

# Town of Forest City Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan



Updated March 2021

# **Town of Forest City Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan**

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# Town of Forest City Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan

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## **Plan Introduction**

Contained herein is the updated Town of Forest City Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan. This is the third update for this plan. The initial plan involved approximately one year of documenting and analyzing data, interviewing league officials, interviewing town personnel, documenting and analyzing facilities, conducting a survey of users and the hard work of a volunteer committee that is committed to providing quality parks and recreation facilities and programming to the citizens of Forest City and Rutherford County. The first update to this plan involved the same process as the initial plan, in addition to conducting a new survey, reviewing accomplishments and recommending new implementation strategies. In the second update, a suite of different data collection processes were used, including a meeting with Recreation Commissioners, facility tours, an online survey and interviews with staff. The 2015 update was completed by Isothermal Planning and Development (IPDC) with support from the Forest City Recreation Department. The 2021 update followed the same guidelines and was completed by Town of Forest City staff.

The Town of Forest City primarily serves town residents, but facilities are also used by those living outside of the town limits. Forest City offers the most organized programs and facilities of any other cities in Rutherford County.

Statistics indicate that while the Town of Forest City's population hasn't grown substantially during the last census period, Rutherford County's population is continuing to grow. As the population continues to grow, additional burdens will be placed upon the Town of Forest City's ability to provide recreational services, not only for its own citizens, but also for those in outlying areas that participate in their programs or use their facilities. Through this planning process, it is envisioned that Forest City will be able to meet current and future needs. It is also envisioned that Rutherford County will take more of an active role in recreation to take some of the resource load off of the municipalities. Hopefully, all of the local government entities within Rutherford County will work together to assist and complement each other, to offer more diverse types of recreation and to help each other meet future needs.

## **Purpose and Scope**

This planning process began with a recommendation in the Rutherford County Land Use Plan update completed in 2001. Issue #5 within the Land Use Plan was "The Need for Recreational Opportunities in Rutherford County". The goal to be addressed from this issue is "to develop a wide range of recreational opportunities to serve residents, tourists and visitors and to act as a stimulus for economic development". The objective

of this issue is to “inventory all facilities, programs and participants throughout the County to determine what needs exist and determine how those needs are to be addressed”. The final recommendation from the Land Use Plan is that “Rutherford County should form a recreation advisory committee consisting of members from various age groups and recreational backgrounds”. This committee would inventory all public and private facilities, programs and participants to determine what needs exist and how Rutherford County can best address these needs. From this recommendation the Rutherford County Arts Parks and Recreation Committee (RCAPRC) was formed. The RCAPRC felt that the inventory of programs and facilities, in conjunction with a Comprehensive Plan, would provide the best direction to Rutherford County to address current and future recreational needs. It was also at this time that the larger municipalities (Lake Lure, Rutherfordton, Spindale and Forest City) were offered the opportunity to become actively involved by creating their own mini-plans based upon the data that the County was accumulating. Lake Lure, Rutherfordton and Forest City accepted this offer. Forest City activated its Parks and Recreation Commission and started development of its Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan. This plan will act as Forest City’s Parks and Recreation Plan.

The main purpose of this document is to provide the Town of Forest City with an actionable plan to guide its actions and decisions regarding:

- Future parks and recreation programs and facilities
- Renovation of existing parks and/or facilities
- Cooperative efforts in providing recreation needs
- Possible land acquisitions
- Providing assistance in obtaining grants

The Forest City Comprehensive Recreation Plan is organized into four sections:

- Review of physical, demographic and historical characteristics
- Inventory and analysis of existing recreation facilities
- Community survey and needs assessment
- Recommendations and implementation

## **Methodology**

From commencement to completion, the work on the original plan and the additional recreation plans spanned from the summer of 2004 to the summer of 2005. The 2015 update began in the fall of 2014 and was completed in 2015. The 2021 plan was updated during the first quarter of 2021. The information utilized for this plan was gathered from a number of sources including the Town of Forest City Parks & Recreation Survey, Census Bureau, North Carolina State Data Center, North Carolina

Division of Community Assistance, Rutherford County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Rutherford County Economic Development Commission, North Carolina Municipal and County Parks and Recreation Survey and Town of Forest City staff. The update process involved a thorough review of the plan, making necessary changes to data and the inventory and analysis of facilities, rewriting the survey section to reflect the newest survey and responses, reviewing implementation strategies and changing or adding as necessary.

An inventory of existing programming and facilities was carried out over the course of the initial planning process and the update process.

A random scientific survey for Forest City citizens was developed and performed during the initial planning process and the update process. The same survey was used for the 2015 update and the 2021 update. In an effort to save financial resources, the survey was entered into Google Forms, an online survey data collection service ([forms.google.com](https://forms.google.com)). Physical copies were available at Town Hall, Callison Recreation Center, the Forest City Golf Course and Mooneyham Public Library and the Rutherford County Farmers Market. The survey was shared on the following Facebook pages: Town of Forest City, Forest City Parks and Rec. Dept., Forest City Events and Explore Forest City. Local media including two newspapers and one radio station also promoted the survey. Hard copies were hand-entered into GoogleForms for calculation and analysis purposes.

The Forest City Parks and Recreation Commission, representing a cross section of interest and expertise, assisted the planner in the preparation of the Plan. The commission's duties included the following:

- Assisting with the creation and review of the community survey
- Analyzing existing programming and facilities
- Identifying the issues, strengths and weaknesses of Forest City
- Assisting the planner in formulating recommendations
- Reviewing the draft plan and recommendations

# Section 1. Review of Physical, Demographic and Historical Characteristics



## **Introduction**

The analysis of physical, demographic and economic characteristics of a municipality is very important when planning for future growth and development. This is especially true when considering parks and recreation. By reviewing and analyzing past and present data and projecting future data, we should be able to determine what impacts the Town of Forest City may expect regarding parks and recreation.

## **Physical Characteristics**

### **Location**

The Town of Forest City is located in Rutherford County at latitude North 35 degrees 20 minutes 01 second and longitude West 81 degrees 51 minutes 51 seconds along US Highway 74 Business. Forest City is bordered to the west by the Town of Spindale. Forest City is approximately 60 miles east of Asheville, 60 miles west of Charlotte and 25 miles north of Spartanburg, South Carolina. (See Map 1 Locator Map)

### **Geography**

Forest City is located within a geographic zone of the state typically referred to as the foothills (gently rolling terrain). Elevations within Forest City range from approximately 800 feet above sea level along the Second Broad River to over 1,050 feet above sea level in the central western portion of the Town. Underlying rock formations are generally gneiss and schist from the Paleozoic Era. Since a large part of the town is developed, most of the typical Appalachian Hardwood Forests have been replaced by roads, buildings and other landscaping. All 8.5 square miles of the Town of Forest City are located within the Broad River Basin.

### **Climate**

Forest City is located within a climate zone in North Carolina known as the Thermal Belt. Summers in Forest City are typically moderately warm and very humid. Winters are moderately cold. Precipitation is evenly distributed throughout the year. According to data collected from the Southeast Regional Climate Center, the average annual temperature is 58 degrees, with an average high temperature of 71 degrees and an average low temperature of 45 degrees. The highest temperature of 107 degrees was recorded in August of 1999. The lowest temperature of -8 degrees was recorded in January of 1982. In the summer months, the average high temperature is 88 degrees and the average low temperature is 63 degrees. In the winter months, the average high temperature is 53 degrees and the average low temperature is 28 degrees. The yearly precipitation average is 50 inches and is generally spread out evenly throughout the year. The heaviest average monthly rainfall amounts occurred during the months of

March (5.26 inches) and January (4.7 inches). The lowest monthly averages occurred during the months of April (3.63 inches) and December (3.76 inches). The average annual snowfall amount is 5.5 inches with the heaviest monthly averages occurring in January (2.9 inches), February (1.4 inches) and March (.9 inches).

### **Existing Land Use**

While most of Rutherford County would be classified as rural, Forest City would be classified as *developed* (urban environment with normal municipal services) and *urban transitional* (outlying municipal areas being developed for urban purposes). Forest City has a mix of several residential classifications, several commercial classifications and two manufacturing classifications. The older downtown commercial growth has occurred along US Highway 74 Business. Newer highway commercial growth has occurred along the US Highway 74-A. Industrial areas are located along Duke Street, US Highway 74-A, Vance Street, US Highway 74 Business East and in the Alexander Mills area of Forest City.

### **Future Land Use**

It is anticipated that land uses will continue to intensify within both the municipal boundaries and transitional areas around Forest City. Extensions of water and sewer utilities will encourage growth. One trend that should be noted within Rutherford County is that most residential growth in the last 10-year census period occurred outside of municipal boundaries. Only the municipalities of Rutherfordton, Chimney Rock and Lake Lure increased their populations. Forest City's population (even with the annexation of Alexander Mills) decreased by 8%. It is anticipated that commercial and industrial growth will continue where water and sewer utilities are available. It is also anticipated that residential growth will continue to dominate rural areas outside of municipalities.

### **Floodplains**

The Town of Forest City has floodplains that are delineated on the National Flood Insurance Rate Maps. For most locations, these flood prone areas are within prescribed elevations of known streams or creeks. These maps have been updated using LIDAR technology and are much more accurate than what used to be available. This could be helpful in the future for creating greenways or open space along creeks, streams and rivers. (Greenways along floodplains are also recommended within the Rutherford County Hazard Mitigation Plan.)

### **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure is typically defined as utilities (water, sewer, electricity & gas) and roads.



**Water System** - The Town of Forest City currently operates an 8-million gallon per day water system that draws water from the Second Broad River. Supply lines serve Forest City as well as the Towns of Bostic and Ellenboro. There is also the possibility that Forest City may construct a new water plant along the Broad River at the Riverstone Industrial Complex on US Highway 221 South.

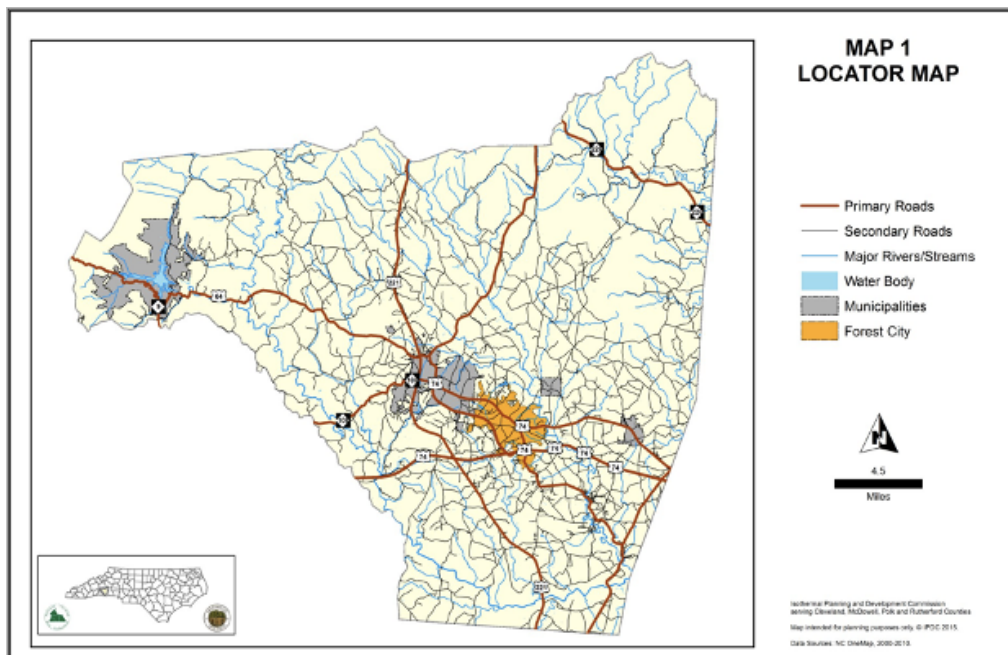
**Sewer System** - The Town of Forest City operates a 4.95-million gallon per day sewage treatment facility with an excess of 8,500 customers. This system also provides sewage services for the Town of Ellenboro.

**Electricity** - The Town of Forest City supplies the Town's electric utilities. This utility also serves areas outside of the Town's corporate limits.

**Natural Gas** - Natural gas (where available) is supplied by the Public Service Company of North Carolina.

**Streets, Roads and Sidewalks** - There is a large network of streets, roads and sidewalks within the corporate limits of Forest City. The majority of streets are maintained by the Town of Forest City. Some of the streets and roads that fall under state maintenance include: US Highway 74 Business, US Highway 74-A, Vance Street, Cherry Mountain Street, Hudlow Road, Oak Street, South Church Street, Hardin Road, South Broadway Street and Old Caroleen Road. Forest City maintains all of the sidewalks within the corporate limits.

Map 1. Locator Map



## Demographics

NOTE: In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the U.S. Census Bureau adjusted and delayed 2020 Census operations in order to protect the health and safety of the American public and Census Bureau employees and ensure a complete and accurate count of all communities. Therefore, the demographic characteristics in this plan are from the 2019 Census estimates.

### Population

According to the 2010 US Census, the Town of Forest City’s population was 7,475. The high point of Forest City’s population (8,331) was just after the annexation of the Town of Alexander Mills in 1980. The population has decreased since then: 7,531 in 2000 and 7,475 in 2010. The 2019 estimate was 7,155.

Rutherford County’s population estimate in 2019 was 67,029. This represents a decline of -1.2% since 2010. Over the past fifty years, the differences between the growth trends is much more stark with the County growing faster than Forest City (see Table 1. 50 Years of Population Growth).

The service area for the Town of Forest City’s recreation services covers more than the Town. Currently, there are approximately 18,000 people that live within a 10-minute drive of downtown Forest City.

Table 1. 50 Years of Population Change

Location	1980 Pop.	1990 Pop.	2000 Pop.	2010 Pop.	2019 Pop.	% Pop. Change 1980-2020	% Pop. Change 2010-2020
Forest City	7,688	7,475	7,549	7,475	7,155	-6.9%	-4.3%
Alexander Mills	643	662 *				N/A	N/A
Rutherford County	53,787	56,918	62,899	67,819	67,029	24.6%	-1.2%

\* The Town of Alexander Mills was merged into Forest City prior to the 2000 Census.

## **Age**

Forest City's median age in 2019 of 37 was lower than Rutherford County's (45) and the state's (39). 2,048 persons (27.4%) were under 19. 2,175 persons (32.1%) were between the ages of 20 to 44. 1,903 persons (21.2 %) were between the ages of 45-64. 1,350 persons (19.3%) were age 65 and older.

## **Race/Ethnicity**

Forest City has one of the most diverse populations within Rutherford County. In 2019, Forest City's population was 66.8% white, 27.6% Black or African American, 4.6% Hispanic or Latino, .4% Asian and .6% two or more races.

## **Socio-Economic Characteristics**

According to the NC Department of Commerce, there were 24,131 jobs within Rutherford County in 2019. The Government sector was the primary employer in the County with 13.8% of the workforce. Government and the following sectors account for 47.2% of the workforce in Rutherford County: Manufacturing (12%), Healthcare and Social Assistance (10.8%) and Retail Trade (10.6%).

The current unemployment rate in Rutherford County is 7.5%, which is higher than the State's rate of 6.1% and the US' rate of 6.2%.

The median household income for Forest City in 1999 was \$27,589, which is considerably lower than Rutherford County's (\$42,608) and the State's (\$57,341).

In 2019, 84.4% of the population in Forest City had received a high school diploma, compared to 83.8% in Rutherford County and 87.6% in North Carolina. 18.1% of the population in Forest City had received a bachelor's degree, compared to 17.8% in Rutherford County and 20.5% for North Carolina.

## **Historical Characteristics**

Although Rutherford County was officially formed in 1779, there is much history dating back to the pre-revolutionary period. Prior to white settlers, the area was part of the Great Cherokee Nation. Although Native Americans did not have permanent settlements here, there were many small encampments and trails that were used to move and trade with their lands to the west and the north. During the 1700s, white settlers from the east and south began to filter through using the Native American trails.

According to the *History of Rutherford County* by Nancy Ellen Ferguson, Tryon County was formed from Mecklenburg County in 1768. In April of 1779, Lincoln and Rutherford

Counties were created from Tryon County. Rutherford County was named in honor of Brigadier General Griffith Rutherford who fought in the Revolutionary War.

The original County seat was Gilbertown, which also served as an encampment for the British and Tory Troops under Major Patrick Ferguson. In 1787, the County seat was moved to Rutherford Town (which later became Rutherfordton).

According to the Town of Forest City website, the Town of Burnt Chimney was a crossroads community along the Shelby-Rutherfordton and Spartanburg-Lincolnton Roads that was originally incorporated in 1877. The name “Burnt Chimney” originated from the remains of the McArthur home that marked the crossroads. A replica of the chimney stands close to the original site in the Town’s public square today. The name was changed in 1887 to Forest City in honor of prominent citizen Forest Davis. Forest City has grown into the largest municipality and the commercial and industrial hub of Rutherford County.

According to Parks and Recreation staff, the original pool and golf course were constructed around 1933. The pool was replaced in the 1950s. A “Blueprint for Recreation”, which may have been the original recreation plan for Forest City, was written in 1954. This was also the same year that the first Recreation Commission was founded.

## **Section 1 Summary**

The growth potential of Rutherford County appears to be above average for the 21st Century. Good infrastructure, a strategic location close to major highways and proximity to larger metropolitan areas are significant factors that enhance its growth potential. Proper planning for parks and recreation services is needed to accommodate the future population growth of the Town and the surrounding area.

In a study conducted by the US News & World Report, Charlotte and Asheville are among the 2020-2021 Best Places to Live, ranked as sixth and thirty-fourth respectively. Some of the best attributes of these living in these cities include a thriving restaurant and bar scene, greenway trails, plenty of green spaces, an art and music scene. sports teams. These trends are confirmed in the 2021 survey response and reflected in the regional recreation field. With recent additions like the Pavilion On Park Square (POPS), the Thermal Belt Rail Trail, the Trails to Tails Dog Park and the growing local businesses, Forest City can expect to see an influx of potential residents and visitors that desire the same unique amenities on a smaller scale as these cities and their populations continue to grow.

According to a survey conducted by Area Development in 2016, the third most important site selection factor is quality of life when looking for sites for expansion or relocation. Under quality of life factors, “quality of life for a technology company is more likely to cater to the lifestyle of the younger demographic that will likely be on the payroll. These are workers who tend to appreciate urban living, esoteric shops, coffeehouses and outdoor recreation with a bit more edge.” This was seen firsthand when Facebook selected to build a major data center in Forest City in 2012.

Another factor to consider is how overall health and wellness is directly connected to recreation opportunities. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) reports that “more time spent in parks and green spaces can help individuals fight against mental health issues like depression, anxiety and stress. Making sure that all people have access to parks and outdoor programming is a critical way to increase these positive effects on health and quality of life for your community.” The NRPA also specifically lists farmers markets as an important asset in a community because they provide access to healthy food options, educational resources for youth and the opportunity to partner with other organizations to serve as community wellness hubs. By maintaining the current outdoor spaces and working closely with the Rutherford County Farmers Market, the Mooneyham Public Library and other community organizations, Forest City can continue to improve the quality of life in this area.

The Town of Forest City has laid the groundwork. By taking advantage of these studies and enhancing its recreational and cultural resources, Forest City’s population will begin to grow in a positive direction.



# Section 2. Inventory and Analysis of Existing Facilities and Programming

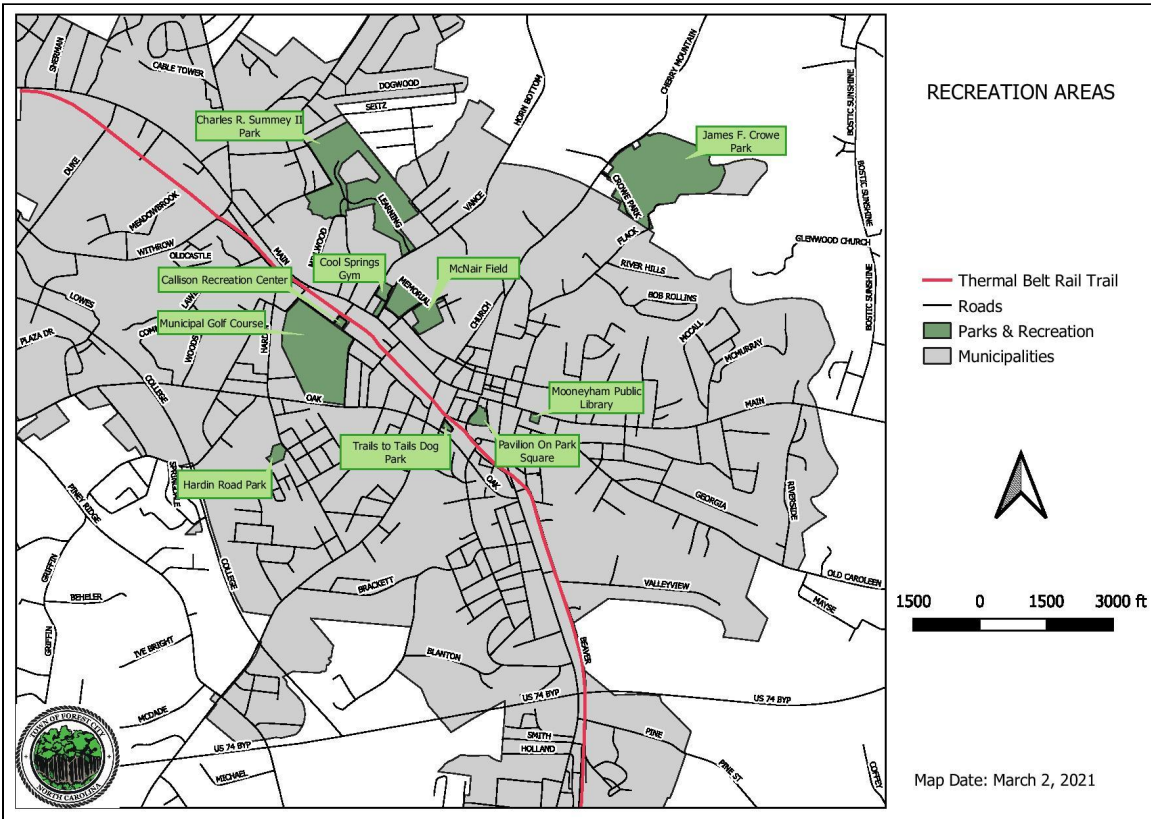




# Introduction

The Town of Forest City offers numerous opportunities for recreational activities at various parks and facilities. In this section, we will examine each location and what is offered there. Parks and recreation areas are noted on Map 2.

Map 2. Recreation Areas



## Facilities Inventory

### Callison Recreation Center

Callison Recreation Center is a large facility located two blocks south of Main Street on Clay Street. This facility is located on the same tract of land as the Forest City Golf Course and the Forest City Clubhouse. The total tract covers over 60 acres. The facility is owned by the Town of Forest City and is maintained and operated by the Forest City Recreation Department.



Callison Recreation Center facilities include:

- Recreation offices
- Gym with multiple basketball courts
- Fitness room
- Equipment storage
- Six regulation tennis courts
- Swimming pool
- Combined parking with the golf course for 150 vehicles
- Two senior citizens clubs

Callison is used the most by recreational basketball leagues, fitness groups and senior citizens. The pool is used by the Forest City Swim Team and swim lessons are taught in the summer. In the summer, the pool operates at capacity. The facility is landscaped and maintained well. The Thermal Belt Rail Trail lies to the north of the main parking area and connects the facility to the trail.

Since the adoption of the original plan, the following improvements have been made:

- The pool pumps and drains were updated
- The weight room was expanded
- Air conditioning was added
- The tennis courts are recoated on a yearly basis
- The areas inside the fence around the pool were expanded
- Shade structures and a picnic shelter around the pool were constructed

### **Charles R. Summey II Park**

The Charles R. Summey II Park is a large regional facility constructed in partnership with Rutherford County Schools. The park is located off of Vance Street north of its intersection with Main Street. Forest City Dunbar Elementary School is located in the central portion of this property. The portion of the property owned by the Town of Forest City consists of approximately 71 acres. The Forest City Recreation Department maintains the park property and the school property.



Charles R. Summey II Park facilities include:

- Two lighted baseball fields
- One lighted softball field

- Two t-ball fields
- Field tower with bathrooms
- One small picnic shelter
- One children's play unit
- Three irrigated multi-purpose fields adjacent to school
- One irrigated multi-purpose field
- Quarter-mile rubberized walking track
- Two shelters with bathrooms
- Marked parking for 138 vehicles

This facility is heavily used by the Forest City Little League. The facility is beautifully landscaped with lots of additional greenspace. Sidewalks connect this facility to Vance Street and back to Main Street.

Since the adoption of the original plan, the following improvements have been made:

- The rubber track was redone
- A parking study to improve safety and walkability was completed

### **Cool Springs Gym**

Cool Springs Gym is located on West Main Street next to the Rutherford County Schools administrative offices. The Town of Forest City acquired the property from Rutherford County Schools and completed renovations in 2004. The gym is in great shape and is used for youth and adult basketball programs. There is parking for approximately 155 vehicles located behind the gym off of Vance Street. The rear of the gym serves as locker rooms for the Forest City Owls and visiting baseball teams playing at McNair Field.



Since the adoption of the original plan, the following improvements have been made:

- The gym floor was replaced
- The building has been repainted
- A new HVAC was installed
- An ADA-accessible restroom was added
- New sidewalks and new parking were completed
- Lockers for the Forest City Owls were added
- The gym foyer was completely renovated

### **Forest City Clubhouse**

The Forest City Clubhouse is located on the same tract of land as the Forest City Golf Course and Callison Recreation Center. The total tract covers over 60 acres. The facility is owned by the Town of Forest City and is maintained and operated by the Forest City Recreation Department. The clubhouse is a meeting facility that includes a large meeting/dining room, sitting room, commercial kitchen and furnished patio. The facility accommodates groups of 200 people with seating space for 115. The atmosphere is rustic with wood walls, ceiling and floor. A small stage area suitable for a small combo or DJ is located at the back of the meeting room. The patio opens out of the sitting room with steps leading from the patio to a large grassy fenced back yard.



The following improvements have been made since the original plan was adopted:

- The clubhouse was reroofed and painted
- A new HVAC was installed

### **Forest City Golf Course**

The Forest City Golf Course is located on the same tract as Callison Recreation Center off of Clay Street. Construction for the golf course began in 1933 as a civil works administration program. The golf course was remodeled and improved in 1998 and 1999. The course is 9 holes, 3,005 yards from the white tees and has a par of 36. There is a practice chipping green, a practice putting green and a driving net available. There is a



full service pro shop with a club pro. Carts are available for a fee. The course is owned by the Town of Forest City and is maintained by a golf course maintenance crew.

### **Hardin Road Park**

Hardin Road Park is a small community park area located in central southwestern Forest City on Hardin Road, south of its intersection with Oak Street. This park is located adjacent to a Forest City water storage tank and the Dunbar Community Center. The park consists of two tracts of land totaling approximately three acres. The park is



owned by the Town of Forest City and maintained by the Forest City Recreation Department.

Hardin Road Park facilities include:

- One outdoor basketball court
- Bathrooms
- One large picnic shelter
- Three children's play units
- Parking for 10 vehicles



The park is showing signs of age. There is a sidewalk leading to this park along Hardin Street, but it does not connect to a neighborhood or to downtown.

### **James F. Crowe Park**

James F. Crowe Park is a large park facility located in the northern section of Forest City between Cherry Mountain Street and Flack Road. The complex was originally built with the Department of the Interior Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF). It is owned by the Town of Forest City and maintained and operated by the Forest City Recreation Department. The complex consists of two tracts of land totaling approximately 80 acres and abuts the Second Broad River.



James F. Crowe Park facilities include:

- Two lighted baseball fields
- One lighted softball field
- Equipment storage
- Bathrooms
- Two horseshoe pits
- Five large picnic shelters
- Two small picnic shelters
- Sand area
- Large children's play unit
- Numerous children's play stations
- Marked parking for 145 vehicles

Although this facility is older, it is clean and well maintained. There is also quite a bit of acreage not in use, including access to the Second Broad River. Fields are not in as much demand since the Charles R. Summey II Park has been completed. There are no sidewalks or bikeways leading to this park.

Since the adoption of the original plan, the Town of Forest City received a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant to upgrade this park and the following improvements have been made:

- New bathrooms, a large picnic shelter, new baseball dugouts and new playground equipment were added
- Parking facility was updated
- All ballfields were relighted
- Fencing was repaired
- Field drainage, regrading and resurfacing of ball fields is completed annually

### **McNair Field**

McNair Field is located on the site previously occupied by the Martin Green Legion Field. Since the adoption of the original plan, McNair Field was created and is one of the newest ballparks in the Coastal Plain League. McNair Field was named in honor of Robert McNair, a Forest City native and a major contributor to this project. The grandstands have 556 reserved seats and general admission seating for over 1,000. There is a



press box, two separate food areas, a beer garden, ample parking and a state-of-the-art scoreboard. The natural field surface and irrigation system are as nice as any other field in the summer league program. McNair Field is home to the Forest City Owls.

### **Mooneyham Public Library**

Mooneyham Public Library began as a small collection of books housed in an upstairs room in Forest City's Town Hall. Today the library is located in a building constructed in 1964 on Main Street. Mooneyham Public Library is dedicated to providing free and equal access to quality resources and reliable information and to fostering lifelong learning.





The building is two levels. The street level contains the library, learning center and administrative offices. The basement level contains meeting rooms that are used by various groups within the town and serve as space for senior citizen groups. The library offers books, audio and video cassettes, magazines, tax forms, public access to the internet for online resources, free WiFi, accelerated reader collections, fax service, copies and story time. The building is 3,300 square feet on each level and located on a .4-acre lot with an adjoining .5-acre lot with additional parking and green space.

### **Park Square Trailhead**

Through a partnership with Rutherford County and the towns of Spindale, Ruth, Rutherfordton and Forest City, the 13.58-mile Thermal Belt Rail Trail was created where the old Southern Railroad and the Thermal Belt Railway once ran. Trail construction began in 2018 and was completed in 2019. The trail extends from Forrest Hunt Elementary School in Forest City to Oak Springs Road in Gilkey at a distance of 13.58 miles with a width of 12 feet. The Town of Forest City



maintains three trailheads on their portion of the Thermal Belt Rail Trail: Park Square Trailhead, Forrest Hunt Trailhead and Pine Street Trailhead. The Park Square Trailhead is located adjacent to Oak Street, the Pavilion On Park Square (POPS) and the Rutherford County Farmers Market. It is also accessible via Park Square and Mill Street, which directly connect to Main Street and historic downtown Forest City.

Park Square Trailhead amenities include:

- Fitness stations
- Directory sign
- Wheelchair-accessible swing
- Picnic area
- Children's slides
- Paved connection to Thermal Belt Rail Trail

### **Pavilion On Park Square (POPS)**

The Pavilion On Park Square (POPS) is an outdoor amphitheater located between Main Street and Oak Street at the site of a former cotton plant called Florence Mill. Forest City's Town Council decided to pay for the park using capital funds rather than financing it. The groundbreaking for the new park was held on August 23, 2017, and POPS opened to the public in April 2019. With the opening of POPS, Forest City finally has its

own gathering space for the community. Town-sponsored events have more than tripled since the opening of POPS. Along with festivals, concerts and movie nights, other community-minded activities have taken place like Zumba classes, yoga sessions, the Rutherford County Libraries summer kickoff party, National Night Out and more. The facility is owned by the Town of Forest City and is maintained and operated by the Forest City Recreation Department.



POPS amenities include:

- 2,500-seat amphitheater with tiered grass seating
- Covered stage
- Colonnade with swings
- Two splash pads
- Concession stand
- Restrooms
- .25-mile sidewalk around the perimeter

### **Rutherford Opportunity Center (formerly Forest City Elementary School)**

Through an agreement with Rutherford County, the Town of Forest City agreed to operate and maintain the playground portion of the Rutherford Opportunity Center located along Old Caroleen Road. This property originally housed Forest City Elementary School. When the new school was built off of Vance Street, the property became the



Rutherford Opportunity Center. The property consists of 10.9 acres with the school building and a large playground area (approximately three acres). The playground consists of a combination play structure and park benches. The playground is spread out around the three acres of open space and is located within a large residential area. There are sidewalks connecting this park with the residential areas and the downtown area of Town. The park is heavily used, and it is in fair condition.

### **Trails to Tails Dog Park**

Trails to Tails Dog Park is home to a wide open area for dogs to play together. Right off of the Thermal Belt Rail Trail, Trails to Tails is conveniently located at 122 Park Street and is open daily from sunrise to sunset. The facility is owned by the Town of Forest City and is maintained and operated by the Forest City Recreation Department.



Trails to Tails Dog Park amenities include:

- Two separate sections for large dogs and small dogs
- Water fountains
- Waste stations
- Shaded seating areas

## **Surrounding Recreational Facilities**

### **Chimney Rock**

#### **Chimney Rock Riverside Park**

Located within walking distance of nearly all of the Village lodging properties, Riverside Park is the perfect spot for a family picnic or base camp for a day of fishing and swimming. With abundant shade, several picnic tables and easy access to the Rocky Broad River, it is a lovely place to spend an afternoon relaxing and making memories with family and friends.

#### **Chimney Rock State Park**

Chimney Rock State Park brings the best of the mountains together in one place. For immediate gratification, you can take the elevator to the top or hike on several unique hiking trails. Visitors can hike the Hickory Nut Falls Trail, one of the highest in the East.

#### **Rocky Broad Riverwalk**

The Rocky Broad Riverwalk runs parallel to Main Street in Chimney Rock Village, providing easy access to restaurants and other attractions. It offers a serene walking trail with plenty of boulders and rock outcroppings and many places to fish along the trail. The whitewater paddling section of the river flows for 3.5 miles from Lake Lure to Chimney Rock, featuring class IV and V rapids for normal flows.

## **Lake Lure**

### **Lake Lure Beach & Water Park**

People come from all around to enjoy the unique lakeside water park in the mountains of Lake Lure. The beach by the lake is one of the community's most well-known landmarks as visitors and residents visit the beach on a regular basis. The beach and water park consists of approximately three acres and is located in the Town Center. Like the lake, the beach and water park are owned by the Town of Lake Lure and managed by contractual agreement with a private company. The beach is operated by Lake Lure Tours. Facilities include 100 yards of clean, sandy beach and swimming area, a ticket office, change area, bathrooms, a water park with water slides and water games, a large covered picnic shelter on the beach, individual picnic tables and marked parking for 70 vehicles.

### **Lake Lure Flowering Bridge**

Within walking distance of the village shops and eateries, visitors can discover the abundance of flowers and shrubbery that consume the Lake Lure Flowering Bridge, a once thriving overpass that carried traffic into and out of the area for over 75 years. Part garden and part whimsical pedestrian path, the bridge joins Lake Lure and Chimney Rock Village in a multi-sensory journey through fifteen eye-popping, nose-tingling stops. More than 700 plant varieties flourish in raised beds and planters made all the more fascinating by the interplay of local art and quaint whimsy along the way.

### **Lake Lure Golf Club**

The Lake Lure Golf Club is a great nine-hole course offering a challenging golf game amidst the beautiful scenery of Hickory Nut Gorge at the southeastern end of town. The course is open year round and has a historic clubhouse, paved parking area, cart storage building, driving range and two putting greens. The course is located at the southeastern end of town along US 64/74. It sits on a 235-acre tract of land owned by the Town of Lake Lure. From the white tees, the course is 2,738 yards for nine holes and par 35. The course underwent a major renovation in 2010 to return it to its original design and playing condition. It has proven popular with golf leagues, women's teams and golfers looking for a challenging place to practice their shots.

## **Rutherfordton**

### **Cherry Bounce Trail**

The Cherry Bounce Trail was originally used as a distribution route by moonshiners to deliver Amos Owens' famous Cherry Bounce drink. Today, it is a beautiful route that runs throughout Rutherford County and provides travelers with some of the most

brehtaking views the county has to offer. There are several historical markers along the way as well as popular destinations such as Washburn's General Store and the Bostic Lincoln Center. The trail and the story of Amos' Owens also inspired the Cherry Bounce Festival, an annual event that features art from local and regional artists, live bluegrass/Americana music and cherry-inspired items by local restaurants and businesses.

### **Crestview Park**

Crestview Park is a multi-purpose, recreation-focused park located off of Park Street between Crestview Street and US Highway 221. Before Kiwanis Park was completed in 2021, Crestview was Rutherfordton's largest and most heavily used park. It provides recreation opportunities to visitors and offers youth sports leagues and schools facilities for a variety of recreational programming. Crestview Park offers three regulation Little League fields, one regulation senior league field, one t-ball field, a 1/3-mile paved walking path, a concession stand, bathrooms, two outdoor basketball courts, four asphalt tennis courts, a children's play area with assorted equipment, one picnic shelter, one multipurpose field, two grills, marked and unmarked parking spaces, free high-speed wi-fi and creek access to Mile Branch.

### **KidSenses Children's Interactive Museum**

Since opening in 2004, KidSenses has welcomed over 500,000 visitors to their 11,000 square-foot space, which features 14 different interactive exhibit areas, curriculum-based workshops for field trip groups, a 7,500 square-foot Children's Garden and unique opportunities to stimulate the imagination and educate the mind.

### **Kiwanis Park**

Kiwanis Park is a large, passive park adjacent to downtown Rutherfordton, providing attractive open space in the middle of town. The property consists of seven separate tracts of land totaling 3.7 acres. Kiwanis Park offers a children's play area, picnic tables, grills, a swing set, two wooden bridges, stream and creek access, greenway access and marked parking spaces.

### **Main Street Park**

Main Street Park is a small downtown park that was created by closing First Street between Main Street and Central Street. Main Street Park consists of .08 acres that is maintained as open space for the downtown area. It consists of six concrete tables, eight wooden benches, two brick planters, three moveable planters, ten metal arches, two historical information kiosks, one directional kiosk, six banner flag posts and various hanging art.

### **Purple Martin Greenway**

Named after the Purple Martin bird that appeared on General Griffith Rutherford's family crest, the Purple Martin Greenway is Rutherfordton's first natural trail system. Along this trail, you can explore wildlife, creeks, waterfalls and local plant life. The trail is bike-, kid- and pet-friendly as well as handicap-accessible. Located just off of US Highway 221, the greenway is a hidden gem that feels like a true wilderness escape yet has the convenience of being close to shopping and restaurants. Phase 1 opened in the fall of 2015 and includes an easy .5 mile stroll along Cleghorn Creek complete with picnic shelter and a small creek waterfall. Phase 2 launched in 2017 and added .7 mile to the trail, bringing the total length 1.2 miles. Another .7 mile is scheduled to be added by the end of 2017 extending the trail to almost 2 miles and connecting it to Charlotte Road, which runs perpendicular to Main Street in downtown Rutherfordton.

## **Spindale**

### **Charles B. Deviney Park**

Located at 217 Greer Street, there are two picnic shelters available for rental, a playground, a horseshoe pit, three tennis courts and a basketball court.

### **Spindale House**

Located in the heart of Main Street, the Spindale House serves as the gathering place for all ages. Outside, you can enjoy your day watching the children play on the swings or watching the world pass by while sitting in the beautifully landscaped gazebo area. There are several programs offered at the Spindale House, including senior walking, fellowship and other activities, a weight room, volleyball leagues, basketball leagues, a game room and tennis and pickleball courts.

## **2019-2020 Programming Information**

### **Forest City Little League**

The Forest City Little League is one of two local divisions of the Little League of America offered in Rutherford County. It encompasses tee ball through senior league teams for boys and girls in both spring and fall. Games are played at Charles R. Summey II Park and James F. Crowe Park. There are between 30 and 35 teams with a range of 400 to 500 children participating in this program. Because of the division of Rutherford County by the three little league charters, it should be noted that a large portion of participants in the Forest City league are from outside of Forest City's municipal boundaries (approximately 30%). This program is partially funded through the Forest City Recreation Department, and it is operated by a volunteer board of directors.



### **Forest City Youth Football**

Forest City Youth Football is one of four youth football leagues offered in Rutherford County. The league operates under the regulations of American Youth Football, which uses weight limits to help prevent injury and enhance the competitive parity of the league. It encompasses four age groups (5-13) and includes cheerleaders. There were approximately 210 children participating. The team practices at Charles R. Summey Park II and plays their home games at East Rutherford High School. Approximately 50% of the participants are from outside of Forest City's municipal boundaries. This program is partially funded through the Forest City Recreation Department, and it is operated by volunteers.

### **Forest City Recreation Softball League**

The Forest City Recreation Softball League offers opportunities for churches in and around Rutherford County to participate in the league at James F. Crowe Park under the rules of the United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA). It averages around 10-12 teams in the spring and fall seasons, averaging 132 participants each season. A divisional tournament is also offered at the end of each regular season.

### **Forest City Recreation Basketball League**

The Forest City Recreation Basketball League is one of two basketball leagues in Rutherford County. This organization offers opportunities in two different leagues: 1) a church league composed of teams from local churches, which averages ten teams and 120 participants and 2) a youth league for children ages 5-13, which averages 12 teams and approximately 120 participants. Approximately 60% of the participants reside outside of the corporate limits of Forest City. The Town of Forest City fully funds the youth league and operates both leagues.

### **Forest City Heat Basketball**

The Town of Forest City hosts this organization for boys and girls with opportunities to compete on a national level. Forest City Heat teams have been highly competitive in both state and national competitions, winning several state and national titles. There are ten teams with approximately 120 participants. Forest City provides the facilities (Callison Recreation Center and Cool Springs Gym) for their use, and the Recreation Department partially funds the program. The program is operated by volunteers. Tournaments can have a significant impact on the local economy with as many as 6,000 visitors yearly.

### **Forest City Clay Street Pool**

The pool is open daily each summer. The Recreation Department has lifeguards on duty for the safety of patrons that visit the pool. Family swim and open swim times are

available along with two evenings of night swims weekly. Swim lessons are offered and taught by our team of lifeguards, offering morning and evening classes with different levels for ages 5 and up. The department also offers a fitness swim each day during lunch. The Clay Street Pool is the summer home to the Forest City Swim Team.

### **Forest City Swim Team**

The Forest City Swim Team is one of the recreational swim teams organized in Rutherford County. The team is open to anyone between the ages of 5-18. The program operates two seasonal competitions with the winter team averaging 60 participants and the summer team averaging 80 participants. The summer competitions utilize the Clay Street Pool, and the winter competitions utilize the indoor pool at Isothermal Community College. This team competes on a western North Carolina regional basis.

Approximately 60% of participants reside outside the corporate limits of Forest City. This team is partially funded through the Recreation Department and is operated by volunteers.

### **Senior Citizens Clubs**

The Town of Forest City sponsors two senior citizens clubs through the Recreation Department. The Forest City Senior Citizens Club was formed in 1969 and meets twice monthly at Mooneyham Library. The Golden Rutherford Senior Citizens Club was formed in the 1970s and originally met at the Forest City Housing Authority. Both groups now meet twice monthly at Mooneyham Library. Activities include programs such as musical entertainment, exercise, outings (such as fishing, picnicking, cookouts, etc.), crafts, overnight and day trips, luncheons and bingo. There are currently 150 participants in both clubs. These programs do not duplicate what Rutherford County offers at its Senior Citizen Center. Approximately 50% of the participants reside outside of the Forest City corporate boundaries. The Forest City Recreation Department fully funds and operates these programs.

### **Senior Citizens Exercise**

The Forest City Recreation Department offers senior exercise groups twice a week at Callison Recreation Center. In addition to group exercise, the gym is open to senior citizens and anyone else that may want to walk Monday through Friday.

### **Sports Camps**

The Forest City Recreation Department conducts youth sports camps each year to give instruction to young people to assist them in learning basic skills and improving their level of competitiveness. Camps offered include basketball, golf, soccer, volleyball and tennis. Qualified instructors are utilized, and approximately 190 participants are served each year.

## Camp Harmony

Camp Harmony is a two-week camp held each year in June at the Callison Recreation Center for children with special needs. Recreation Department personnel provide assistance in scheduling activities, preparing registration and consent forms, facility preparation and maintenance, swimming pool supervision and any other assistance requested by camp counselors.

## Other Programs

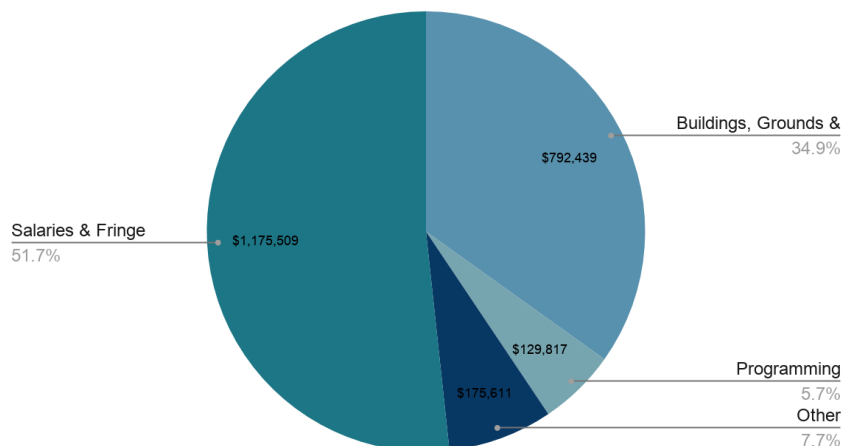
The Recreation Department provides and maintains facilities in cooperation with the schools and other organizations that offer sports programs for youth. These include: Clay Street Tennis Courts (utilized by tennis teams at East Middle, Chase Middle and East High Schools), the soccer field at Charles R. Summey II Park (utilized by East High's women's team and Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy), the Forest City Golf Course (utilized by the East High School and Rutherford County Middle School Golf Teams), the playing fields at James F. Crowe and Charles R. Summey II Parks (utilized by Forest City Little League, Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy, Master's Academy and travel ball clubs) and McNair Field (utilized by the Forest City Owls, Cleveland County Community College, Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy and the American Legion baseball teams).

# BUDGET

According to the Forest City Parks and Recreation Department budget for the 2020/2021 fiscal year, the budgeted appropriations and expenditures were as follows:

**Total Appropriated for all Parks and Recreation** **\$2,273,376**

Parks & Recreation FY 20-21 Budget



A link to the full budget has been included on the resource page at the end of this document to provide additional context for recreation spending.

## **Section 2 Summary**

The Town of Forest City is very fortunate to be able to offer facilities and programming that larger municipalities would be envious of. Not only does the Town own and operate these facilities, but they are kept in excellent condition. Town staff has done a great job, despite challenges to maintain and operate this department and these facilities while also providing maintenance for other Town and County properties, such as: grounds maintenance of the Forest City Clubhouse, McNair Field, the downtown square and the ABC Store and grass cutting at the Rutherford County Education Offices, Town entrances on East and West Main Street, Mooneyham Library and the Firing Range at Crowe Park.

## Section 3. Community Survey and Needs Assessment



## **Introduction**

In an effort to get more public input regarding Parks and Recreation programming and facilities, a community survey was conducted for both the original and updated plans. This survey, along with analysis of existing programming and facilities and the expertise of the Recreation Commission, was to be the basis of the Plan and its updates. The original survey was used to gather demographic information, understand what opportunities the respondent was currently using and what opportunities the respondent was not utilizing and gather specific comments. The survey used for this update focused more on facility usage and improvements to facilities and programming. An initial meeting was held with the Recreation Commissioners to determine the scope of the update. After this meeting, Commissioners were provided an opportunity to edit the survey questions. No changes or edits were suggested, and the same questions were used.

## **Development**

In developing the original survey, the Recreation Commission utilized examples of other surveys and information obtained during participation in a seminar provided by the North Carolina Division of Environment and Natural Resources Division of Parks and Recreation. For the 2021 update, the Forest City Recreation Commission utilized a more user-friendly survey that focused more on Forest City's actual facilities and programming with some slight modifications from the previous survey. One significant change was that the survey was also open for non-residents of Forest City. Since the Parks and Recreation Department serves the community as a whole, the Recreation Commission agreed that they should gather feedback from anyone that uses the Town's facilities. The updated survey was available online through Google Forms, and it consisted of 17 sections. The first section collected demographic information, and the remaining sections included a set of questions for each facility with space to add additional comments, programming questions, questions about the needs being met, and a section to give the respondent a chance to address anything else that was not contained in the survey. A copy of the survey is included for reference.

## **Methodology**

Once the survey was developed for the original plan, a methodology was devised for printing, distribution, returning of surveys and tabulation of surveys. The limiting factor regarding the usage of community surveys is cost. This is an expensive process for the amount of return that Forest City received. However, it is believed that the data and



information obtained is more random than having a small group of persons (that share the same interests) show up at public meetings. Town staff decided to use the same survey for the 2021 update. However, in order to keep costs down, an online platform was utilized. Physical copies were available at Town Hall, Callison Recreation Center, the Forest City Golf Course and Mooneyham Public Library and the Rutherford County Farmers Market. The survey was also shared on the following Facebook pages: Town of Forest City, Forest City Parks and Rec. Dept., Forest City Events and Explore Forest City. Local media, including two newspapers and one radio station, also promoted the survey. Hard copies were hand-entered into GoogleForms for calculation and analysis.

## **Survey Results**

There were 160 surveys completed online and 22 surveys completed by hand.

### **Demographic Information**

#### **Zip Code**

There were no non-responses.

125 responded 28043.  
11 responded 28018.  
1 responded 28019.  
9 responded 28040.  
1 responded 28044.  
1 responded 28052.  
1 responded 28074.  
1 responded 28076.  
5 responded 28114.  
21 responded 28139.  
1 responded 28160.  
2 responded 28167.  
1 responded 28586.  
1 responded 28613.  
1 responded 29349.  
1 responded 39074.

#### **How long have you lived in Forest City?**

There were no non-responses.

The shortest tenure was 2 months.

The longest tenure was 83 years.

**What is the age and gender of each person in your household?**

There were no non-responses.

There were 182 households identified, and the average household size was 2.7.

The average age of those surveyed was 32.2 years.

The youngest male included was 4 months, the eldest 86.

The youngest female included was 4 months, the eldest 89.

**With which of the following do you most strongly identify yourself?**

There were no non-responses.

158 (86.8%) responded White or Caucasian.

11 (6%) responded Black or African American.

6 (3.3%) responded I prefer not to say.

3 (1.6%) responded Hispanic, Spanish or Latino.

2 (1%) responded Other.

1 (.5%) responded Asian, Pacific Islander or Asian American.

1 (.5%) responded Native American or American Indian.

0 (0%) responded Middle Eastern.

**What is the highest level of education you have completed to date?**

There were no non-responses.

0 (0%) responded No schooling completed.

1 (.5%) responded Less than 8th grade education.

1 (.5%) responded Some high school, no diploma.

19 (10.4%) responded High school graduate or equivalent (e.g. GED).

30 (16.5%) responded Some college, but no degree.

36 (19.8%) responded Associate's degree.

47 (25.8%) responded Bachelor's degree.

10 (5.5%) responded Some graduate school, but no graduate degree.

38 (20.9%) responded Graduate degree (e.g. Master's, Doctorate, Professional degree).

**Which one of the following best describes your employment status?**

There were no non-responses.

102 (56%) responded Employed full-time.

- 8 (4.4%) responded Employed part-time.
- 16 (8.8%) responded Self-employed.
- 2 (1.1%) responded Not employed, but looking for work.
- 1 (.5%) responded Not employed and not looking for work.
- 5 (2.7%) responded Not employed, unable to work due to a disability or illness.
- 42 (23.1%) responded Retired.
- 2 (1.1%) responded Student.
- 4 (2.2%) responded Stay-at-home spouse/partner/parent.

**Which range best describes your gross household yearly income in 2020?**

There were no non-responses.

- 10 (5.5%) responded \$0 to \$14,999.
- 12 (6.6%) responded \$15,000 to \$24,999.
- 19 (10.4%) responded \$25,000 to \$34,999.
- 24 (13.2%) responded \$35,000 to \$49,999.
- 43 (23.6%) responded \$50,000 to \$74,999.
- 27 (14.8%) responded \$75,000 to \$99,999.
- 20 (11%) responded \$100,000 to \$124,999.
- 12 (6.6%) responded \$125,000 to \$149,999.
- 11 (6%) responded \$150,000 to \$199,999.
- 3 (1.6%) responded \$200,000 to \$249,999.
- 1 (.5%) responded \$250,000+.

**Callison Recreation Center**

**On average, how many times do you visit Callison Recreation Center in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

- 117 (64.3%) responded 0 times.
- 39 (21.4%) responded 1-3 times.
- 11 (6%) responded 4-7 times.
- 15 (8.2%) responded 8+ times.

**What is your primary reason for visiting Callison Recreation Center?**

Of the 64 that responded:

- 12 (18.8%) responded youth basketball league.
- 5 (7.8%) responded adult basketball league.

10 (15.6%) responded weight room.  
17 (26.6%) responded gym walking.  
20 (31.2%) responded other.

**Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- If you add pickleball courts, myself and many friends would use it often. Spindale and Rutherfordton have them. It seems crazy that you wouldn't, with so many tennis courts available that are rarely used at all.
- Do more social media advertisements. I did not know people could gym walk or there was a weight room or anything. I thought the reC center was for organized sports and classes
- We need classes for young adults and more activities for children and adults
- I enjoy the senior exercise with Phillip & TG. I enjoy the exercise with Phillip - personal trainer.
- The programs and trips scheduled for seniors in Forest City have been very helpful and enjoyable. With the coronavirus pandemic these trips and activities have been suspended. Myra & her staff do a great job for seniors and we look forward to being able to participate in senior activities, events and trips. These are blessings for the seniors of Forest City and their guests.

**Charles R. Summey II Park**

**On average, how many times do you visit Charles R. Summey II Park in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

65 (35.7%) responded 0 times.  
37 (36.8%) responded 1-3 times.  
20 (16.5%) responded 4-7 times.  
30 (8.2%) responded 8+ times.

**What is your primary reason for visiting Charles R. Summey Park II?**

Of the 116 that responded:

45 (38.8%) responded playgrounds.  
39 (33.6%) responded baseball fields.  
48 (41.4%) responded track.  
16 (14.3%) responded other.

### **Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- Additional parking is needed for the baseball fields. During little league season, parents and grandparents have to park in the school parking lot. You have to walk up steps or walk uphill on the paved path to get to the fields. This can be hard for an elderly grandparent, a parent with several kids, etc. Especially if you have a child in a stroller.
- Lights for T-Ball fields - sometimes the games are cut short because it gets too dark, Shade for the playground (it is extremely hot if the sun has been shining on it)
- Need additional parking. Having to park in the school parking lot is hard for us grandparents going to watch our grandkids play ball.

## **Clay Street Pool**

### **On average, how many times do you visit the Clay Street Pool in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

120 (65.9%) responded 0 times.

38 (20.9%) responded 1-3 times.

14 (7.7%) responded 4-7 times.

10 (5.5%) responded 8+ times.

### **What is your primary reason for visiting the Clay Street Pool?**

Of the 69 that responded:

49 (71%) responded recreational swimming.

12 (17.4%) responded swim lessons.

1 (1.4%) responded swim team.

18 (26.1%) responded private party rental.

5 (7%) responded other.

### **Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- We love the pool. I would like to see better options for small children that can not yet swim.
- Make it an option for people who take swim lessons to have access to the pool to practice what they're learning outside of the 50 minute lesson. Set aside a time for those people and household only to come back to practice. Include this in the lesson price. I would be willing to pay \$5-\$10 more for this add on.



- Non-slip bathroom floors, safety-slow-close hinges on bathroom doors so they don't slam onto small hands. More umbrellas and chairs, perhaps to rent. Snack bar.
- As has been planned in the past, the pool needs to be covered so that the swim teams can practice and have meets there in the colder weather. The ICC pool is old, has problems. They had been kind for many years to allow the teams to use the facility. It's time for Forest City to make the move to have an indoor pool!!!
- Plaster at bottom of pool needs to be redone

## **Clay Street Tennis Courts**

**On average, how many times do you visit the Clay Street Tennis Courts in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

157 (86.3%) responded 0 times.

13 (7.1%) responded 1-3 times.

6 (3.3%) responded 4-7 times.

6 (3.3%) responded 8+ times.

**What is your primary reason for visiting the Clay Street Tennis Courts?**

Of the 30 that responded:

22 (73.3%) responded recreational tennis play.

2 (6.7%) responded tennis lessons.

1 (3.3%) responded tennis lessons.

2 (6.7%) responded participation in a school tennis team.

5 (16.5%) responded other.

**Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- Again, add pickleball.
- Add more parking so we don't have to fight the golf parking lot and end up having to park at the pool
- Fences need to be secured to the ground. Balls escape into the drain everytime we go.
- Need a backboard so people can practice solo

## **Cool Springs Gym**

**On average, how many times do you visit Cool Springs Gym in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

139 (76.4%) responded 0 times.  
28 (15.4%) responded 1-3 times.  
6 (3.3%) responded 4-7 times.  
9 (4.9%) responded 8+ times.

### **What is your primary reason for visiting Cool Springs Gym?**

Of the 42 that responded:

25 (59.5%) responded youth basketball league.  
10 (23.8%) responded adult basketball league.  
0 (0%) responded basketball camp.  
10 (24%) responded other.

### **Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- Can't remember seeing anything about basketball camp in years. Would love to see more camps for younger kids I know church league basketball is played there. Again these two basketball ball courts are great love to see the YMCA brought in for more youth activities.
- Didn't know anything took place at the gym.
- THE SMELL IS AWFUL..NEEDS VENTING..
- Heat system doesn't work properly
- The youth basketball league could benefit from better communication between the league/coaches and parents/players.
- Offer more activities
- The odor there is awful.

## **Forest City Clubhouse**

### **On average, how many times do you visit the Forest City Clubhouse in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

85 (46.7%) responded 0 times.  
86 (47.3%) responded 1-3 times.  
7 (3.8%) responded 4-7 times.  
4 (2.2%) responded 8+ times.

### **What is your primary reason for visiting the Forest City Clubhouse?**

Of the 96 that responded:

21 (21.9%) responded clubhouse rental.  
82 (85.4%) responded attending a party.  
7 (7%) responded other.

**Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- I know you have concerns for this but parking is the problem.
- Update the interior. Atleast paint over the wood paneling and make it come into the year 2021 I stead of looking like the 1980's. More people would rent it out if it was more modern
- NEEDS IMPROVEMENT FOR HEATING & AIR
- Kitchen & bathroom need major improvements.
- Possibly updated decor/technology for meetings or parties to use video presentations, etc.
- Very nice facility and available for events by rental

## Forest City Golf Course

**On average, how many times do you visit the Clay Street Pool in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

65 (35.7%) responded 0 times.  
37 (36.8%) responded 1-3 times.  
20 (16.5%) responded 4-7 times.  
30 (8.2%) responded 8+ times.

**What is your primary reason for visiting Charles R. Summey Park II?**

Of the 116 that responded:

45 (38.8%) responded playgrounds.  
39 (33.6%) responded baseball fields.  
48 (41.4%) responded track.  
16 (14.3%) responded other.

**Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- Town does a great job with the golf course
- Tee boxes need improving. General tree care could improve. I would love to see a general redo of the layout once every 25 years or so.
- Sand traps are not kept in good shape. Need to either fix and maintain them or cover them up and just have grass bunkers. Tee to green is good.

- The course is well maintained and the staff is professional, kind and always helpful.
- Keys to golf carts need to be kept at desk....people sneak on and play free all the time...need to offer more lessons.....need a snack bar/ small burger joint for golf course and pool....

## **James F. Crowe Park**

### **On average, how many times do you visit James F. Crowe Park in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

- 64 (35.2%) responded 0 times.
- 68 (37.4%) responded 1-3 times.
- 23 (12.6%) responded 4-7 times.
- 27 (14.8%) responded 8+ times.

### **What is your primary reason for visiting James F. Crowe Park?**

Of the 113 that responded:

- 77 (68.1%) responded playgrounds.
- 50 (44.2%) responded picnic shelter rental.
- 20 (17.7%) responded Little League.
- 13 (11.5%) responded softball league.
- 16 (14.4%) responded other.

### **Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- LOVE the new playground! Thank you so much for updating it!
- We love the new playground. My kids beg to go. Great job.
- Love the improvements here. I would like to see the volleyball court back. You could also add some outdoor basketball goals along the parking lot that could be used when the fields are not in play. Add some electrical outlets to shelters I think a few have them but not sure.
- We love the improvements that have happened here! Maybe some no-smoking signs though, around the playground? And the bathrooms still need some TLC to make them welcoming.
- More swings would be nice.
- We need water options or drink machines better equipment and swings
- LOVE this park
- My children really enjoy the new playground Would be nice if a similar playground would be in walking distance to main street.

- I did not know about the park until this survey, but will bring my daughter to the playground now!
- We love the new large playground! Improved swings or smaller playground for younger kids would be great.
- Needs a disc golf course
- Thanks for new playgrounds! Will be returning more often.

## **Hardin Road Park**

### **On average, how many times do you visit Hardin Road Park in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

170 (93.4%) responded 0 times.

8 (4.4%) responded 1-3 times.

2 (1.1%) responded 4-7 times.

2 (1.1%) responded 8+ times.

### **What is your primary reason for visiting Hardin Road Park?**

Of the 18 that responded:

8 (44.4%) responded playgrounds.

2 (11.1%) responded basketball court.

7 (38.9%) responded picnic.

5 (28%) responded other.

### **Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- Advertise more. Did not know there was such an area in forest city
- Basketball court is in pretty bad shape
- Need more sitting area. Redecorate, make bigger expand. Put mulch/sand under swings. Fix basketball goals. More tables.
- Park need some improvements. Basketball goals sitting area!
- More lighting

## **McNair Field**

### **On average, how many times do you visit McNair Field in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

55 (30.2%) responded 0 times.

82 (45.1%) responded 1-3 times.



27 (14.8%) responded 4-7 times.  
18 (9.9%) responded 8+ times.

### **What is your primary reason for visiting McNair Field?**

Of the 122 that responded:

113 (92.6%) responded Forest City Owls games.  
12 (9.8%) responded American Legion baseball games.  
13 (10.7%) responded high school baseball games.  
1 (.8%) responded baseball camp.  
11 (8.8%) responded other.

### **Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- Great facility love to see owls reduce entrance fee to get more people to come to games. When you have two or three games a week it's pricey for a family
- Keep the \$1 games with \$1 hotdogs chips and drink. It's the only way families as big as ours (6) can ever afford to go to events like this.
- Very nice facility
- Beautiful facility.
- Great facility, people and team ... miss the Owls Games this past season due to the coronavirus. . Great venue to socialize with friends.
- starting to look run down...do a better job at upkeep...

## **Mooneyham Library**

### **On average, how many times do you visit Mooneyham Library in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

87 (47.8%) responded 0 times.  
39 (21.4%) responded 1-3 times.  
23 (12.6%) responded 4-7 times.  
33 (18.1%) responded 8+ times.

### **What is your primary reason for visiting Mooneyham Library?**

Of the 95 that responded:

73 (76.8%) responded check out books.  
12 (12.6%) responded use the computers.  
8 (8.4%) responded utilize the reference materials.  
18 (18.9%) responded club meetings.

12 (12.1%) responded other.

**Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- My son homeschools. We love coming here to check out books.
- Invest in more upfront parking. Even though people may not be considered handicap, having to climb all those stairs every time, is hard on the knees and feet and makes it unappealing to go there
- Enjoy taking grandchild to story time. Denise does a wonderful job.
- We send customers there for use of public computers
- We attend preschool storytime when unable to attend at Spindale Library. This is a great service!
- The handicapped parking spaces aren't all needed. Could you provide a space for short-term parking to pick up or return books?

## **Park Square Trailhead**

**On average, how many times do you visit the Park Square Trailhead in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

46 (25.3%) responded 0 times.

39 (21.4%) responded 1-3 times.

29 (15.9%) responded 4-7 times.

68 (37.4%) responded 8+ times.

**What is your primary reason for visiting the Park Square Trailhead?**

Of the 134 that responded:

123 (91.8%) responded access to the Thermal Belt Rail Trail.

23 (17.2%) responded fitness stations.

23 (17.2%) responded picnic tables.

28 (20.9%) responded children's play area.

8 (5.6%) responded other.

**Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- The children's play area could use some improvements
- We love the rail trail and all its accessories!
- We love the TBRT and this trailhead!
- If the kids play area was complete my family and I would use it often.
- It was opened recently before the pandemic but I know I'll use more when safe to do so.

- The children's play area needs improvements.
- The Rails to Trails Project is one of the best things to happen in our County.
- We plan to use this more this spring and summer! Glad to have this addition.

## **Pavilion On Park Square (POPS)**

### **On average, how many times do you visit POPS in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

26 (14.3%) responded 0 times.

51 (28%) responded 1-3 times.

47 (25.8%) responded 4-7 times.

58 (31.9%) responded 8+ times.

### **What is your primary reason for visiting POPS?**

Of the 151 that responded:

125 (82.8%) responded events.

82 (54.3%) responded splash pads.

61 (40.4%) responded swings.

48 (31.8%) responded picnic tables.

9 (6.3%) responded other.

### **Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- Something needs to be done to better accommodate the skateboarders who've started using it as a skate park.
- My kids love coming here as well.
- This is the greatest thing the town has done along with the trail. I tried to click on events but it would register. Love Forest City thanks for the opportunity to respond.
- More picnic tables - especially around the splash pad. Put the picnic tables under some shade.
- Better water drainage in grassy areas near splash pads. Creates very mushy, slippery areas and grass lawn cannot be enjoyed.
- More shaded seating.
- A WONDERFUL addition to the town. Super excited when some normalcy returns for events.
- Love bluegrass, country and southern rock concerts there
- Our child loves going to the park! The splash pads are amazing. The children events are awesome. The Christmas lights are amazing!

- POPS is a great asset for the Town of Forest. Have met people from other towns and states. A real jewel for Forest City. The mayor, commissioners and staff at the Town of Forest City are to be congratulated for this venue & events it schedules.

## **Trails to Tails Dog Park**

**On average, how many times do you visit the Trails to Tails Dog Park in a year?**

There were no non-responses.

129 (70.9%) responded 0 times.

19 (10.4%) responded 1-3 times.

10 (5.5%) responded 4-7 times.

24 (13.2%) responded 8+ times.

**Additional comments or suggestions for improvements:**

- Great addition to town!
- More natural barriers blocking view of the busy road would be nice
- Would love to see maybe some obstacle courses, ramps added for the dogs - so glad to have this!
- Fenced area has become muddy from use.
- I go every other day because I live nearby. I take my own dog bags, but normally, the bin is empty. It can get very muddy but I understand that is due to the season. Maybe a bigger sign with the rules or rules on individual signs on the fences so people can read them. Many take their unaltered dogs and they try to mount other people's spayed dogs. A social media page or group may be helpful because people can check in and that way you know when there are other dogs there because sometimes, you go and no one else shows up.
- Advertising
- If I had a dog, I would use it
- Great option for the community. Not one that we use.
- More shade, I really like the water fountain.

## **Other Facilities Comments**

**Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding Forest City recreational facilities?**

- This is not about the recreational facilities but the town needs to paint crosswalks near Ray Rice and El Michoacán's. It's dangerous and sometimes impossible to

safely cross the street on this end. Even at the intersection at Church st. There's no crosswalk and we've nearly been ran over just walking the dog.

- Pickleball!!!
- Forest city needs something for teenagers to do for fun.
- So happy to see this city growing!
- Thank you for finally re-doing Crowe Park.
- I've never even heard of a lot of these parks—wish there was more advertisement and awareness of them
- Just want to say thank you for the TBRT—we drive all the way from Spartanburg to run on it!
- Rutherford County needs a soccer complex.
- We have places to play baseball, softball, basketball, tennis, swimming and golf but no where to play soccer except on the college campus. Why should soccer player kids be less value than the other kids playing sports. All kids should, no matter their race, gender or athletic ability, have equal opportunity to staff, support and areas. At times it comes across that since soccer is a widely Hispanic sport, it gets put on the back burner over predominantly white sports.
- There have been great improvements over the past 5-10 years, especially, and it's been a blessing to use.
- I have lived in FC all my life and never heard of the majority of the places asked about. Just a suggestion maybe advertising via mail, social media, newspaper ect
- We are just utilizing the parks around FC as we just purchased a 2nd home there. We are excited about using and enjoying the Rail Trail, other local trails, POPS and McNair Field in the near future.
- Myra does a great job managing.
- Love the direction FC is going. Very progressive. Pls don't let this temporary setback slow you down.
- I would like to see the facilities maintained more regularly. They get run down pretty quickly and there seems to be no plan to keep them clean and in shape.
- I am proud of the facilities that Forest City offers.
- It would be great to have a place to rent to store your bikes. For those who don't live close to the rail trail, it would be nice to pull your bike out of a storage facility, ride the rail trail, and put your bike back up.
- Keep up the great work and continuous improvement!
- Dog poop bag stations inside POPS and along the outside fence would be very helpful!
- I love the rails to trails walking path and POPS. Those 2 things are wonderful for our town. I go to both often. best things to happen in our town in a long time.

- Please add playground equipment for the kids at Hardin Rd Park my grandkids would love to have something to play on
- Desperate need of soccer facilities in Forest City. We have to travel to Shelby for my son to play soccer on a decent field.
- Usage of facilities for families (Please disregard if things have changed and I am not up to date, however; - families have to pay to come and play basketball at Calison's or to use the facilities. Cool Springs indoor court is not open to free play of basketball because they are always packed with games. The gyms should operate more like a community center for the public to come and use freely. I'm sure it will cost to have staff in the evenings, but there should be space for families to come in the evening and free play especially in the winter time. Request a grant to create an indoor pool :)
- The exercise equipment at POPS is a great addition to the rail trail. I work out there 5 or 6 days each week after walking 3 miles on the trail.
- Ruby C Hunt YMCA has a Rutherford Families Program in need of a permanent facility- any help is appreciated to make this happen. Forest City may have a chance to partner with them!
- You have a lot of great recreational venues for all Forest City and Rutherford Co. Residents.
- I have enjoyed being a member of the Forest City Senior club since 2005 .We experience interesting programs and travels.
- Really like POPS. Hope more events can be held this year when COVID-19 is under control
- I hope that the town will step up and provide the necessary funding to maintain the proposed soccer field complex. It is a much needed facility that will benefit many children.
- I am proud of the continued updates and upgrades to our facilities. It is a wonderful asset for our families and children. Surrounding communities in the county are also very happy to have access to these resources. I hope that it will be an encouragement for all of our towns to add, improve and upgrade.
- More lighting in all areas. When it becomes dusk, all areas do not feel as safe without proper lighting
- Outstanding facilities that are very well maintained!
- As seniors ... my wife and I appreciate the work Myra King & her staff do for seniors. We like and attend the POPS venue and events, I use the Forest City Golf Course and appreciate the staff. The Christmas Carriage rides are special. We have met visitors from Georgia and Tennessee who come specifically to this event. Parks are clean and a good place for people to enjoy nature.
- Fc needs a good disc golf course
- We need a Soccer Sports Complex!

- Need indoor swimming pool, alexander mills needs a town park/playground,
- A map of the parks with all their amenities listed would be very helpful

## **Forest City Recreation Programs**

### **Do you or anyone in your household participate in any Forest City recreational programs?**

There were no non-responses.

51 (28%) responded yes.

131 (72%) responded no.

### **If yes, which programs?**

Of the 50 that responded:

- 20 (40%) responded Forest City Little League.
- 1 (2%) responded youth football league.
- 7 (14%) responded youth basketball league.
- 1 (2%) responded AAU/YBOA basketball.
- 5 (10%) responded adult basketball league.
- 1 (2%) responded volleyball league.
- 1 (2%) responded church softball league.
- 1 (2%) responded Forest City Swim Team.
- 8 (16%) responded Camp Harmony.
- 6 (12%) responded golf camp.
- 4 (8%) responded soccer camp.
- 2 (4%) responded tennis camp.
- 0 (0%) responded summer day camp.
- 11 (22%) responded swim lessons.
- 3 (6%) responded lifeguard training.
- 10 (20%) responded senior citizens programming.

### **Are the recreational needs of Forest City being met? Please explain your answer.**

- Yes! The Thermal Belt Rail Trail has been amazing and gives a safe space to exercise outside.
- No. Need pickleball courts. Spindale has, Rutherfordton has. Shelby even has a league that is very popular. That could easily happen here. It seems no one from FC ever visits other places to see what is working.
- I realize the soccer fields are not in Forest City, but it would be nice to have new soccer fields with bathroom access and adequate parking. Currently, parking is



an issue since many parents have to park across the street and cross a very busy road with their children. Also, it is hard to use a portajohn when you have small kids.

- I think more could be done for youth Haven't been impressed with little league for years. I think if the town doesn't want to address adding more programs then the YMCA can help. Like I said we travel now because other countries offer more.
- My daughter will turn 5 this year. I didn't see a lot of offerings for her age group last year, but we're hoping to sign up for things this year.
- I think so. A wide variety is being offered. It's impossible to meet everyone's needs/wants, but I think the town is meeting a large portion of the population.
- No. There are no soccer fields. The soccer community seems to be put on the back burner and those kids not cared about as much as literally ALL other sports, basketball, softball, baseball, golf, tennis, swim
- We would like more yoga classes offered
- Yes, we have seen our grandchildren enjoy many aspects of the recreation department
- Am hoping for more summer camp options. Would also like to see a variety of week-long or two-week-long sports camps so that kids can try out different sports to see what they like without committing to an entire season.
- I feel like they are.
- I feel if you are participating by using the facilities that they are.....yes
- yes, although I'd like a possible organized golf league! and more basketball leagues for aged humans.
- Desperate need of good quality soccer fields.
- I wish we'd known about the volleyball league!
- Yes. As a senior citizen I most appreciate POPS, the rail trail and the exercise station.
- no they are not they have no support for skateboarding other than the bike trail and that isn't very good to skate on because it's all just flat with nothing else to do.
- I believe so. We have so many great and exciting things to do in Forest City now and I love working here! I love bringing my kids to Forest City for events @POPS and the parks, trails, etc.
- We really need a soccer complex in this County. Also, it would be great to build some type of shelter near the trailhead that could be rented out for events such as arts and crafts expo, farmers market, Christmas shopping event, etc. It would have high visibility from Oak Street.
- I think so. They all seem to be in pretty good shape.
- Forest City does a very good job at the programs they have committed to. I would like them to be committed to the county-wide soccer program as well.

- Forest City is providing programs for all citizens of the city ... as noted by the diverse programs that are available. Being a senior - our activity is limited due to our age.
- Our town is in need of a nice soccer complex for county kids to practice, play and host their own tournaments.
- no.....need a YMCA.....
- A skate park would be nice for the town and or a RC (Remote Control) event center.
- I appreciate and enjoy the recreational opportunities provided for the senior citizens.

The 2005 survey showed a broad range of interests and usage according to the respondents of this survey. According to the survey results, a high emphasis should be placed upon fitness, outdoor recreation, attending performances and outdoor leisure activities.

The 2009 survey results showed how much usage each facility was receiving, what types of activities each facility was being used for, a multitude of comments about each facility and other pertinent information. The 2009 survey also shows which programs are being utilized and asked for comments for activities that the citizens would like to see added.

The 2015 survey group was smaller, but the questions were the same. Many of the trends are similar. Respondents are very interested in engaging with the recreation options in Forest City and take pride in the offerings. Those who responded provided feedback on additional opportunities, communication and programming.

The 2021 survey had the highest number of responses of each survey and provided the best feedback. By asking for specific comments about each facility at the end of each section, it was easier for respondents to clarify their opinion about each facility. Similar to the 2015 survey, the respondents followed the same trends in their feedback regarding additional opportunities, communication and programming.

We feel that the recommendations offered within this plan will address many of the deficiencies noted from the surveys.

## **Needs Assessment**

When discussing and identifying the needs of the Forest City Recreation Department, we attempted to look from different viewpoints. The Parks and Recreation Commission

decided to focus on maintenance and improvements of current facilities in addition to new facilities. Over the course of several meetings, the responses from the survey and the expertise of the Parks and Recreation staff and the Recreation Commissioners were all utilized to determine what areas needed the most attention. The recommendations in Section 4 address all needs that were discussed.

### **Section 3 Summary**

The Recreation Commission set a goal to garner at least 50 responses to the 2021 survey. We far exceeded that goal with 182 responses. Thanks to the diverse group that was reached, we feel that we received great information, and this information coupled with actual usage data from the Parks and Recreation Department helped to establish the needs that Forest City should address over the next five years.

## Section 4. Recommendations and Implementation



## Introduction

The Town of Forest City Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan is based upon a review of the community, an analysis of existing programs and facilities, identification of user needs and an adherence to stated proposals and recommendations. The plan is designed to provide a framework from which the Town of Forest City can enhance its parks and recreation system. This plan is intended to be implemented over a period of five years.

The goal and purpose of the Forest City Recreation Department is to actively encourage, provide, promote and protect quality leisure, recreation and cultural opportunities, facilities and environments that are essential for the enhancement of the lives of the citizens of Forest City, Rutherford County and the surrounding foothills area that forms the intersection of the Piedmont Region and the Appalachian Mountains. This plan is intended to provide recommendations that will improve service delivery and encourage continual improvement.

Instrumental to implementation of the plan is the identification of adequate funding at a time when balancing municipal budgets throughout the state has become increasingly difficult. The North Carolina Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan identified inadequate funding for park facilities and recreation programs as a key issue needing to be addressed in the next five years if the government is to maintain basic minimum services. In the 2020 Recreation Plan, public managers were asked to rate the difficulty of meeting public needs for a variety of purposes. The top responses, as measured by the managers rating the items as either difficult or somewhat difficult are: the needs of a growing population (72%), youth programming and facilities (65%), accessibility for people with disabilities(61%) and the need to acquire undeveloped park land (57%).

Implementing the plan will result in meeting the present and future needs for parks and recreation services, as well as possibly preserving conservation areas in Forest City. The Town of Forest City will have to continue to consider parks and recreation as an important part of its budget and earmark funds to continue this important service. The 2005 planning process identified numerous recommendations, many that have come to fruition and were built upon in the 2009 update. The 2015 update has kept some of the previous pertinent recommendations and combined them with new recommendations. The 2021 update will focus on continued improvements, expanding access to our facilities and exploring new opportunities for tying our recreational needs to improved health goals.

In light of the current economic downturn and uncertainty induced by the COVID-19 pandemic that is expected to last for a long period of time, the Town should focus on taking care of what we have and making it the best that it can be.

## **Recommendations and Implementation Strategies**

Areas of focus are ranked on priority at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Department.

### **High Priority**

#### **Funding Sources** (ongoing from the 2015 Plan)

We recommend that the Town of Forest City use a variety of funding strategies to fund these recommendations, including but not limited to: Community Development Block Grants, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Park and Recreation Trust Fund, Clean Water Management Trust Fund, NCDOT and private foundations seeking to improve community health and equitable access to recreation opportunities.

- Capital Improvement Program - This important budget tool would allow the Town to plan for and prioritize large projects and then fund them. Generally, capital improvement programs include all Town departments and show what services the Town will build or replace, where these services are or will be located and when the construction or replacement will take place. Usually these CIP's are 5 to 10 year plans.
- User Fees and Sponsorships - Practically all recreation departments (including Forest City) researched for the Rutherford County Recreation Plan included the use of user fees and sponsorships. User fees are paid by the participant and help to offset whatever program the participant is participating in. Most municipalities charge a higher fee for participants from outside the municipal boundaries. Sponsorships are generally paid by an individual, business or industry and generally include the team name, uniforms and equipment to be used in team sports programs.
- General Tax Revenues - The operation and maintenance of most parks and recreation departments are funded primarily by general tax revenues. Recreation is a public service, and funding should be scheduled along with other Town services. It is also important to note that as other sources of recreation revenue increase, the Town should not decrease the amount of funds available from general tax revenues for recreational purposes. Ultimately, it is the decision of the governing body to distribute general tax revenues.

- Grant Programs - There are numerous grant programs that can be utilized for parks and recreation programs. Federal programs include the Land and Water Conservation Fund (which can be used for land acquisition and park development) and Community Development Block Grants (which, along with housing and infrastructure, may be used for recreation purposes). State programs include the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund which provides a dollar for dollar match up to \$500,000 for the development and rehabilitation of parks and recreation facilities, the Clean Water Management Trust Fund which provides funding for acquisition of riparian property and greenways and NCDOT which can provide enhancement funding for bikeways, sidewalks and other types of trails. Private foundations from financial institutions and banks, large companies (WalMart, Target, etc.), health insurance companies and well-focused organizations also have small grant programs for specific needs, including but not limited to purchasing playground equipment, facility and equipment upgrades, program development and marketing needs.

There are numerous other grant programs, foundations and funding sources that could be utilized. The Recreation Commission specifically recommended the following additional sources:

- Golden Leaf Foundation
- USDOT
- NCDOT
- BlueCross BlueShield
- RHI Legacy Foundation
- Dogwood Health Trust
- Facebook/Forest City Data Center
- US Soccer Foundation (USSF)
- US Tennis Association (USTA)
- Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority
- Isothermal Planning and Development Commission (IPDC)

It should also be noted that the Rutherford County Arts Parks and Recreation Plan requested that Rutherford County assist the Town of Forest City financially for providing parks and recreation facilities and programming for residents outside of Forest City's corporate boundaries.

### **Partnerships** (ongoing from the 2015 Plan)

Parks and recreation opportunities are provided in contemporary societies through a diverse collection of organizations that exist at the neighborhood, state and national level. Leisure service organizations meet the needs of the community by operating



within a broad range of missions, motivations, structures, resources and techniques. With such a large number of organizations (public, private and non-profit) playing vital roles in the community, coordination and cooperation between providers is crucial.

It was noted in the 2015 plan that the Parks and Recreation Department could benefit by working with the Recreation Commissioners to develop an independent 501(c)(3) organization to work on behalf of the department. In this model, the non-profit organization would be a constant partner to the Department. The primary role of the non-profit would be to promote the Department in the community and raise funds for the department through ongoing effort and/or special project initiatives. Creating a “friends of the Forest City Recreation Department” organization would be a traditional partnership model and was highly encouraged. The Town has established a 501(c)(3) called Explore Forest City, a Main Street Committee that is a unique preservation-based economic development tool that enables communities to revitalize downtown and neighborhood business districts by leveraging local assets from cultural, historic, and architectural resources to local enterprises and community pride. While Explore Forest City is not specifically an arm of the Forest City Parks and Recreation Department, it can serve as a model for a potential 501(c)(3).

Partnerships can be formed with local public, quasi-public or private entities. Joint use agreements between community partners can assist in meeting the needs of those in the community while protecting and respecting the assets of the Recreation Department.

Opportunities for recreation in both the Town of Forest City and Rutherford County may include partnerships with the following types of entities:

- Rutherford County Government
- Rutherford County Schools
- Another Municipality
- User Groups (such as Little League or RC Soccer Association)
- Adopt-a-Park Programs
- Adopt-a-Trail Programs
- RHI Legacy Foundation or another medical provider (regarding fitness activities)
- Kaboom! (playground funding)
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina
- Community Forestry (NC Forestry Service)
- Private Sector
- Churches

There are numerous other organizations that could be a potential partner. The Recreation Commission specifically recommended the following additional organizations:

- Rutherford County Government
- CycleNC
- Dominion Energy
- Rutherford BARN

Partnership agreements are essential to demonstrate the commitment of each party and identify the resources each party will contribute. Regardless of which party (or combination) contributes acquisition, development, operational, maintenance, replacement or other resources, tracking these contributions to strive for a dollar for dollar cost sharing between partners over the life of the project is the goal. Negotiations for these contributions should focus on demonstrating the advantages and disadvantages of each partner's participation. Issues need to be identified between both parties and solutions to overcome them need to be demonstrated. Some of the key priority issues that need to be addressed within a partnership agreement are:

- Liability issues that face both parties.
- Addressing how both parties will try to reach an equity position of 50/50 cost sharing during a specific time frame.
- Land use and management needs to be addressed so neither parties' environmental concerns are compromised.
- Joint capital cost development and how both parties need to be involved in the design component, equipment needs and storage needs.
- It is important that each party share with the other what their mission statement is so there is a greater appreciation of what each party desires to achieve. The key is to get both parties to think on behalf of the overall community first and their respective needs second.
- In the partnership agreement, each party needs to make a decision on how they will resolve conflicts with each other.
- The partnership agreement is a living document and needs to change in time based on the needs of the community. Facility usage and contribution philosophy will remain consistent in the agreement, but the conditions of the agreement may change.
- If both parties jointly develop a facility or park, a capital enhancement fund needs to be established for ongoing maintenance and facility upgrades.
- Usage within facilities, pricing of activities, schedule of events, equipment, operational issues, tracking process of partner contributions and review sessions need to be evaluated periodically by both governing bodies.

Based on responses from the survey and general feedback from the community, a soccer complex is greatly needed in Forest City. The Recreation Commission recommends a partnership with the County and the RHI Legacy Foundation to construct a soccer complex.

The Rutherford County Arts Parks and Recreation Plan recommended that Rutherford County form a partnership with the Town of Forest City, not only to jointly fund future parks and facilities, but for Rutherford County to make a contribution for programming that Forest City is already providing on a per capita basis (similar to Cleveland County) for Rutherford County participants.

### **Information and Communication** (ongoing from the 2015 Plan)

One of the issues identified in all of the surveys performed in Rutherford County was that there were numerous people in each planning jurisdiction that do not know what is offered, who the contacts are for various leagues, where facilities are located and where parks are located. In the Rutherford County Arts Parks and Recreation Plan, it was recommended that a clearinghouse be created to disseminate this information. It was recommended that a part-time person be hired at the Tourism Development Authority to put together a contact list and be able to put this information out on a monthly or quarterly basis. Forest City needs to identify a contact person to work with the County for information related to Forest City. Forest City also needs to create and update a living document with information on different programs, contacts and calendars that is updated regularly. Forest City also needs to keep the website updated with information about current events, tournaments, sign-ups, etc.

The Recreation Commission specifically recommended the following avenues of communication to advertise this information:

- A digital sign on Oak Street
- Videos for social media and website
- Pamphlets in power bills

### **Relationships with User Groups** (ongoing from the 2015 Plan)

In an effort to make user groups more aware of rules and regulations governing the usage of Forest City Parks and Recreation Facilities, budgetary constraints, scheduling and to better understand the needs of our user groups the following is proposed:

- Creation of a user's handbook governing the usage of all parks and facilities to be received by the head of all user groups utilizing said parks and facilities that would address such issues as code of behavior, scheduling of fields for maintenance, scheduling the fields for practice and any other topic that may be deemed appropriate.

- The Forest City Recreation Commission shall appoint one member of the commission to act as a liaison with all user groups utilizing Forest City Parks and Recreation Facilities.

**Facility Improvements** (ongoing from the 2015 plan)

The following improvements should be scheduled for the Town's existing parks over the next five years:

Callison Recreation Center:

1. Resurface the pool bottom
2. Replace the wooden light poles on tennis courts 2 & 3
3. Install pickleball courts
4. Replace the gym floor

Charles R. Summey II Park:

1. Install a new maintenance and storage building
2. Review and implement the parking study to improve safety and walkability (supporting documents are attached)
3. Replace the irrigation system on all ballfields
4. Change all acorn lighting to LED

Forest City Golf Course

1. Tree removal

Hardin Road Park:

1. Resurface the basketball courts
2. Install new basketball goals
3. Install additional playground equipment
4. Install an additional picnic shelter

James F. Crowe Park:

1. Replace the small playground
2. Install irrigation system in all three ballfields
3. Resurface the parking lot and area between ballfields
4. Install volleyball court
5. Construct reservation signage for the shelters

McNair Field

1. Replace the box seats

## Mooneyham Library

1. Fix the roof

## Park Square Trailhead

1. Construct a multi-purpose facility with additional parking

## Pavilion On Park Square (POPS)

1. Install crosswalks from downtown parking to POPS
2. Fix the irrigation and drainage issues

## **Facility Linkage** (ongoing from the 2015 Plan)

One item that both State and National Park people like to see (especially when applying for grant funding) is how parks and recreation facilities are linked. This can be done by sidewalks, bikeways, greenways with trails and Rails to Trails. As noted in the James F. Crowe Park renovations, James F. Crowe Park is not easy for pedestrians to get to. All other Forest City parks and facilities are linked by sidewalks.

The Recreation Commission specifically recommended the following ways to improve facility linkage:

- Create a bike lane on Cherry Mountain Street to connect James F. Crowe Park to Main Street
- Review any ways to connect populated areas to the recreation facilities

## **Recreation Planning** (ongoing from the 2015 Plan)

Being in the midst of a tight economy does not lend itself well to new and expensive projects. But this does not mean that you cannot continue to plan for new future facilities when the time and economy is right. The Parks and Recreation Commission discussed several planning activities that could benefit the Town of Forest City in the Future. The three areas that the Commission thought that could use some planning efforts were:

- **Community Walkability** - the development of a pedestrian and possibly a bicycle plan. Walking is still the number one recreation activity in the country today and the Town could expand its pedestrian and bicycle ways. This would encourage desirable neighborhoods and could possibly help with facility linkage.
- The Town could develop a site-specific park plan for the unused portion of James F. Crowe Park. There is a lot of undeveloped acreage along the Second Broad River that could be utilized for a number of recreation activities. In the event the Town wanted to apply for a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant, a site-specific park plan would maximize points in the scoring system.
- The Town should consider the creation of mini-parks in the downtown business district that supports walkability and livability in small towns. Mini parks promote

pedestrian comfort, provide opportunities for social interaction and are a way to support economic and community development.

**Programming** (ongoing from the 2015 Plan)

Based on the survey response, there were several areas of programming needs. Those included: soccer, skateboarding and programs for kids of all ages. The Parks and Recreation Department should consider forms of each programming. This could be various leagues, lessons or camps.

The Parks and Recreation Department should consider an ongoing manner to gather input to develop future programming. This could be surveying users or user groups to continue to develop the department and offer new programs that would be utilized by its citizens.

The Recreation Commission specifically recommended the following methods to improve programming:

- Hire a Program Director that would be responsible for and serve as the contact person for all aspects of Forest City's programming
- Partner with T.G. Baker's mentor program, Fitness Solutions
- Partner with Kisha McDowell's mentor program, Leaders & Entrepreneurs for the Advancement (Enrichment) & Promotion of Girls
- Develop more programs for middle- and high school-aged people to participate in (ex. service projects, tutoring, exercise classes, etc.)

**Fees** (ongoing from the 2015 Plan)

Each year, the Parks and Recreation Department should review its user fee structure to determine the most equitable way to generate funds to offset costs of facility and program operations.

## **Section 4 Summary**

As stated earlier, this plan is to be implemented over the next five years. However, as with all plans, changes and amendments should occur as they are anticipated. This plan and its recommendations should be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Parks and Recreation Commission to determine what recommendations have been implemented, which recommendations need to be addressed in the short term and to determine if any changes or new recommendations need to be addressed or included within this plan.

## Resources

Town of Forest City FY 2020-2021 Budget

[townofforestcity.com/sites/default/files/uploads/government/transparency/annual-budget-fy-20-21.pdf](http://townofforestcity.com/sites/default/files/uploads/government/transparency/annual-budget-fy-20-21.pdf)

Town of Forest City Pedestrian Plan

[connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Documents/Forest%20City%20Ped%20Plan.pdf](http://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Documents/Forest%20City%20Ped%20Plan.pdf)

Town of Forest City Downtown Streetscape Plan

[townofforestcity.com/sites/default/files/uploads/business/economic-development/attachment-8-streetscape.pdf](http://townofforestcity.com/sites/default/files/uploads/business/economic-development/attachment-8-streetscape.pdf)

NC Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

[files.nc.gov/ncparks/north-carolina-state-parks-statewide-comprehensive-outdoor-recreation-plan-2020-to-2025-for-public-comment.pdf](http://files.nc.gov/ncparks/north-carolina-state-parks-statewide-comprehensive-outdoor-recreation-plan-2020-to-2025-for-public-comment.pdf)

Isothermal Regional Bicycle Plan

[connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Documents/Isothermal%20Regional%20Bicycle%20Plan.pdf](http://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Documents/Isothermal%20Regional%20Bicycle%20Plan.pdf)

US News & World Report Best Places to Live in the US in 2020-2021

[realestate.usnews.com/places/rankings/best-places-to-live?src=usn\\_pr](http://realestate.usnews.com/places/rankings/best-places-to-live?src=usn_pr)

Parks and Improved Mental Health and Quality of Life

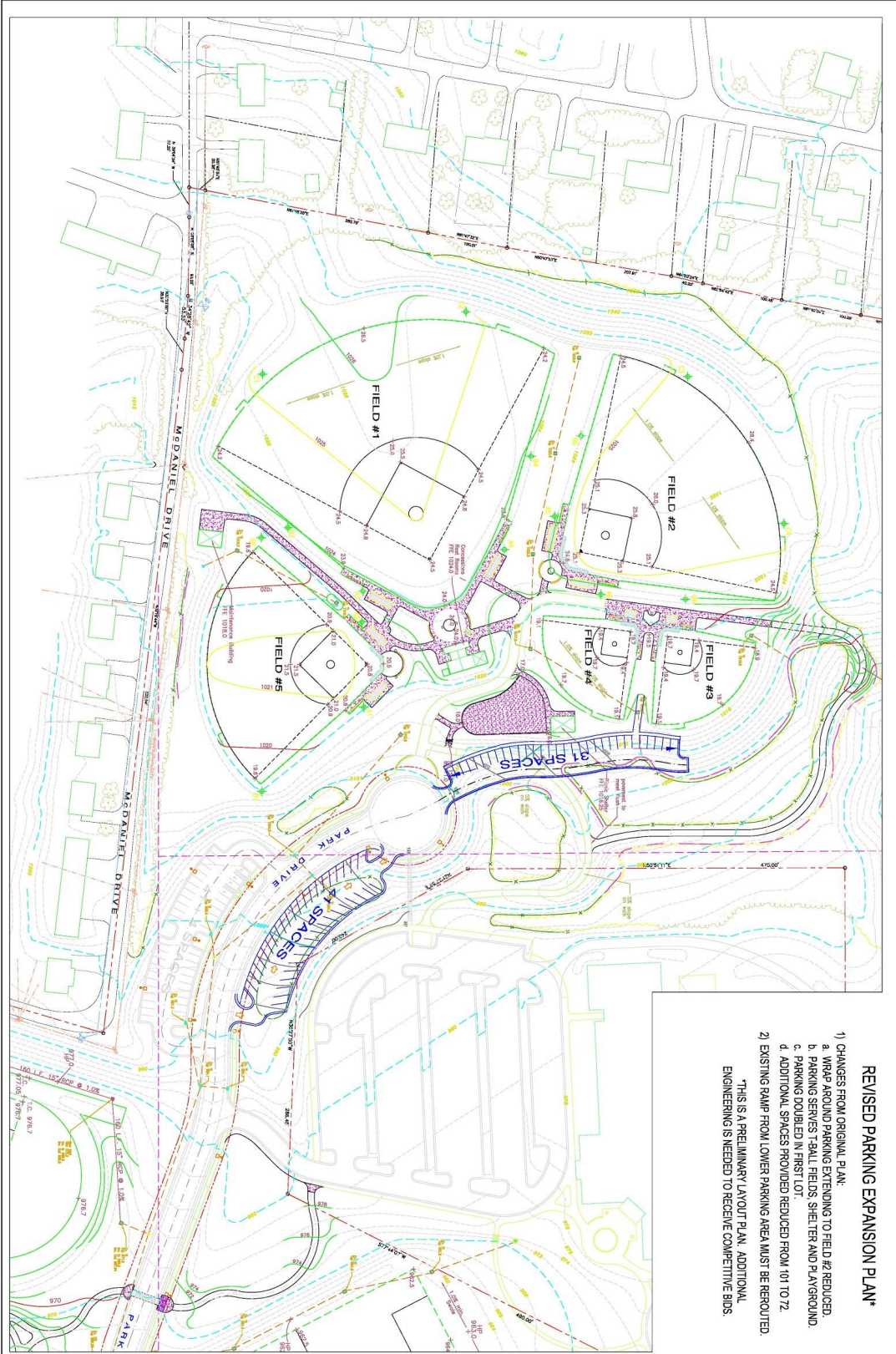
[nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/health-wellness/ParksandHealth/fact-sheets/parks-improved-mental-health-quality-life](http://nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/health-wellness/ParksandHealth/fact-sheets/parks-improved-mental-health-quality-life)

Farmers Markets, Parks and Rec and Healthy Meals

[nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/january/farmers-markets-parks-and-rec-and-healthy-meals](http://nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/january/farmers-markets-parks-and-rec-and-healthy-meals)

Charles R. Summey II Park Parking Facility Improvement Drawings





- REVISED PARKING EXPANSION PLAN\***
- 1) CHANGES FROM ORIGINAL PLAN:
    - a. WRP# AROUND PARKING EXTENDING TO FIELD #2 REDUCED.
    - b. PARKING SERVICES T-SHIRT FIELD, SHELTER AND PLAYGROUND.
    - c. PARKING DOUBLED IN FIRST LOT.
    - d. ADDITIONAL SPACES PROVIDED REDUCED FROM 101 TO 72.
  - 2) EXISTING RAMP FROM LOWER PARKING AREA MUST BE REROUTED.
- \*THIS IS A PRELIMINARY LAYOUT PLAN. ADDITIONAL ENGINEERING IS NEEDED TO RECEIVE COMPETITIVE BIDS.

PROPOSED INCREASED PARKING FOR  
 CHARLES R. SUMMEY III PARK  
 VANCE STREET, FOREST CITY, NC

SHEET **1**

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT  
 T = 50'

DRAWINGS BY  
 KYLE WAINMAN, PE, P.E.  
 150 COUNTRYWOOD DRIVE  
 FOREST CITY, NC 28043  
 PE NO. 18855 COMPANY NO. P-1885

DATE: 10/16  
 REV: 11/16  
 REV: 08/21  
 REV: 08/21  
 REV:

FRAME SURVEY AND DESIGN



