

Kinston-Lenoir

System-wide Parks and Recreation Plan



The Two Views of Recreation Offerings

Local governments generally fall somewhere along this spectrum

Parks and Recreation as an **EXPENSE**

Similar to a police department or a fire department.

Money goes in
Services come out

Nothing more, no significant impact on the bottom line



This spectrum generally gauges how leadership views parks and recreation

Parks and Recreation as an **INVESTMENT**

You get the service, but you also get the economic dividends of your investment

Money goes in
Services come out +
Additional ROI comes from the investment

Research Supports That Parks And Recreation Acts More Like An INVESTMENT

Property Values Increase:

Economic research has demonstrated consistently that homes and properties located near parklands have higher values than those located farther away. Higher home values not only benefit the owners of these properties but also add to the tax base of local governments. ¹

8%-20%

Average property value increase ².

Economic Development:

Parks and recreation improves the quality of life in communities and benefits the local economic development of a region. Eighty-seven percent of corporate executives responding to a 2023 Area Development survey rated-quality-of life features as an important factor for a headquarters, factory or other company facility. ¹

75%

of Executives quality of life as important when locating facilities

Visitor Spending:

Many local park and recreation agency amenities spur tourism to their respective locales, generating significant economic activity, including but not limited to increased sales, local restaurants/bars and hotels¹.

$$\left(\begin{array}{l} \text{Economic impact} \\ \text{of patron spending} \end{array} \right) = \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{Number} \\ \text{of Visits} \end{array} \right) \times \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{Average spending} \\ \text{per Visit} \end{array} \right) \times (\text{Multiplier})$$

Events are not a matter of IF you will have an impact, but how much of an impact it will have ³.

Sources:

1. "The Economic Impacts of Parks: An Examination of the Fiscal Effects of Operations and Capital Spending by Local Park and Recreation Agencies on the US Economy.
2. Crompton, J.L. 2001. Parks and Economic Development. PAS Report No. 502. American Planning Association, Chicago, Illinois.
3. Center for Economic Studies: Michigan State University: 2007 Quantifying the Economic Impacts of Community Events

Grants Leverage that Local Investment

- 1. Eligibility:** The department is eligible for all these funds
- 2. Partnering:** Partnering with the local governments is possible. Non-profits are not typically eligible
- 3. Leveraging local funds:** These grants are great ways to leverage local investments of funds.
- 4. Key considerations:** Planning is critical in receiving all these funds
- 5. Public Input:** Public needs and wants are the backbone of justifying these funds to the funding body.

The Free Grant Fund Myth

While free grant funds do happen, it's like basing your retirement plans on a rich uncle/aunt's benevolence...it's very rare when it happens

State Funds \$500k Max	Federal Funds \$500k Max	Federal Trails Funding	State Land Protection and Waterways	Established and growing funds in: Accessible Parks Grant Great Trails State Funding
				

Benchmarking your Investment

**Investment is
below national
median**

Your parks and recreation investment
levels are slightly below national
median levels.

**NRPA Per Capita Spending Comparison
(Communities 50,000-99,999)**



Desire For More Investment

Support for source of investment funds	Percent support
Grants (virtually all require a match)	67%
County general funds	62%
City general funds	59%
Special purpose foundation	53%
Project specific bond	44%
Special tax	29%
Fee-in-lieu of contributions	24%

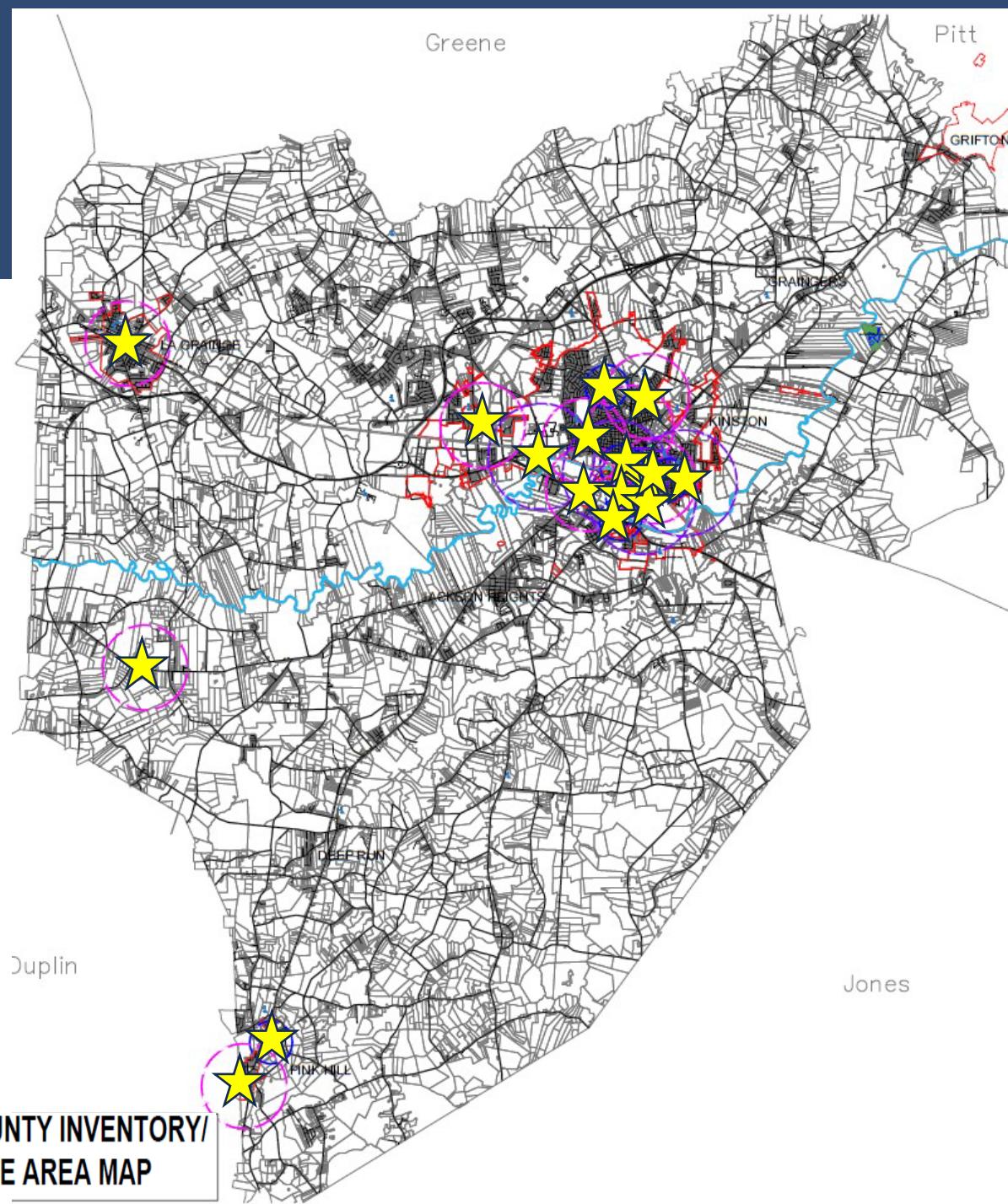


There is a desire for more recreational investment

Benchmarking Parkland

The recreation system is below median levels compared to national benchmarks

Quartile	Acres per 1,000 residents	Applied to Lenoir County Population (54,000)
Lower Quartile	4.8 acres	259.2 acres
Kinston/Lenoir	6.0 acres	324 acres
Median Quartile	10.2 acres	550.8 acres
Upper Quartile	17.4 acres	939.6 acres



Source of comparison: National Recreation and Parks Metrics data for communities between 50,000-99,999 in population

Benchmarking Amenities

Above Benchmark: Low need for more Tennis/Pickleball, Disc Golf, Golf Courses, Recreation Centers, Community Center (no gym), Amphitheater, Nature Center, Aquatic Center, Stadium

At Benchmark:
Basketball Courts, Community Garden, Pickleball (dedicated), Dog Park, Teen Center

Below benchmark: Baseball/Softball Fields, Multi-purpose Field, Multi-use Courts (Basketball/Volleyball), Playground, Inclusive Playground

Current Contribution to Service Offerings

Amenity	Metrics-based Needs Range* (population size between 50,000- 99,000)	Metrics Based Benchmark for Estimated Population** (54,000)	Current System Total	Kinston Facilities (current)	Lenoir County Facilities (current)
Baseball and Softball Fields	1/3,675	14-15	15	12	3
Multipurpose Field	1/4,070	13-14	2	2	0
Basketball Courts (dedicated)	1/8,363	6-7	6	6	0
Community Gardens	1/56,150	0-1	1	1	0
Disc Golf	1/58,150	0-1	2	2	0
Tennis / Pickleball	1/12,972	4-5	18	18	0
Pickleball (dedicated)	1/12,972	4-5	7	7	0
Basketball and Volleyball (multi-use courts)	1/24,972	2-3	0	0	0
Golf Courses	1/68,208	0-1	1	1	0
Playground	1/3,707	14-15	12	9	3
Inclusive Playgrounds	1/20,239	1-2	0	0	0
Dog Park	1/55,135	0-1	1	1	0
Recreation Centers (and gym)	1/39,886	1-2	6	5	1
Community Center (no gym)	1/52,000	1-2	4	3	1
Performance Amphitheater	1/59,000	0-1	2	1	1
Nature Center	1/71,360	0-1	1	0	1
Aquatic Center	1/60,824	0-1	2	2	0
Stadiums	1/64,150	0-1	1	1	0
Teen Center	1/58,712	0-1	0	0	0

Table 5.3 | * Metrics derived from 2025 NRPA agency performance data | ** NC OSBM-based population estimate



above benchmark



below benchmark



within benchmark

The Public's Voice

4 public meetings were held and approximately **170** people provided input in total

383 households took the online survey representing **866** individuals

The survey was conducted in a way to understand the differences in need between residents within the city and outside of the City limits

Focus groups were also conducted

Help Improve Recreation in Kinston/Lenoir County!
Community Survey
Please visit the link or use the QR code below:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Kinston-LenoirRec>
This effort will help inform planning efforts for Parks and Recreation in the community. Thanks for your participation!



LENOIR COUNTY / CITY OF KINSTON

DROP-IN COMMUNITY MEETINGS

COMPREHENSIVE PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

The City of Kinston and Lenoir County, wants to hear from you!

We invite you to join us and share your ideas during this unique opportunity. Your input will help us set priorities for future recreational improvements and inform the future development of parks, trails, and both water and land-based recreational facilities and services in our community.

Location: Neuseway Nature Park (401 W Caswell St.)
Date/Time: 11-23-2024 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
and / or

Location: Kinston Community Center (2602 W Vernon Ave.)
Date/Time: 11-22-2024 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Invite your friends and family to visit and let us know your thoughts, ideas, and concerns regarding recreation in our community.

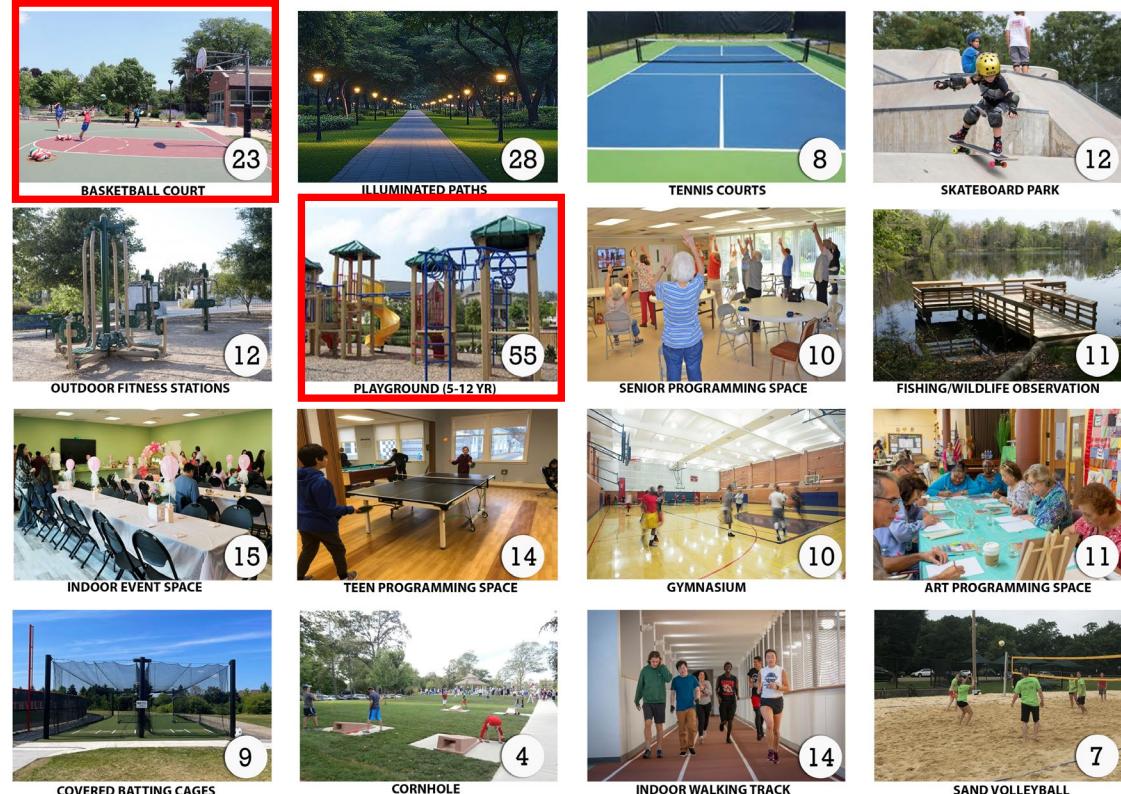
Your Opinion Matters!

Scan the QR code below to access the **Rerecation Master Plan Survey** or feel free to visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Kinston-LenoirRec>



Visual Preference Exercise Results – 170 Participants

Top Five Choices from Public Meetings:



1. Playground (5-12 Yr)
2. Adventure Play Area
3. Multipurpose Greenway

4. Hiking-Biking Paths / Tied with Tot Lot
5. Outdoor Basketball Court

So, what recreational elements do the public want?

Top 10 Desires - City Residents

1. Indoor Programing
2. Pool
3. Playground/Tot Lot
4. Greenway/ Trails
5. Adventure Recreation
6. Pickleball Courts
7. Gymnasium
8. Picnic Areas
9. Basketball Courts
10. Bike Trails

Top 10 Desires - County Residents

1. Indoor Programing
2. Baseball/Softball Fields
3. Basketball Courts
4. Gymnasium
5. Playground/Tot Lot
6. Football Fields
7. Greenways/Trails
8. Soccer Fields
9. Pool
10. Adventure Recreation





Key Recommendation Themes

Access/ Accessibility

- Enhance ADA Park Access **(Immediate)**
- Operating Hours Signage **(Immediate)**
- ADA-Compliant Play Areas **(Immediate)**

Budgetary

- Annual Intergovernmental Recreation Planning Session **(Short Range)**

Environmental

- Flood Proofing **(Short Range)**
- Safe Landscaping **(Immediate)**

Key Recommendation Themes



Facilities (General)

- New Facility Development (Mid Range)
- Expanded Trail (Mid Range) and Blueway Access (Long Range)
- Playground Updates (Mid Range)
- Indoor Facility Assessments (Varies - Long Range)
- Cultural and Teen Space Enhancements (Mid Range)

Facilities (Existing)

- Upgrades Based On Assessments (Varies - Per Funding)

Maintenance

- Building Condition Assessments (Immediate)
- Playground Equipment Inspections (Immediate)
- GIS-Informed Routing (Mid-Range)



Key Recommendation Themes

Marketing

- New Resident Packets (**Long Range**)
- Unified Signage and Branding (**Short Range**)
- Instructor Recruitment (**Short Range**)
- Visitor Attraction (**Short Range**)

Organizational

- Enhance The Community Engagement/Feedback Process (**Long Range**)
- Improve Digital Infrastructure/Vectors of Communication (**Immediate**)

Parkland

- Adjacent Property Acquisition *To Existing Facilities* (**Long Range**)
- Caswell Park Development (**Short Range**)
- King Property Development (**Long Range**)



Key Recommendation Themes

Partnerships

- Annual County Public Recreation Meeting (**Long Range**)
- Partnered Programs (**Short Range**)
- (Cross) Departmental Collaboration (**Immediate**)
- Consider Shared Instructors (**Immediate**)
- Community Transit Partnership Program (**Mid Range**)
- Professional Design (**Immediate**)
- Organize and Develop A Parks Foundation (**Short Range**)

Policy

- Environmental Policies (**Mid Range**)
- Arts and Culture Policy (**Short Range**)

Programs

- Non-Traditional Sports (**Immediate**)
- Social Sports for Adults (**Immediate**)
- Community Fitness (**Immediate**)
- Festivals, Movies & Events (**Immediate**)
- Encourage Volunteerism (**Immediate**)



Key Recommendation Themes

Safety

- Systemwide Electrical Evaluation (Immediate)
- Enhanced Lighting for Security (Immediate)
- Pedestrian Safety Measures (Immediate)
- Park Surveillance (Immediate)

Staffing

- Programming (Mid Range)
- Events Staff (Mid Range)
- Maintenance and Operations (Mid Range)
- Volunteer Requirement and Training (Immediate)
- Marketing Staff (Mid Range)

Walkability

- Implement Updated 2024 Pedestrian Plan (Kinston) (Short Range)
- Develop a Lenoir County Greenways and Trails Master Plan Per the Existing Transportation Plan (Short Range)

Opinion of Probable Costs

\$11,698,000*

Category / Improvement	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Cost	Future
	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034	2034-2035		
Existing Parks Renovations / Improvements												
Barnet Park and Disc Golf Course												
Site-specific master plan*								\$60,000			\$60,000	
Synthetic turf on two soccer fields									\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000	
Accessibility improvements									\$10,000		\$10,000	
Restroom updates										\$50,000	\$50,000	
Add safety lighting upgrades										\$10,000	\$10,000	
Parking improvements (pave 3 existing gravel lots)										\$230,000	\$230,000	
Sub-total											\$2,360,000	
Bill Fay Park												
Site-specific master plan*					\$60,000						\$60,000	
Accessibility improvements							\$10,000				\$10,000	
Restroom updates						\$50,000					\$50,000	
Parking improvements							\$100,000				\$100,000	
Resurface 6 tennis courts								\$130,000			\$130,000	
Resurface par 3 greens								\$100,000			\$100,000	
Update batting cage							\$8,000				\$8,000	
Safety improvements (fence, lighting, etc.)								\$50,000			\$50,000	
Drainage improvements at ballfields 1 & 3								\$50,000			\$50,000	
Sub-total										\$558,000		

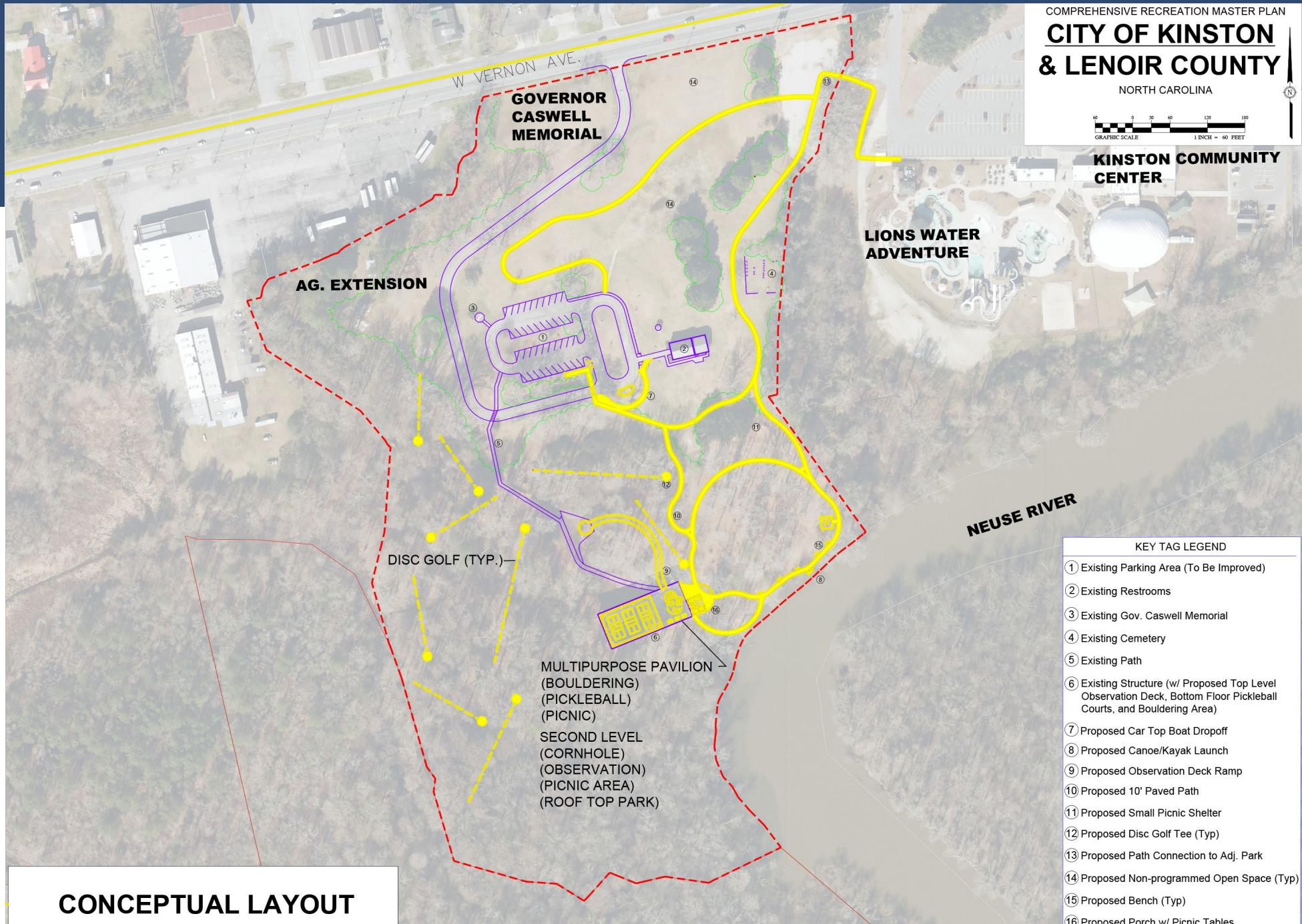
* address additional needs identified in the site specific master plan

Action Item	Description	Immediate	Short-Range	Mid-Range	Long-Range	Check Off
Enhance community engagement and feedback mechanisms (8.1)	To better serve the community, the department should implement more robust community engagement and feedback mechanisms. This could include annual surveys after events and programs.				x	
Improve digital infrastructure (8.2)	Keep the department website up to date. Develop a more user friendly website and mobile app for easy access to program information, registration, and facility reservations. This can streamline operations and improve accessibility. Increasing the social media presence can help share updates, promote events, and engage with the community. Implementing online registration and payment systems make it easier for residents to sign up for programs and services.	x				
Consider adjacent properties (9.1)	For existing park sites, the department should consider any property that is directly adjacent to a park as a candidate for acquisition. Sites can be brought online when the population grows.			x		
Caswell Park Site (9.2)	The County should redevelop the Caswell Park site to accommodate water access for canoes / kayaks and to encourage wildlife / nature observation. This site needs a site-specific master plan.			x		
King Park Site (County) (9.3)	The County, in partnership with the City, should seek to develop the King property into a community park that emphasizes outdoor recreation, sports, and nature. This needs a site-specific plan.			x		
Annual County public recreation meeting (10.1)	To stay engaged with folks living outside the City limits, the recreation advisory board should host an annual public meeting to assess the recreation services and learn about what the residents want.			x		
Partnered programs (10.2)	Kinston should explore offering more programs via a partnership with Lenoir County Schools. These can include non-athletic activities like dance, arts, and life skills, among others.	x				
Departmental collaborations (10.3)	The department should expand its collaboration and marketing efforts across service areas. There should be special emphasis on strengthening the existing partnerships and joint effort with the area libraries.	x				
Research shared instructors (10.4)	Talk with other area park departments to see if they have instructors who would like to expand their services in the Kinston / Lenoir County parks and recreation department.	x				
Community transit partnership program (10.5)	This program would focus on enhancing the public accessibility to parks and recreation facilities by expanding public routes, adding subsidized transportation for low income residents, providing flexible scheduling, adding community shuttle service, and making public awareness campaigns.			x		

* - Cost are planning level only, and subject to change. Total does not include future potential projects.

County-Owned Park Concepts: Caswell Site

Total opinion of probable costs:
\$1.5 Million



Questions?

