

Town of Wingate, North Carolina
Comprehensive Park and Recreation Facilities Vision Plan
With
2012-2016 Park and Recreation Capital Improvement Plan



Prepared

For

The Town of Wingate, NC

By Ray Manieri

All American Associates, Inc.

Initially Approved by the Wingate Board of Commissioners

Month, Day, 2012

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Section 1: Introduction

A. Planning Background:

The Town of Wingate has an attractive community park and an active recreation program, focused primarily on youth, provided through the non-profit Wingate Community Recreation Association. Wingate is proud of its park and recreation facilities, and they have served the Town's residents well for many years. Wingate, however, is a rapidly growing community and the size and composition of its population is changing. Local residents have expressed their interest in developing additional park facilities and especially in developing local greenways. The Town wants to be sure that it possess the facilities it needs to serve its population for the future, and, therefore, commissioned the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for park and recreational facilities.

B. Purpose of Plan:

Wingate anticipates that the preparation of this plan will serve the following purposes:

- Obtain public input from Wingate's citizens about the parks and recreational facilities they desire.
- Provide the Town of Wingate with a strategic vision and implementation plan for the expansion and the improvement of its outdoor parks and recreational facilities and programs over the next several years.
- Enhance the Town's scoring potential on state and federal grants, which it may submit for funding to implement the plan's recommendations.

C. Plan Methodology:

To determine what Wingate's future park and recreational facility needs might be, this plan performed a needs assessment, provided and prioritized recommendations, and finally estimated the costs of recommendations and provided an implementation plan to achieve the recommendations. This methodology is outlined below.

1. Needs Assessment:

The initial phase in the development of this plan involved an assessment of Wingate's future outdoor park and recreation facility needs. This assessment had several stages as follows:

a. Examination of Current Facilities, Programs, and Management:

The plan first catalogued Wingate's existing park and recreation facilities and examine how these facilities are used and managed.

b. Examination Of local Population Growth and Composition:

The plan then examined potential trends in Wingate's population growth and composition during the period 2010-2030 to determine what impact these might have on future recreation demand and needed facilities.

c. Examination of National and State Recreation Trends:

Next, using a variety of recreation studies and surveys such as the National Survey for Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) and North Carolina's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the plan examined trends at the national and state level, which could affect Wingate's recreation demand.

d. Determination of Facility Needs Based Industry Level of Service Standards:

The plan then compared Wingate's current facilities and the population-based level of service standards recommended by the National Recreation and Parks Association's (NRPA) 1983 "Classification System Guidelines", and the more recent "Small Community Park and Recreation Planning Standards" developed for the state of Colorado by RPI Consulting. This process provided some concept of whether or not Wingate might have a surplus or deficiency of certain facilities.

e. Public Input and Local Recreation Preferences:

Finally, and most importantly, Wingate gathered information about local recreational preferences for this plan, as well as a greenway master plan through a serious public input effort conducted over two weeks in early March 2012. This effort included the preparation and distribution of a parks and recreation/greenway survey to the Town's population, in early March 2012, by sending the survey to the Town's water and sewer billing list. The Town received ? surveys representing about ? % of the Town's estimated 2010 population of 467 households. In addition, this public input effort also

involved a series of public input meetings, which were advertised in a local newspaper. The Town held meetings at 6 PM on March 8, from 1-5 PM on March 13, and at 6 PM again on March 15. ? people attended the meetings. Information gathered during this process is used elsewhere in this plan. Finally, the Wingate Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Committee reviewed the plan, its conclusions, and recommendations prior a public presentation of the plan to the Wingate Board of Commissioners for approval.

f. Conclusions:

From information obtained through this process, the plan develops conclusions regarding Wingate's likely demand and need for outdoor park and recreation facilities through 2030.

2. Recommendations:

Based on these conclusions, the plan provides specific prioritized project recommendations for Wingate to undertake during short, medium, and long-term periods.

3. Implementation Plan:

The plan provides an implementation or action plan to guide Wingate in the implementation of the recommended short-term projects.

4. Capital Improvement Plan:

Finally, this plan provides Wingate with a five-year Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Plan.

D. Acknowledgements:

The preparation of the Comprehensive Park and Recreation Facilities Vision Plan would not have been possible without the financial and volunteer support of the following organizations and people.

1. Wingate Board of Commissioners:

The preparation of the Wingate Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Strategic Plan would not have been possible without the support of the Wingate's Board of Commissioners, which had the vision to authorize the preparation of the plan, and provided funds for its preparation, and

eventually approved the plan. At the time of completion of this plan the membership of the Wingate Board of Commissioners included

- Bill Braswell-Mayor
- Barry Green-Commissioner
- Gary Hamill-Commissioner
- John Mangum-Commissioner
- Brent Moser-Commissioner
- Blair Stegall-Commissioner

2. Town Staff:

Wingate's professional staff also played an important role in the preparation of this plan. Town Administrator Patrick Niland and Grant Administrator Sandra Thomas served on the Park and Recreation Advisory Committee that advised on the preparation of the plan. Mr. Niland served as the Chairman of the committee and effectively moved the cumbersome process of public input along. Ms. Thomas served as Secretary of the committee, and effectively coordinated its meetings and ensured that each member of the committee had information necessary to contribute to the committee's work.

3. Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee:

The Wingate Board of Commissioners appointed the Park and Recreation Advisory Committee. The committee provided important input and advice to All American Associates, the Town's consultant, during the preparation of this plan. It provided review and comment for the firm's suggestions and recommendations. It also shaped the public input process. It reviewed the final draft of the plan prior to its submission to the Board of Commissioners, and it urged the plan's acceptance by the Board. The membership of the advisory committee included the following people.

- Michael Judd-Wingate University
- Patrick Niland, Wingate Town Manager
- Sandra Thomas, Wingate Grant Administrator
- Brad Sellers-Wingate Code Enforcement Officer
- Gary Hamil-Wingate University and Town Commissioner
- Jerry Earnhardt-Pedestrian advocate
- Max Edwards, Town businessman
- Art Henderson, Town resident
- Karen Nash, Wingate Elementary School
- Jennifer Huntley, Wingate Community Athletic Association

Section II. Needs Assessment:

A. Current Situation:

1. Recreation Programs and Management:

In Wingate, the management of park and recreation facilities and programs is split between The Town of Wingate and the non-profit Wingate Community Recreation Association (WCRA).

a. Town Role:

The Town of Wingate's role in local recreational management involves the scheduling and maintenance of the facilities at Wingate Community Park and the Highland Park playground, and the coordination of annual festive events held at the Town's park. These events include Family Movie Night, National Night Out, and the Easter Egg Hunt. The Town's recreational budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 is \$64,025, or about 2.7% of the Town's total general fund budget of \$2,291,978. This amount represents an increase of 6.8% in recreational funding from the fiscal year 2010-2011 budget. This increase, occurring in a year in which the Town reduced its total budget by 3.2%, indicates that recreation is an important Town function to the Wingate Board of Commissioners and professional staff.¹

b. The Wingate Community Recreation Association:

The non-profit WCRA manages youth and adult team sports programming in Wingate, but receives no funds from the Town. After reaching a point of dormancy, where it provided no recreational programming, the organization has experienced a significant rebirth under local parent Jennifer Huntley over the past year.

The WCRA provides a variety of team sports programming to local boys and girls aged 2-16 and adults and would like to provide senior activities. Youth sports activities are seasonally- based. Fall-Winter season activities include indoor basketball, and track, and cheerleading. Spring activities include soccer, flag football, T-ball, baseball and softball, and outdoor track. During periods when youth activities dormant, adult softball, soccer, and basketball programming is provided.

¹ Town of Wingate' 2011-2012 Fiscal Year Budget Message dated May 31, 2011

Participation levels in WCRA recreational programming are very high, and mirror the trends of increasing population, especially minority population, and the trend toward increasing participation at the national and state levels discussed later in this report. The organization currently has 520 youth, from 235 member families, participating on 25 various sports teams. The 520 participating youth represent 55% of the estimated 2010 youth population in Wingate.² The most popular sports in terms of participation are soccer, football, and basketball followed by baseball/softball and T-ball. Another 40 adults also participate in softball, soccer, and basketball play. The WCRA estimated that 90% of participants are minority African American and Hispanic youth and adults. Many of the participants come from low-income households, and the WCRA must keep its participation fees low.³

2. Executing Parks and Recreation Facilities:

Several park and recreational and athletic facilities are located in or close to Wingate. These include the following:

a. Town-Owned Facilities:

i) Wingate Community Park:

Wingate Community Park is located at 315 W. Elm St. beside Wingate Elementary School in the western section of town. The park property contains 37 acres and provides a variety of facilities. There are two unlighted baseball/softball fields, a small lighted T-ball field, a multi-use soccer and football field, a children's play area, a ¾-mile paved walking trail, picnic shelters, a community center, providing meeting facilities for up to 96 people, and ample parking for such uses.

² See the table Changes in Recreational-Related Age Groupings in Wingate 2000-2010 on p. 17, which shows Wingate's 2010 population ages 5-19 to be 935.

³ Jennifer Huntley supplied this information about the WCRA in a February 14, 2012 interview.

Aerial View of Wingate Community Park Property



ii) Highland Park Playground:

The Highland Park Playground is a 2-acre neighborhood playground located at the intersection of Washington St. and Booker St., in the Highland Park residential sub-division, south of Highway 74. The park provides basic playground equipment and a concrete basketball court.

Aerial View of Highland Park Playground Property



b. Union County School System-Owned Facilities:

Forrest Hill High School is located on Forest Hill School Rd. just off US Highway 74 a few miles east of Wingate. The school's athletic facilities include one baseball and one softball field, two vacant fields suitable for football and soccer, a football stadium and oval track, and four tennis courts. School system facilities are primarily available for use by school sports teams and students and not the public, are not available for use by the WCRA, and so are not counted as Wingate facilities in determining level of service standards later in this report.

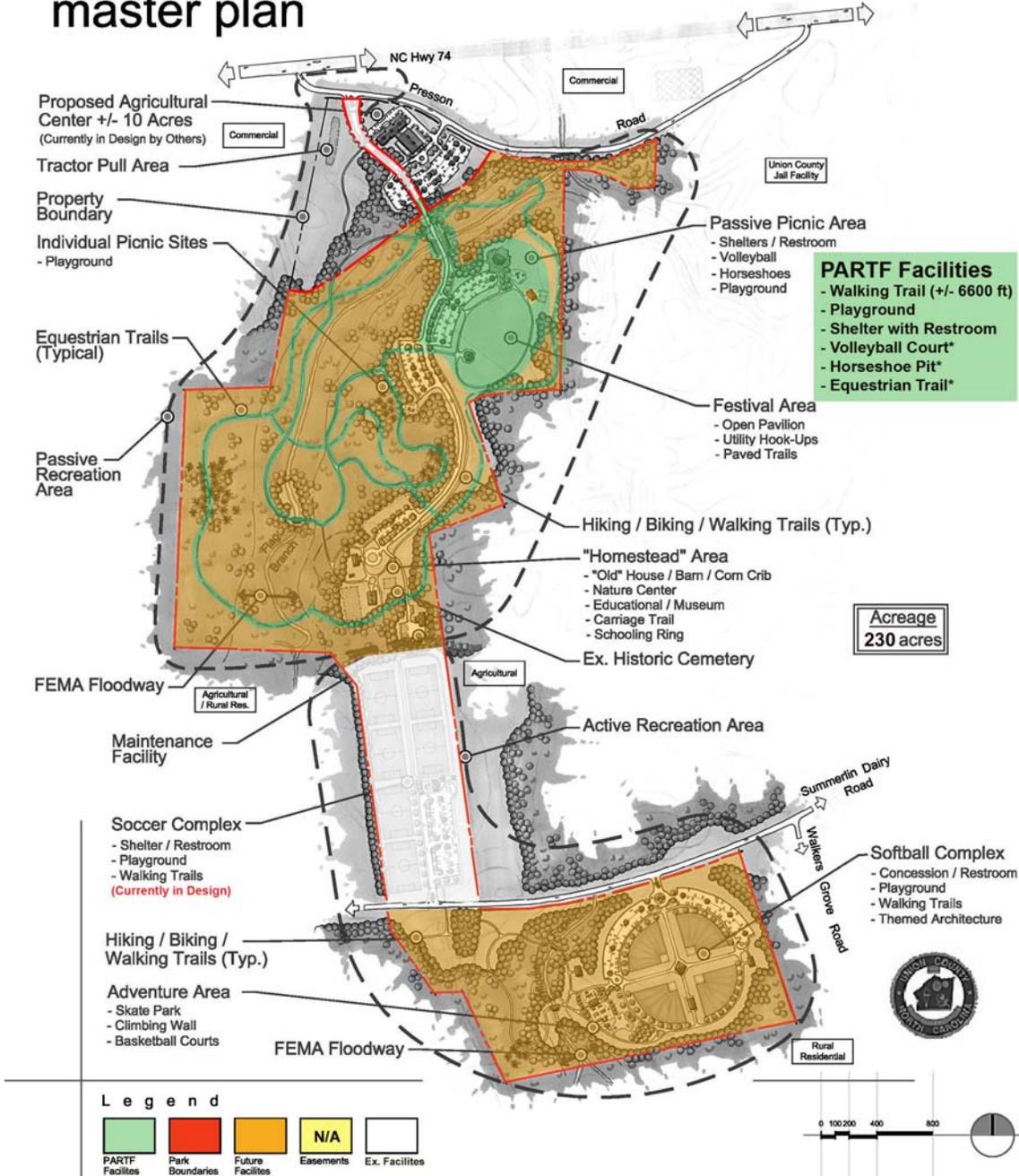


c. Union County-Owned Facilities:

i) Jesse Helms Park Soccer Complex:

This Union County Park is located a few miles southwest of Wingate on Summerlin Dairy Rd. It currently provides six full size "game" soccer fields for public use, which the public can reserve for a fee for soccer practice and games. The complex does have other facilities including a 75-person picnic pavilion, four individual picnic sites, one playground, a 4/10-mile paved walking trail, restrooms, and a six-section exercise station. Union County has developed an ambitious master plan for future park development, shown below, which calls for a variety of future facilities to be completed by 2015. These include a festival area, with an open pavilion, utility hook-ups, and paved trails; a passive picnic area with shelters, restrooms, a volleyball court, and playground; additional walking and biking trails; a homestead learning and education area; an adventure area with skate-park, climbing wall and basketball court; and a softball complex with four fields. The Carolina Thread Trail plans call for the trail to run along Ray's Fork along the edge of the expanded park and north toward Wingate. Although this facility is available for use by the WCRA, the fees charged for practice and game use are too high for the organization and its predominantly low-income participants to bear. For this reason, the facilities at Jesse Helms Park are not included in Wingate's facilities in calculating level of service standards later in this plan.

master plan



Legend

 PARTF Facilities	 Park Boundaries	 Future Facilities	 N/A	 Ex. Facilities
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d. Wingate University Facilities:

Wingate University provides a variety of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, but these are primarily for use by the University's sports teams and students, and for the most part are not available for use by the public. For this reason, university-owned park and recreation facilities also are not counted as Wingate facilities in calculating level of service standards later in this plan.

B. Issues and Trends Affecting Recreation Demand:

1. Local Population Growth and Composition:

In projecting its future park and recreational needs, a community should consider any demographic changes that might be occurring within the population it serves. Significant changes in local demographics over time can affect the need or demand for various types of park and recreational facilities.

a. 2000-2010-The Current Picture:

As are the state and national populations, Wingate's small population is rapidly growing, aging, and becoming more diverse. Between 2000 and 2010 Wingate's population increased by 1,869 persons, from 2,406 to 4,275. Of these new persons, 309 were added by annexation, but 1,479 were added through urban growth, giving Wingate a growth rate over this period of 78%, and making it the 31st fastest growing municipality in North Carolina. This high rate of growth reflected the rapid growth in population in Union County between 2000 and 2010. During this period, a growth rate 58.7% made Union the fast growing county in North Carolina.⁴ During this same period, the statewide population of North Carolina grew by only 12.5%.⁵

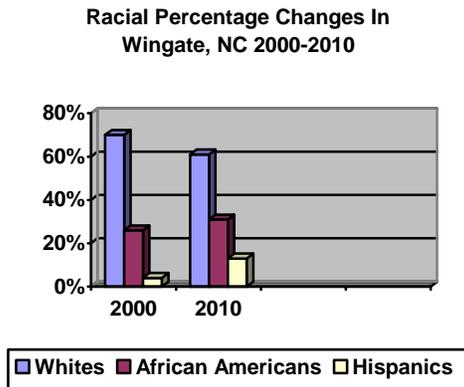
Between 2000 and 2010, the racial composition of Wingate's population also changed significantly. In 2000, Whites comprised 70% of the Town's population, while African-Americans comprised 26%, and Hispanics accounted for only 4.2%.⁶ By 2010, however, the percentage of the population comprised by Whites had decreased to 61%, while the

⁴ July 2009 Municipal Population Estimates-By Municipality Name, NC Office of State Budget and Management Internet site www.osbm.nc.us.

⁵ This growth was determined by comparing the state's total population from the 2000 US Census with its population from the 2006-2008 Three-Year American Community Survey. These sources were accessed through the American Factfinder internet site accessed @ www.factfinder.census.gov.

⁶ US Census Bureau, 2000 US Census, Summary Files 1 and 3, accessed through American Factfinder

percentage comprised by African Americans had risen to 31%, and the percentage comprised by Hispanic had increased to 13%.⁷



In its dramatic increase in the percentage of its population comprised by Hispanics, Wingate’s population mirrored similar increases that have been occurring in the North Carolina and Union County populations. Between 1990 and 2000, North Carolina’s Hispanic population increased by 21.3% and Union County’s by 17.6%.⁵

In attempting to analyze the impact on a community’s recreational demand, it is helpful to organize its population into recreationally significant age groups that are interested in certain activities that require particular facilities. This study organizes Wingate’s population into the following age groups:

Age Group	Age Range	Projected Outdoor Recreation Interests
Youth	5-19	Traditional outdoor team sports as football, soccer, baseball, softball, tee-ball, and basketball
Young Adult	20-44	Adult softball, basketball, flag football, soccer, running, bicycling, walking, golf, fitness exercising, tennis
Older Adult	45-59	Running, walking, bicycling, golf, nature viewing, fitness exercising , golf, tennis
Seniors	60+	Walking, nature viewing, golf, fitness exercising, socializing, games, crafts

Wingate’s population has been dramatically aging. In 2000, the Town’s Median Age was only 23 years of age. By 2010, however, the Median Age had risen steeply to 30.1.⁸ The population growth and aging process Wingate experienced between 2000 and 2010 affected recreational-related age groupings. The table below details these changes.

⁷ US Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey, accessed through American Factfinder.

⁸ NC Office of State Budget and Management internet site www.osbm.state.nc.us 2000 Census Demographics-County Hispanic totals.

Changes in Recreational-Related Age Groupings in Wingate 2000-2010

Recreational Age Groups	2000 (2,406)		2010 (4,275)		
	#	%	% Change	#	%
Youth 5-19	626	26%	+52%	953	22%
Young Adult 20-44	1,048	44%	+13%	1,189	28%
Older Adult 45-59	304	13%	+162%	797	19%
Senior 60+	286	12%	+53%	439	10%

All groups experienced significant increases in total numbers, especially the Older Adult group, with an increase of 162%, and the Youth and Senior groups, which experienced 52% and 53% increases respectively. However, with the overall growth in Wingate’s population, the 2010 total population percentages comprised by these groups changed significantly. The percentage comprised by the Youth group dropped from 26% to 22%. The percentage comprised by the Young Adult group dropped quite dramatically from 44% to 28%. The population percentage comprised by the Older Adult group, which had the greatest 2000-2010 increase in total number, increased from 13% to 19%. Finally, the percentage comprised by the Senior group dropped from 12% to 10%.⁹

b. 2010-230-The Future:

Detailed population projections for the period 2010-2030 are not available for towns of Wingate’s size, but are available for North Carolina counties. This study, therefore, assumes that during the period 2010-2030, changes in Wingate’s population will mirror those projected for Union County’s population.

If Wingate’s population grows at a rate similar to that of Union County, it would experience a 2010-2020 increase of 25% and have a 2020 population of 5,344. By 2030, after another growth spurt of 20%, Wingate could have a population of 6,413. Wingate’s Median Age may increase slightly to 30.7 years by 2020 and remain at that point through 2030.¹⁰

⁹ Wingate’s 2000 age group summary was obtained from the 2000 US Census through American Factfinder. The 2010 age group summary was obtained from the 2000-2009 American Community Survey also accessed through American Factfinder. percent changes are those for Union County obtained from the NC Office of Budget and Management-County and State Population Projections 2010-2020 accessed @ www.sobm.state.nc.us. The Union County 2000-2010 percentage changes were applied to Wingate’s 2000 population summary to obtain an age group summary for 2010.

¹⁰ These figures are based on Union County’s projected growth rate from County and State Population Projections 2010-2019 found on the internet site of the NC Office of State Budget and Management.

Recreational-related age groups could experience a major shift in population percentages and in recreational importance over the two decades between 2010 and 2030. The tables below numerically present this situation. The population percentage of the Youth age group could very likely decline from 22% in 2010 to 20% by 2030. The Young Adult age group's population percentage may also decline from its 2010 28% to 25% by 2020 and remain there until 2030. The population percentage of the Older Adult age group may remain at about 18%-20% during this period. The Senior age group of Wingate's population could experience a major expansion between 2010 and 2020 from 10% to 22%, but may grow only to 25% by 2030.¹¹

**Possible Changes in Recreational-Related Age Groupings in Wingate
2010-2020**

Recreational Age Groups	2010 (4,275)		2020 (5,344)		
	#	%	% Change	#	%
Youth 5-19	953	22%	+11%	1,058	20%
Young Adult 20-44	1,189	28%	+12%	1,332	25%
Older Adult 45-59	797	19%	+35%	1,075	20%
Senior 60+	439	10%	+130%	1,010	22%

**Possible Changes in Recreational-Related Age Groupings in Wingate
2020-2030**

Recreational Age Groups	2020 (5,344)		2030 (6,413)		
	#	%	% Change	#	%
Youth 5-19	1,058	20%	+19%	1,259	20%
Young Adult 20-44	1,332	25%	+19%	1,585	25%
Older Adult 45-59	1,075	20%	+9%	1,172	18%
Senior 60+	1,010	22%	+50%	1,515	24%

The magnitude of this shift of recreational-related age group populations, which Wingate could very likely experience, is highlighted in the table below, where the recreational age groups' 2000 and potential 2030 population percentages are compared.

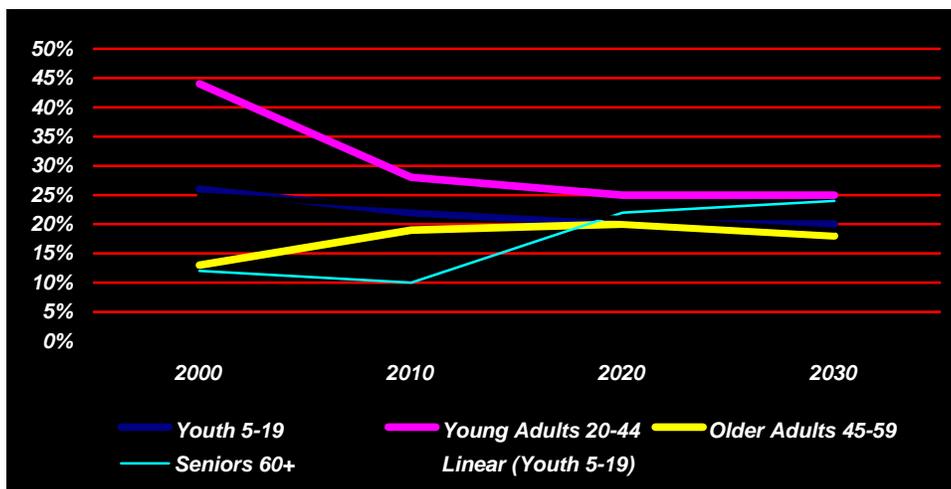
¹¹ The 2030 figures also come from the NC Office of Budget and Management's internet site- County and State Population Projections 2020-2030.

Possible Changes in Recreational-Related Age Groupings in Wingate 2000-2030

Recreational Age Groups	2000 (2,406)		2030 (6,413)		
	#	%	% Change	#	%
Youth 5-19	626	26%	+100%	1,259	20%
Young Adult 20-44	1,048	44%	+50%	1,585	25%
Older Adult 45-59	304	13%	+275%	1,172	18%
Senior 60+	286	12%	+435%	1,515	24%
Total	2,406			6,413	+270%

Over this 20-year period, the Youth and Young Adult age groups, although they might experience impressive growth rates of approximately 100% and 50% respectively, could also experience a major decline in the percentage of Wingate's population which they comprise. The declines could be from 26% to 20% for the Youth group, and from 44% to 25% for the Young Adult group. Over the same period, the Older Adult and Senior age groups could also experience tremendous growth rates of 75% and 435% respectively. If so, the percentage of Wingate's total population comprised by the Older Adult group could rise from 13% to 18%, while the percentage comprised by the Senior group could increase from 12% to 24%. Younger and older populations prefer different forms of outdoor recreation and this demographic shift could have an important impact on Wingate's outdoor recreational facility needs during the two decades between 2010 and 2030. The chart below more graphically presents this shift.

Possible Changes in Recreational-Related Age Groupings in Wingate 2000-2030



2. The Trend of Increasing Recreation Participation:

Over the past decade or more, Americans in general and North Carolinians in particular have participated in outdoor recreational activities at a much higher rate than in previous years.

a) National Recreation Participation Trend:

The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) has documented this increase. In 1982-1983, the NSRE found that 89% of people age 16 and older participated in at least one activity. By 1994-95, the study found that participation had increased to 94.5%. In 1999-2000, the NSRE found that 97.6% of the national population aged 16 or older participated in at least one recreational activity.¹²

b) North Carolina Recreation Participation Trend:

The NSRE found the same recreational participation trend in North Carolina's population. Between 1995 and 2006, the number of North Carolinians participating in recreational activities increased by almost 50% from 27.4 million participants to 40.5 million participants.¹³

**North Carolina Resident Participation and Percent Change by Activity
1995-2006¹⁴**

Activity Type	% Participating 1995	Millions of participants 1995	% Participating 2006	Millions of participants 2006	% change in # participants 1995-2006
Trail/street/road activities	66.1%	3.713	85.7 %	5.812	56.5%
Individual sports	20.2%	1.137	28.2%	1.913	68.2%
Team sports	26.5%	1 .490	21 .6%	1 .468	-1 .5%
Spectator	56.1%	3.152	62.4%	4.232	34.3%

¹² Ibid, Section IV p. 3.

¹³ Ibid Section 1 p. 10.

¹⁴ NC 2009-2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan I-10-11, accessed @ www.nc.parks.gov

activities					
Viewing/learning activities	68.8%	3.865	81.7%	5.543	43.4 %
Snow/ice activities	11.8%	0.662	17.9%	1.212	83.1%
Camping	21.8 %	1.226	28.7%	1.949 %	59.0 %
Hunting	9.4%	0.528	9.9%	0.670	26.9%
Fishing	26.7%	1.500	36.7%	2.493	66.2%
Boating	28.7 %	1.612	31.0 %	2.105	30.6%
Swimming (natural, pool, snorkeling)	50.8%	2.856	53.1%	3.605	26.2%
Outdoor adventure activities	33.0%	1.853	51.2%	3.475	87.5%
Social activities	67.8%	3.811	88.2%	5.986	57.1%
Total		27.4		40.5	

c. Local Recreation Participation:

Finish this out with data form survey and meetings

Union county residents may not participate in recreational activity as much as other North Carolinians and Americans, but over one-half of County residents may participate in some recreational activity, as revealed by the July 2010 Trust of Public Lands’ “ Benchmark Study of Residents of Union County, North Carolina-Data Findings Report” done for the Carolina Thread Trail. When asked how often they participated in some form of recreational activity within 20 miles of their homes, responding Union County residents answered as follows:¹⁵

- Very Frequently 19% Frequently 21%} 30%

¹⁵ The results of this survey can be found in the Carolina Thread Trail master Plan for Union County and Participating Municipalities, May 2010 Draft

- Sometimes 26%
- Rarely 27% Never 6%} 31%

The Wingate Community Recreation Association has experienced a tremendous recent growth in participation levels, going from no participation to 600 youth and adult participants in about a year.

3. Changing Recreational Preferences Trend:

Over the past two decades or so, several surveys and studies of both national and state focus have documented a shift in the recreational preferences of Americans in general and North Carolinians in particular. More passive and individual outdoor activities are growing more popular, while participation in more active traditional, team sports is stagnant or declining.

a) National Recreation Preferences Trends:

Nationally, interest in passive and individual recreational activity has been growing for more than two decades, while interest in active, traditional team-oriented recreational sports activities has been declining. Several national recreation studies and surveys conducted over the past 20 years or so show an increasing interest in passive, outdoor recreational activities, such as exercise walking and nature viewing.

This trend toward participation in more passive outdoor recreational activities could be seen as early as early as 1985. In that year, most of the ten most popular forms of outdoor recreation, identified by the “Report of the President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors”, were passive type of activities.¹⁶ The chart below provides this listing.

1985 Ten Most Popular Nationwide Outdoor Activities 1985

1. Picnicking	6. Playing sports
2. Driving for pleasure	7. Fishing
3. Swimming	8. Attending sports events
4. Sightseeing	9. Boating
5. Walking for pleasure	10. Bicycling

A list of the outdoor recreational activities growing most rapidly in popularity in 1985, also identified in the report, included several passive

¹⁶ The results of the “Report of the President’s Commission on American Outdoors” were excerpted from the Town of Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Master Plan, January 2002, Wolpert LLP. The plan can be accessed from the Town’s web site.

recreational activities.¹⁷

1985 Nationwide Outdoor Recreational Activities Growing Most Rapidly in Popularity

1. Canoeing	5. Sailing
2. Bicycling	6. Hiking/Backpacking
3. Attending outdoor sports	7. Walking for pleasure
4. Camping	8. Water-skiing

By the mid-1990s, the nationwide shift in popularity from active, team-oriented sports recreational activity toward more passive, individualized activity was in full bloom.

Housed within the United States Forest Service, the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission completed editions of the “National Recreation Survey”, now called the “National Survey for Recreation and the Environment” (NSRE) during the 1983-1984 and 1994-1995 periods. A comparison of the results of these two surveys shows that between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s more passive and individualized outdoor activities showed much greater growth in participation than traditional outdoor team-oriented activities.¹⁸ Among the outdoor recreational activities with the greatest increase in popularity, were bird watching at 155%, hiking at 93% backpacking at 73%, and walking at 43%. Participation in outdoor team sports had an increase in popularity of only 25%.

Increase in Participation in Recreational Activity Mid 1980s-Mid 1990s

Activity	% Change from 1982-83 to 1994-95
Bird Watching	+155.2%
Hiking	+93.5%
Backpacking	+72.7%
Downhill Skiing	+58.5%
Attended Outdoor Concert/Play	+54.7%
Off-Road Driving	+43.8%
Walking	+42.8%
Motor Boating	+39.9%
Sightseeing	+39.5%
Swimming-Non Pool	+38.2%
Attended Sports Event	+34.7%

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ The results of the comparison of findings from US Forest Service National Recreation Surveys are also excerpted from the Wolpert, 2002 Chapel Hill master plan.

Snowmobiling	+34%
Golf	+29.1%
Outdoor Team Sports	+25%
Camping	+24.5%
Cross-Country Skiing	+22.6%
Boating	+17.4%
Swimming-Pool	+16.4%
Picnicking	+15.9%
Sledding	+15.8%
Water Skiing	+12.6%

In 1997, the National Sporting Goods Association conducted a recreational survey that ranked the top 25 recreational activities by millions of participants. As can be seen in the table below, this survey revealed non-traditional, individual, passive, and nature-related outdoor activities to be among the most popular nationally. Exercise walking, with 76 million participants, was the most popular form of outdoor recreation, while camping, with 46 million participants, was rated as the 4th most popular, and bicycling, with 45 million participants, rated as the 5th most popular. Traditional outdoor team sports rated farther down the popularity list. Basketball ranked 9th, softball ranked 19th, baseball ranked 21st, soccer 22nd, and touch football 25th in national participation levels.

Most Popular Recreational Activities 1997

Activity	Participation in Millions	Activity	Participation in Millions
1. Exercise walking	76.3	14. Golf	26.2
2. Swimming	59.5	15. Running/Jogging	21.7
3. Exercising w/Equipment	47.9	16. Dart Throwing	21.4
4. Camping	46.6	17. Volleyball	17.8
5. Bicycling	45.1	18. Hunting	17
6. Bowling	44.8	19. Softball	16.3
7. Fishing	44.7	20. Mountain Biking	16
8. Billiards/Pool	37	21. Baseball	14.1
9. Basketball	30.7	22. Soccer	13.7
10. Hiking	28.4	23. Target Shooting	13.5
11. Boating	27.2	24. Backpacking	12
12. Roller Skating	26.6	25. Football-Touch	11.9
13. Aerobics	26.3		

The 2000 edition of the NSRE confirmed the growth of more passive and

individualized forms of outdoor recreation activities.¹⁹ The survey found that almost 208 million people across the nation were engaged in some form of outdoor recreation. The most popular types of activity, as measured by the number of people participating, were as follows:

**Percentage and Number of Persons Participation in Outdoor Activities
2000²⁰**

Activity	% of People Participating	# of People Participating
Individual trail/street/road activities	88.3%	188.2 Million
Traditional social activities	80.6%	171.8 Million
Viewing and photographing activities	73.9%	157.5 Million
Viewing and learning activities	67.3%	143.4 Million
Driving for pleasure activities	61.5%	131.1 Million
Swimming activities	61.3%	130.6 Million

The five most popular forms of outdoor recreational activities in 2000, in terms of percentage of the US population participating in the activity, were as follows:

Activity	% of US Population Participating
Walking	82.3 %
Family Gathering	73.8%
Viewing natural scenery	59.5%
Visiting a nature center, trail, or zoo	56.6%
Picnicking	54.6%

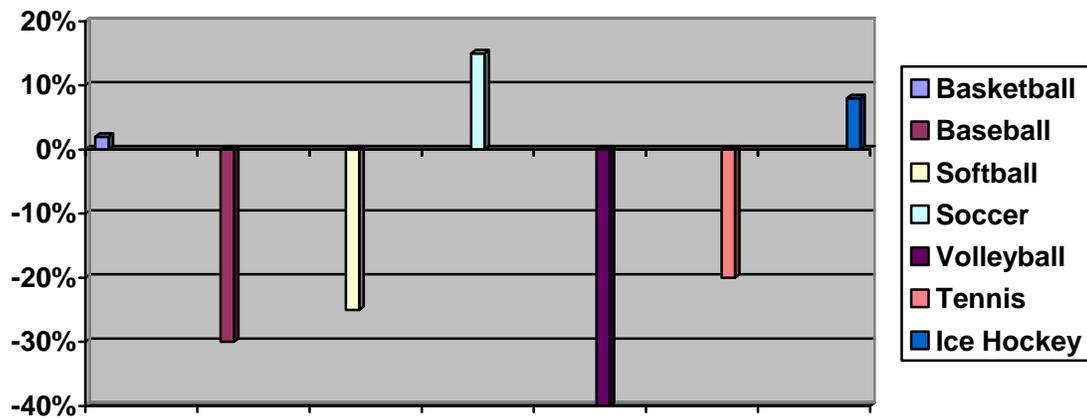
American Sports Data, Inc., a sports information and marketing research firm has been tracking national recreational participation trends since 1983 and producing an annual "Super-Study of Sports Participation". The 2000 edition of this research effort supported the data from earlier studies presented above. This data, presented in the charts below, showed that

¹⁹ "2000 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment", US Forrest Service, accessed at www.srs.fs.usda.gov.

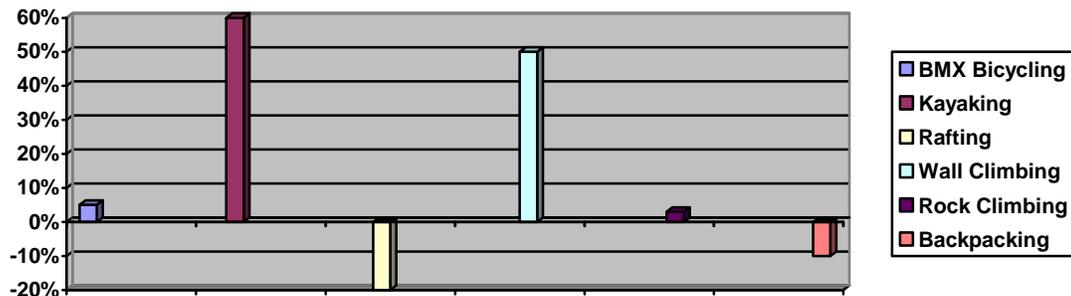
²⁰ 1999-2006 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, USADA, National Forest Service.

over the past two decades, Americans have been decreasing their participation in traditional, competitive team sports, such as baseball, softball, volleyball, and tennis, typically accommodated by municipal park and recreation facilities. According to the super-study, however, participation in such non-traditional activities soccer, ice hockey, kayaking, wall climbing, in-line skating, mountain biking, trail running, etc. are growing in participation and popularity.

% Change in Participation in US Team/Competition Sports 1987-2002²¹



% Change in Participation in US Miscellaneous Outdoor Recreational Sports 1998-2002²²



An examination of recreational management issues can provide some insight into national recreational participation and preference trends. Recreation Management Magazine conducts an annual e-mail survey of recreation professionals involved in the management of such facilities as public parks and recreation facilities, private non-profit facilities such as YMCAs, school and college facilities, and private for-profit facilities such as health clubs and camps. The annual study entitled "A Look at What's

²¹ American Sports Data's 2003 Super-Study of Sports Participation

²² Ibid.

Happening in Recreation, Sports, and Fitness Facilities” publishes the survey results

The results of the 2011 survey indicate that more people may be using recreational facilities, and that the non-traditional recreational preferences of users may be affecting the type of new facilities provided, as well as the types of recreation programs offered at facilities. Of 2011 survey respondents, 50.7 percent indicated that usage of their facilities had increased in 2010. Furthermore, 53.7 percent expected an increase in 2011, and 53.9 percent expected to see an increase in 2012. Interestingly, respondents managing park facilities, such as Wingate provides, were the most likely to report that the number of people using their facilities had increased in 2010. Some 56.3 percent of parks respondents indicated that was the case.

Many 2011 survey respondents, 41.5%, indicated that they planed to add new facilities to serve the increase in users. Park facility managers were especially likely to report the planned addition of new facilities, and 47.5% expressed such plans. The types of new facilities reported by park managers included a number of non-traditional activities.

Rank	Type of Facility	% of Responders Planning
1	Splash play areas	28.5%
2	Trails	26.6%
3	Playgrounds	26%
4	Park structures	26%
5	Disc Golf	22%

Almost one-third of 2011 survey respondents, 31.9%, indicated planned new additions to their programming activity. Many of these also included non-traditional activity.

Rank	Type of Programs	% of Responders Planning
1	Fitness	26.8%
2	Educational	25%
3	Teen	24%
4	Mind and body balance (Tai Chi, Yoga)	22.5%

5	Active older adult	20.9%
6	Day and summer camps	20.8%
7	Environmental education	20.3%
8	Individual sports	18.9%
9	Holiday and special event	18.6%
10	Sports tournaments and races	18%

b) North Carolina Recreation Preferences Trends:

Several studies and surveys over the past 25 years have documented the increasing popularity of passive outdoor recreational activity in North Carolina.

The State of North Carolina’s Division of Parks and Recreation examined statewide recreational trends in 1989. The “Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey” concluded that the five most popular outdoor recreational activities engaged in by North Carolinians at that time were as follows:

- Walking for pleasure
- Driving for pleasure
- Viewing scenery
- Beach activities
- Visiting historical sites

This survey also found that over 50% of responding households had participated in at least one of the following activities:²³

- Swimming
- Visiting natural areas
- Picnicking
- Attending sports events
- Visiting zoos
- Freshwater fishing

Using information from the latest NSRE, North Carolina’s 2009-2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) details the state’s recreational demands, and how those are changing. As indicated in the

²³ Results from the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation’s “1989 Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey”, excerpted from City of Hickory’s Master Recreation Plan, www.hickorygov.com/recreation/masterplan.

table below, the percentages and numbers of North Carolinians participating in non-traditional, more individualized, outdoor recreation activities is increasing rapidly, while the percentage and numbers participating in more traditional team sports activities are stagnant or decreasing.

**North Carolina Resident Participation and Percent Change by Activity
1995-2006²⁴**

Activity Type	% Participating 1995	Millions of participants 1995	% Participating 2006	Millions of participants 2006	% change in # participants 1995-2006
Trail/street/road activities	66.1%	3.713	85.7 %	5.812	56.5%
Individual sports	20.2%	1.137	28.2%	1.913	68.2%
Team sports	26.5%	1.490	21.6%	1.468	-1.5%
Spectator activities	56.1%	3.152	62.4%	4.232	34.3%
Viewing/learning activities	68.8%	3.865	81.7%	5.543	43.4 %
Snow/ice activities	11.8%	0.662	17.9%	1.212	83.1%
Camping	21.8 %	1.226	28.7%	1.949 %	59.0 %
Hunting	9.4%	0.528	9.9%	0.670	26.9%
Fishing	26.7%	1.500	36.7%	2.493	66.2%
Boating	28.7 %	1.612	31.0 %	2.105	30.6%
Swimming (natural, pool, snorkeling)	50.8%	2.856	53.1%	3.605	26.2%

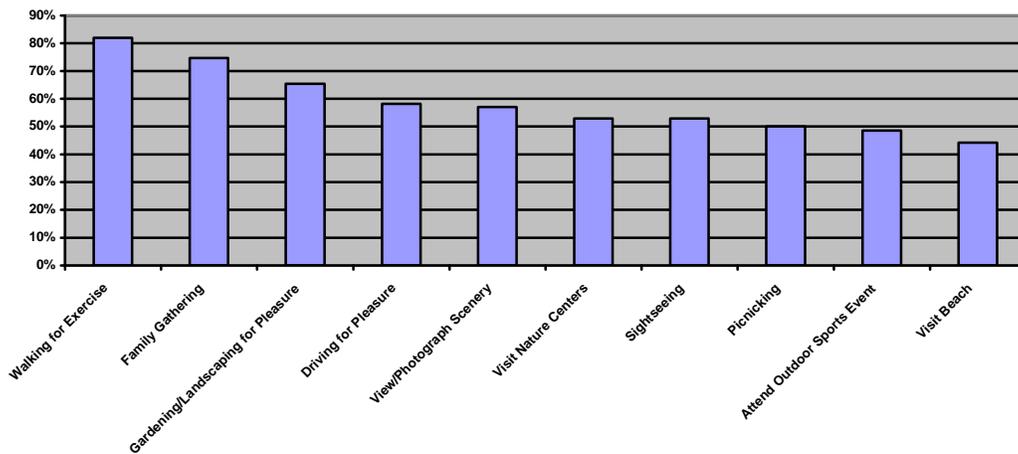
²⁴ NC 2009-2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan I-10-11, accessed @ www.nc.parks.gov

Outdoor adventure activities	33.0%	1.853	51.2%	3.475	87.5%
Social activities	67.8%	3.811	88.2%	5.986	57.1%
Total		27.4		40.5	

The percentage of state residents participating in street, road, or trail-based activity increase from 66.1% in 1995 to 85.7% in 2006, while the number of participants increased by 56.5%. The percentage of North Carolinians participating in individual sports rose from 20.2% in 1995 to 28.2% in 2006, while the number of participants rose by 68.2%. In contrast, the percentage of state residents participating in team sports activity actually declined from 26.5% in 1995 to 21.6% in 2006, and the number of participants declined by 1.5%.

The chart below showing North Carolinians' top ten most popular outdoor activities in 2009 evidences the trend toward more passive outdoor recreation.²⁵

2009 North Carolinians' Top Ten Most Popular Outdoor Recreation Activities



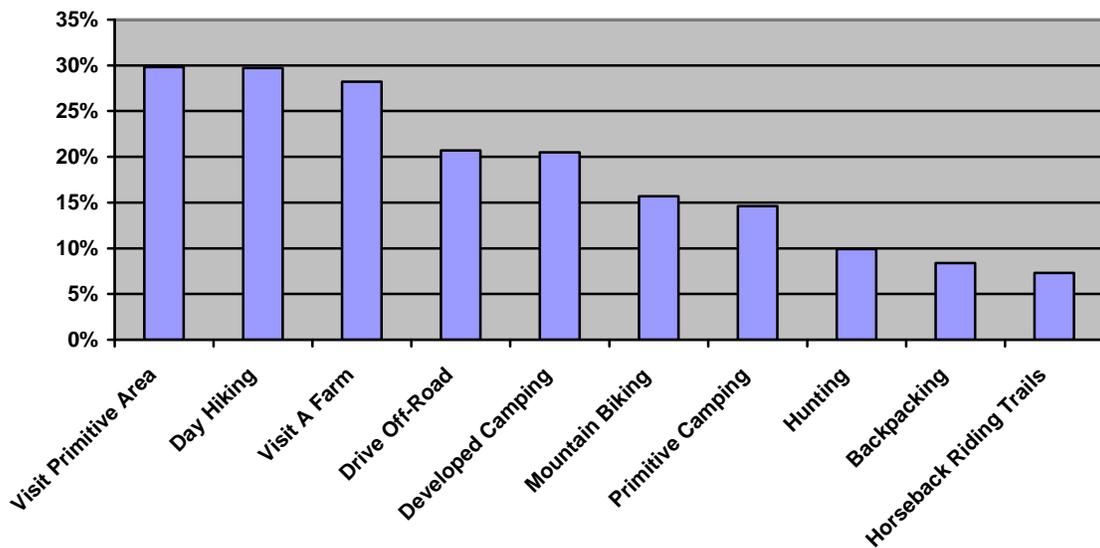
One of the most important results of the NSRE is the division of the population into groups with similar recreation interests and setting types. Very often people that share an interest in one recreation activity or settings also share interests in others. Wingate can provide recreational opportunities to people interested in the following activities:

²⁵ NC SCORP p.II-2

- Nature-Based Land Activities
- Developed Setting Activities
- Team Sports Activities
- Viewing and Learning Activities
- Individual Outdoor Sports Activities

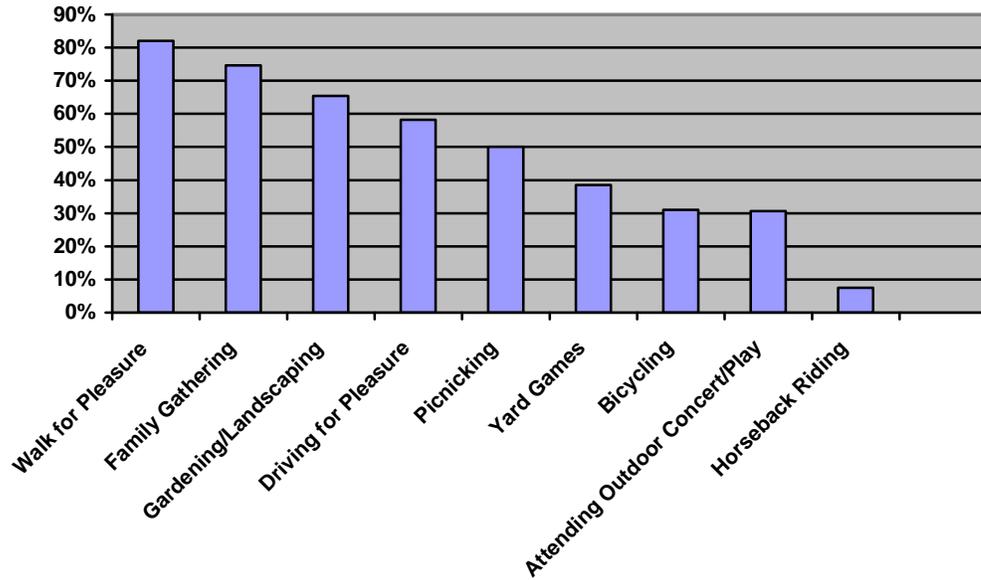
In planning for its future outdoor activity facility needs, it will be helpful for Wingate to examine North Carolina participation levels in these various categories of activities that it can reasonably provide. The charts below provide the percentage of North Carolinians that participate in various outdoor recreation activities²⁶

i) Nature Based Land Activities 2009:

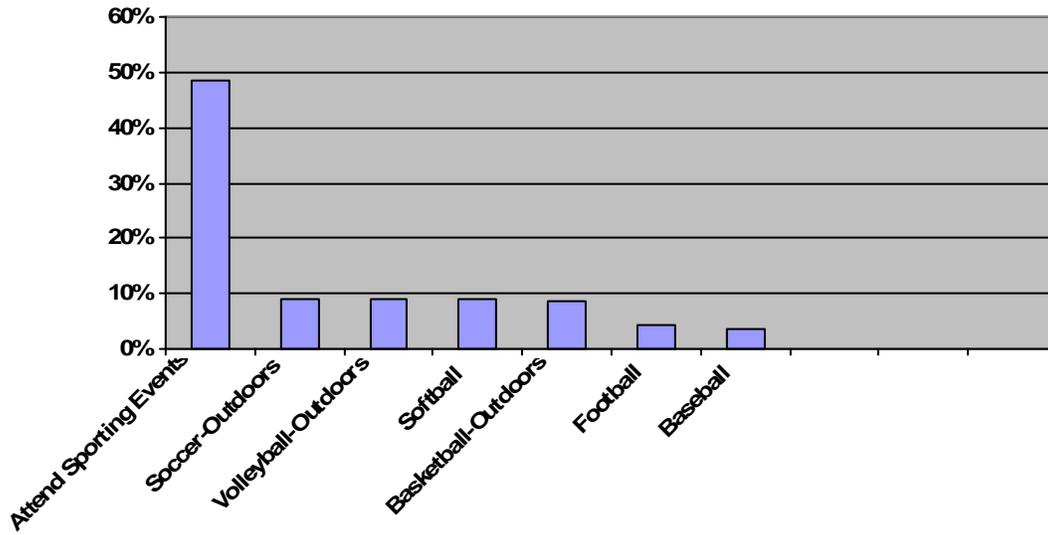


²⁶ NC SCORP P. II-3-10.

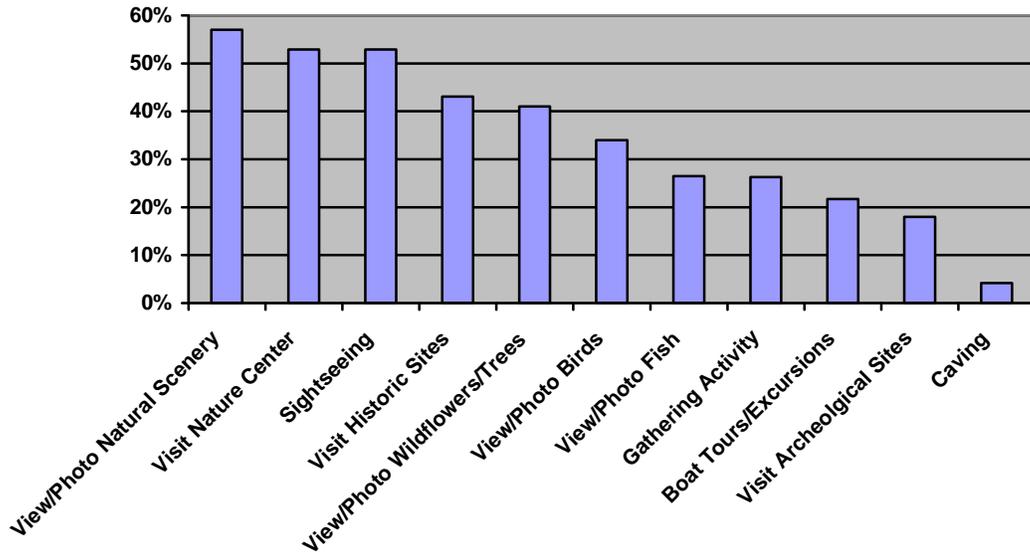
ii) Developed Setting Activities 2009:



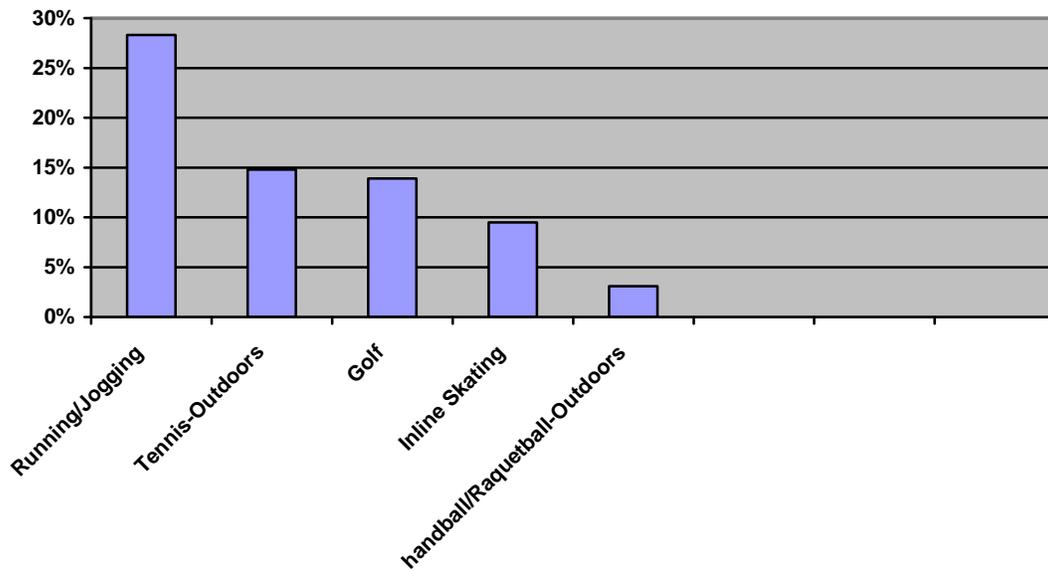
iii) Team Sports Activities 2009:



iv) Viewing and Learning Activity 2009:



v) Individual Outdoor Sports Activities 2009:



vi) Summary of 2009 Percentages of NC Residents Participating in Outdoor Recreation Activities

Rank	Activity	Percent	Rank	Activity	Percent
1	Walk for Pleasure	82%	41	Coldwater Fishing	11.5%
2	Family Gathering	74.6%	42	Hunting	9.9%

3	Gardening or Landscaping	65.4%	43	Inline Skating	9.5%
4	Driving for Pleasure	58.2%	44	Rafting	9.3%
5	View/photo Natural Scenery	57%	45	Soccer-Outdoors	9%
6	Visit Nature Centers, etc.	52.9%	46	Volleyball-Outdoors	9%
7	Sightseeing	52.9%	47	Softball	8.9%
8	Picnicking	50%	48	Basketball-Outdoors	8.5%
9	Attend Sports Events	48.6%	49	Backpacking	8.4%
10	Visit a Beach	44.2%	50	Use Personal Watercraft	8%
11	Visit Historic Sites	43.1%	51	Sledding	8%
12	View/Photo Other Wildlife	43%	52	Horseback Ridding	7.8%
13	View/Photo Wildflowers, Trees	41%	53	Horseback Riding on Trails	7.3%
14	Swimming in an Outdoor Pool	39.9%	54	Big Game Hunting	7.2%
15	Swimming in Lakes, Streams, etc	39.7%	55	Canoeing	6.7%
16	Yard Games, e.g., Horseshoes	38.5%	56	Small Game Hunting	6.4%
17	View/Photograph Birds	34%	57	Waterskiing	6.3%
18	Bicycling	31%	58	Downhill Skiing	6.1%
19	Boating	31%	59	Mountain Climbing	5.3%
20	Freshwater Fishing	30.9%	60	Football	4.2%
21	Attend Outdoor Concerts, Plays, etc.	30.6%	61	Caving	4.2%
22	Visit a Primitive Area	29.8%	62	Snorkeling	4.1%
23	Day Hiking	29.7%	63	Sailing	3.7%
24	Running or jogging	28.3%	64	Baseball	3.5%
25	Visit a Farm	28.2%	65	Anadromous Fishing	3.1%
26	View/Photograph Fish	26.5%	66	Kayaking 3.1	3.1%
27	Gather Mushrooms, Berries, etc.	26.3%	67	Handball or racquetball-outdoors	3.1%
28	Warm water Fishing	25.9%	68	Snowboarding	3.1%
29	Visit Other Waterside (not a beach)	24.4%	69	Orienteering	3%
30	Motor boating	22.5%	70	Rowing	2.5%
31	Boat Tours or Excursions	21.7%	71	Rock Climbing	2.3%
32	Drive Off-Road (any type)	20.7%	72	Ice skating outdoors	2.1%
33	Developed Camping	20.5%	73	Surfing	1.8%
34	Visit Archeological	18%	74	Migratory bird	1.7%

	Sites			hunting	
35	35 Snow/Ice Activities (any type)	17.9%	75	Snowmobiling	1.5%
36	Saltwater Fishing	17%	76	Scuba Diving	1%
37	Mountain Biking	15.7%	77	Cross Country Skiing	1%
38	Tennis Outdoors	14.8%	78	Windsurfing	0.5%
39	Primitive Camping	14.6%	79	Snowshoeing	0.2%
40	Golf	13.9%	80	Ice fishing	0%

To help address the recreation demand created by this increasing participation, many local governments across the state are planning to increase the recreational facilities and parks available to their residents. In completing the 2006-2007 Municipal, County Park, and Recreation Services Survey, the Recreation Resource Service at N.C. State University surveyed local parks and recreation departments to determine their capital improvement needs for the next 10 years. Of the 219 departments contacted, 105, or just about 50%, responded. The responding departments collectively reported that they had capital improvement needs of more than \$230 million that they were planning to address. ²⁷

c. Union County Recreation Preferences:

Finish this out with input from surveys and meetings

Union County residents may have the same preferences for passive outdoor recreational pursuits, as do other residents in North Carolina and across the nation. When asked in the July 2010 as part of the Trust for Public Lands' " Benchmark Study of Residents of Union County, North Carolina, What types of recreational activities they engaged in within 20 miles of their homes, responding County residents answered as follows:

- Walking 59%
- Biking 23%
- Hiking 18%
- Swimming 16%
- Gardening 14%
- Fishing 13%
- Recreational Sports 10%
- Running or jogging 9%
- Hunting 6%
- Camping 5%
- Nature or Bird Watching 4%
- Motor-boating 4%

²⁷ NC SCORP p I-11

- Riding Horses 2%
- Canoeing or Kayaking 2%
- Riding ATVs 2%
- Sailing 1%
- Photography 1%
- Other 14%
- None 13%

The WCRA success in rebuilding its annual participation levels from nothing to 600 in about a year indicates that interest in traditional team sports activity may always be the foundation of recreation in a small town like Wingate.

4. Industry Level of Service Standards:

This section of the needs assessment projects any adequacy, surplus, or deficiency in Wingate's existing outdoor parks and recreation facilities by comparing those facilities to a parks and recreation industry level of service planning standard of facilities needed, based on population of a community's service area. A service area could be a neighborhood, or a town, city, or an entire county. Wingate's service area is believed to just the Town of Wingate. There are two sets of industry level of service standards, which are helpful in trying to project park and recreation needs based on population. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) is a national non-profit, professional organization that assists national, state, and local parks and recreation professionals in planning and managing their outdoor park and recreation facilities. In 1983, the NRPA developed its Classification System Guidelines²⁸ to provide basic standards for park and recreation facilities planning. This system recommends the number of various park and recreation facilities based on a service area's population. These recommendations are as follows:

- .17 miles of walking trail per 1,000 residents
- 1 basketball court per 2,000 residents
- 1 tennis court per 2,000 residents
- 1 baseball field per 5,000 residents
- 1 soccer field per 10,000 residents
- 1 football field per 10,000 residents

Urban level models form the basis of the standards. They are not ideal for analyzing long-range recreation needs over time in small towns like

²⁸ Surprisingly these guidelines cannot be found on the NRPA's web site. The can, however, be found as part of recreation plans from other communities by searching the Internet for them.

Wingate, where populations, in addition to being low, do not change much over time. In 2003, therefore, RPI Consulting, Inc., a sports marketing research company, developed “Small Community Parks and Recreation Planning Standards” for the state of Colorado. Actual use patterns and desires of small town residents in Colorado form the basis for this guide, and it may reflect park and recreation needs in smaller towns more accurately. In examining Wingate’s park and recreation needs, this study will use the Colorado level of service standards.

This Colorado planning guide recommends that small towns use, as a general rule of thumb, the provision of 14 acres of park and recreation dedicated land for each 1,000 residents in the service area. Wingate currently has 39 park acres. According to this rule, it should currently have 59.85 acres, 74.76 by 2020 and 89.74 by 2030. For specific types of activities, which may be appropriate for Wingate, the guide recommends the following standards:

Facility Category	Facility Type	# Facilities Per 1,000 Residents in Service Area
Sports Fields	Soccer/Multi-Use Field	0.95
	Baseball/Softball Field	0.61
	Tennis Court	0.97
Courts	Basketball Court	0.91
	Volleyball Court	0.13
	Small Skatepark-7,000 SF	0.16
	Full-Sized Skatepark-17,000SF	0.06
Outdoor Recreation	BMX Track (Standard ABA Certified)	0.16
	Paved Multi-Use Trail (per Mile)	1.04
	Dirt/Gravel Multi-use Trail (Per Mile)	2.33
	Playground (Per 3,200 SF of fully developed area)	0.16
Leisure	Family Picnic Area	6.25
	Group Picnic Area (With Shelter)	0.36
Other Facilities	Park Bench	7.69
	Swimming Pool	0.12

This guide also provides recommended capacity levels, in terms of total users accommodated by a facility. If a facility, such as a play field, is used by, or accommodates, a number of players above the recommended limit, this guide considers that facility to be “over capacity”, and an indication that another such facility is needed. The capacity recommendations for facilities that relate to recreation in Wingate are as follows:

Type of Facility	Capacity Use Limit in # of Participants
Soccer/Multi-Use Field	169
Baseball/Softball Field	327

**Surplus or Deficit of Park and Recreation Facilities-Based on Industry
Level of Service Standards
Town of Wingate 2011-2030 System-Wide Park and Recreation
Strategic Plan**



Outdoor Facility Type	Level of Service Standard	2012		2020		2030		
		Current Level of Service (# Facilities)	RPI Small Town Standard	Town Population	2010 No Build Surplus or Deficit (RPI Small Town Standard Town Service Area)	Town Population	2020 No Build Surplus or Deficit (RPI Small Town Standard Town Service Area)	Town Population
Baseball-Softball Fields	2*	0.61 Field/1,000 People	4,275	0	5,344	-1	6,413	-2
Soccer/Multi-Use Fields	1*	0.95 Field/1,000 people	4,275	-3	5,344	-4	6,413	-5
Full-Size Skateboard Park (17,000)	0	0.06 Park/1,000 people	4,275	0	5,344	0	6,413	0
Tennis Courts	0	0.97 Field/1,000 people	4,275	-4	5,344	-5	6,413	-6
Basketball Courts	0	0.91 Court/1,000 people	4,275	-4	5,344	-5	6,413	-6
Volleyball Court	0	0.13 Court/1,000 people	4,275	0	5,344	0	6,413	0
Small Skateboard Park (7,000 SF)	0	0.16/1,000 people	4,275	0	5,344	0	6,413	0
BMX Track	0	0.16 Track/1,000 people	4,275	0	5,344	0	6,413	0
Dirt/Gravel Multi-Use Trail	¾ Mile	2.33 Miles/1,000 people	4,275	-10	5,344	-13	6,413	-15

Playground Areas	1	0.16 Area/1,000 people	4,275	0	5,344	0	6,413	0
Picnic Areas	1	0.36 Areas/1,000 People	4,275	0	5,344	-1	6,413	-1
Swimming Pool	0	0.12 Pools/1,000 People	4,275	0	5,344	0		0

*Not included among Wingate facilities are the soccer fields currently located at Jesse Helms Park, or the baseball fields planned for the park since the WCRA does not use the facilities due to high County use fees and its predominantly low to moderate-income participation base.

5. Local Recreational Preferences:

Local park and recreational preferences have been expressed in several ways over the past few years. These are discussed below.

a) Wingate's 2020 Comprehensive Plan

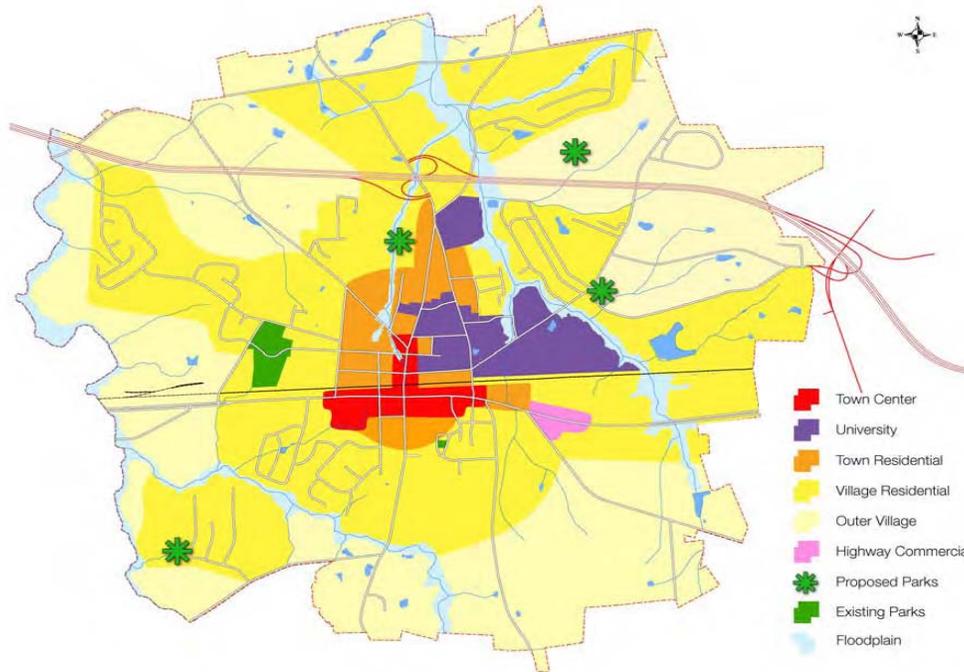
During the preparation of Wingate's 2020 Comprehensive Plan, Wingate residents were surveyed to determine local feelings about parks and open space. Residents responded as follows:

- 44% expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of open space in Wingate
- 34% expressed dissatisfaction with the accessibility of parks and open spaces
- 86% expressed the belief that parks and open spaces were important quality of life amenities
- 96% believed that Wingate should invest in parks and open space development

The plan eventually recommended the development of four new parks by 2025 located as follows:

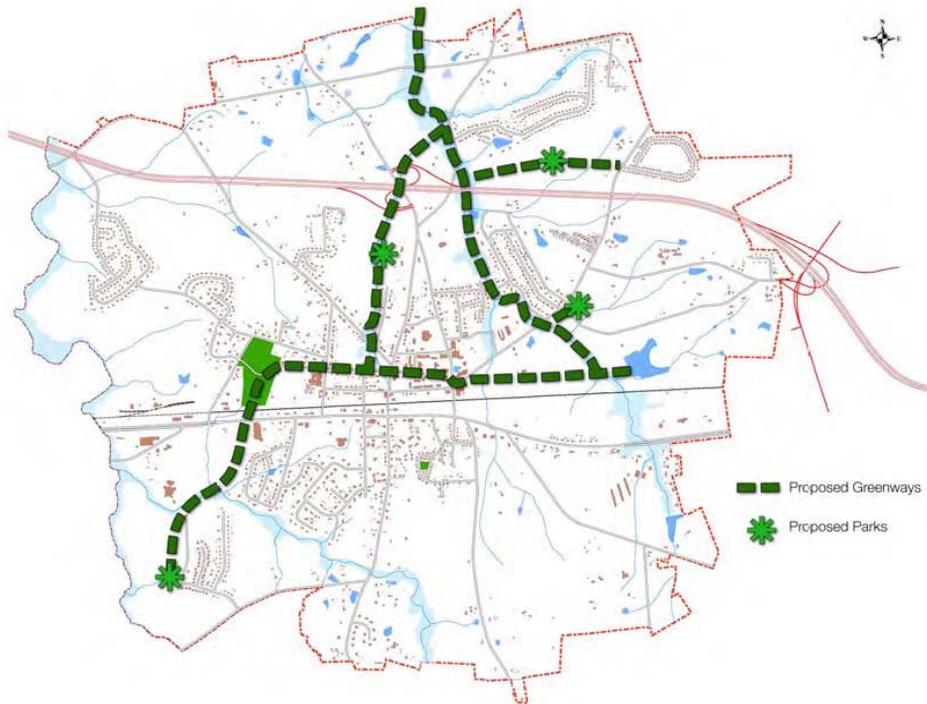
- Spring Branch south of the proposed Monroe bypass interchange
- Along an unnamed tributary of Meadow Branch northeast of Wingate just south of the Windwood residential subdivision
- Along E. Wilson Rd. just east of Meadow Branch at the southern end of the College Park residential subdivision.
- The now functioning Jesse Helms Soccer Park located southwest of Wingate along Summerlin Dairy Rd.

These locations can be seen on the map below. When asked to identify important issues related to parks, 66% of respondents identified greenways as the most important issue.



The Comprehensive Plan notes that sidewalks are incorporated into much of the central, developed part of Wingate, and that the low volume of local automobile traffic encourages bicycle use on local streets. It also points out, however, that there are currently no or any specific plans, to develop pedestrian and bicycle improvements like bike lanes and greenways. The plan recommends the development of greenway trails, as shown on the map below, which would connect Wingate's existing park and the other parks suggested in the plan, as well as the development of a pedestrian and bicycle master plan and, or a greenway and parks master plan. The Comprehensive Plan provided recommendations for the preparation of a greenway master plan and d the development of a greenway system. The preparation of a master plan was recommended as a short-term action plan task to be developed in 1-3 years, or during the 2010- 2013 period. The development of a greenway system was assigned as a medium term action plan task to be completed in 3-5 years, or during the 2013-2015 period.

Suggested Greenway and Bicycle Routes



b. 2012 Park and Recreational Survey:

c. 2012 Public Park and Recreation Input Meetings:

d. 2012 Park and Recreation Advisory Committee:

Section III: Conclusions

The potential for continued rapid growth and diversification of Wingate's population, changing national and state recreational trends, recreation industry level of service standards, and local recreational preferences indicate that Wingate may need to add additional recreation facilities during the period 2012-20230, some facilities like those all ready available and some facilities that are not currently provided.

A. Implication of Population Changes:

Wingate has recently experienced rapid population growth, which could continue at slower yet still significant pace through 2030. Between 2000 and 2010, Wingate's population grew by 78% to 4,275. During the period 2010-2020, the Town's population could increase by 25% to 5,344. After another increase of 20% during the decade 2020-2030, Wingate's population could reach 6,413; an increase of 50% over the size of the 2010 population and a 270% increase over its 2000 population size.²⁹ More people likely means a greater demand on existing recreational facilities that may lead to a need to add additional facilities.

Wingate has also recently experienced significant changes in the racial composition of its population that may continue. Between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of Wingate's population, comprised by Whites, experienced a sharp decline of 13%, dropping from 70% of the total population to 61%. During this same period, the percentage of the Town's population comprised by African Americans experienced a significant increase of 20%, rising from 26% of the total population to 31%. The percentage of Wingate's population comprised by Hispanics experienced the most significant change, an increase of 225%, rising from only 4% of the total to 13%. If this diversification of Wingate's population continues, it could affect the demand for recreational facilities. A major increase in the size and percentage of the Town's Hispanic population between 2012 and 2030 could create a need for additional soccer facilities.

Over the period 2012-2030, Wingate's population could age significantly creating a major shift in the percentage of the Town's population comprised by specific recreational age groups. Although the percentage of the population they comprise could drop, the number of youth aged 5-19, which are the focus of organized, traditional team sports activities

²⁹ See the discussion about population trends beginning on page 14.

such as soccer, football, baseball/softball, and basketball could double. The number of young adults aged 20-44, which are more likely to be interested in active outdoor sports activities such as softball leagues, golf, running, and bicycling will likely increase, but its percentage of the total population, and perhaps its importance in Wingate's recreational demand could drop dramatically. Both the number and percentage of the population comprised by the Older Adult Group, aged 45-59, and the Senior Group, aged 60+, could increase; dramatically so for Seniors. This segment of Wingate's population is likely to be healthier and live longer than previous generations. With longer and healthier lives, people are remaining active in their chosen activities longer in life, creating additional demand for recreation areas and facilities. While seniors participate in outdoor recreation less frequently than younger people do, seniors participate more frequently than in past years. An increasing interest in physical fitness and improved health has led to more participation. If higher participation rates are coupled with large increases in the over-65 age group, the elderly could demand services to a much greater degree than they do now. Increased demand, therefore, for activities that have high participation by older Americans could occur. These include walking, sightseeing, attending family gatherings, visiting a beach or waterside, picnicking, visiting an historic site or nature center, bird-watching, wildlife viewing, attending concerts, nature study, fishing, swimming, motor-boating, biking and golf.³⁰

B. Implication of National and State Recreation Trends:

Participation in recreation activities has been increasing at the national and state level and could increase locally. Nationally, between 1982 and 2000, participation in recreational activity increased by 10%, while the participation level in North Carolina increased 50% between 1995 and 2000.³¹ When surveyed to gain public input about the Carolina Thread Trail, 56% of responders indicated that they exercised; 19% very frequently, 21% frequently, and 26% sometimes. Increased recreational participation levels on the part of Wingate's population, reinforced with the population's potential for rapid growth could place a high demand on existing recreational facilities creating a need to build additional facilities during the period 2012-2030.

Since the mid 1980s, the increase in participation in non-traditional, individualized, and more passive outdoor recreational activities, such as

³⁰ The 2009-2013 NC State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Section IV p. 6, accessed @ www.nc.parks.gov.

³¹ See the discussion on the trend of increasing recreation participation on p 19.

canoeing and kayaking, exercise walking, bicycling, and hiking has been documented in numerous studies and surveys at the national and state level. At the same time, interest and participation in traditional team oriented sports recreational activity, such as baseball, softball, football, and basketball has declined, although the popularity of soccer has increased. Nationally, by 1997, walking was the most popular form of outdoor recreation. In North Carolina, between 1995 and 2006, the number of people participating in trail/street/road activities increased 56.5%, the number participating in viewing and learning activity increased 43.4%, the number involved in camping increased 59%, and the number of people participating in outdoor adventure activities grew by 87.5%. During this same decade, however, the number of people participating in team sport activities declined by 1.5%. In providing information for the planners of the Carolina Thread Trail, Union County survey takers indicated their favorite forms of exercise to be of a passive, individualized type including walking 59%, Biking 23%, Hiking 18%, and sports 10%. If Wingate's population exhibits these same recreational preferences, the town may need to add facilities such as greenway and nature trails and bike lanes.

C. The Implication of Industry Level of Service Standards:

Recreation industry level of service standards provide a recommended number for various types of recreational facilities based on the size of a community's serviced area. According to the RPI University of Colorado standards, if Wingate built no additional facilities during the period 2012-2030, the Town would have the following recreational deficiencies.

Type of Facility	2012 Deficiency	2020 Deficiency	2030 Deficiency
Baseball/Softball Fields	0	-1 Field	-2 Fields
Soccer/Multi-Purpose Fields	-3 Fields	-4 Fields	-5 Fields
Tennis Courts	-4 Courts	-5 Courts	-6 Courts
Basketball Courts	-4 Courts	-5 Courts	-6 Courts
Dirt/Gravel Trails	-10 Miles	-13 Miles	-15 Miles
Picnic Areas	0	-1	-1

What about the expansion of Jesse Helms Park by 2015 providing more of this stuff?

D. The Implications of Local Recreational Preferences:

Section 4: Recommendations

A. Recreation Management, Program and Funding Issues:

1. The Role of the Park and Recreation/Greenway Advisory Committee:

a. Problem:

Until recently, no organization existed in Wingate to speak to recreational issues and provide advice and comment to the Wingate Board of Commissioners on recreational policy.

b. Possible Action:

Over the past year or so, The Wingate Community Recreation Association has reorganized itself into an effective non-profit recreational programming provider. For the preparation of this plan and a greenway master plan, the Wingate Board of Commissioners formed the Park, Recreation, and Greenway Advisory Committee. It is recommended that the Town consider both the WCRA and the PRGAC as permanent, important players in the recreation arena in Wingate. Wingate's Board of Commissioners should view the Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Committee as a permanent, formalized, standing committee, with a membership appointed by the Board and representing the following constituencies:

- Wingate Board of Commissioners
- Wingate professional management staff
- Wingate Community Recreation Association
- Wingate's senior and minority communities
- Wingate University

The Board of Commissioners should consult with the committee on matters relating to management, improvement, and expansion of park, recreation, and greenway facilities, policies, and programs, such as the setting of the Town's recreation budget and the preparation and submission of park, recreation, and greenway grant applications.

c. Justification:

Previous WCRA inactivity and the lack of a public recreation representation have hindered the provision, of recreational programs in Wingate.

2. Town Relationship with the Wingate Community Recreation Association

a. Problem:

The Wingate Community Recreation Association, operated by one parent from her home, provides team sports recreational programming for the community to approximately 600 youth and adults, yet has no formalized relationship with and receives no funding from the Town of Wingate.

b. Possible Action:

Wingate may wish to consider strengthening and formalizing this relationship. Wingate may also want to consider providing a small amount of funds to the WCRA on a case-by-case, or recurring basis.

c. Justification:

Two major issues affect the WCRA's ability to provide recreational programming. Since it serves a low to moderate-income participant population, the organization keeps its participation fees low. Consequently, the WCRA cannot afford the Country's user fees for use of the soccer fields at the Jesse Helms Park Soccer Complex. The baseball/softball and soccer/football fields at Community Park also lack exterior lighting. These situations curtail the WCRA's ability to provide soccer practice and game opportunities. The execution of a formal agreement with the WCRA to use Town recreational facilities could allow the WCRA to tap funding from the Union County Athletic Council, for improvements to the facilities, which the Town cannot obtain. A small amount Town funding might also help address these issues.

3. Allow Use of Community Center for Senior Activities:

a. Problem:

The WCRA would like to offer recreational programming for Wingate's senior population aged 60+, but has no space to offer such programming.

b. Possible Action:

Wingate could make such programming possible by allowing the WCRA to use of the Community Center building at Community Park at no cost for such use.

c. Justification:

Seniors will comprise a larger percentage of Wingate's population over the next several years and there are no programs for this group. Between 2010 and 2030, the number of senior in Wingate's population could increase by 345% from 439 to 1,515 individuals, and the percentage of the Wingate's population comprised by seniors could increase from 10% to 24%.

B. Short-Term Projects 2012-2016

1. Greenways:

a. Problem:

b. Possible Action:

Develop the University Loop Trail

c. Justification:

2. Community Park Play Field Facilities:

a. Problem:

The lack of exterior lighting on the park's baseball/softball, and soccer/football fields prevents the fields' use at night, limiting the time that the Wingate Community Athletic Association can schedule practice and games. The lack of a proper surface on the outdoor track limits its use by the WCRA.

b. Possible Action:

c. Justification:

Tennis and outdoor basketball Cts.?

B. Mid-Term Projects 2017-2021

1. Build New Babe Ruth Base Ball Field

C. Long-Term Projects 2022-2030

Appendix A: Park and Recreation Survey and Results

A. General Parks and Recreation:

Q 1: Describe the expected participation level, of you and your immediate family, (parents, children, grandparents), with Wingate’s recreational activities and facilities over the next several years? Choose only one level under each column.

Level of Participation	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years
High level of participation			
Moderate level of participation			
No/Low level of participation			

Q 2: Over the next several years, what type of activities do you think you and your immediate family will be involved in? You may choose more than one activity under each column.

Activity Type	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years
More active team-oriented outdoor sports played on fields or courts			
More passive, individualized outdoor activities such as walking, running, jogging, tennis, nature viewing, hiking, camping, and boating, etc.			
Indoor activities such as aerobics, exercising with weight machines, social activities, making things, learning, etc.			

Q 3: In terms of recreation policy over the next several years, which age group do you feel should be Wingate 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th priorities? Assign each group a 1, 2, 3 or 4 in each column.

Age Group	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years
Youth Age 5-19			
Young Adults Age 20-44			
Older Adults Age 45-59			
Senior Age 60+			

Q 4: If, over the next several years, Wingate could add new facilities that it does not already have, what would be your 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th choices? Place a 1, 2, 3, or 4 in each column

Facility	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Stream-Based Greenway or Nature Trails				
Rock Climbing Wall				
Indoor Gym				
Tennis Courts				
Outside Basketball Courts				
Skate-park/Rollerblading				
Swimming Facility				
Golf Facilities				
Bicycling Facilities/Lanes				
Outdoor events venue				
Other (Identify)				

Q 5. What type of recreation activities do you think should be provided for seniors (60+) in Wingate?

Activity	Select
Outside Activity	
Walking	
Exercise Stations	
Nature Viewing	
Biking	
Indoor Activity	
Walking	
Exercising	
Social Activity: Dances, Games, Crafts, Learning	
Trips: Shopping, Events, Historical Sites	

B. Greenway System: (paved or natural trails/paths along local stream for walking, running, biking)

Q 6. How important do you believe it is that Wingate develop a comprehensive, multi-segment greenway system as part of its overall park and recreation strategy? Not very important___ Important___ Very Important___

Q 7. If you believe that Wingate should develop a greenway system, what to you

would be the most important characteristics of such a greenway? Choose those important to you.

Connectivity-connecting to local schools, parks, university, etc.____ Serving all section of Town as much as possible____ Extending away from Town to reach other towns or locations____

Q 8: What type of greenway facility would you favor?

A more expensive (\$130/Foot), wider paved trail that could be used for walking, running, leisurely walking, bike riding, family strolling etc. ____

A less expensive (\$4/Foot), narrower natural nature trail that would be used primarily by serious exercise walkers, runners, and mountain bikers____

A combination of both types as appropriate for the specific location____

Q 9. In a Wingate greenway system, which stream locations, in your opinion, are the most important to include? Check one column only for each stream.

Stream	Location	Importance Rating		
		Very Important	Important	Not Very Important
Meadow Br.	East-North Wingate			
Spring Br.	North-Central Wingate			
Flagg Br.	West Wingate			
Ray's Frk.	South Wingate			

C. Demographic Information:

Q 10. Please check the following demographic information about you, so that the town can show granting agencies that the results of this survey are representative of Wingate's population.

Race: ___White ___African American ___Hispanic ___Other Gender: ___Male ___Female Residency: ___Wingate___ Union Co ___Other___ Household Income: Below \$25,000 a Year___ \$25,000-\$50,000 a Year ___Above \$50,000___ Age___ Does Your Family Participate in Recreation Activity in Wingate: ___Yes ___No

Appendix B: Park and Recreation Capital Improvement Plan