

8 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Engagement Plan + Process
- Community Input Sessions
- Guiding Principles Development





Community engagement and input is an essential part of any planning process. The most effective plans are firmly rooted in the realities and visions of the communities that created them. This plan uses a combination of input from Apex residents, the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission, Town Council, and the PRCR Department staff to inform the community engagement portion of the information-gathering process.

ENGAGEMENT PLAN + PROCESS

The PRCR Department and the project team designed the robust public engagement plan to maximize the input. The process was intended to be equitable and inclusive, offering a variety of feedback opportunities and methods for all community members to have a comfortable platform for expressing their input.



Figure 8.1 - Peakfest 2021

- > Asset Mapping Sessions
 - September 27, 2021 – Staff
 - September 28, 2021 – Staff
 - October 12, 2021 – Town Council
- > Public Input Meeting #1 – October 7, 2021
- > Public Opinion Survey
 - October 7-24, 2021
- > Scientific Survey
 - Winter 2021
- > Special Event Attendance #1 – Peak Fest, September 11, 2021
- > Focus Group Meetings
 - Non-Athletics Group, January 31, 2022
 - Seniors and Disabled Populations, January 31, 2022
 - Cultural Arts and Special Events, February 1, 2022
 - Athletic Programs, February 1, 2022
- > Special Event Attendance #2 – Peak Fest, May 7, 2021
- > Visioning Sessions
 - PRCR Advisory Commission, April 27, 2022
 - Staff, May 11, 2022
 - Town Council, May 17, 2022
 - Public Input Meeting #2 – June 22, 2022
- > West Street Park, April 3, 2022
- > Recommendations + Implementation Plan Work Sessions
 - PRCR Advisory Commission, November 30, 2022
 - Town Council, January 17, 2023



Figure 8.2 - Public Engagement Plan Summary

Though each meeting with community members and department staff had its own purpose and outcomes, the meetings towards the beginning of the planning process had a broad approach with the Department and project team intending to inform attendees about the planning process and solicit input regarding community values, customer satisfaction and the recreational needs and wants of the community. Meetings later in the process took a more focused approach, seeking feedback on proposed recommendations. Input from all meetings drove the creation of the Department’s vision framework, which is the foundation for this plan’s recommendations and implementation plan.

The community input process included a statistically valid survey which polled a randomly selected sample of the Town’s population. Scientific survey is an approved market research tool that provides an opportunity to reach individuals who would not typically attend a meeting or otherwise participate in a public engagement process. The survey also balances responses from special interest groups. In addition to scientific survey, the Town administered a web-based public input survey that was open to all residents through publicinput.com website. The details of the community engagement meetings are described below, including the purpose, input strategy, and outcomes summary.

Asset Mapping

Asset mapping is an information gathering technique that addresses strengths, opportunities, and challenges from an asset-based perspective. Assets are defined as anything that provides tangible or intangible value to the community. Examples include traditional concepts of assets, such as vehicles and buildings and non-traditional concepts of assets, such as relationships, community support, quality staff members and more.

Purpose

To receive detailed input from PRCR Department Staff and Town Council on how the Town’s parks, recreation programs, cultural resources and greenways make the community better and stand out among peer communities, how to strengthen park programs and facilities and identify what could stand in the way of efforts to improve the system.

Method

Asset mapping work sessions included two staff meetings and one Town Council meeting. The meetings included a short description of the comprehensive planning process, followed by an asset mapping exercise intended to generate feedback on the Department’s strengths and successes and identify potential challenges and areas for growth. The project team engaged with staff in a virtual forum and facilitated asset mapping using the online engagement tool ConceptBoard. After a brief presentation about the benefits of the comprehensive parks and recreation master plan, elements included within the plan and the roles the parks and recreation department staff and Council play in developing the plan, staff were presented with a series of four questions. The group was encouraged to respond to the questions by placing virtual sticky notes over the four virtual whiteboards or responding to the questions in the meeting chat.

The asset mapping questions include the following:

- › What about parks and recreation makes your community better?
- › What is your parks and recreation Department known for?
- › What would strengthen the Department’s positive impact on the community?
- › What are the most significant threats to the Departments assets and reputation?

Staff Asset Mapping Summary

- › Apex PRCR Department staff recognize the role recreation programs, activities, events, and festivals play in creating community bonds and a sense of togetherness.
- › Apex’s parks, recreation and greenways system is recognized for the sense of community pride and togetherness conveyed through the variety of popular special events and festivals supported by the Department.
- › First-rate customer service is a critical attribute of the Department and staff believes they do an outstanding job responding to residents’ recreational needs and maintenance requests.
- › The staff is in favor of adopting environmentally sustainable operations and committing to extending resources to environmental/outdoor education facilities and programs.
- › There was a shared sense of concern among staff about the demand for parks, programs and greenways outpacing the department’s capacity to provide quality recreation amenities and programs. Staff presume the Department would be empowered to better support the Town’s recreational needs by investing in the human capital needed to expand park operations and recreation programs.
- › Providing ‘something for everyone’ by way of recreational programs and services creates a sense of pride among staff in the work they do to serve the community.
- › The Town of Apex is home to a remarkable greenway system with purposefully designed and planned connections.

Town Council Asset Mapping Summary

- › Apex Town Council believes that Parks, Recreation, Cultural Resources and Greenways create community connections, promote unity, and establish sense of place.
- › Environmental stewardship is a value upheld by Town Council. Members agree that PRCR Department excels at strategically acquiring and providing natural, open spaces for residents to connect with the outdoors, appreciate nature, and achieve positive health outcomes. They also were in agreement over the need for further investment in passive parks to mutually serve as amenities and environmental resilience assets.



- › Members concur that the dedicated Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Staff do an outstanding job serving the needs of residents by providing high-quality and well-planned programs and events.
- › Town Council perceives the primary challenge to the assets identified to be keeping up with the pace of growth.
- › Council expressed the desire to push Apex above and beyond the national standard by proposing projects and ideas that are unique and ahead of future trends, thus ensuring continued success of the department.
- › An idea unique to this group; Apex Town Council members also noted the importance of identifying public/private partnership opportunities, as well as ascertaining funding opportunities through the planning process.

Asset Mapping Common Themes

The asset mapping sessions with the PRCR Department staff and Town Council revealed several aligned thoughts and sentiments. Both staff and Council believe that parks can create a shared sense of place and create connections throughout the community. Both groups also recognize the need to examine the Department's budget and revenue to make informed decisions relating to funding and staffing needs. Town Council and staff also support the idea that the Town's parks and greenways provide access to healthy outdoor spaces and experiences. The chart below shows the common themes revealed in the asset mapping sessions.

TOWN COUNCIL ASSET MAPPING	STAFF ASSET MAPPING MEETING #1	STAFF ASSET MAPPING MEETING #2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Community Connection › Growth › Fiscal Responsibility › Outdoor Experience › Health + Wellness › Quality › Inclusion › Experience › Caring › Human Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Quality › Variety › Community Connection › Resources › Human Resources › Inclusion › Communication › Experience › Health + Wellness › Caring › Outdoor Experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Sense of Place › Greenways and Transportation › Variety › Quality › Outdoor Experiences › Human Resources › Organization › Growth › Sustainability › Structure

VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE #1

October 7th, 2021

Purpose

To seek input from the public regarding recreational facility, greenways and trails and program needs and explain the planning process.



Method

The project team hosted a two-hour public virtual open house via Zoom, an online meeting platform. Open house participants were given a brief presentation about the Town's past planning efforts, the comprehensive planning process, components/contents of the plan and a snapshot of Apex's current recreation inventory. Attendees took part in several polling questions and had the opportunity to ask questions and express opinions using Zoom's question and answer widget. A total of 56 individuals attended/participated in the meeting.

Participants were posed three open ended questions designed to capture their sentiment regarding the positive effect parks, recreation, greenways, cultural resources and open space have on their lives. Responses were captured as a word cloud as a means of creating a visual representation of the text. The more often respondents mention a specific word, for example a park facility (greenways), the bigger and bolder the word appears, pointing to its importance.

Summary

- › Participants in the virtual open house conveyed their sense of pride in the Department's ability to foster a sense of community, to connect people and to provide access to nature.
- › Greenways, tennis, playgrounds, and greenspace emerged as the tangible recreational facilities in which participants feel the greatest sense of pride.
- › Similarly, participants expressed that greenways, nature, tennis, and walking are the Town-provided recreational resources they enjoy most.
- › Participants noted that during the peak of the pandemic, access to parks and greenways helped them cope by getting exercise, walking, playing tennis and getting out of the house and into nature for fresh air.



Figure 8.3 - Table and Quotes from Asset Mapping Sessions

What about Apex PRCR evokes a sense of pride?



How did parks and greenways allow you to cope during the peak of the pandemic?



Figure 8.4 - Poll Answers from Virtual Open House



What do you enjoy most about the parks, recreation, greenways and cultural resources provided by the Town of Apex?



Figure 8.5 - Poll Answers from Virtual Open House

Greenways

- Virtual open house participants were vocal about greenways in Apex. The conversation focused on the desire for and potential strategies to increase connectivity throughout the Town by closing greenway gaps and expanding the infrastructure.
- Some of the concerns mentioned by participants included traffic conflict and safe crossings, especially along Highway 55.
- Participants also inquired about current project updates including Beaver Creek Greenway and future projects that will include connections to the American Tobacco Trail and to the Town’s parks.

Facilities

- Open House participants were asked how they currently interact with recreational facilities in Apex, how they might see themselves doing so in the future, and which facilities they would like to see added.
- The conversation highlighted the demand for facilities to support the recreational activities in which meeting attendees currently participate. Several participants pointed to a need for pickleball courts, tennis, BMX bike facilities, basketball courts, mountain biking, and community gardens.

Operations/Policies

- Population growth for any jurisdiction results in housing and commercial development and with it, comes the need to ensure equitable access to recreation. Apex residents present at the virtual meeting conveyed their desire for the PRCR Department to continue to identify recreational needs around Apex’s older neighborhoods.
- As the Town looks to future geographic expansion, PRCR Department staff confirmed two parks property acquisitions in the western part of Apex.
- Participants acknowledged that the growing recreation system will need resources to ensure services and facilities are provided at a high level of quality.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Purpose: To hear from residents outside of those who has attended meetings or were randomly selected to participate in the statistically valid survey.

Method: The project team used the Town’s virtual public engagement platform publicinput.com to receive feedback on the following elements of comprehensive plan. The same questions were asked during the first special event attendance at PeakFest.

- Community Values** input focused on identifying which values are important to the community including Health + Wellness, People + Community, Environment + Nature, Culture + Arts, Education + Learning, Equity + Inclusion, Economic Vitality and Connectivity + Growth.
- Amenities and Programming** input focused on the types of recreational amenities and programs residents would like to see added or enhanced in Apex.
- Greenways and Trails** input focused on how people would like to use greenways and trails and what types of experiences they would like to have on those amenities.
- Criteria for Prioritization** input focused on the public’s perception of the most important factors the PRCR Department should take into consideration when prioritizing projects. Residents were asked to rank their top three priorities from the following list: serving stated community needs, exploring new trends and ideas, ensuring affordability to users, maximizing positive economic impact on the community, ensuring accessibility for all users regardless of ability, creating community connections, promoting health and wellness programming, promoting environmental sustainability, promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, physical connectivity throughout Town, or attracting visitors to the area.

Summary

Topmost community values include:

- Environment + Nature
- Health + Wellness
- People + Community

Most desired parks and recreation amenity needs

- Greenways and Trails with Trailheads – 56%
- Water Sports Access (Canoe, Kayak, Paddleboard, Sailing)
- Environmental Conservation, Restoration and Enhancement – 31%

Most desired program and activity needs

- Outdoor Concerts and Movies – 31%
- Fitness and Wellness Programs – 21%
- Aquatics Programs (Swim Lessons, Fitness) – 19%

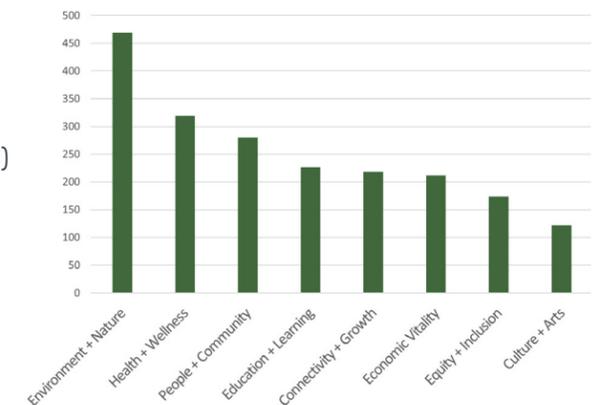


Figure 8.6 - Community Values



Additional Comments/Aspirational Ideas

Although most open-ended remarks centered around the themes observed across all survey responses, it is important to capture the unique ideas that had not been previously mentioned. Some of these ideas are mentioned below:

- › Consider lighted trails at Lake Pine during the holidays
- › Consider more flower gardens in the parks.
- › Expand cultural resources by working with Wake County to get a library west of Interstate 540.
- › Consider blueways/paddle trails, taking advantage of local creeks and neighboring water bodies.
- › Create a lake on par with Raleigh’s Lake Johnson, or Cary’s Bond Park.
- › Expand water sport and ecology programs.
- › Consider water features when developing new and repurposing existing parks.
- › Continue to encourage and support Public Art. Include funding for art by professional artists in future designs for parks and greenways.
- › Accommodate outdoor spaces for all seasons.
- › More cultural events to show how diverse Apex really is.

- › Use Town parks or Town Hall courtyard for event rentals like weddings or parties.
- › Develop Depot Plaza as a park space.
- › Take advantage of the senior center campus by:
 - Offering nature walks in spring and fall around pond and by the old house where there is a nest box and old plantings.
 - Taking advantage of the area crossing the railroad tracks into downtown Apex for history walks.
- › Focus on smaller scale community facilities /opportunities rather than larger regional facilities that attract big organizations and out of town users.

Common Themes

- › Preserving and engaging with nature rose as the most important community value. Open ended comments reinforcing this finding refer to respondents’ desire for dedicated natural areas, open greenspace, passive parks, and more nature programs
- › Greenways and trails with trailheads emerged as the most desired amenity need. The majority of respondents indicated their desire to use greenways for walking, to improve health and wellness, followed closely by connecting with nature. The idea of “bikeways” was mentioned directly and implicitly among several open-ended comments. A significant number of remarks referred to a need for bicycle lanes that are not shared with cars or pedestrians.
- › Responses to program needs varied widely with the top choice for outdoor recreation.

“Make sure that Apex is walkable as the Town grows and connect greenways and sidewalks.”
Quote from Online Questionnaire

SCIENTIFIC SURVEY

Purpose: To solicit feedback on the recreational needs and wants of the community. Responses are reflective of the Town’s demographics.

Number of responses: 513 households, exceeding the goal of 400 residents.

Method: The project team administered a scientific survey in the Winter of 2021. A survey packet was mailed to randomly selected sample households within Apex town limits. Residents were given the option to return the survey response by mail or complete it online on ApexParksSurvey.org. A total of 513 responses were returned with a precision of at least +/- 4.3% and the 95 % level of confidence. A more detailed description of methodology for ensuring statistically valid results is contained in Appendices.

Summary

Priority investment rating – The priority investment rating is an objective tool to evaluate the priority that should be placed on investments in parks and recreation facilities, amenities and programs, especially as resources become available. The priority investment rating combines measures of:

1. The importance residents place on certain facilities, amenities and programs and
2. How many residents have unmet needs for that facility, amenity or program.

High priority facilities

- › Greenway and trails with trailheads (PIR = 162)
- › Aquatics facility (PIR = 147)
- › Water sports access (PIR = 136)
- › Miniature golf (PIR = 102)

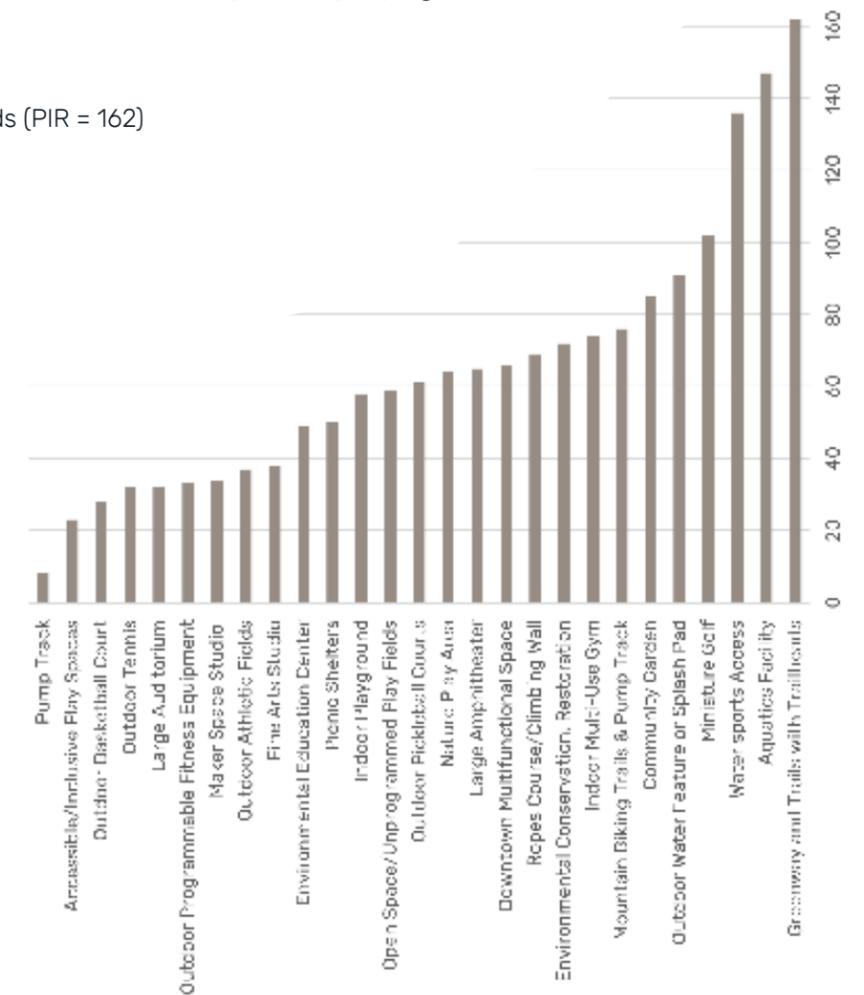
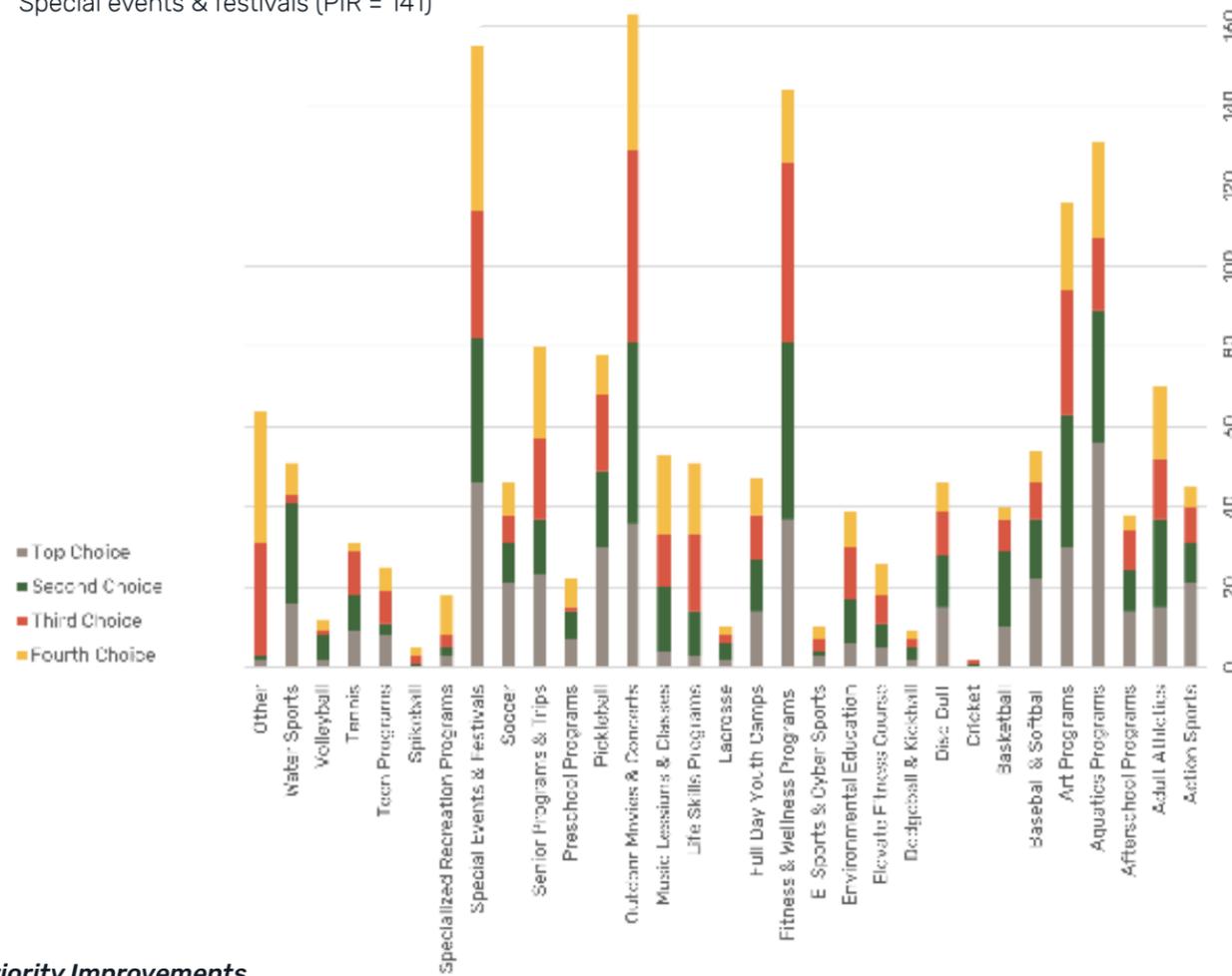


Figure 8.9 - Top Priorities for Investment



High priority programs

- › Outdoor movies and concerts (PIR = 200)
- › Aquatics programs (PIR = 177)
- › Fitness and wellness programs (PIR = 166)
- › Art programs (PIR = 148)
- › Water sports (PIR = 146)
- › Special events & festivals (PIR = 141)



Priority Improvements

The highest levels of support for potential improvements to parks and the recreation system, based on the sum of “very supportive” and “somewhat supportive” were:

- › Improving/upkeeping existing facilities (92%),
- › Develop greenway trails connecting to existing trails (91%),
- › Acquire undeveloped land for future park locations (80%),
- › Implementing sustainability measures to minimize environmental impact of parks and recreation facilities (80%),
- › Increase parkland through public/private partnerships (79%).

Miscellaneous Questions Summary

- › **Program participation ratings:** Approximately 39 percent of households surveyed indicated they had participated in a recreation, athletic or youth/teen program the Department offered during the past 12 months. Ninety-seven gave an “Excellent” or “good” rating when asked to rate the overall quality of the programs they participated in.
- › **Organizations used for parks and recreation facilities:** The organizations that responding households use most for recreation parks and facilities were; Town of Apex (58%), State Parks (56%), adjacent municipality (51%) and County parks (41%). Twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents use the Town of Apex most for their household’s recreation needs.
- › **Barriers to park, facility, and program usage:** Respondents were given a list of fourteen (14) various reasons that prevent them or members of their household from using Town parks/facilities. The top four reasons were: Lack of information/don’t know what is offered (42%), not enough time/too busy (29%), overcrowding (24%) and inconvenient hours of operation (17%).
- › **Community perceptions of the Department:** The highest levels of agreement with various statements regarding the Town Parks and Recreation, based on the sum of “strongly agree” and “agree” responses among residents who had an opinion, were:
 - Public parks add to quality of life in the community (97%),
 - Recreation and parks are an essential service to the town (95%) and
 - I feel safe when visiting parks in the town of apex (89%).
- › **Methods of learning:** Responding households were asked to indicate all the ways they learn currently about Town parks, facilities, and special events.
 - Town website (63%)
 - Word of mouth (56%)
 - Banners in public places (48%)
 - Social media (44%)
- › The sources of information that respondents most prefer to use to learn about Town parks, facilities and special events, based on the sum of respondents’ top choices, were:
 - Town website (37%),
 - Social media (34%) and
 - Direct email (33%).
- › **Funding support:** The potential improvements that respondents indicated they would be most willing to support with tax dollars, based on the sum of respondents’ top three choices, were:
 - Developing greenway trails to connect Town’s existing greenway trail segments (20%),
 - Acquiring undeveloped land for future parkland locations (18%),
 - Constructing an indoor/outdoor aquatics facility (17%).
 - Eighty-three percent (83%) of respondents are “very supportive” (52%) or “supportive” (31%) of the funding of parks and recreation improvements/expansions to be funded with a future bond financed within the existing property tax rate structure.

Figure 8.10 - Recreation Program Importance



SPECIAL EVENT ENGAGEMENT #1 (PEAKFEST 2021)

Purpose: To solicit input regarding community values, recreational facility and program needs, greenways and trails uses and experiences and various criteria to be taken into consideration when prioritizing specific plan components.

Method: The project team hosted a booth at the Town of Apex’s annual PeakFest, a street festival that draws thousands of people to downtown Apex. The festival is the largest public event in Apex. It has been celebrated through music, food, arts and craft displays and activities for all ages for over 40 years. A series of 12 engagement boards were displayed on easels, whereby festival-goers could conveniently provide their input using sticky notes and sticker dots. An introductory board described the comprehensive planning process, including an explanation of its individual steps and the timeline the process will follow. The other engagement boards focused on community values, park facilities, recreational programming, trails and greenways and criteria for prioritization



Figure 8.12 - Peakfest 2021



Figure 8.14 - Peakfest 2021



Figure 8.13 - Peakfest 2021

- **Community Values** input focused on identifying which park focused values are important to the community including: Health + Wellness, People + Community, Environment + Nature, Culture + Arts, Education + Learning, Equity + Inclusion, Economic Vitality and Connectivity + Growth.
- **Amenities and Programming** input focused on the types of recreational amenities and programs residents would like to see added or enhanced in Apex.
- **Greenways and Trails** input focused on how people would like to use greenways and trails and what types of experiences they would like to have on those amenities. A mapping exercise allowed residents to identify destinations they want to access and identify or prioritize greenway and trail corridors. Additionally, participants provided feedback on two town-wide greenways maps. The first map allowed contributors to indicate which corridor, out of ten town-wide planned corridors, should be designated as the highest priority. The second map displayed the Town’s current greenway system and asked participants to mark destinations on the map that they felt should be connected via greenway trails.
- **Prioritization Criteria** input focused on the public’s perception of the most important factors the Apex PRCR Department should take into consideration when prioritizing projects. Participants were asked to rank their top three priorities from the following list: serving stated community needs, exploring new trends and ideas, ensuring affordability to users, maximizing positive economic impact on the community, ensuring accessibility for all users regardless of ability, creating community connections, promoting health and wellness programming, promoting environmental sustainability, promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, physical connectivity throughout Town, or attracting visitors to the area.



Community Values

Community values reflect core beliefs or principles that a community holds as a collective and wishes to maintain into the future. For this exercise, participants were asked to identify the community values that were most important to them. The resulting scores show the commonly held community values. Public engagement results at Peakfest revealed that Apex community values the environment and nature. Open-ended comments encouraging the PRCR Department to preserve trees and open space further pointed to residents' desire to position the environment and nature at the center of the conversation about enhancing parks and recreation in the Town of Apex.

Community Values identified in the highest regard are:

- > Environment + Nature (94)
- > Connectivity + Growth (64)
- > People + Community (62)
- > Health + Wellness (60)

Amenities

Participants ranked the top three amenities they would like to see the Apex PRCR Department offer or expand in the future. The project team compiled the list of possible amenities from department recommendations, references to previous community input and items in line with 2022 national trends. Greenways and trails and ropes course emerged as the most desired recreational facilities. Participants also indicated a strong desire for paved walking loops, a farmers market pavilion, and a miniature golf course.

Top Five Facilities in Demand (Number of selections)

- > Greenways + Trails (102)
- > Rope Course (87)
- > Paved Walking Loops (83)
- > Farmers Market Pavilion (80)
- > Miniature Golf (78)

Program Needs

Participants ranked the top programs they would like to see Apex PRCR offer or expand. The programs listed, generated by the project team and Department staff, were based on current program offerings, trends in recreation and cultural programming and programs that were identified through community input. Participants indicated that there is a need to add to and expand outdoor recreation programs and offer outdoor performances. Participants also expressed the need for more performing arts as well as fitness and wellness programs.

Top Five Programs in Demand (Number of selections)

- > Outdoor Programs (paddleboard, CrossFit, Elevate Course, running, training) (118)
- > Outdoor Performances (82)
- > Performing Arts Programs (45)
- > Fitness + Wellness Programs (45)
- > Athletics (35)

Greenways and Trails

Participants were asked to provide their top choices regarding how they envision themselves using greenways and trails in the Town of Apex. They were also asked what three types of experiences they would most like to have on greenways and trails. Overall, participants were most inclined to want to walk the greenways, followed by hiking and biking. In terms of greenway experiences, participants expressed their desire to engage with nature, to have the capability of connecting to two or more destinations via greenway, to use greenways and trails to walk pets and to improve their overall health and wellness.

Greenway + Trail Usage in order of highest preference

- > Walk (127)
- > Hike (120)
- > Bike (110)

Greenways + Trails Experience in order of highest preference

- > Connect with Nature (96)
- > Connect to Parks, Downtown and/or other Destinations (75)
- > Walk a Pet (60)
- > Improve Health + Wellness (59)

Prioritization Criteria

After indicating their most desired recreation facilities, programs and experiences participants were asked to indicate the top three ways they believe the Department should balance the many priorities revealed in the planning process.

Prioritization Criteria in order of highest preference

- > Promoting Environmental Sustainability (58)
- > Physical Connectivity through Town (45)
- > Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (34)
- > Health and Wellness Programming (28)
- > Maximizing Positive Economic Impact on the Community (26)



Figure 8.15 -
Apex Community
Park Greenway Trail



FOCUS GROUPS

Purpose: To facilitate more in-depth conversations on specific topics related to PRCR Department

Method: The project team identified the following focus groups:

- › Cultural Arts and Events
- › Seniors and Special Needs Populations
- › Non-Athletic Programs
- › Athletic Programs



Because of the rise in Omicron cases, the focus groups meetings were conducted virtually via Zoom platform. Each focus group was asked a consistent set of questions to get their feedback on programs, parks, facilities and greenways usage and overall needs for the Town of Apex. In addition, the discussion was focused on specific concerns and barriers of usage for parks, facilities, and program participation.

Focus Group Questions:

- › Q1- What about parks, recreation, cultural resources and greenways makes your community better?
- › Q2- What is your parks, recreation, cultural resources and greenways system known for?
- › Q3- What would strengthen the Department's positive impact on Town of Apex?
- › Q4- What are some of the biggest threats or challenges to the assets you have identified?



Figure 8.16 - Cultural Arts Programs

Summary

Cultural Arts and Special Events

- › Overall, the group felt the town's large events were a major contributor to the community's pride.
- › Needed improvements included marketing and outreach efforts to increase the diversity and creating bilingual translation of marketing and programming materials that reflects the interests of diverse populations.
- › The group discussed opportunities to activate the Halle Cultural Arts Center by making the facility more welcoming to the public through marketing and programming, rethinking use of the space to maximize its potential, and considering the addition of alcohol licensing to expand and enhance facility rentals and offerings.
- › The addition of art displays and connectivity of greenways to Town facilities throughout Town will continue enhancing health, arts, and cultural resources.

Seniors and Special Needs Populations

- › Overall, this group is satisfied with the benefits of the parks and recreation programming, noting that programs meet the physical, mental, social, and financial needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- › Senior and specialized recreation programs are affordable and provide opportunities to meet and engage with others.
- › Senior participants felt programs attracted a diverse population, yet transportation for seniors remains a challenge.
- › Participants were interested in bringing all-inclusive park features for children and bring people together to break down misconceptions and barriers to participation, to promote inclusion and encourage diversity of user groups.
- › Participants expressed concerns with managing services to maintain the current level of services given growing community needs, park maintenance needs for older parks, preservation of green space, affordability of programs changing with increased demands for service and having enough trained staff and resources to meet growing department needs, so no one is placed at bottom of prioritization listings.
- › Marketing efforts to digitize access to introduce people to programs and parks with ease of use were mentioned as a need for these groups.



Figure 8.17 - Spirit League



Non-Athletic Programs

- › Participants in this virtual focus group session expressed that the wide range of park amenities, well-maintained parks, athletic programs, and special events make Apex better. Noted were the needs to preserve greenspace amid the Town’s growth and to connect gaps existing within the greenway system.
- › The group explored opportunities to increase environmental education and gardening programming.
- › The Town’s growth and affordability of programs were discussed as competing concerns associated with maintaining current level of service in parks and recreation.
- › Suggestions to improve marketing efforts included simplifying website navigation to easily find parks, programming, and special events information to increase and broaden outreach.

Athletic Programs

- › Participants in this focus group agreed that parks are top-notch, well-maintained, and used by the general public and rental groups.
- › Though the variety of youth activities and programs was noted as positive, the group felt new programs should be developed to reflect the interests of diverse populations.
- › The addition of athletic fields and gymnasium space, expanding the rental reservation timeline to more than six months, and better communication between staff and coaches were identified as needs to accommodate the continued growth of programs and provide primetime use of fields and facilities by user groups.
- › The lack of retail stores and hotels to accommodate overnight guests for tournaments were identified as gaps to increasing local economic impacts of sports to the community.
- › Pleasant Park is seen as a game-changer and is projected to provide additional field space for use. However, the group shared that continuous growth of athletic programs would increase the need for constructing another large park and providing necessary staffing and operational support to accommodate athletics in one location.
- › The group agreed that now is not the time to be complacent with one large park due to community growth, increasing needs and potential competition from nearby communities looking to construct similar athletic facilities.



Figure 8.18 - Non-Athletic Senior Program



Figure 8.19 - Athletic Program

SPECIAL EVENT ENGAGEMENT #2 (PEAKFEST 2022)

Purpose: To solicit input regarding recreational facility and program needs for future park properties, greenways and trails uses and experiences; and receive input on the themes that emerged through needs assessment and previous community engagement efforts

Method: The project team attended Town of Apex’s popular annual PeakFest as an outreach effort to reach larger Apex population. A series of 5 engagement boards were displayed at the PRCR Department’s booth whereby festival goers could provide their input. Boards included a voting exercise for the future of Kidstowne Playground at Kelly Road Park, open-ended questions on Key Themes, input for new connections or improvements to the greenway network and input on potential park amenities for Olive Farm Parkland and Wimberly Road Parkland. Over 300 participants provided feedback at the festival.



Figure 8.20 - Peakfest 2022

Summary

THEME	PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK
Greenways + Connectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Apex residents have expressed a strong desire for expanding greenway system and connectivity to destinations including parks, natural areas and open space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Connected greenways are needed › Provide connectivity to Crowder Park via greenways
Nature + Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Apex residents value access to natural areas in parks and understand the positive health outcomes access to nature provides, focus on environmentally sustainable operations and need for environmental education programming has been mentioned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › More nature trails › Cat park with gates › Larger dog parks with trails › Apex tree archive › Preserve now, before it is too late › More green space
Sense of Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Apex residents indicated creating connections and developing a sense of community should be one of the most important considerations when prioritizing parks and recreation investments. While Apex is investing in new parks, there is also a need to keep up with aging facilities. 	



THEME (CONTINUED)	PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK (CONTINUED)
<p>Something for Everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apex residents consider diverse parks and recreation offerings for all ages and ability levels as an asset to the community. Expanding cultural events to celebrate the diversity of demographics was indicated as future need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tennis, Racquetball, Pickleball Kids sports Diverse preschool class offerings Soccer fields Art center Ropes based play, Inclusive play, Fitness Dog park at Jaycee Park Allow dogs in festivals and downtown farmers market More ways to walk/bike downtown Connect Kelly Glen to Beaver Creek Greenway
<p>Unique to Apex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apex residents would like to see innovative programs and amenities that would attract out of town visitors to Apex to generate economic impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paddle board yoga Wiffleball field EV chargers
<p>Operations Efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apex residents consider parks and recreation staff an asset to the community for excellent customer service. As the town continues to grow, there is need for additional staff, resources, and desire to be competitive with other recreation providers in the area. 	

Community values reflect core beliefs or principles that residents wish to maintain. The needs assessment process and the feedback from Apex residents, staff and Council resulted in six key themes that formed the basis of discussion for future vision of the Apex parks system. The Key Themes board asked “what is one action the Town of Apex Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department can take for each of the following themes to be a leader in parks and recreation offerings?” Each of the six themes had a space for participants to provide their ideas on a post it.

“Positive staff interactions really help people engage with parks. Friendly (and) cheerful people add a great dimensions to the parks”.
-Quote from Peafest 2022



Figure 8.21 - Peakfest 2022

Planned Greenway Network

The Planned Greenway Network board included a map of the existing Town greenway system with built and planned greenways. Participants were asked where they would like to see improvements and connections in the Town of Apex. Participants could draw on the map or provide feedback on a post-it. The following feedback was received:

- Connection from Stillwater to American Tobacco Trail (ATT)
- Complete Clark Branch Greenway
- Sidewalks on Richardson Rd
- Sidewalk from Old Salem to Davis Dr
- Beaver Creek connection to the Nature Park and ATT
- Build Big Branch Greenway
- Connect Olive Chapel Park to ATT for bikes
- Connect Middleton community to Salem schools and White Oak Greenway
- Sidewalk by bridge over Beaver Creek at Richardson
- Connect Waldon Creek to a greenway
- Sidewalk under 64 to Salem Elementary
- Sidewalk from Crocketts Ridge to Kelly Road
- Apex community Park to Bond Park connection
- Pedestrian Bridge over 64 to Lake Pine Dr
- Sidewalks to Apex Friendship Elementary
- Charleston Village to Highway 55
- Charleston village to Salem Schools
- Complete Beaver Greenway West of Apex Nature Park to downtown
- Complete sidewalk and curbing on North End of Pate St (between Hunter and Cash)
- Connect Hadden Hall to Beaver Creek Greenway



Figure 8.22 - Proclamation for July to be named Parks and Recreation Month - 2023



Future of Kidstowne Playground at Kelly Road

The Kidstowne Playground at Kelly Road park was constructed in the fall of 1999. This well loved play structure was constructed of wood in a community build and many of the components and underground supports will need to be replaced in the near future. This board included three options for replacement and asked residents “What do you see for the future of Kidstowne playground located at Kelly Road Park?” by using a dot to share their preference. Option B received the majority of the votes.

KIDSTOWNE PLAYGROUND AT KELLY ROAD PARK

WHAT DO YOU SEE FOR THE FUTURE OF KIDSTOWNE PLAYGROUND LOCATED AT KELLY ROAD PARK? Please use a dot to share your preference.



OPTION A : Replace existing playground with a similar wood size material as the current community-built one but with long lasting composite building materials.

OPTION B : Replace existing playground entirely with new equipment and new play objects and designs based on community ideas.

OPTION C : Replace existing playground with a new play equipment that features the same play objects and designs of the existing playground (castle, rocketship, treehouse, train and depot, ship-2 slides, 3 climbing pieces, 4 areas for upper body skill development, etc.)



Figure 8.23 - Kids Town Feedback Board

OPTION	NUMBER OF VOTES
Option A- Replace existing playground with a similar wood size material as the current community-built one but with long lasting composite building materials.	76
Option B- Replace existing playground entirely with new equipment and new play objects and designs based on community ideas.	120
Option C- Replace existing playground with a new play equipment that features the same play objects and designs of the existing playground (castle, rocket ship, treehouse, train and depot, ship-2 slides, 3 climbing pieces, 4 areas for upper body skill development, etc.)	30

Wimberly Road Parkland

Wimberly Road is currently undeveloped parkland. It is comprised of 7 parcels totaling 49.94 acres. The site has frontage along Wimberly Road. The northern section of the site is bounded by Army Corps land, while eastern side neighbors a proposed planned residential development, called The Park at Wimberly on the proposed plans. There is a pond, perennial stream, two gas easements and floodway on the site. On the southern border, there is a proposed public safety station, pedestrian access from The Park at Wimberly subdivision and a proposed open play area.

Participants were asked to suggest potential park amenities and programming they would like to see at the Wimberly Road Parkland. The board included an aerial image of the park site with a blank space for the prompt. Engagement results are illustrated in the following chart.



Figure 8.24 - Wimberly Road Parkland



Figure 8.25 - Peakfest 2022

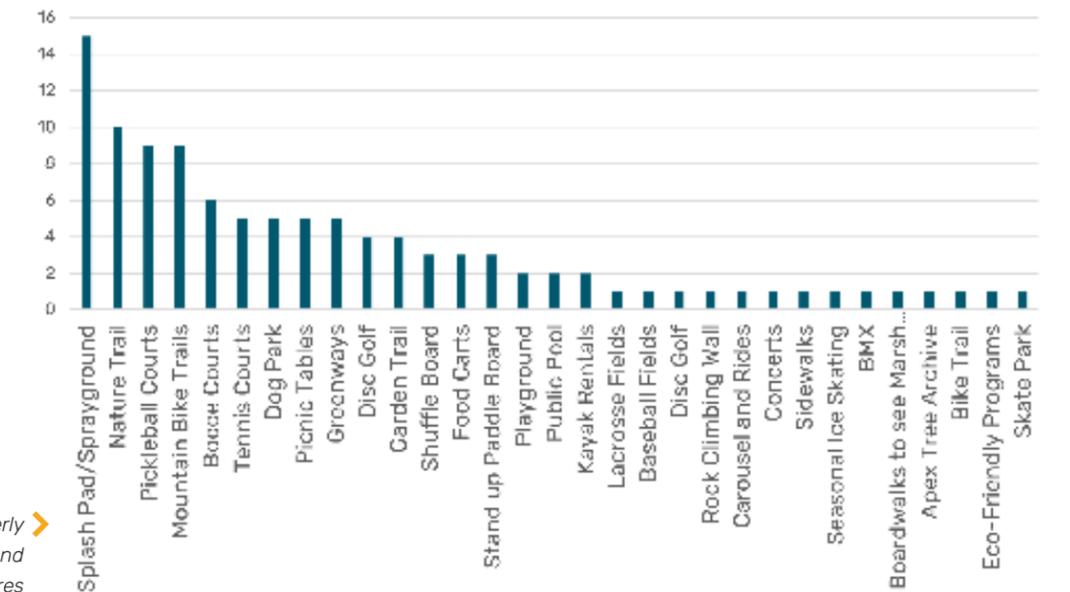


Figure 8.26 - Wimberly Road Parkland Programming Desires



Olive Farm Parkland

Olive Farm Park is currently undeveloped parkland. It is comprised of 4 parcels totaling 20.64 acres. There is frontage on Humie Olive and Olive Farm Roads. The site is primarily wooded with some cleared open area and a farm pond. The parkland includes several utility easements along the western edge and a 20' undeveloped greenway easement parallel to Humie Olive Road.

This board asked participants “please suggest potential park amenities and programming you would like to see at Olive Farm Parkland. Use the blank space to write your comments.” The board included an aerial image of the park site with a blank space for the prompt. Engagement results are illustrated in the following chart.

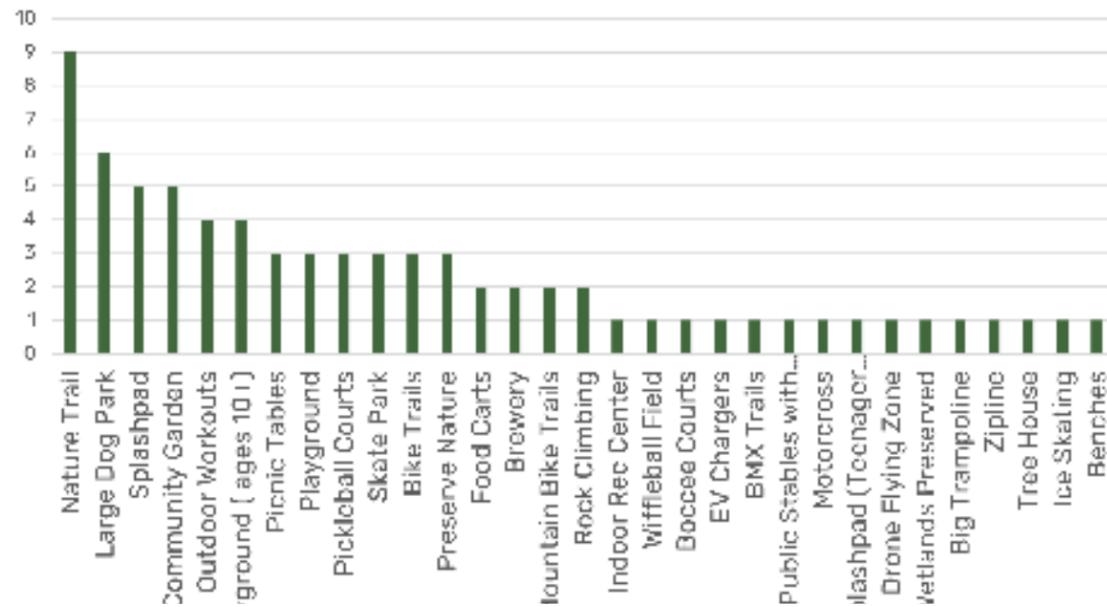


Figure 8.27 - Olive Farm Parkland Programming Desires

Common Themes

- Feedback for the six themes showed desire from residents for more greenway connections, sport courts, and preservation of nature.
- Many participants provided specific suggestions for improving and completing connections for the greenway network throughout the Town.
- There was a strong interest in the future of Kidstowne Playground at Kelly Road Park. Input provided for the future of Kidstowne Playground came from children, parents and grandparents that currently use the facility, many who participated in the original design sessions and community build events. Option B received most votes which proposes the idea to replace existing playground equipment entirely with new equipment and new play objects and designs based on community ideas.
- Participants' feedback for Wimberly Road Parkland included a range which included natural and built park features, bicycle and pedestrian amenities and various sport courts.
- Olive Farm Parkland also received a variety of feedback for future park amenities such as nature trails, dog park, gardens, splash pad and sport courts.

VISIONING SESSIONS

Purpose: To develop long-range vision for the parks and recreation system using the findings from needs assessment and the themes that emerged through community engagement process to date.

Method: The project team conducted a series of three visioning sessions with the advisory commission members, staff and Town Council. Each session included a short presentation on needs assessment and community engagement findings followed by an interactive session where participants provided feedback on the six themes that emerged from the needs assessment.



Each group of participants responded to following questions as they relate to each theme. They developed one big idea to enhance the theme and identified one action item and one challenge each to accomplish implementing the big idea.

- How do we expand greenways and connectivity throughout the Town?
- How do we foster connection to nature and environmental awareness?
- How do we develop sense of community through parks and recreation?
- How do we expand offerings for ALL residents through parks and recreation?
- How can we make parks and recreation offerings "unique to Apex"?
- How do we manage departmental operations to achieve efficiency?



EMERGING THEMES

Community input up to visioning sessions revealed the following core ideas or themes. These themes were used to guide the discussion during visioning sessions with staff, advisory commission, and council.

Greenways + Connectivity: Conversations throughout public input process were centered around the need to close greenway gaps and expanding the greenway network throughout the Town. Meetings with public, staff, advisory commission, as well as Council reflected the Town's strong desire for greenways which serve as alternative mode of transport, connect people to destinations, encourage physical activity, and provide opportunity to enjoy natural areas. Residents expressed their need for interconnected walkable and bikeable roads, methods of balancing the development of pedestrian sidewalks and multiuse paths with dedicated bike lanes.

Environment + Nature: Town of Apex residents highly value environmental conservation and preservation. This theme is encapsulated by the remarkable amount of feedback conveyed throughout the community input effort. Connecting with nature was the foremost experience residents would like to enjoy using Apex's parks and greenways system. Further, promoting environmental sustainability rose to the top as criteria for future projects prioritization. Tree canopy protection, use of alternative sources of energy, stormwater management through green infrastructure, and integrating recycling with Department operations were some of the ideas consistently mentioned.

Sense of Community: Participants indicated that their foremost point of pride for Apex's parks, recreation, open space and greenway system was the Town's efforts to connect people and the Department's ability to foster a sense of community. Celebrations, festivals, and special events are some of the ways community members connect and socialize, discover greater values and beliefs that bind the community together. Interactions through recreation programs also inspire residents to build social cohesion.

Diverse Offerings for all residents: Throughout the community engagement process, Apex residents, staff, and Council expressed the desire to expand the inclusivity efforts by providing recreation services to all residents regardless of their age, culture, or ability level. Residents realize the demographic shifts in the community demand addition of new programs that celebrate the diversity in Apex's population. Additionally, Apex residents want to ensure access to play and recreation for the special needs community in the Town.

Unique to Apex: Apex residents expressed the desire to offer "unique" recreation opportunities in the town that would draw out-of-towners. Apex has a rich history of being a railroad town and parks provide platform to share these stories with public. Additionally drawing visitors to town to enjoy parks and recreation programs generates positive economic impact.

Operations Efficiency: Apex residents consider parks and recreation staff an asset to the community. However, they also realize that with the growing town comes the need for additional staff, resources, and consistent economic investment in the parks and recreation system. It is also important to provide high quality services to remain competitive with other recreation providers in the area. Residents not only expressed the need to build trendy new parks facilities, but also to provide capital to take care of existing aging facilities.

Visioning Sessions - Summary

Advisory Commission Visioning Session

Greenways + Connectivity

- › Advisory commission participants suggested greenway connectivity to Apex downtown as one of the ideas for expanding the greenway system. Highway 55 is identified as one of the major physical barriers to cross for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- › Some participants suggested identifying certain greenway corridors as "commuter corridors" to connect major employer destinations with the Town and extending those to provide regional connections.
- › Partnerships with other agencies such as NCDOT and neighboring jurisdictions was identified as a strategy to implement these larger projects.
- › Placemaking strategies to enhance user experience included addition of small destination nodes supplemented with site furnishings, drinking water fountains, workout stations and public art.
- › The majority of the participants identified funding and right-of-way acquisitions as challenges to implementing greenways and enhancing connectivity.

Nature + Environment

- › Identification and protection of existing natural resources within Town of Apex was a consistent theme among participants.
- › Addition of a new nature center facility to provide environmental education programs, focusing on native plant palette and naturalized landscapes for wildlife habitat and leveraging the mental and physical health benefits of green spaces in new developments were some of the ideas discussed.
- › Additional ideas included use of technology and emphasis on renewable sources of energy.
- › The challenges for implementing these ideas included public interest level and funding for conservation land acquisition. Participants also suggested being selective about accepting fee-in-lieu for new development projects coming to town.

Sense of Community

- › Some of the common themes mentioned to enhance the sense of community in Apex included bringing more community focus to the organized athletic and non-athletic programs, adding more special events and festivals, creating neighborhood level special events organized by HOA groups, and supported by parks and recreation department and a focus on parks and recreation branding.
- › The challenges identified include limited staff capacity for additional programs and events which typically are organized after hours and on weekends.

Diverse Offerings

- › Participants overwhelmingly supported the idea of expanding programs for all residents and focusing on inclusivity for all ages, abilities, gender, and cultures.
- › The ideas ranged from car shows, food truck rodeo, outdoor film festival, guest speaker series to facility modifications to ensure access, gender neutral restrooms and responding to changing demographics of the community. Participants suggested identifying trends across the country and regularly asking Apex community what programs they would like to participate in.
- › Challenges included identifying the program gaps, funding, and developing affordable fee structure for all residents to participate.



Unique to Apex

- › Advisory commission participants suggested one of the ways to make parks and facilities unique to Apex is to leverage technology.
- › Virtual reality, e-sports and readily available digital resources were some of the ideas mentioned in addition to streamlining the rentals and online registration processes for greater user experience.
- › “Walt Disney Approach” was mentioned for enhanced customer service. The challenges identified included additional responsibilities on existing staff, identifying gaps in the system and funding for new projects.
- › Action items included addition of new staff, town branding, identifying partnerships with local universities, seeking grants funding and dedicated staff for each large park or a cluster of small parks to ensure high quality user experience throughout the system.

Operations Efficiency

- › The big ideas to achieve departmentwide operations efficiency included leveraging technology to automate and track registration and rentals, standardize departmental processes and achieving CAPRA accreditation.
- › Interdepartmental collaborations were suggested to achieve multiple town-wide goals on high demand projects. Additionally, the participants suggested training existing staff with modern tools and investing in user friendly digital applications to achieve operations efficiency.

Staff Visioning Session

Greenways + Connectivity

- › Staff mentioned several ways to help expand the greenway system in Apex including incentivizing new developments to build greenways, prioritizing greenways to connect destinations, use of impact fees, working with the community to find routes that don't interfere with existing neighborhoods, etc.
- › Some innovative ideas included developing a town-wide greenway network app to encourage greenway use, QR codes for interactive maps signage on greenway corridors and bike rental programs.
- › The challenges identified included funding and staffing for growing greenway network.

Nature + Environment

- › PRCR staff suggested several ideas to foster connection to nature and raise environmental awareness amongst residents, such as, building a new nature center, outdoor classroom at the Nature Park and developing new nature-based recreation programs that also include a nature adventure component.
- › The staff felt that reduced pricing on programs could reflect as low-quality programs for certain section of population and suggested that raising fees will help people commit to attend classes and reduce cancellations.
- › While the Town is investing in new electric equipment and tools that aid in energy conservation, they would like to see these efforts continued. Additionally, the staff suggested the administration should incorporate recycling program in town operations.

Sense of Community

- › While the staff agreed that local events and festivals contribute to the sense of community amongst residents, they are also aware of the challenge of a short-staffed department. They suggested streamlining the town wide volunteerism initiative and hiring a volunteer coordinator to coordinate additional programs such as recreation on wheels, community building, adopt a park program and community service days.

- › They also suggested intentional marketing outreach for local businesses to get them involved in the parks and recreation programming.

Diverse Offerings

- › In order to diversify the program offerings, the staff suggested that future recreation staffing should reflect the changing demographics of the community.
- › The programs should include afterschool programs for younger children, teen programs, senior programs with transportation assistance, culinary classes and instructors who can teach in multiple languages.
- › Additionally, staff would like to see Apex host international festival to involve diverse groups of residents and they suggested exploring partnerships with NC State festival group and other area cultural groups.



Figure 8.28 - Staff Visioning Session

Unique to Apex

- › Staff mentioned that Apex already has some unique features in the parks system and at Pleasant Park. These include facilities like Elevate fitness course, Splashlantis, Street Hockey rinks, and themed playgrounds
- › They mentioned another unique idea to enhance the skate park was to incorporate an art wall that is easy to clean up and maintain to give space for graffiti artists to express their art.

Operations Efficiency

- › Majority of the staff mentioned that communication is one of the biggest challenges for the department. The maintenance staff would like to leverage the capabilities of the current Citiworks asset management software to track work orders and to provide consistent and accurate internal and external communications.
- › Recreation staff also mentioned training for skills set development. As the department is hiring new staff that have had experiences outside of the department, cross training and collaboration amongst staff was also mentioned.

Town Council Visioning Session

Greenways + Connectivity

- › Town council members agreed on the idea of expanding the greenway network to connect destinations within the town and to surrounding jurisdictions.
- › Easement acquisitions and funding were the biggest hurdles in expanding the network and closing gaps in the existing network. They suggested easier requirements for developers to support building greenways and being proactive in designing and planning in advance to identify right-of-way acquisition.
- › Building greenways in the older part of the Town was also mentioned as challenge, along with overall funding need to build greenways.



Nature + Environment

- › Council members mentioned creating more programs and natural areas to get families and youth outdoors. Educating community about native plants, reducing lawn areas by planting butterfly gardens and other native species to make Apex “environmental community”.
- › The challenges include generating demand for nature-based programs, need for dedicated staff, funding and limited indoor space. Council suggested making nature center a priority project.
- › Additional outreach components included digital applications to identify key park features, greenways and native plants palette along greenway corridors.

Sense of Community

- › Council members also agreed that local events and festivals contribute to the sense of community. They understand that these events and festivals typically occur over the weekends and it is not realistic for the department staff to facilitate them on a regular basis.
- › Council members suggested smaller neighborhood scale HOA hosted events such as movie nights that are supported by the PRCR department where the department would rent equipment.
- › The challenges included costs to include programs, staff capacity and maintenance.
- › Members also suggested leveraging Apex’s branding as part of community marketing in programs such as town scavenger hunt, ride to restaurant day, wear an Apex hat day, etc.

Diverse Offerings

- › In order to diversify the program offerings, the Council members suggested partnership with the DEI Department and private developers to offer diverse programs and events.
- › They also mentioned need for satellite recreation facilities, ensuring diverse representation in the Advisory Boards and other decision-making bodies and staying on top of trends to offer new programs.

Unique to Apex

- › Council focused the discussion on incorporating Apex’s history as a railroad town into more parks and recreation planning and branding efforts, along with creating and expanding Apex’s unique facilities like Pleasant Park and Skate Park.
- › Leveraging public private partnerships was also discussed.

Operations Efficiency

- › Town Council is keenly aware of the department wide staff shortage and they would like to focus on identifying current staff’s skillset and identify gaps that need to be filled in.
- › They also would like to ensure staff retention through competitive job opportunities.
- › Interdepartmental collaboration was mentioned to improve staff efficiency and importance of staff’s input on their needs and desires.
- › According to council funding and staff capacity are major challenges for the Town and need to be addressed to continue to provide high quality services.



Figure 8.29 - Draft Recommendations Presentation to Staff

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING # 2

Purpose: To seek input from the public regarding the proposed recommendations to the Parks, Recreation, Greenways and Open Space Master Plan.

Method: The project team hosted a two-hour open house at the Apex Senior Center. Participants began the meeting with a recorded presentation on the Master Plan process. Following the presentation, they had the opportunity to interact with the project team and provide feedback verbally and through a series of ten boards. The ten boards illustrated the project process + timeline, proposed recommendations, and opportunity for open feedback. A total of 15 individuals participated.



Figure 8.30 - Open House # 2

Summary

The greenways boards illustrated proposed connections and asked participants to identify missing connections and priority greenway projects. Participants requested to connect Friendship School and Pleasant Park and priority was placed on downtown connectivity. A way to promote the greenway system was suggested by acknowledging those who have completed all portions of the greenway system by rewarding them with a pin or a badge.

Search areas are determined by identifying geographic access gaps through walkability and drive time analysis combined with the community engagement feedback. Participants were asked to mark areas on the map where they would like new park facilities. Participants also noted desire for a new nature park near Harris Lake, playground with looped walking path and exercise equipment, more pocket parks, whirligig features along walking paths, unique art walks, and story walks in the comments section.

The board for Indoor Recreation Space + Programming illustrated the current locations for indoor recreation facilities and asked participants to identify locations for desired future indoor recreation facilities. Participants marked the following locations- Future Recreation Activity Center Area, Wimberly Road, and Nature Park. Comments for this board included the desire to have indoor facilities within walking distance. Participants also included desire for additional indoor facilities such as indoor gym, basketball, jogging track, and Olympic size pool and suggested extended gym hours.

The Existing Parks board provided potential opportunities for participants to provide any feedback on existing parks and amenities. For Kelly Road Park, participants mentioned that they enjoy the unique and colorful playground and added the desire to see similar play features such as the train, pirate ship and rocket ship with upgraded materials.

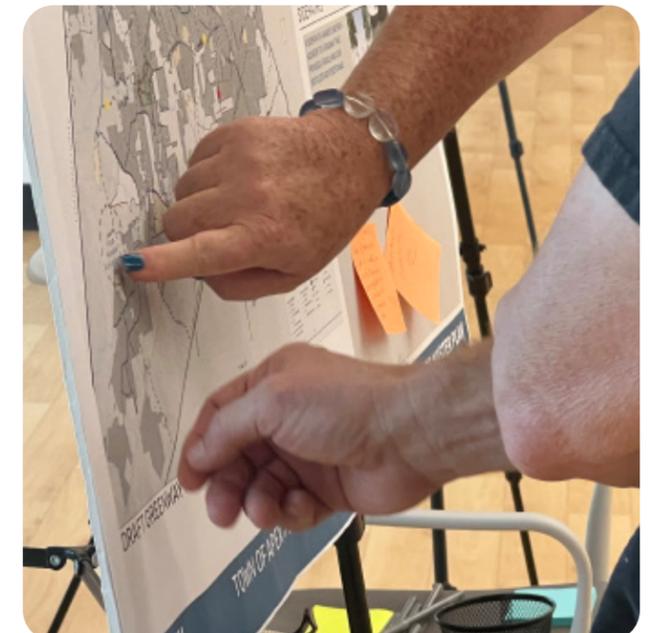


Figure 8.31 - Open House # 2

Participants suggested that Community Park should have additional fishing opportunities and education, the addition of a boardwalk or pavilion for events and improve the restrooms by the tennis courts. The Senior Center could have additional wayfinding signage as it is currently hard to navigate from the main Town Hall Campus entrance.

The results of all initial community engagement and the visioning sessions culminated in developing the overall framework of three components Experience, Expand and Excel, on which the nine guiding principles of the comprehensive plan are based. These guiding principles were shared with the public at the open house for validation. A participant suggested the addition of stewardship and preservation of existing nature resources and features in the Environmental Stewardship guiding principle.

The Sneak Peek at 2031 Apex's Park System illustrated various ways the park system will be in the year 2031 with full implementation of this Master Plan. Participants noted support for technology and kids programs.

The final board provided the opportunity for any additional feedback. A participant voiced positive parks staff interactions with friendly and cheerful people help participants engage with parks.

WEST STREET PARK MASTER PLAN

McAdams team conducted public engagement meeting at the West Street Park to discuss potential improvements to the park property. The preliminary report for this engagement opportunity is provided in the appendices.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES DEVELOPMENT

The project team developed a set of nine guiding principles based on the results of the community engagement and the needs assessment findings. The guiding principles form the basis for the recommendations crafted over the ten-year planning horizon. They guide the decision makers and the department staff towards right strategies, practices, and processes for prioritizing and implementing these recommendations. These nine guiding principles are explained in greater detail in the Recommendations chapter.

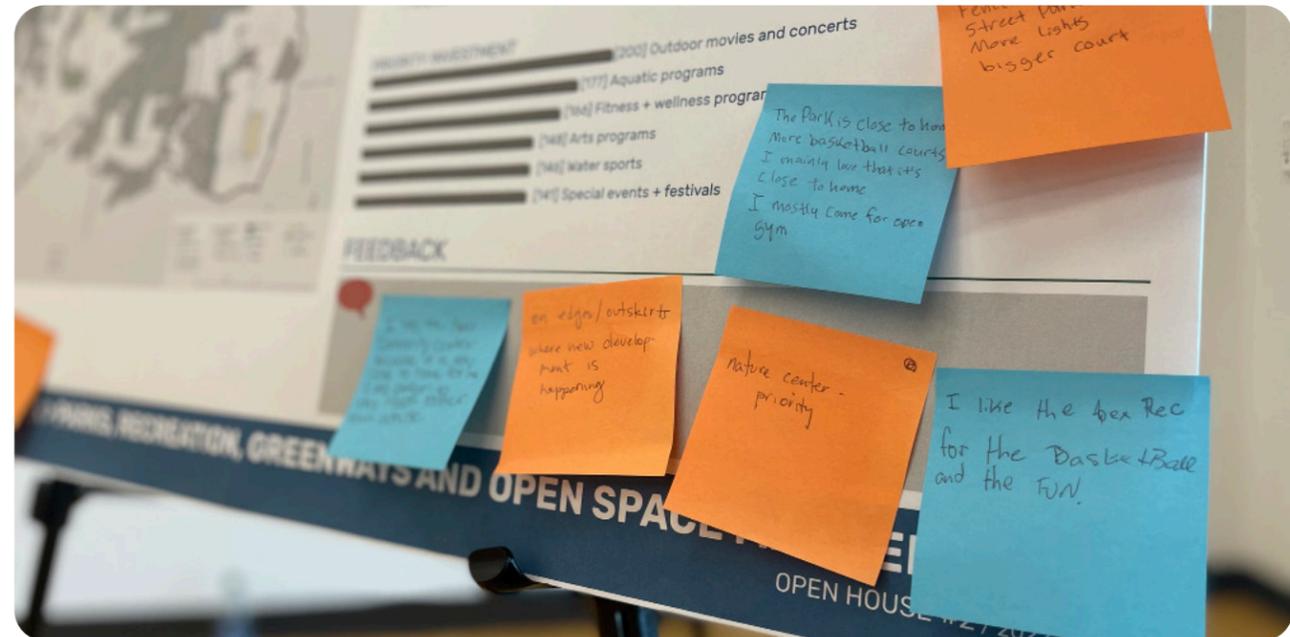


Figure 8.32 - Open House # 2

