

# Pineville



Parks | Art | Recreation | Culture



COMPLETED MAY 2020  
PREPARED BY KIMLEY-HORN

# Acknowledgments

THANK YOU TO THE CITIZENS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PUBLIC MEETING PROCESS, THE MANY GROUPS THAT MADE THE PARC PLAN POSSIBLE, AND THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTE TO PINEVILLE PARKS AND GREENWAYS.

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## Introduction

Parks and recreation facilities are vital components to the health and overall happiness of a community. They provide places to exercise, gather, and enjoy nature. PARC stands for Parks, Art, Recreation, and Culture, and this plan will provide guidance and actionable steps to improve all four of these important cornerstones of Pineville for the next ten years.

# The Purpose of this Plan

Welcome to the Pineville PARC Plan! This plan aims to help Pineville better serve its citizens through parks, open space, and recreation opportunities. Pineville started planning for the future of the parks system in 2014, when the Pineville 2014 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan was published. The PARC Plan was commissioned in 2020 to update and expand upon the 2014 plan. This new planning period covers the Pineville Parks and Recreation system from 2020 to 2030. As Pineville grows and expands during this planning period, the PARC Plan will help guide the Parks and Recreation Department in its quest to promote healthy lifestyles and provide recreation space to the citizens of Pineville.

This plan studies Pineville today and anticipates future needs. It addresses the quality of recreation by analyzing the type and distribution of recreation facilities and recommending additions and renovations. The PARC Plan also addresses quantity and quality of parks by making recommendations for new parks that will improve level of service to the community. Maintenance, budgets, department organization, programming, marketing, and partnerships are important pieces of the puzzle. Together, these recommendations will help Pineville provide a healthy and robust Parks and Recreation system for years to come.



**PARC**

Stands for Parks, Art, Recreation, and Culture.

This plan will leverage community feedback, national guidelines, athletic trends, and professional experience to provide guidance for all four PARC categories.

This plan is organized into four chapters. **Chapter 1: The System Today** analyzes the existing Parks and Recreation facilities in Pineville as well as the 2020 demographics. This information will be used to establish a baseline of where Pineville is today. **Chapter 2: Needs Analysis** uses national data to analyze the appropriate amount of park land and facilities to serve the population of Pineville. National trends are also leveraged to anticipate changing needs in recreation. **Chapter 3: Proposals** presents the park renovations, new parks, recreation facilities, and programs recommended in this plan. **Chapter 4: Action Plan** provides guidance and actionable steps to implement the ideas proposed in this plan. For a summary of all plan proposals, see pages 62-63.

# Why do we need Parks and Greenways?

Throughout this plan, there are recommendations for new amenities, new parks, and additional miles of greenways. This will take time, effort, and money, so it is important for the Town to continue to plan, raise capital, and set aside adequate budget to provide necessary resources for the system to be successful in the future. Why are parks and recreation space so important to a community?



Lake loop path at Lake Park

## Healthy Lifestyle

A community that prioritizes parks, playgrounds, trails, and community open space understands the direct relationship those facilities and spaces have on the community's quality of life. Proper planning of these facilities keeps the Town physically and mentally healthy while promoting a strengthened sense of community. The Trust for Public Land states that according to the Center for Disease and Control, "only 25 percent of American adults engage in recommended levels of physical activity, and 29 percent engage in no leisure-time activity at all. This sedentary lifestyle is contributing to an increased incidence of obesity along with obesity-related diseases, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, congestive heart failure, and stroke." Quality outdoor spaces and recreation facilities give people a place to participate in fun activities that promote a healthy lifestyle.

## A Sense of Community

Communities that lack adequate park space typically report a lack of a sense of community. Once considered amenities, parks, trails, and community open space are now evaluated as vital components to a healthy community. They provide space to relax, exercise, and gather together. As the Pineville area continues to grow and larger residential developments move in, it will be even more vital to the health of the community to continue to place a high level of importance on these facilities in an effort to enhance what makes the Pineville community special. Among the priorities of Parks and Recreation planning is the ability for residents to access these facilities. The quality of a park, in addition to the standard performance criteria, must be evaluated by the number of residents that have the means to access that park. A community can spend millions of dollars on a park or greenway facility, but if a majority of the community cannot feasibly access it, the overall impact is reduced.

In addition to parks, greenways and trails play a significant role in the health of the community. These facilities support an active lifestyle and provide alternate means of transportation. When planned well, greenways can be used by large numbers of the population and will eventually lead to reduced traffic congestion, a strengthened and better connected community, and healthier and happier citizens. In the future the community should strive to create meaningful connections to greenway trails as they are built.

## Improved Quality of Life

Community parks and greenway facilities have been studied for years and have consistently reported a number quality of life benefits. These benefits directly correlate to a healthier and more vibrant community. Some of the benefits include:

- Encouraging healthier and more active lifestyles
- Reducing mental stress
- Supporting play, social skills, and brain development
- Promoting the social health of the community
- Promoting community involvement and cohesiveness
- Reducing air pollution and increased temperatures

Additionally, properly planned greenways act as alternate modes of transportation reducing car travel, traffic, and traffic accidents.

### COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Greenville, SC is an example of great park investments and returns. The Town removed a four-lane highway and replaced it with a 355-foot suspension pedestrian bridge, putting the focus back on pedestrians and opening up downtown's most important natural asset. Falls Park opened in September 2004 and proved to be a catalyst for South Main Street and in the West End. With a \$13-million investment by the Town, the park helped spur more than \$100 million in private investment within two years.



Playground at Jack D. Hughes Park

## Added Value to the Community

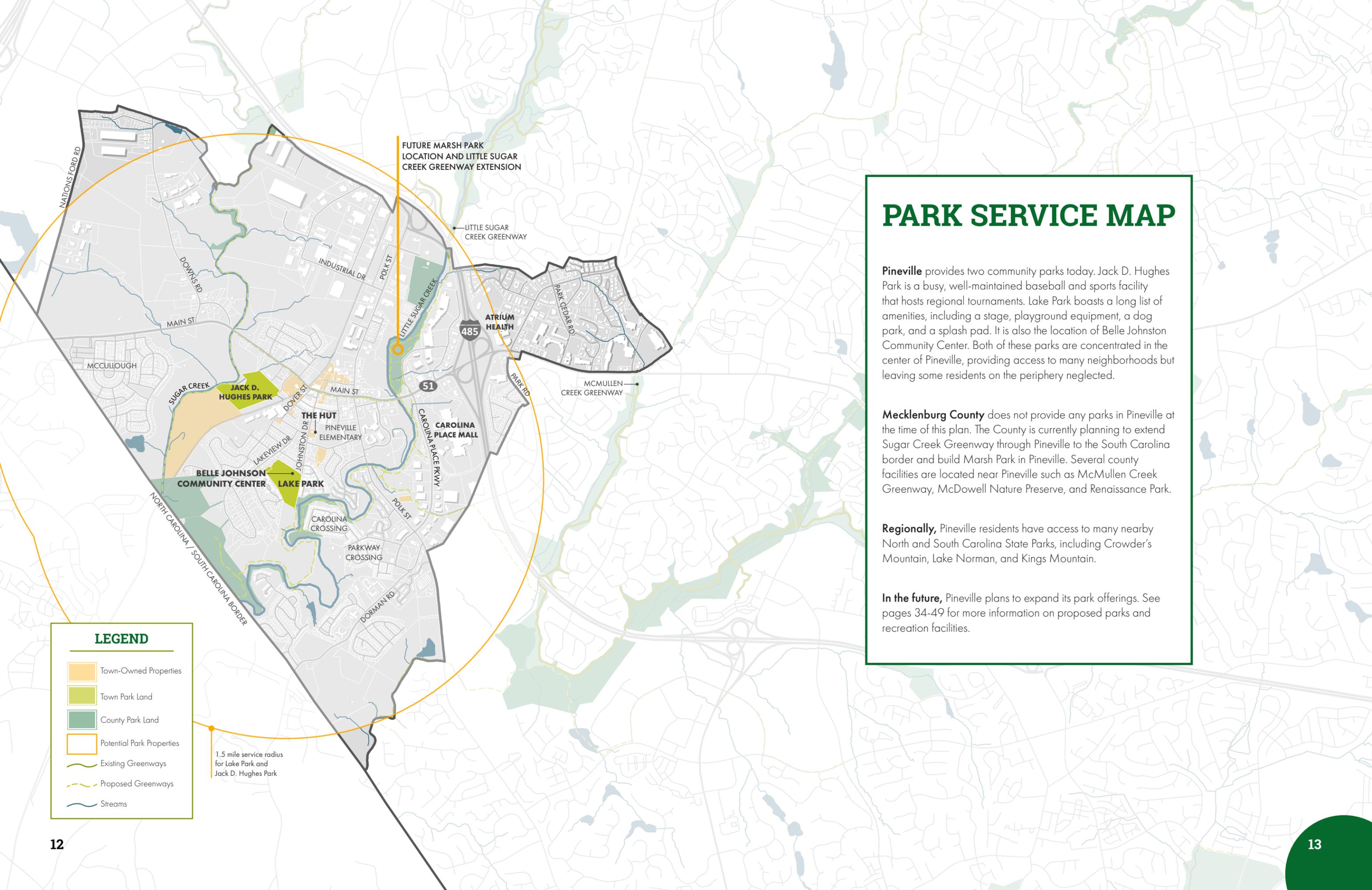
Often times, the quality of life benefits of parks and greenway facilities do not adequately tell the story when communities are asked to set aside millions of dollars in capital funds for future implementation and maintenance. Communicating these benefits is important for the sake of capital planning to point out the monetary benefits so that communities can holistically plan and evaluate capital spending each year.

- **Higher property values.** National research shows that properties within 500 feet of an excellent park increase in value by approximately 15%. Additionally, national data indicates that the closer a property is to a quality greenway trail, the higher its value.
- **Employment return-on-investment.** Parks and greenways are job creators. The Trust for Public Land indicates that 8.96 jobs are created for every \$1 million spent.
- **Fiscal return-on-investment.** The Trust for Public Land indicates that, on average, municipalities across the country see a return of \$7 for every \$1 spent, (e.g., If the community spends \$1 million on a new park, based on national averages, they could see a return on that investment of \$7 million). Due to the size of Pineville and the growth rate, the return on that investment would take longer than a larger Town; however, there is an immediate return on quality of life benefits in the interim.



## The System Today

To understand where the Pineville parks and recreation system should grow, we first need to understand where it is today. Pineville has two main parks at the time of this plan, and one community center. On the following pages, we will examine the amenities, condition, and use of each facility. We will also examine the demographics of Pineville today so we can project how it will grow.



**LEGEND**

- Town-Owned Properties
- Town Park Land
- County Park Land
- Potential Park Properties
- Existing Greenways
- Proposed Greenways
- Streams

1.5 mile service radius for Lake Park and Jack D. Hughes Park

## PARK SERVICE MAP

**Pineville** provides two community parks today. Jack D. Hughes Park is a busy, well-maintained baseball and sports facility that hosts regional tournaments. Lake Park boasts a long list of amenities, including a stage, playground equipment, a dog park, and a splash pad. It is also the location of Belle Johnston Community Center. Both of these parks are concentrated in the center of Pineville, providing access to many neighborhoods but leaving some residents on the periphery neglected.

**Mecklenburg County** does not provide any parks in Pineville at the time of this plan. The County is currently planning to extend Sugar Creek Greenway through Pineville to the South Carolina border and build Marsh Park in Pineville. Several county facilities are located near Pineville such as McMullen Creek Greenway, McDowell Nature Preserve, and Renaissance Park.

**Regionally**, Pineville residents have access to many nearby North and South Carolina State Parks, including Crowder's Mountain, Lake Norman, and Kings Mountain.

**In the future**, Pineville plans to expand its park offerings. See pages 34-49 for more information on proposed parks and recreation facilities.

# The Park and Recreation System

## Jack D. Hughes Park

Jack D. Hughes Park is well used by the community and region today. The park boasts several sports facilities, restroom and concession facilities, a trail system, and play areas. The park hosts events and tournaments year-round.

The park is in great shape today and is the product of several phases of investment by the Town. Opened in the 1960s, it has been a part of the Town for decades. In 2014, a master plan was completed that spurred renovations. Phase I opened in 2006 and Phase II in 2010. The current park is 29.6 acres, and the Town owns 71.8 acres adjacent to the existing footprint.

The park today is used primarily for sports practices. It is used nearly every weekend from March to October for tournaments. A 250-seat stadium surrounds a full-size baseball

field. The park also boasts two softball fields and a multi-use field that is used for volleyball and soccer. These fields are valuable assets used regionally, and new fields are necessary to meet the high demand for fields at Jack D. Hughes Park.

A concept plan for a Jack D. Hughes expansion is proposed as part of the PARC Plan. Please see page 38 for more information on the future expansion of the Park.

## The Hut

The Hut is a community meeting space that was added to the Parks and Recreation system in 2000. It is used for community meetings and the Jazz at the Hut music series. The facility is often rented for meetings, and the fenced backyard can be used for weddings.

## Stats and Amenities



### THE HUT

Address: 413 Johnston Drive

Size: 1.3 acres, 4,000 sf

- 1 Large community room
- 1 Kitchen
- 1 Fenced backyard
- 1 Picnic area



IDH Shelter Signage



Playground at IDH



The Hut



Shelters at IDH

## Park Stats and Amenities



### PARK DATA

Address: 513 Main street

Size: 29.4 acres

Phase III size: 71.8 acres



### SPORTS

- 1 Full-size baseball field
- 250 Seat baseball stadium
- 2 Softball fields
- 1 Multi-use field
- 2 Batting Cages



### PLAY

1 Playground

1.5 Miles of trails



### FACILITIES

3 Picnic Shelters

2 Restroom and concession buildings

234 Parking spots

# The Park and Recreation System

## Lake Park

Lake Park has many park amenities and activities for the community to enjoy. It is the site of the Belle Johnston Community Center, which has classroom and exercise space. The park boasts several play areas, a stage, three picnic shelters, and a trail around the beautiful man-made lake.

Like Jack D. Hughes Park, Lake Park is very popular and is the product of several phases of planning and investment by the Town. Shay Stage hosted its first concert in 2000. During the community survey conducted in 2013, many citizens listed a dog park as their top park priority. In response, the Town developed Canine Commons Dog Park in 2017, and the splash pad was built in 2019. The park now has a variety of amenities for people and pets to enjoy.

Lake Park is the site of many community events. The Queen City Yacht Club Regatta and Paws in the Park take place in the spring. Fall Fest is held in October and features vendors and live music. The park is also the site of game nights, races, a community yard sale, and the Rockin' and Reelin' summer concert and movie series.

**CANINE COMMONS DOG PARK** is a 2-acre fenced park located off of the lake loop path. It is a popular park for dogs of all sizes to enjoy. The dog park is relatively new and the fencing and signage is in great shape. It has its own dedicated parking lot off of Lake Drive.

**THE SPLASH PAD** has a variety of spray features for kids to play in. A small restroom facility is located directly adjacent to the splash pad. Large groups can rent the splash pad and the adjacent medium shelter.

**SHAY STAGE** is the site of Rockin' and Reelin', a summer concert and movie series that takes place from June-September. When not used for music events, it is often utilized by yoga or workout classes. Restrooms are located in the stage structure and can be used by the public in the summer.

A concept plan for a Lake Park expansion is proposed as part of the PARC Plan. Please see page 40 for more information on the future expansion of the Park.

## Belle Johnston Community Center

Belle Johnston Community Center was built in 1988. It has been used by the community for decades for community meetings, programs, and exercise.

The center has a craft room as well as a large community room with an adjacent kitchen. These rooms are used to host senior dinner events, art classes, cooking classes, and educational events for kids. The center is also used for Parks and Recreation Department offices and meetings. More space is needed to accommodate these programs.

The center also has a full size indoor basketball court with an elevated running track above. A small gym is located off of the court, containing a squat rack, an adjustable bench, weights, and yoga balls. See the appendix for a full existing conditions assessment by Neighboring Concepts.

A Belle Johnston Community Center expansion and renovation is proposed as part of the PARC Plan. Please see pages 42-47 for more information.

### Stats and Amenities



#### COMMUNITY CENTER

Address: 1000 Johnston Drive

Size: 19,000 square feet

- 1 Basketball court
- 1 Gym
- 1 Running track
- 2 Multi-purpose rooms

### Park Stats and Amenities



#### PARK DATA

Address: 1000 Johnston Drive

Size: 21.3 acres



#### FACILITIES

- 1 Community center
- 3 Picnic shelters
- 2 Restroom buildings
- 151 Parking spots



#### PLAY

- 7 Playground areas
- 0.7 Miles of trails
- 1 Splash pad
- 1 Dog Park
- 1 Stage

Canine Commons Dog Park



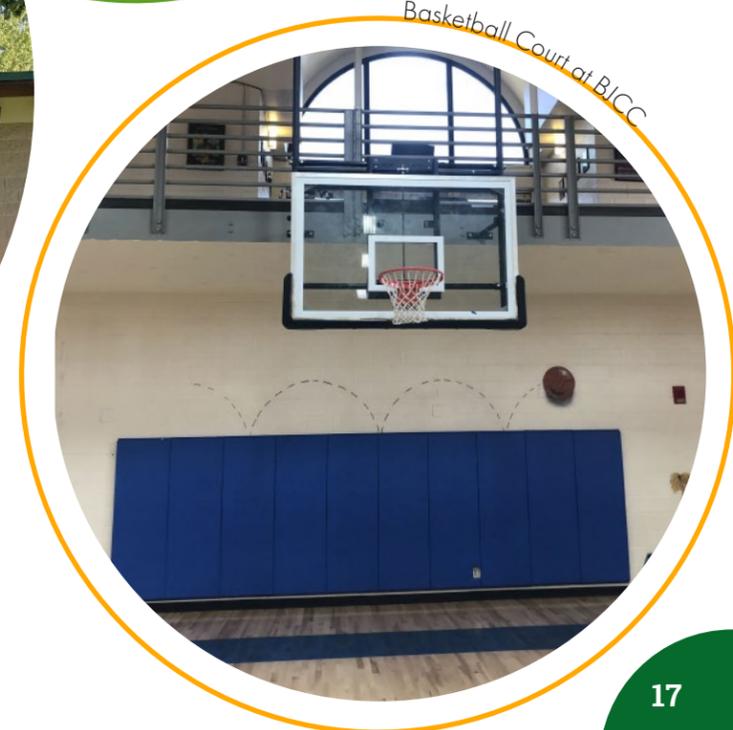
Shay Stage

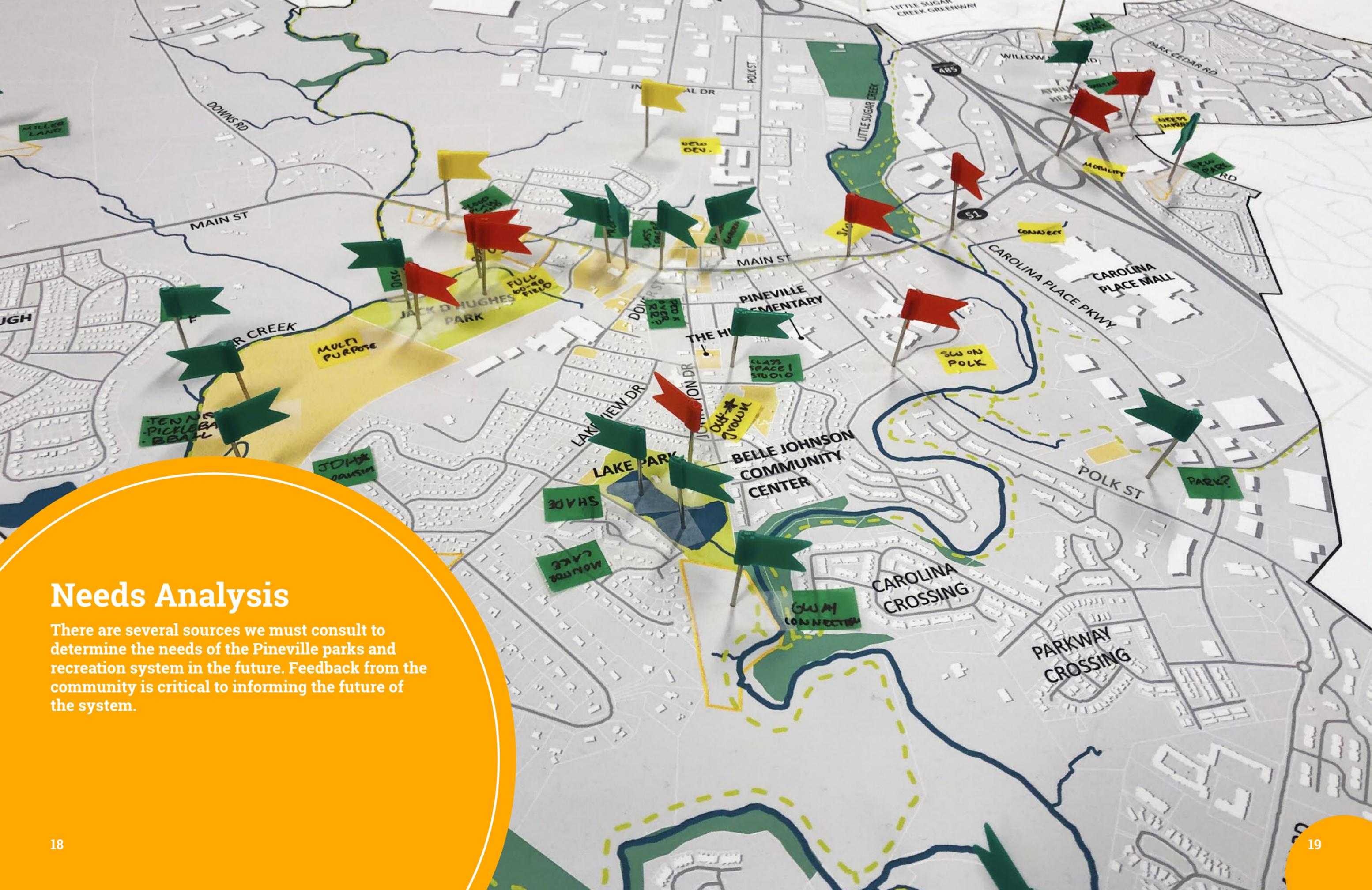


Shelter at Lake Park



Basketball Court at BICC





## Needs Analysis

There are several sources we must consult to determine the needs of the Pineville parks and recreation system in the future. Feedback from the community is critical to informing the future of the system.

# Community Feedback

The Town and the Consultant team engaged with the community at several events over the course of the planning process in an effort to collect valuable community feedback. At the beginning of the process, a steering committee of Parks and Recreation employees and Park Board members was formed. The committee members provided feedback on the plan at multiple points throughout the process. Two community meetings were held, with approximately 60 citizens in attendance at the first meeting. The second meeting was held virtually through a YouTube presentation updating the community on the PARC Plan progress.

A community survey was advertised and made available from mid-March to mid-April. A total of 291 citizens responded, providing over 5,000 data points. This important community feedback was used to inform the plan proposals.



## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FEBRUARY 24, 2020

The first steering committee meeting was held at Belle Johnson Community Center and was attended by the entire committee, including Park Board members and Parks and Recreation staff. The committee gave input on the strengths and weaknesses of Pineville, PARC plan goals, and officially decided on the name "PARC Plan!"



## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING APRIL 1, 2020

The second steering committee meeting reviewed survey results to date, and then focused on park proposals. The committee discussed renovations and expansions for Lake Park and Jack D. Hughes Park as well as opportunities to expand the park network.

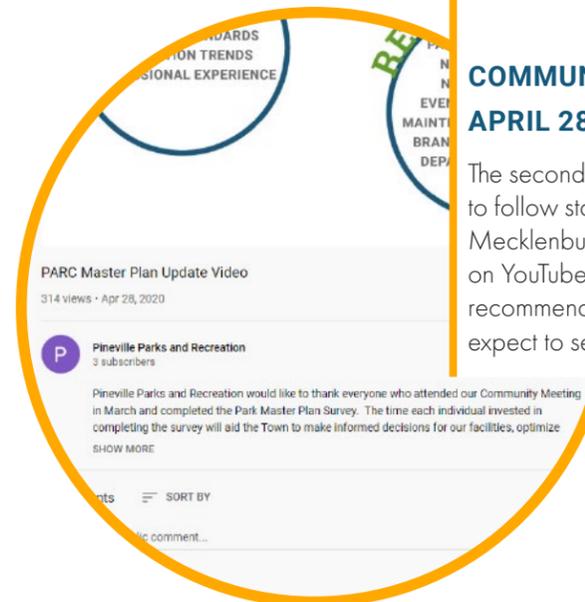
## COMMUNITY SURVEY ACTIVE MARCH 11-APRIL 20

## PARC PLAN KICKOFF FEBRUARY 2020



## COMMUNITY MEETING MARCH 11, 2020

The first community meeting was held at The Hut. About 60 people participated in a variety of activities, giving input on the PARC Plan and the Pineville Mobility Plan.



## COMMUNITY MEETING APRIL 28, 2020

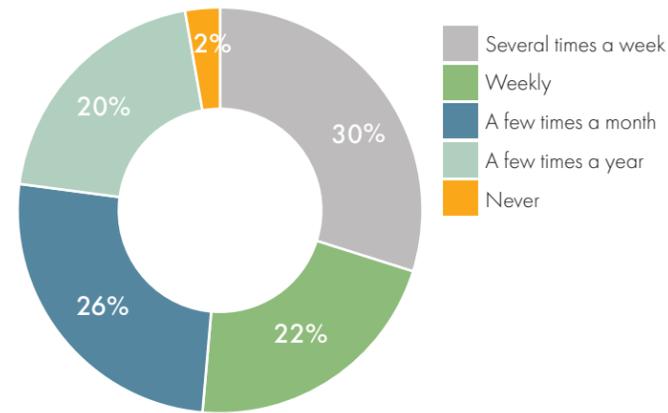
The second community meeting was held virtually to follow stay-at-home orders put in place by Mecklenburg County. The presentation, posted on YouTube, updated the community on the recommendations and park proposals they could expect to see in the final PARC Plan.

# Community Feedback

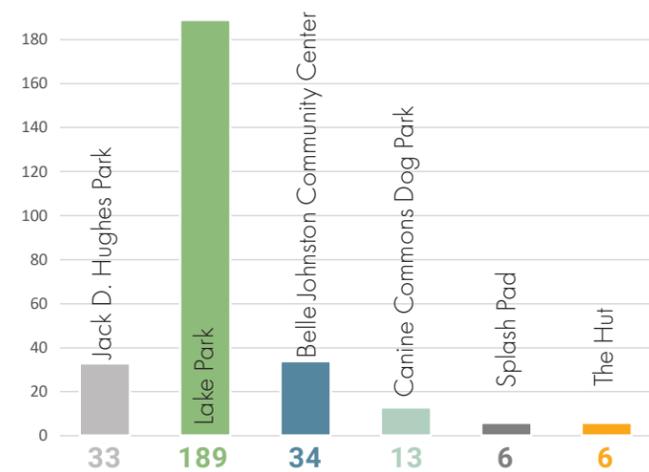
A community survey was issued on March 11, 2020—the day of the first community workshop. The survey asked for feedback on 23 questions, including questions about parks, athletics, programs, mobility, and demographic data. 291 people completed the survey, providing thousands of data points about how citizens feel about Pineville today and how they want it to grow in the future. The survey data is summarized and recorded here, along with feedback from the steering committee meetings and public workshops.

## Park Use Today

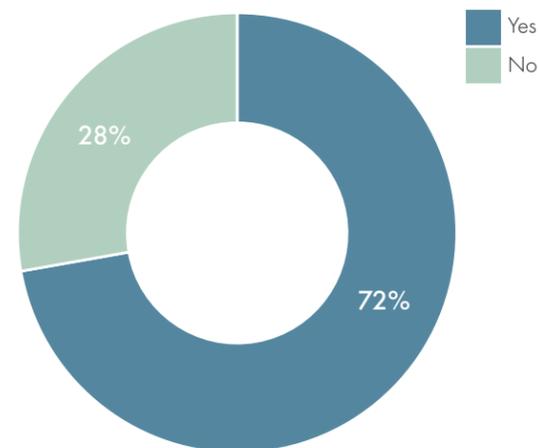
HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU USED A PUBLIC RECREATION AREA, PARK, OR TRAIL IN THE LAST YEAR?



WHICH PARK OR RECREATION AREA DID YOU VISIT MOST OFTEN?



DO YOU USE PARK OR RECREATION FACILITIES OUTSIDE OF PINEVILLE?



### TAKEAWAYS:

- Pineville parks are used very frequently by residents. Half of responders use the park once or more a week.
- In an essay response, many participants said **additional amenities** would make them more likely to visit parks. Specifics included disc golf, workout stations, sand volleyball, and trails. Others requested **activities and events for adults** such as races or book clubs or **shade** for playground areas.
- **Lake Park** is far and away the most used park in Pineville.
- Most people who visited facilities outside of Pineville did so to access **greenway trails**. Others said it was for a change of scenery.

## Park and Facility Satisfaction

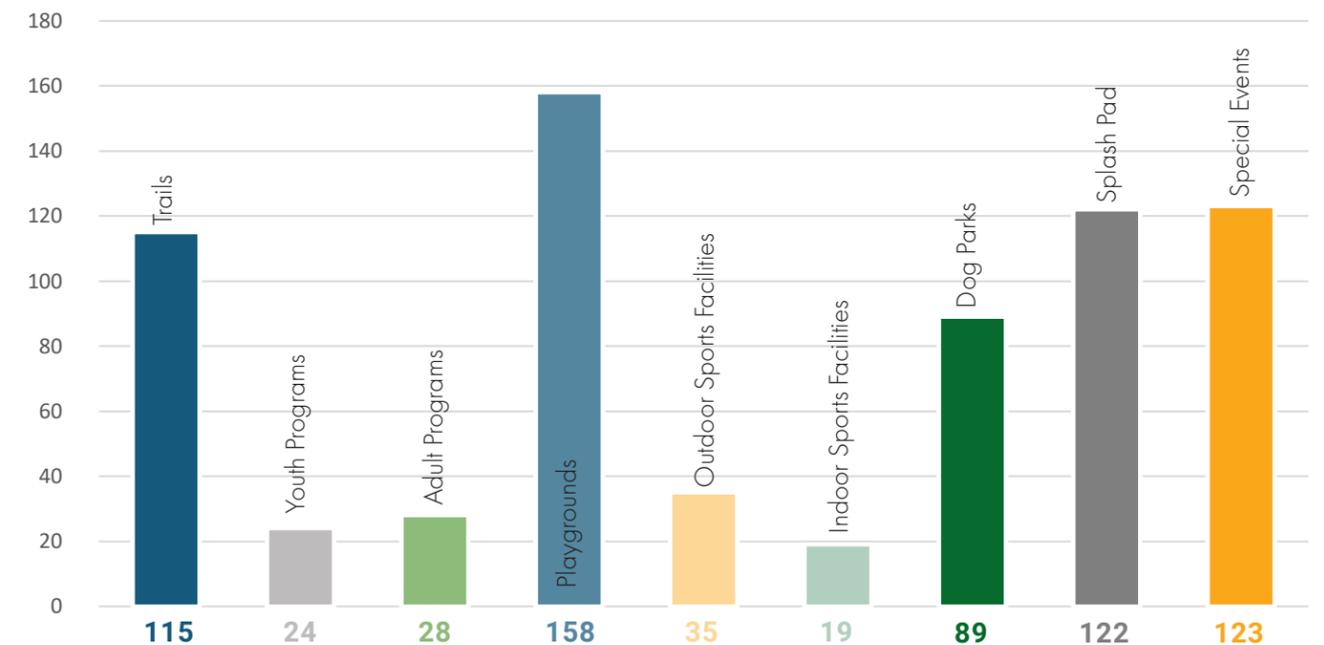
HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE PUBLIC RECREATION, PARK, AND TRAIL FACILITIES?



HOW WOULD YOU RATE PINEVILLE FACILITIES?



WHAT ARE YOU MOST SATISFIED WITH TODAY?



### TAKEAWAYS:

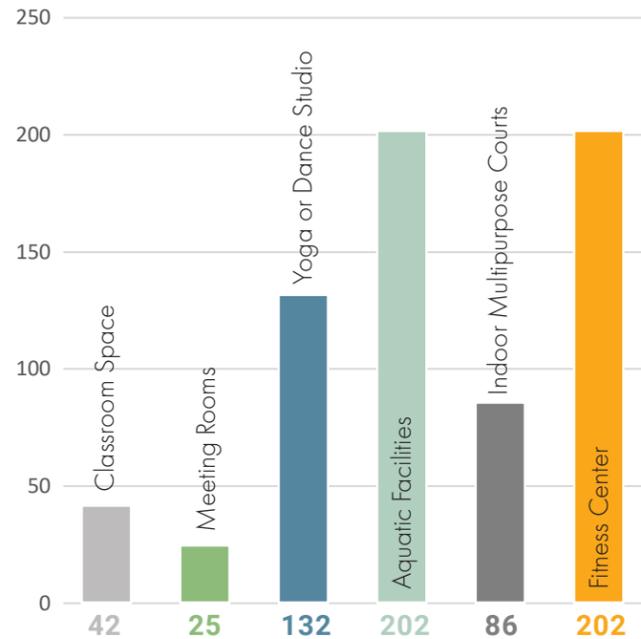
- People are **generally satisfied** with Pineville parks and facilities today.
- People were most satisfied with playgrounds, followed by events and the splashpad.

## Future Priorities

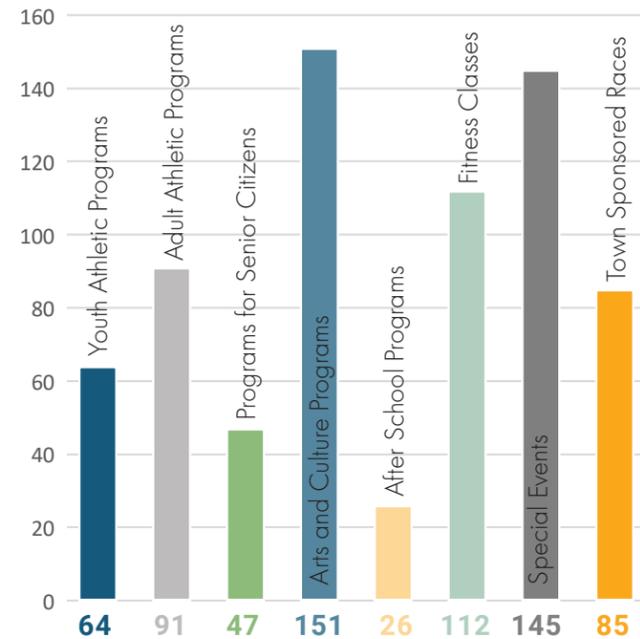
### HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL PUBLIC RECREATION, PARKS, AND TRAILS?



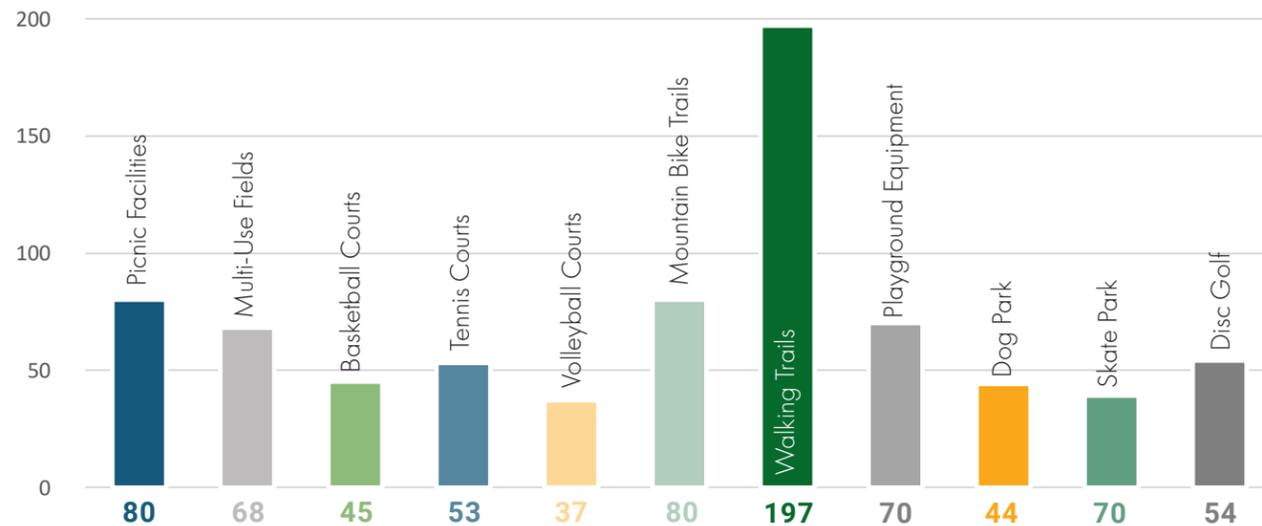
#### WHAT INDOOR FACILITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN THE FUTURE?



#### WHAT PROGRAMS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN THE FUTURE?

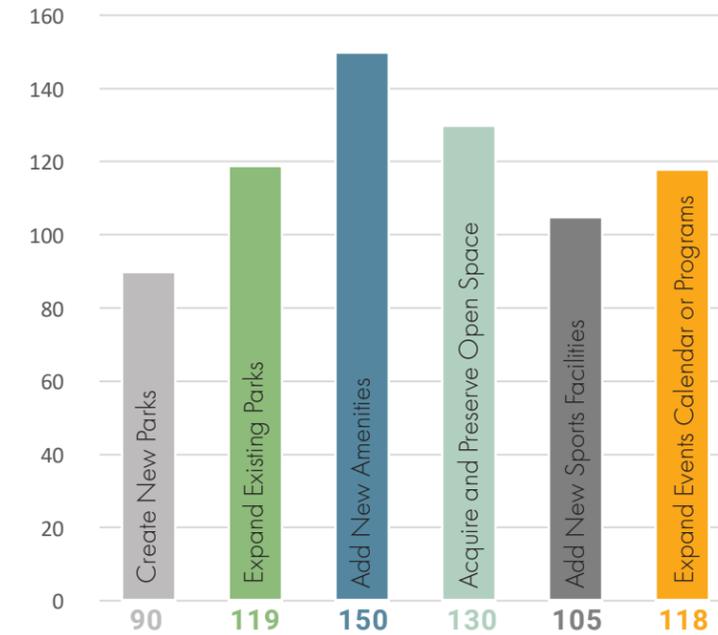


#### WHAT OUTDOOR FACILITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN THE FUTURE?



## Future Priorities Summary

### SELECT PRIORITIES FOR THE PINEVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM.



#### TAKEAWAYS:

- For future priorities, people want to see **new amenities**. They rated the need for additional facilities and parks relatively high.
- Indoors, people want to see more **aquatic facilities and fitness centers**.
- Outdoors, people overwhelmingly want more **walking trails**. Other popular choices were picnic facilities, multi-purpose fields, mountain bike trails, and playgrounds.
- For programs, people want **art and culture programs and special events**.

#### WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT PINEVILLE?

- In this essay response question, many people said they treasure the **small town feel** of Pineville and do not want to lose that in the future.
- Many people said they love the parks and recreation facilities in Pineville, and most named **Lake Park** in particular as their favorite part!

#### WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE ABOUT PINEVILLE?

- Many responses said **more ball fields** are necessary to meet growing demand.
- Others said they would like to ease congestion and have **safer walking routes**.



# Park Classifications

Parks can come in many different sizes and serve many purposes. When considering the future of Pineville’s park system, it is important to consider all park types and evaluate how they can meet the needs of the community. The National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) has published guidelines that categorize the main types of parks and how many locations or acres of that type a town should have.

Below is a summary of the different park types, how they serve the community, and what area they are meant to serve. These definitions are based on NRPA guidelines, but can evolve with the community as long as they are providing adequate recreation areas to the public. A general acreage is given for each park type, but a park’s classification is determined more by use and amenities than by area.



## Regional Park

**AREA: OVER 100 ACRES**

**SERVICE RADIUS: 50 MILES**

**EXAMPLES: STATE PARKS SUCH AS LAKE NORMAN AND CROWDERS MOUNTAIN**

A regional park is the largest type defined by the NRPA. It should serve several communities within a 50-mile service radius. Regional parks are usually established by the state or county. They typically consist mostly of passive or conservation space, with small parts developed for active recreation.

## Community Park

**AREA: 20-100 ACRES**

**SERVICE RADIUS: 1.5 MILES**

**EXAMPLES: JACK D. HUGHES PARK, LAKE PARK**

A community park should serve the needs of a fairly large community. In the context of Pineville a centrally located community park would serve the downtown area and a few surrounding neighborhoods. It should provide active and passive activity types, and generally require a maintenance facility, restrooms, and scheduled programming. Community parks are good locations for large sports fields and trails. They are typically provided by the Town.



## Neighborhood Park

**AREA: 5-20 ACRES**

**SERVICE RADIUS: 1 MILE**

**EXAMPLES: ARCHDALE PARK, INDEPENDENCE PARK**

As the name indicates, a neighborhood park typically serves one or several neighborhoods. Although the area is smaller, neighborhood parks should still integrate passive and active uses. Smaller sports facilities—like sand volleyball or basketball—work well for this park type. Parking is necessary to allow users to bring sports equipment or children, but should be fairly walkable for the community it serves. Neighborhood parks are typically provided by the Town.

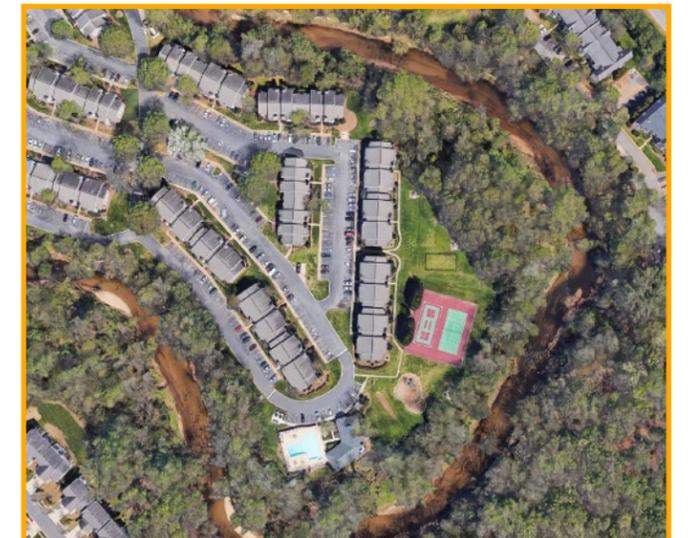
## Mini Park

**AREA: LESS THAN 5 ACRES**

**SERVICE RADIUS: 0.25 MILES**

**EXAMPLES: PINEVILLE PLACE APARTMENTS**

The smallest of the park classifications, a mini park—sometimes called a pocket park—is only meant to serve a small number of people. They are typically used by one neighborhood or even a grouping of multi-family buildings. Despite their small size, mini parks are still a valuable asset with more specialized amenities. They typically include picnic shelters, playgrounds, or small walking trails. Mini parks can be provided by municipalities or private developers.



# NRPA National Standards

How do the park types on the previous page apply to Pineville? Pineville currently has two parks, both of which fall into the community park category. These parks serve the community well, and there are many regional parks that also serve Pineville. However, mini parks and neighborhood parks are not represented. This creates a service gap.

To plan for the future of Pineville's parks, we can use the NRPA standards to evaluate how many parks are necessary to fill these service gaps and provide enough park land for the population of Pineville. Below is a summary of these guidelines. These national standards are a great starting point for evaluation, but they are not tailored specifically to Pineville. **The national standards do not represent the recommendations of the PARC Plan.** Please see pages 34-35 to see how these recommendations have been applied to Pineville.

## Existing Park Acreage

PARK TYPES	CURRENT ACREAGE	CURRENT RATIO	NRPA GUIDELINES
Mini Parks	0 acres	0 acres/1,000 people	<b>0.25</b> ac/1,000 people
Neighborhood Parks	0 acres	0 acres/1,000 people	<b>2</b> ac/1,000 people
Community Parks	50.7 acres	5.2 acres/1,000 people	<b>5</b> ac/1,000 people

## NRPA Park Recommendations

PARK TYPES	2020 NEEDS (POPULATION 9,690)	PROJECTED 2030 NEEDS (POPULATION 11,450)
Mini Parks	2.4 acres ( <b>2.4</b> additional acres needed)	2.9 acres ( <b>2.9</b> additional acres needed)
Neighborhood Parks	19.4 acres ( <b>19.4</b> additional acres needed)	22.9 acres ( <b>22.9</b> additional acres needed)
Community Parks	48.5 acres ( <b>0</b> additional acres needed)	57.3 acres ( <b>6.6</b> additional acres needed)

### TAKEAWAYS:

- **Mini Parks.** Pineville does not have any mini parks today. According to NRPA standards, Pineville needs 3 acres of mini parks by 2030. The public plaza outside the proposed library and town hall project will provide quality, centralized mini park space. Additional mini parks should be provided by private developers in residential developments when possible. See page 37 for mini park guidelines.
- **Neighborhood Parks.** Pineville does not have any neighborhood parks today. According to NRPA standards, Pineville needs 23 acres of neighborhood parks by 2030. However, Pineville has two large, centralized, heavily programmed community parks, so park acreage and amenity needs are largely met by Lake Park and Jack D. Hughes Park. Neighborhood parks should be added to the Pineville system primarily to provide park access to neighborhoods on the outskirts of Pineville.
- **Community Parks.** Based on these recommended park guidelines, Pineville is providing plenty of community park acreage for its population today. Not only does Pineville have over 50 acres of community park land, these acres are heavily programmed with a variety of amenities for all ages. Although the community park acreage will fall slightly short of the projected 2030 population needs, the planned Marsh Park covers that small service gap.

## NRPA Facility Recommendations

FACILITY TYPES	NRPA GUIDELINES	EXISTING	PROJECTED 2020 NEEDS	PROJECTED 2030 NEEDS
<b>FIELDS</b>				
Adult Baseball	1/15,000 people	1 fields	1 fields	1 fields
Youth Baseball	1/5,000 people	0 fields	2 fields <b>(+2)</b>	2 fields <b>(+2)</b>
Softball	1/5,000 people	2 fields	2 fields	2 fields
Football	1/10,000 people	1 multi-use field	1 fields	1 fields
Soccer	1/7,500 people	1 multi-use field	1 fields	2 fields <b>(+1)</b>
<b>COURTS</b>				
Basketball	1/5,000 people	1 court	2 courts <b>(+1)</b>	2 courts <b>(+1)</b>
Tennis	1/2,500 people	0 courts	4 courts <b>(+4)</b>	5 courts <b>(+5)</b>
Volleyball	1/5,000 people	1 multi-use field	2 courts <b>(+1)</b>	2 courts <b>(+1)</b>
Shuffleboard	1/5,000 people	0 courts	2 courts <b>(+2)</b>	2 courts <b>(+2)</b>
Horseshoe	1/5,000 people	0 courts	2 courts <b>(+2)</b>	2 courts <b>(+2)</b>
<b>OUTDOOR AREAS</b>				
Picnic Shelter	1/2,500 people	6 shelters	4 shelters	5 shelters
Playground	1/2,000 people	8 playgrounds	5 playgrounds	6 playgrounds
<b>TRAILS</b>				
Walking/Jogging	1 mile/1,250 people	2 miles	8 miles <b>(+6)</b>	9 miles <b>(+7)</b>
<b>SPECIALIZED</b>				
Community Center	1/15,000 people	1 center	1 center	1 center
Swimming Pool	1/20,000 people	0 pools	0 pools	1 pools <b>(+1)</b>
Sprayground	1/15,000 people	1 spraygrounds	1 spraygrounds	1 spraygrounds
Amphitheater	1/10,000 people	1 amphitheater	1 amphitheaters	1 amphitheaters
Disc Golf	1/15,000 people	0 courses	1 courses <b>(+1)</b>	1 courses <b>(+1)</b>
Skateboard Park	1/15,000 people	0 parks	1 parks <b>(+1)</b>	1 parks <b>(+1)</b>
Dog Park	1/5,000 people	1 dog park	1 dog park	1 dog parks

### TAKEAWAYS:

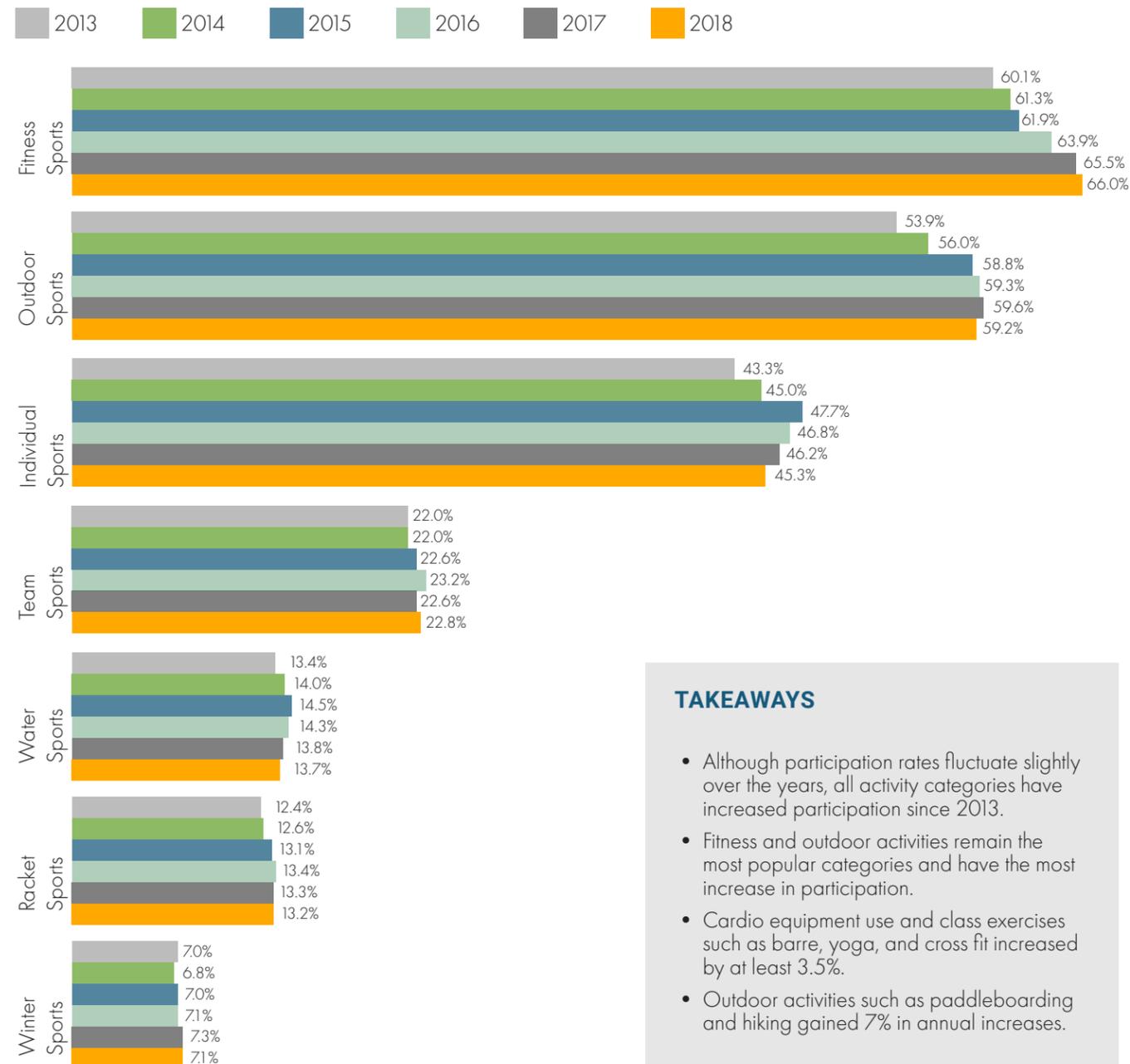
- Based on NRPA recommendations, **Pineville falls short on sport facilities.** Community feedback indicates a desire for baseball, basketball, tennis, volleyball, and disc golf, so the PARC plan addresses those needs in the facility recommendations.
- Some of the NRPA recommendations, such as shuffleboard, horseshoe, and skateboard parks, have not been requested in community feedback. The **need for outdoor games** will be met in other ways more in line with community desires, such as cornhole or sidewalk games.

# National Trends

Community needs can't just be based on population—trends in recreation need to be taken into account when planning for the future. The data on these pages is from the Sport & Fitness Industry Association Sports, Fitness, And Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report. This report provides insight into what activities are most popular by age group and what activities are growing in popularity.

In general, activity rates are increasing, although total participation rate (around 73% for Americans over 6 years old) remains the same.

## Total Participation Rate



### TAKEAWAYS

- Although participation rates fluctuate slightly over the years, all activity categories have increased participation since 2013.
- Fitness and outdoor activities remain the most popular categories and have the most increase in participation.
- Cardio equipment use and class exercises such as barre, yoga, and cross fit increased by at least 3.5%.
- Outdoor activities such as paddleboarding and hiking gained 7% in annual increases.

Current activity participation rates only tell part of the story. The activities that people want to do are also important because creating access to these activities can encourage people to exercise who may not be today. The lists below represent the activities that non-participants are most interested in by age.

## Non-Participant Interest

### 6-12

- Soccer
- Fishing
- Swimming on a team
- Camping
- Martial arts
- Basketball
- Skateboarding
- Bicycling
- Golf
- Football

### 13-17

- Camping
- Fishing
- Basketball
- Working out w/ weights
- Running/jogging
- Swimming for fitness
- Golf
- Volleyball
- Football
- Working out w/ machines

### 18-24

- Camping
- Martial arts
- Backpacking
- Snowboarding
- Climbing
- Kayaking
- Fishing
- Bicycling
- Volleyball
- Working out w/ weights

### 25-34

- Stand-up paddling
- Swimming for fitness
- Camping
- Bicycling
- Surfing
- Kayaking
- Working out w/weights
- Running/jogging
- Backpacking
- Wakeboarding

### 35-44

- Stand-up paddling
- Swimming for fitness
- Camping
- Bicycling
- Working out w/ weights
- Martial arts
- Basketball
- Working out w/ machines
- Volleyball
- Running/jogging

### 45-54

- Camping
- Working out w/ weights
- Stand-up paddling
- Bicycling
- Swimming for fitness
- Hiking
- Fishing
- Canoeing
- Working out w/ machines
- Bird/wildlife viewing

### 55-64

- Bicycling
- Bird/wildlife viewing
- Working out using machines
- Camping
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Swimming for fitness
- Stand-up paddling
- Working out w/weights
- Canoeing

### 65+

- Bird/wildlife viewing
- Fishing
- Working out w/ machines
- Swimming for fitness
- Hiking
- Fitness classes
- Bicycling
- Camping
- Working out w/ weights
- Shooting

### TAKEAWAYS

- Outdoor activities such as biking, camping, and fishing topped the lists of all ages.
- Stand-up paddling was a new top interest for young adults.
- Gym workouts with weights and machines were listed for all ages except the youngest.



## Proposals

The proposals and recommendations in this section are based on community feedback, demographic information, and national standards and trends. It is important to understand that every community is different, and the proposals here have been customized to Pineville to create a realistic vision for the future.

# The Future Park System

Pineville provides two high-quality, well-loved parks today. It is clear from the community feedback and NRPA recommendations that Pineville needs to expand its park offerings to provide for its population into the future. This involves expanding existing parks and reserving space for new parks.

Community park acreage in Pineville is meeting national standards, but more fields are needed to meet the needs of the community. There are no neighborhood parks in Pineville and several locations are needed to meet standards and provide park coverage to peripheral neighborhoods. See pages 38-49 for park concepts.

## Community Parks

Pineville already provides a lot of community park space in Jack D. Hughes and Lake Park. Although plenty of acreage is provided, the amenities at Jack D. Hughes and Lake Park are in high demand, particularly the athletic fields at JDH.

### 1 JACK D. HUGHES PHASE III

Location: Main Street

Size: 71.8 acres

The parcel south of Jack D. Hughes Park is owned by Pineville and can be used to expand the park. A Jack D. Hughes expansion is a perfect location for new multi-use fields and baseball fields that are desired by the community.

### 2 LAKE PARK EXPANSION

Location: Lake Drive

Size: 12.6 acres

Lake Park is already a very active park with many amenities. The adjacent creek-side parcel allows space to expand the park and provide more natural park space and passive amenities to Lake Park.

### 3 MARSH PARK

Location: Leitner Drive

Size: 25.7 acres

Mecklenburg County plans to build Marsh Park as part of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway extension. This county park will be located off Main Street and provide a great natural amenity.

## Greenways and Trails

Trails were the most desired amenity in the community survey, and trails through the Jack D. Hughes and Lake Park expansions will provide 2 more miles of trails. Pineville should also connect to the Little Sugar Creek Greenway expansion when it is built.

## Neighborhood Parks

Pineville does not provide any neighborhood parks today, making these parks the priority for new park acreage. NRPA standards suggest Pineville needs 22.9 acres of neighborhood parks by 2030, which would mean 2-3 locations ideally on the outskirts of Pineville.

### 4 GOODSSELL PARK

Location: Goodsell Court

Size: 1.6 acres (2 parcels)

A park east of Pineville provides park coverage to neighborhoods that are currently disconnected from the system.

### 5 WEST PARK

A park in the west of Pineville is not necessary today as there are no large population centers there. However, as Pineville grows, it is important to plan for the future. Pineville should monitor planned development in this area and purchase park land to be developed in the future as an investment in this growing area.

## Mini Parks

Pineville does not provide any mini parks today. The area in front of the police department can become a mini park in the future as part of the library and town hall construction. For other mini park recommendations, see page 37.

### 6 LIBRARY PLAZA

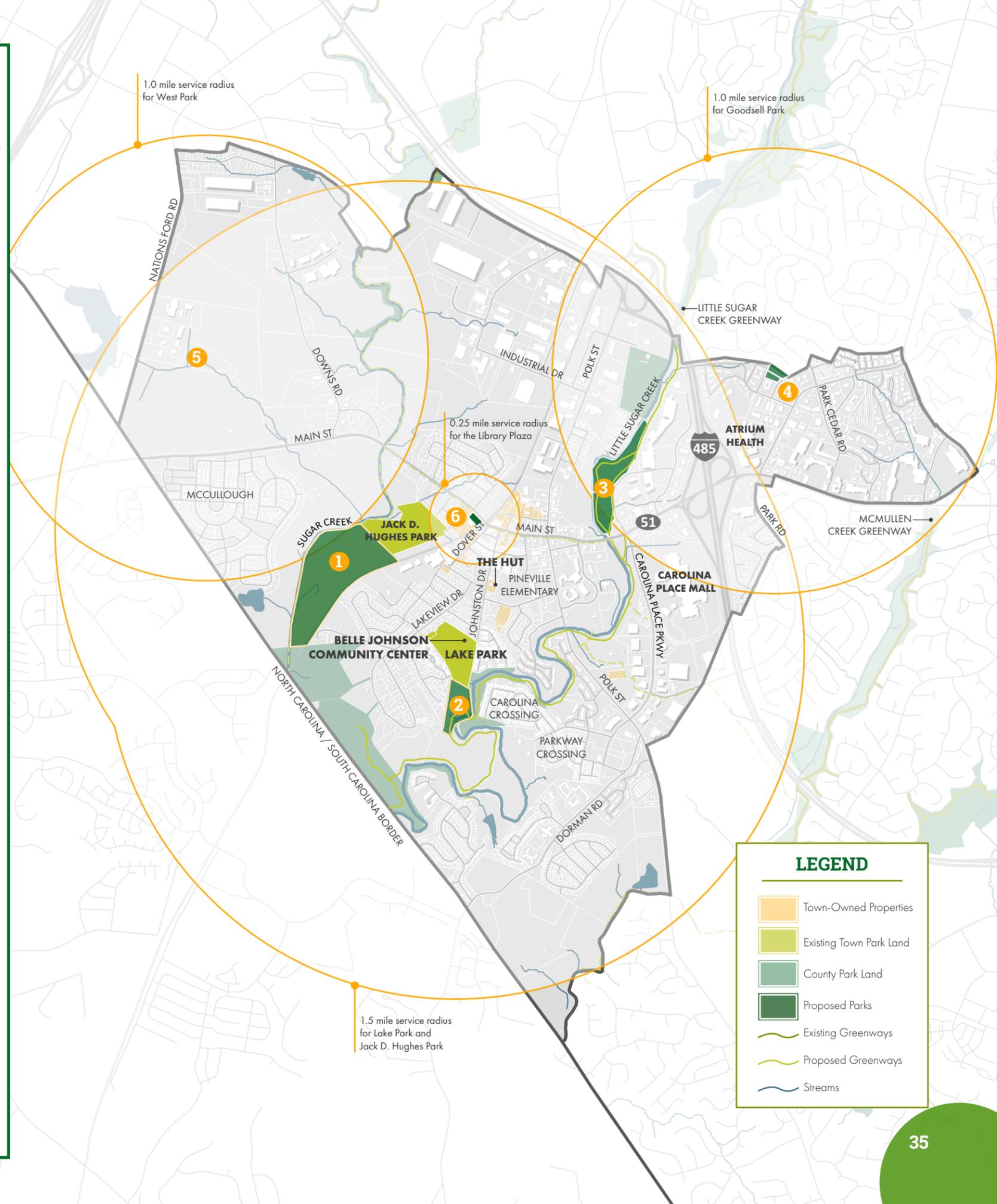
Address: 427 Main Street

Size: 1.2 acres

The large lawn area in front of the police department functions as community space and can be programmed in the future to become a mini park.

## Indoor Recreation

Parks and Recreation staff has outgrown the Belle Johnston Community Center, and more room is needed for programs. For details on the BJCC expansion, see pages 42-47.



**LEGEND**

- Town-Owned Properties
- Existing Town Park Land
- County Park Land
- Proposed Parks
- Existing Greenways
- Proposed Greenways
- Streams

# Facility Recommendations

Expanding park size or acreage is not the only way to improve Pineville's park system. Those parks need to be programmed with amenities for people to enjoy. Today, Pineville has a splash pad and dog park at Lake Park that meet community needs. Some new play facilities can be added to increase the offerings. The sports fields offered are extremely popular and well used. Expanding the amount of sports courts and fields in Pineville is necessary to meet needs. Below is a summary of the facility recommendations.

## Sports Facilities

- 2 BASEBALL FIELDS**  
Pineville needs new baseball fields to meet growing demand. One youth and one adult size baseball field should be built in the Jack D. Hughes expansion.
- 1 MULTI-USE FIELD**  
The multi-use field in Jack D. Hughes Park is used today for volleyball and soccer. Another multi-use field is needed to meet demand.
- 2 BASKETBALL COURTS**  
Basketball is in growing demand in Pineville. Two new courts should be built in the Jack D. Hughes expansion.
- 4 TENNIS COURTS**  
Tennis is popular with many age groups and is easy to integrate into smaller parks. Tennis courts should be provided in the new neighborhood park.



## Play Facilities

- 2 MILES OF TRAILS**  
Based on NRPA standards, Pineville needs to add 7 miles of trails by 2030. The Little Sugar Creek Greenway extension planned by Mecklenburg County will provide 4.2 miles of trails in Pineville. The Town should provide an additional 1.5 miles in the Jack D. Hughes expansion, and 0.5 miles in the Lake Park expansion which will connect to the Little Sugar Creek greenway and trail system.
- 5 PICNIC SHELTERS AND PLAYGROUNDS**  
Pineville is currently meeting the community need for playgrounds and shelters. However, new parks should provide at least one shelter.
- 1 DISC GOLF COURSE**  
Disc golf is a relatively cheap amenity, and one that can be easily integrated to a park with little disturbance. A nine-hole disc golf course should be integrated into the Jack D. Hughes expansion.

# Park Recommendations

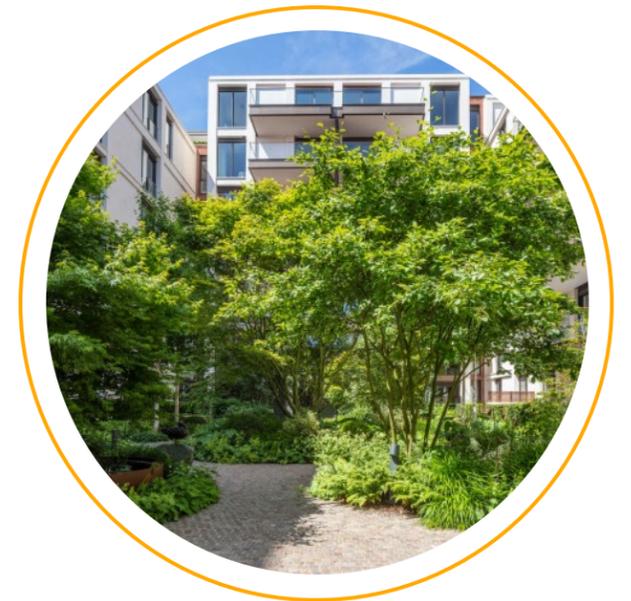
## Mini Parks

Mini parks may be small but they can be very valuable for the people who use them. People need space to interact with nature and get outside, and mini parks can provide that space through playgrounds, walking trails, or picnic shelters. Mini parks are unique because they can be implemented through a community effort. While larger parks usually need to be funded and designed through the Town, mini parks are often created and maintained by neighborhood associations, schools, churches, or apartment complexes. However, mini parks don't have to have formalized agreements or be public property to serve the surrounding community in a meaningful way.

Mini parks are very small and community-specific, so it's likely that the primary users will live or work nearby. The best people to decide where mini parks should go are the people that will be using it the most. Rather than prescribe specific park locations, this plan recommends that **the Town should encourage mini parks in appropriate settings according to the following guidelines.**

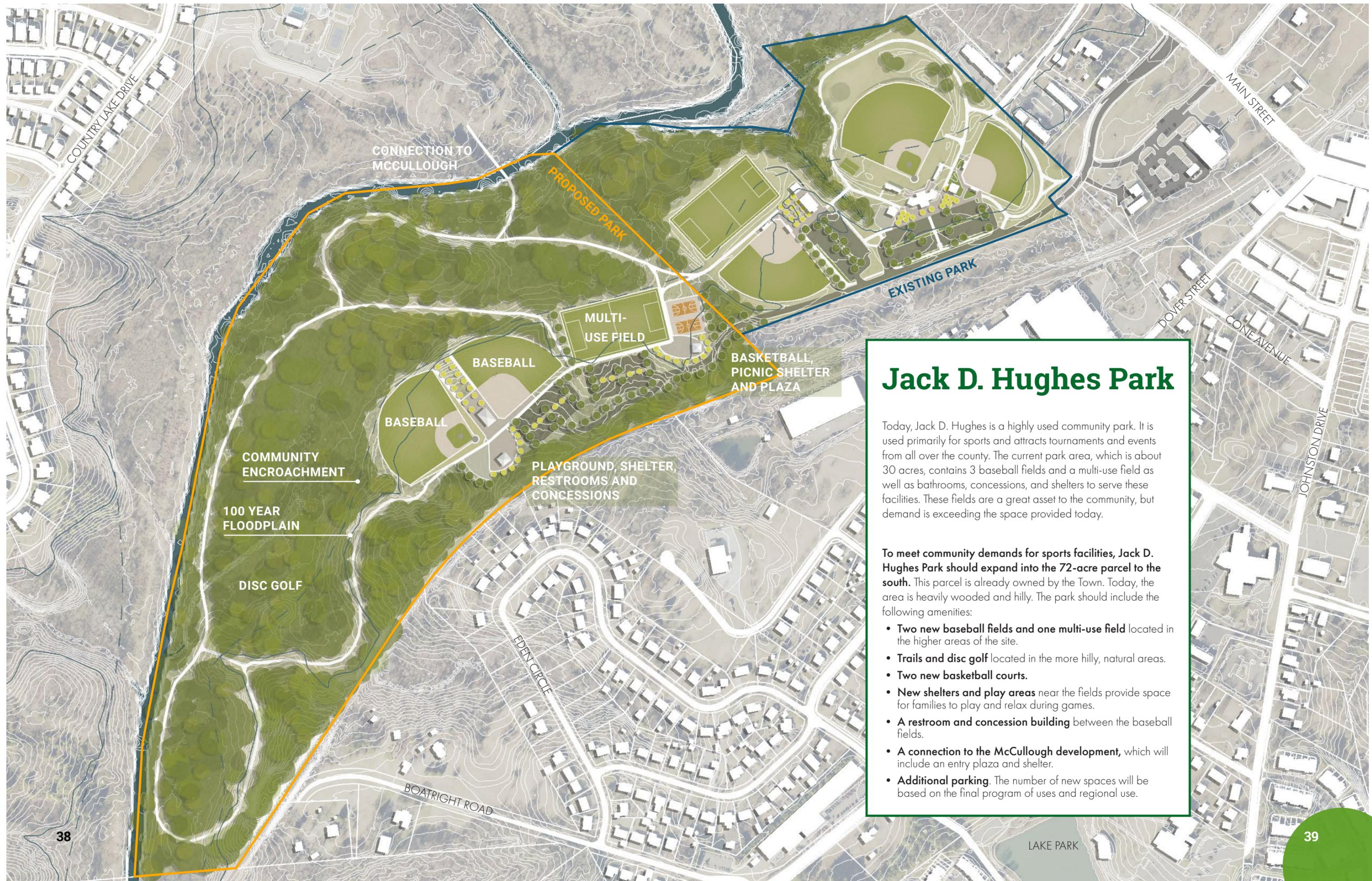
### WHERE SHOULD MINI PARKS GO?

- Mini parks are most successfully created when a community group advocates for it. If there are people who are excited about it and will use it frequently, a mini park will be a great community asset.
- One particularly good opportunity for mini parks is in new apartments or subdivisions. As Pineville's population grows, so will the housing demand, and a mini park associated with an apartment complex can offer a higher quality of living for residents as well as a marketable asset for developers. See page 61 for recommendations on open space requirements in these developments.
- Empty lots in a single-family neighborhood also make good mini park locations.



### WHAT SHOULD MINI PARKS LOOK LIKE?

- Mini parks can be as small as half an acre, provided they include desired activities.
- At a minimum, mini parks should provide seating, some sort of shelter (e.g., a picnic shelter or shade sail), and a place to enjoy nature.
- One or two additional amenities would be ideal for a mini park, if space allows. Appropriate choices for a mini park would be a garden, dog park, playground, or outdoor games. Some may even install small sports facilities like a basketball or volleyball court.
- It is important to cater the park to the needs of a community. For example, an apartment complex mini park could be in the form of a courtyard with grills and a shelter. A senior living facility may have a community garden with lots of seating and raised beds.



# Jack D. Hughes Park

Today, Jack D. Hughes is a highly used community park. It is used primarily for sports and attracts tournaments and events from all over the county. The current park area, which is about 30 acres, contains 3 baseball fields and a multi-use field as well as bathrooms, concessions, and shelters to serve these facilities. These fields are a great asset to the community, but demand is exceeding the space provided today.

To meet community demands for sports facilities, Jack D. Hughes Park should expand into the 72-acre parcel to the south. This parcel is already owned by the Town. Today, the area is heavily wooded and hilly. The park should include the following amenities:

- Two new baseball fields and one multi-use field located in the higher areas of the site.
- Trails and disc golf located in the more hilly, natural areas.
- Two new basketball courts.
- New shelters and play areas near the fields provide space for families to play and relax during games.
- A restroom and concession building between the baseball fields.
- A connection to the McCullough development, which will include an entry plaza and shelter.
- Additional parking. The number of new spaces will be based on the final program of uses and regional use.

## Lake Park

Today, Lake Park is highly amenitized and is the most used park in Pineville. The entire 21-acre parcel is being used today, leaving no room to add new amenities.

To meet community demands for more amenities, Lake Park should expand into the 12.6-acre parcel to the south. This shady parcel borders Little Sugar Creek, providing a great opportunity to develop more passive recreation in Lake Park as well as connect to the planned Little Sugar Creek Greenway extension. It is critical to connect to the greenway to give Pineville residents easy access to a great amenity while highlighting what Pineville has to offer to greenway visitors. The park should include these amenities:

- **A picnic shelter and grills** near the front of the site. The shelter plaza provides space for games such as permanent cornhole boards or four square.
- **Natural play areas** near the picnic shelter such as obstacle courses or creative play structures.
- **A new trail system**, including a connection to the planned Little Sugar Creek Greenway extension and a fitness loop.
- **A trailhead** to celebrate the connection point between the Lake Park trails and the greenway.
- **Educational signage** and teaching space in both the picnic shelter and at the trailhead.
- **Additional parking** near the existing lot.



# Belle Johnston Community Center

The Belle Johnston Community Center houses the Parks and Recreation staff as well as a small gym, two classrooms, and an indoor basketball court. Built in 1988, the building is in need of renovation to accommodate the growth of Pineville, changes in recreation programming and shifts in demographics. Additional administration space is needed for Parks and Recreation staff, while additions to the building should focus on flexible spaces that can be used for revenue generating programs. See the appendix for an existing conditions report prepared by Neighboring Concepts.

**Recommended site improvements** shown on this page include providing an accessible path from the primary entry door to the public way, meeting current accessibility requirements. A paved path is suggested to continue through the parking lot to the picnic shelters. Additionally, a parking lot expansion of 30 spaces is shown. The existing parking lot currently acts as a programming constraint, preventing two functions from taking place at the same time because of a lack of parking.

**The PARC Plan also recommends expanding and renovating parts of Belle Johnston Community Center.** Two options for interior expansions and renovations are provided on the following pages.

BUILDING  
EXPANSION  
AREA

BUILDING  
EXPANSION  
AREA

NEW ADA PATH TO PUBLIC WAY

PRESERVE  
SEATING AREA FOR  
AMPHITHEATER

PARKING LOT  
EXPANSION

## Belle Johnston Community Center Renovation Option 1

**Option 1 focuses on maximizing the allowable building area for a future addition**, without having to add a costly and intrusive fire sprinkler system to the building. The administration offices are relocated to the front of the building, providing daylight to the spaces, and allowing supervision of the primary parking lot. The main reception desk is relocated to provide direct sight lines of the front and rear entry doors, as well as the gymnasium entry. A central multipurpose room/fitness studio is added that could be programmed for spin classes, group fitness, or other uses where A/V is preferred without the use of natural light. The main corridor is extended, providing a secondary entrance to the existing multipurpose room, allowing two uses to occupy the room at the same time. A large multipurpose room with a central divider is recommended at the rear of the existing building, allowing for a variety of programming uses of various sizes to take place. A new rear corridor reaches to the weight room, allowing access without having to pass through the gymnasium. The existing storage room adjacent to the weight room is combined with the weight room, but serves as a designated Cardio area, with views of the lake.

### Budgetary renovation costs for Option 1 are as follows:

Area to be Renovated:	18,380 sf @ \$135 / sf =	\$2,481,300
New Construction:	5,575 sf @ \$220 / sf =	\$1,226,500
Cost of Sitework:	15,000 sf @ \$10 / sf =	\$ 150,000
		<b>\$3,857,800</b>

Assumptions include new HVAC, Lighting and finishes throughout the existing area to be renovated.

**Construction cost information** from four recent renovations of similar sized recreation centers in Mecklenburg County is included below report, providing a guide for budgeting future improvements.

Building	Year Renovated	Area	Total Cost of Renovation	Cost per Square Foot
Marion Diehl Rec. Center Renovation	2019 / 2020	29,950	\$2,424,678.00	\$80.96
Sugaw Creek Rec. Center Renovation*	2019 / 2020	13,773	\$1,631,389.00	\$118.45
2nd Ward Gymnasium Renovation*	2019 / 2020	16,024	\$1,835,066.31	\$114.52
West Charlotte Rec. Center Renovation	2016 / 2017	13,547	\$1,460,870.00	\$107.84
<b>Averages</b>		<b>18323.5</b>	<b>\$1,838,000.83</b>	<b>\$105.44</b>

\*Indicates scope of work includes a small addition, including new exterior walls, roof, etc.

All four projects above were completed in Mecklenburg County, NC utilizing a design, bid, build delivery method.



## Belle Johnston Community Center Renovation Option 2

Option 2 focuses on minimizing impacts to the existing building, with the goal of providing a more cost effective renovation, while still providing additional spaces for added programming. The administration offices remain in their current location, with additional offices being added. The main reception desk remains in its current condition, but is replaced to meet current ADA standards. A small multipurpose room is added that could be programmed for small spin classes, group fitness, or other uses where A/V is preferred without the use of natural light. The main corridor is extended, providing a secondary entrance to the existing multipurpose room, allowing two uses to occupy the room at the same time. A different arrangement for the multipurpose room addition at the rear of the building is shown, allowing for smaller programming uses to take place. A new rear corridor reaches to the weight room, allowing access without having to pass through the gymnasium. The existing storage room adjacent to the weight room is combined with the weight room, but serves as a designated Cardio area, with views of the lake.

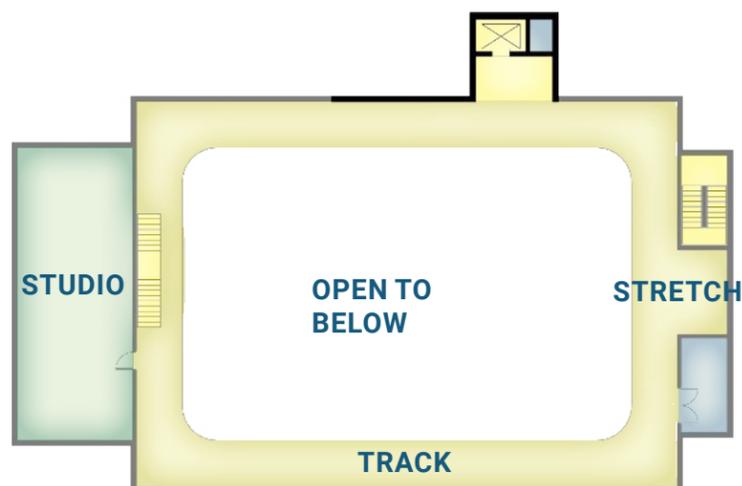
### Budgetary renovation costs for Option 2 are as follows:

Area to be Renovated:	18,380 sf @ \$120 / sf =	\$2,205,600
New Construction:	3,230 sf @ \$220 / sf =	\$ 710,600
Cost of Site work:	15,000 sf @ \$10 / sf =	\$ 150,000
		\$3,066,200

Assumptions include new HVAC, Lighting and finishes throughout the existing area to be renovated.



The suggested improvements at the second floor are the same between both options. A floor can be added to create a studio above the future weight room, and elevator access is provided to the track and studio spaces. A rubber athletic floor is recommended for the track surface, with a designated stretching area.



# Goodsell Park

Neighborhood parks are needed in Pineville, particularly in the neighborhoods east of I-485. This 1.6-acre area provides space for a shady park with amenities requested by the community. The park should contain these amenities:

- **Tennis courts** located in the flattest area of the site.
- **A small shelter and grills** to give users a place to gather in the park. The shelter plaza provides space for games such as permanent cornhole boards or four square.
- **An entry plaza** to formalize the park entrance and provide a sitting area outside the tennis courts.
- **A play lawn** to provide space for passive play.
- **A rain garden** to beautify the central low point of the site.
- **A landscape buffer** preserving existing trees between the commercial and residential uses adjacent to the park.
- **Additional parking** near the park entrance.

PLAY LAWN

RAIN GARDEN

PLAYGROUND

SHELTER AND GRILLS

TENNIS COURTS

PROPOSED PARKING

GOODSELL COURT

# Programming Strategy

Community events and park programming are important to the overall sustained health of a Parks and Recreation system. Programming is a great way to activate these spaces and bring them to life. Events also promote the facilities within the system, creating brand recognition and excitement for parks throughout the community.

## Program Analysis

Pineville has a great events schedule today, providing a mix of regularly scheduled programs like game nights, culture block classes, and concerts as well as special events like the yacht club regatta or Pineville Players performances. As a part of this plan, there are a few recommended programming additions that could help round out the overall schedule.

- **Explore new event locations.** Events can attract people to parks they may not have explored before. When new amenities are added to the system, Pineville should host events that celebrate them. For example, to draw visitors to the Lake Park expansion, Pineville could host a 5K routed along the new paths and onto the new Little Sugar Creek Greenway extension. East Park is smaller, but can still host events like outdoor read-alouds for children or a sustainability walk highlighting the rain garden.
- **Host cultural events.** Festivals celebrating the food and culture of a specific country or ethnic group can be a fun event that fosters community comradery. Pineville can partner with a cultural non-profit to help organize these events and ensure that members from all over the community are included.
- **Expand the event offerings.** Based on the community survey, Pineville residents want to see more events geared toward young adults and seniors. Many working adults would like to see events offered in the evenings so they can attend after their work day.



50 Pineville Farmer's Market

# Wayfinding & Brand Strategy

In the context of a park system, a brand can define everything from the type of programs they provide to the color and fonts on signage. This plan is called the PARC Plan because the system in Pineville today represents parks, art, recreation, and culture. The parks system is strongly associated with Lake Park in particular, which is by far the most used amenity in Pineville. As the system expands in the coming years, it is important to champion the system as a whole.

From an aesthetic standpoint, the brand of the parks today is inconsistent. The parks department does not have its own logo, but uses a tag on the Town logo. Jack D. Hughes has its own graphic logo, while Belle Johnston Community Center has a more traditional sign. These signs look good on their own, but don't form a cohesive aesthetic.

## Establish a Consistent Brand

Pineville should **establish a park system brand** including a logo, color scheme, and font package that can be applied to all park signage. Signs and monuments do not all have to look exactly the same, but should follow a cohesive visual language. Visitors should be able to see a park entry sign or trail wayfinding marker and know that they are using one of Pineville's great amenities.

## Form a Hierarchy

There are several types and sizes of signs that should be established to form a helpful wayfinding network. **Park signs** are an important part of that network, and other landmarks can adopt this sign type to mark the entrance to Main Street or the farmer's market.

**Smaller directional wayfinding signs** are also important. These are typically blade signs that direct people toward a nearby amenity, like a park. They should be visible to pedestrians, bikers, and drivers to keep them heading in the right direction. These will be important in the Jack D. Hughes expansion to direct people to the correct fields within the park, and they can also be used to mark trail routes.

**Accents** such as street light banners, rules and regulations signage, or even event flyers can use the park system brand as well.



Examples of aesthetically varied signs in Pineville Parks



## Action Plan

Many factors need to be considered to achieve a healthy and active parks and recreation system, including staff recruitment, marketing, budget, park maintenance, and partnerships. This section recommends strategies to fulfill the goals set forth in this plan.

# Department Organization

Pineville Parks and Recreation has a total of nine full-time employees, five of which work to maintain facilities and grounds throughout the Town. The group manages the parks, plans events, and coordinates athletics. The existing organizational chart below illustrates the current staff assignments for supervisory staff throughout the agency.

At the time of this plan, the Parks and Recreation Department is organized under the Parks and Recreation Director. There are full-time positions for maintenance, athletic, and event coordinators. Recreation aides work under the Parks and Recreation Director, while the park maintenance supervisor manages a maintenance crew. The Parks and Recreation Department operates out of Belle Johnston Community Center. This organization is working well and no structural changes are needed.

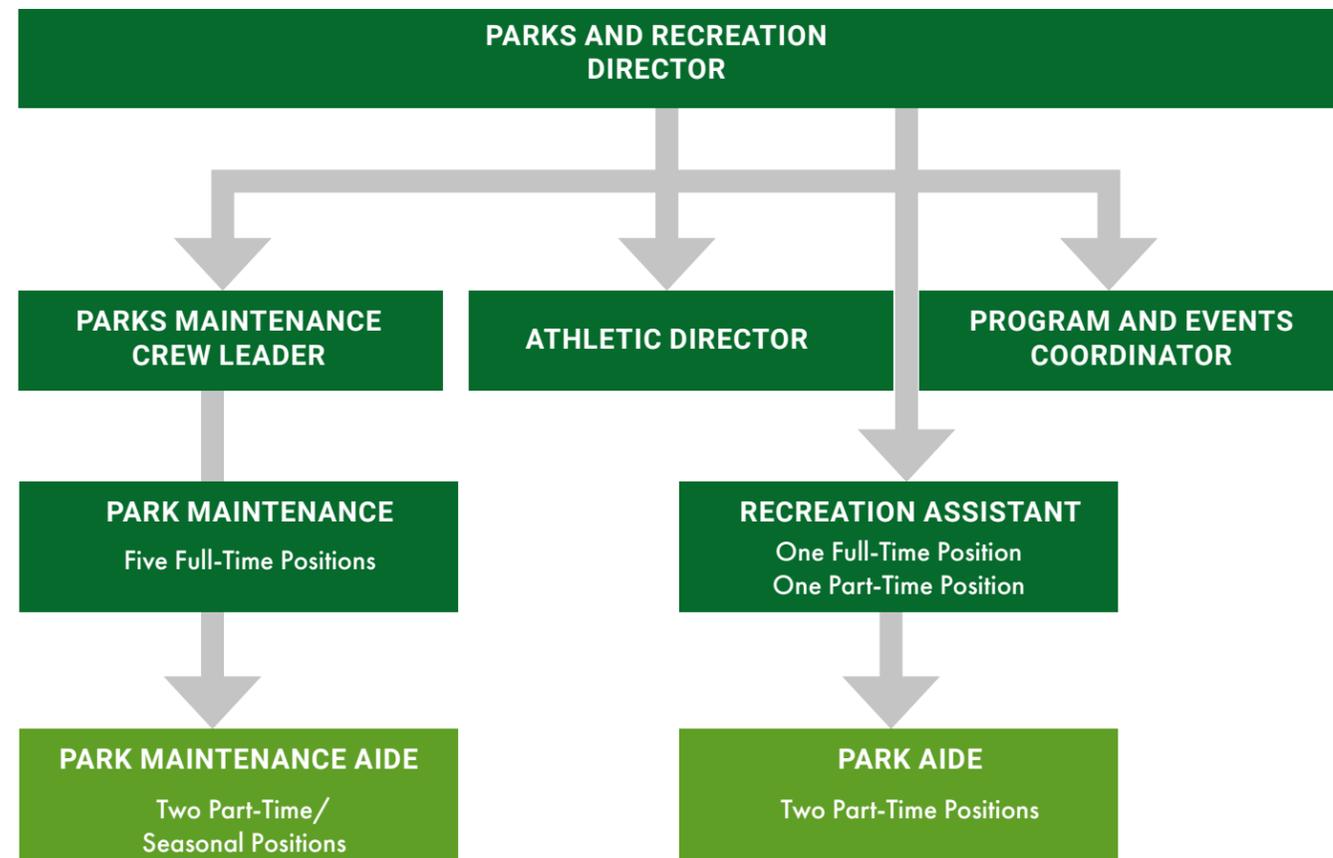
## Staff Needs

### Administration

The administration side of the Parks and Recreation Department does not need additional staff today. As park acreage and amenities increase, so too should athletic coordination and programming. The athletic director and events coordinator should monitor their workload closely and hire new aides or assistants as needed.

### Maintenance

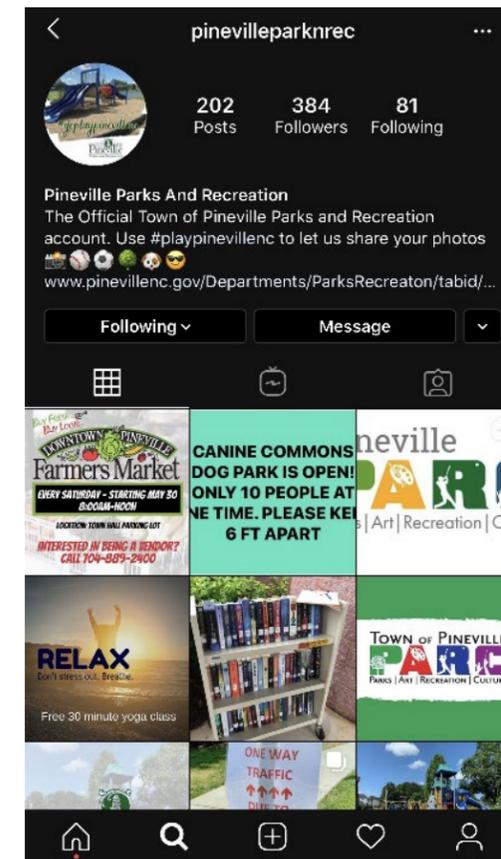
Today, a crew of five full-time and two seasonal positions maintains 52 acres of parks in Pineville, supervised by the crew leader. This means the park acres are staffed at a rate of 10:1, in line with best practice recommendations. To maintain this high standard of care, staff must increase with park acreage. A new full-time position should be added with every 10-15 acres of new park land.



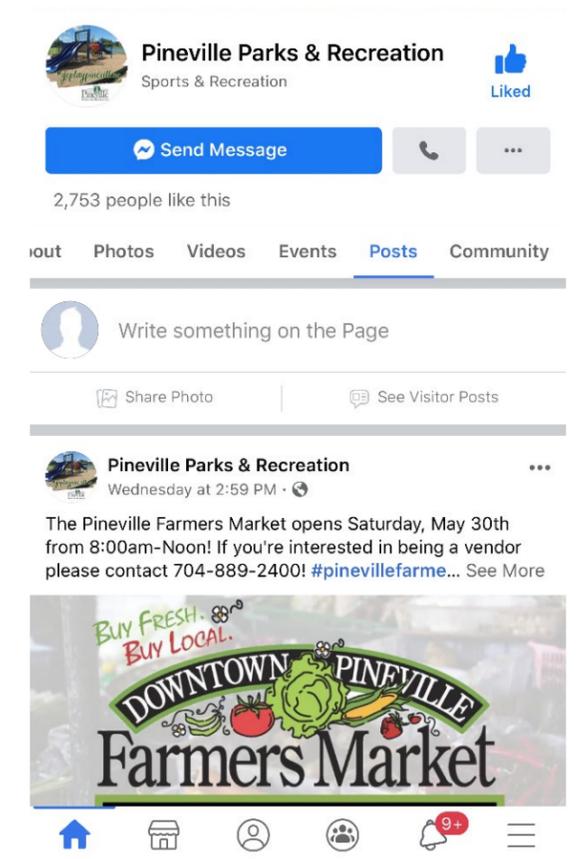
# Marketing and Outreach

As the Parks and Recreation system grows, it will be important for the Town to continue focused efforts on reaching the community in as many ways as possible. The motto of, “if you build it, they will come” only works if you are able to spread the word to let them know it is there. A strong Pineville communications department:

- Strengthens the support for Parks and Recreations facilities, programming, and the community.
- Encourages active participation, social gatherings, events, and interaction.
- Emphasizes the importance of community to make others want to visit and be a part of what makes it successful.
- Highlights the importance of quality of life as well as providing educational opportunities to learn and understand the importance of natural preservation and responsible land stewardship.



Pineville Parks and Rec Instagram (screenshot 5/15/2020)



Pineville Parks and Rec Facebook (screenshot 5/15/2020)

The best way to reach the community is through **events—whether it be social, cultural, or sports-related**. These events should be advertised on social media platforms and on the Town website. Pineville has invested a lot of care and enthusiasm into its park system, and it is important to educate people about all the Town has to offer. It is highly recommended for Town communications staff to continue to be out in the community and participating in events to be the eyes and ears of the Town to understand the best ways to reach them. Holding community events in the parks, attending farmer’s markets, and taking short-sample surveys throughout the year to keep a pulse on the community are good examples of outreach activities the Town should engage in.

Pineville is actively updating community outreach tools and social media platforms (see the images above) and this will need to continue for communication to be successful. **Proper website maintenance including regular event calendar updates and quality, engaging community photo uploads** are important to the success of the website. The goal should not be to simply have a website or social media accounts, but to have an **active and enthusiastic presence** that inspires the community and visitors alike.

# Budget Recommendations

## Current Spending

The Pineville Parks and Recreation Department gets funding from two sources: a parks and recreation budget and a culture and tourism budget. Parks contribute to bringing visitors to Pineville so a large percentage of the overall parks budget (71% in 2020) comes from the culture and tourism fund.

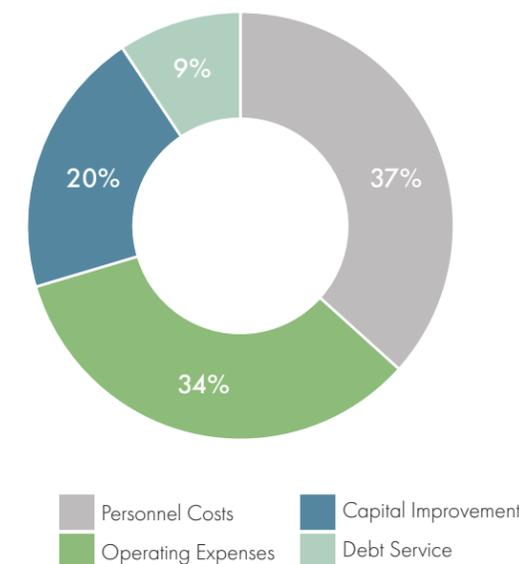
The budget is organized into four categories. Personnel costs includes employee salaries and benefits. Operating expenses includes utilities, insurance, equipment maintenance, supplies, and other day-to-day costs. Capital improvement accounts for one time costs like large equipment or new park design fees.

The Pineville parks department had an approved operating budget of \$1,835,763 for FY 2019. Based upon the current estimated population of 9,690, the Town is spending approximately \$190 per capita on Parks and Recreation services. This budget helps maintain the high standards of Pineville parks and employees today. It also accounts for the many capital improvement projects that have been implemented recently, including the dog park, sprayground, accessibility improvements, gym renovations, and more. This history of proactive planning and budgeting has allowed Pineville to maintain and improve the high-quality park system.

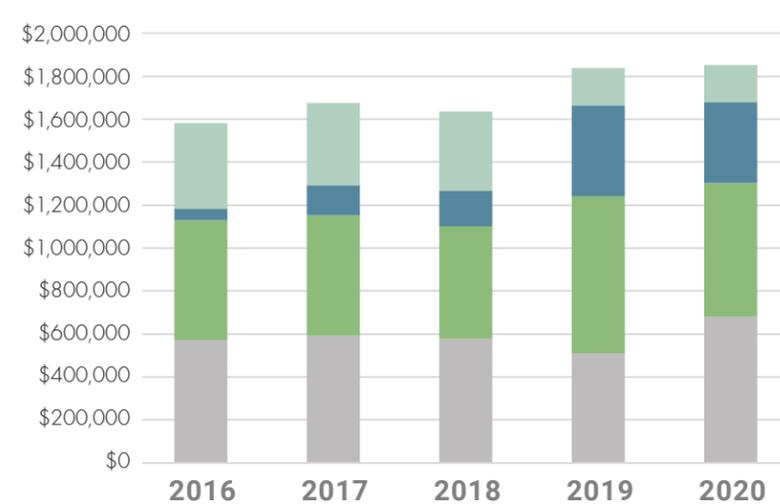
### PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGET

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 (APPROVED)
Personnel Costs	\$570,093	\$591,342	\$576,444	\$508,283	\$678,283
Operating Expenses	\$557,691	\$599,698	\$522,163	\$730,150	\$623,850
Capital Improvement	\$53,587	\$138,114	\$165,874	\$424,500	\$374,500
Debt Service	\$399,354	\$385,035	\$370,717	\$172,830	\$172,830
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,580,725</b>	<b>\$1,714,189</b>	<b>\$1,635,198</b>	<b>\$1,835,763</b>	<b>\$1,849,463</b>

### 2020 BUDGET BY PERCENTAGE



### BUDGET BY YEAR



## Recommendations

The Parks and Recreation budget today is sufficient for providing quality park maintenance and supporting the staff of nine full-time employees. Budget increases will be necessary in the future for several reasons.

- **Staff** will need to increase as new parks are added. Staff costs include on-boarding, training, and salaries for full- and part-time employees.
- **Supplies and maintenance costs** will increase as the Town hires new maintenance personnel and adds new parks and greenways. The numbers in the chart below provide guidance on cost increases as new parks and greenways are added. The numbers include staffing, supply costs, day-to-day maintenance, and regular fixes.
- **Larger, one-time capital costs** need to be considered as well. Things like large equipment purchases, construction of new parks, or major repairs are not included in the numbers in the chart below. As new parks and greenways are implemented, design fees and actual construction costs need to be included in capital outlay. The maintenance team should anticipate and help plan for large equipment replacements as far in advance as possible.

When planning for the future, it's important to understand that **the budget should increase over time**. Many factors impact this increase, including rising population, new park construction, and inflation. The chart below provides guidance for increasing the operating budget based on new facilities. Costs estimates for the projects proposed in this plan are provided in the action plan summary on pages 62-63. The Town must prioritize and plan for implementing these projects by setting aside capital improvement funds and beginning fundraising efforts in advance.

### RECOMMENDED OPERATING BUDGET FIGURES

	Cost Per Acre/Per Mile
Open Space and Undeveloped Parks	\$250
Neighborhood and Mini Parks	\$3,750
Community Parks	\$8,000
Soft-Surface Trails	\$3,250
Paved, Multi-Use Trails	\$6,750

### CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

See pages 62-63 for cost estimates for the projects proposed in this plan.

# Maintenance Recommendations

The maintenance department today consists of four full-time and two seasonal workers who report to the park maintenance crew leader. The crew follows a comprehensive maintenance checklist broken down by month. A maintenance shed at Jack D. Hughes Park houses all equipment. The parks in Pineville today are densely programmed and require heavy maintenance, but this is not the case for all the parks proposed in this plan. As the park system expands, it is important to plan ahead for maintaining additional acreage.

## Plan for Future Parks

The Department currently has a comprehensive maintenance checklist for parks. As new parks are constructed or expanded, a personalized checklist should be added to the maintenance standards so that new parks are maintained to a consistent standard.

Consistent standards does not necessarily mean every facility will be maintained the same exact way. **Creating levels of maintenance and grading the parks accordingly will help prioritize spending and efforts.** The "grade" does not reflect the importance of a specific property, but the level of maintenance it needs due to the play, visitors, and programs that occur. The parks today all require level 1 maintenance because they are heavily programmed and used. The proposed park extensions have acres of natural areas and paths, which do not need to be maintained as strictly as the new sports fields and restroom facilities. The chart below summarizes the grades given to each facility.

### LEVEL 1

Level 1 facilities have high visitation and use. The goal is to keep these facilities clean, safe, and beautiful.

- Lake Park (current area)
- Jack D. Hughes Park (current area)
- The Hut
- East Park
- Library Plaza
- All sports facilities, restrooms, playgrounds, and picnic areas

### LEVEL 2

Level 2 facilities are less used. They should be neat and clean with some tolerance for wear and tear.

- Lake Park expansion (trails)
- Jack D. Hughes Park expansion (trails)
- All undeveloped Town-owned property with street frontage

### LEVEL 3

Level 3 facilities are undeveloped natural areas. They are seldom used by the public except for hiking. These facilities should be safe and free of trash.

- All undeveloped Town-owned property without street frontage

## Staff Organization

Today, the maintenance staff works together as one crew to maintain all the parks. As the system grows, the staff can organize into more specialized crews. For example, the parks crew can maintain the level 1 facilities as they do today, while a separate trails crew can be responsible for maintaining the trails and more natural areas in the proposed Lake Park and Jack D. Hughes expansions. **More staff will need to be hired as park acreage increases**, with one staff member hired per 10-15 acres of new parks as described on page 54.

## Adopt-A-Park Program

Many Pineville citizens value the parks and greenways, and this high regard can be leveraged to supplement the maintenance of parks. One way is to create an "Adopt-A-Park" program. **This park adoption method allows for local civic groups, clubs, and individuals to sponsor a park and perform light maintenance at specified times during the year.** One example would be sports teams that use Jack D. Hughes Park helping to pick up trash or clean the concession building after tournaments.

## Maintenance Building

The maintenance building at Jack D. Hughes Park is too small for the five full-time employees on staff. With additional park acreage, the crew will need more equipment and team members—both of which need space. **Expanding the maintenance areas should be a priority** to prepare for additional park acreage.

Pineville should promote this program on their website and provide a form for groups to apply. Interested parties can coordinate with a parks department team member to determine a plan for maintenance. A parks department team member should help organize and attend a fun kick-off event to supervise the first park clean-up. After the first event, the group can organize at regular intervals to assist with light maintenance like raking, painting, or trash pick-up in their adopted park.



# Partnerships

As the Town grows and the need for quality parks, recreation facilities, and programs continues to increase, the Town must continue to seek opportunities for strategic partnerships. Partnerships will be crucial in the future to advance Pineville's goals for expanded parks, amenities, open space, greenways, and trails. **Partnerships with Mecklenburg County, local schools, community groups, philanthropic organizations, Carolina Thread Trail, private organizations and land owners, and non-profits should be considered.** The Town will need to have an outreach strategy for these groups to better understand those opportunities. Partnership opportunities include:

## Parks and Amenities

Plenty of groups in Pineville could help with the creation of new parks and park amenities. It is critical that the Town partners with **Mecklenburg County** on the Lake Park expansion to work together on the greenway connection. The parks department must also form a collaboration system with the **police department** to program the new mini park in front of the police department building. The Town can form partnerships with **churches and schools** to gain access to existing parks, playgrounds, and sports facilities. In particular, **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools** would be a beneficial partner because any agreements to share amenities could be coordinated across the district instead of with individual schools. An Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) would allow the Town and the partner group to use facilities that are not afforded by that group. For example, if Pineville Elementary has a gymnasium that is not scheduled for use, the Town could have first right of refusal to use the building. Conversely, if the Town has a sports field that is not scheduled for a league, the school system would be able to use the amenity if they choose. **Pineville Community Athletic Association (PCAA)** can also help with scheduling and promoting sports events.

Private partners are important. **Large land owners** in Pineville such as **Atrium Health** may consider sponsoring a park or greenway segment. Developers also can be partnered with to create mini parks on their properties. See page 37 for more detail on how mini parks can be created through partnerships.

## Greenways

It is critical that Pineville partner with Mecklenburg County to advocate for and connect to the Little Sugar Creek Greenway extension. The Town could also partner with **Carolina Thread Trail** and the **Tarheel Trailblazers**, who have advocated for new trails in the past and helped make them a reality. They could help fund raise or share costs for design and construction of future trails and trail connections.

## Conservation and Sustainability

It is the duty of Pineville's Parks and Recreation system to keep parks and trails clean for the people and animals that use them. **Conservation-focused non-profits**, such as **Catawba Riverkeeper**, would be great partners to help maintain the creeks and streams of Pineville through educational events or stream clean-ups.

## Arts and Culture

Pineville currently partners with **ASC's Culture Block Program** to provide concerts and art classes to citizens. The Town should continue using and expanding these offerings by finding local artists to teach and promote classes. Pineville should continue investing in the **Pineville Farmer's Market** and use it as an opportunity to promote local farmers and artisans.

# Codes and Ordinances

Pineville cannot preserve and promote parks on their own. Private citizens and corporations own most of the land in Pineville, but the Town can still exert influence over how these privately owned parcels are developed and cared for through the land development ordinance. Establishing an open space requirement for new developments is the best way to give Pineville leverage to require appropriate mini parks and outdoor spaces for residents.

## Open Space Requirements

Single- and multi-family residential developments are a great place to establish mini parks. It provides necessary space for the residents of the community to exercise and be outdoors, and the developers can use these open spaces to market their development. The Town can encourage this through the zoning ordinance. The ultimate goal of open space requirements is not to burden developers or prescribe strict standards, but to collaborate with developers to provide great open spaces for Pineville residents. A mini parks champion can take on this coordination role by encouraging good design and making developers aware of the advantages of good parks. Exceptions are acceptable if a creative design solution is proposed that still provides quality open space.

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

Requiring open spaces is only valuable to residents if the area is accessible, correctly sized, and programmed with appropriate amenities. Providing guidelines in the code gives developers a clear idea of what they need to propose to get approval. It also gives Pineville negotiating power to establish quality mini parks in town, while allowing for design flexibility in unique sites or circumstances.

- **Size:** Size requirements are a good first step to establishing open space. Size of open space is often required as a percentage of the overall development acreage. The requirements can be different for multi-family developments and single-family developments.
- **Location and accessibility:** The open space area should be centrally located relative to the neighborhood or apartment complex. The area should have easy, direct access to the public street system and be accessible by both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- **Context:** The type, scale, and demographics of a development should be taken into account when designing open space. Where a courtyard garden would work well for a senior living facility, a pool deck with grills and shelters may be appropriate for apartments with young people and families. Renters often expect these amenities in apartments and townhomes, so quality open space can benefit developers and residents.
- **Design:** It is difficult to prescribe design guidelines as sites and programs will vary, but a minimum seating and shade requirements should be implemented. Other design elements like gardens, picnic shelters, grills, small games, or other amenities should be listed as items to consider. A zoning ordinance should not require these additional amenities, but can encourage them through good relationships and direct coordination with designers and developers.

# Action Plan Summary

Below is a summary of the actionable recommendations made in this report. These items have been prioritized based on feasibility, budget, and public support. Associated costs are for budgeting and capital planning purposes only. More accurate costs can be determined when plans have progressed to 30% design.

## SHORT-TERM

Projects in this category should be a top priority for the Town. These projects have already been explored or planned at the time of this plan. Because these projects are already progressing in some way, the Town should aim to begin these projects in the next five years.

### 2020-2025

**Lake Park Expansion.** The parks department is submitting a grant to build the Lake Park expansion. Construction of the trails should begin with the Little Sugar Creek Greenway extension. The department should begin construction documents for this park immediately if the grant is approved. Cost: \$2,800,000.

**Belle Johnston Community Center Expansion.** The Belle Johnston building needs to be expanded to provide appropriate space for staff and programming. Cost: \$3,857,800.

**Library Plaza.** The mini park/plaza should be constructed along with the Library and Town Hall project. This cost does not come from the Parks and Recreation budget.

**Maintenance building.** The maintenance staff needs more room for staff and equipment, especially when new park acreage is added in Pineville. Expanding the maintenance building in Jack D. Hughes Park should be a priority. Cost: \$60,000.

**Wayfinding.** Evaluating the Parks and Recreation Department brand should be a priority so that as new parks are built, the new wayfinding package can be implemented. The Town should hire a consultant to prepare wayfinding design guidelines and implementation drawings. Cost: \$35,000.

**Code updates.** The zoning code should be updated to provide open space requirements and guidelines.

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TOTAL ESTIMATED CAPITAL EXPENDITURES: \$6,752,800.

#### Budget notes:

- The costs in this section are for budgeting and capital planning purposes only. It is recommended that all projects listed be developed to a minimum of 30% design to better understand site constraints and construction costs.
- Budget numbers include a land acquisition cost of \$25,000/acre. Land acquisition costs should be monitored for specific parcels before purchase.
- All park improvements should budget a minimum of 1% additional budget for incorporation of public art.
- Option 1 cost estimates for Belle Johnston Community Center Expansion are used here for budgeting purposes.

## LONG-TERM

Projects in this category should be a priority for the Town. These projects are important to the Town, but planning and design has not yet started. These projects should begin planning and design in the next 1-5 years and be completed by the end of the planning period.

### 2025-2030

**Goodsell Park.** This new neighborhood park should be planned and budgeted for in this planning period. Cost: \$3,500,000.

**Jack D. Hughes Park Expansion.** This area has been under consideration for a park expansion for years, but it will be a big undertaking. The Town should begin planning and budgeting for this park expansion in the planning period. Cost: \$11,000,000.

**West Park Purchase.** Pineville should monitor planned development in the west side of town throughout the planning period. Cost: \$2,500,000.

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TOTAL ESTIMATED CAPITAL EXPENDITURES: \$17,000,000

## ONGOING

Projects in this category should be ongoing efforts. The Town will need to check in on these items every few months to keep the department healthy and active.

**Mini Parks.** Mini Parks should be encouraged by the Town as apartments and subdivisions are developed around Pineville.

**Programming, Marketing, and Outreach.** Events are planned and executed year round, and marketing of the parks should be done with each new event.

**Organization.** Staff should be hired and evaluated regularly as new parks are built. Budget needs will also increase with additional parks.

**Partnerships.** Some partnership opportunities need to be pursued quickly, such as a partnership with Mecklenburg County to plan the Lake Park expansion. Others can be formed and cultivated over time as more groups get involved with Pineville Parks and Recreation.

**Staff.** As parks are added to the system, new staff will need to be hired and trained.

# Pineville



Parks | Art | Recreation | Culture