

STRATEGIC PLANNING

CHAPTER TWO

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

RESEARCH & MORE RESEARCH

Public input is a critical component in developing a comprehensive plan for a parks and recreation department. The citizens are the participants and users of the parks system and its recreation programs and special events. An effective plan must accurately reflect the facilities and programs most desired by the citizens of the community. The recommendations provided in this Strategic Plan were driven by public input gathered through a variety of forums; interviews, surveys, evaluation, observation, emails, and requests received, meetings with Woodstock City Council and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, input from local user groups and neighboring agencies, national and state level research, and as a result of findings after using several new park and trail evaluation tools.

The process for this Strategic Plan started in July 2019 and as mentioned already, that process started with the development of goals and objectives that can be measured. Using S.M.A.R.T. Goals, the parks and recreation staff developed several goals and objectives that progress can be reviewed each year, and also processes that will help the department get organized, focused, and on track to implement a new strategic plan. Part of this process included understanding current maintenance and improvement needs, the ability to justify upgrades and major improvements to parks and new processes to help the department streamline work, and accurately make decisions that will continuously improve the experiences and quality of life for City of Woodstock residents. Understanding the challenges ahead in Strategic Planning and developments, it is wise to plan ahead and be prepared.

In a year's time, the department has developed and implemented two new comprehensive operational plans; Parks & Trails Maintenance Program, Recreation Division Recreation Program Plan and Guidelines, and will be completing the remainder Administration and William G. Long Senior Center policies and procedures by early 2022. The two biggest improvements to the operations and described in more detail below is the City Reporter Parks and Playground Inspection Program that started in the Winter of 2019, and on January 1, 2021; Rec Desk, an online park and recreation management and online registration software that will accompany a new city-wide website design.



CITY REPORTER PARKS & PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS

The City Reporter Parks and Playground Inspection program is a process for parks and recreation departments to utilize in managing a timely and efficient inspection and work order maintenance system. The inspection management process for parks, playgrounds, and their assets ensures safety, and that the Parks & Trails Maintenance Staff conforms to CPSC and ASTM Standards.

Public parks and playgrounds all across North America need to be inspected and maintained on a regular basis. Countless hours of use and outdoor weather take a heavy toll on outdoor fixtures and equipment. Ensuring the public safety of parks and playgrounds is critical.

Why City Reporter?

City Reporter Parks & Playground inspections help manage the Parks & Trails Maintenance Program in the following ways:

- Extensive assortment of customizable park and playground checklists are included.
- Custom schedule creation with alerts for each location and each inspection or task.
- Document and track every concern with photographs.
- Detailed reporting includes full concern description and photos.
- Copies of inspection results automatically emailed to managers and maintenance staff.
- Re-inspection process documents completed repairs with photos.
- Automated reminders emailed for outstanding repairs, inspections, and upcoming workload.
- Optional integrated work order process provides easy work order creation in the field.
- No data charges, no limits on data, inspections, number of photos, or number of assets.

Efficiency

Using smartphones, tablets (iPads), and other devices, staff are able to conduct paperless inspections easily. Once the program is opened, a location is selected and all the checklists needing completed are loaded. Once completed, the report is filed into the cloud and City Reporter instantly converts the inspection into a professional and concise report, and emails to appropriate personnel. Inspections can begin on site, be paused, and re-started at a different time as well, allowing flexibility in scheduling and response to other matters if urgent.

Risk Management & Record Keeping

City Reporter includes customizable checklists based on Consumer Product Safety Commission recommendations (CPSC) and American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards. The checklists are continuously updated and monitored by Certified Playground Safety Inspectors (CPSI) to maintain compliance. The playground inspection software ensures record keeping meets high quality standards. Each inspection report is stamped with the inspectors ID, the date, and the time of inspection. The records are filed permanently in the cloud where they are totally secure, yet readily available as needed.



Woodstock Parks and Recreation
 105 East Main Street
 Suite 142
 Woodstock, GA 30188
 P: 770-517-5788 F: null

Inspection Details

Family Mountain Bike Trails

Address: 513 Neese Road
 Dupree Park
 Woodstock
 Area: Trails

Date Range: 01-Jan-2020 to 08-Apr-2020

Inspection	Inspected by	Inspection Date
Hiking & Biking Trails	Alan Putnam	25-Mar-2020 10:28:46 AM
Hiking & Biking Trails	Alan Putnam	02-Jan-2020 10:33:25 AM

Hiking & Biking Trails

Location: Family Mountain Bike Trails
 Address: 513 Neese Road
 Dupree Park
 Woodstock
 Area: Trails
 Inspection Group: General Inspections
 Checklist: Hiking & Biking Trails

Inspected by: Alan Putnam
 Inspection Created: 25-Mar-2020 10:28:46 AM
 Inspection Saved: 25-Mar-2020 11:01:18 AM
 Next Inspection Date: 23-Jun-2020

Updated by:
 Last Updated:
 Approved By: Michael Huffstetler
 Approved Date: 3/30/20 1:39 PM

Approval Signature: 

Trails cover a large area, and have repetitive structures and features. If you find an issue please be sure to document the location of each issue, and take pictures of the concern.

First Impression

First Impression? Are people using the trail?	Notes
Trail is empty. Today is supposed to be beautiful day.	

General Safety

Is the area free of vandalism?	Yes 
Is the area free of litter, debris, runoff from erosion or other substances?	Yes 
Are all signs, trail markers, emergency locators, and structures in good condition, not missing?	Yes 

REC DESK – RECREATION MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Rec Desk is an online management and registration system that is efficient, provides needed documentation and reporting, and serves as an easy to use online customer service platform for information, registrations, and marketing as the system serves as an online catalog of programs, events, and services. Online programs are the norm in today's parks and recreation departments and customers all over the United States are accustomed to using these systems. The City of Woodstock has not used a system like this and relies on in person meetings, lots of paperwork, and it takes many hours to produce reports and searching files. It was identified early that a system like this is needed and with the spread of Covid-19 in 2020, it is even more important to have the ability of offer online registrations and information, and limit in person activity as much as possible. This system will be fully operation in early 2021 and will be very helpful in helping the department move forwards based on results of this Strategic Plan

Website Example – Public View

The screenshot shows the public view of the Woodstock Parks and Recreation website. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with "RETURN TO WOODSTOCKGA.GOV" on the left and "ONLINE REGISTRATION" on the right. Below this is the city logo for "CITY OF WOODSTOCK PARKS AND RECREATION" on the left and contact information for "Woodstock Parks and Recreation" (105 E. Main St, Ste 142, Woodstock, GA 30188, Telephone: (770) 517-6788, Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm) on the right. A "CAPRA ACCREDITED" seal is also visible. A dark blue navigation menu contains links for Home, Programs, Memberships, Reservations, Leagues, Special Events, Recreation & Parks, About Us, Help, and Log In. The main content area features a large banner for "Woodstock Parks and Recreation" with a background image of a wooden bridge. Below the banner, there are three "Special Event Notice" sections. The first is for a "9/11 Day of Remembrance Ceremony" on September 11, 2021, at 7:00 pm, featuring a city skyline at night. The second is for a performance by "CHRISTOPHER CROSS" on September 18, 2021, at 7:30 pm, featuring a man playing a guitar. The third is for "Northside Hospital Cherokee Amphitheater". On the right side of the page, there is a vertical sidebar with several buttons: "Create Account" (dark blue), "Sign In" (orange), "Park Project Updates" (dark blue), "Trail Status" (orange), "William G. Long Senior Center" (dark blue), and "Northside Hospital Cherokee Amphitheater" (orange).

2020 NRPA Agency Performance Report

In addition to the demographics, studies, and recreation programming trends highlighted in Chapter One, NRPA Park Metrics compares agency to agency to give a realistic picture of parks and recreation operations across the nation. These are the benchmarks agencies use as goals and comparisons when evaluating their effectiveness to communities. NRPA at a time use to have standards but eliminated those in favor of park metrics because the metrics are real time and real data. The graphic below are some findings from the 2020 NRPA Agency Performance Report. The full report is included in the [Appendixes](#).

2020 NRPA Agency Performance Review Key Findings



Agencies that ban the use of tobacco products at parks and facilities

76%

Full-Time Equivalent Employees (FTES) Per 10,000 Residents:

8.1

Operating Expenditures Per Capita:

\$81.19/year

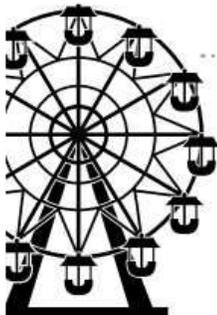


Manages **11.0** miles of walking, hiking, running and biking trails

54%



of park and recreation agencies deliver STEM programming to children and young adults



88%

of park and recreation agencies offer themed special events to the public

Residents Per Park:

2,281



Revenue-to-Operating Expenditures:

25.9%



The statistics shown are from the 2020 Park Metrics Agency Survey. Most agencies will not complete the survey until the end of 2020 but enough have that the comparisons are realistic. Only a handful of agencies in the Southeast and in Georgia have completed so the report covers agencies who are similar in size and operation from around the country, as opposed to strictly local parks and recreation departments. What is clear is that most agencies have pursued parks bonds and/or other tax methods to fund park improvements, renovations, new development, and land acquisition. A brief summary is provided for each chart below.

For purposes of this Strategic Plan, parks and recreation staff chose to pull only the statistics from the NRPA Park Metrics that apply to operations, parks, trails, and facilities. Programming was focused on in chapter One and will also be discussed in more detail in another chapter. Information was included in the survey for the City of Woodstock to the best of the staffs abilities based on budgeting software, GIS information, and current population statistics.



Agency Summary

	My Agency	#	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Operating Expenditures per Capita	\$78.63	46	\$48.84	\$83.69	\$160.09
Revenue per Capita	\$9.32	39	\$9.69	\$25.32	\$59.59
Total Revenue to Total Operating Expenditures	12.0%	40	16.7%	26.3%	50.4%
Total Tax Expenditures per Capita	\$68.30	39	\$22.70	\$50.52	\$101.69
Operating Expenditures per Acre	\$5,699	37	\$5,026	\$9,149	\$32,400
Operating Expenditures per FTE	\$138,639	44	\$70,537	\$104,902	\$136,388
FTE's per 10,000 Population	5.6	46	4.2	6.7	14.2
Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents	13.6	38	3.8	7.8	18.3
Number of residents per park	2,530	39	1,302	2,267	4,662
Number of acres per park	34.5	39	8.0	17.3	43.0
Number of Participants per Program	15	27	10	25	60
Ratio of Fee Programs to all Programs	40.0%	26	52.4%	80.0%	99.1%
Ratio of Building Attendance to Park Attendance	0.3%	21	4.2%	48.0%	84.3%

Most parks and recreation departments in the United States spends the majority of their budgets on parks and maintenance. It is evident that the Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department is no different in that regard. What is not shown on the Agency Summary is the tasks and duties that have been performed by the department which explains why the department is on the higher end of expenditures than other departments, but at the same time falls behind in parks, programming, and personnel.

After discussions with staff and a year-long review of parks and recreation operations, it is noted that the maintenance staff spend time mowing grass in the parks, setting up and working events, and performing other in-house tasks that has limited routine maintenance and other typical duties that lend to successful operations. More staff in programming and maintenance is needed to allow all personnel to perform their jobs at their full potential and prioritize appropriately. Progress has been made but a solid plan moving forward is needed as recommendations in this Strategic Plan.

The 2020 statistics below represent a more accurate representation than previous years as shown on the graphs. In previous years, the undeveloped land and acres not maintained directly by the Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department wasn't included, and budgeting information may or may not have reflected capital dollars accurately. 2020 as is most likely the case for all agencies in the United States, budgets were affected due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In Woodstock, projects were frozen, and budgets were kept at a minimum until further notice.

NRPA Agency Performance Report Continued

Acres per 1,000 Population



Year	My Agency	#	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
2013	-	267	4.5	9.2	16.4
2014	4.0	292	4.6	9.1	15.9
2015	-	422	5.1	9.6	17.6
2016	10.9	398	5.1	10.5	18.2
2017	5.3	399	5.4	10.7	18.0
2018	-	441	5.3	9.8	17.9
2019	6.2	421	5.6	10.5	17.6
2020	13.6	38	3.8	7.8	18.3

Woodstock is above the average in park acres per 1,000 population, however 146.7 of these acres are undeveloped, and approximately 240 acres of Olde Rope Mill Park consists of 14 miles of mountain bike trails developed and maintained by SORBA Woodstock, a local chapter of the International Mountain Biking Association. Of the 146.7 undeveloped acres, 99.43 acres is being planned and the final master plan for Little River Park will be available March 2021. At the fulfillment of this Strategic Plan, all acres will be developed, and more land will be needed for acquisition to meet new growth in population.

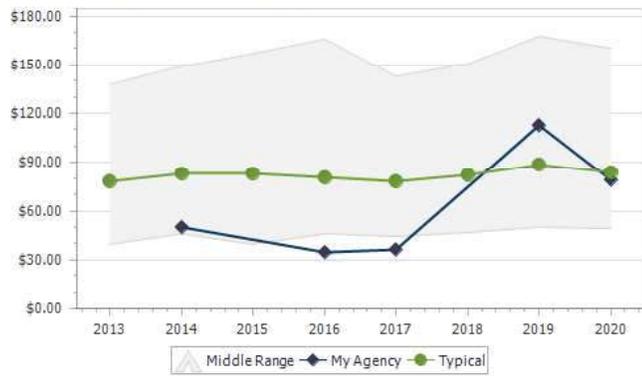
Operating Expenditures per Acre



Year	My Agency	#	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
2013	-	254	3404	7559	18000
2014	12381	282	4056	8515	20292
2015	-	408	3418	7702	20788
2016	3097	390	3097	8085	19188
2017	6565	385	3310	7059	16441
2018	-	435	3578	8108	20398
2019	18046	410	4048	8443	21139
2020	5699	37	5026	9149	32400

Woodstock is in the lower quartile for operating expenditures per acre but less than 100 acres out of 450+ acres is currently maintained by parks and recreation staff so in that regard, the city would move toward the upper quartile of the scale. As duties become streamlined and new processes are in place for short and long term maintenance and operation of properties, more funding will be needed to accommodate needs.

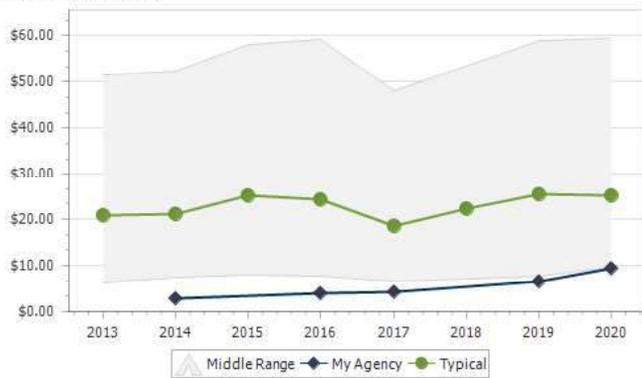
Operating Expenditures per Capita



Year	My Agency	#	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
2013	-	299	39.19	77.99	137.85
2014	50.06	329	46.16	83.17	149.07
2015	-	486	39.74	83.09	156.88
2016	34.66	450	46.28	80.49	165.71
2017	36.02	456	44.36	78.39	142.77
2018	-	519	47.00	82.02	151.03
2019	112.66	481	49.71	88.76	167.70
2020	78.63	46	48.84	83.69	160.09

Woodstock’s operating expenditures per capita is in the median range and will need to maintain and/or increase spending to meet future demand. This number represents the average operating expense per person in the City of Woodstock. Woodstock has a very high rate of residents per square mile which limits acreage dedicated to parks and recreation. While operating expenditures per capita is in the median range, the population density greatly affects the expenditures in other areas.

Revenue per Capita



Year	My Agency	#	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
2013	-	243	6.38	20.93	51.48
2014	2.83	274	7.44	21.27	52.36
2015	-	410	8.08	25.15	58.05
2016	4.08	402	7.79	24.39	59.35
2017	4.33	398	6.67	18.67	48.18
2018	-	475	7.28	22.43	53.57
2019	6.61	432	7.68	25.36	58.93
2020	9.32	39	9.69	25.32	59.59

Both, the graph above and below are discussed in the next paragraphs.

Revenue as a % of Operating Expense (Cost Recovery)



Year	My Agency	#	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
2013	-	253	17.2	32.7	49.3
2014	5.8	281	15.0	27.9	47.2
2015	-	409	15.1	31.5	50.3
2016	12.1	399	16.5	32.0	52.0
2017	12.4	396	13.4	27.5	43.2
2018	-	472	13.8	29.1	47.4
2019	5.9	431	14.3	28.1	48.9
2020	12.0	40	16.7	26.3	50.4

Woodstock has not dedicated a lot of resources toward programming and revenue opportunities in prior years, aside from concerts and special events, so these numbers are not typical of what it could be over the several years. Sponsorships and non-recorded revenue/expenditures due to not having sufficient management systems in place do not allow statistics in this area to be represented accurately. A focus on program management, reporting, and finances will be needed to ensure transparency and successful parks and recreation opportunities.

A focus on more recreation programming is also needed to meet resident needs, and to also increase revenue and cost recovery. According to current demographic information, Woodstock has a higher median household income than other surrounding cities in Georgia and has an opportunity to recoup more expenses with registration fees and sponsorships. Proper accounting of program registrations and expenses at the William G. Long Senior Center will also balance these numbers. Operationally, the parks and recreation administration staff and coordinators will need to focus on these areas for reporting, and to accurately tell the story of Woodstock Parks and Recreation to the community and city leadership.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Interviews, surveys, and several meetings were held with city and parks and recreation staff, as well as elected and appointed officials. Prior to 2019, a Parks and Recreation Bond Committee was formed to prioritize projects and needs, as well as a master plan for Little River Park began and all included public input meetings and surveys, in addition to months of research. In 2020 a 2021-2025 Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan Survey was conducted. This survey had a sample size of 956 respondents which results in a 95% Confidence Level at a Margin of Error of 3.11%. This means that the City of Woodstock and all involved in planning for the future of Woodstock Parks and Recreation can be 95% confident that all responses in the survey are within 3% accuracy. For example, if 71% of the respondents want to see a new splash pad constructed, then planners are 95% confident that 69% - 74% of the population would want a splash pad. The next several sections go into more detail about each user group that was involved in the community engagement and community input processes.

ELECTED & APPOINTED OFFICIALS AND CITY STAFF

The feedback explored administrative practices, maintenance duties, ongoing partnerships, current user groups, and factors relating to funding of park use. Interviews with parks and recreation staff revealed information about the daily operations of the agency and provided insight into the opportunities and constraints of staff. These interviews/surveys also allowed elected and appointed officials the opportunity to share thoughts on the current condition of the parks, how the staff operates, and what they felt were important projects to undertake over the next ten years.

Some strengths noted among many of the staff and officials highlight the appreciation of established parks and included amenities, and the continued increase in usage. This popularity has also led to overcrowding of space emphasizing the need for more parks and trails. The department has worked hard to establish partnerships and offer collaborative programming with local businesses such as UGA Extension, Foxtale Book Shoppe, IN WDSTK, Healthy Kids Running Series, Woodstock Visitors Center, and Sequoyah Regional Library System. These collaborations are less than a year old and the list will continue to grow, allowing the parks and recreation department to become ingrained in the fabric of the Woodstock Community, not just for entertainment but strong partnerships that will benefit the community as a whole. The department has a strong reputation for great special events, including the Woodstock Summer Concert Series, Brown Bag Concerts, and holiday events including parades, festivals, fireworks, and community recycling events.

Growth in the city and reorganizing operations to better serve the community and allow staff to work efficiently requires some time, expense, and highlights the need for additional staffing to maintain parks, coordinate events, organize administrative practices, and continuously plan and improve services. Progress is happening rapidly and will need to continue to do so in order to meet demand and expectations of residents, visitors, and city leadership. This Strategic Plan will help the parks and recreation and the city to get better organized and prepared to carry out the recommendations and improve the parks system.

Highlighted are the top common strengths and weaknesses of the parks and recreation department, as commented on and presented by city staff and elected/appointed officials.

Strengths

Certified Staff
CAPRA Accreditation
Community Partnerships
Sponsorship of Events
Volunteer Base
Good Reputation
City Council Support
Experienced Staff
Interdepartmental Support
Longevity of Employees
Desirable Location
Community Interest in Recreation
Established / Popular Parks
Amenities in Parks
Dedicated Facility for Seniors
Community Vision
Fast Growing Population

Weaknesses

Covid-19 Restrictions
Time Management
Marketing and Communications
Diversity of Events and Programs
Repetitiveness / Lacking New Ideas
Lack of Open Space
Short / Unconnected Trails
Overcrowded Events
Security / Safety
Lack of Needed Park and Trail Space
Lack of Collaboration
Lack of Staffing Requirements
Budget Constraints
Lacking Operational Software / Processes
Employee Training
Upward Mobility
Lacking Indoor Recreation Space

2020 WOODSTOCK CITY COUNCIL RETREAT

In February 2020 the City of Woodstock City Council held its retreat with city department heads to discuss planning and budgeting for the upcoming fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020. Following the retreat, the Covid-19 pandemic started, and several items of interest were deferred. Several parks and recreation related items discussed was park and trail development and priorities, funding methods, and a new vision for the department was created.

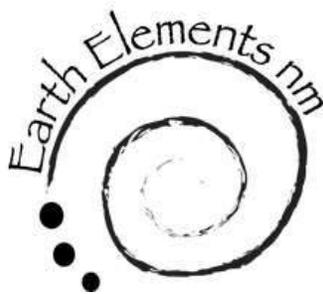
Michael Huffstetler, the Parks and Recreation Director created a presentation which was based on input from Woodstock City Council, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and Woodstock Parks and Recreation staff. The presentation was also the official kickoff of the Strategic Planning process. It is important to develop a vision and present the vision ahead of surveying and obtaining community input. The input received validates and disputes original findings and leads to a solid Strategic Plan moving forward. A copy of the presentation is included in the **Appendix**, and several pages are highlighted throughout this Strategic Plan.

Council Retreat Summary

Covid-19 halted progress on any and all plans that were initially planned in response to the 2020 City Council Retreat. After meeting with the public, reviewing online, social media, and email requests, conducting a community wide survey, and researching trends and attending workshops, ALL projects discussed in the presentation are still valid options for inclusion in the 2025 Strategic Plan. These will be highlighted further in the strategic action chapters.

The project that continued was construction of phase 1 of the Downtown Playground. The new 0.6 acre park opened in Downtown Woodstock in July 2020. Projects that were allowed to continue the planning phases is the Trestle Rock Trail Extension (September 2020) and the Little River Park Master Plan (October 2020). The Trestle Rock Trail Extension is being master planned to connect Olde Rope Mill Park to J.J. Biello Park, a Cherokee County Recreation and Parks facility. Also, included in the plan is a connection to a future City of Woodstock Park, and to the South Cherokee Recreation Association complex, a facility in partnership with Cherokee County Recreation and Parks. This plan overview will be discussed further and be located in the **Appendix**.

The Little River Park Master Plan was halted and deferred in March 2020 and given permission to complete the plan September 2020. The original firm planning the park during Covid-19 discontinued the park planning division of their firm. The City of Woodstock and the Parks and Recreation Department was able to obtain the services of the Landscape Architect who was working on the plan, and obtain all public input notes, planning filed, drafts, and all the information needed to initiate a new contract and continue with the project. The new firm completing the Little River Park is Earth Elements, NM and the city is thrilled to continue the project with the same team and continue the vision of the residents of Woodstock, the City of Woodstock City Council, and the Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department. The timeline for completion of the master plan is Spring 2021. The community input notes, draft drawings, and opinion of probable costs are included in the strategic action section of this plan and in the **Appendix**.



The 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan Survey was initiated in the Fall of 2020 and due to Covid-19 restrictions, the input was completely online via survey and left open for several weeks. Surveys were distributed thru many user groups and shared across many social media and online platforms. Some user groups and partners who participated and shared the survey to their interests parties include:

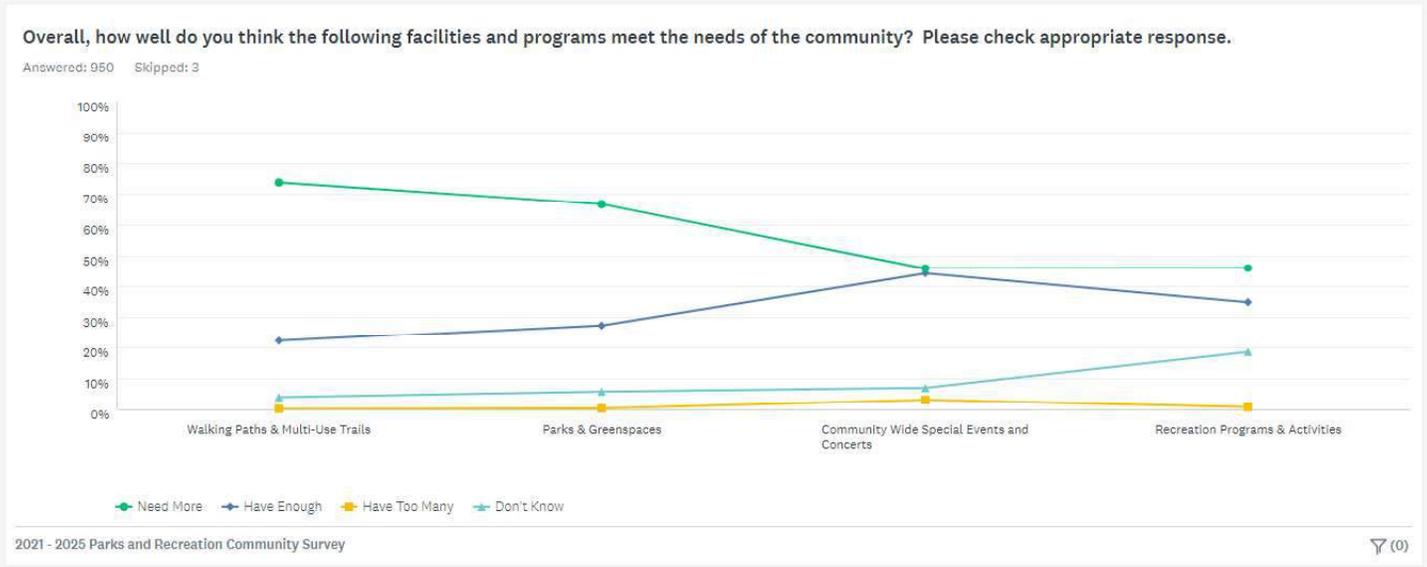
- City of Woodstock Department Heads
- City of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Staff
- City of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- William G. Long Senior Center Membership
- Woodstock Visitors Center
- Local HOA Boards
- Elm Street Cultural Arts
- SORBA Woodstock
- Greenprints Alliance
- Local Real Estate Agencies
- Upward Sports Soccer
- Healthy Kids, Inc.
- Other user groups partnered with the Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department.

Highlighted below are the statistics and areas from the survey that directly relate to the planning of facilities. Direct recreational programming will be highlighted in the strategic planning chapters of this plan. The results highlight the need for more parks and trails, as well as the need to improve current facilities and offerings.

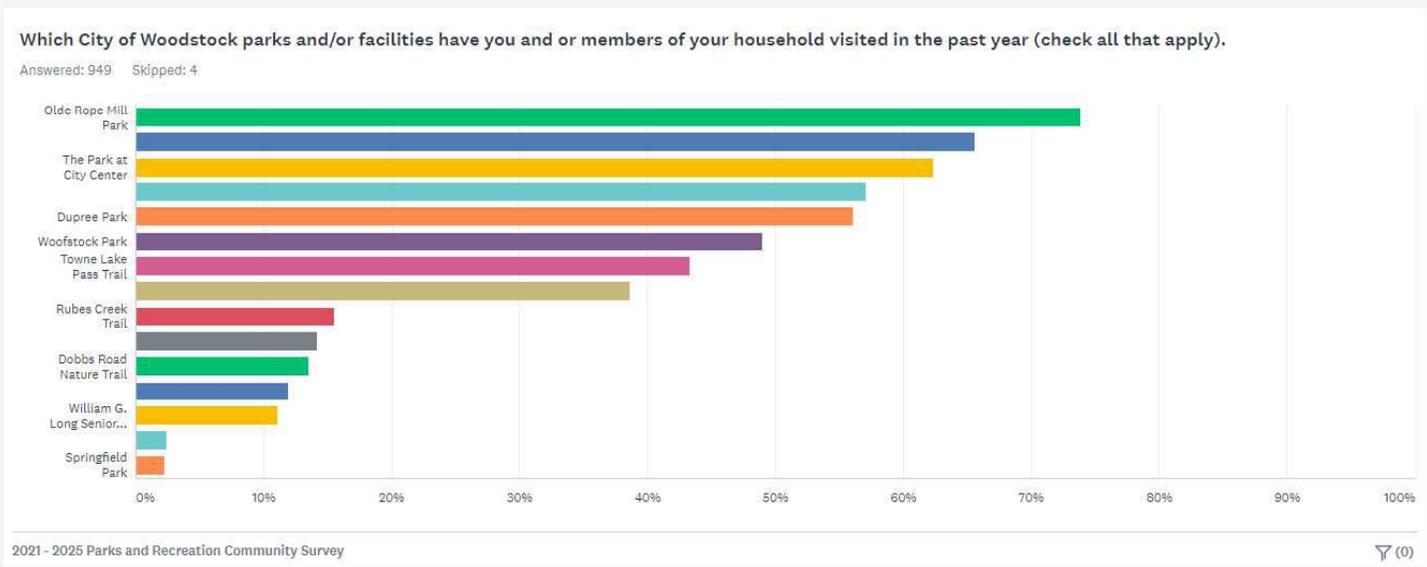


Breakdown of 2021 – 2025 Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan Survey

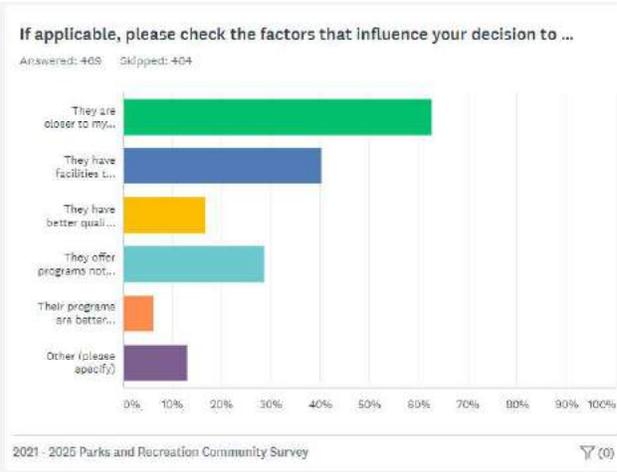
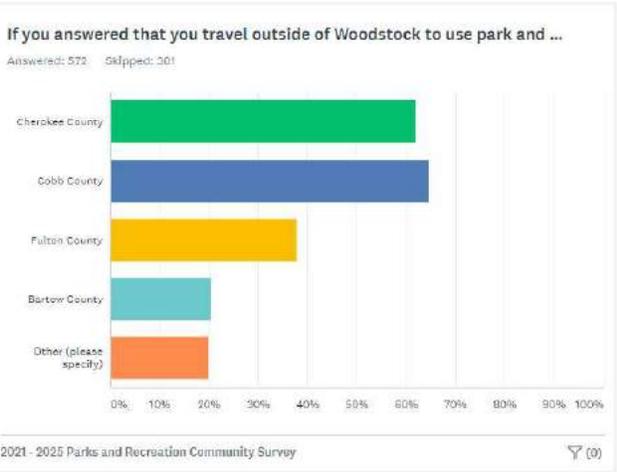
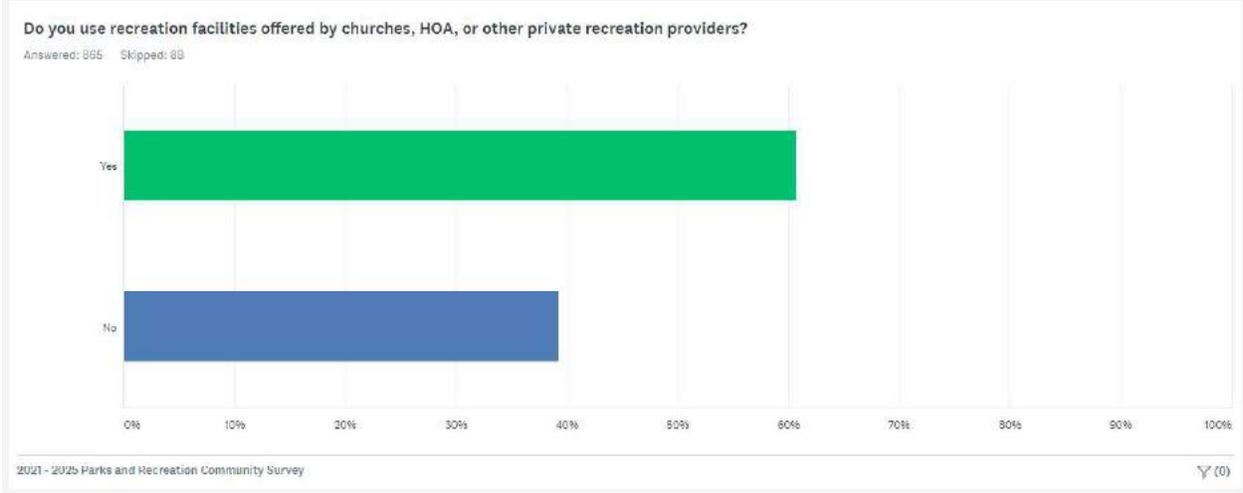
When measuring the desire to expand the facilities and programs, the survey results indicate that the majority users of the parks, facilities, and programs would welcome the expansion of the trail system along with support for expansion of existing or future parks. While community events and organized programs received less of an endorsement than trails and parks there was still a significant positive response to expanding those activities as well.



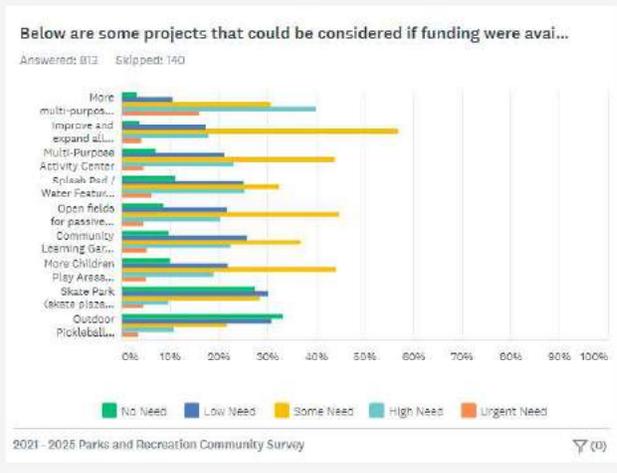
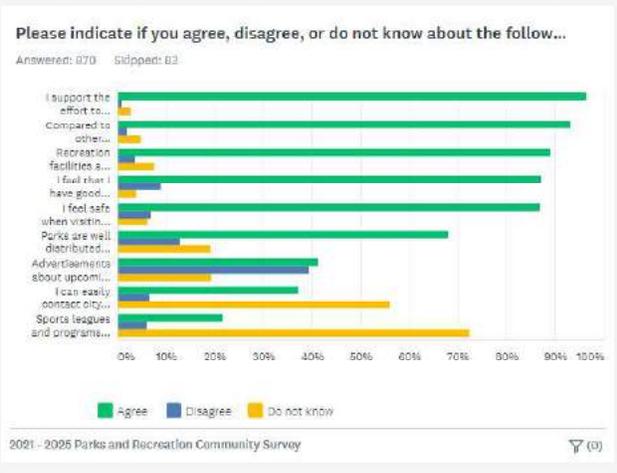
When measuring the current usage of facilities, trails, and parks it is significant to note that the more fully developed parks and trails received higher usage responses. Seniors comprise 13% of the population while 11% of the respondents have utilized the Senior Center.

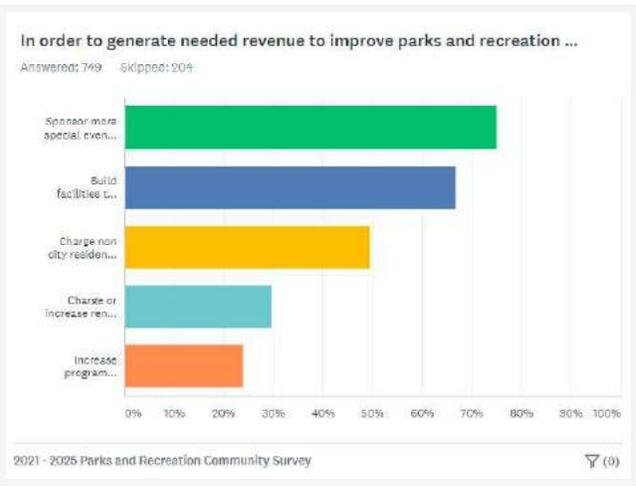
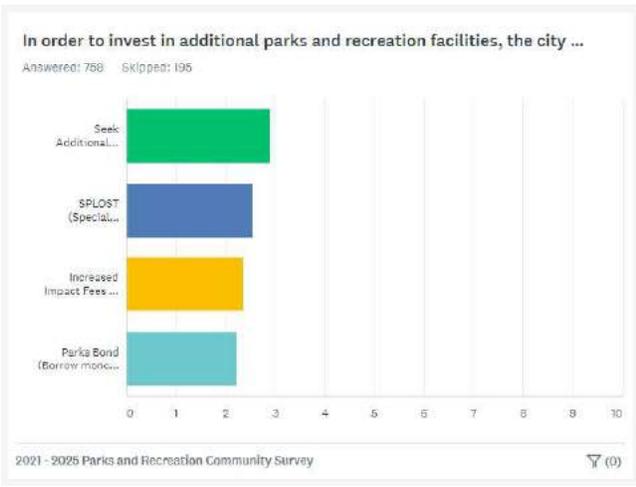


Although usage responses were high and positive, there are still a significant number of respondents utilizing recreational venues outside of the City of Woodstock. In general, this is due to 3 main factors: proximity, availability, and quality.



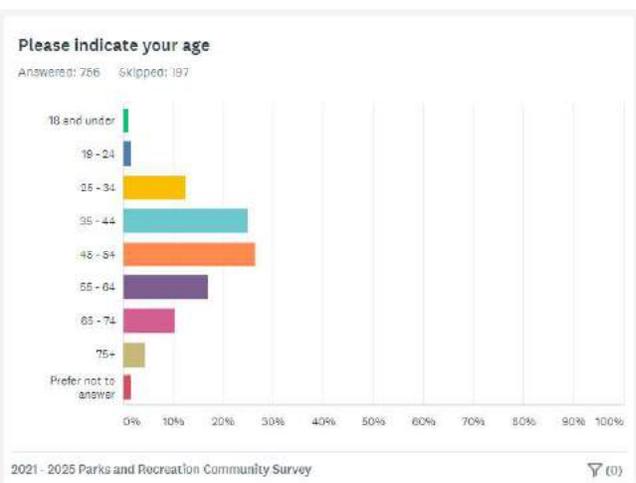
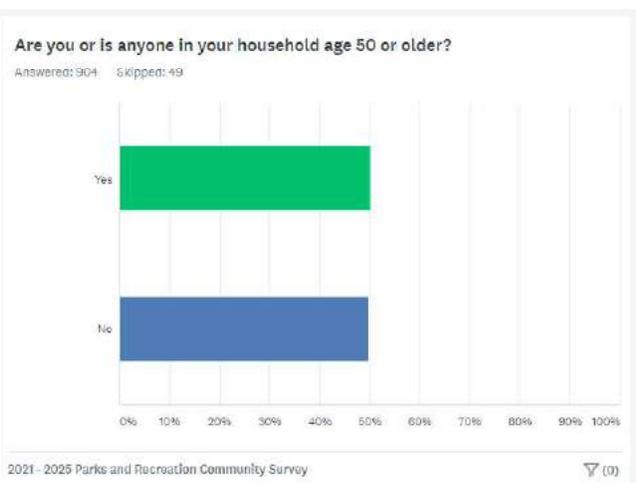
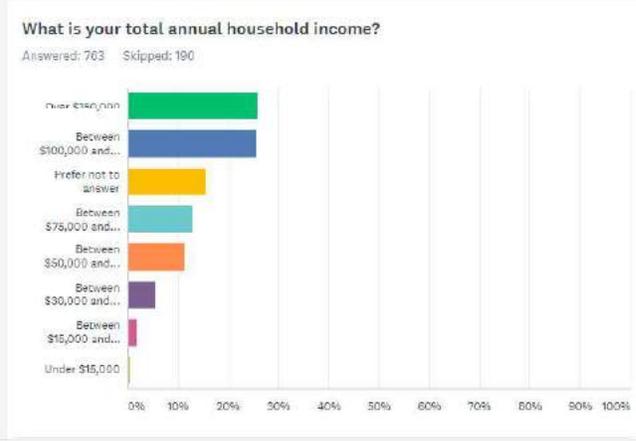
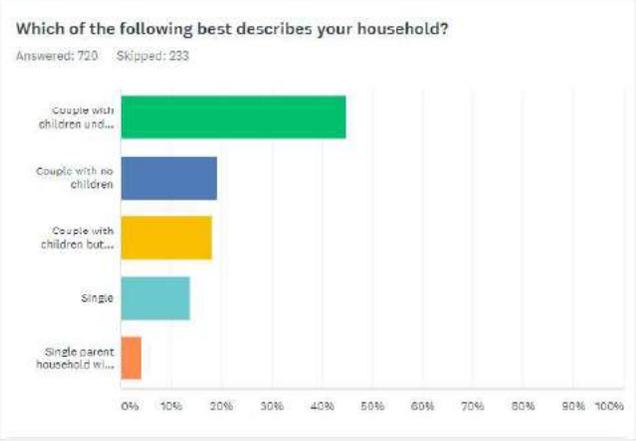
Respondents overwhelmingly support efforts to improve and expand on Parks and Recreation venues and programming. We have an opportunity to capitalize on the the goodwill of the community by communicating and executing on long range master plans.





About the Data:

The Woodstock Parks and Recreation Master Plan survey represents a sample size of 3% with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of +/- 3%. Statistically the survey results, while open to subjective interpretation, can be considered valid and accurate. That said, certain populations appear to be over-represented in the results: 50% of respondents have a household member over the age of 50, 32% of respondents are 55+, 64% are above the median household income for Woodstock, and 45% are couples with minor children.



Master Planning Survey Comments Overview

Interests

Youth (Out of 33 comments):

- Curling - 15
- Baseball - 2
- Bike/Cycling - 4
- Basketball - 2
- Gymnastics - 3
- Skatepark - 1
- Softball - 3
- Equestrian - 1
- Coding - 2
- Archery - 1

Selected Comments:

"Times for rec classes (dance, gymnastics, etc) geared for parents that don't work."

"Coding and Auto repair"

"I think a City of Woodstock youth Cycling program would make a lot of sense in the area."



Master Planning Survey Comments Overview

Interests

Adult (Out of 50 comments):

- Curling - 22
- Painting - 1
- Bike Park - 5
- Historic Walking Tours - 1
- Skateboarding - 4
- Book Club - 1
- Basketball - 2
- Women's Adventure - 1
- Folk Art - 2
- Beer Brewing - 1
- Accessibility - 2
- Lacrosse - 1
- Programs for Autistic Adults - 1
- Dog Training - 1
- Gold Panning - 1

Selected Comments:

"I'm in my 40's, I still love to skateboard."

"I would go to Woodstock every week if you had the winter Olympic sport of Curling available."

"Incorporating a bike park for all levels (kids too, please!) like Smyrna Bike Park at North Cooper Lake Park... it's amazing!"



Master Planning Survey Comments Overview

Interests

Teen (Out of 14 comments):

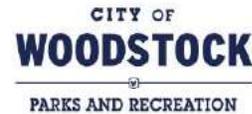
- Skatepark - 3
- Smashball - 1
- BMX - 3
- Teen Space - 1
- Volleyball - 3
- Computer Classes - 1
- Parcor - 1
- Curling - 1

Selected Comments:

"Our family would be HUGELY excited for a skateboard & BMX bike facility"

"Would love to see a curling facility with after school curling programs"

"Sand volleyball or normal volleyball"



Master Planning Survey Comments Overview

Interests

Senior (Out of 50 comments):

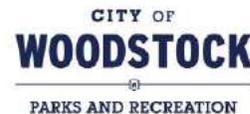
- Curling - 8
- Hiking - 2
- Mountain Biking - 5
- Crocheting - 1
- Art Classes - 3
- Tai Chi - 1
- Walking - 3
- Chess - 1
- Gold Panning - 2
- Wine Classes - 1
- Pottery Classes - 2
- Indoor Walking - 1

Selected Comments

"Why isn't there an option for Mountain Biking for this age group? Are you suggesting people over 50 can't ride a mountain bike?"

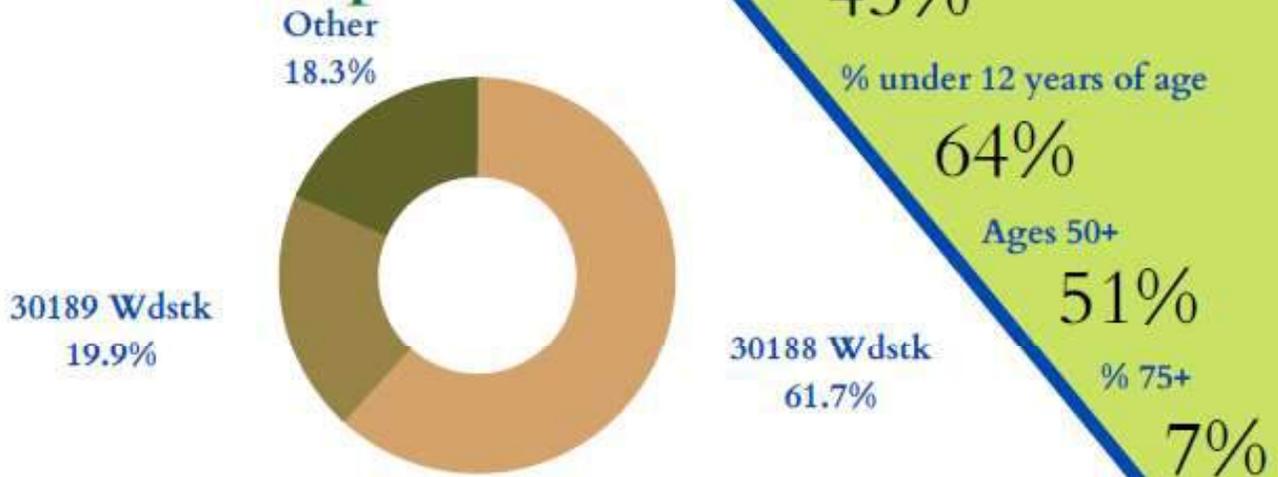
"Gold Panning, Book Club, Serving Community Events, History of Rivers and Hiking in GA, History of Woodstock"

"People over 50 hike, too!"



2025 Master Plan Survey

Who Responded?



93%

of respondents agree that Parks and Recreation is as important to the Woodstock community as Police, Fire, and Schools.

Recreation Programs

Ages 18 and Under

- #1 Hiking
- #2 Paddle Sports
- #3 Biking
- #4 Culinary Arts
- #5 Fishing



Ages 19 and Older

- #1 Hiking
- #2 Running/Walking
- #3 Paddle Sports
- #4 Fitness Classes
- #5 Culinary Arts



Requested Projects

- 86% Multipurpose Trails
- 79% Update Current Facilities
- 72% Multipurpose Activity Center
- 70% Passive Open Space
- 68% Playgrounds / Pocket Parks
- 64% Splash Pad / Water Play
- 64% Outdoor Learning Garden
- 43% Skate Park
- 36% Pickleball Courts

96%

of respondents agree that they support the effort to improve parks and recreation facilities and programs.

LITTLE RIVER PARK

LITTLE RIVER PARK COMMUNITY INPUT – EARTH ELEMENTS, NM

Earth Elements, NM is contracted with the City of Woodstock to Design Little River Park, a 100 acre park on the eastside of Woodstock that will serve as a trailhead and provide miles of trails and recreational experiences to the surrounding neighborhoods and all of Woodstock. The parks and recreation department is very excited to be working with Earth Elements, NM in designing a nature based park that will meet many of the needs expressed by the residents in the 2021 – 2025 Strategic Planning Survey. The timeliness of the project to tie into this Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan is seamless. The design elements in the project represents the needs and desires of the City of Woodstock and is also a footprint to follow as current and newer parks and facilities are developed. Enjoy!

- **Michael D. Huffstetler, CPRE**

Parks and Recreation Director, City of Woodstock

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the data collection phase of the Little River Park Master Plan process, the City of Woodstock hosted (2) community workshop meetings for the purpose of receiving comments and programming input from community members. The meetings were held in the municipal court from 5pm to 7:30pm on Thursday March 14, 2019, and Tuesday March 19, 2019, at the City Annex Building located at 12453 Highway 92. The workshop format included a sign in station that was monitored by representatives from the City of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department. The meeting greeters:

- Welcomed attendees,
- Requested that attendees signed in and provided each with a comment card,
- Escorted attendees to one of the three (3) programming stations manned by representatives from the design team,
- And collected the completed attendee comment cards.

The image board station was comprised of a series of presentation boards that featured drawings and photographs of the following potential programming elements:

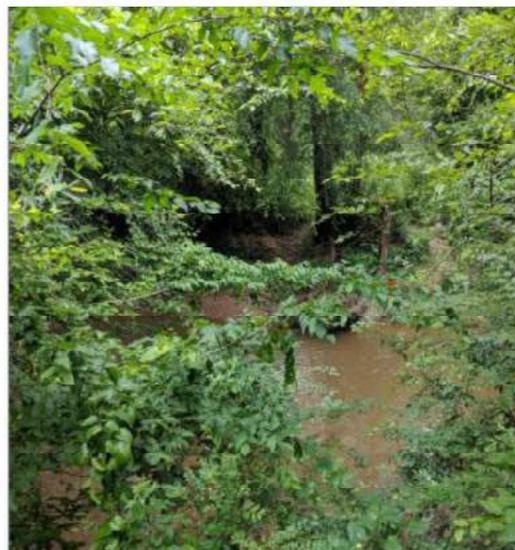
- Trail types – (including nature trails, multi-use paved trails, and boardwalks)
- Trail amenities – (including rest areas, site furnishings, and signage)
- Paddle/fishing trail types – (including paddle craft launches, accessible fishing docks, and signage)
- Site structures – (including restrooms, pavilions, shade structures, tree houses, and overlooks)
- Nature play spaces – (including natural structures that are woven into the existing terrain)
- Passive open spaces – (including outdoor classrooms and multi-use open space fields)

An existing conditions base map of the project site was located at each of the three (3) programming stations, which were manned by representatives from the design team. The workshop format allowed attendees to review the initial park base map, ask questions and offer suggestions for proposed park improvements and desired amenities. Input received from meeting participants were recorded on comment cards which were collected by representatives from the City of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department.

Attendance at the meetings, which were publicized on social media and local press outlets, ranged from approximately forty-six (46) to forty-nine (49) participants per session, (refer to the sign-in sheets located in the Appendix of the Little River Park Master Plan Community Input Report), which is a separate document not included with this Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan . Documents will be on the parks and recreation departments website and available upon request. The majority of the comments received were focused on preserving the character of the site and creating amenities that would allow users to enjoy and engage with the natural environment. A large number of the attendees proposed the following amenities:

- Nature, multi-use, and paddle craft trails
- Access to the river and pond for fishing
- Pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and the City of Woodstock Greenprints Trail System
- Areas for nature watching, tree climbing, and picnicking
- Nature play zones and passive open green spaces
- Facilities that engage disabled users of all age ranges

It should be noted that there were also requests for the inclusion of a disc golf course, as well as a dog park. Additionally, comments regarding traffic safety concerns along Trickum Road were received. The information from these community workshop meetings will be incorporated into the Little River Park Master Plan and will be used to assist with the development of the park programming.



LITTLE RIVER PARK
MASTER PLAN
COMMUNITY INPUT REPORT

PREPARED FOR:
CITY OF WOODSTOCK
12453 HIGHWAY 92
WOODSTOCK, GA
30188

LITTLE RIVER PARK DATA COLLECTION REPORT – EARTH ELEMENTS, NM

The following is the Executive Summary of the Little River Master Plan Data Collection Report. The full report is available as part of the Little River Park Master Plan, which is a separate document not included in the Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan . Documents will be on the parks and recreation departments website and available upon request.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The data collection process for the Little River Park Master Plan project included the preparation of inventories that documented the existing on-site cultural and natural resources, as well as floodplain management regulatory requirements. These reports were generated using literature review methods. However, in the case of the environmental assessments and investigations report, the literature review method was supported by a pedestrian survey in order to verify the location of natural occurring habitat and features. The data collection report includes the following:

- **Ecological Assessments & Investigations: Little River Park, Woodstock, Georgia**

Prepared By: CCR Environmental, Inc. Natural Resource Consultants

Dated: July 2019 Location: Appendix A (of Data Collection Report)

The ecological assessments & investigations included a Federal and State Waters Assessment (FSWA) and Endangered Species Investigation (ESI). These assessments were related to the City's desire to develop a Master Plan for a proposed park (Little River Park) on this property and were intended to identify ecological issues that may need more in-depth, site-specific surveys and investigations for the required environmental permitting, e.g., U.S. Waters delineation for USACE 404 Permitting, related to site development.

Numerous streams were identified in the project area, and except for the Little River, the streams were small and incised with a moderate to poor bank stability and extensive canopy. Substrate in most streams consisted primarily of sand, silt, clay, and small gravel with some occasional cobble, and aquatic habitat conditions mostly were moderate to poor. The Little River in the project area was fairly large (approximately 50-60 feet wide and 1-4 feet deep) and was fairly degraded, i.e., moderate to poor bank stability with severe sedimentation areas, and one large wetland was present in the northeastern corner of the site. Any impacts to these resources may require permitting through the United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) 404 Permit process (Federal) and the state's and county's stream buffer variance programs. Wetlands are not considered state waters that require a buffer.

Four federally protected species were identified as target species for this study; the federally endangered Indiana Bat (*Myotis Sodalis*) and Gray Bat (*Myotis Grisescens*), federally threatened Northern Long Eared Bat (*Myotis Septentrionalis*), and federally threatened Cherokee Darter (*Etheostoma Scotti*). The project appears unlikely to adversely affect the target species; however, agency coordination with GDNR and USFWS will likely occur through any 404 Permitting related to project development, and any mitigation or development restrictions would be spelled out during that process.

- **Cultural Resources Literature Review: Little River Park, Woodstock, Georgia**

Prepared By: Brockington Cultural Resources Consulting

Dated: July 2019 Location: Appendix B (of Data Collection Report)

The literature review focused on documenting previously recorded archaeological and architectural resources within the project Area of Potential Effect (APE). Research was conducted using the National Register of Historical Places (NRHP) online database maintained by the National Park Service (NPS) and the Georgia Natural Archaeological, and Historical Resources Geographic Information System (GNAHRGIS). Research was also conducted at the Georgia Archives.

The NRHP online database was reviewed to determine in any NRHP listed properties are located in the APE. GNAHRGIS was reviewed to determine if any previously recorded archaeological sites or architectural resources are located in the APE. This included a review of site forms as well as archaeological and cultural resources survey reports. At the Georgia Archives county histories and cemetery records were reviewed to determine if any previously recorded cemeteries are located in or near the APE. In addition, Civil War maps such as those provided in The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War (Davis et al. 2003) were reviewed to determine if any military activity associated with the Civil War took place within the APE.

The literature review revealed that there are no previously recorded architectural resources located in the APE. There is one archaeological site (9CK2209) in the study area. However, it was determined not eligible for the NRHP. There are 16 other sites located within one km (0.6 mile) of the study area, but they are not within the study area boundary.

- **Floodplain Management Review: Little River Park, Woodstock, Georgia**

Prepared By: Dewberry Consultants, LLC

Dated: July 2019 Location: Appendix C (of Data Collection Report)

A desktop review of the existing floodplain and topography information was prepared in order to identify the federal and local regulatory constraints pertaining to the development of Little River Park, including the need for potential FEMA coordination and compliance with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District ordinance as adopted by the City of Woodstock. Existing floodplain studies for the Little River were obtained and reviewed, and recommended considerations were prepared to assist with the development of concepts that can be engineered to comply with local and federal floodplain requirements. Additionally, existing streamflow monitoring stations within the Little River watershed were researched and recommendations are provided for a process to monitor water levels and identify critical stages for potential closure of the park.

The detail and findings presented in these reports was used in the development of the initial park base map (Appendix D – of Data Collection Report). Areas identified as environmentally sensitive, having regulatory buffers and/or flood management requirements were located on the field-run site survey data provided by TerraMark. This information will be incorporated into the Little River Park Master Plan and will be used to identify the location of future park amenities.

CHAPTER TWO CONCLUSION

FROM THE PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR

The City of Woodstock and the Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department has a tremendous opportunity to develop a parks system that is as unique and as authentic as its residents, staff, and visitors. It is clear that the community is seeking the quality of life and freedom of choice that only parks and recreation can provide. The Covid-19 pandemic only highlighted this need and deemed parks and recreation services as essential to keeping residents healthy, active, and connected. Ensuring these needs will be top priority among all else as the parks and recreation department develops the final Strategic Plan recommendations.

Community input from residents and visitors, current participants, city leadership, stakeholders, and community partners highlighted many things, but the overwhelming needs are:

1. Trail connections (connect current trails and to major landmarks)
2. Upgrade current parks (Up to Date & Conservation Minded)
3. Provide unique amenities (nature inspired and unique to Woodstock and the arts)
4. Need for programming to accommodate a growing population (not just passive)
5. Need for programming space for all ages, indoors and outdoors
6. Ensure adequate staffing and operations to support community needs.

Moving forward to Chapter three, information from the first two chapters will be utilized along with an evaluation of the current services and facilities in developing recommendations for improvement and development. None of the recommendations are meant to be final. Recommendations can and most likely will continuously change as each project moves into final planning stages. Similar to the Little River Park Master Plan, final design, costs, and feasibility isn't truly known until the process takes place. Several projects will need to be researched, investigated, planned, and permitted by professional design firms, while other projects can be coordinated in house and with other departments. Property may need to be acquired, and initial projects may be modified to fit current space and to meet "some" need. For example, a highly requested item is a skate park combined with a pump track. This is an excellent project that Woodstock would be proud of. However, it could be possible that the final design is a skate plaza constructed within a landscape that provides a visible but not too visible place for teenagers to hang out and feel some privacy, while also able to be seen. With a couple intentional design elements this would also be a great project for residents currently living in the City of Woodstock. In addition, elements of a pump track can be designed in various locations along the current trail system. It would look different but could be a great alternative. This is the fun part of Strategic Planning, taking input and eventually seeing what the reality of the projects will be. It's a team effort and the parks and recreation department can't wait to get to work.

Michael D. Huffstetler, CPRE

Parks & Recreation Director, City of Woodstock