

## CHAPTER SIX: PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

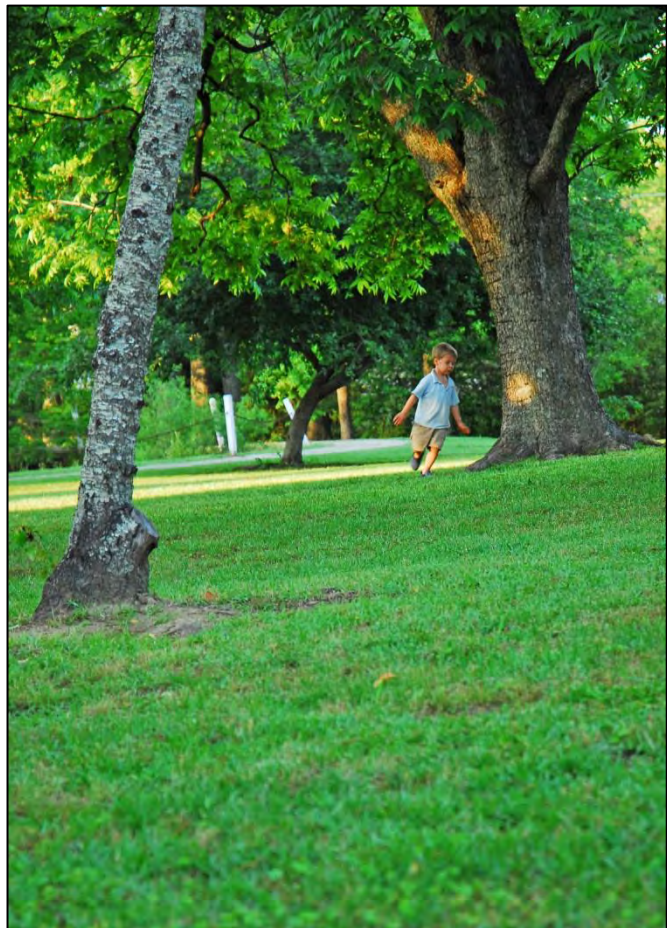
### 6.1 Introduction

The City of Auburn was ~~listed as one of the 40~~ number 17 on Forbes 2012 list of Best Places to Live and one of Forbes 25 Best Places to Retire in 2014. ~~for 2009 by U.S. News and World Report.~~ In selecting the Best Places to Live for 2009, U.S. News looked for ~~affordable communities with strong economies and plenty of recreational opportunities.~~ Auburn features top notch athletic and recreational facilities and programs that can be used almost year round due to the City's mild winters and warm summers. In 2016, the Parks and Recreation Department initiated the development of a Park, Recreation and Culture Master Plan that will be instrumental in providing further updates to Chapter of CompPlan 2030. The Master Plan includes not only park design, but also parks and recreation programming, facilities, cultural arts and the Auburn Public Library.

The City of Auburn Parks and Recreation Department is guided by goals set each year in the areas of Public Information, Beautification, Programming, Athletics, Parks, Cemeteries, and Facilities. The ultimate aim of Parks and Recreation is to provide the Auburn community with quality parks, recreational facilities and recreational activities.

Parks and Recreation play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life of Auburn residents. There are many benefits to a strong park system:

- Public parks and recreation systems are dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for residents in communities around the country through recreation programming, leisure activities, and conservation efforts.
- Parks, recreation activities, and leisure experiences provide opportunities for young people to live, grow, and develop into contributing members of society. They create lifelines and continuous life experience for older members of the community and generate opportunities for people to come together. They also pay dividends to communities by attracting businesses, jobs, and increasing ~~housing~~ property value.
- Parks and recreation services play a vital role in creating active and healthy communities by encouraging exercise through active uses like sports programs or passive uses like hiking and biking trails.



- Community recreation programs at park and recreation facilities provide children with a safe refuge and a place to play, which helps to reduce at-risk behavior such as drug use and gang involvement. A child playing at one of Auburn's many parks
- Parks and recreation facilities reduce fuel costs and commute times by providing a place close to home to relax, exercise, and reduce stress<sup>1</sup>.
- Well-used parks offer many ways for neighbors to get to know each other, and efforts to create, save, or care for parks create further community cohesiveness. This "social capital" can reduce a city's costs for policing, fire protection and criminal justice.

## 6.2 Executive Summary

In 2009-2016, The City of Auburn maintained ~~4,869~~ 1,431 acres of parks, recreational facilities and cemeteries within the city limits. Additionally, and residents have access to an additional 1,587 acres of facilities maintained by the State, Auburn University or private facilities. These facilities range from a large state park to walking and biking trails to state-of-the-art soccer, softball, and tennis facilities. Residents often remark that Auburn's park system is essential to their quality of life and to the identity of the City. Founders of the system understood the role parks play in a healthy, livable, and balanced city and that preserving land for future generations should be a priority. While looking to the future, Auburn examined past trends within the City and in similar cities. As with the overall CompPlan, a variety of tools were used in developing recommendations for parks and recreation, including the Auburn Interactive Growth Model's Parks and Recreation submodel, a comprehensive analysis of existing plans, standards and citizen surveys, as well as staff analysis.

## 6.3 Existing Conditions

In addition to the 1,431 acres of parks, recreational facilities and cemeteries, the ~~The Auburn Parks and Recreation Department manages, 1,869 acres of parks, recreational facilities and cemeteries. An additional 187~~ 326 acres of parkland are managed by Auburn City Schools. The Auburn Water Works Board manages Lake Ogletree and Lake Wilmore. Lake Ogletree is available for fishing to members.

Parks and Recreation consists of three divisions: Administrative, Leisure Services, and Parks and Facilities. Within those three divisions, the Department focuses on the areas of Athletics, Beautification, Cemeteries, Facilities, Parks, Programming, and Public Information.

The Administrative Division is responsible for providing management oversight within the Parks and Recreation Department. The division develops, coordinates, and oversees the implementation of Parks and Recreation policy. The Administrative Division also provides information to the public regarding the services, functions and facilities available through the Parks and Recreation Department.

Leisure Services is responsible for organizing special events, quarterly programs, and athletics, as well as scheduling the use of all public parks, pools and recreational facilities. They offer a variety of programs in arts and crafts, athletics, ceramics, clubs, dance, fitness, martial arts, music, theatre, therapeutics, and pre-school activities.

The Parks and Facilities Division is responsible for maintaining and enhancing Auburn's public parks, cemeteries, and athletic facilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Recognizing the importance of Parks and Recreation facilities...111<sup>th</sup> Congress H.RES 288 March 26, 2009

### 6.3.1 Existing Plans

Despite the success of the Parks and Recreation Department in providing a high level of service, there is currently not a “comprehensive” plan for the future; however, a Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan is currently being developed, such as a parks and recreation master plan. Land is purchased on an as needed basis or as it becomes available. Citizen surveys show a high level of satisfaction with current conditions without much input for future growth. One of the most common citizen comments was to “keep up the good work.” This is acceptable for the short term, but over the course of time this approach is not sustainable. It is important to plan ahead while land best suited for future parks and recreation facilities is still available.

Despite the lack of a “comprehensive” parks plan, there are several existing plans related to Parks and Recreation. These include:

- The Bicycle Master Plan, which is a map of proposed bicycle lanes and trails. For more information on this plan, see Chapter 5: Transportation.
- The Green Space and Greenway Master Plan, which is a comprehensive document to link existing and future parks through bike paths and greenways.
- Parks and Recreation Capital Projects Priority Survey, which creates a hierarchy of importance for future projects.
- Auburn 2020 Plan, which is a strategic plan for the City.
- The 2004 Future Land Use Plan, which was the guide for future land use in Auburn until the adoption of this plan.
- Auburn University Master Plan, which is a comprehensive plan for Auburn University.

While all of these plans have their purpose, they are independent from each other with multiple authors. ~~The Auburn 2020 plan heavily favors bicycle planning in the Parks and Recreation section of the plan.~~ The Auburn 2020 Plan is the most comprehensive of the above plans. It creates a park hierarchy and provides input for future park locations and recommends greenways connecting these parks. The plan does not specifically mention the criteria for selecting each new park location and does not provide any methodology of how the general park locations were created. The Auburn 2020 plan heavily favors bicycle planning in the Parks and Recreation section of the plan; however, the Parks and Recreation portion of the plan is only a small part of the overall plan. The above plans are being used as the foundation for the Park, Recreation and Cultural Master Plan that is currently being drafted.

~~CompPlan 2030 seeks to utilize the existing plans along with public and staff input to generate a set of recommendations for Parks and Recreation for the next 20 years.~~

### 6.3.2 Citizen Survey Results

The following results are from the ~~2014~~ 2016 Citizen Survey. Eighty-four percent (84%) of the residents who had an opinion were satisfied (rating of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) with the maintenance of city parks, 83% were satisfied with the maintenance of walking trails (in 2011 walking trails were listed as an area with the most dissatisfaction), 81% 82% were satisfied with maintenance of cemeteries, 82% were satisfied with the maintenance of outdoor athletic fields, and 80% were satisfied with the outdoor athletic fields. In 2011, Residents were most dissatisfied with walking trails, bike lanes, and swimming pools, but by 2016 as mentioned above walking trails were the second highest ranked area in satisfaction, swimming pools quality and maintenance showed significant increases.

The survey also showed three significant decreases in positive ratings from the 2015 to 2016. The positive rating for quality of senior programs fell from 69% to 60%, special needs/therapeutics programs decreased from 63% to 56%, and ease of registering for programs decreased from 73% to 69%. This led to a recommendation that the City should place the most emphasis on these items over the next two years. Residents would also like to see an increased number of parks and community recreation centers.

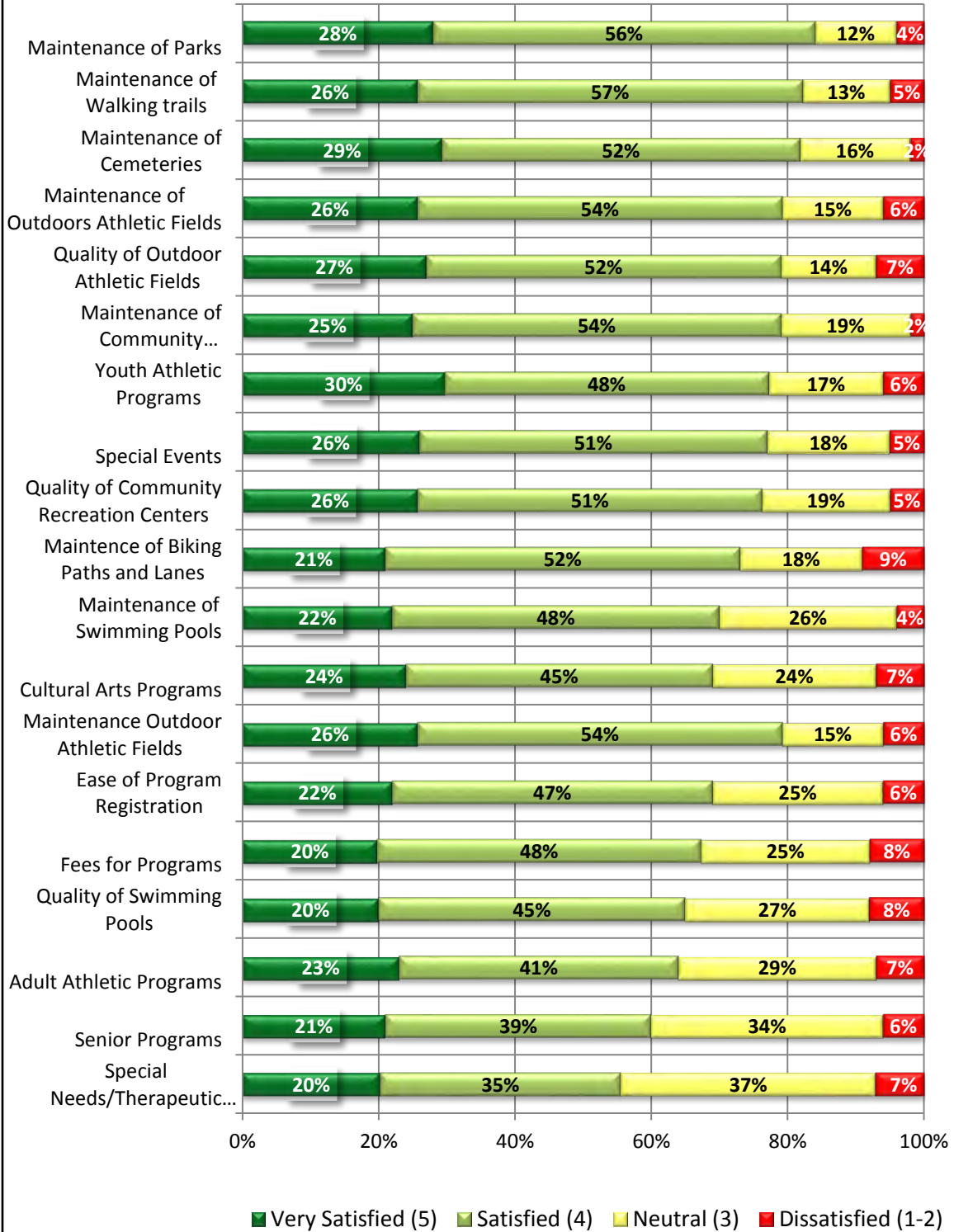
More results of the Citizen survey can be found on the following page.



CityFest April 2017

### 2016 Citizen Satisfaction With Parks and Recreation

By percentage of residents surveyed who rated an item as 1-5 on a 5 point scale  
(Responses Labeled "I don't know" were not counted)



### 6.3.5 Boards and Commissions

The Auburn City Council has formed a variety of boards, commissions and committees to assist the Parks and Recreation Department in the information gathering and deliberative process. It is the duty of the membership of each entity to provide feedback and guidance to City Departments or the City Council on a variety of issues. Boards and commissions related to Parks and Recreation are:

- The Cemeteries Advisory Board works with the Parks and Recreation Department to maintain and plan for future cemeteries as well as recommending policies for cemetery management.
- The Greenspace Advisory Board encourages planned and managed growth as a means of developing an attractive built environment and protecting and conserving the City's natural resources.
- The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board advises the Parks and Recreation Department on future activities and capital projects.
- The Tree Commission oversees the protection of trees on public property, promotes planting new trees and works to educate the public on the economic and aesthetic benefits of trees.



**Auburn Softball Complex**

Other Boards and Commissions not formed by the City Council include:

- The Auburn Beautification Commission, which encourages aesthetic improvements to the City through flowers, gardens and other landscape elements.
- Auburn Community Tennis Association
- Auburn Soccer Association
- Auburn Youth Football
- Auburn Baseball/Softball Association

### 6.3.6 Parks

The City of Auburn maintains twelve park facilities. Map 6.1 is a map of these facilities and others and is provided later in this document:

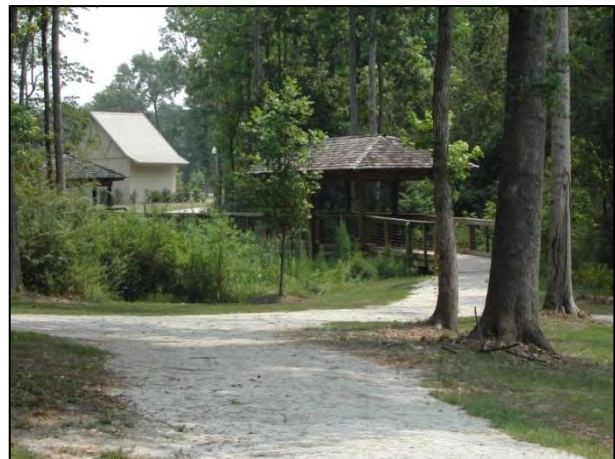
- Kiesel Park is located at 550 Chadwick Ln. At ~~423~~ 124 acres, it is the largest park maintained by the City of Auburn. The dog-friendly park is known for its horticultural beauty, colorful nature trails, pavilion, and the historical Nunn Winston House. The park hosts parties, picnics, family reunions and weddings year round. In late April every year, the park hosts City Fest, a large free outdoor festival. It also has a fenced in dog area.
- Hickory Dickory Park is located at 1399 Hickory Lane. This four (4) acre park features a large wooden structure designed to resemble notable landmarks of Auburn. The play structure features slides, tubes, tractors and monkey bars. The park also features a shelter and plenty of open space.

- Sam Harris Park is located at 850 Foster Street. This ~~three and one half (3.5)~~ thirty (30) acre park has a playground, a pavilion, and a walking trail that is 1/6th of a mile long.
- Martin Luther King Park is located at 190 Byrd Street. This eight (8) acre park has a pavilion, a playground, a basketball goal, a fenced-in field, and a walking trail.
- Felton Little Park is located at 341 E Glenn Avenue. This eight (8) acre park features a playground with swings and other playground equipment, picnic tables, and baseball fields.



Hickory Dickory Park

- Bowden Park is located at 340 Bowden Drive. The facilities at Bowden Park include a playground, an open, grassy area, and a swing set on one and a one-half (1.5) acres.
- Graham McTeer Park is located at 200 Chewacla Drive. This linear park stretches almost two (2) acres and features open space and a walking trail.
- Moores Mill Park is located at 900 E University Drive. It has a large grassy area, a sand volleyball court, and a wooded area with picnic tables on slightly over two (2) acres.
- Salmon Park is slightly over ~~sixteen (16)~~ three (3) acres. It is located next to Town Creek Cemetery on South Gay Street. It features a picnic area with stationary grill, open space and a sitting area.
- Westview Park is located at 657 Westview Drive. This seventeen and one-half (17.5) acre park has two basketball courts and a picnic table in an open area.
- Duck Samford Park features two children's playground facilities and houses nine baseball fields and one softball field with amenities across almost fifty-six (56) acres. It is accessible from East Glenn Ave, East University Drive, and Airport Rd.
- Town Creek Park occupies ~~75.6~~ 40.4 acres and is located at 1150 S. Gay Street adjacent to Town Creek Cemetery which is approximately 23.3 acres. The park features two pavilions and two walking trails. The first is 0.87 miles long. The Duncan Wright Fitness Trail is a ¼ mile trail that circles the pond. The Auburn Trail of Historically Significant Trees is located in Town Creek Park. These include an offspring of the Toomer's Corner live oak and seedlings of the southern longleaf pine (the state tree of Alabama) and the bald cypress. The park also hosts the May Sundown Concert Series every Thursday night in May.



Town Creek Park

### 6.3.7 Walking Trails

- The City maintains ~~seven~~ eight walking trails open to the public:
  - Duck Samford Stadium Track, 3 3/4 laps = 1 mile;
  - Duck Samford Baseball Trail, 1 lap = 1/4 mile;
  - ~~Dumas Drive Trail~~ Duncan Wright Fitness Trail, circle loop twice = 1 mile;
  - Frank Brown Recreation Center, One complete lap = .42 mile
  - Kiesel Park Trail, 1 lap = 2 1/4 mile;
  - Sam Harris Park Trail, 6 laps = 1 mile;
  - Town Creek Trail/Historic Tree Trail, .87 miles
  - Lake Willmore Biking/Walking Trail, 3 miles.



A walking path at Town Creek Park

### 6.3.8 Athletic Programs

The Auburn Parks and Recreation Department offers a wide variety of athletic programs for children and adults on both a year-round and seasonal basis. Several leagues for different age groups are offered, including: baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, flag and tackle football, tennis and cheerleading. These leagues take advantage of Auburn's lighted fields and recreation center gymnasiums. ~~In 2010, over 4,000 adults and children participated in a City-run athletic league.~~ The City of Auburn provides equal opportunity for participation in programs without regard to race, sex, national origin, citizenship, or disability.

### 6.3.9 Athletic Facilities

The Auburn Softball Complex is recognized as one of the premier softball complexes in the nation, winning the ASA Alabama Softball Complex of the Year award in 2008. There are five regulation fields with concession stands, restrooms, meeting rooms, and press boxes. A nearby picnic area and playground equipment help turn softball games into an enjoyable outing for the entire family.

The Auburn Soccer Complex serves as the home for the Auburn Soccer Association. ~~Phase I of the project~~ and includes six full-sized fields with lighting, one unlit practice field and a paved parking lot. A state-of-the-art concessions building provides concessions, office space, meeting space and restroom facilities.

Duck Samford Park and the Bo Cavin Baseball Complex contain 10 lighted baseball fields, seven of which have a press box. The park also features concessions, batting cages and bullpens. The complex was host to the 2002 Dixie Youth Majors State Tournament, and hosted the 50th Dixie Youth World Series in 2005. Felton Little Park features three additional lighted baseball fields, a concession area and batting cages.





Yarbrough Tennis Center

The City of Auburn/Auburn University Yarbrough Tennis Complex includes six indoor courts, 12 outdoor hard courts, and 16 outdoor clay courts, one of them a stadium court. Located off Richland Road, the center was completed in 2007 and offers championship caliber courts with state of the art lighting. Facilities include men's and women's locker rooms and a pro shop. In addition to the Yarbrough Tennis Complex, the Department maintains the Samford Avenue Tennis Center which features six outdoor hard courts. The

Department also maintains Indian Pines Tennis Courts, located at 900 Indian Pines Drive.

During the summer months, the City of Auburn opens two public pools to allow residents to enjoy warm weather and relax. The pools are open from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Certified lifeguards are on duty at all times.

- Drake Pool is located at 653 Spencer Avenue, next to Drake Middle School. It features a main pool and a children's swim area.
- Samford Pool is located behind Auburn Junior High School, which is at 332 East Samford Avenue. There are three separate pool areas at the Samford Pool: the main pool, the deep pool (with two diving boards, one high and one low), and the children's pool.



Samford Pool

### 6.3.10 Recreation Centers and Programs

The Auburn Parks and Recreation Department also maintains three recreation centers:

- The Frank Brown Recreation Center features workout facilities, a game room, gymnasium, ~~kitchen~~ and racquetball courts.
- The Dean Road Recreation Center houses the offices of the administrative staff and the ceramics shop. It also features a gymnasium, meeting rooms and a kitchen. Both recreation centers offer rooms for reunions, private parties, meetings and other events at very reasonable rates.
- The Boykin Community Center ~~houses a gymnasium and several programs, including the Auburn Daycare Center; Joyland Child Development Center; Boys & Girls Club; Adult~~

Daycare Center sponsored by East Alabama Mental Health; Auburn Senior Center sponsored by Lee-Russell Council of Government Area Agency on Aging; Headstart sponsored by Alabama Council on Human Relations campus consists of the original 1951 Boykin Street elementary school (with a classroom addition added in 2001), a 16,500 sq. ft. gymnasium with classroom space built in 1995 and two newly constructed, outdoor basketball courts finished in 2016. In addition to parks and recreation programs, the facility houses several non-profit tenants: Auburn Day Care Center, Auburn Senior Center sponsored by the Lee-Russell Council of Government Area Agency on Aging, Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Lee County-Auburn Chapter, and Joyland Child Development Center. In March 2017, a \$1.8 million renovation project began which will focus on upgrading all of the restrooms in the old school building to meet code and ADA standards, new electrical wiring throughout, a new fire alarm system, security upgrades throughout the building, painting, the addition of dropped ceilings and new lighting, an upgrade to the fitness center and the addition of offices for the Community Development Division of the City's Economic Development department. The project is slated to be completed in November 2017.

- The Hubert and Grace Harris Center is opened in 2012 and is the home for the Parks and Recreation administrative offices as well as all programming for citizens age 50 and older. The facility has a large multipurpose room, meeting/activity room and a warming kitchen.



**Hubert and Grace Harris Center**

The Community Programs Division is responsible for planning quarterly ~~social~~ classes, programs and special events.

Quarterly programs are designed to interest citizens of all ages. The programs range from arts and crafts, dance and ~~aerobics~~ fitness, to ~~after-school and~~ summer day camps for kids. The ceramics ~~shop~~ studio offers several ~~arts and crafts~~ classes, including pottery and stoneware handbuilding and throwing techniques, as well as independent studio hours. Citizens can take part in one of many special events throughout the year, including Daddy-Daughter Date Night, Bike Bash, The Fishing Rodeo, the Easter Egg Hunt, Auburn City Fest, ~~Earth Week, Bike to School/Work Competition, the Annual Memorial Day Breakfast, July 4 Independence Day Celebration, Spring and Fall Sundown Concert series, Annual Veterans Day Ceremony, Bike Bash, Downtown Trick or Treat, and the Christmas Parade~~ annual Holiday Art Sale.

The Program Division also sponsors the Young At Heart Club for senior citizens. This group sponsors various dinners, speakers, dances, and trips. Monthly activities such as creative dance, aerobics, games and bingo, cheerleading and more are planned each month. The Therapeutics program involved with the Alabama Special Olympics and offers practices and competitions in bowling, golf, gymnastics and track and field, as well as a summer camp.

The Community Programs Division also sponsors programs and events for members of the community age 50 and older. Activities include bingo, bi-monthly day trips, lunch outings, tours of local industries, volunteer opportunities, crafts, card games, and speakers. Monthly events include

dances, mock auctions, trivia nights, holiday parties and an annual health fair. Contracted instructors offer various 50+ specific classes including Zumba Gold, yoga, tai chi, functional fitness, piano lessons, and technology courses.

The Therapeutics program is also housed within the Community Programs division and offers classes and events for citizens who have intellectual and physical disabilities. Programs include: bingo, fitness, dances, an annual 7-week summer camp and partnerships with the Auburn University Best Buddies Chapter. In addition, the Department supports the Lee County Special Olympics program by offering practices and hosting county and regional competitions. Athletes can participate in basketball, bowling, flag football, golf, power lifting, softball, swimming, track and field, and volleyball.

### 6.3.11 Golf Facilities

In 2005, the Auburn-Opelika metro area was ranked the “#1 Area in America to Golf” by *Golf Digest*. The City of Auburn features three public golf courses and three private courses within the City limits and its immediate vicinity.

- Auburn Links at Mill Creek, established in 1992, is an 18-hole public golf course with rolling fairways and large Bermuda grass greens along Parkerson’s Mill Creek. *Golf Digest* presented Auburn Links with a 3 1/2 star rating and *Links Magazine* once ranked the course third best among public courses in the Southeast.
- The Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail at Grand National is a public 54-hole golf complex designed by Robert Trent Jones in Opelika. It includes two 18-hole courses, an 18-hole par three course, clubhouse, and practice facilities. Grand National has been the site for the Barbasol Championship since 2015 and was the host-site for the 1997 Nike Tour Championship, 1998 LPGA Tournament of Champions, and the 2000 NCAA Men’s Div. I Golf Championship.
- Indian Pines Golf Course is an 18-hole municipal course owned by the Cities of Auburn and Opelika. In 1999, the course was redesigned, and a new clubhouse was added in 2006.



Indian Pines Golf Course (Bing)

- Auburn University Club at Yarbrough Farms is a private golf course. It is home to the Auburn University golf teams. The club features an 18-hole golf course and excellent practice facilities. The AU Club has a 12,000 square foot clubhouse with a restaurant, bar, pro-shop and locker rooms. Swimming and tennis facilities are available to AUC members.
- Moore’s Mill Golf Club, a private golf club with an 18- hole golf course, includes a club house with restaurant, lounge, bar, private dining area, locker rooms, golf shop, club storage, golf learning center, and meeting space with high-tech audio-visual equipment. Other club amenities include an outdoor pavilion, two swimming pools, a fitness center, and a soft-surface tennis facility.
- Saugahatchee Country Club is a private club with swimming, tennis, fitness and dining facilities. The 18-hole, par-72 golf course has been ranked one of the top five in the State by *Golf Digest*.

### 6.3.12 Cemeteries

The Auburn Parks and Recreation Department oversees and maintains four municipal cemeteries and one private cemetery, encompassing 67 acres.

- Memorial Park is a seventeen (17) acre cemetery located at 1000 E. Samford Avenue.
- Pine Hill is a six (6) acre cemetery, located at 303 Armstrong Street. Pine Hill was established in 1837 and is the oldest cemetery in Auburn. This cemetery features a walking tour from a brochure picked up at the main entrance.
- Town Creek Cemetery features ~~twenty-six (26)~~ twenty-three (23) acres located on South Gay Street. It is the City’s newest cemetery, opened in 2006. It is a carefully landscaped and irrigated cemetery designed for perpetual maintenance. The cemetery adjoins Town Creek Park which is dedicated to passive uses.
- Westview is a ~~20~~ seventeen (17) acre cemetery located at 700 Westview Drive.
- Baptist Hill is a four acre cemetery located at 307 South Dean Road. The cemetery contains over 500 marked graves and many others are unmarked. The oldest grave is dated 1879. The City does not own this property, but started maintaining the grounds in the 1980s due to citizen concern that the cemetery was unkempt.



Town Creek Cemetery

### 6.3.13 Biking

The City of Auburn has ~~34~~ approximately 43 miles of bike facilities. These paths range from bike lanes on the sides of roads to off-road asphalt and concrete or asphalt paths. The Auburn Bicycle Master plan calls for an additional 117.5 miles of bike paths, located along most of Auburn’s major roads.

The City ~~recently~~ completed a ~~new bike trail~~. The the Lake Wilmore Trail, is an off-road mountain bike course located by Lake Wilmore and Ogletree Elementary school in March 2011. ~~The project~~

was completed in March of 2011. Two existing trails were also dedicated: the Roberta Jackel Bike Trail was dedicated ~~in~~ and opened in April 2011, while the Joanna Hoyt Bike Trail was dedicated in June 2011. A more detailed inventory of bike trails and plans can be found in Chapter Five: Transportation.

### **6.3.14 Greenways**

The 2007 Greenway Master Plan proposed five new greenways throughout the City. There are currently two completed greenways with plans to start construction on a third in the near future. The Charlotte and Curtis Ward Path on Shell Toomer Parkway and the Town Creek Greenway from East University Drive to Wright’s Mill Road are both complete. The City has acquired ~~some~~ right-of-way for the Saugahatchee Creek Greenway. The first phase will consist of 1.5 miles and will have put ins and take outs for watercraft, plus a small park located at the Donahue Road stream crossing and it is anticipated that construction will be completed in 2018. There is no timetable currently for the Lake Ogletree Greenway, the Lake Wilmore Greenway, or the Parkerson Mill Creek Greenway.

### **6.3.15 Beautification**

The Beautification and Urban Forestry crew is primarily responsible for landscaping and beautification on City property. The crew maintains over 40 beautification areas including medians, landscape areas in the parks and cemeteries, the Nunn Winston House gardens at Kiesel Park, the Welcome to Auburn signs and other sites.

In addition, the Auburn Beautification Council, a non-profit group, assists in beautification projects with funding and volunteer work on projects such as the downtown baskets and the Rouse/Corley Garden at Kiesel Park as well as with special projects that come up from time to time. The Council is also in charge of presenting two awards. The first award is the Auburn Beautification Council Award. This award is presented once a year, “to recognize a business, an organization or a state, county, or federal agency which has contributed significantly to the beautification of the City of Auburn or its surrounding areas.” This is the highest award bestowed by the Auburn Beautification Council. The second award is the Loveliest Village Award, which rewards revitalizing a home, business, industrial site or other entity or for landscaping excellence that serves as an inspiration to the community.

### **6.3.16 Non-City Managed Facilities**

When developing an inventory of recreation facilities, it is important to inventory facilities that are not owned or managed by the City as well. Many communities have a private pool or park for the sole use of residents living there. Existing public and private facilities assist in determining appropriate locations for new public recreation areas.

In addition to these facilities, there are other areas of recreational interest that are not managed by the City of Auburn. These include:

- **Chewacla State Park:** Chewacla State Park has 548 scenic acres located just south of I-85. Tranquil park facilities include a 26-acre lake, swimming area, playgrounds, hiking trails, a modern campground and picnic areas with tables, grills and shelters. Newly renovated cabins are available for daily rental year round.
- **Lake Ogletree :** This 300 acre lake is located on a 500+ acre parcel located in the southeast part of Auburn and is owned by the Auburn Waterworks Board. The lake serves as the principal source of drinking water for the City. Recreational rights are currently leased to a private outdoors club.

- **Louise Kreher Forest Ecology Preserve:** The Forest Ecology Preserve is a nature center established as an outreach program of the Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. It is supported principally through private gifts and the efforts of many volunteers. Besides providing 110 acres with miles of beautiful wooded hiking trails and other special features, it also provides regularly scheduled programs presented by professionals in their field.
- **Donald E. Davis Arboretum, Auburn University:** The Davis Arboretum is an Auburn University facility dedicated to the display of native woody plants of the Southeastern United States. In addition to displaying native plants, its purpose is to promote ecological education through the study and observation of plants and their natural habitats.

## 6.4. Cultural Programs

### 6.4.1 City of Auburn

The Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center was constructed in 1999 to better serve the artistic needs of the Auburn area and provide residents and visitors with access to an outstanding, active schedule of exhibitions, musical concerts, lectures, art classes and special events for children and adults throughout the year. The Community Arts Center contains an art gallery, two studio/classrooms, a children's gallery, a conference room, and a performance room. The arts center works closely with the Auburn Arts Association and other local artists to make sure the community is receiving top-notch art education and leisure activities.



Jan Dempsey Community Art Center

~~The Dean Road Ceramics Studio at the Dean Road Recreation Center is a newly renovated space with many artistic and educational opportunities offered to residents of the Auburn-Opelika area. was renovated in 2007 and added more pottery wheels and independent studio opportunities for patrons. In the summer of 2013, additional classroom space was dedicated to the studio allowing it to expand its class offerings. The studio offers inventive classes that are grounded in art, and therefore art education, offering creativity, self-expression, communication, and higher order thinking. Each class encompasses a unique and educational learning opportunity for students with a focus on traditional and contemporary ceramic arts. The Ceramics Sstudio is equipped with nine professional pottery throwing wheels, a stainless steel extruder, a slab roller, multiple glazes, commercial-grade firing kilns, a pug mill, and a RAKU kiln and a large selection of hand-mixed glazes. Its studio space serves the artistic needs of the community, providing residents with the creativity, inspiration, and encouragement to create ceramic works.~~

In 2010, Auburn High School opened the Auburn Performing Arts Center, Julie and Hal Moore Center for Excellence. The \$10 million addition has new band and chorus rooms with a renovated auditorium. The 950-seat auditorium can accommodate both theatre and band events and includes an orchestra pit. For larger theatre productions, the pit can be covered to fit 75 more seats. The auditorium is used by all of Auburn's public schools for performances.

**6.4.2 Auburn University**

The Telfair Peet Theater, located on the Auburn University campus, has presentations of plays and musicals year-round. The Telfair Peet Theatre offers performances from classical to modern productions, including five productions September-May, summer dinner theatres, and the annual autumn “haunting of the theatre.” The University broke ground for a new performing arts center in April 2017. The building will be located at the southwest intersection of South College Street and Woodfield Avenue across from the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art and will have seating for 1,200.

The Auburn Community Orchestra evolved from the Auburn University Orchestra, which ceased operations in 1997. Auburn University Orchestra members felt the cultural atmosphere of the community would be diminished without regular orchestral concerts. Therefore, they formed the Community Orchestra to ensure the survival of quality orchestral music in the community and the surrounding area. The Auburn Community Orchestra is dedicated to its mission to present orchestral concerts to the citizens of Auburn, Opelika, and East Alabama, and presents a fall concert each year, often at Kiesel Park.

The Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art was opened to the public by Auburn University in 2003. The 40,000 square foot art museum is located on South College Street, one of the City’s major gateways. The museum includes seven exhibition galleries, a museum shop, a café, auditorium, a terrace overlooking a lake, and 15 acres of botanical gardens displaying a large-scale sculpture, and a landscape including walking paths, benches, and water features.



**Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art (Bing)**

**6.4.3 Opelika**

The East Alabama Arts Center is located in Opelika, which is contiguous to Auburn. The East Alabama Arts Center hosts national and international performing arts events including operas,

musicians, playwrights and other entertainers from late fall to spring of each year. Past performances have featured: *Gypsy*, *The Producers*, *An Evening with Garrison Keillor*, the world renowned African Children’s Choir, the San Francisco and the New York City Opera Companies, Houston's Alley Theater, and the Alabama Symphony Orchestra with Marvin Hamlisch.

### 6.5 Park Standards

The City of Auburn’s park standards are based on the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) standards to assess the need for park and recreation facilities. Many communities have adopted standards based on the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) guidelines. The NRPA recommends a total of ~~6.25 to 10.5~~ 9.2 acres of ~~open space~~ parkland per 1,000 people or 584 acres. The City currently manages approximately 775 acres of what would be considered parkland (See Map 6.1 and Table 6.1). It also suggests a classification system for parks. These range from mini-parks to regional and national parks. In addition to NRPA criteria, Park and Recreation standards should be based on the following:

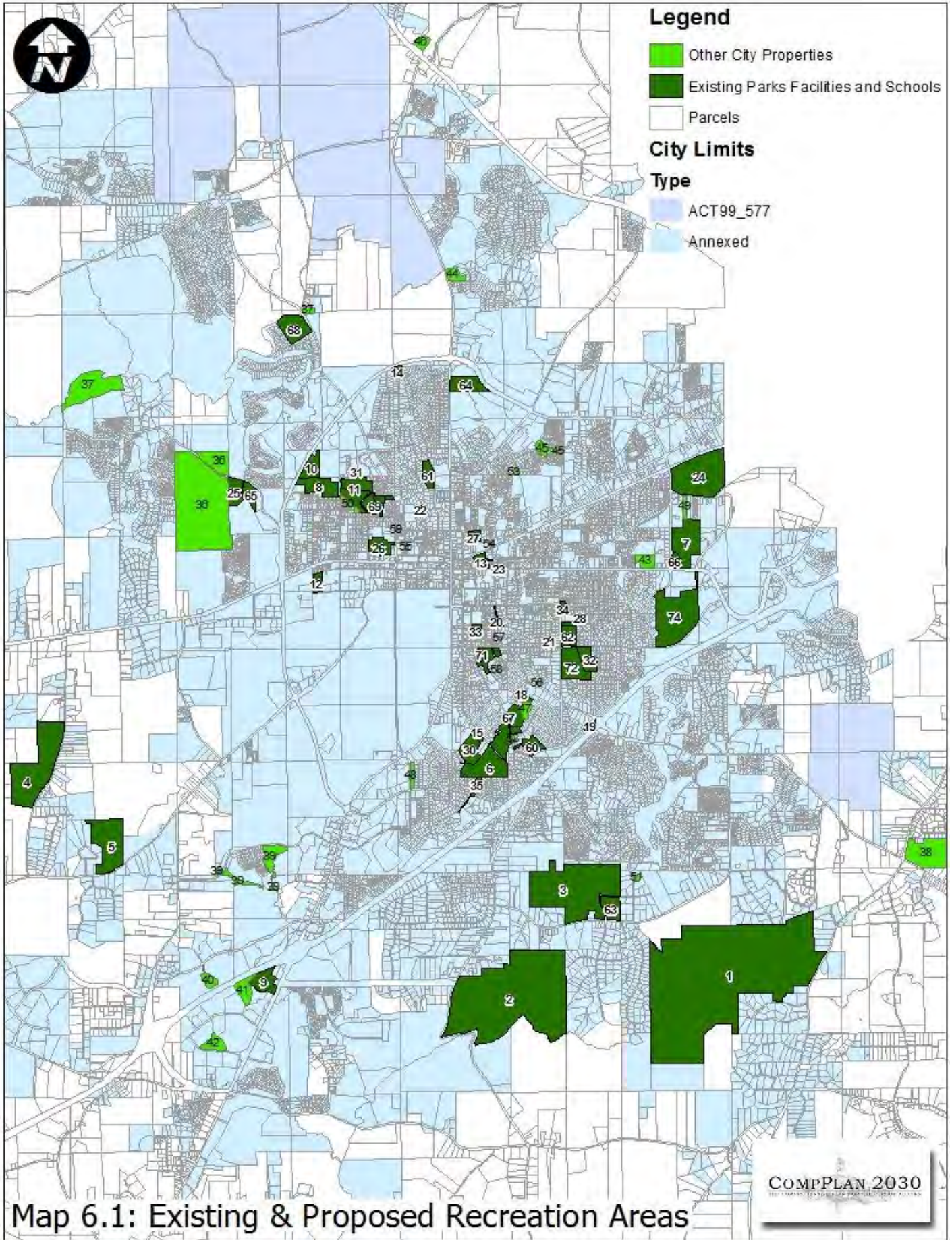
- **Relevance.** They should reflect the needs and lifestyles of today's residents.
- **People Orientation.** They should reflect the unique needs and preferences of people in the area being served.
- **Performance Standards.** They should provide a basis for measuring achievement of community objectives. They should measure the quality of recreation service rather than simply the quantity.
- **Feasibility.** They should be attainable within a reasonable timeframe and with available funding sources.
- **Practicality.** They should be simple to understand and apply. They should be based on sound planning principles, information and a credible development process. They should also be flexible enough to handle unanticipated situations and rapidly changing needs.

The following table shows the adopted classification and standards adopted for the City of Auburn Parks and Recreation Department. It is important to note that these park sizes are recommendations: actual park size will vary depending on land availability and other factors.

**Figure 6.2**

Park Type	Acres/1000 Population		Minimum Size		Service Area Radius
	NRPA Standards	Adopted Standards for City of Auburn	NRPA Standards	Adopted Standards for City of Auburn	
<b>Mini Park</b>	0.25-0.50	0.25-0.50	1 Acre or Less	1 Acre or Less	<0.25 mile / 5 minute walk
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	1.0-2.0	1.0-2.0	15 Acres	>1 and Less than or equal to 15 Acres	0.5 mile /12 minute walk
<b>Community Park</b>	5.0-8.0	5.0-8.0	25 Acres	>15 and Less than or equal to 25 Acres	1-2 miles / 5 minute drive
<b>Regional Park</b>	Variable	Variable	Variable	>25 Acres	30 miles / 1 hour drive





**Table 6.1 Existing Parks, Schools, Cemeteries, and Other City Owned Open Areas**

ID	Type	Name	Acres	ID	Type	Name	Acres
<b>Current Park Facilities</b>							
1	Regional Park	Lake Ogletree (Water Board Property)	831.89	20	Neighborhood Park	Graham McTeer Park	1.79
2	Regional Park	Chewacla State Park (State of Alabama)	547.52	21	Neighborhood Park	Bowden Park	1.43
3	Regional Park	Lake Wilmore	208.38	22	Mini Park	Cary Street Park	0.72
4	Community Park	Kiesel Park	124.16	23	Mini Park	Veteran's Memorial Park	0.27
5	Community Park	Auburn Soccer Complex	74.27	24	Recreational Facility	Indian Pines Golf Course	102.40
6	Community Park	Town Creek Park	67.88	25	Recreational Facility	Yarbrough Tennis Courts	17.50
7	Community Park	Duck Samford Park	54.44	26	Recreational Facility	Boykin Community Center	10.64
8	Community Park	Sam Harris Park	30.14	27	Recreational Facility	Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center	7.48
9	Community Park	Auburn Softball Complex	23.17			Frank Brown Recreation Center	
10	Community Park	Shug Jordan Fields	19.81			Hubert and Grace Harris Center	
11	Community Park	West View Park	18.12	28	Recreational Facility	Dean Road Recreation Center	3.16
12	Neighborhood Park	Martin Luther King Park	8.75	29	Recreational Facility	Samford Pool	1.53
13	Neighborhood Park	Felton Little Park	8.29	30	Cemetery	Town Creek Cemetery	23.30
14	Neighborhood Park	Hickory Dickory Park	3.66	31	Cemetery	West View Cemetery	17.30
15	Neighborhood Park	Salmon Park	3.27	32	Cemetery	Memorial Park Cemetery	16.90
16	Neighborhood Park	Duncan Wright Trails	2.71	33	Cemetery	Pine Hill Cemetery	6.40
17	Neighborhood Park	Margie Piper Bailey Park	2.65	34	Cemetery	Baptist Hill Cemetery	3.54
18	Neighborhood Park	Boy Scout Hut	2.33	35	Walking Trail	Town Creek /Windsor Forest Walking Trail	7.78
19	Neighborhood Park	Moore's Mill Park	2.14				
					<b>Total Park Acres:</b>		<b>2255.7</b>
<b>Future Parks, Open Space and Other City Property:</b>							
36	Future School/Park	Richland Road Property	274.17	48	Other City Property	S Donahue/Pace Property	5.01
37	Open Space	Saugahatchee Greenway/Blueway	63.63	49	Other City Property	Saugahatchee Road Property	4.82
38	Future Park	Fraleigh Property	61.84	50	Other City Property	Northwest Village Openspace	4.41
39	Open Space	Long Leaf Properties	33.77	51	Other City Property	Windway Property	2.75
40	Open Space	Auburn Tech. Park Lake North	16.30	52	Other City Property	Lot on Janet Drive	1.97
41	Open Space	Auburn Tech. Park Lake	16.25	53	Other City Property	Tacoma Drive Lot	1.45
42	Open Space	Auburn Tech. Park Lake South	14.28	54	Other City Property	Lot on Ross St. & Opelika Rd.	0.77
43	Future Park	Dinius Property	11.88	55	Other City Property	White Street Lots	0.76
44	Open Space	Asheton Park	11.86	56	Future Park	Open Lot on Forestdale Drive	0.95
45	Other City Property	Dekalb Street Lots	9.46	57	Other City Property	Pine Dale Circle	0.57
46	Future Park	Lot on Hwy 280 & N College St.	8.61	58	Other City Property	Dumas and Sherwood Island	0.15
47	Future Park	Wright Mill Road/Town Creek Property	7.73	59	Other City Property	N Donahue and Drake Avenue Property	0.11
					<b>Total Acres:</b>		<b>553.5</b>
<b>School Facilities</b>							
60	School Facility	Auburn Early Education Center	14.38	68	School Facility	Yarbrough Elementary School	31.91
61	School Facility	Cary Woods Elementary School	12.99	69	School Facility	JF Drake Middle School (6th grade - Fall 2017)	20.53
62	School Facility	Dean Road Elementary School	15.10	70	Recreation Facility	Drake Pool	
63	School Facility	Ogletree Elementary School	19.60	70	School Facility	Auburn Jr. High School (7th grade - Fall 2017)	12.21
64	School Facility	Pick Elementary School	24.89	71	School Facility	Auburn High School (Jr. High - Fall 2017)	35.73
65	School Facility	Richland School	13.27	72	Recreation Facility	Samford Avenue Tennis Center	2.12
66	School Facility	Duck Samford Stadium	5.34	73	School Facility	New High School (Fall 2017)	103.18
67	School Facility	Wright's Mill Elementary School	13.35	74			
					<b>Total School Acres</b>		<b>324.60</b>

## 6.6 Analysis of Existing Conditions

According to the 2014 2016 Citizen Survey completed by the ETC Institute, the vast majority of Auburn citizens are satisfied with the existing level of service provided by the Parks and Recreation Department. As the City's population and land area grow over time, however, additional and expanded parks and recreation facilities will be needed to maintain a quality park system. Current facilities are predominantly within the Shug-Jordan Parkway/East University Drive loop. The Level of Service Standards adopted by the City of Auburn found in Section 6.5.1 show a population increase of 1,000 should be accompanied by 6 2-10 new acres of park land to continue the existing level of service.

### 6.6.1 Create a Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

The ~~2010~~ 2015 Census population estimate shows that Auburn is one of the fastest growing cities in Alabama. The largest population gains were outside of the Shug-Jordan Parkway/East University Drive loop. These areas are currently underserved by the existing park system. While these areas are growing, it is important to look at the overall growth of the City and population projections to adequately plan for the future. There are many ingredients involved for an effective master plan, including existing resource inventory, existing plans, staff input and stakeholder input. One of the outcomes of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan will be to determine locations for new parks to meet the growing population.

#### 6.6.1.1 Auburn Interactive Growth Model

While the City has plans for three future parks outside of the loop, in the future there will be a demand for additional parks, especially in the northern parts of the City. The locations of future park facilities will be chosen in part based on population trends with help from the Auburn Interactive Growth Model (AIGM) and citizen input. Specific needs and desires for the future include a downtown public space, more facilities on the north side of Auburn and a shift in programs to accommodate the increase in children and senior citizens.

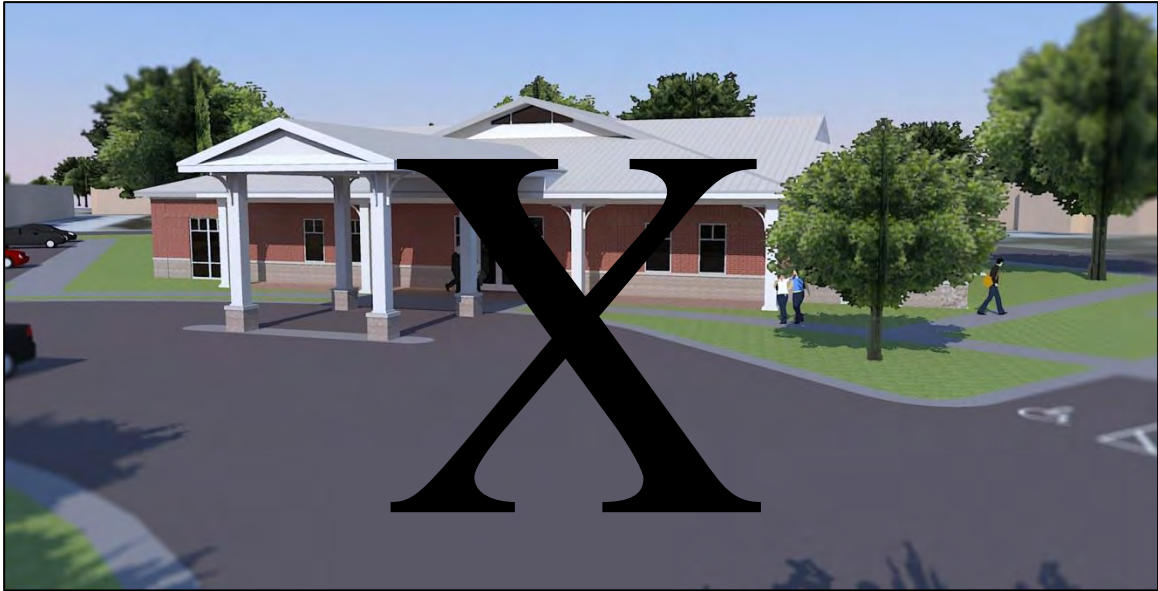
Since the AIGM is updated annually, the Parks submodel will be updated annually to assure accurate general locations where new facilities may be needed. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Greenspace Advisory board can then narrow down the best specific location for a new facility based on the AIGM recommendation and create a map of future facilities and when they are expected to be needed.

#### 6.6.1.2 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

The City of Auburn does not currently have a macro-level Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan process that is under way will address ~~There are~~ site specific master plans ~~in place~~ for several future parks and facilities, as well as other plans that guide the Department as discussed in section 6.3.1. ~~These~~ The current master plans can be found in the Appendix.

- *Fralely Property: Moore's Mill and Society Hill Rd* – This 62 acre parcel is planned to be a park in the future. There is currently no master plan for this property.
- ~~• *Lot on East University Drive and Stoker St* – This two acre parcel is planned to be a small neighborhood park. There is currently no master plan available, but this park could have a playground, open space and a picnic area with a shelter to serve the surrounding neighborhood.~~
- *Lot on Forestdale Drive* – This 0.9 acre property is planned to be a small neighborhood park with benches and a picnic area.
- *280 Rest Stop* – While not in the city limits yet, this nine acre parcel already has elements in place to be a successful park. The main building is planned to be a small community center with an area behind it for tent/pavilion space. Other planned improvements to the area are two new playground areas and a new amphitheater, new walking trails to expand on existing walking trails and an expanded picnic area. The plan also allots space to a possible future police substation and fire station.

- *Lake Ogletree* – This land is currently owned by the Auburn Water Works Board. The lake is the primary source for drinking water in Auburn. It is currently leased out for private recreation.
- ~~*Frank Brown Expansion and New Senior Center* – The Frank Brown Recreation Center features basketball and racquetball courts, a workout facility as well as foosball and air hockey tables. The new senior center will features offices, meeting and conference rooms, a computer lab, full kitchen facilities and three (3) activity rooms with removable walls that can be combined into one large room.~~



**Rendering of New Frank Brown Senior Center**

- *Lake Wilmore Park* – Lake Wilmore is a 206-acre property owned by the City of Auburn and is part of the Parks Master Plan. In March 2011, the City of Auburn and the Auburn Off Road Bicycling Association (AORBA) held the grand opening and ribbon cutting for the new Lake Wilmore Trail. A partnership between the City of Auburn, Auburn Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Auburn Bicycle Committee, and AORBA, the trail is approximately three miles in length and is available for off-road biking, hiking, running, and walking. Future plans for the property call for additional trails, a community center, and additional park features.

These plans are part of the foundation for a City-wide master plan for parks and facilities. It is important to include all existing plans and stakeholder groups for the creation of a unified document. The master plan will function for Parks and Recreation in the same way CompPlan 2030 functions for overall planning for future growth and development.

~~The plan should be drafted by a committee specifically created for this purpose. The committee should include members of Parks and Recreation, Planning, and Engineering, as well as stakeholders from the community. The committee should hold public meetings and send out citizen surveys in the same manner in which this document was created.~~

### 6.6.1.3 Open Space/Greenway Master Plan

The Auburn Greenspace Task Force put together a report in February of 2001 that created a greenway master plan and made recommendations to preserve and create greenspace in the future. This plan is the most comprehensive Parks and Recreation plan to date. The plan touches on a variety of topics, many that are still relevant today:

- The ~~creation of a permanent Greenways Commission~~ to Greenspace Advisory Board oversees the greenways program and to have the authority to make recommendations to the Planning Commission to deny projects if they do not meet open space or non-vehicle transportation regulations. This is a recommendation of the Greenways Master Plan.
- Identify underserved areas of the City that do not have adequate open space with the recommendation that no one should live more than two miles from public open space. This task will be completed via the Parks and Recreation master plan.
- Raise property taxes to fund open space acquisition. This idea may not be deemed viable in the current economic climate. If Auburn continues to grow as projected, large tracts of land needed for a park will increase in value. Most planned recreation facilities are on the south and east sides of the City. The 280 rest stop is the only property on the northern side owned by the City that is planned as a future park.

The current Greenways Master Plan Map shows greenways connecting to most major parks and recreation areas in the City. While some follow existing streets, most of these greenways are trails that follow bodies of water or take the most direct route between large parks. The trails cross over multiple parcels and property owners. The plan ~~needs to~~ will be updated as part of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan to include phases for implementation ~~and include sources for funding and land acquisition. The plan will also need to be updated once~~ and to provide connections to future facility locations ~~are determined to create a green network between them and incorporate them into the overall master plan.~~ This green network could include walking and biking trails, some of which could be implemented in the existing City right-of-way.

## 6.6.2 Land Acquisition

As Auburn continues to grow, land acquisition is very important for future park construction. While it is impossible to tell with full certainty where growth is going to occur, the Auburn Interactive Growth Model (AIGM) and the Future Land Use Plan can help direct growth and provide ~~an~~ guidance as to where future development will occur. At present, the north and west sides of Auburn are underserved compared to the rest of the City. Future park locations can be divided into three categories: planned future parks, where the City already owns the property in question and plans a park at that location; possible future parks, where the City already owns the property in question, but has not committed to a park at that location; and identified needs, where the AIGM predicts the need for a future park based on projected growth in the area.

### 6.6.2.1 Funding/Incorporating Open Space into New Development

With the ongoing implementation of the Future Land Use Plan, it will be easier for the City to justify land purchase in certain areas established by this plan. The City can also acquire land through development agreements, by donation or by first right-of-refusal agreements with surrounding property owners to expand existing facilities.

One way to help fund open space programs is the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. In ~~2010~~ 2016 this program handed out ~~\$38~~ \$94.8 million across the United States to help preserve open space and recreation land.<sup>2</sup> Funding for this program is funneled through the State government, and is quite limited. “To be eligible for grants, every state must prepare and regularly update a statewide recreation plan (sometimes called a SCORP, for Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan). Most SCORPs address the demand for and supply of recreation resources (local, state and federal) within a state, identify needs and new opportunities for recreation improvements and set forth an implementation program to meet the goals identified by its citizens and elected leaders.”<sup>3</sup> The State of Alabama received ~~\$585,552~~ \$1,493,901 from this fund for new parks in FY 2016.<sup>4</sup> While this program would require cooperation with the State, it is still an attractive option for additional funding.

The City could also create a parks and recreation opportunity fund to help pay for future land acquisition. This could be funded from external sources. This fund would act as a local version of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund on a local level to help acquire additional land as needed. Details regarding the implementation and application this fund should be further explored.

Nodes as identified in the future land use plan are locations, often at major intersections, where a mix of uses intended to meet the needs of nearby residents are concentrated. Requiring park space as an integral part of nodes reduces the cost of constructing new facilities to meet the needs of new development, increases the value of adjacent property, and provides a focal point for the node.

Land designated as open space is maintained as open space and cannot be sold, subdivided, or developed. Building structures on the land is discouraged. Subdivision open space is owned and maintained by the developer, owner of the development site, homeowners association, or other private entity. Open space in a subdivision can take several forms while limiting the presence of structures. It can be natural open space, consisting of existing vegetation, trees, or wetlands. This area is undisturbed and does not have much recreational value. It can also be community gardens or a specific agriculture use.

One open space option is the conservation subdivision. The purpose of a conservation subdivision is to preserve at least half of the land in a development as open space. Lots in conservation subdivisions are typically much smaller than on traditional development putting an emphasis on community open space instead of private backyards. This allows for higher density development on part of the site and a community park or open area on the other half, creating a large gathering space with the same number of units as traditional development. The open space created this way could satisfy the level of service standards for this area, reducing the need to construct a City-maintained park or recreational facility in this area.

In some cases, the open space is turned over to the City for maintenance. This allows all residents to use the open space and not just those living in the subdivision. This is also a way to acquire land in areas where it may have been cost prohibitive before. The land must meet City specifications. Open space can be active or passive. For more information on passive open space, please see the Natural Systems section.

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<sup>2</sup> National Park Service <<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/upload/signed-FY16-lwcf-certificate.pdf>> May 8, 2017

<sup>3</sup> National Park Service <[http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/plan\\_prijts.html](http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/plan_prijts.html)> May 8, 2017

<sup>4</sup> National Park Service <<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/upload/signed-FY16-lwcf-certificate.pdf>> May 10, 2011

### **6.6.2.2 Land Donation**

Some of Auburn’s parks are in place because of generous donations from the community, including Kiesel Park. Land donation is a relatively cheap way for the City to obtain property for future facilities. Benefits of land donation go beyond tax write-offs, such as naming the park after the donor. While land donation should be the preferred way for the City to acquire land, many citizens are either not aware of the benefits of donating or lack strong incentives to donate. Land bank or land swap programs may allow citizens with desirable park land to trade their land for another piece of property of the same value. This idea could benefit both the City and the donor.

The City currently maintains an informal land bank and currently owns and maintains several future park properties. The creation of a formal land bank would allow for a larger selection of property and greater incentive to encourage land swaps with citizens to acquire land for desired park locations. These incentives must be heavily marketed to make citizens aware of them. The Parks and Recreation Department is working to create more awareness of these benefits by creating an informative brochure and by contacting citizens who have desirable land and have expressed interest in donation.

### **6.6.3 Level of Service**

The Parks and Recreation Department receives high marks for their level of service by almost all citizens. However, as the population of Auburn shifts away from being predominantly students, the recreational programs offered by the City will need to cater more to the needs of children and senior citizens. Sports programs are well-established, but other recreational programs need to be expanded as well.

For children, afterschool programs are run by Auburn City Schools. Expanded afterschool programs have been requested through community input. Auburn City Schools generally only offers academic programs, such as drama clubs and band. Parks and Recreation assists the schools with after school programs when needed or when a non-academic recreational activity is planned.

For senior citizens, programs such as dance classes, free fitness classes, arts and crafts opportunities and continuing education are effective ways to stay active in the community and help maintain social connections. ~~The proposed senior center next to Frank Brown Recreation center will~~ new Hubert and Grace Harris Center has become one the hub for these over 50 activities, but in the future it may be necessary to build these types of facilities in the northern and southern parts of the City as well. Parks and Recreation already plans to expand senior programming in the future and has hired a Programming Coordinator under the Community and Special Programs Director to work with seniors and therapeutics (special needs).

### **6.6.4 Public/Private Partnerships**

The City of Auburn and the surrounding areas have many other recreational opportunities that are not necessarily owned or maintained by the City. Regional events such as the SEC Tennis or Golf Championships do not only benefit Auburn, they benefit the entire region. It is important for the City to continue to work with Auburn University and the surrounding communities to provide exemplary service to all residents.

#### **6.6.4.1 Community/Regional Partnerships**

Auburn University owns and maintains many of its own recreational facilities, but partners with the City for some amenities not on the main campus. While some facilities are closed to everyone but

student athletes, the University provides a variety of recreation options to students, faculty and staff, including tennis courts, a running track, fitness centers and a large open area for student athletic fields. The University also maintains an arboretum and a nature preserve. The City should continue existing partnerships with the University for facilities such as the Tennis Center and other co-owned facilities throughout the City. Working with the Auburn School Board to share those facilities would be a benefit as well.

The City should also study the feasibility for additional recreational opportunities, such as mountain bike trails, archery/shooting ranges, disc golf courses and camping facilities. While some of these are available now on a much smaller scale, the expansion of these programs would provide a larger spectrum of recreational activities. Some of these facilities could be privately-owned and operated.

Chewacla State Park is owned and maintained by the Alabama Park System. The public park is a regional draw both to Auburn residents and tourists from out of town. The City of Auburn does not have to maintain the park, but still benefits from its amenities and location.

#### **6.6.4.2 Funding Sources**

In order to maintain a high level of service for an increasing population, funding will need to increase as well. A well-maintained park system can be an economic development tool in the form of higher property values and by hosting regional tournaments for soccer, baseball and softball. These sports are becoming a large industry and local tournaments bring in significant revenue in the form of entry fees, hotels, and support of local businesses.

The City should continue to work with the Auburn-Opelika Tourism Bureau and the City of Opelika to actively market the excellent facilities in both Auburn and Opelika.

#### **6.6.5 Maintenance of Facilities**

Maintenance is important for aesthetic value and for the health of those using the facilities. While the general consensus of the community is that parks and facilities are well maintained, it is very easy for these facilities to rapidly decline if this is not kept up. As the footprints of parks and facilities stretch farther away from the center of Auburn, it may become necessary to prioritize maintenance of grounds, structures or equipment if staff and budget resources are stretched.



## 6.7 Goals, Objectives, and Policies

**PRC 1:** Create a Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan to grow the City's parks, recreation, and cultural opportunities as the City grows.

**PRC 1.1:** Continue to use the Auburn Interactive Growth Model (AIGM) to help determine the timing and general location of future parks.

**PRC 1.1.1:** Maintain up-to-date parks level of service standards.

**PRC 1.1.2:** Review potential changes to the parks submodel as the AIGM is updated annually.

**PRC 1.2:** Analyze the best locations for new parks using data from the AIGM and departmental and stakeholder input.

**PRC 1.2.1:** Work with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Greenspace Advisory Board to select the most ideal location in or around the area recommended for a future park by the AIGM.

**PRC 1.2.2:** Maintain an up-to-date map of future facilities and when they are expected to be needed.

**PRC 1.3:** Develop a parks and recreation and a culture master plan document.

**PRC 1.3.1:** Create a committee to develop the parks, recreation and culture master plan through the Auburn 2040 planning process.

**PRC 1.3.2:** Engage with individual stakeholders to determine facility and programmatic needs, including conducting surveys and holding public meetings.

**PRC 1.3.3:** Incorporate the Greenways Master Plan and other Parks and Recreation Planning documents into the master plan as appropriate.

**PRC 1.4:** Actively promote the completion of the existing Greenways Master Plan and pursue opportunities for additional greenways.

**PRC 1.4.1:** Continue working toward full implementation of the greenway master plan. Update the master plan to reflect changes proposed in the Future Land Use Plan and those proposed by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan.

**PRC 1.4.2:** Improve integration between bicycle and pedestrian paths and trails. Initiate formal discussions between bicycle and pedestrian interest groups on how best to accomplish this.

**PRC 1.4.3:** Greenway planning staff should work to coordinate the greenspace plan and Greenspace Advisory Board recommendations into the planning process.

**PRC 1.4.4:** Establish a dedicate annual funding source to build greenways segments and prioritize construction as property or easements for greenways become available.

**PRC 2:** Continue to acquire additional land as needed and feasible to fulfill the recommendations of the parks, recreation and culture master plan and to maintain a high level-of-service.

**PRC 2.1:** Secure funding to purchase properties as growth and opportunities occur.

**PRC 2.1.1:** Tie the parks and recreation capital improvements program to the Future Land Use Plan to help implement the recommendations of the updated Greenways Master Plan.

**PRC 2.1.2:** Explore grant opportunities for parks or open space, including benefits from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

**PRC 2.1.3:** Create a parks and recreation opportunity fund to provide funding for unexpected park opportunities.

**PRC 2.1.4:** Work with property owners adjacent to existing facilities in need of additional space to develop first right-of-refusal agreements.

**PRC 2.2:** Encourage donation of land for future parks and recreation facilities.

**PRC 2.2.1:** Explore opportunities for offering incentives for land donation.

**PRC 2.2.2:** As development occurs, leverage opportunities to acquire and build additional parks and recreation facilities, including voluntary land swaps and donations via development agreements.

**PRC 2.2.3:** Develop a program for land donation via bequests.

**PRC 2.2.4:** Develop a marketing program to educate potential donors about the possibilities and benefits of property or monetary bequests and donations for parks development.

**PRC 3:** Address identified level-of-service issues.

**PRC 3.1:** Work to provide needed facilities and programs to address level-of-service deficiencies.

**PRC 3.1.1:** Provide additional park facilities north of Shug Jordan and East University Drive where none currently exist.

**PRC 3.1.2:** Explore opportunities to build additional community centers outside the core of the City.

**PRC 3.1.3:** Encourage the continued offering of diverse cultural programs throughout the City, including those offered by Auburn University, the City of Auburn, and Auburn City Schools.

**PRC 3.1.4:** Provide additional athletic facilities, as needed, to meet the demands of local users and better position the City when competing for athletic tournaments.

**PRC 3.1.5:** As demographics increasingly shift away from the college student demographic, shift programs to meet the needs of youth, senior adults and the special needs population.

**PRC 4:** Develop partnerships within the community and region to make better use of available resources and increase funding sources and sponsorships for recreation facilities, special events, athletic tournaments, and other exhibitions.

**PRC 4.1:** Develop partnerships within the community and region to make better use of available resources.

**PRC 4.1.1:** Continue work with Auburn University to develop and construct shared specialized recreational facilities.

**PRC 4.1.2:** Continue partnership with Auburn City Schools to use school facilities and athletic fields for public recreational programs and as neighborhood or community parks.

**PRC 4.1.3:** Study the feasibility of developing outdoor recreational amenities such as camping, hiking and archery facilities, disc golf courses, and equestrian and mountain bike trails in cooperation with Auburn University and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

**PRC 4.2:** Develop additional funding sources and sponsorships for recreation facilities, special events, athletic tournaments, and other exhibitions.

**PRC 4.2.1:** Continue to market the Auburn Parks and Recreation system as an economic development strategy tool for the City through community and regional outlets.

**PRC 4.2.2:** Continue to work with the Auburn-Opelika Tourism Bureau to promote youth and amateur sporting events, which are the fastest growing segment of leisure travel.

**PRC 4.2.3:** Identify and promote revenue-generating activities, programs, and facilities to help offset costs associated with providing excellent public recreation services.

**PRC 5:** Ensure that the facility maintenance program is maintained and funded for all City parks, recreational facilities, athletic fields, vehicles, and maintenance equipment.

**PRC 5.1:** Continue to maintain existing facilities at the established high level-of service.

**PRC 5.1.1:** Maintain a current list of maintenance priorities, updated annually.

**PRC 5.1.2:** Utilize youth athletic board funds for special maintenance projects.