

CITY OF KANNAPOLIS



INTRODUCTION

The Livable Community Blueprint for Cabarrus County provides a comprehensive study of parks, recreation and bike and pedestrian routes across the county. Cabarrus County, similar to many other counties across North Carolina, provides public recreation on both a county and municipal level. This study takes into consideration all the recreation providers within the county, but recognizes that it is critical to look at how the municipalities operate together as well as on an individual basis. This will insure that all the recreation providers work together so that all residents have access to quality recreation parks, facilities and programs regardless of where they live in the county.

For the purposes of this study, the overall county area has been broken down into 6 subdistricts or planning areas. Within this report a detailed analysis of each subdistrict has been provided that includes an inventory of existing public, quasi-public and private recreation facilities, recommendations for new park development and bike and pedestrian routes, and associated costs for new development. This chapter serves to focus specifically on the City of Kannapolis and its recreation department.

The City of Kannapolis is located in the northern portion of Cabarrus County and occupies all of Subdistrict 2 as well as the east portion of Subdistrict 1. Most of the City parks and facilities occur within the boundaries of Subdistrict 2.

Since Kannapolis incorporated, they have been very pro-active in charting their future. In 2000 the city established a Vision Cabinet and Visioning Committee to identify goals for the community. The city's statement of Vision is as follows: "In 2015, Kannapolis is among the most dynamic and desirable communities in the Piedmont, attractive to families, loved for its neighborhoods, appreciated for its uniqueness and respected for its contributions to the regions." Kannapolis is renowned as a City for Families, A City of Strong Neighborhoods, A Unique City and a Regional Leader. Committees established for this visioning process include Live, Play, Work and Learn. The Play Committee addressed issues specific to recreation.

While all the recreation providers in the county impact one another with their existing parks and trails, development projects, and delivery of services, it is the County Recreation Department that most impacts the City of Kannapolis. In recent years the county has made several significant changes in the way they operate. They have reduced the number and variety of program offerings for county residents and they are focusing on the development of larger community, district and regional parks. This leaves municipalities with the task of programming parks and community centers as well as the capital development of mini parks, neighborhood parks, and civic parks. Since the

county is reducing the amount of programs offered, these changes have had a significant impact on the City of Kannapolis Recreation Department.

RECREATION SUMMARY

Since the incorporation of the City of Kannapolis city parks have been developed. However, it has only been in the last year that a formal parks and recreation department has been established. With this commitment to recreation by the city comes a need to assess the current park system to ensure that the needs of the residents are being met. A previous study was completed in January of 1989 entitled City of Kannapolis Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The plan recommended the establishment of a Recreation Department, which has been accomplished. Most of the park and facility development recommendations have not been implemented.

EXISTING CITY PARKS

A detailed inventory of all the parks and facilities in the Kannapolis area has been compiled. These include public, quasi-public, school parks, private subdivisions and clubs. A comprehensive listing of this inventory is located in **Appendix B** of this report.

The City of Kannapolis owns and/or operates the following public parks:

City of Kannapolis - Existing Public Parks	
Mini Parks	Special Purpose Parks
James Street Park	Midway Ball Fields
Rose Hill	Undeveloped
Community Parks	Forest Park
Baker's Creek Park/Greenway	Irish Buffalo Creek Site
Civic Parks	
Veterans Park	
Village Park	

It should also be noted that additional public parks are located in the City of Kannapolis, however, they are not owned by the city. These include the ongoing development of the North Cabarrus Park as well as numerous school parks.

PARK UPGRADES

The City of Kannapolis has been proactive in recreation over the past few years and has acquired some land to develop parks. They currently do not offer any programming, which leaves some gaps where the county has pulled out.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Four public workshops were conducted at the beginning of this study in various locations around Cabarrus County to give community residents an opportunity to voice their opinions on the topic of recreation in the area. One of the workshops was held in the City of Kannapolis on September 6 at Northwest Cabarrus High School.

As part of the workshop, participants were asked to fill out a written questionnaire. A portion of the survey asked individuals to indicate how important they felt it was to have certain parks and facilities developed within the community. The remainder of the survey asked numerous open-ended questions concerning parks and recreation. These results can be found in the countywide summary section of this report and in Appendix H-1.

A second series of workshops were held in six locations between March 7 and March 20, 2001 to present the preliminary findings of the study. The City of Kannapolis workshop was held on March 15. More information about the findings can be found in Appendix H-2.

Additional public input was solicited with a random mail-out survey. The detailed results of the survey can be found in Chapter 8: Mail-Out Survey.

In addition to the surveys and questionnaires prepared as part of this study, the City of Kannapolis distributed a mail-out survey in 2000. The results of the City survey largely reflected the input received during the development of this plan. A copy of the results of the city survey is available from the Kannapolis Parks and Recreation Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

PARK AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

The following are recommendations for new parks and facilities that should be built in the City of Kannapolis. For additional information see: Subdistrict 1 and 2 Chapters - Park and Facility Recommendations section.

City of Kannapolis - Proposed Public Parks	
Current	Location
6 Mini Parks	In neighborhoods
5 Neighborhood Parks	Irish Buffalo Creek Park and the 8 th street landfill site, banks of Lake Fisher, and in the southwest and southeast quadrant of this subdistrict.

Intermediate	
1 Mini Park	
1 Neighborhood Park	
1 Community Park	East side of the subdistrict to serve the central and eastern portion of the district
Long Term	
3 Mini Parks	
1 Neighborhood Park	
1 Community Park	On east side of Don Howell Lake

There are additional facilities that are also recommended. Refer to Subdistrict chapters 1 and 2 for additional information.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SYSTEMS

One of the statements of the Vision process was to develop a system of greenways and sidewalks, with the Loop Road as the central point, connecting areas frequented by Kannapolis citizens, with special emphasis placed on connecting parks and schools to the community. Through the Livable Community Blueprint process these routes have been identified. The successful development of these routes relies on the initial acceptance and designation of these routes by the City of Kannapolis.

The City of Kannapolis has the only designated greenway in the study area of this Blueprint. It is Bakers Creek Greenway, which connects the YMCA to Bakers Creek Park along a one-mile paved path. This study recommends continuing this greenway to connect other destinations in the city. The route could easily connect through the Waste Water Treatment plant and southward to the Irish Buffalo Creek Corridor, which proposes to connect several residential areas, schools and future parks. Continuing northward along Bakers Creek, from Bakers Creek Park, the greenway may connect to the northern areas of town and to Landis and China Grove.

The Irish Buffalo Creek is designated by this study as a major north south route through Kannapolis. The City has engaged preliminary discussions to make portions of this route a reality. This corridor will connect to the new North Cabarrus Park and under Interstate 85 to Concord.

Walkers use Loop Road extensively at all times of the day. With this existing focus on exercise, new opportunities for walkable routes should be established throughout the community. Additional routes have been identified, which are on-road and off-road, to connect the desired destinations of Kannapolis, making Kannapolis a walkable community. Refer to Subdistrict Two Chapter for additional descriptions of the bicycle and pedestrian routes designated through Kannapolis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Kannapolis has been successful with the parks they have. Bakers Creek Park, Village Park and Veterans Park all have enhanced recreation opportunities for their residents. With the recent establishment of a City Parks and Recreation Department, there is opportunity to evaluate new directions. With the population in Kannapolis, there is definitely need for additional parks.

- Focus on land acquisition. With the city's goal to provide mini parks in neighborhoods, look at potential land donation for development of these parks.
- Look into possibility of acquiring existing recreation facilities such as Kannapolis Recreation Park.
- Set up maintenance schedules and procedures to assure that the numerous mini parks can be well maintained.
- Evaluate opportunities to establish programming within Kannapolis Parks.
- Continue to work with the City of Kannapolis schools to maximize public use of school facilities after hours.
- Secure the sites and develop multiple sports complexes to support youth and adult team sports.
- Form a task force to complete the Fieldcrest-Cannon stadium amateur sports complex previously committed to by Kannapolis City Council. Further investigate site watershed restrictions, which may affect potential site development.
- Develop a series of interconnected neighborhood and community parks encompassing passive and/or active leisure activities.
- Work towards the development of lakes for recreational and leisure time activities, with consideration given to non-motorized boating, fishing, and shoreline parks.
- Support the expansion and development of the Piedmont Farmer's Market in both size and activity. This may include produce, arts and crafts, children's playground, and adult passive recreational opportunities.
- Designate the routes identified in the Livable Community Blueprint as routes to pursue the development of safe and friendly pedestrian and bicycle corridors.
- Create a task force of city agencies and citizens for the purpose of promoting and overseeing the establishment of bicycle and pedestrian corridors.
- Encourage new developments to incorporate sidewalks and off-road facilities for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Encourage all new utility and street projects to incorporate a bike and pedestrian element.
- Ensure all future NCDOT road projects and improvements provide for bike lanes, and that road conditions better facilitate bicycle transportation.