on the same map in this report.

A provision standard of one activity building per 50,000 residents has been proposed. This translates into a current deficiency of five to six activity buildings, however, given the degree of new community center construction that this Plan proposes, it is reasonable to reduce the total number of required activity buildings. Activity building service gaps are most prevalent in RPA C, where three new activity buildings are recommended (one at Spriggs Road Park Site, one at Sweet Water Park Site, and one at new park site to be acquired). It is also recommended that the activity building to be redesigned at Dacula Park be enlarged such that it be classified as a community center.

Senior recreation centers very much resemble community centers (and are connected to community centers in some instances), however, they are intended for the sole use of Gwinnett's senior citizen population (age 55 plus). The Parks and Recreation Division operates one senior recreation center at Bethesda Park, which contains several multi-purpose meeting rooms, and rooms for arts and crafts, games, computers and conferences. The County's Health and Human Services Department provides three senior activity centers that are very similar to the Bethesda Senior Center but are generally smaller in size. Local cities (Grayson and Snellville) also provide two senior centers, bring the County-wide total to 6 senior centers.

The geographic distribution of senior centers is shown on Map 6-5; a 4-mile radius has been placed around each facility to illustrate a reasonable distance to travel to such a center. Senior centers are distributed relatively evenly throughout the County. RPA A does not contain any senior centers, although one is proposed as part of the George Pierce Park community center. Other significant service gaps exist in RPAs A and D.

As indicated earlier, significant population growth is anticipated in the 55-plus age group, which is expected to increase by 136% between 2000 and 2010. This aging of the population, along with the other trends affecting seniors (e.g., early retirements, higher incomes for many seniors, greater fitness levels amongst seniors due to active living, etc.) has significant ramifications on the provision and delivery of recreation facilities and services.



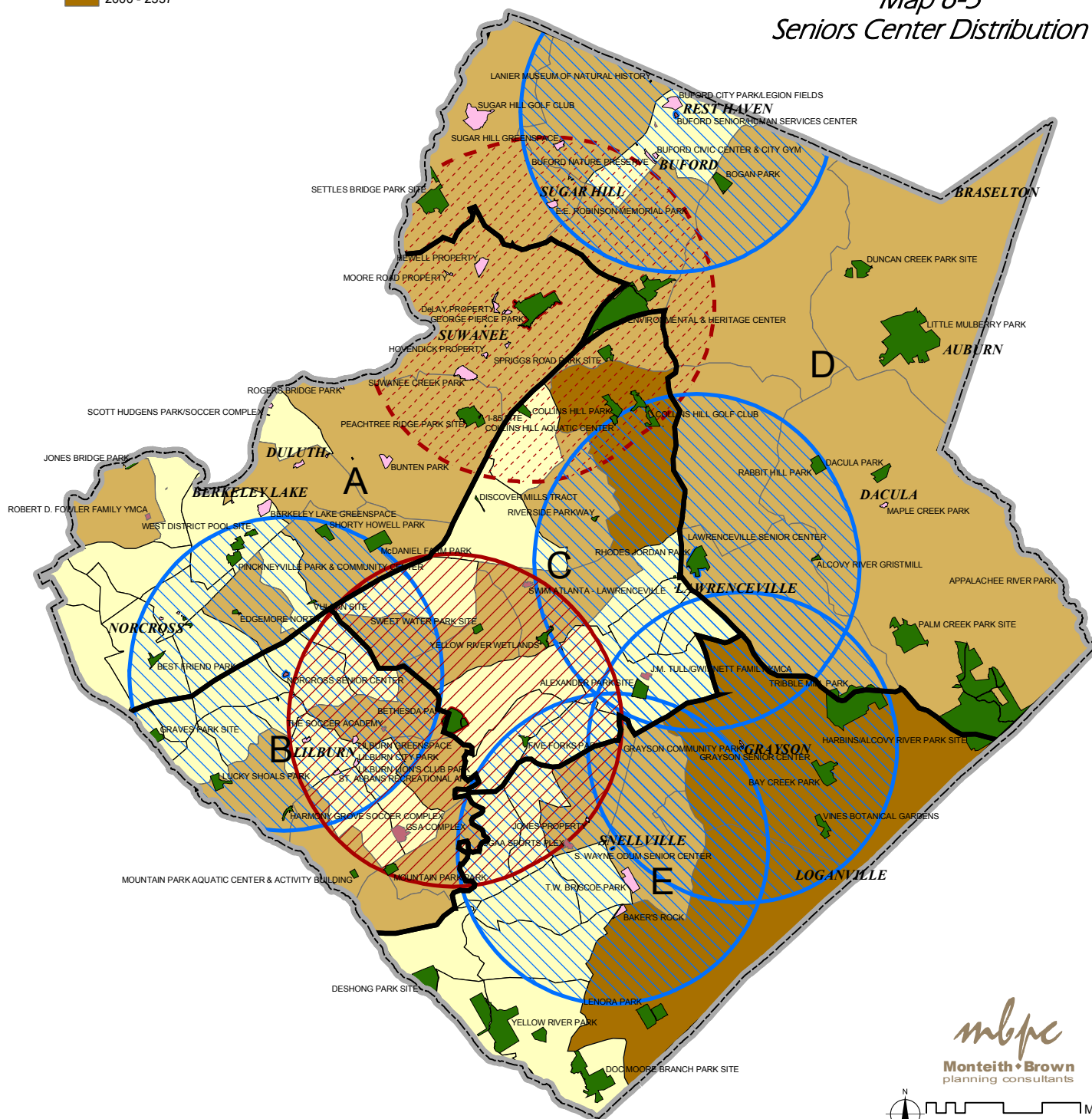
WINNETT COUNTY, GEORGIA

2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

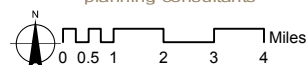
Map 6-5 *Seniors Center Distribution*

Legend

- Recreation Planning Area
- 4mi Service Radius - Existing/Planned Seniors Center (Parks and Recreation)
- 4mi Service Radius - Planned/Not Funded Seniors Center (Parks and Recreation)
- 4mi Service Radius - Existing/Planned Seniors Center (Health and Human Services/City)
- City Park
- County Park
- Private Facility
- 2000 Population Distribution Ages 55 +**
 - 332 - 999
 - 1000 - 1999
 - 2000 - 2337



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With this in mind, a provision standard of one senior recreation center per 75,000 population has been proposed. Because Gwinnett has an increasing percentage of older adults and seniors, consideration should be given to modifying this provision standard (or linking it to the 55 and over population) within the next five to ten years in order to better reflect the needs of the citizenry. The needs analysis indicates

that three new senior centers are required to meet current needs. Although RPA B is deficient in total supply, the Rhodes Jordan/ Lawrenceville Senior Center located in RPAs D is located close enough to RPA C to provide for adequate accessibility. In addition to the senior suite proposed at George Pierce Park in RPA A, a senior center addition is recommended to the proposed community center at Dacula Park. In order to meet the provision standard and to alleviate gaps in distribution, the development of senior centers on new land acquisitions is recommended in RPAs A, C and D.

Senior recreation centers need not be stand-alone structures, rather it is recommended that senior centers developed by the County take the form of dedicated space within a community center. There are many reasons for such an approach, the most obvious being related to greater efficiencies (both operational and functional) achieved through the sharing of space and resources. For example, gymnasiums and pools are multi-functional spaces that can be used for structured and unstructured programs for all age groups. Considering that the use of such facilities would be the greatest during daytime hours for seniors and during nighttime and weekend hours for children, teens and adults, it would make sense to co-locate senior centers and community centers under the same roof. Concerns over safety as a result of the integration of age groups can be alleviated through proper design and the creation of dedicated space for seniors (e.g., arts/crafts room, games room, kitchen, lounge, etc. could be made off-limits to those that are not members of the senior center. This is the type of development that is proposed at George Pierce Park through the addition of a "senior suite" to the proposed community center.

SENIOR CENTERS		RPA
Norcross Senior Center		B
Bethesda Park		C
Buford Senior/Human Services Center		D
Lawrenceville Senior Center		D
Grayson Senior Center		E
S. Wayne Odum Senior Center		E
Total		6

Plan Area	Supply #	Senior Centers (per capita)	Demand #	D-S #
A	0	0:136028	1.8	1.8
B	1	114,069	1.5	0.5
C	1	150,202	2.0	1.0
D	2	45,062	1.2	(0.8)
E	2	49,013	1.3	(0.7)
Total - 2000	6	98,075	7.8	1.8
Standard		75,000		
Total - 2003	6	112,714	9.0	3.0
Total - 2005	6	121,017	9.7	3.7
Total - 2010	6	140,323	11.2	5.2

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

For all community centers, activity buildings, and senior recreation centers (combined), an overall provision standard of one facility per 30,000 residents is recommended.

Gymnasiums are typically operated as either stand-alone facilities or as components of community centers. The County operates four gymnasiums at Best Friend, Bogan, Lenora and Rhodes Jordan Parks, while the cities of Duluth and Buford operate two gymnasiums. Aside from schools, which the County has an agreement with for the use of gymnasiums, private enterprise and not-for-profit agencies provide the majority of the gymnasium inventory in Gwinnett (17 gymnasiums, including 7 at the Suwanee Sports Academy). The location of gymnasiums (not including those in schools), is heavily skewed to RPA A, which contains 15 of the 23 public, not-for-profit, and private gymnasiums.

A provision standard of one gymnasium (county, city and private) per 20,000 population is recommended, translating into a need for 34 gymnasiums (11 more than the current supply of 23). In particular, the supply of gymnasiums RPAs B, C and E is not sufficient to meet the needs of the current population. In response to this need, gymnasiums have been recommended at Lucky Shoals, Bethesda, Spriggs Road, and Bay Creek Parks, in addition to the development of gymnasiums on sites to be acquired in these RPAs. In order to maintain a balanced approach to facility development throughout the County, gymnasiums have also been proposed for George Pierce and Dacula Parks.

GYMNASIUMS		#	RPA
Best Friend Park		1	A
Bunten Park		1	A
A. Worley Brown Boys & Girls Club		1	A
Robert D. Fowler Family YMCA		2	A
Gwinnett Sports Center		3	A
Suwanee Sports Academy		7	A
Lawrenceville Boys & Girls Club		1	C
J.M. Tull/Gwinnett Family YMCA		2	C
Bogan Park		1	D
Rhodes Jordan Park		1	D
Buford Civic Center & City Gym		1	D
Buford Youth Community Center		1	D
Lenora Park		1	E
Total		23	

Plan Area	Supply #	Gymnasiums (per capita)	Demand #	D-S #
A	15	9,069	6.8	(8.2)
B	0	0:114,069	5.7	5.7
C	3	50,067	7.5	4.5
D	4	22,531	4.5	0.5
E	1	98,025	4.9	3.9
Total - 2000	23	25,585	29.4	6.4
Standard		20,000		
Total - 2003	23	29,404	33.8	10.8
Total - 2005	23	31,570	36.3	13.3
Total - 2010	23	36,606	42.1	19.1

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

The following are the recommendations related to community centers, activity buildings, senior recreation centers and gymnasiums. Recommendations are listed alphabetically by RPA and are not in priority order. The priority and capital cost of each recommendation is provided in Section 8.

Recreation Planning Area "A" - Recreation Center Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| George Pierce Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gymnasium addition• Construct senior suite for community center |
| Land - New Acquisition | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquire parkland between Duluth and Suwanee for a senior center |

Recreation Planning Area "B" - Recreation Center Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Lucky Shoals Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop community center with gymnasium |
| Land - New Acquisition | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquire site(s) for gymnasiums (4) |

Recreation Planning Area "C" - Recreation Center Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bethesda Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop community center and gymnasium |
| Spriggs Road Park Site | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop activity building with gymnasium |
| Sweet Water Park Site | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop activity building (land dependent) |
| Land - New Acquisition | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquire site(s) for activity building, senior center, and gymnasiums (2) |

Recreation Planning Area "D" - Recreation Center Recommendations

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Dacula Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add a gymnasium and classroom to the activity building• Redevelop existing activity building as a community center with senior suite |
|-------------|---|

Recreation Planning Area "E" - Recreation Center Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Bay Creek Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop community center and gymnasium |
| Lenora Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop community center (add to gymnasium) |
| Land - New Acquisition | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquire parkland east and west of Snellville for gymnasiums |

**6.8 INDOOR
AND
OUTDOOR
AQUATIC
FACILITY
ANALYSIS**

A lane pool, otherwise referred to as a competition pool, has a length of 25 or 50 meters and can be used for competitive swimming events. Such pools may also have supporting interactive play features. Gwinnett County has 6 indoor lane pools, three of which are operated by the County (Bogan Park, Collins Hill, and Mountain Park). Local YMCAs and private enterprise provide the remaining three indoor lane pools (note: dimensions and amenities at these facilities may vary from the design standards of County pools). Although there may be additional privately-operated indoor lane pools in Gwinnett, agreements for public or community group usage do not exist and, therefore, these facilities are not included in the Plan's inventory. Map 6-6 illustrates the location of indoor aquatic facilities in Gwinnett County using a 4-mile service radius.

Half of Gwinnett County's indoor lane pools are located in RPA C. RPA E is completely void of any indoor lane pools (or leisure pools for that matter), and significant gaps also exist in RPAs A and D.

A leisure pool, often referred to as a family aquatics center, serves the aquatic needs of the entire community. Leisure pools contain interactive play features, but are not used for competitive swimming events.

There are 2 indoor leisure pools in Gwinnett County, one at Bogan Park and one under design at Bethesda Park. The service area for indoor leisure pools is larger than that of indoor competition pools. As such, the only gap is in the eastern portion of the County; anticipated population growth in this area should substantiate the need for an indoor leisure pool in the future.

As indicated in the trends section of this report, swimming is one of the most popular recreational activities and is one that is enjoyed by all ages. As such, there is considerable demand for swimming facilities, especially indoor aquatic centers that can be used year-round. Public consultation undertaken for this Plan identified a great deal of demand for an indoor competition pool in the western portion of the County. In response, the County has recently acquired a site (currently referred to as the West District Pool Site) for an indoor lane pool that is recommended in this Master Plan.

INDOOR LANE POOLS		RPA
Robert D. Fowler Family YMCA		A
Mountain Park Aquatic Center		B
Collins Hill Aquatic Center		C
J.M. Tull/Gwinnett Family YMCA		C
Swim Atlanta - Lawrenceville		C
Bogan Park		D
Total		6

Plan Area	Supply #	Indoor Lane Pools (per capita)	Demand #	D-S #
A	1	136,028	1.7	0.7
B	1	114,069	1.4	0.4
C	3	50,067	1.9	(1.1)
D	1	90,124	1.1	0.1
E	0	0:98,025	1.2	1.2
Total - 2000	6	98,075	7.4	1.4
Standard		80,000		
Total - 2003	6	112,714	8.5	2.5
Total - 2005	6	121,017	9.1	3.1
Total - 2010	6	140,323	10.5	4.5

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

Provision standards of one indoor lane pool per 80,000 people and one indoor leisure pool per 200,000 population have been proposed. The application of these standards yields a need for nearly 3 additional indoor lane pools and 2 more indoor leisure pools.

INDOOR LEISURE POOLS		RPA
Bethesda Park		C
Bogan Park		D
Total		2

Plan Area	<i>Supply</i> #	Indoor Leisure Pools <i>(per capita)</i>	<i>Demand</i> #	D-S #
A	0	0:136,028	0.7	0.7
B	0	0:114,069	0.6	0.6
C	1	150,202	0.8	(0.2)
D	1	90,124	0.5	(0.5)
E	0	0:98,025	0.5	0.5
Total - 2000	2	294,224	2.9	0.9
Standard		200,000		
Total - 2003	2	338,142	3.4	1.4
Total - 2005	2	363,052	3.6	1.6
Total - 2010	2	420,969	4.2	2.2

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

Given the considerable capital and operating costs associated with indoor aquatic facilities, a less aggressive approach to indoor aquatic facility development is recommended. Specifically, the County should place a greater emphasis on addressing distribution issues than meeting the recommended provision standards. As evidenced during the public consultation process, the most pressing short term need is the development of an indoor competition pool at the West District Pool Site. RPAs E and D (the southern half) do not have the same geographic accessibility to indoor pools as do the other areas of the County. As such, future population growth will require Gwinnett County to acquire and/or identify land in the eastern portion of the County to accommodate an indoor competition pool and an indoor family aquatic center.

One of the goals established by the Citizen Steering Committee was to consider the feasibility and cost/benefit of developing certain higher-level competition facilities, such as a 50-meter indoor pool capable of hosting state and national meets. It is recommended that the County investigate the feasibility of developing an Olympic-size 50-meter pool with appropriate spectator capacity at the West District Pool Site at the time that this site is master planned.

There are considerably more outdoor aquatic facilities in the County than there are indoor venues. Not including pools provided by subdivisions or fitness/country clubs, there are a total of 16 outdoor lane pools in the County that are either publicly accessible or that operate under an agreement with local swim organizations (only 1 is operated by the County, that being at Dacula Park). The location of outdoor aquatic facilities operated by the County and its cities is shown on Map 6-7.

Given the large number of outdoor lane pools that are available in private residential settings and clubs, the overall supply and distribution of outdoor lane pools is not a key concern for this Master Plan as it appears that the demand for this type of facility is adequately being met by the current inventory.

Plan Area	Supply #	Outdoor Lane Pools (per capita)	Demand #	D-S #
A	4	34,007	1.7	(2.3)
B	1	114,069	1.4	0.4
C	4	37,551	1.9	(2.1)
D	2	45,062	1.1	(0.9)
E	5	19,605	1.2	(3.8)
Total - 2000	16	36,778	7.4	(8.6)
Standard		80,000		
Total - 2003	16	42,268	8.5	(7.5)
Total - 2005	16	45,381	9.1	(6.9)
Total - 2010	16	52,621	10.5	(5.5)

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

Nationwide, very few recreation departments are developing new outdoor lane pools, choosing instead to build leisure pools that have significantly greater summertime appeal, especially for children and teenagers.

There is one outdoor leisure pool in each recreation planning area, with facilities in Best Friend, Collins Hill, Lenora (currently under design), Mountain Park Aquatic, and Rhodes Jordan Parks. There are a total of 5 such facilities in Gwinnett, all of which are operated by the County. With a recommended provision standard of one outdoor

OUTDOOR LEISURE POOLS		RPA
Best Friend Park		A
Mountain Park Aquatic Center		B
Collins Hill Park		C
Rhodes Jordan Park		D
Lenora Park		E
Total	5	

Plan Area	Supply #	Outdoor Leisure Pools (per capita)	Demand #	D-S #
A	1	136,028	1.7	0.7
B	1	114,069	1.4	0.4
C	1	150,202	1.9	0.9
D	1	90,124	1.1	0.1
E	1	98,025	1.2	0.2
Total - 2000	5	117,690	7.4	2.4
Standard		80,000		
Total - 2003	5	135,257	8.5	3.5
Total - 2005	5	145,221	9.1	4.1
Total - 2010	5	168,387	10.5	5.5

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

leisure pool per 80,000 population, there is a need for four additional outdoor aquatic centers. New leisure pools are proposed for all RPAs except for C. Anticipated locations for new outdoor pools include the West District Pool Site, a new site in RPA B (preferably in the Meadowcreek area), Duncan Creek Park Site (subject to the findings of the Park Master Plan), and Bay Creek Park.



GWINNETT COUNTY, GEORGIA

2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

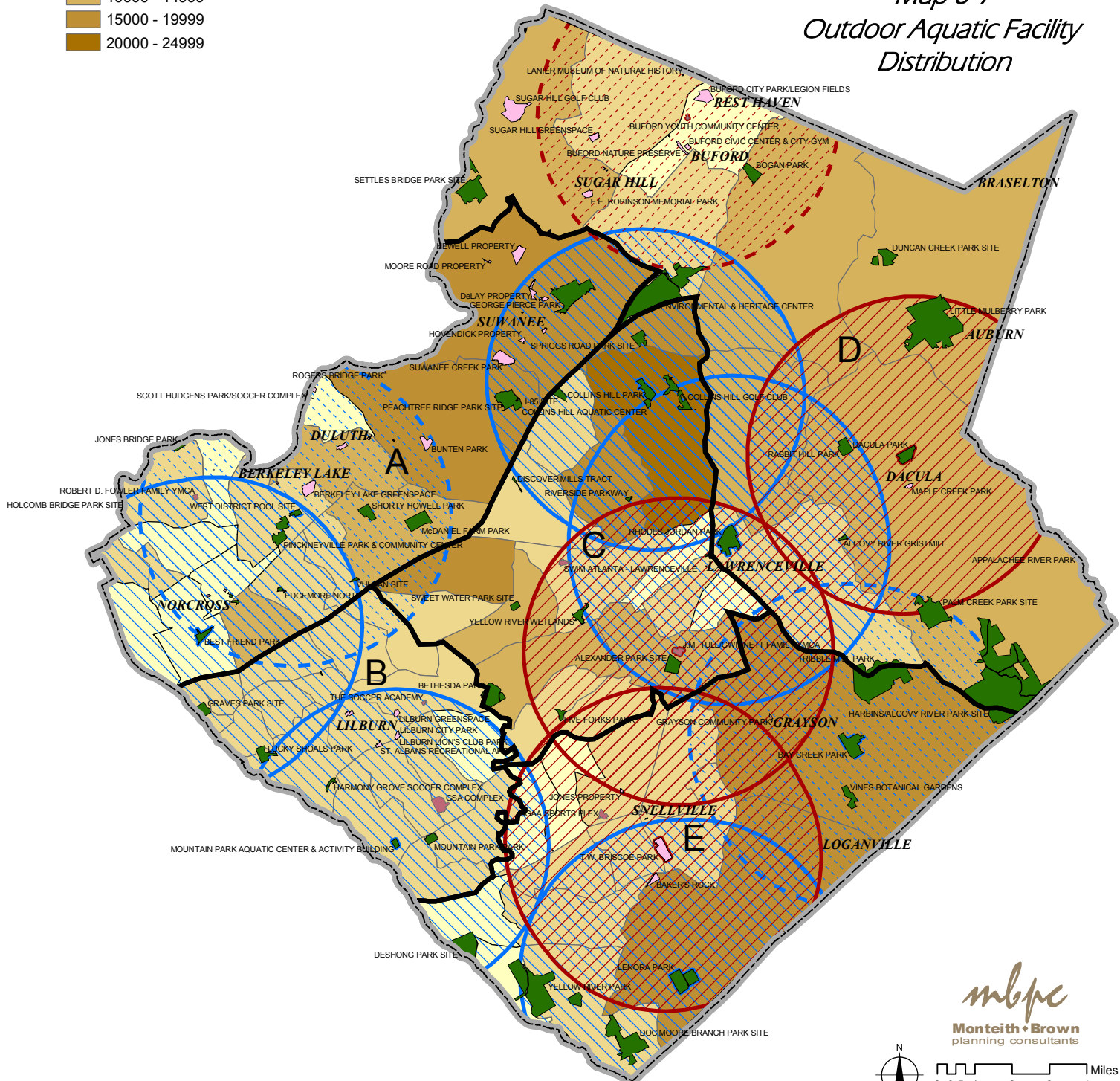
Map 6-7 Outdoor Aquatic Facility Distribution

Legend

- Recreation Planning Area
- 4mi Radius - Existing/Funded Outdoor Competition Pool
- 4mi Radius - Planned/Not Funded Outdoor Competition Pool
- 4mi Radius - Existing/Funded Outdoor Leisure Pool
- 4mi Radius - Planned/Not Funded Outdoor Leisure Pool
- City Park
- County Park
- Private Facility

2000 Total Population Distribution

- 2237 - 4999
- 5000 - 9999
- 10000 - 14999
- 15000 - 19999
- 20000 - 24999



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Lastly, the newest type of aquatic facilities is a splash pad, which is also referred to as a splashground or spray pad. Splash pads are an outdoor aquatic facility that is comprised of a series of interactive water play features, such as spouts, jets, water walls, fountains, water guns/cannons, water buckets, etc. Unlike wading pools, splash pads contain no standing or pooled water and typically use recirculated water. The splash pad is a relatively new aquatic feature that is rapidly gaining popularity in other areas of North America. The core user of such facilities is children ages 2 to 14, however, splash pads can also be entertaining for all members of the family. The size and number of features per splash pad can vary tremendously, depending on the community that it is intended to serve. Currently there are no such facilities in the County, although some of the splash pad's features have been duplicated in outdoor leisure pools.

There are generally three reasons that children are attracted to water: (1) to cool off from the summer heat; (2) to enjoy a fun water experience; and (3) to partake in a social atmosphere. As such, the design of a splash pad facility should incorporate a variety of fun water spray devices to diversify the experience, provide benches, picnic tables and shaded areas to assist in the social atmosphere, and include traditional play equipment that provides a sense of security for each of the various age groups (i.e., tots and older children). By providing fun, yet simple designs and sprayers, the County can minimize the need for supervision and increase both the safety and security of younger children.

Unlike an outdoor leisure pool, a splash pad allows children to do more than just splash – they can run, jump, climb, and swing all in a water setting. Older children enjoy the interactive aspect of waterplay, while smaller children enjoy the ground sprayers. If the spray facility is located near either an indoor or outdoor pool, older children can also benefit from an even greater aquatic experience.

Because splash pads are an untested commodity in Gwinnett County, a provision standard has not been created in this Master Plan. Service levels experienced in other municipalities, however, are often close to 1 splash pad per 5,000 children ages 0 to 14. This standard would not be appropriate for Gwinnett County, however, due to the considerable supply of indoor and outdoor leisure pools and the sheer size of the County, which does not allow for neighborhood-level parks or the development of splash pads within walking or cycling distance of most residential areas. Because splash pads share many of the same recreational attributes as playground equipment (e.g., children are the target market, they are free of charge, they do not require adult supervision, etc.), it is appropriate to develop splash pads in densely populated, family-oriented, and lower-income areas that do not have reasonable access to an indoor or outdoor family aquatics center. In this light, a test cases for splash pads is recommended – either at Graves Park Site or Lucky Shoals Park, both of which are in high need areas that are deficient in terms of aquatic facilities.

The following are the recommendations related to indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities. Recommendations are listed alphabetically by RPA and are not in priority order. The priority and capital cost of each recommendation is provided in Section 8.

Recreation Planning Area "A" - Aquatic Facility Recommendations

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| West District Pool Site | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a 25-meter indoor competition/lane pool OR build a 50-meter pool with diving well, spectator area, etc. to serve as a tournament venue• Develop an indoor warm water instructional/therapeutics pool• Build an outdoor family aquatics center |
|-------------------------|---|

Recreation Planning Area "B" - Aquatic Facility Recommendations

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Graves Park Site | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a splash playground (if not here at Lucky Shoals Park, but not both) |
| Lucky Shoals Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redevelop park to accommodate a splash playground (if not here at Graves Park Site, but not both) |

Recreation Planning Area "C" - Aquatic Facility Recommendations

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Collins Hill Aquatic Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Construct outdoor restrooms and a changing area for the existing outdoor pool |
|-----------------------------|---|

Recreation Planning Area "D" - Aquatic Facility Recommendations

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Rhodes Jordan Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add a second slide to the existing pool |
|--------------------|---|

Recreation Planning Area "E" - Aquatic Facility Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bay Creek Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an outdoor family aquatics center |
| Land - New Acquisition | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquire site for an indoor competition/lane pool to serve the eastern portion of the County (RPA E and the southern half of RPA D); consideration should also be given to acquiring sufficient land for an indoor family aquatics center |

6.9 TENNIS COMPLEX ANALYSIS

There are approximately 170 tennis courts within the County, excluding those at schools, fitness clubs, country clubs, subdivisions, and private residences. Of these 170 courts, 43 are operated by Gwinnett County

and 35 are provided by local cities; the remainder are supplied by private enterprise and not-for-profit agencies. Map 6-8 illustrates the distribution of tennis complexes (defined as clusters of 4 or more courts) provided by the County and local cities with a 2-mile service radius applied.

By applying a 2-mile radius to each tennis complex, a number of service gaps appear throughout the County, especially in RPAs C, D, and E. However, when other non-government courts are accounted for in the provision standard analysis, it becomes evident that there is an ample supply of tennis courts in Gwinnett. A provision standard of one tennis court per 4,000 population is recommended.

Tennis courts, however, are not unlike other recreational facilities such as playgrounds and basketball courts in that they are a feature that should be supplied in nearly every community park. As such, even though an assessment of needs indicates that the current supply of tennis courts is sufficient, the development of new parks and redevelopment of existing ones dictates that additional tennis courts be considered. As a lower level priority, this Master Plan recommends that tennis courts be developed as part of Duncan Creek Park and Spriggs Road Park Sites and as part of the redevelopment/expansion of George Pierce, Dacula, Bay Creek, Rhodes Jordan Park and Lenora Parks. In the event that parkland is acquired in the Meadowcreek area, tennis courts should also be considered for this community.

Plan Area	Supply #	Tennis Courts (per capita)	Demand #	D-S #
A	54	2,519	34.0	(20.0)
B	18	6,337	28.5	10.5
C	30	5,007	37.6	7.6
D	30	3,004	22.5	(7.5)
E	38	2,580	24.5	(13.5)
Total - 2000	170	3,461	147.1	(22.9)
Standard		4,000		
Total - 2003	170	3,978	169.1	(0.9)
Total - 2005	170	4,271	181.5	11.5
Total - 2010	170	4,953	210.5	40.5

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

The following are the recommendations related to tennis complexes. Recommendations are listed alphabetically by RPA and are not in priority order. The priority and capital cost of each recommendation is provided in Section 8.

Recreation Planning Area "A" - Tennis Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| George Pierce Park | • Develop four tennis courts with service building |
|--------------------|--|

Recreation Planning Area "B" - Tennis Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Land - New Acquisition | • Acquire parkland for tennis courts (among other facilities) in the Meadowcreek area |
|------------------------|---|

Recreation Planning Area "C" - Tennis Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Spriggs Road Park Site | • Develop six tennis courts with Mountain Park type service building |
|------------------------|--|

Recreation Planning Area "D" - Tennis Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Dacula Park | • Develop four tennis courts |
| Duncan Creek Park Site | • Develop four tennis courts |
| Rhodes Jordan Park | • Develop two tennis courts with Mountain Park type service building |

Recreation Planning Area "E" - Tennis Complex Recommendations

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Bay Creek Park | • Develop tennis courts |
| Lenora Park | • Develop tennis courts |

**6.10 OUTDOOR
BASKETBALL
COURT
ANALYSIS**

Outdoor basketball courts, and to some extent skate parks, are to teenagers what playgrounds are to children – they are an essential recreational element that should be provided in nearly every park in the County. The recreational needs of youth, with the exception of traditional team sports such as baseball, have been largely neglected in Gwinnett until recently when the Parks and Recreation Division began to construct teen areas in its parks (basketball courts, sand volleyball courts, skate parks, etc.). It is precisely these types of unstructured, low cost activities that teens today are seeking.

Approximately 20.5 basketball courts are provided by the County and local cities (half courts/single baskets are equal to 0.5). This distribution of these courts is illustrated on Map 6-9 (along with the locations of skate parks); a 2-mile service radius has been applied. Not only does the distribution of facilities create numerous service gaps throughout the County, but the overall supply of courts is extremely low for a County with such a youthful



**GWINNETT COUNTY,
GEORGIA**

**2004
Comprehensive
Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

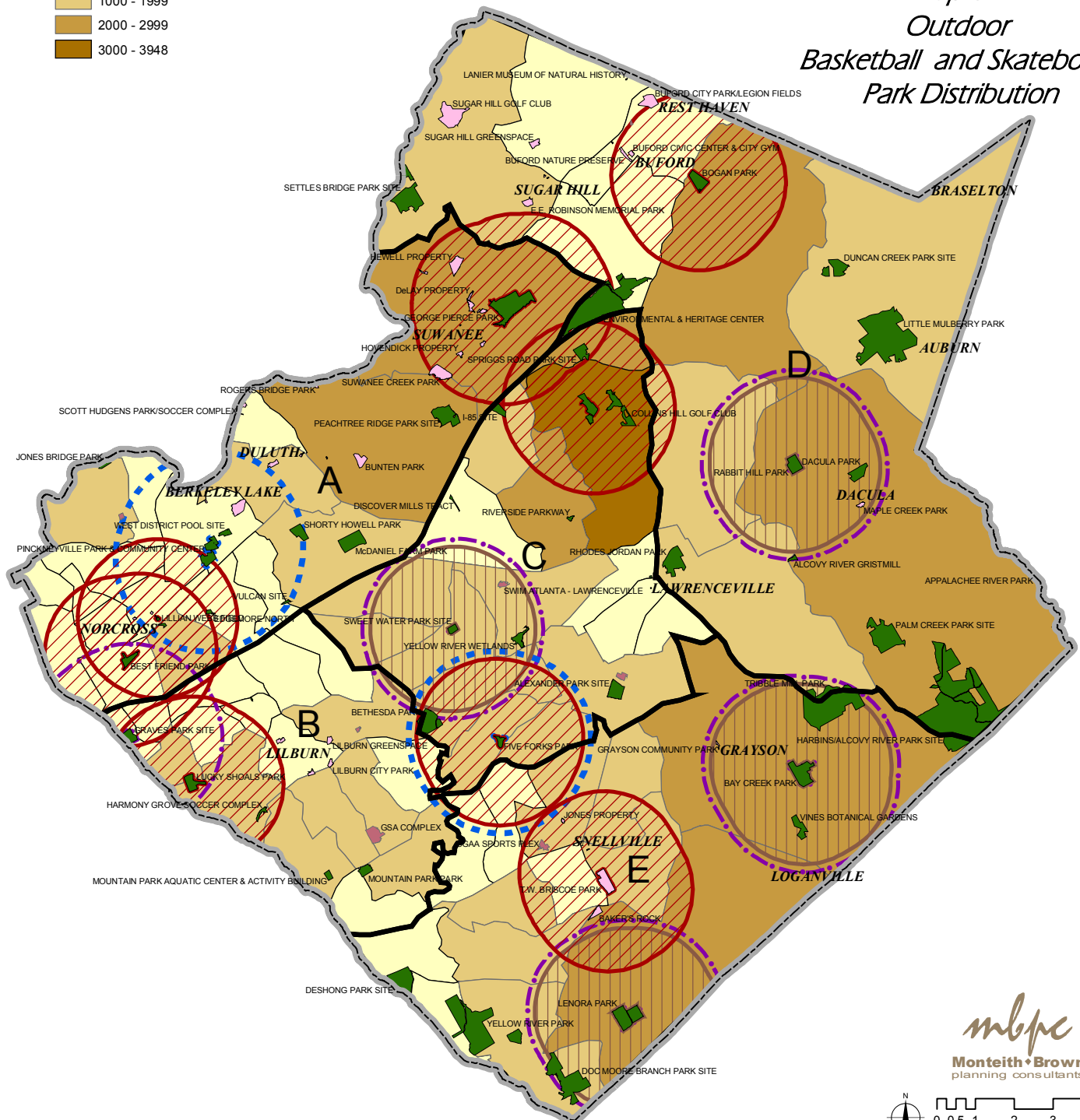
**Map 6-9
Outdoor
Basketball and Skateboard
Park Distribution**

Legend

- Recreation Planning Area
- 2mi Service Radius - Existing/Funded Basketball
- 2mi Service Radius - Planned/Not Funded Basketball
- 2mi Service Radius - Existing/Funded Skateboard Park
- 2mi Service Radius - Planned/Not Funded Skateboard Park
- City Park
- County Park
- Private Facility

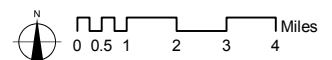
2000 Population Distribution Ages 10-19

- 199 - 999
- 1000 - 1999
- 2000 - 2999
- 3000 - 3948



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age profile. The County has over 25 active parks, yet only 7 contain outdoor basketball courts.

A provision standard of one full outdoor basketball court per 10,000 population has been recommended. This standard, although consistent with levels attained in many other jurisdictions, translates into a need for nearly 50 additional basketball

Plan Area	Supply #	Basketball Courts (per capita)	Demand #	D-S #
A	7.5	18,137	13.6	6.1
B	3.0	38,023	11.4	8.4
C	5.0	30,040	15.0	10.0
D	3.0	30,041	9.0	6.0
E	2.0	49,013	9.8	7.8
Total - 2000	20.5	28,705	58.8	38.3
Standard		10,000		
Total - 2003	20.5	32,989	67.6	47.1
Total - 2005	20.5	35,420	72.6	52.1
Total - 2010	20.5	41,070	84.2	63.7

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

courts over the next few years! Clearly this is a goal that the county will not achieve overnight, but it is one that would go a long way toward meeting the recreational needs of Gwinnett's youth (among other age groups).

Basketball court development is recommended for a number of existing community parks that currently do not contain any, including Mountain Park, Bethesda, Dacula, Rabbit Hill, Rhodes Jordan, and Lenora Parks. Additional courts are proposed for George Pierce and Bay Creek Parks. It is also expected that new parks, including Peachtree Ridge, Duncan Creek Site, and future acquisitions will be given consideration for the inclusion of outdoor basketball courts.

The following are the recommendations related to outdoor basketball courts. Recommendations are listed alphabetically by RPA and are not in priority order. The priority and capital cost of each recommendation is provided in Section 8.

Recreation Planning Area "A" - Outdoor Basketball Court Recommendations

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| George Pierce Park | • Build outdoor basketball courts |
| Peachtree Ridge Park Site | • Build outdoor basketball courts (2) |
| Land - New Acquisition | • Acquire parkland between Duluth and Suwanee for 2 basketball courts |

Recreation Planning Area "B" - Outdoor Basketball Court Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Mountain Park Park | • Build basketball courts (land dependent) |
| Land - New Acquisition | • Acquire parkland for basketball courts in the Meadowcreek area |

Recreation Planning Area "C" - Outdoor Basketball Court Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Bethesda Park | • Develop basketball courts on the unused adult softball parking area |
| Collins Hill Park | • Replace two basketball courts |
| Land - New Acquisition | • Acquire site(s) for basketball courts (6) |

Recreation Planning Area "D" - Outdoor Basketball Court Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Dacula Park | • Build outdoor basketball courts |
| Duncan Creek Park Site | • Build outdoor basketball courts (subject to Park Master Plan) |
| Rabbit Hill Park | • Build outdoor basketball courts |
| Rhodes Jordan Park | • Build outdoor basketball courts |

Recreation Planning Area "E" - Outdoor Basketball Court Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bay Creek Park | • Build outdoor basketball courts |
| Lenora Park | • Build outdoor basketball courts |
| Land - New Acquisition | • Acquire parkland east and west of Snellville for basketball courts |

6.11 SKATE PARK ANALYSIS

Skate parks offer paved areas with specially constructed ramps, quarter pipes, rails, and other structures for skateboarding and freestyle skating and cycling within a controlled environment. These activities are not fads that will fade away, rather they are continuing to grow in popularity, particularly amongst older children and teenagers – a demographic that has traditionally been challenging to serve. Furthermore, because skateboarding and similar activities often occur in open public plazas or on private lands, resulting in conflicts with other activities (not to mention vandalism and injuries), skate parks offer an important alternative to this problem.

Gwinnett has two County-operated skate parks at Pinckneyville Park and Five Forks Park (a mini-skate park that is currently under construction), as well as five privately-operated indoor parks.

Although there are a total of seven skate parks, there are distinct differences between those owned by the County and those provided by the private sector – most notably that the County facilities are free of charge.

Plan Area	Supply #	Skate Parks (per age 10-19)	Demand #	D-S #
A	2	10,732	3.5	1.5
B	0	0:16,212	3.2	3.2
C	2	11,422	4.6	2.6
D	1	12,699	2.5	1.5
E	2	8,455	3.4	1.4
Total - 2000	7	13,470	17.2	10.2
Standard		5,000		
Total - 2003	7	14,256	20.0	13.0
Total - 2005	7	15,561	21.8	14.8
Total - 2010	7	17,600	24.6	17.6

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

Map 6-9 (see page 135) illustrates the locations of the two existing County skate parks along with the those parks for which skate parks have been proposed through site-specific master plans (Bay Creek, Graves, Lenora, Rabbit Hill, and Sweet Water Parks). Significant service gaps remain throughout the County, especially in RPAs A, B, C, and D.

A provision standard of one skate park per 5,000 youth ages 10-19 has been proposed (public and private facilities combined). This standard is specifically linked to the teen population because skate parks are predominantly used by this demographic and this approach will provide a more accurate determination of demand as Gwinnett's population ages. In order to achieve the recommended level of service, a total of 13 skate parks are required, increasing to nearly 18 parks by the year 2010.

A total of 12 new skate parks are recommended across all five RPAs. Although 12 new parks, when added to the current inventory of 7, is more than the provision standard requires, geographic gaps in service require that additional skate parks be developed in order to provide reasonable access for the majority of Gwinnett children and teenagers. In addition to the five parks for which skate park development is anticipated (as a result of approved park master plans), skate parks are proposed for George Pierce, Mountain Park, Bethesda, and Rhodes Jordan Parks, as well as Peachtree Ridge and Duncan Creek Parks (subject to the findings of their park master plans). Furthermore, a skate park should be given strong consideration for any parkland acquired in the future, especially in areas with significant densities of teens. All new skate parks should be designed in consultation with children and teenagers.

The following are the recommendations related to skate parks. Recommendations are listed alphabetically by RPA and are not in priority order. The priority and capital cost of each recommendation is provided in Section 8.

Recreation Planning Area "A" - Skate Park Recommendations

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| George Pierce Park | • Develop a skate park |
| Peachtree Ridge Park Site | • Develop a skate park |

Recreation Planning Area "B" - Skate Park Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Graves Park Site | • Develop a skate park |
| Mountain Park Park | • Develop a skate park (land dependent) |
| Land - New Acquisition | • Acquire parkland for a skate park in the Meadowcreek area |

Recreation Planning Area "C" - Skate Park Recommendations

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Bethesda Park | • Develop a skate park on the unused adult softball parking area |
| Sweet Water Park Site | • Develop a skate park |

Recreation Planning Area "D" - Skate Park Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Duncan Creek Park Site | • Develop a skate park (subject to Park Master Plan) |
| Rabbit Hill Park | • Develop a skate park |
| Rhodes Jordan Park | • Develop a skate park |

Recreation Planning Area "E" - Skate Park Recommendations

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Bay Creek Park | • Develop a skate park |
| Lenora Park | • Develop a skate park |

6.12 PLAYGROUND ANALYSIS

21 of Gwinnett County's parks contain a total of 58 playground areas (most parks have more than one playground area due to the large size of the parks and a desire to separate tots from older children). In addition to County parks, 14 city parks contain 23 playground areas and 3 not-for-profit recreation centers also offer outdoor play equipment. In total, it is estimated that there are 84 publicly-accessible playgrounds at 38 sites in Gwinnett County, not including playgrounds at schools or subdivisions. Map 6-10 illustrates the location of County and city playgrounds; service radii of a half-mile and one-mile have been applied to each playground site.

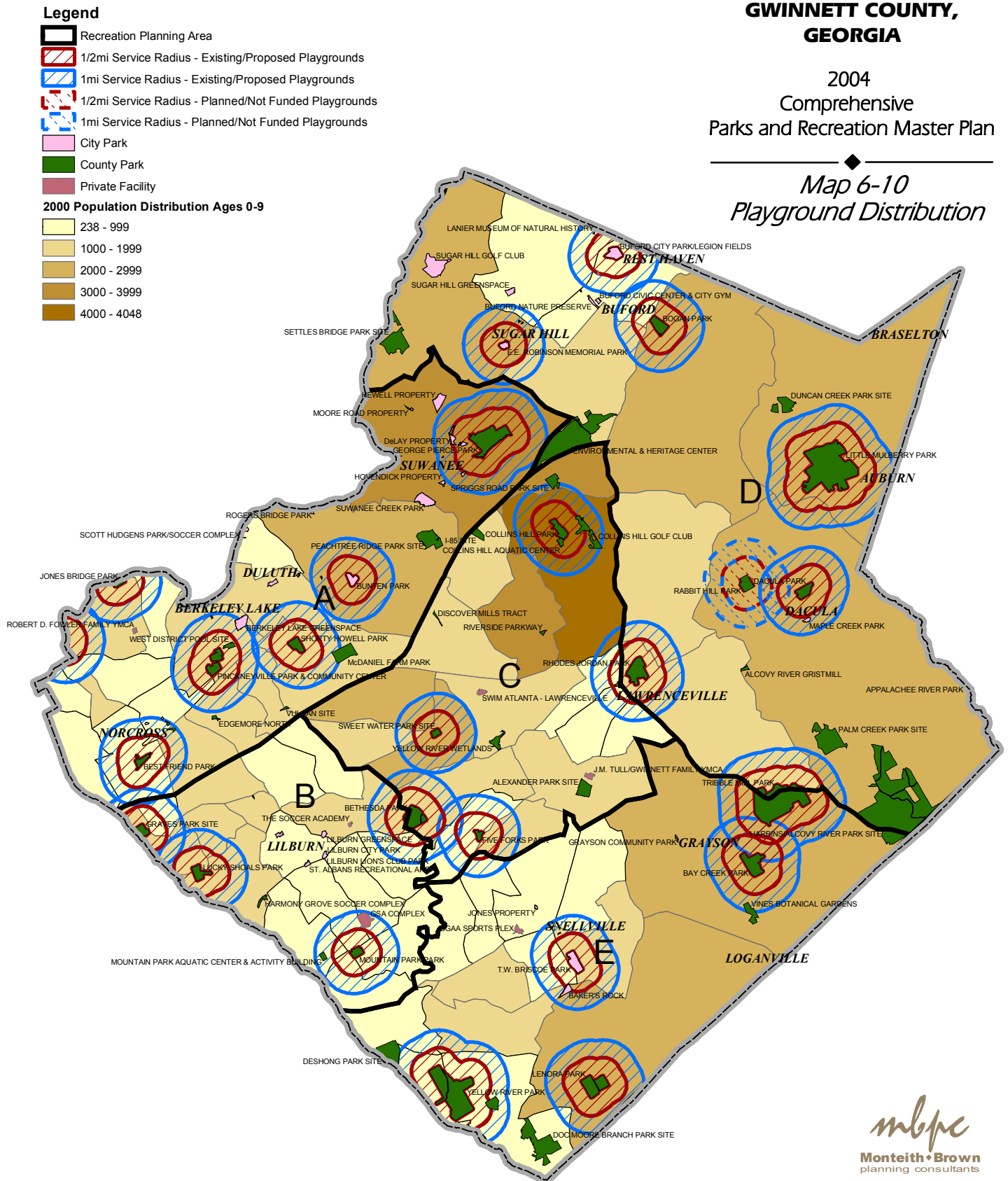
Playgrounds are an essential amenity in every community park and can even be accommodated in many open space parks. With this in mind, it is important that efforts be made to ensure that all children have reasonable access to a playground, whether it be at a park, a school or a residential complex. In denser urban areas, it is typically recommended that playgrounds be provided within a half-mile of all residential neighborhoods so that children can easily walk or cycle; this guideline should also account for the existence of physical barriers such as rivers, rail lines and major roads that are unsafe for pedestrians to cross. Due to Gwinnett's large land base, this approach is not feasible in the County, however, a provision standard of one playground area per 750 children ages 0 to 9 has been proposed that, if achieved, would significantly increase free play opportunities for children and improve accessibility to play areas. It is recognized that one park may contain multiple playground areas and this standard has been designed to reflect this.

Using the recommended standard, 51 additional playground areas would be required at present. Fortunately, the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Division is currently undertaking an aggressive park development program that will see approximately ten parks designed or developed in 2003/2004, nearly each of which will contain one or more playground areas. In addition, expansions to numerous existing parks will also be able to accommodate new playground areas. This Master Plan recommends the development of over 20 playground areas in existing and (currently) undeveloped parks. Furthermore, it is strongly recommended

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*Map 6-10
Playground Distribution*



that future parkland acquisitions incorporate playgrounds, where appropriate. It is also important to note that not all playgrounds need to be provided by the County – local governments should also assume responsibility for providing safe play equipment in all of their active parks. Developers should also be encouraged to construct playgrounds accessible to all local residents (i.e., not within "gated" subdivisions), possibly located between adjacent developments to maximize accessibility.

Overall, due to proposed playground development in expanding parks, developing parks, and future County and city parks, it is anticipated that the gap between the current level of service and the provision standard will shrink significantly.

Plan Area	Supply #	Playground Areas (per age 0-9)	Demand #	D-S #
A	36	597	28.6	(7.4)
B	7	2,382	22.2	15.2
C	12	2,176	34.8	22.8
D	13	1,174	20.3	7.3
E	16	924	19.7	3.7
Total - 2000	84	1,123	125.7	41.7
Standard		750		
Total - 2003	84	1,205	135.0	51.0
Total - 2005	84	1,261	141.2	57.2
Total - 2010	84	1,305	146.2	62.2

Note: "D-S" refers to Demand minus Supply, the result of which is the surplus or (deficiency).

The following are the recommendations related to playgrounds. Recommendations are listed alphabetically by RPA and are not in priority order. The priority and capital cost of each recommendation is provided in Section 8.

Recreation Planning Area "A" - Playground Recommendations

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| George Pierce Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a playground at the eastern pavilion • Develop playgrounds for both the baseball and soccer complexes |
| Peachtree Ridge Park Site | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a playground |
| Pinckneyville Park & CC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a playground at the community center |
| Shorty Howell Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a playground (land dependent) |

Recreation Planning Area "B" - Playground Recommendations

- | | |
|--|--|
| Mountain Park Aquatic Center/
Activity Building | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a playground |
| Mountain Park Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a playground (may require land acquisition) |
| Land - New Acquisition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire sites for playgrounds, including in the Meadowcreek area |

Recreation Planning Area "C" - Playground Recommendations

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Alexander Park Site | • Develop a playground |
| Collins Hill Aquatic Center | • Develop a playground |
| Collins Hill Park | • Expand the lakeside playground |
| Spriggs Road Park Site | • Develop a playground |
| Land - New Acquisition | • Acquire sites for playgrounds |

Recreation Planning Area "D" - Playground Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Dacula Park | • Develop a playground |
| Duncan Creek Park Site | • Develop a playground (subject to Park Master Plan) |
| Alcovy River Gristmill | • Develop a playground |
| Little Mulberry Park | • Develop a playground |
| Rabbit Hill Park | • Develop a playground |

Recreation Planning Area "E" - Playground Recommendations

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Bay Creek Park | • Develop a playground (east) |
| | • Develop a playground (west) |
| Centerville Park Site | • Develop a playground |
| DeShong Park Site | • Develop a playground |
| Doc Moore Park Site | • Develop a playground |
| Lenora Park | • Develop a playground (tree farm) |
| | • Develop a playground (northwest) |
| Land - New Acquisition | • Acquire parkland east and west of Snellville for playgrounds |

**6.13 TRAIL &
GREENWAY
ANALYSIS**

The number one goal of this Master Plan, as identified by the Citizen Steering Committee, is to “work toward achieving pedestrian and bicycle linkage or connectivity between parks and other points of interest such as schools, libraries, institutional land uses and commercial nodes”. In short, the development of a greenway system in Gwinnett County is a key priority for this Plan. This emphasis on trails and greenways is supported by the Plan’s public consultation program (including the needs assessment and benchmarking survey), as well as extensive trends research which indicates that activities such as walking, hiking, running, cycling, and in-line skating are all among the most preferred active recreational pursuits both locally and nationwide. Internal park trail systems and greenways that link parks to other destinations provide these types of opportunities.

This 2004 Parks and Recreation Master Plan is fully supportive of, and consistent with, the findings of the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan. In particular, one of the goals of the Gwinnett County Open Space and Greenway Master Plan (2002) was to increase connectivity via a system of greenway trails. Both Master Plans agree that “the County should consider

establishing greenways in locations providing the greatest connectivity between existing greenspaces and where they can serve as useful transportation corridors". To this end, the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan recommended that the County consider negotiating multi-purpose easements that combine greenway public access rights with sewer and access easements. This Parks and Recreation Master Plan has developed a definition of a "Linear Park" to be added to the County's park classification system in order to advance the implementation of the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan. Most importantly, recommendations have been set made for the allocation of significant funds toward the establishment of a greenway system (up to a total of \$40 million depending on the amount of SPLOST funds available).

Key excerpts from the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan, as well as the Pedestrian, Bicycle and Greenways Plan for Gwinnett County (1995) are reproduced in Appendix H.

A provision standard has not been created for trails or greenways because their development is predicated on both opportunity and suitability of the landscape, among numerous other factors. Instead, park master plan documents and public input have been relied upon in order to develop recommendations regarding internal park trail systems. These recommendations are identified in Section 8.

SECTION 7: Delivery System Analysis

7.1 EXISTING OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE & DEPARTMENT ORGANIZA- TION

The Gwinnett County Department of Community Services is responsible for providing recreation services throughout the County. Within the Department, responsibility for providing leisure services are handled by the Parks and Recreation Operations Division and the Parks and Recreation Project Administration Division.

"The mission of Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation is to provide quality parks and leisure activities to the citizens of Gwinnett County. The department will promote broad-based recreational opportunities in order to improve the quality of life for all citizens in Gwinnett County and make reasonable modifications to programs, services or activities when necessary to promote participation by persons with disabilities."

The current staffing of Parks and Recreation totals 153 full time positions, 43 part time positions and 10 seasonal workers for a total of 208 persons or positions. Tables 7-1 to 7-3 lists the positions by area of activity. *Note: Tables 7-1 to 7-3 are all current as of December 31, 2003 and do not reflect staffing changes made in early 2004 (i.e., addition of 6 full-time staff).*

The responsibilities of the divisions within the department are listed below. Parks and Recreation Operations Division of Community Services is the primary point of contact for the community and is the arm of the County that is most responsible for ensuring that the leisure needs of County residents are being met.

The Parks and Recreation Operations Division is responsible for:

1. Programming for cultural, historical, environmental, and seniors related facilities.
2. The programming of all classes, special events and camps.
3. Providing inclusion in all areas of programming for citizens with disabilities.
4. Recreational programming for aquatics and tennis.
5. Recreational programming for indoor and outdoor facilities for both youth and adults.
6. Security and police liaison;
7. The marketing and resource development for both divisions.
8. Maintenance of all park facilities.
9. Maintenance of all park grounds.
10. Rentals, collection processes, and fees to augment operational costs of park system and service delivery.

The planning, management and development of recreation services is primarily the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Project Administration Division of the Department of Community Services, although other departments and boards also play a role.

The Parks and Recreation Project Administration Division is responsible for:

1. Community Services Development.
2. Planning and development.
3. Management of the Sales Tax implementation.
4. Construction management.
5. Special projects.

Table 7-1: Full-Time Staffing Breakdown

Department of Community Services: Project Administration, Operations and Fiscal Management

<u>Community Services Department- Director's Office</u>	
Department Director	1
Office Administrator	1
Office Assistant	1
Subtotal - Community Services Department - Director's Office	3
<u>Parks & Recreation Operations Division:</u>	
Division Director, Parks & Recreation Operations	1
Sr. Administrative Assistant	1
<u>Park Grounds Maintenance:</u>	
Community Services Manager, Park Grounds Maintenance	1
Park Maintenance Coordinator	3
Community Grounds Foreman	19
Community Parks Worker I	8
Community Parks Worker II	34
Community Parks Refuse Collector	1
<u>Support Services:</u>	
Community Services Manager, Support Services	1
Administrative Assistant	1
Park Maintenance Coordinator, Facilities Maintenance Contracts	1
Staff Assistant I	1
Field Support Services Foreman	1
Warehouse supervisor	1
Electrical Services Foreman	1
Plumbing Services Foreman	1
Facilities Operations Foreman	1
Facilities Operation Technician	7
Warehouse Technician	1
Warehouse Clerk	1
Community Parks Worker II	1
<u>Recreation Programming:</u>	
Community Services Manager, Recreation Programming	2
Program Coordinator	4
Resources & Marketing Coordinator	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - Aquatics/General	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - Tennis	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - Environmental Outdoor	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - Heritage	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - Rentals	2
Recreation Facility Programmer - Historic	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - South Area	2
Recreation Facility Programmer - North Area	2
Recreation Facility Programmer - West Area	2

continued...

Table 7-1: Full-Time Staffing Breakdown (continued)**Department of Community Services: Project Administration, Operations and Fiscal Management**

Recreation Facility Programmer – Cultural Arts	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - Senior	1
Recreation Facility Programmer – Adult Athletics	2
Publicity and Marketing Specialist	1
Aquatics Supervisor	4
Community Parks Worker II	2
Recreation Leader	7
Facilities Program Assistant	5
Subtotal - Parks & Recreation Operations Division	131
<i><u>Parks & Recreation Project Administration Division:</u></i>	
Division Director, Parks & Recreation Project Administration	1
Community Services Development Manager	1
Program Management/Sales Tax Program Manager (contract)	--
Principal Planner	1
Project Manager	1
Sr. Community Services Planner	3
Facilities Operation Foreman	1
Facilities Operation Technician	2
Subtotal - Parks & Recreation Project Administration Division	10
<i><u>Parks & Recreation Fiscal Management Division:</u></i>	
Financial Manager	1
Financial Officer I	1
Financial Officer II	3
Tech Systems Specialist I	1
Tech Systems Specialist II	1
Financial Technician II	2
Staff Assistant II	1
Subtotal - Parks & Recreation Fiscal Management Division	9
TOTAL Full-Time Positions	153

Table 7-2: Part-Time Staffing Breakdown**Department of Community Services: Project Administration, Operations and Fiscal Management**

<i><u>Parks & Recreation Operations Division:</u></i>	
<i><u>Support Services:</u></i>	
Warehouse Technician	1
<i><u>Recreation Programming:</u></i>	
Tennis Center Manager	3
Tennis Attendant	7
Recreation Leader	23
Historical Site Interpreter	1
Assistant Museum Director	1
Graphic Arts Specialist	1
Subtotal - Parks & Recreation Operations Division	37
<i><u>Parks & Recreation Project Administration Division:</u></i>	
Office Assistant	2
Staff Assistant	1
Financial Technician I	2
Financial Technician II	1
Subtotal - Parks & Recreation Project Administration Division	6
TOTAL Part-Time Positions	43

Table 7-3: Seasonal Staffing Breakdown
Department of Community Services: Project Administration, Operations and Fiscal Management

<u>Parks & Recreation Operations Division:</u>	
<u>Park Grounds Maintenance:</u>	
Parks Crew Member	2
<u>Recreation Programming:</u>	
Recreation Leader	8
Subtotal - Parks & Recreation Operations Division	10
TOTAL Seasonal Positions	10

As noted in Sections 4 and 5 and outlined more fully in Appendix C, Gwinnett County has one of the lowest ratios of park staff to both population and acreage compared to the other benchmarking communities. In particular, the number of Gwinnett County project administration staff was considerably lower, indicating that this may be an area that requires further investigation, especially given the aggressive development strategy recommended by this Plan. Furthermore, the County must also address staffing levels for every facility added to the inventory and every additional acre of parkland acquired. The trends research and consultation with staff and the public indicates that additional staff will be required over the next few years in the areas of maintenance, community development, and programming for seniors and youth at-risk.

In keeping with the ever-increasing role the County plays in the provision of parks and recreation facilities and services, there will be a need to increase staffing levels or contractual services. Every facility built and every acre of land acquired has a staffing implication. As noted earlier, Gwinnett County has one of the lower ratios of staff per capita compared to other similar communities. In many cases, Gwinnett's parkland and facility inventories were also deficient compared to the benchmarking communities, however, staff ratios need to be reconciled in order to correspond to the County's existing facility and land base.

It is, therefore, recommended that the County consider increasing staffing levels or contractual services in the areas of project administration, community development, programming for seniors and youth at-risk, and maintenance (where warranted). The County must also identify staffing requirements associated with new parks and facilities and budget accordingly.

7.2 GWINNETT COUNTY'S ROLE IN RECREATION SERVICE DELIVERY

Within Gwinnett County the municipalities of Suwanee, Loganville, Buford, Sugar Hill, Duluth, Grayson, Snellville, Auburn, Berkley Lake, Norcross, and Lilburn have city-owned recreational facilities and parkland. Some of the cities have small recreation departments that oversee the operation of these facilities and Suwanee has just completed its own Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment. The County provides parks and recreation planning staff on occasion to assist these smaller departments and joint projects have been undertaken in the past.

The public has confirmed the importance of the County's role in the provision of recreational services. The County has made major strides in improving the provision of parkland, recreational facilities and the supply of recreational services to its residents since it came into being in 1971. The County has also done an excellent job in communicating with the residents to determine overall priorities and specific park development details. As the County grows and continues to change in its composition, even greater efforts may be needed to make the system accessible and responsive to the needs of all of the residents.

Gwinnett County will continue to carry the responsibility for ensuring that the leisure needs of Gwinnett residents are being addressed. For example, there are some direct delivery programs (e.g., aquatics) that will continue to be a County responsibility. The Master Plan, however, recommends that the County continue to utilize athletic associations for the delivery of sports-oriented recreational services. Over the longer-term, a greater role in service delivery may be required of community groups, the not-for-profit and voluntary sector, other public providers, and the private sector. In order to maintain this goal, a re-allocation of existing County resources may be required to help empower community-based organizations through community development and to improve customer service.

Ultimately, the responsibility for ensuring that recreational needs are being met rests with the County. The County will manage the leisure system through coordination, facilitation, support, and direct programming in areas where adequate community capacity does not exist and where the County is identified as being the most appropriate provider (e.g., aquatics, trails, ball diamonds, etc.). The County will continue to be involved in revenue generating program areas, where appropriate, as a means of offsetting non-revenue producing services.

In the strengths-based delivery system that is proposed by this Master Plan, County resources and tax dollars will be focussed on those functions that the County does best. Moving to a strengths-based delivery system does not mean that there will be a reduction in the current per capita level of public investment in the leisure system. A reallocation of County staff and resources, however, may be required to strengthen the support to the voluntary sector so that they can move to a delivery system that is more community-based. It is believed that most of the Plan's recommendations can be implemented through a realignment of existing staff responsibilities. For example, this may mean that fewer resources will be available for direct programming and facility management, while more will be allocated to facilitation and customer service.

It is recommended that the County continue to foster its working relationship with local government recreation departments, boards of education and community schools, and athletic associations to ensure non-duplication of services and the most appropriate mix of facilities to meet the needs of all socio-demographic groups in the County.

It is recommended that the County continue to foster community development and customer service initiatives in order to increase partnership opportunities, to enhance the strength-based delivery system, and to modify direct programming in response to community needs.

Out of the extensive consultation process that has been a building block of this Master Plan has come the identification of the following areas where new responses and initiatives may be needed from Gwinnett County:

- In order to continue to move to a system whereby the community has a stronger role to play in the delivery of services, the County may need to exert more efforts with regard to community development in more densely populated areas and areas with higher concentrations of ethnic mix.
- There may be a need for greater strategic linkages between other County departments, agencies (State and Federal), cities, utility companies, and community providers to increase the effectiveness of every dollar spent.
- The responsibility for sport tourism initiatives within the County should be clarified. The primary responsibility of the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Division is to provide facilities and services for recreational sports. Gwinnett County Convention and Visitors Bureau, through its Sports Commission, should undertake a marketing analysis (with the assistance of the County) regarding the benefits of sports tourism to the area.
- There continues to be a need to identify core services as a basis to guide the County's future investment in recreation and leisure services.
- The principle of cost recovery is a desirable goal for the County, however, certain recreation facilities and activities can not be treated as cost recovery items. For example, neighborhood parks and trails and programs for children, teenagers, and at-risk individuals should continue to be subsidized. There is also a need to identify the services that require higher levels of financial support, such as youth and at-risk groups. User fees should continue to be an integral component in the financing of recreational services for those capable of paying.

7.3 STRENGTHS-BASED DELIVERY SYSTEM: THE COUNTY'S ROLE

Gwinnett County and its partners in recreation will deliver recreational services in the County. Who does what will be based on the abilities of each partner, including the County, to deliver the service in an effective, efficient, and affordable manner.

While enhanced roles are seen for community partners, Gwinnett County will have three main roles in this strengths-based delivery system:

- Manager and coordinator, overseeing the entire leisure system.
- Delivering the services it does best (e.g., planning, developing, and managing parks and open spaces; recreation programming such as aquatics providing an adequate complement of community recreation facilities, etc.).
- Filling in the gaps (e.g., the County will assume responsibility for delivering services if no suitable community partner exists to deliver the service).

7.4 DEFINING GWINNETT COUNTY'S CORE SERVICES

In defining its role in a strength-based delivery system, the County shall be responsible for providing the following core services:

- **the provision of services and programs where the County is the agency that is the best positioned to deliver them; priority shall generally be assigned to those programs and services serving the greatest number of residents;**
- **the supply and maintenance of appropriate buildings and structures capable of serving County residents;**
- **the supply and maintenance of appropriate areas of open space/parkland for passive and active pursuits; and**
- **the provision of staff to co-ordinate and program core services, including planning, research, facility allocation, customer service, community development functions, etc.**

In addition, the County may become involved:

- **when, for reasons of legislation or public safety, the services are best provided by the County;**
- **when the program is seen as a priority by the public and operation by an alternative provider will not be acceptable to the public; or**
- **when revenue-generating opportunities are significant to the overall operation of the Department.**

Gwinnett County will continue to have a fundamental role to play in the provision of recreational services, however, within the broad scope of recreation, it is clear that the County cannot play a pivotal role in all areas and maintain the overall goal of fiscal responsibility, which is a caveat of all civic actions.

7.5 AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER ENTITIES

The Parks and Recreation Division has numerous agreements with other providers and users involving the operation and usage of recreation facilities within the County. These agreements allow the Department to meet many of the community's needs that they would not otherwise be able to meet on their own.

The County is involved in a number of land and facility leases, both as the lessee and the lessor. For example, the County currently leases Lillian Webb Field and Cemetery Field from the City of Norcross, part of Rhodes Jordan Park from the City of Lawrenceville. The County has an agreement with a private company for the operation of Vines Botanical Garden and with an appointed public authority for the operation of Collins Hill Golf Course. The County also leases out remnant parcels that are not suitable or required for parkland, such as the Vulcan Site.

Most importantly, the County has an agreement with the Board of Education for the use of community schools and the provision of continuing education programming. Under this agreement, the Parks and Recreation Division utilizes most elementary and middle school gyms and fields for its Gwinnett L.I.F.E. programming. Furthermore, as part of the existing agreement, the County funds approximately 60% of directors' salaries for 13 community schools. While the arrangement appears to be working, a longer term agreement is required in order to ensure continued community access to school facilities after hours.

The Gwinnett Parks Foundation is a charitable organization established to support Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation. The following is their mission statement:

The Gwinnett Parks Foundation is a 501c(3) organization whose mission is to assist the needs, whether volunteer labor or monetary, of the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation. The foundation was organized in 2001 to improve the quality of life for all its citizens by working in cooperation with Gwinnett County parks and Recreation, private citizens, businesses, foundations and the Gwinnett County government.

Specifically, the Foundation enhances the County's park system through the acceptance of tax deductible donations and the organization of fundraising events, corporate challenge, commemorative programs, and the "Adopt-a-Park" program that allows community organizations to beautify their favorite park.

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation has informal links with a number of greenspace conservation agencies, including the Trust for Public Land, Gwinnett Open Land Trust, and the Chattowah Open Land Trust. In order to increase the amount of protected open space in the County, it is essential that the County continue to expand its connections with these groups through information-sharing and, in certain cases, land acquisition.

**7.6 HOW
SERVICES
ARE
DELIVERED
IN THE
FUTURE**

Gwinnett County Parks & Recreation and the Gwinnett County Park Police have organized a joint venture called "Neighborhood Park Watch". The program brings volunteers, Parks & Recreation staff and park police together in an effort to improve safety within specific parks. Volunteers are trained to recognize and report potential concerns in the parks and their observations help the County keep the parks clean and safe for the community. Currently, five parks are participating in the Neighborhood Park Watch program, including Lucky Shoals Park, Yellow River Park, Jones Bridge Park, George Pierce Park and Tribble Mill Park.

Last but not least, it bears noting that the Parks and Recreation Division is overseen by the County's Recreation Authority. The Recreation Authority is a nine-member advisory board comprised of volunteers appointed by the Board of Commissioners. With staff, the Recreation Authority helps ensure that the Parks & Recreation mission is being fulfilled.

The Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Community Services should continue to analyze recreation needs on a "planning area" system basis in order to manage population to service levels; this Master Plan utilizes five recreation planning areas in order to analyze area-specific and County-wide needs.

In an effort to enhance customer service and capitalize on existing synergies, the Department of Community Services shall play a lead role in enhancing communication and coordination among the civic partners involved in the delivery of recreation.

The Department of Community Services shall promote and advocate the importance and values of recreation to residents and its partners in recreation and will assume a leadership role for the support and coordination of recreation services in Gwinnett County. The Department of Community Services will coordinate opportunities and be the point of contact with its identified service partners.

The Department of Community Services shall identify its partners in recreation and bring them together on a regular basis (e.g., annually) to share direction, lend support through community development initiatives, promotion, grant assistance, service partnerships, funding, etc.

The County shall act as an "information broker" and shall share its knowledge and expertise with the community to aid in capacity building and the identification of necessary and redundant services. In order to accomplish this, the County shall ensure that its information resources are accurate, relevant, and accessible. Information shall also be provided to the County's partners in recreation, as required, and technology shall be used to provide broader access to this information. The information about County parks and facilities as well as City and private facilities could be

consolidated on the County's web site and a review undertaken periodically to ensure the appropriate links exist to relevant related sites.

Some retooling of the way that the Department of Community Services delivers its recreational services is required in order to better serve this rapidly growing County. The current three-district approach should be revised to better reflect community boundaries and to provide for greater community involvement and accountability. It is recommended that five (5) areas be created solely for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating the delivery and provision of services and not for the purpose of maintenance crews.

7.7 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Community Services should clearly define its responsibilities towards volunteers, including the definition of roles and responsibilities and parameters for their involvement in the delivery of County services. As a general principle, the County will support volunteers by offering training in organizational development.

The emphasis in this Master Plan is on an asset-based approach to community development. **“Community development” in simple terms means helping or enabling communities to help themselves. In the context of this Master Plan, it is a process whereby neighborhood, youth, seniors and volunteers in general will become more involved in deciding what should be provided and will play a more significant and direct role in service provision.** This means identifying and mobilizing community assets in each of the five Recreation Planning Areas so that the County's partners in recreation can play a more hands-on role in providing locally-based leisure activities that meet the unique needs of that community.

Gwinnett County, primarily through the efforts of the recreational service division of the Community Services Department, currently supports community development in the following ways:

- Providing staff resources to community development initiatives;
- Bringing partners together to develop solutions to community problems and issues (e.g., youth vandalism);
- Providing access to the County administration for local community associations to address local concerns;
- Volunteer training (e.g., coaching certification); and
- Promotion of special events.

Another area that falls under the realm of community development is volunteer services. Volunteers are the backbone of the recreation delivery system. For example, volunteers deliver all the minor sports programs in Gwinnett. As the number of volunteers declines, as has been the general trend in recent years, more resources will be needed for volunteer training and recruitment. One of the emerging issues is the need for liability insurance for volunteers acting in the public interest.

There is widespread support for making demographic analysis the fundamental basis for determining program and facility needs. This generally means that greater support will be provided to those activities that serve the largest population. However, there is also recognition that emerging sports and activities may not have the volunteer base or organizational capacity to build their organizations such that their participation numbers will grow to the level where they may be eligible for more support from the County. Activities such as cross country running and extreme sports may fall within this category. For low-capacity organizations in particular, more assistance is required in areas such as filling out grant applications, community outreach, problem solving, networking and mentoring.

7.8 CUSTOMER SERVICE

It is recommended that the County continue to monitor, survey and seek public opinion regarding the delivery of recreational services to the residents of Gwinnett. The County should also seek greater cooperation with other departments to increase the recreational opportunities to its residents through coordinated efforts of the County expenditures.

The County will need to continue to conduct surveys on a periodic basis of the opinions regarding parks and recreation and the delivery of services by the County. The County should also monitor the number of persons by age involved in various recreational pursuits in order to more accurately reflect trends and changing demands on the department's resources.

The County should also continue to produce its leisure guide Gwinnett L.I.F.E. in cooperation with the Boards of Education and continue to distribute it to households throughout the county. Consideration could be given to including advertisement from related recreational groups and private operators. Consideration could also be given to putting the information on line.

The County also needs to improve communication across department lines (e.g., with the Departments of Public Utilities, Planning and Development, Transportation, etc.) in order to provide a single window access to services. This is a goal not just for recreation services, but for the entire civic administration. The teams will have representation from each department and may be an appropriate mechanism to deal with some issues facing recreation services.

7.9 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

It is recommended that the County maintain databases for use in performance measurement (e.g., customer profiles, participant registrants, exit surveys, demographic profiles and cost of service). Where applicable to parks and recreation, the County shall also apply nationally accepted benchmarking standards, performance measures, and best practices.

“Performance measurement” refers to the tools that the County will use to measure outcomes resulting from its investment in recreational services. Generally, these tools are measures of efficiency, effectiveness and customer satisfaction.

Sometimes recreation professionals have difficulty in visualizing the logical progression between spending resources (inputs such as budget and human resources) to achieve outcomes such as a healthier community. A document prepared for a parks and recreation performance measurement think-tank offers a useful example.

Like many communities, Gwinnett is committed to developing and maintaining an integrated trail system. But how does this system lead to outcomes that offer community benefits and contribute to the County’s vision for the future? The progression of sequential thinking outlined in the following table helps to illustrate the series of events leading from planned actions to desired outcomes, using trails as an example (see Table 7-4).

Table 7-4: Performance Measurement - Inputs to Ultimate Outcomes

Inputs Investments)	Tactics (Initiatives)	Outputs (Tangible Results)	Short-term Outcomes	Mid-term Outcomes	Ultimate Outcomes
Budget Staff	Trail-System Planning	Plans	Safe Hiking Route	People Bike More Often	Better Air Quality
	Construction	Meetings	Convenient Biking Routes	More People Use Trail System	Healthier Citizens
	Maintenance	Bike Paths	Safe Walking Paths	People Use Car less Often	Reduced Health Care Costs
		Signs	Public More Aware of Trail System	Reduced Auto Emissions	More Dollars Available to Support Other Community Services
		Grass Cut		Increased Exercise by Citizens	Better Quality of Life
		Weeds Controlled			
		Public Information Material			

Source: “Harnessing the Power of Performance Measurement”, Heather Daynard, PME Inc. 2002.

As illustrated in Table 7-4, basic yet tangible results (outputs) can be expected shortly following the implementation of tactics and activities. A quality assurance and maintenance program will immediately cause grass to be cut, signs to be posted, etc. Outputs can be easily counted and

attributed to staff members with the immediate control of the quality and frequency of the activities. Straightforward performance measures can be established, tracking mechanisms set and reporting schedules developed.

A little further along the measurement timeline, short-term outcomes such as safer biking routes and a higher level of public awareness are likely to occur. These outcomes can be directly attributed to the implementation of the activity and are therefore helpful in establishing future priorities. While somewhat less tangible than outputs, creative measurement systems and tracking protocols can help to quantify short-term outcomes.

Advancing along the continuum, mid-term outcomes are possible. It is noteworthy, that due to the time lapse between activity and results, these outcomes may be less obviously connected to the tactic or action and are usually more difficult to measure. Measurement systems can either be developed locally or the municipality may wish to borrow for pre-established systems from other organizations.

The final outcome can be best described as the ultimate community benefit(s) derived by the department's initiative. The complexity and nature of these benefits are not normally associated with a single activity, but rather a number of complementary initiatives targeting a common vision. For this reason, it is advisable that the performance management system spans most/all departments as community benefits are often the result of a combination of strategies arising throughout the organization.

As the time between actions and results becomes greater, the need for more sophisticated performance measurement grows. To illustrate this point - and continuing with the trails example drawn from the Harnessing the Power of Performance Management document - Table 7-5 provides potential performance measurements connected to output and outcome results of different types.

Table 7-5: Potential Performance Measurements for Trails

Outputs	Measures
Plans, Meetings, Bike Paths, Signs, Grass Cut, Weeds Controlled, Public Information	Total Miles Bike Paths per Capita Total Miles Bike Paths per Square Acre of Area Average Maintenance Cost per mile of New Bike Paths
Outcomes	Measures
Safer Bike Routes More Convenient Bike Routes People Bike More, Use Car less Reduced Auto Emissions Increased Exercise by Citizens Better Air Quality Reduced Health Care Costs More Dollars Available to Support Community Services Better Quality of Life	Number of Bike Accidents per Capita Number of Bike Accidents per Square Acre of Area % of Population Using Bike Paths for Leisure % of Commuters Biking to Work % of Main Commuter Corridors Served by Bike Paths Parts per Million of Air Pollutants from Auto Exhaust Number of Citizens Considered Active/inactive Incidence of Asthma in Citizens Annual Number of Doctor Visits per Capita for Respiratory Ailments Annual Number of Hospital Days per Capita for Respiratory Ailments Average Number of Citizens Active Enough to Realize Optimum Health Benefits Average Levels of Obesity

Source: "Harnessing the Power of Performance Measurement", Heather Daynard, PME Inc. 2002.

Adopting an "outcomes focussed" performance management system would help to link service delivery, program development and other department functions with the municipal vision and desired community benefits. Understandably, as the department moves towards this system, there will undoubtedly be certain existing services and programs that are not obvious contributors to the desired outcomes. For example, to achieve optimum community health benefits, a program should be accessible, maintain the long-term interests of participants, attract a broad number of citizens and contain sufficient physical activity levels (intensity and frequency) to provide health benefits. How then, would an existing program that captures a narrow target audience and that is somewhat restrictive - either by price or policy - fit into the outcomes approach? Several communities have grappled with this question when setting priorities for the construction of new arenas versus more versatile and multi-purpose facility such as gymnasiums.

There is no single answer to this quandary, however, a locally specific, well-crafted and creatively orchestrated performance management system focussing on outcomes will provide sufficient data and ongoing feedback to help decision makers place the highest priority on results oriented activities.

7.10 ACCESS AND EQUITY

It is recommended that the Department of Community Services work with its partners in recreation to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the recreational system.

It is recommended that all organizations receiving funding from the County or using county facilities to deliver recreational services be committed to the County's policies on accessibility.

In planning new facilities, it is recommended that geographic accessibility be a basic requirement (e.g., physically locating facilities so that the largest number of persons can reach the facility and ensuring that public transit is available).

It is recommended that the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation consider developing bus routes to major parks and recreation facilities in order to serve the more densely populated areas of the County on weekends (e.g., Recreation Planning Areas A, B, and C).

The Master Plan reaffirms these policies but in addition to the above, adds to the equation the guiding principle of distribution – that is striving for an accessible and equitable distribution of recreational services throughout the County.

Income is a significant barrier to recreational participation. As a basic premise of this Plan, no resident will be denied access to the recreational system due to a lack of financial resources. The County will, therefore, continue to offer subsidies.

While the County has long had a commitment to inclusive programming for persons with disabilities, due to a significant aging of the communities demographic composition, an increase in the numbers of persons who will face challenges in accessing the recreational system is anticipated.

7.11 SPECIAL EVENTS, SPORT TOURISM AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

When pursuing major sporting, cultural or special events, it is recommended that the County continue to consider the needs of local residents and the facility requirements identified in this Plan as the County's primary responsibility. Although it is recognized that special events and tournaments often provide economic benefits to local recreation organizations and the County as a whole, any new facilities that may be required should meet the recreational activity needs of local residents first and foremost.

Local residents should not be displaced by non-local events, be they professional sporting events or amateur events. When a major event will impact directly on a user group or on an adjacent community, every effort should be made to balance the local interest with the broader corporate goal of bringing revenue to the County. The Gwinnett County Convention

and Visitors Bureau's Sports Commission is often one of the lead agencies involved in bringing such events into the County. The Parks and Recreation Division, prior to designing and/or building major facilities, should consult with the Sports Commission on matters relating to sport tourism.

7.12 PARTNERS IN RECREATION

It is recommended that the County's Parks and Recreation Division recognize the following organizations as its major partners in recreation, including (but not limited to) athletic associations, sports council, Boards of Education, County Library system, Health and Human Services Department, Gwinnett County Convention and Visitors Bureau, local governments, YMCA, Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Club, Cultural Centers, and key community-based leisure organizations. These agencies and groups shall be actively engaged in the planning and development of new and redeveloped facilities.

Overall, there is a strong sentiment that the County should be involved in the recreation delivery system. According to the household survey, the most frequented places for recreation and leisure activities in Gwinnett are managed by the County, reinforcing the importance of the County's involvement as a facility provider. The identified "major partners" are public and quasi-public organizations which the County recognizes as partners who offer potential partnership opportunities either in the provision of land for development, joint use of new facilities or the use of existing facilities.

7.13 SERVICE & FACILITY PARTNERSHIPS

It is recommended that, where appropriate, the County consider entering into partnerships with public, not-for-profit, and/or private organizations in developing, financing, operating, and/or maintaining recreation facilities or services in an effort to better serve the residents through improving cost efficiency, customer service, and accessibility.

Over the past decade, recreation departments have experienced unprecedented change in the delivery of services and the management of leisure facilities. Pressures caused by the influences of technology, shifts in participation trends, and calls for increased operating efficiencies have caused many departments to search for new and creative ways of doing business. Moreover, the need to adopt more financially prudent methods of leisure service delivery has caused many communities to examine new forms of alliances, agreements, and partnerships.

Recreation and parks services have traditionally been provided using a variety of alternative delivery approaches. Joint ventures and partnerships between governments and community groups have a long history and the contracting out of certain maintenance functions is relatively commonplace. Furthermore, joint use agreements with boards of education have been instituted with varying degrees of success for many years. The

difference now seems to be an increased focus on financial benefits and the emergence of new potential service providers from the private sector.

As governments face the challenge of providing quality leisure programs and services at the right cost, new types of alternative service delivery methods and arrangements with outside interests have become increasingly attractive. These arrangements are usually designed to share the costs, risks, and benefits of particular initiatives while remaining sensitive to the program requirements of the selected target audience. As mentioned earlier, many of these collaborative arrangements already exist. However, there appears to be mounting enthusiasm at both staff and political levels to examine non-traditional and new collaborative possibilities.

Partnerships, collaboration, and alternate service delivery models will continue as significant considerations. Given the significant evolution of partnership concepts and the emergence of new types of arrangements between governments and customary, as well as non-traditional partners, it may be useful to re-examine elements of the Gwinnett's service delivery options review framework to ensure that it is applicable to a wide range of alternatives and circumstances that might be presented to the County for consideration.

In the broadest sense, a **public-private partnership** is any significant relationship between a public sector entity and private sector enterprises, for which providing a product or service is the primary objective.

A **public-public partnership** involves any collaboration between public-sector organizations or between the public sector and not-for-profit organizations. These arrangements may involve the development of facilities, products or the delivery, implementation and monitoring of services. In the sphere of recreation and leisure services, public-public partnerships may include various joint-use agreements pertaining to the use of recreation facilities. Development projects that have involved joint financing by different levels of government can also be classified as partnerships. Similarly, the development and delivery of certain public services to the community by not-for-profit groups (including recreation services and programs) is also an emerging form of partnership with the public sector.

Historically, various partnerships between the public and voluntary sectors have been more prevalent than contractual collaboration between the public and private sectors. The growth of public-private partnerships can be viewed as a distinct alternative to the historical role of the public and institutional sectors in building, owning and operating community facilities.

7.13.1 Reasons for Partnering

The rationale for engaging in public/public or public/private partnerships is, in theory, most clearly rooted in the need to achieve resource efficiency. If properly executed, they allow for public services and facilities to be provided in a more efficient and cost effective manner, using the qualities

and strengths of each partner. The role of the County in such partnerships must, however, reflect the need for transparency of operations and accountability to the community. Such precepts may require specific business and contractual arrangements to be put in place which enable the review of performance of the partnership and which allow for penalty or reward for failing to meet, or exceeding, revenue targets or service standards.

Table 7-6 contains a sampling of reasons for considering a public/private approach to infrastructure problem solving.

Table 7-6: Reasons for Considering a Public-Private Partnership

REASON	DESCRIPTION
Construction Cost Savings	Combining design and construction components under one private partner can result in significant cost savings through a "phased in" construction schedule, faster procurement, and a reduction in the risk of cost and time overrun.
Operational Savings	In some cases, private sector service providers are able to reduce operating costs through the operation of multiple facilities, the sharing of specialized labor, bulk supplies purchasing, the use of centralized administrative staff, and more flexible compensation arrangements. These savings are often enhanced when the private partner is involved at the infrastructure design stage.
Faster Implementation	By dealing with fewer service providers, combining the design and construction, reducing procurement time, and accelerating capital financing, required infrastructure may be introduced faster and less expensively.
Risk Sharing	Under traditional procurement practices, governments assume all risk associated with serviced delivery. Privatization allows the transfer of some risk such as that associated with cost overruns market fluctuations, ongoing maintenance, environmental regulatory compensation, etc.
Increased Financing Options	The wide range of financing options (both debt and equity markets) and the flexibility available to the private sector (i.e. the ability to periodically refinance debt of use financial innovation) may, in some instances, reduce the cost of project capital.
Enhanced Public Management	In allowing a greater role for the private sector in the provision of municipal infrastructure, local government managers are able to spend more time planning and monitoring results as opposed to managing the resources required to provide public services.
Increased Public Sector Revenues	Privatization may provide municipalities with new sources of revenue in the form of property taxes, lease or franchise payments, or profit sharing agreements.
Realizing the Value of Under-utilized Assets	Creative development projects combined with intensified marketing initiatives by private sector providers may succeed in increasing the use of a particular asset to reflect potential value.
Enhanced Facility Maintenance	Local Governments are often reluctant or unable to dedicate appropriate funds for ongoing maintenance of facilities despite the long-term savings it may generate. Depending upon the structure of the partnership, private partners are motivated to protect the value of their assets and invest in equipment and machinery that leads to increased efficiency.
True Costing and True Value	The price of services, in the form of user charges or the general tax rate, seldom reflects the full cost of the service (i.e. depreciation, risk capture, overhead, etc.) Among its other benefits, the PPP process forces municipalities to determine the real cost of service delivery.
Arms Length Independence	Privatization often facilitates the efficient and needs based delivery of services by removing political influences from day to day operations.

Source: Canada/Nova Scotia Corporation Agreement to Promote Private Sector Participation in Municipal Infrastructure

**7.14 PRICING
STRATEGY**

It is recommended that the County maintain its user fee policy of protecting the interests of specific groups for whom subsidized services are essential. The County should continue to ensure access for people with disabilities and for other groups with financial difficulties.

It is recommended that the County develop a reporting process whereby operating costs and revenues can be tracked by type of activity to enable ongoing monitoring of the relationship between costs and revenues on an annual basis.

It is recommended that the increase in total operating costs for the provision of new recreation programs, services and facilities be minimized through an increase in user fees to the extent that such an increase in fees is reasonable and appropriate. Notwithstanding, the County shall recognize the legitimate need to maintain an operating subsidy for certain activities, types of facilities, and specified communities in need within the County.

Just as stormwater management, libraries and streetlights are essential services and not user fee controlled, certain recreation activities and facilities are not capable of being treated as cost recovery items. For example, full cost recovery is not possible or recommended for items such as neighborhood parks, trails, play equipment, spray pads, aquatic programs, use of environmental areas, etc. Furthermore, full cost recovery should not be expected for programs for children, teenagers, and at-risk individuals. Often, the true cost of an essential service would make a cost recovery approach prohibitive.

**7.15 PROGRAM-
MING
INVENTORY
& ANALYSIS**

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation currently offers a wide range of activities for residents. The various program topics (by age group) that are available to Gwinnett residents through the County's park system and programming division are listed in Table 7-7.

Table 7-7: Leisure Activities for Various Age Groups

Pre-School (0-4)	Children (5-9)	Teens (10-19)	Adults (20-54)
waterplay swimming climbing (play equipment) arts, crafts & music developmental programs	swimming walking cycling waterplay in-line skating organized sports: (soccer, baseball, basketball, football, cheerleading) skateboarding day camps music & dance gymnastics	swimming walking cycling skateboarding in-line skating organized sports: (soccer, baseball, basketball, badminton, volleyball, roller hockey, football, cheerleading, lacrosse) day camps drop-in programs leadership training/social recreation music & dance adventure (extreme sports; e.g., rock-climbing)	walking & jogging aerobics & fitness golf gardening organized sports: (softball, football) continuing education/self improvement cultural programs nature appreciation
Seniors (55+)	Families	People with Disabilities	Special Populations
walking swimming golf softball wellness activities gardening nature appreciation cultural programs arts, crafts, games, classes, clubs tours & trips continuing education basketball	swimming special events walking, hiking, cycling cultural activities	varies by age & disability swimming inclusive programs specialized programs	varies by type & level of need but may include low-cost programs, social services, ethnic services, organized sports, etc.

In terms of geographic distribution, scale and scope, the County's extensive offerings are complemented very well by the recreational opportunities provided by local athletic associations, community schools, community groups, not-for-profit agencies, and private enterprise. Based on the 2002 Needs Assessment Survey, the benchmarking exercise, and national trends, it would appear that Gwinnett County has an excellent understanding of the programmatic needs of its citizenry and is currently offering an acceptable level of service in this regard. Within the more ethnically diverse neighborhoods, however, community development efforts may need to be enhanced in order to identify and address local preferences and program needs.

**7.16 MONITORING
& UPDATING
THE MASTER
PLAN**

This Master Plan is intended to guide decision-making related to parks and recreation services in the County for the next 5 to 10 years. With any document that utilizes a long-term planning horizon, the further into the future that projections are made, the more difficult it becomes to ensure accuracy. This is particularly true given Gwinnett's rapid pace of growth and increasing ethnic diversity. As a result, there is a need for the recommendations contained in this Master Plan to be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that the Plan remains reflective of current realities and responsive to the changing needs of the community.

It is recommended that the County implement a system for the regular monitoring of the Master Plan.

Trends change and often unforeseen factors emerge which create unanticipated increases or decreases in participation and which, in turn, may impact substantially upon facility provision. Continued monitoring of the participation levels (as well as overall population figures) in Gwinnett's major recreational activities is necessary to identify significant changes and to relate the change to the corresponding impact on the facility and park provision recommendations. As a result, the direction of the Plan may need refocusing from time to time.

The following steps may be used to conduct an annual review of the Master Plan early on in the budgeting process.

1. Review of the past year (Master Plan recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success/failure of new and existing recreation initiatives, changes in participation levels, issues arising from the public and community groups, etc.).
2. Issues impacting the coming year (anticipated financial and operational constraints, political pressures, etc.).
3. Review of Master Plan for direction regarding recommendation.
4. Staff identification of Master Plan recommendations to be implemented over the next year. Due to implications identified during steps #1 and #2, the output of this task may result in the identification of projects or timing that do not correspond with the recommendations of the Master Plan.
5. Prioritization of short-term projects and determination of which projects should be implemented in the coming year based upon criteria established by staff (e.g., financial limitations, community input, partnership/funding potential, etc.).
6. Preparation of report by Project Administration staff on items 1 through 5 above. If staff recommendations and priorities differ significantly from those recommended in the Master Plan, the report should detail the reasons for the new direction. If staff recommendations support those established in the Master Plan, the

report should explain how their recommendations conform to the direction of the Plan.

7. Communication to staff, the Recreation Authority, and Board of Commissioners regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects, and projects to be implemented in the coming year.
8. Budget revisions as necessary.

Unanticipated circumstances may dictate the need to reassess the priorities and recommendations of the Master Plan. Through the monitoring of participation levels and qualitative considerations, adjustment of resource allocations, and implementation of shifts in political pressures and direction, it is possible that certain components of the Master Plan will require updating.

It is important to remember that one of the primary objectives of this Plan was to propose a refined capital program for the period following the current SPLOST program. In the event that the SPLOST program is extended past March 31, 2005, then it is anticipated that a large number of the capital recommendations of this Plan could be implemented, depending on the size of the parks and recreation allocation. Extension of the SPLOST could provide significant capital resources for parks and recreation through the year 2009. It would, therefore, be prudent to begin re-examining the leisure needs of Gwinnett residents for the period following the 2005 SPLOST. Updating the Master Plan requires a commitment from all staff involved in the delivery of leisure services, including staff, the Recreation Authority, the Board of Commissioners, and the public.

In 2008, the County shall initiate a process to reconfirm the direction, priorities and accomplishments of the Master Plan. This review is not intended to be a comprehensive update, but rather a scoped evaluation of the issues of the day and should be sufficient to provide adequate direction for the period of 2009 to 2013.

In 2012, the County shall undertake a complete review and update of the Master Plan.

SECTION 8: Recommendations

This section provides a summary of the Plan's recommendations relating to the County's park system concepts, land acquisition, facility development, programming, and the recreation service delivery system. These recommendations have been described in detail throughout this report and are a culmination of the input received through a variety of sources including the needs assessment survey, public meetings and questionnaires, the Citizen Steering Committee, the benchmarking survey, past plans and reports, the Consultants' extensive research and experience, and County staff expertise and local knowledge.

8.1 REVIEW OF INVENTORY/ ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation has made great strides in recent years in terms of both parkland acquisition and recreation facility development. Rapid population growth and the heightened expectations of park system users, however, create the need to build upon past accomplishments by continuing to expand the number and range of leisure facilities and services.

With an increasingly complex park system, it is no longer appropriate to merely say that each recreation service area require one community park. Ethnic diversity, an aging population, and the emergence of new recreation activities requires a new approach and greater flexibility in planning for the future. **In this light, this Master Plan has adopted a methodology that examines park and facility needs from two perspectives: supply and distribution.** Major categories of facility types – ranging from community centers to skate parks – were assessed using this two-pronged approach. Recommended provision standards were established to guide the provision analysis, while GIS mapping was created to provide direction for the distribution analysis.

Table 8-1 contains a summary of the inventory of major facilities within Gwinnett County, including those provided by the County, local cities, federal government, significant not-for-profit agencies, and private enterprise.

To provide a point of reference, a map illustrating the County park system has been inserted at the end of this section (see Map 8-1).

Table 8-1: Inventory of County, City, Federal and Private Parks and Facilities in Gwinnett County by RPA

	A	B	C	D	E	COUNTY
Population (2000 Census)	136,028	114,069	150,202	90,124	98,025	588,448
Acreage:	1,772	251	645	5,513	2,454	10,626
Indoor Facilities:						
Indoor Lane Pools	1	1	3	1	0	6
Indoor Leisure Pools	0	0	1	1	0	2
Community Centers*	3	0	0	2	1	6
Activity Buildings	3	2	0	2	1	8
Gymnasiums	15	0	3	4	1	23
Senior Centers	0	1	1	2	2	6
Outdoor Facilities:						
Baseball/ Softball Fields	32	12	20	33	31	128
Soccer Fields	20	16	8	8	6	58
Football Fields	4	2	2	4	4	16
Playground Areas	36	7	12	13	16	84
Outdoor Lane Pools	4	1	4	2	5	16
Outdoor Leisure Pools	1	1	1	1	1	5
Tennis Courts	54	18	30	30	38	170
Basketball Courts	7.5	3	5	3	2	20.5
Skate Parks	2	0	2	1	2	7

* not including facilities operated by not-for-profit agencies or private enterprise

Note: inventory does not include facilities in schools, residential complexes, private fitness clubs, and similarly restricted facilities



Section 8: Recommendations

Gwinnett County 2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Table 8-2 provides a "snapshot" of the current park and facility needs and priorities within each Recreation Planning Area (RPA). Applying inventory and population data within each RPA to the recommended provision standard for each facility type (see Table 6-7 on page 97), parkland and facilities that did not meet the standards were identified. Included in this analysis were County facilities, as well as recreation areas provided by local cities, the federal government, significant not-for-profit agencies, and private enterprise. RPAs B and C are clearly the most deficient in terms of overall park and recreation infrastructure, although it bears noting that all RPAs have additional park and/or facility requirements, especially considering anticipated levels of population growth.

Table 8-2: Application of Park and Recreation Facility Provision Standards by Planning Area



RPA	Meets Standard	Does Not Meet Standard
A	Active Parkland Community Centers Gymnasiums Playgrounds Skate Parks Outdoor Basketball Courts	Passive Parkland Indoor Leisure Pools Senior Recreation Centers
B	none	Active Parkland Open Space Indoor Leisure Pools Community & Senior Recreation Centers Skate Parks Gymnasiums Ball Diamonds Football Fields Playgrounds Tennis Courts
C	Indoor Leisure and Lane Pools Skate Parks	Active Parkland Open Space Community & Senior Recreation Centers Activity Buildings Ball Diamonds Soccer Fields Football Fields Playgrounds
D	Active Parkland Open Space Community Centers Ball Diamonds Football Fields	Passive Parkland Skate Parks
E	Passive Parkland Playgrounds	Indoor Leisure and Lane Pools Community Centers Activity Buildings Gymnasiums Soccer Fields Outdoor Basketball Courts Skate Parks

Table 8-2 provides a useful guide to establishing capital project priorities throughout the County and can be used as a point of departure for the rest of the analysis. With this Master Plan having a planning horizon of 5 to 10 years, coupled with the rapid growth of the County, **it is very important to understand that there will be a need for all types of facilities throughout the County in the coming years.**

Furthermore, this Master Plan is guided by a set of goals established by the Citizen Steering Committee. Two of the top three goals recommend that the County adopt a balanced approach to acquisition and development (both geographically and in terms of the range of facilities) and that the County strive to meet the needs of all age groups. **Clearly, equity in park and facility provision is a dominant theme of this Master Plan** – a theme that was echoed by the Steering Committee when they were asked to prioritize the recommended capital projects.

8.2 PARK SYSTEM CONCEPT RECOMMEND-- ATIONS

In Gwinnett County, decisions relating to the future planning, acquisition, development, and management of park resources are guided by a "concept" of the County's park system. This system concept establishes park classifications and defines various aspects of each park type. Through a classification framework, a consistent management approach can be created that improves equity and responsiveness to community needs. The current park system includes "Community Parks", "Passive Community Parks", "Open Space Parks" and "Special Purpose Parks".

8.2.1 New Classification - Special Purpose Neighborhood Park

Before reiterating the recommendations regarding the park system concept (which can be found in greater detail in Section 5.), it is important to examine the broader context of the situation. The Gwinnett County Department of Community Services is the primary provider of parks and recreation facilities in the unincorporated County and its cities. The County provides recreation services that are typically associated with urban communities rather than the passive open space preservation role that many county recreation departments play.

Although many park amenities provided by the County may also be provided at the local town or city level, there are a number of significant differences between the County parks system and city parks. Given these differences, tremendous population growth in Gwinnett County over the past thirty years has blurred the boundary lines between the County and its unincorporated cities and towns. No longer are there significant dissimilarities in population densities and land use patterns between cities and the County – patterns of development are determined more by interstate and road networks than they are by political boundaries. In fact, some of the more densely populated areas of Gwinnett are not found within the cities.

Yet, despite the very urban character of Gwinnett County, there are inequalities related to parkland provision as a result of the two-tier government structure. Most notably, city dwellers are served by both neighborhood-level parks that are generally in close proximity to their home and County parks. Those living outside of cities, however, do not typically have the luxury of having a smaller neighborhood-level park located nearby because the only provider in their area would be the County, which generally only provides large-scale multi-use parks. **With accessibility being one of the key elements of a successful park system, it is essential that the County's park classifications be modified to allow for the acquisition and development of smaller parks in under-served areas. This flexibility will allow for the County to provide recreation services to many of Gwinnett's more densely populated areas and ethnic communities that need them most.**

The Master Plan's public consultation program found that 39% of the population supported the need for more parks and recreation facilities in their area and that 50% of those surveyed indicated that they would use County parks more often if one was located closer to their home. While the existing park system concept has served Gwinnett County well, it is not necessarily applicable and responsive to every area in the County. **If the County is to meet the needs of residents living within under-served and densely populated areas, it must adjust its park classification system.**

Although the Passive Community Park category was created in 2000 to enable the acquisition of smaller parks in densely populated and under-served areas, its minimum land base requirement of 20 acres is too restrictive in that many of the parkland "gap" areas do not have parcels this large. Consideration must be given to acquiring smaller park parcels and even redeveloping vacant and underutilized commercial land uses as parks.

It is, therefore, recommended that a new classification of parkland be created, that being a "Special Purpose Neighborhood Park". "Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks" would provide an alternative form of parkland for the more densely populated and under-served areas. This park type would be a supplement to the standards already in place and applied to major nodes of development. Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks would generally be 5 to 20 acres in size and be designed in the vein of "special purpose" parks, which are developed on an as needed and opportunity-driven basis. This park type would be an active park with reduced parking standards, as it will cater to a geographic area with a denser population and a greater potential for "walk to" utilization and/or bussing opportunities. Generally, the denser the population, the greater is the demand for active recreational opportunities such as soccer, basketball and walking paths, therefore, these types of facilities (in small numbers and for unscheduled play only) should be considered for Special Purpose Neighborhood Parks. Such parks may be in the form of either commercial land acquisitions or the assembly of larger land holdings, but are not intended as Community Parks. The minimum Special Purpose

Neighborhood Park should be 5 acres and is intended to serve a population of approximately 5,000 people.

8.2.2 New Classification - Linear Park

In keeping with the need for access and flexibility within the County's park system, a greenway system is required to complement and link communities and public spaces. The County's Open Space and Greenway Master Plan identifies in great detail the benefits of acquiring and/or protecting greenway corridors; not only do greenway systems provide for recreational trails, but they also provide extensive social and environmental benefits. The number one priority for the community and the Citizen Steering Committee was the creation of linkages and connectivity between communities and public spaces. Considerable public demand was apparent in each of the public consultation initiatives undertaken for this Plan.

It is, therefore, recommended that a new classification of parkland be created, that being a "Linear Park". The adoption of the "Linear Park" classification is a key step toward the implementation of an integrated greenway system. A Linear Park is defined as a linear strip of land typically developed along waterways, utility easements, and roadways that provide corridors for trails and greenways, open space, and physical buffers. Linear Parks will be located outside of other public parks, but connect those parks and other points of interests, such as schools, residential neighborhoods and business districts. They will provide an emphasis on walking, jogging, and bicycling; usage for motorized transport and equestrian riding will be prohibited.

The level of development of Linear Parks can range from minimal to extensive and may include trailhead (parking and amenity) areas. If parking is provided then associated facilities including rest rooms, playground, and picnic or pavilion area should be included. Linear Parks may also include adjacent pockets of open space. The service area for such a park could range from several neighborhoods to County-wide.

Acquisition of parcels for Linear Parks should be coordinated with proposed Greenway locations in the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan. In addition opportunities may arise to acquire parcels that are not associated with the Greenway Plan that would still meet the requirements outlined for a Linear Park. Highest priority would be given to parcels that provide connection between existing parks, schools, public facilities and residential areas.

**8.3 LAND
ACQUISITION
RECOMMEND-
ATIONS**

The County currently owns and/or leases approximately 8,160 acres of parkland at 53 sites. Recreation Planning Area D, in large part due to the 1800-acre Harbins/Alcovy Park Site, contains nearly half of Gwinnett County's parkland. 63% of County-owned parkland is classified as "Open Space". Despite having significant acreage in Open Space parks, RPAs B and C do not have any such parks, while RPA A has only one (although there are numerous Federal open space parks located in the area). RPAs B and C also have the lowest per capita supply of active parkland (Community and Passive Community Parks). In terms of overall parkland, RPAs D and E are very well supplied.

Based on the recommended provision standards, the County as a whole has a current parkland deficit of 2,900 acres, approximately 900 acres of which is encouraged to be supplied from other levels of government (i.e., federal, state, local) or affiliated conservation agencies. Forecasted population growth and increasing ethnic diversity in Gwinnett leave the County with no choice but to continue to acquire and construct new parks and to complete construction of master planned facilities at existing parks. **It is recommended that Gwinnett County continue to support and work with other parkland providers in order to increase the overall supply and to ensure that parks are being acquired in the areas where they are most needed.**

A review of property records and aerial photography indicates that approximately 1,100 acres adjacent to existing parks may have potential for acquisition. RPAs with the largest potential for park expansion are D and E, where surpluses in Open Space Parks exist. Approximately 376 acres, however, may be available to expand existing parks in RPAs A, B, and C. **Given the need for additional parkland in all areas, and especially RPAs A, B, and C, we recommend that the County work to expand existing parks through the acquisition of adjacent parcels.**

Although expansion of existing parks will assist in addressing some of the under-supply in recreation planning areas A, B, and C, a significant deficit will remain. Unfortunately, it is not achievable for the County to acquire over 1,000 acres of parkland in each of RPAs A, B, and C. This amount of available land simply does not exist, nor would it be economically feasible to acquire already developed land in large quantities, remove existing structures and redevelop the sites as parkland. Nevertheless, current and projected development and intensification patterns indicate that the demand for parks and recreation facilities in these areas will only continue to worsen. Aggressive, immediate and continuous action is required to address this matter.

In terms of parkland acquisition and expansion, the County should place a high priority on RPAs A, B, and C. The "Special Purpose Neighborhood Park" classification was created specifically to address recreation facility needs in these planning areas, all three of which are relatively densely populated and have a very limited supply of land. **Available sites with**

parkland potential need to be identified, including sites containing under-utilized or vacant commercial structures. The acquisition and redevelopment of abandoned commercial sites presents an excellent opportunity for the County to not only provide parkland to under-served areas, but also to assist in revitalizing and improving the overall quality of life of such areas. The creation of a number of Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) in Gwinnett County offers an appropriate medium through which vacant commercial sites can be transformed into new park sites and integrated into broader revitalization efforts.

In short, the County is in a position where providing parkland in the areas most in need is a challenging and costly option, whereas parkland acquisition is a more feasible and likely option in areas with lesser needs. In order to provide an appropriate supply of parkland, a balanced approach to acquisition is required that is predicated largely on opportunity. Additional parkland should be acquired in all recreation planning areas, with priorities being placed on addressing deficiencies in under-served areas and expanding existing park sites.

This Plan recommends that the County strive to acquire an additional 300 acres for park purposes in each RPA over the next four years, for a total of 1500 acres. Although the acquisition of 1500 acres does not fully address future (or even current) deficiencies, it is felt that this requirement strikes an appropriate balance between demand, equity, and reality. **Acquisition in RPAs A, B, and C should contain a mixture of Community/Passive Community Parks and Open Space Parks (as well as Special Purpose Neighborhood Park in areas where Community/Passive Community Parks development is not possible), while acquisition in RPAs D and E should be predominantly limited to Community Parks.**

The second level of the parkland needs analysis involves an examination of the geographic "gap" areas that are not adequately served with parkland. The following nine gap areas were identified and have been prioritized based upon factors such as public input, size of gap, and parkland needs:

High Priority:

1. Lilburn North, Meadowcreek area (mostly in RPA B)
2. Lawrenceville West, Hwy 316 corridor (RPA C)
3. Snellville West, along Stone Mountain Hwy (RPA E)
4. Snellville East (RPA E)
5. Lawrenceville North, east of Buford Drive, both sides of I-85 (RPA D)

Lower Priority:

6. Norcross West, near Dekalb County line (RPA A)
7. Lawrenceville Southwest (RPAs D and E)
8. Dacula East, along County line (RPA D)
9. Braselton (RPA D)

When acquiring parkland, it is recommended that the County have regard to the above list of gap areas. Additional consideration should also be given to expanding existing parks and acquiring new ones in areas where significant population growth and intensification is expected to occur, such as along the I-85, I-985, and Georgia Highway 316 corridors into the northeast and eastern-most portions of the County. Furthermore, In an effort to ensure consistency with the County's Open Space and Greenway Master Plan (2002), all parkland (and greenway) acquisition should consider the goals and recommendations of that Plan.

With the goals and recommendations of the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan in mind – in addition to the goals of this Plan – the following are the recommendations related to the acquisition of parkland.

- **Acquire 300 acres in RPA A.** Focus on under-served areas and areas of growth, including, but not limited to, the area between Duluth and Suwanee, north of I-85, and the Norcross West area. The development of Community Parks, Passive Community Parks, and Open Space Parks is desired.
- **In RPA A, expand Jones Bridge Park and Shorty Howell Park** through acquisition of adjacent parcels (93 acres).
- **Acquire 300 acres in RPA B.** Focus on under-served areas and areas of growth, including, but not limited to, the Lilburn North/Meadowcreek area and south of I-85. The development of Community Parks, Passive Community Parks, and Open Space Parks is desired.
- **In RPA B, expand Mountain Park Aquatic Center/Activity Building and Mountain Park Park** through acquisition of adjacent parcels (85.8 acres).
- **Acquire 300 acres in RPA C.** Focus on under-served areas and areas of growth, including, but not limited to, the Lawrenceville West/Hwy 316 corridor area and south of I-85. The development of Community Parks, Passive Community Parks, and Open Space Parks is desired.
- **In RPA C, expand Alexander Park, Bethesda Park, Collins Hill Park, Spriggs Road Park Site and Sweet Water Park** through acquisition of adjacent parcels (197.2 acres).
- **Acquire 300 acres in RPA D.** Focus on under-served areas and areas of growth, including, but not limited to, the Lawrenceville North area, the Lawrenceville Southwest area, the Braselton area, the Dacula East area, and the I-85 and Hwy 316 corridors. The development of Community Parks and Passive Community Parks is desired.

- **In RPA D, expand Alcovy River Grist Mill, Harbins/Alcovy Park Site, Little Mulberry Park and Rabbit Hill Park through acquisition of adjacent parcels (377.1 acres).**
- **Acquire 300 acres in RPA E. Focus on under-served areas and areas of growth, including, but not limited to, the Snellville West area and the Snellville East area. The development of Community Parks and Passive Community Parks is desired.**
- **In RPA E, expand Bay Creek Park, Centerville Park Site, Tribble Mill Park, Yellow River Wetlands and the Yellow River Post Office Historic Site through acquisition of adjacent parcels (352 acres).**

8.4 GREENWAY DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The development of a greenway system in Gwinnett County is a key priority for this Plan. In fact, the number one goal of this Master Plan, as identified by the Citizen Steering Committee, is to “work toward achieving pedestrian and bicycle linkage or connectivity between parks and other points of interest such as schools, libraries, institutional land uses and commercial nodes”.

This 2004 Parks and Recreation Master Plan is fully supportive of, and consistent with, the findings of the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan. In order to advance the implementation of the Open Space and Greenway Master Plan, this Parks and Recreation Master Plan has developed a definition of a “Linear Park” to be added to the County’s park classification system. **Recommendations have been set made for the allocation of significant funds toward the establishment of a County-wide greenway system (up to a total of \$40 million depending on the amount of SPLOST funds available).** While each RPA has been allocated funds under this Plan for greenways, the appropriation of funds amongst the recreation planning areas and the timing of implementation will depend heavily upon the opportunities for acquisition and development.

8.5 FACILITY DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Requirements for significant recreation facilities within the County are well documented throughout this report, including Sections 6 and 8.1. In an effort to summarize these recommendations, and to present them in a format that is different from that used elsewhere in this report, the capital facility-related recommendations are listed on a park-by-park basis below. If a park is not listed, there are no recommended changes to it.

The facility development recommendations are listed below alphabetically by park and have not been placed in order of priority. The priority and capital cost of each recommendation is provided in Section 8.7.

Section 8: Recommendations

Gwinnett County 2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Alcovy River Gristmill (park master plan to be undertaken in 2004/05)

- Pedestrian trails and restroom
- Dam Restoration
- Mill restoration
- Parking
- Pavilion and Playground

Alexander Park Site (park master plan to be undertaken in 2004/05)

- Soccer complex, pedestrian system, trails and restroom building, pavilion and playground
- Maintenance building
- Tennis complex (to be determined by Park Master Plan)

Bay Creek Park

- Teen area (skate park, roller hockey, basketball courts, sand volleyball courts & restroom building), plaza, picnic pavilion/playground, restroom bldg., and parking and infrastructure
- Community Center, Gym, Outdoor Leisure Pool & Parking (longer-term project, future growth will substantiate need)
- East Picnic Pavilion/Playground, Parking, Restroom Bldg. & East Trails
- Soccer Fields - Land Dependent
- Tennis Area & Parking (longer-term project, future growth will substantiate need)

Bethesda Park

- Teen Skating & Basketball on unused Adult Softball Parking area
- Community center, gym, indoor walking track
- New Adult Softball Parking
- Paved trail connections from loops with small shelter and boardwalk connection plus paved links to Bethesda Church Rd

Bogan Park

- Dog Park
- Trail System Completion
- Lighting 7th ballfield

Centerville Park Site (park master plan to be undertaken in 2004/05)

- Trails, parking, pavilion, playground and restroom, contingency for other facilities TBD by the Park Master Plan

Collins Hill Aquatic Center

- Pavilion/Playground
- Outdoor Restrooms and changing area for outdoor pool

Collins Hill Park

- Replace two basketball courts
- Expanded Lake Side Playground
- Paved Lake Edge Promenade

Dacula Park

- Expand Dacula Activity Bldg. to Community Center with Senior Center (longer Term Project, Future Growth will substantiate)
- Outdoor Basketball Courts
- Four tennis courts
- Informal Picnic area with small shelter, restroom bldg., playground and volleyball courts.
- Gym & classroom addition to the Activity Building

DeShong Park Site (park master plan to be undertaken in 2004/05)

- Completion of trails
- Restroom, Pavilion and Playground, Contingency for other facilities (as per Park Master Plan)

Doc Moore Park Site (park master plan to be undertaken in 2004/05)

- Trails, parking (120 spaces), restroom (2), pavilion and playground
- Contingency for other facilities TBD by the Park Master Plan

Duncan Creek Park Site (park master plan to be undertaken in 2004/05)

- Recommend Soccer plus general children's and teens recreation opportunities (e.g., skate park, tennis courts, basketball, playground, etc.) (Phase II to be determined by Park Master Plan)

Environmental & Heritage Center

- Preliminary design indicates full build-out of the center will require additional funding

George Pierce Park

- Multi-Purpose & Greenway Trail Linkages/Loops
- Outdoor Basketball Courts; Gym Addition (planned)
- Senior Suite for Community Center
- Skate Park
- Install lighting on remaining soccer fields
- Land acquisition for expanded park entrance
- Playground & Restroom Bldg. at Eastern Pavilion
- Wetlands access boardwalk system
- Playgrounds for both Baseball and Soccer Complexes
- Tennis courts (4) with service building

Graves Park Site

- Skate Park
- Multipurpose and nature trails
- Group Pavilion + 40 parking spaces
- Pond edge improvements
- Splash Playground (splash park recommended at Graves Park Site or Lucky Shoals)
- Fencing along DeKalb Co. line
- Irrigation of open areas

Section 8: Recommendations

Gwinnett County 2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Harbins/Alcovy River Park Site (park master plan to be undertaken in 2004/05)

- Soccer fields, ball diamonds, and other Phase II elements (active and passive uses to be determined by Park Master Plan)

Harmony Grove Soccer Complex

- Soccer complex lighting

Holcomb Bridge Park Site

- Trail system completion with two foot bridges, two deck river overlooks, & signage

Jones Bridge Park

- Comprehensive Trail Loop & sidewalk system
- Park master plan
- Maintenance Compound
- Good Age Bldg. Renovation

Lenora Park

- Teen Area - Skate park, Roller hockey, Basketball Courts, Sand Volleyball Courts, Restroom Building & plaza
- Extended multi-purpose trail system plus 10' wide stabilized Cross Country Trail system & mulch trails
- Soccer Complex
- Community Center (add to gymnasium) (longer-term project, future growth will substantiate need)
- Maintenance Compound
- Tree Farm Pavilion/Playground zone with restroom bldg.
- Northwest corner Pavilion/Playground with restroom bldg. plus modification of end of ballfield concession bldg. into pavilion
- Tennis Courts (longer-term project, future growth will substantiate need)
- 7th baseball field

Little Mulberry Park

- Phase II Woodland Trails
- Large Group Pavilion with playground, restroom bldg. and trail connection spur
- Phase II Equestrian and Walking Trails
- ADA compliant Meadow Perimeter Multi-Purpose Trail
- Lake Siltation Removal (spread onsite)
- Lakeside Concession Rental Building with rental boats and restroom
- Phase II Lakeside Activity area (w/o the Concession Rental Building)
- Disc Golf Course
- Contingency for other facilities TBD

Lucky Shoals Park (park master plan to be undertaken in 2004/05)

- Community Center and/or Activity Building (dependent on land) with gymnasium
- Park Master Plan
- Redevelopment of a mixed sports complex including soccer, Basketball Courts & Splashground (as per Park Master Plan); splash park recommended at Lucky Shoals or Graves Park Site

McDaniel Farm Park

- Phase II multi-purpose and nature trail system with second bike/pedestrian bridge & interpretive signage
- Farm restoration including Farm House Residence restoration and furnishing for public tours
- Ecological Landscape restoration of depleted farm fields
- Second parking zone with group pavilion and restroom building
- 2 outdoor classrooms
- 3 rustic picnic shelters

Mountain Park Aquatic Center & Activity Building

- Pavilion/Playground

Mountain Park Park

- Group Pavilion with Playground & restroom bldg. (may require land acquisition)
- Soccer complex & teen facilities (skate park, basketball courts) (land dependent)
- Develop football field on acquired land

Palm Creek Park Site

- Park Master Plan
- Phase one development

Peachtree Ridge Park Site (park master plan to be undertaken in 2004/05)

- First phase development (as per Park Master Plan)

Pinckneyville Park & CC

- Playground/Shelter at Community Center

Rabbit Hill Park

- Teen area (skate park, roller hockey, basketball courts, sand volleyball courts and restroom building), group pavilion, playground and restroom
- Multipurpose trail and natural surface trails
- Soccer lighting
- Increase parking
- Develop off-leash dog park
- Expand soccer - Land Dependent

Section 8: Recommendations

Gwinnett County 2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Rhodes Jordan Park

- Lake Perimeter Multi-Purpose Trail with Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge over the dam spillway and other trail connections
- Teen Facilities (basketball, skate park, etc.)
- Park Master Plan
- Potential for multiple shuffleboard/ horseshoe courts
- Relocation of the softball field from the football field plus additional facilities on undeveloped land based on new park master plan
- Tennis courts (2) w/Mountain Park style building
- Add second slide at the pool

Settles Bridge Park Site

- Phase 1 development

Shorty Howell Park

- Multi-purpose trail extension, picnic/playground, teen facilities (dependent on acquisition)

Singleton Road Activity Building

- Soccer fields (3) under power lines

Spriggs Road Park Site (park master plan to be undertaken in 2004/05)

- Trail System, Pavilion/Playground/Restroom Bldg., Activity Bldg. with Gym, Six Tennis Courts w/ Mountain Park type building, Football complex

Sweet Water Park Site

- Phase II development, courts, skate area, bridges and trails
- Activity Building - Land Dependent

Tribble Mill Park

- Completion of Multi-Purpose Trail Loop (Upper Lake route with Boardwalk) plus existing woodland trail system repair/restoration and expansion
- Special Events Restroom (Ozora Meadows)
- Protective Fencing of Granite Outcroppings
- Grand Pavilion (Ozora Meadows)
- Fishing Parking
- Ozora Meadows Landscaping

West District Pool Site (park master plan to be undertaken in 2004/05)

- Indoor competition/lane pool (basic layout/design, 25m), Indoor warm water instructional/therapeutics pool, outdoor multi-purpose (football, soccer, lacrosse) artificial turf field w/ parking, outdoor family aquatics/leisure pool

Yellow River Park

- Per park master plan, additional passive improvements including observation deck, bike lanes and road improvements, etc.

8.6 DELIVERY SYSTEM RECOMMEND- ATIONS

Yellow River Post Office (planning study to be undertaken in 2004/05)

- Provision of parking (10 spaces, hardscape), trails and interpretive signage
- Restoration of the remaining structures

Yellow River Wetlands

- Additional land acquisition (2.5 acres)
- Boardwalk & Interpretive Amenities

Out of the extensive consultation process that has been a building block of this Master Plan has come the identification of the following areas where new responses and initiatives may be needed from Gwinnett County:

- In order to continue to move to a system whereby the community has a stronger role to play in the delivery of services, the County may need to exert more efforts with regard to community development in more densely populated areas and areas with higher concentrations of ethnic mix.
- There may be a need for greater strategic linkages between other County departments, agencies (State and Federal), cities, utility companies, and community providers to increase the effectiveness of every dollar spent.
- The responsibility for sport tourism initiatives within the County should be clarified. A policy may also be required regarding the proper balance between community needs and sport tourism.
- There continues to be a need to identify core services as a basis to guide the County's future investment in recreation and leisure services.

Cooperation with Other Providers

Within Gwinnett County, numerous municipalities have city-owned recreational facilities and parkland. The County provides parks and recreation planning staff on occasion to assist these smaller departments and joint projects have been undertaken in the past. Cities play an important role in providing for the recreational needs of County residents and their contribution to the overall park system should not be overlooked. Similarly, other groups such as athletic associations, not-for-profit agencies, boards of education, and other leisure-oriented community groups also play integral roles. Without every key partner working together, it would not be possible to provide Gwinnettians with the recreations services they require and deserve.

It is recommended that the County's Parks and Recreation Division recognize the following organizations as its major "partners in recreation", including (but not limited to) athletic associations, sports council, Boards of Education, County Library system, Health and Human Services Department, Gwinnett County Convention and Visitors Bureau, local governments, YMCA, Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Club, Cultural Centers, and key community-based leisure organizations. These agencies and groups shall be actively engaged in the planning and development of new and redeveloped facilities.

It is recommended that the County continue to foster its working relationship with its "partners in recreation" to ensure non-duplication of services and the most appropriate mix of facilities to meet the needs of all socio-demographic groups in the County.

In an effort to enhance customer service and capitalize on existing synergies, it is recommended that the Department of Community Services play a lead role in enhancing communication and coordination among its "partners in recreation". It is recommended that the Department meet with its "partners in recreation" together on a regular basis (e.g., annually) to share direction, lend support through community development initiatives, promotion, grant assistance, service partnerships, funding, etc.

Community Development

In simple terms, "community development" means helping or enabling communities to help themselves. In the context of this Master Plan, it is a process whereby neighborhood, youth, seniors and volunteers in general will become more involved in deciding what should be provided and will play a more significant and direct role in service provision. This means identifying and mobilizing community assets in each of the five Recreation Planning Areas so that the County's partners in recreation can play a more hands-on role in providing locally-based leisure activities that meet the unique needs of that community. As the County grows and continues to change in its composition, greater efforts may be needed to make the system accessible and responsive to the needs of all of the residents.

In the strengths-based delivery system that is proposed by this Master Plan, County resources and tax dollars will be focussed on those functions that the County does best. Over the longer-term, a greater role in service delivery will be required of community groups, the not-for-profit and voluntary sector, other public providers, and the private sector – there is a recognition that the County cannot "do it all". Ultimately, the responsibility for ensuring that recreational needs are being met rests with the County. The County will manage leisure system through coordination, facilitation, support, and direct programming in areas where adequate community capacity does not exist and where the County is identified as being the most appropriate provider (e.g., aquatics, trails, ball diamonds, etc.).

It is recommended that the County continue to foster community development and customer service initiatives in order to increase partnership opportunities, to enhance the strength-based delivery system, and to modify direct programming in response to community needs.

Gwinnett County's Core Services

Gwinnett County will continue to have a fundamental role to play in the provision of recreational services, however, within the broad scope of recreation, it is clear that the County cannot play a pivotal role in all areas and maintain the overall goal of fiscal responsibility.

In defining its role in a strength-based delivery system, it is recommended that the County be responsible for providing the following core services:

- **the provision of services and programs where the County is the agency that is the best positioned to deliver them; priority shall generally be assigned to those programs and services serving the greatest number of residents;**
- **the supply and maintenance of appropriate buildings and structures capable of serving County residents;**
- **the supply and maintenance of appropriate areas of open space/parkland for passive and active pursuits; and**
- **the provision of staff to co-ordinate and program core services, including planning, research, facility allocation, customer service, community development functions, etc.**

In addition, the County may become involved:

- **when, for reasons of legislation or public safety, the services are best provided by the County;**
- **when the program is seen as a priority by the public and operation by an alternative provider will not be acceptable to the public; or**
- **when revenue-generating opportunities are significant to the overall operation of the Department.**

Programming

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation currently offers a wide range of activities for residents. In terms of geographic distribution, scale and scope, the County's extensive offerings are complemented very well by the recreational opportunities provided by local athletic associations, community schools, community groups, not-for-profit agencies, and private enterprise. Based on the 2002 Needs Assessment Survey, the benchmarking exercise, and national trends, it would appear that Gwinnett County has an excellent understanding of the programmatic needs of its citizenry and is currently offering an acceptable level of service in this regard.

Within the more ethnically diverse neighborhoods, it is recommended that community development efforts be enhanced in order to identify and address local preferences and program needs.

In addition, demographic projections and input received through the Master Plan's public consultation program indicate that more attention will need to be paid to both youth and seniors in the future. **It is recommended that programming for seniors and youth at-risk be modified and or expanded in order to meet the ever-changing needs of these groups.**

Staffing

The Gwinnett County Department of Community Services is responsible for providing recreation services throughout the County. Within the Department, responsibility for providing leisure services are handled by the Parks and Recreation Operations Division and the Parks and Recreation Project Administration Division.

Gwinnett County has one of the lowest ratios of park staff to both population and acreage compared to the other benchmarking communities. In particular, the number of Gwinnett County project administration staff was considerably lower, indicating that this may be an area that requires further investigation, especially given the aggressive development strategy recommended by this Plan. Furthermore, there will be staffing implications for every facility added to the inventory and every additional acre of parkland acquired. The trends research and consultation with staff and the public indicates that additional staff will be required over the next few years in the areas of maintenance, community development, and programming for seniors and youth at-risk.

It is, therefore, recommended that the County consider increasing staffing levels or contractual services in the areas of project administration, community development, programming for seniors and youth at-risk, and maintenance (where warranted). The County must also identify staffing requirements associated with new parks and facilities and budget accordingly.

Volunteer Support

Volunteers are the backbone of the recreation delivery system. For example, volunteers deliver all athletic association programs in Gwinnett. As the number of volunteers declines, as has been the general trend in recent years, more resources will be needed for volunteer training and recruitment.

The Department of Community Services should clearly define its responsibilities towards volunteers, including the definition of roles and responsibilities and parameters for their involvement in the delivery of

County services. **As a general principle, it is recommended that the County support volunteers by offering training in organizational development.**

Customer Service

It is recommended that the County continue to monitor, survey and seek public opinion regarding the delivery of recreational services to the residents of Gwinnett. The County should also seek greater cooperation with other departments to increase the recreational opportunities to its residents through coordinated efforts of the County expenditures.

Performance Measurement

“Performance measurement” refers to the tools that the County will use to measure outcomes resulting from its investment in recreational services. Generally, these tools are measures of efficiency, effectiveness and customer satisfaction.

It is recommended that the County maintain databases for use in performance measurement (e.g., customer profiles, participant registrants, exit surveys, demographic profiles and cost of service). Where applicable to parks and recreation, the County shall also apply nationally accepted benchmarking standards, performance measures, and best practices.

Physical Accessibility of Parks and Facilities

While the County has long had a commitment to inclusive programming for persons with disabilities, due to a significant aging of the communities demographic composition, an increase in the numbers of persons who will face challenges in accessing the recreational system is anticipated.

It is recommended that the Department of Community Services work with its partners in recreation to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the recreational system.

It is recommended that all organizations receiving funding from the County or using county facilities to deliver recreational services be committed to the County’s policies on accessibility.

In planning new facilities, it is recommended that geographic accessibility be a basic requirement (e.g., physically locating facilities so that the largest number of persons can reach the facility and ensuring that public transit is available).

It is recommended that the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation consider developing bus routes to major parks and

recreation facilities in order to serve the more densely populated areas of the County on weekends (e.g., Recreation Planning Areas A, B, and C).

Special Events & Sport Tourism

Although it is recognized that special events and tournaments often provide economic benefits to local recreation organizations and the County as a whole, any new facilities that may be required should meet the recreational activity needs of local residents first and foremost.

Local residents should not be displaced by non-local events, be they professional sporting events or amateur events. When a major event will impact directly on a user group or on an adjacent community, every effort should be made to balance the local interest with the broader corporate goal of bringing revenue to the County.

When pursuing major sporting, cultural or special events, it is recommended that the County continue to consider the needs of local residents and the facility requirements identified in this Plan as the County's primary responsibility.

Facility Partnerships

Over the past decade, recreation departments have experienced unprecedented change in the delivery of services and the management of leisure facilities. The need to adopt more financially prudent methods of leisure service delivery has caused many communities to examine new forms of alliances, agreements, and partnerships.

Recreation and parks services have traditionally been provided using a variety of alternative delivery approaches. Joint ventures and partnerships between governments and community groups have a long history and the contracting out of certain maintenance functions is relatively commonplace. Furthermore, joint use agreements with boards of education have been instituted with varying degrees of success for many years. The difference now seems to be an increased focus on financial benefits and the emergence of new potential service providers from the private sector.

Partnerships, collaboration, and alternate service delivery models will continue as significant considerations. Given the significant evolution of partnership concepts and the emergence of new types of arrangements between local governments and customary, as well as non-traditional partners, it may be useful to re-examine elements of the Gwinnett's service delivery options review framework to ensure that it is applicable to a wide range of alternatives and circumstances that might be presented to the County for consideration.

It is recommended that, where appropriate, the County consider entering into partnerships with public, not-for-profit, and/or private organizations

in developing, financing, operating, and/or maintaining recreation facilities or services in an effort to better serve the residents through improving cost efficiency, customer service, and accessibility.

Pricing Strategy

It is recommended that the County maintain its user fee policy of protecting the interests of specific groups for whom subsidized services are essential. The County should continue to ensure access for people with disabilities and for other groups with financial difficulties.

It is recommended that the County develop a reporting process whereby operating costs and revenues can be tracked by type of activity to enable ongoing monitoring of the relationship between costs and revenues on an annual basis.

It is recommended that the increase in total operating costs for the provision of new recreation programs, services and facilities be minimized through an increase in user fees to the extent that such an increase in fees is reasonable and appropriate. Notwithstanding, the County shall recognize the legitimate need to maintain an operating subsidy for certain activities, types of facilities, and specified communities in need within the County.

Long-Range Planning

The Gwinnett County Department of Community Services has an excellent track record of proactively planning for current and future park and facility needs. The County's efforts to identify needs on both an area-specific and County-wide basis should continue.

It is recommended that the Parks and Recreation Division continue to analyze recreation needs on a "planning area" system basis in order to manage population to service levels. It is further recommended that the five recreation planning areas used in this Plan be adopted solely for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating the delivery and provision of services and not for the purpose of maintenance crews.

Monitoring and Updating The Master Plan

It is recommended that the County implement a system for the regular monitoring of the Master Plan.

In 2008, the County shall initiate a process to reconfirm the direction, priorities and accomplishments of the Master Plan. This review is not intended to be a comprehensive update, but rather a scoped evaluation of the issues of the day and should be sufficient to provide adequate direction for the period of 2009 to 2013.

In 2012, the County shall undertake a complete review and update of the Master Plan.

**8.7 LONG RANGE
CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENT
PLAN**

To meet the goals of this Plan and to provide specific direction to future capital spending, priorities for land acquisition and facility development have been established.

How Priorities were Established

In order to identify priority recommendations, a list of capital projects substantiated by the Master Plan's background research and public consultation program, was prepared by the Consultants and County staff. This list of recommendations was then presented to each Citizen Steering Committee member in order for them to rank each recommendation using a scale of 1 to 5, where "1" means that they feel the project is a very low priority and where "5" represents a very high priority. The responses of every committee member were aggregated and averaged in order to establish a priority ranking for each capital recommendation. The higher the ranking, the higher overall level of importance the Committee placed on the project.

A group of approximately fifteen Parks and Recreation Division Staff was also given an opportunity to prioritize the same list of capital projects presented to the Citizen Steering Committee. The way in which staff ranked the projects deviated from the methodology employed by the Steering Committee. In simple terms, the higher the "staff rank", the higher the priority attributed to it by staff (e.g., a staff rank of "12" is a high priority, while a staff rank of "0" is a low priority).

It should also be noted that some recommendations have not been given a priority ranking. This is a result of the consolidation of multiple recommendations due to design and/or development logistics.

Table 8-3 lists every capital parks and recreation facility project recommended by this Plan in priority-order. The order of the list was derived, first and foremost from the average ranking established by the Citizen Steering Committee. From the beginning of this project, it was determined that the planning process would be driven by the consensus direction of the Citizen Steering Committee. This Committee is considered to be representative of the County's population and, in the view of the Consultants, is more than sufficiently able to make informed and educated decisions about future park system needs. For this reason, the priority ranking of projects relies most heavily on the direction received from the Committee.

County staff input, and to a lesser degree that of the Consultants, also played a part in establishing the priority of capital projects. In particular, the staff rankings provided valuable input pertaining to the logistics of

implementing certain recommendations. As a result, the priority of a handful of key projects was elevated or lowered based on the insight provided by staff and consultants. **Subsequent consultation with the Gwinnett County Recreation Authority and Board of Commissioners may further alter the order of the recommendations.** Furthermore, with the rapid growth of the County, it is possible that priorities for spending will change over the next five to ten year period. In order to meet the most critical needs of the dynamic and changing population, staff and political officials will need to modify the priorities of capital projects over time. Recommendations have been made for the periodic review and updating of this Plan.

Cost Estimates

Cost estimates for each capital project were prepared by the County's Parks and Recreation Division using figures published in park master plans and actual costs for recently bid projects. In cases where cost estimates were taken from existing park master plans, the estimates will be based on the anticipated construction costs for the year that the plan was prepared. All other cost estimates are shown in 2003 dollars and have not been adjusted for inflation.














It is also important to note that the actual list of projects to be implemented is entirely dependent upon the extension of the SPLOST by voters and the amount of the SPLOST allocated to the County parks system. As presently proposed, the entire capital program is nearly \$370 million. This figure is more than what is anticipated to be available for parks and recreation through the SPLOST extension, however, because there is justification for each recommendation, it is important for each one to be identified and prioritized. Also of note, because the future capital budget is unknown, the list of projects has not been divided into tiers or groupings, rather a running total column illustrates the estimated cost of implementing each project in succession.

Section 8: Recommendations

Gwinnett County 2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Table 8-3: Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Projects by Priority

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	Aquatics		Playground
	Baseball/ Softball		Soccer
	Community Center, Activity Bldg, Senior Center, Gym		Supporting Site Infrastructure
	Football		Teen Facilities (skate parks, basketball courts, etc.)
	Internal Park Trails		Tennis
	Park Master Plans		Collection of Recreation Facilities/ Other
	Park/ Greenway Acquisition		

#	RPA	Park	Recommendations	Est. Cost (\$000s)**	Running Total	Cte. Rank	Staff Rank
1	B	Land - New Acquisition	Acquiring 300 acres toward following goals: Acquire additional parkland (1,493 acres; only 85 acres available through park expansion); Consider acquiring vacant commercial properties for redevelopment as active community facilities; Site(s) for 11 ball diamonds, playgrounds, and 4 gymnasiums; Acquire parkland along the I-85 corridor; Acquire parkland to serve the Meadowcreek Cluster this land could accommodate basketball courts, skate park, playground, tennis courts, informal play fields, etc.	\$21,000	\$21,000	4.35	11*
2	C	Land - New Acquisition	Acquiring 300 acres toward following goals: Acquire additional parkland (1,608 acres; only 197 acres available through park expansion); consider acquiring vacant commercial properties for redevelopment as active community facilities; Site(s) for ball diamonds (3), soccer fields (5-10), activity building, senior center, basketball courts (6), playgrounds (20), football field, pavilions, and gymnasiums (2); Acquire parkland between I-85 and Lawrenceville (under-served area); Acquire parkland along the I-85 corridor (growth-related); Acquire parkland along the Hwy 316 corridor (growth-related)	\$21,000	\$42,000	4.00	12*
3	C	Land - Park Expansion	Identified Land adjoining Alexander Park, Bethesda Park, Collins Hill Park, Spriggs Road Park Site and Sweet Water Park Site (197.2 Acres)	\$12,303	\$54,303	3.65	11*
4	B	Land - Park Expansion	Identified Land adjoining Mountain Park Aquatic Center and Activity Building and Mountain Park Park (85.8 Acres)	\$6,864	\$61,167	3.65	6*
5	C	Alexander Park Site	Soccer complex, pedestrian system, trails and restroom building, pavilion and playground (TBD by park master plan)	\$4,738	\$65,905	--	--
6	A	George Pierce Park	Multi-Purpose & Greenway Trail Linkages/Loops	\$567	\$66,472	4.65	5
7	C	Spriggs Road Park Site	Trail System, Pavilion/Playground/Restroom Bldg., Activity Bldg. with Gym, Six Tennis Courts w/ Mountain Park type building, Football complex	\$6,928	\$73,400	--	--
8	E	Bay Creek Park	Teen area (skate park, roller hockey, basketball courts, sand volleyball courts & restroom building), plaza, picnic pavilion/playground, restroom bldg., and parking and infrastructure	\$2,518	\$75,918	--	--
9	D	Little Mulberry Park	Phase II Woodland Trails	\$685	\$76,603	4.24	10
10	D	Rhodes Jordan Park	Lake Perimeter Multi-Purpose Trail with Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge over the dam spillway and other trail connections	\$960	\$77,563	4.00	13
11	D	Settles Bridge Park Site	Phase 1 development	\$2,800	\$80,363	4.00	8
12	A	West District Pool Site	Indoor competition/lane pool (basic layout/design, 25m), Indoor warm water instructional/therapeutics pool, outdoor multi-purpose (football, soccer, lacrosse) artificial turf field w/ parking, outdoor family aquatics/leisure pool	\$11,909	\$92,272	--	--
13	D	Open Space and Greenway Acquisition & Construction	Open Space and Greenway Acquisition & Construction	\$6,400	\$98,672	4.07	12*
14	E	Yellow River Post Office	Provision of parking (10 spaces, hardscape), trails and interpretive signage	\$136	\$98,808	4.07	8
15	C	Bethesda Park	Teen Skating & Basketball on unused Adult Softball Parking area	\$352	\$99,160	4.00	4

(continued...)

Table 8-3: Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Projects by Priority (continued)

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#	RPA	Park	Recommendations	Est. Cost (\$000s)**	Running Total	Cte. Rank	Staff Rank
16	D	Rabbit Hill Park	Teen area (skate park, roller hockey, basketball courts, sand volleyball courts and restroom building), group pavilion, playground and restroom	\$1,651	\$100,811	--	--
17	B	Lucky Shoals Park	Community Center (or activity building depending on land availability) with gymnasium (TBD by Park Master Plan)	\$6,238	\$107,049	3.88	5
18	A	Peachtree Ridge Park Site	first phase development (TBD by park master plan)	\$9,000	\$116,049	3.77	11
19	--	Augmentation (numerous parks)	For those parks currently in a design or build phase in the 2001 SPLOST program (Best Friend, Graves, Sweet Water, Little Mulberry, Bethesda, Lenora, Yellow River Park, etc.), the bidding process may not allow for certain proposed items to be built. To allow these items to be constructed, a contingency has been proposed in the event that they are not funded within the current budget.	\$3,279	\$119,328	--	--
20	D	Dacula Park	Expand Dacula Activity Bldg. to Community Center with Senior Center (longer Term Project, Future Growth will substantiate)	\$3,200	\$122,528	3.75	9
21	B	Singleton Road Activity Building	Soccer fields (3) under power lines	\$594	\$123,122	3.76	5
22	D	Duncan Creek Park Site	Recommend soccer, tennis, plus general childrens and teens recreation opportunities (e.g., skate park, basketball, playground, etc.) (Phase II to be determined by park master plan)	\$3,010	\$126,132	3.73	4
23	C	Bethesda Park	Community center, gym, indoor walking track	\$6,238	\$132,370	3.71	4
24	E	Lenora Park	Teen Area - Skate park, Roller hockey, Basketball Courts, Sand Volleyball Courts, Restroom Building & plaza	\$1,250	\$133,620	4.18	2
25	D	Land - New Acquisition	Acquiring 300 acres toward following goals: Acquire land between the I-85/I-985 interchange and Little Mulberry Park (under-served area); Acquire land in the Braselton area (under-served area)	\$15,000	\$148,620	3.65	11*
26	E	Land - New Acquisition	Acquiring 300 acres toward following goals: Acquire parkland west of Snellville (under-served area) for ball diamonds, soccer fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, and gymnasiums; Acquire parkland east of Snellville (under-served area) for ball diamonds, soccer fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, gymnasiums, and an indoor competition pool and indoor family aquatics center (to serve eastern portion of County)	\$15,000	\$163,620	3.71	12*
27	A	Land - New Acquisition	Acquiring 150 acres toward following goals: Acquire additional parkland (949 acres, of which 232 should be able to accommodate active uses); Acquire parkland between Duluth and Suwanee for a senior center and 2 basketball courts; Acquire parkland along the north side of I-85 (growth related)	\$31,500	\$195,120	3.53	11*
28	B	Mountain Park Park	Group Pavilion with Playground & restroom bldg. (may require land acquisition)	\$655	\$195,775	3.31	8
29	A	Land - Park Expansion	Identified Land adjoining Jones Bridge Park and Shorty Howell Park (93 Acres)	\$7,500	\$203,275	3.94	7*
30	A	Open Space and Greenway Acquisition & Construction	Open Space and Greenway Acquisition & Construction	\$8,400	\$211,675	3.87	8*
31	B	Open Space and Greenway Acquisition & Construction	Open Space and Greenway Acquisition & Construction	\$7,600	\$219,275	3.60	5*
32	A	George Pierce Park	Outdoor Basketball Courts; Gym Addition (planned)	\$2,682	\$221,957	3.59	3
33	B	Mountain Park Park	Soccer complex & teen facilities (skate park, basketball courts) (land dependent)	\$4,074	\$226,031	3.56	0
34	B	Graves Park Site	Skate Park	\$91	\$226,122	3.53	1
35	E	Open Space and Greenway Acquisition & Construction	Open Space and Greenway Acquisition & Construction	\$7,200	\$233,322	3.50	7*

(continued...)

Section 8: Recommendations

Gwinnett County 2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Table 8-3: Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Projects by Priority (continued)

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#	RPA	Park	Recommendations	Est. Cost (\$000s)**	Running Total	Cte. Rank	Staff Rank
36	E	Land - Park Expansion	Acquire Bay Creek Expansion Land; Identified Land adjoining Centerville Park Site (to Yellow River Park), Tribble Mill Park and the Yellow River Post Office Historic Site (350 Acres)	\$10,695	\$244,017	3.47	6*
37	A	George Pierce Park	Senior Suite for Community Center	\$255	\$244,272	3.41	9
38	C	Sweet Water Park Site	Phase II development, courts, skate area, bridges and trails	\$500	\$244,772	3.41	4
39	D	Little Mulberry Park	Large Group Pavilion with playground, restroom bldg. and trail connection spur	\$1,248	\$246,020	3.56	4
40	C	Bethesda Park	New Adult Softball Parking	\$211	\$246,231	3.18	2
41	D	Bogan Park	Dog Park	\$100	\$246,331	2.87	8
42	A	George Pierce Park	Skate Park	\$318	\$246,649	3.06	2
43	C	Open Space and Greenway Acquisition & Construction	Open Space and Greenway Acquisition & Construction	\$10,400	\$257,049	3.67	3*
44	B	Graves Park Site	Multipurpose and nature trails	\$216	\$257,265	4.47	1
45	E	Tribble Mill Park	Completion of Multi-Purpose Trail Loop (Upper Lake route with Boardwalk) plus existing woodland trail system repair/restoration and expansion	\$567	\$257,832	4.47	2
46	E	Centerville Park Site	Trails, parking, pavilion, playground and restroom, contingency for other facilities (TBD by the park master plan)	\$2,279	\$260,111	--	--
47	B	Lucky Shoals Park	Park Master Plan Update	\$40	\$260,151	4.40	1
48	A	Jones Bridge Park	Comprehensive Trail Loop & sidewalk system	\$350	\$260,501	4.25	2
49	E	DeShong Park Site	Completion of trails	\$700	\$261,201	4.24	2
50	A	McDaniel Farm Park	Phase II multi-purpose and nature trail system with second bike/pedestrian bridge & interpretive signage	\$1,073	\$262,274	4.19	5
51	A	Jones Bridge Park	Park master plan	\$40	\$262,314	4.13	0
52	C	Collins Hill Park	Replace two basketball courts	\$15	\$262,329	4.12	5
53	B	Harmony Grove Soccer Complex	Soccer complex lighting	\$475	\$262,804	4.00	1
54	D	Little Mulberry Park	Phase II Equestrian and Walking Trails	\$737	\$263,541	4.00	1
55	E	Lenora Park	Extended multi-purpose trail system plus 10' wide stabilized Cross Country Trail system & mulch trails	\$373	\$263,914	3.94	0
56	B	Lucky Shoals Park	Redevelopment of a mixed sports complex including soccer, Activity Building, Basketball Courts & Splashground (TBD by Park Master Plan; splashground either here or at Graves Road Park Site)	\$3,970	\$267,884	3.94	10
57	E	Doc Moore Park Site	Trails, parking (120 spaces), restroom (2), pavilion and playground	\$1,917	\$269,801		
58	D	Dacula Park	Outdoor Basketball Courts	\$92	\$269,893	3.88	0
59	D	Rabbit Hill Park	Multipurpose trail and natural surface trails	\$350	\$270,243	3.88	0
60	D	Bogan Park	Trail System Completion	\$283	\$270,526	4.20	2
61	A	Holcomb Bridge Park Site	Trail system completion with two foot bridges, two deck river overlooks, & signage	\$177	\$270,703	4.18	2
62	D	Little Mulberry Park	ADA compliant Meadow Perimeter Multi-Purpose Trail	\$350	\$267,884	3.93	0
63	C	Bethesda Park	Paved trail connections from loops with small shelter and boardwalk connection plus paved links to Bethesda Church Rd	\$340	\$269,801	3.88	3
64	E	Lenora Park	Soccer Complex	\$2,824	\$269,893	3.88	0
65	E	Yellow River Wetlands	Additional land acquisition (2.5 acres)	\$150	\$274,367	3.88	0
66	A	McDaniel Farm Park	Farm restoration including Farm House Residence restoration and furnishing for public tours	\$542	\$274,909	3.76	0

(continued...)

Table 8-3: Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Projects by Priority (continued)

Page 4 of 5

#	RPA	Park	Recommendations	Est. Cost (\$000s)**	Running Total	Cte. Rank	Staff Rank
67	E	Yellow River Park	Per park master plan, additional passive improvements including observation deck, bike lanes and road improvements, etc.	\$3,969	\$278,878	3.73	1
68	D	Alcovy River Gristmill	Pedestrian trails and restroom	\$284	\$274,909	3.71	1
69	E	Tribble Mill Park	Special Events Restroom (Ozora Meadows)	\$300	\$279,462	3.67	2
70	E	Yellow River Post Office	Restoration of the remaining structures	\$57	\$279,519	3.67	2
71	A	George Pierce Park	Install lighting on remaining soccer fields	\$227	\$279,746	3.65	0
72	B	Graves Park Site	Group Pavilion + 40 parking spaces	\$317	\$280,063	3.65	2
73	A	Shorty Howell Park	multi-purpose trail extension, picnic/playground, teen facilities (dependent on acquisition)	\$1,750	\$281,813	3.65	0
74	D	Rhodes Jordan Park	Teen Facilities (basketball, skatepark, etc.)	\$900	\$282,713	3.62	0
75	E	Bay Creek Park	Community Center, Gym, Outdoor Leisure Pool & Parking (longer-term project, future growth will substantiate need)	\$8,848	\$291,561	3.53	0
76	E	Lenora Park	Community Center (add to gymnasium) (longer-term project, future growth will substantiate need)	\$2,268	\$293,829	3.53	0
77	A	George Pierce Park	Land acquisition for expanded park entrance	\$20	\$293,849	3.53	0
78	A	McDaniel Farm Park	Ecological Landscape restoration of depleted farm fields	\$578	\$294,427	3.53	0
79	B	Mountain Park Aquatic Center & Activity Building	Pavilion/Playground	\$297	\$294,724	3.47	0
80	D	Harbins/Alcovy River Park Site	Soccer fields (TBD by park master plan)	\$3,224	\$297,948	3.40	0
81	B	Mountain Park Park	Develop football field on acquired land	\$1,928	\$299,876	3.40	0
82	E	Yellow River Wetlands	Boardwalk & Interpretive Amenities	\$650	\$300,526	3.40	0
83	D	Alcovy River Gristmill	Dam Restoration	\$890	\$301,416	3.38	7
84	D	Rhodes Jordan Park	Park Master Plan Update	\$40	\$301,456	3.38	2
85	D	Palm Creek Park Site	Park Master Plan	\$40	\$301,496	3.36	3
86	A	George Pierce Park	Playground & Restroom Bldg. at Eastern Pavilion	\$272	\$301,768	3.35	0
87	A	McDaniel Farm Park	Second parking zone with group pavilion and restroom building	\$728	\$302,496	3.35	0
88	E	Bay Creek Park	East Picnic Pavilion/Playground, Parking, Restroom Bldg. & East Trails	\$669	\$303,165	3.33	0
89	E	Doc Moore Park Site	Contingency for other facilities (TBD by the park master plan)	\$1,134	\$304,299	3.33	0
90	D	Alcovy River Gristmill	Mill restoration	\$1,949	\$306,248	3.31	12
91	D	Alcovy River Gristmill	Parking	\$60	\$306,308	3.31	4
92	A	Jones Bridge Park	Maintenance Compound	\$140	\$306,448	3.31	8
93	E	Lenora Park	Maintenance Compound	\$312	\$306,760	3.31	0
94	D	Rabbit Hill Park	Soccer lighting	\$868	\$307,628	3.31	1
95	D	Rabbit Hill Park	Increase parking	\$430	\$308,058	3.31	0
96	E	Tribble Mill Park	Protective Fencing of Granite Outcroppings	\$45	\$308,103	3.31	0
97	A	George Pierce Park	Wetlands access boardwalk system	\$1,021	\$309,124	3.29	0
98	E	Tribble Mill Park	Grand Pavilion (Ozora Meadows)	\$567	\$309,691	3.25	11
99	E	Bay Creek Park	Soccer Fields - Land Dependent	\$2,824	\$312,515	3.20	0
100	D	Bogan Park	Lighting 7th ballfield	\$100	\$312,615	3.20	2
101	D	Dacula Park	Informal Picnic area with small shelter, restroom bldg., playground and volleyball courts.	\$283	\$312,898	3.19	1
102	B	Graves Park Site	Pond edge improvements	\$34	\$312,932	3.19	0
103	D	Rhodes Jordan Park	Potential for multiple shuffleboard/ horseshoe courts	\$30	\$312,962	3.19	0
104	D	Dacula Park	Gym & classroom addition to the Activity Building	\$2,609	\$315,571	3.14	3

(continued...)

Section 8: Recommendations

Gwinnett County 2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Table 8-3: Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Projects by Priority (continued)

Page 5 of 5

#	RPA	Park	Recommendations	Est. Cost (\$000s)**	Running Total	Cte. Rank	Staff Rank
105	D	Rhodes Jordan Park	Relocation of the softball field from the football field plus additional facilities on undeveloped land based on new park master plan	\$1,325	\$315,571	3.13	4
106	A	Jones Bridge Park	Good Age Bldg. Renovation	\$583	\$317,479	3.13	5
107	E	Lenora Park	Tree Farm Pavilion/Playground zone with restroom bldg.	\$509	\$317,988	3.13	2
108	D	Land - Park Expansion	Identified land adjoining Alcovy River Gristmill, Harbins/Alcovy Park Site, Little Mulberry Expansion & Rabbit Hill Park (377.1 Ac.)	\$9,384	\$327,372	3.12	11*
109	C	Alexander Park Site	Maintenance building	\$120	\$327,492	3.06	4
110	D	Little Mulberry Park	Lake Siltation Removal (spread onsite)	\$794	\$328,286	3.06	2
111	C	Sweet Water Park Site	Activity Building - Land Dependent	\$2,400	\$330,686	3.06	0
112	B	Graves Park Site	Splash Playground (either here or at Lucky Shoals Park)	\$177	\$330,863	3.00	2
113	C	Collins Hill Aquatic Center	Pavilion/Playground	\$292	\$331,155	2.94	1
114	C	Collins Hill Park	Expanded Lake Side Playground	\$117	\$331,272	2.94	0
115	B	Graves Park Site	Fencing along DeKalb Co. line	\$32	\$331,304	2.94	0
116	A	McDaniel Farm Park	2 outdoor classrooms	\$120	\$331,424	2.94	0
117	D	Environmental & Heritage Center	Preliminary design indicates full build-out of the center will require additional funding	\$10,000	\$341,424	2.94	3
118	E	Lenora Park	Northwest corner Pavilion/Playground with restroom bldg plus modification of end of ballfield concession bldg. into pavilion	\$454	\$341,878	2.94	0
119	D	Palm Creek Park Site	Phase one development	\$2,800	\$344,678	2.93	3
120	A	George Pierce Park	Playgrounds for both Baseball and Soccer Complexes	\$295	\$344,973	2.88	5
121	A	Pinckneyville Park & CC	Playground/Shelter at Community Center	\$240	\$345,213	2.88	0
122	E	Tribble Mill Park	Fishing Parking	\$284	\$345,497	2.88	8
123	D	Harbins/Alcovy River Park Site	Ball diamonds (TBD by park master plan) (longer-term project, future growth will substantiate need)	\$2,900	\$348,397	2.87	0
124	E	Lenora Park	Tennis Courts (longer-term project, future growth will substantiate need)	\$251	\$348,648	2.82	1
125	A	McDaniel Farm Park	3 rustic picnic shelters	\$325	\$348,973	2.82	0
126	E	Bay Creek Park	Tennis Area & Parking (longer-term project, future growth will substantiate need)	\$196	\$349,169	2.80	0
127	C	Collins Hill Park	Paved Lake Edge Promenade	\$180	\$349,349	2.75	0
128	D	Rabbit Hill Park	expand soccer - Land Dependent	\$2,300	\$351,649	2.73	0
129	A	George Pierce Park	Tennis courts (4) with service building	\$454	\$352,103	2.69	2
130	D	Harbins/Alcovy River Park Site	Phase II to be determined by the park master plan	\$3,000	\$355,103	2.64	7
131	D	Little Mulberry Park	Lakeside Concession Rental Building with rental boats and restroom	\$817	\$355,920	2.63	2
132	D	Little Mulberry Park	Phase II Lakeside Activity area (w/o the Concession Rental Building)	\$851	\$356,771	2.63	0
133	D	Rhodes Jordan Park	Tennis courts (2) w/Mountain Park style building	\$340	\$357,111	2.63	0
134	B	Graves Park Site	Irrigation of open areas	\$128	\$357,239	2.59	7
135	D	Rhodes Jordan Park	Add second slide at the pool	\$140	\$357,379	2.44	0
136	E	Tribble Mill Park	Ozora Meadows Landscaping	\$170	\$357,549	2.44	0
137	D	Little Mulberry Park	Contingency for other facilities TBD	\$340	\$357,889	2.43	0
138	D	Alcovy River Gristmill	Pavilion and Playground	\$353	\$358,242	2.38	1
139	E	DeShong Park Site	Restroom, Pavilion and Playground, Contingency for other facilities (TBD by the park master plan)	\$992	\$359,234	--	--
140	C	Collins Hill Aquatic Center	Outdoor Restrooms and changing area for outdoor pool	\$525	\$359,759	2.29	0
141	E	Lenora Park	7th baseball field	\$415	\$360,174	2.20	0

* Staff ranked parkland and greenway acquisition/expansion projects separately from all other capital projects

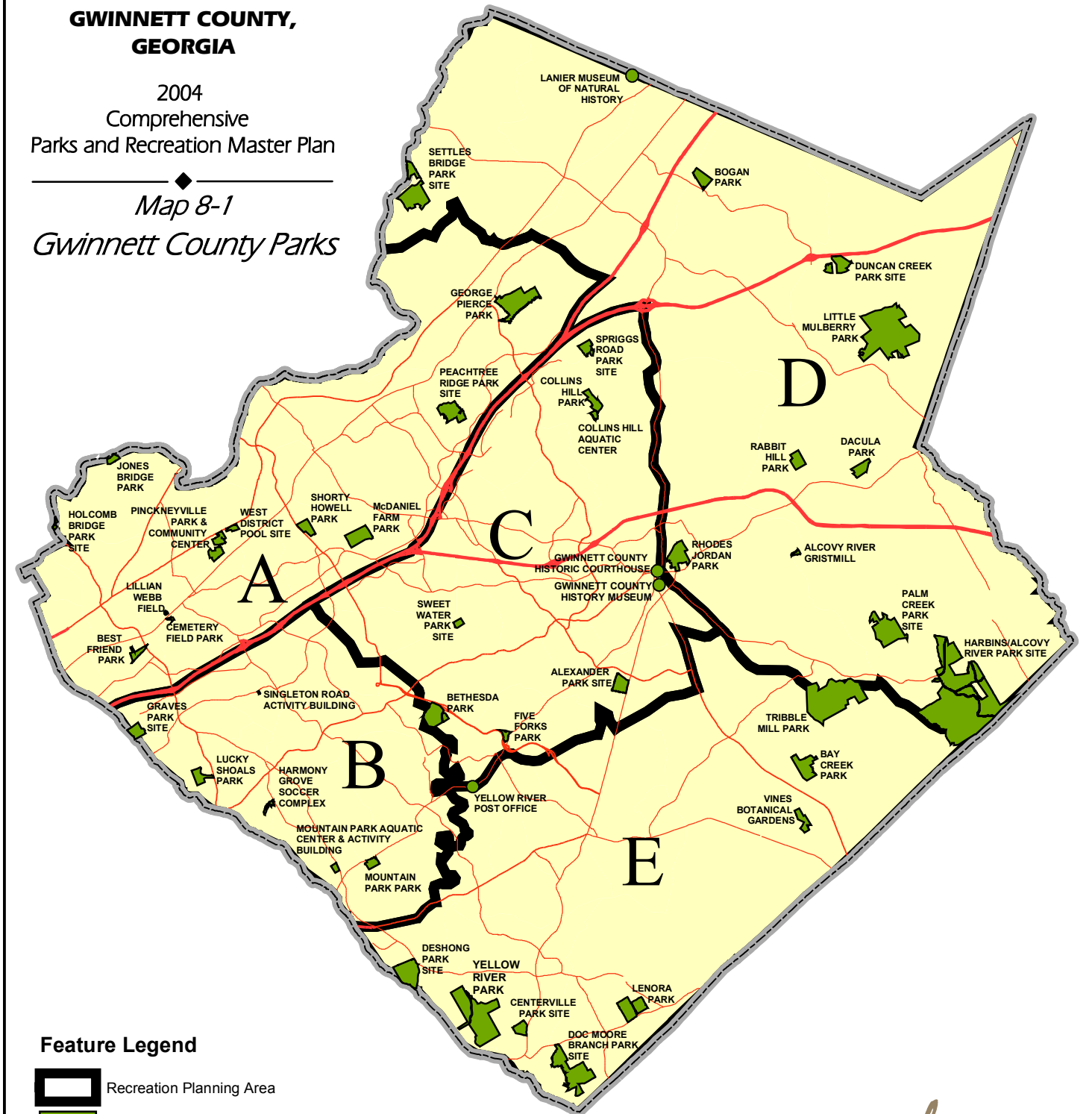
** Cost estimates are shown in thousands (\$000's); cost estimates are based on 2003 dollars and have not been modified to account for inflation.



**GWINNETT COUNTY,
GEORGIA**

2004
Comprehensive
Parks and Recreation Master Plan

◆
Map 8-1
Gwinnett County Parks



Feature Legend

- Recreation Planning Area
- County Parks

NOTE: This Map does not include those
County-owned parcels classified
as "Greenspace" or "Other".

