

# HART COUNTY RECREATION DEPARTMENT

## Long-Term Plan



 Archway Partnership

2013

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to everyone who participated in and supported the Hart County Recreation Department's long-term planning process. Your involvement in this process was invaluable and will positively impact the opportunities for recreation and leisure and the quality of life in Hart County.

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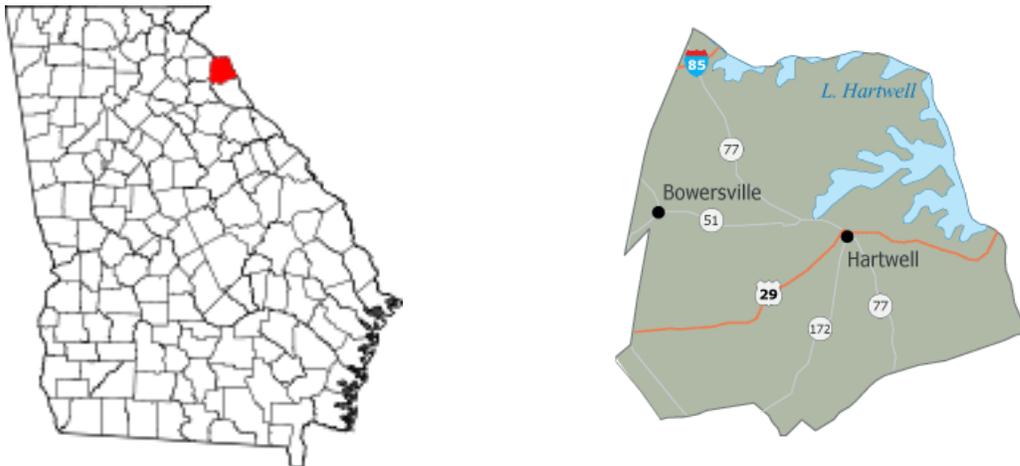


Section 1:

# INTRODUCTION

Located in Northeast Georgia on the border of South Carolina, Hart County was founded in 1853 when the Georgia Assembly designated it from parts of neighboring Elbert, Franklin and Madison counties. The county is named for Nancy Hart, a local heroine of the Revolutionary War who served as spy and captured a group of Tories who threatened her home. It is the only county in Georgia named for a woman.

Hart County's economic base was traditionally rooted in agriculture, primarily cotton, and textile and apparel production. A decade-long dam project to create Lake Hartwell was completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1963, ushering in a new era of growth and opportunities for outdoor recreation on and around the lake. A number of parks, camp sites, marinas, and boat ramps can be reached in minutes from virtually any home in Hart County and offer swimming, fishing, camping, hiking, picnicking, water skiing, pontoon and personal watercraft rentals, mountain bike trails, and motor boating.



Example of annual events that take place in Hart County include: Hartwell Antique Boat Festival, Depot Days, Challenge of the Centuries Bicycle Ride, Spring Fever Sailing Regatta, Pre-4th of July Extravaganza, Lake Hartwell Dam Run, Arts in hARTwell festival, Corps of Engineers interpretive programs, Hart County Community Theater productions, the Bell Family YMCA's Y Tri triathlon, and exhibits and performances at the Hart Regional Arts Center. Golfers can enjoy Cateechee Golf Club, an Audubon Signature Course, or the Hartwell Golf Club. The Gum Branch Mega Ramp Recreation & Tournament Facility hosts a number of fishing tournaments.

The Hart County Recreation Department (HCRD) is a county department and is funded by the Hart County Board of Commissioners. A seven-member Recreation Advisory Board (HCRAB) provides guidance and feedback to the Recreation Director and makes recommendations to the Board of Commissioners on issues related to the department. The HCRAB is led by a Chairperson and Vice-

Chairperson. RAB members are appointed by the Board of Commissioners and serve unpaid, two-year terms.

In February 2012, the Hart County Recreation Department partnered with the Hart County Archway Partnership to develop and implement a long-term/strategic planning process, including gathering community input to produce a plan. This report documents the department's first-ever comprehensive long-term plan. It identifies program, facility, and budget needs and possible challenges for the department for the next 5-10 years. It also presents demographic data for Hart County based on the 2010 U.S. Census and includes benchmark data for comparable counties. More importantly, it also includes ideas and input shared by almost 200 citizens of Hart County who participated in this planning process through online and paper surveys, facilitated public open meetings, and focus groups.

Underlying this planning process were several key interests and concerns that were often expressed by participants. One of these is the desire to continue improving and enhancing existing county recreation facilities. Another is the need to develop a variety of recreational programs and activities for Hart County residents of all ages and phases of life, not only youth. Finally, participants expressed a strong recognition of the contribution that parks and recreational opportunities make to the community's quality of life.



Section 2:

**DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

Community demographics and future growth trends play an important role in the planning process. Understanding the characteristics of Hart County's current population and gauging how the population will grow or change over the 5-10 year life of this long-term plan will help ensure the plan and priorities outlined will meet the needs of residents. Benchmarking Hart County with other communities will provide a comparison and help with developing recommendations.

### **Population Comparisons**

Identifying benchmark communities is one way that a county can draw comparisons, identify best practices, and identify the various types of programs and activities offered in other communities. The following Georgia communities will be used as benchmarks:

- Dawson County
- Franklin County
- Madison County
- Stephens County

Franklin County, Stephens County, and Madison County are all regional neighbors to Hart County in northeast Georgia. Dawson County (Dawsonville, GA) is being used as a benchmark due to its similar population size to Hart County and its location along the growth corridor of GA-400.

This report will utilize demographics from the 2010 United States Census and population projections from the State of Georgia's Office of Planning and Budget. Demographic statistics for these benchmark communities are included and analyzed in the section below to compare Hart County with these communities in several categories. Comparing communities provides additional information for our planning process and helps us understand how other counties are delivering services. Demographic information and economic conditions can also help establish expectations for what is possible, given limited available resources, with consideration based on population age and socioeconomic status, public accessibility of recreational programs and activities, and economic conditions.

### **Total Population**

Our demographic analysis begins with a review of the total populations for Hart County and the identified benchmark communities, shown in Table 2.1 below. Madison County is the largest county of the group, with 28,120 residents, and Franklin County is the smallest, with 22,084 residents. Hart County ranks in the middle of the benchmark group, with 25,213 residents. The relatively small range of total populations of this group indicates that these communities should provide a helpful comparison as we begin to look at Hart County's current recreation programs and activities and start planning for the future.

**Table 2.1: 2010 Population for Hart County and Benchmark Counties**

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

County	Total 2010 Population	Rank in Group
Madison County	28,120	1
Stephens County	26,175	2
<b>Hart County</b>	<b>25,213</b>	<b>3</b>
Dawson County	22,330	4
Franklin County	22,084	5

**Projected Population Growth**

Understanding a community's projected population growth is essential for recreation planning. The projected population growth figures shown below for 2015-2030 are from the Georgia Office of Planning & Budget's (OPB) Georgia 2030 Population Projections report. The 2010 population data below is from the 2010 U.S. Census. The growth data and projections indicate that all of the communities, including Hart County, will experience fairly modest incremental growth over the next 20 years. The exception is Dawson County, which is projected to double in size between 2010 and 2030 due to its extremely strategic location on GA-400, roughly 1 hour north of Atlanta and only 30 minutes from booming north Atlanta suburbs such as Alpharetta and Roswell.

Based on the age group data shown above and the modest rate of population growth projected for the next 20 years, we can expect to see Hart County's population continue to shift towards a larger percentage of adults aged 35 years and older, with lower percentages of the population in the 0-19 and 20-34 age groups. This trend will result in a growing demand for a recreation department that has programs and facilities that appeal to and meet the needs of middle-aged and older adults. As we will discuss below, this age group is more active and involved in exercise and other recreational activities than previous generations.

**Table 2.2: Projected Population Growth**

2010 Data: U.S. Census

2015-2030 Projections: Georgia 2030 Population Projections, Georgia Office of Planning &amp; Budget, March 12, 2010

County	2010 Actual	2015 Projected	2020 Projected	2025 Projected	2030 Projected
<b>Hart County</b>	<b>25,213</b>	<b>27,320</b>	<b>29,645</b>	<b>32,120</b>	<b>34,687</b>
Dawson County	22,330	28,251	33,359	39,231	45,368
Franklin County	22,084	23,963	25,829	27,920	29,901
Madison County	28,120	31,847	34,796	38,014	41,029
Stephens County	26,175	26,729	27,616	28,471	29,273

## Population by Age Group

Looking at demographics for age groups within the population is necessary for predicting and planning for recreation. Different age groups have different needs and desires for recreational activities, and facilities must also be designed or modified to accommodate the usage and safety needs of various age groups.

**Table 2.3: 2010 Population by Age Group**

Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

County	Total Pop.	0-19	20-34	35-49	50+
<b>Hart County</b>	<b>25,213</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>15.7%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>39.5%</b>
Dawson County	22,330	24.9%	17.7%	21.7%	35.7%
Franklin County	22,084	25.6%	17.3%	19.6%	37.5%
Madison County	28,120	27.2%	17%	21.8%	33.9%
Stephens County	26,175	25.8%	17.4%	19%	37.8%
State of Georgia	9,687,653	28.7%	20.8%	21.9%	28.6%

A detailed look at age distributions within Hart County and the selected benchmark communities suggests some demographic similarities and some differences. The communities are fairly similar to each other in terms of their demographics, perhaps because they are all primarily rural communities. However, there are also some important differences to be noted between the benchmark communities and Hart County.

Hart County has the lowest percentage of residents aged 0-19 (24.8%) and of ages 20-34 (15.7%) of the group. These statistics show that the county has a lower proportion of youth and young adult residents in its population than other benchmarked counties. This is important for recreation planning because populations between the ages of 0-19 are the primary users of traditional team sports like baseball, softball, basketball, cheerleading, football, and other team sports, which are the core programs currently offered by the Hart County Recreation Department. The 20-34 age group makes up a large percentage of those who are active as youth coaches, adult sports league participants, parents of youth sports participants, and as instructors or participants in other health, fitness, or leisure programs available through recreation departments. All of the benchmarked communities show similarity in the percentage of their population between the ages of 35-49 years. This age group tends to be involved in recreation activities such as youth coaches, parents or grandparents of youth sports participants, adult sports leagues, and as instructors or participants in other health, fitness, or leisure programs available through recreation departments.

While the aging of the Baby Boomer population is a nationwide trend, some communities are affected by the aging of the population more than others. All of the benchmarked communities are well above the state average of 28.6% for population over the age of 50. Hart County leads the group in the percentage of residents over the age of 50, with 39.5%. Lake Hartwell draws a number of

retirees to the community. This age group includes a mixture of active adults, Baby Boomers, and older adults who require varying needs of assistance in terms of both mobility and recreational activities. Thanks to better healthcare and medical advancements that have improved the quality of life for adults as they age, this group is more interested in staying active and being involved in a wide variety of recreational activities and pursuits than previous generations. They do not view themselves as “seniors.”

Recreation planning efforts must reflect this age shift to ensure facilities and programs offered can accommodate older adults as well as youth. It is clear that there is currently and will be growing demand for the Hart County Recreation Department to coordinate programs and activities beyond simply youth sports. Lower impact activities such as swimming, walking, yoga, dance, and Pilates can be adjusted to include a variety of ages. Older adults may also prefer morning or daytime recreational programs and activities because they prefer not to drive at night. A wonderful illustration of this in Hart County is the group of players who get together daily during the week to play singles and doubles tennis at the tennis courts at Clay Street Park. Members of the group range in age from 40s to late 80s and often include relatives or visitors of the group members as well as people who weekend at the lake and stay over to play tennis on Monday morning. During the Summer months, they are joined by high school tennis players. Another example is the Swingin’ Harts Square Dance Club, a group that holds regular dances in the recreation building at Clay Street Park.

**Race and Ethnicity**

Just as age demographics should be reflected in planning efforts for recreational programs and activities, so should race and ethnicity. Recreation program offerings should reflect the make-up of the community to ensure that all residents have attractive opportunities available to suit their needs. Race, ethnicity, and cultural preferences influence participation levels in recreation activities and sports leagues.

**Table 2.4: Race and Ethnicity**

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

County	White	African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	Other	Multi-Race
<b>Hart County</b>	<b>77.4%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
Dawson County	95.6%	.5%	4.1%	.6%	2%	1.4%
Franklin County	87.3%	8.4%	3.9%	.5%	2.1%	1.7%
Madison County	87.6%	8.4%	4.1%	.6%	2.1%	1.2%
Stephens County	85.1%	10.9%	2.4%	.7%	1.3%	2%

The statistics shown in Table 2.4 indicate greater diversity in Hart County than in the other benchmarked communities in terms of percentages of various racial and ethnic groups. Hart County is 77.4% White and 18.7% African-American. Hispanic or Latino residents comprise 3.1%, and Asian residents, including Korean and Vietnamese communities, make up 3.1% of Hart County’s population. Persons

reporting 2 or more races account for 1.3% of the population. The least diverse of the benchmark counties is Dawson County, which is 95.6% White.

### Annual Household Income

Household income is an important demographic to assist in planning how recreational programs and activities will be funded, and how accessible they will be to residents who would like to participate. In communities with lower median household incomes, local government may provide funding for public recreation to provide greater access for families. Program fees for sports programs and other recreational activities must also be set with consideration to what lower-income residents are able to afford. Setting lower sports or program fees can impact a recreation department’s ability to generate income to offset program costs, especially if the department does not receive adequate local government funding to make up the difference.

**Table 2.5: 2010 Annual Household Income**

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

County	2006-2010 Median Household Income	Rank in Group
Dawson County	\$51,128	1
Madison County	\$41,343	2
Franklin County	\$36,739	3
<b>Hart County</b>	<b>\$36,109</b>	<b>4</b>
Stephens County	\$34,938	5
<b>State of Georgia</b>	<b>\$49,347</b>	

A review of median household incomes for Hart County and the benchmark communities shows that 5 of the 6 communities are below the state median income. Dawson County ranks first in the group and above the state with \$51,128. Hart County’s median annual household income ranks fifth out of the 6 communities at \$36,109. The average number of persons per household in Hart County for 2006-2010 is 2.56. The lower median household income in Hart County as compared to the benchmark communities may be partially attributed to the higher proportion of older adults living in Hart County who are retired and living on fixed incomes as well as a persistently high unemployment rate. However, the median is also counterbalanced by a number of affluent retirees who have retired to homes on Lake Hartwell.

Nevertheless, this statistic indicates a need for recreation planning in Hart County to consider ways to ensure access for lower income households when setting user fees and program fees for recreation facilities, programs, and activities. Maintaining balance between generating operating revenue through user and program fees and ensuring that fees are not a barrier to access is critical. Another consideration for planning future recreational facilities is location. Planners must ensure that citizens are able to reach them if they do not have a vehicle available or have limited funds to pay for gasoline.



## Section 3:

# COMMUNITY INPUT

Community input provides the heart and soul of any recreation planning effort. For planning efforts to reflect the needs and desires of the community, it is important for planners to hear and consider what residents think and want. Without strong support and usage by residents, the recreation department loses relevance and effectiveness, and taxpayers are less willing to support budget allocations for recreation. The ideas and recommendations included in this section were gathered through public meetings, small focus groups, via an online survey, conversations with Recreation Department staff, and discussions with members of the Recreation Advisory Board. Quotes featured throughout this section were selected from comments made by participants in the online survey.

The input process began with several meetings with the Recreation Director and the Recreation Advisory Board to discuss the process and plan for the community meetings. Discussions with the Recreation Director and RAB members helped identify some existing challenges and needs, and highlighted areas for potential development. As part of these meetings, Recreation Advisory Board members updated the mission statement of the Hart County Recreation Department.



### **Community Meetings**

Two community public meetings were held as part of the planning process. We worked very hard to publicize these meetings to encourage as broad participation as possible. The first meeting was held on Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at the Adult Learning Center, and the second was held Thursday, May 31<sup>st</sup> at the Adult Learning Center. Both meetings were held in the evening from 7:00-8:30pm. Here are the methods we used to advertise the meetings and invited the public to participate:

1. Recreation Advisory Board members spread the word among their friends & neighbors

2. Posted meeting flyer on Hart County Library's community bulletin board
3. Posted flyer & online survey link on top center of Hart County Schools web site
4. Posted flyer & online survey link on Hart County Government web site
5. Posted flyer & online survey link on Recreation Department's Facebook page
6. Posted flyer & online survey link on HC Archway Partnership's Facebook page
7. Emailed flyer & survey link to Archway Partnership Executive Committee and asked members to share with their boards
8. Posted flyer & online survey link on HC Chamber of Commerce Facebook page
9. Included meeting information in weekly Chamber Chatter Newsletter (4 weeks)
10. Copies flyers at Hart County Water & Sewer Authority payment window
11. Copies of flyers at Hart County Cooperative Extension office
12. Copies of flyers given to Hart County 4-H students
13. Editorial in *Hartwell Sun* on 4/11/12 written by Jessica Seawright
14. Ran *Hartwell Sun* ad with full written survey (1 week) and meeting info, & online survey link (3 weeks)
15. Shared information during Hartwell Rotary Club and put flyers on lunch tables
16. Emailed flyer & survey link to Hartwell Service League members
17. Handed out flyers at several community meetings

Roughly 50 people participated in the two public community meetings. Each meeting was led by a trained facilitator. Members of the Recreation Advisory Board also served as table facilitators to write down ideas shared by participants and to keep the conversation flowing. The facilitators asked the group three key questions:

1. Given your exposure to Hart County Recreation Department, what do you like? What are we doing well?
2. What do you not like? What could we improve on? What are we missing?
3. Given what's on the board so far, if you were in charge and resources were not an issue, what would you do? What do you hope to see in the next 5-10 years?

The top ten ranked ideas and suggestions from Question 3 are listed below, in order of the item receiving the most votes to those receiving the least. There are more than ten listed due to tie votes.

- Build a new multi-purpose facility that serves the whole community & not just some of the youth
- Build a new Rec Center suitable for many activities including dance
- Buy Hart State Park

- Build community Rec Center including gym, weights, dance, senior activities, indoor/outdoor tracks & pool
- Connect the 2 pieces of land in town and on Hwy 77 with lighted walking paths – tear down existing building and create multi-purpose building, use 77 property for playing fields
- Build a gym & a pool
- Widen walkway to Botanical Garden: build walking path to New Park (Old Park)
- Add walking trails and more greenspace
- Build a basketball gym and swim center
- Build multi-purpose trail (walk, bike, golf cart)
- Keep 6 tennis courts well-maintained and resurfaced when needed
- Focus & develop activities for all age groups
- Create a big play area with a picnic area for families

Two recurring desires are evident in reading these top-ranked items. One is the community's strong interest in a multi-purpose Recreation Center that can be used for diverse activities for all age groups in Hart County, including dance space, a gym, weights, basketball courts, activities for older adults, an indoor track, and a pool. A second wish is for lighted multi-purpose trails with greenspace and connectivity between and facilities and fields at Clay Street Park and Elberton Highway Park. An overriding theme is to develop recreation facilities that serve the whole community, including all age groups as well as families.

### **Youth Focus Group**

One group that was not well represented during the community public meetings was youth. To gather input from youth, a group that could face barriers such as transportation challenges in attending the public meetings, we conducted a focus group. The youth focus group was organized in collaboration with the Hart County 4-H Club to gather feedback and input for the Recreation Department planning process. Archway Graduate Assistant Megan Miller, who possesses a strong background in youth development work, drafted an agenda for the focus group. The agenda was designed to encourage creative thinking and reflection among youth participants. Representatives from the Hart County Recreation Department, Hart County Archway Partnership, and the local 4-H Club then met to discuss the agenda and plan for the focus group.

Hart County 4-H Agent Brandi Shiflet contacted local youth and coordinated their participation in a focus group on July 17, 2012. Participants ranged in age from 10 to 18 and came from diverse socio-economic and racial and ethnic backgrounds. A total of eight youth participated in the session.

The focus group was held inside of the local 4-H facility and lasted approximately two hours. The focus group began with an ice-breaker and an exercise to stimulate

creative thinking about possible recreation department offerings. Participants were then asked to identify and discuss current strengths and weaknesses of Recreation Department programs and facilities. The group then generated a list of ideas based on the earlier creative thinking exercise to improve program offerings and facilities. Finally, they prioritized their ideas for “What’s Next?” using a voting system.

In the discussion around “What’s Not Working,” youth stressed the need to diversify the kinds of recreational activities being offered to include more than team sports and to increase accessibility for youth by scheduling activities in the afternoon rather than late evenings, and ensuring that facilities were safe. There was particular agreement on the need for improved safety around bathrooms during activities. Youth cited the new senior/community center, the team sports leagues, and playgrounds as recreation venues that are working well. When asked to identify programs and initiatives to include in future Recreation Department planning, youth prioritized paintball, bike trails, an indoor waterpark, remodeling current trails and playgrounds, installing a zip line, and developing a movie theatre with a Taco Bell, in that order.

Participants, particularly older youth, expressed doubt that all of their ideas would be able to be realized due to limited financial resources. Youth expressed appreciation at being included in the planning process and were eager to know what the final results of the planning and implementation processes would be.

### **Community Online & Paper Survey**

During the process of advertising and inviting participation in the community public meetings described above, we included a link to an online survey on flyers, Facebook, emails, and in the *Hartwell Sun* ad. A paper version of the survey was run as an ad for one week in the *Hartwell Sun*. We hoped that the survey would be an option for people who were unable to attend the public meetings or did not feel as comfortable offering their feedback in a public setting. Survey results were intended to contribute to the information about the Recreation Department and recreation opportunities collected during the community feedback process.

The online survey was hosted using a free survey web site service, [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com). The paper survey was run in the *Hartwell Sun* for one week and was also distributed by Recreation Advisory Board members and the Recreation Director to those who were interested. We did not run the survey in the *Hartwell Sun* more than one week because only 1 copy of the survey from the newspaper was returned and the low return rate did not justify the cost of continuing to run such a large ad. Please refer to the list above for ways that we promoted both the online survey and community meetings encourage people to share their opinions.

Both the online and paper surveys included questions assessing the types of programs that residents are currently participating in, future interest in a variety of

possible programs/activities/facilities, support for various impacts of recreation activities. The survey also asked respondents to rate the physical condition of existing parks and indicate ways they find out about Recreation Department programs and activities. A total of 100 responses to the online and paper version of the survey were received and analyzed. The following charts and graphs illustrate their responses. Selected comments made by survey participants are also included.

### Program & Activity Participation and Park Usage

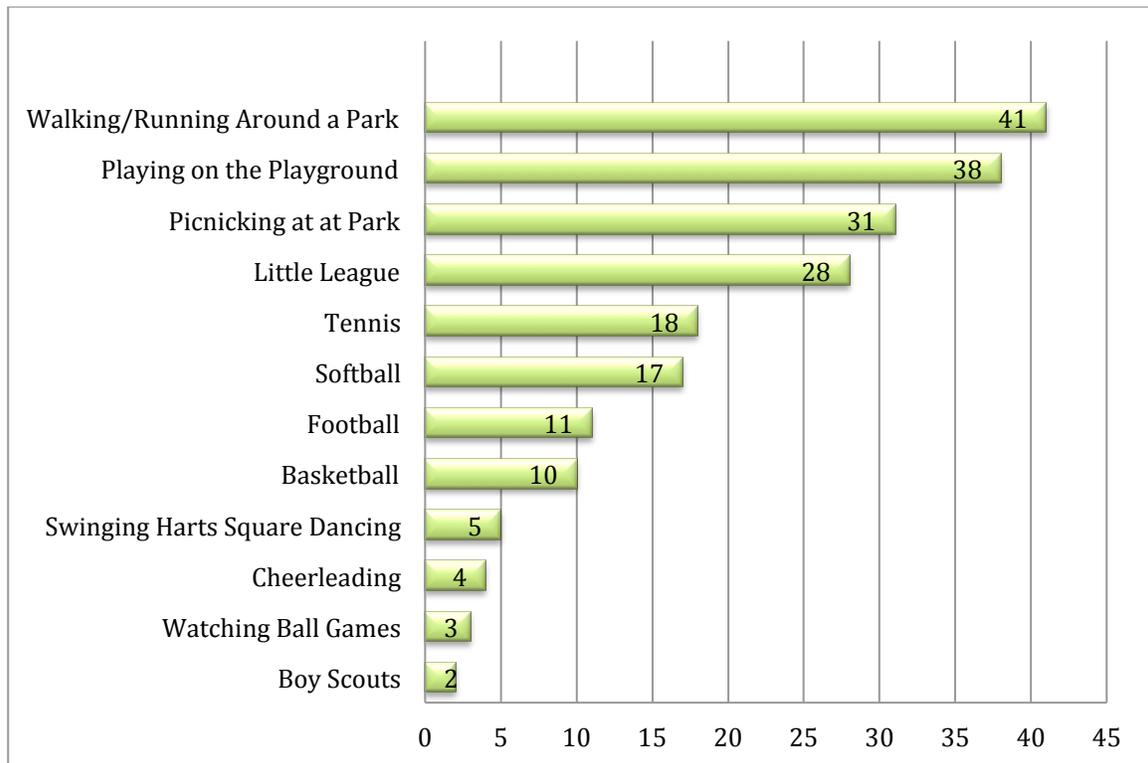
A review of the survey results reveals that the top three recreation activities that survey respondents indicated they or someone in their household had participated in during the last twelve months were not sports programs. The top 3 activities in terms of reported participation were:

1. Walking/Running around a park
2. Playing on the playground
3. Picnicking at a park

These three activities are informal forms of recreation rather than organized, structured activities. They also do not require user fees. Figure 3.1 below shows how often each program or activity was marked by survey respondents.

**Figure 3.1**

Please indicate ALL of the recreation programs or activities offered by the Hart County Recreation Department (or at our facilities) that you or members of your household have participated in during the last 12 months:



Little League was the 4<sup>th</sup> most frequently noted activity by survey participants and softball was 6<sup>th</sup>. Hart County Little League operates both the baseball and softball youth programs. It has its own board of directors, administers its own registration, recruits its coaches and game officials, and creates its own game schedules. Hart County Recreation Department and Hart County Little League collaborate according to a space use agreement whereby Little League uses the fields and provides chalk and field paint, and HCRD maintains the fields and related facilities such as restrooms. There is also an adult softball league that is coordinated by HCRD.

The 5<sup>th</sup> activity in terms of noted participation by survey respondents was tennis. Clay Street Park has 3 sets of double courts (6 courts total) available for the public to use on a first-come, first-served basis. The courts were reconstructed and resurfaced in Spring 2006. The Hartwell Tennis Club uses these courts regularly on weekday mornings for singles and doubles matches. The courts are open from 8:00am-5:00pm on weekdays and see regular usage by residents.

Youth football was noted 7<sup>th</sup> most frequently, and youth basketball was 8<sup>th</sup>. Rec football is played in the Fall and serves youth ages 7-12. Practices and games are held on the football field located at Clay Street Park. Cheerleading is held in conjunction with the youth football program and serves children from ages 5 to 12. Youth basketball has recently been revitalized by the Hart County Recreation Department. The program serves children ages 7 to 12, and games are played in Hart County Middle School gym as part of a cooperative agreement between the Hart County School System and HCRD.

The Swingin' Harts Square Dance Club holds classes in the recreation building at Clay Street Park every Thursday night. The group hosts dances, workshops, and events twice monthly on the first and third Friday. It is a very active club and the dances draw callers, couples, and square dancers from throughout the area. A ballroom dance group has also recently begun holding dances at Clay Street Park, offering basic lessons prior to each event.

Watching children, grandchildren, or teams play ball was an activity mentioned 3 times in the survey comments for this question. The opportunity to watch youth baseball, softball, and football games and cheer on family members and friends draws many spectators to both Clark Street Park and Elberton Highway Park. Another activity noted twice in the survey comments was visiting Clay Street Park for Boy Scout activities such as troop meetings and nature hikes. The park has a Boy Scout hut where a local troop meets weekly.

One respondent mentioned visiting the Hart County Botanical Garden. The botanical garden is located on property within Elberton Highway Park. However, the garden is operated, developed, and maintained by the Northeast Georgia Master Gardeners, a separate non-profit organization that leases the land from

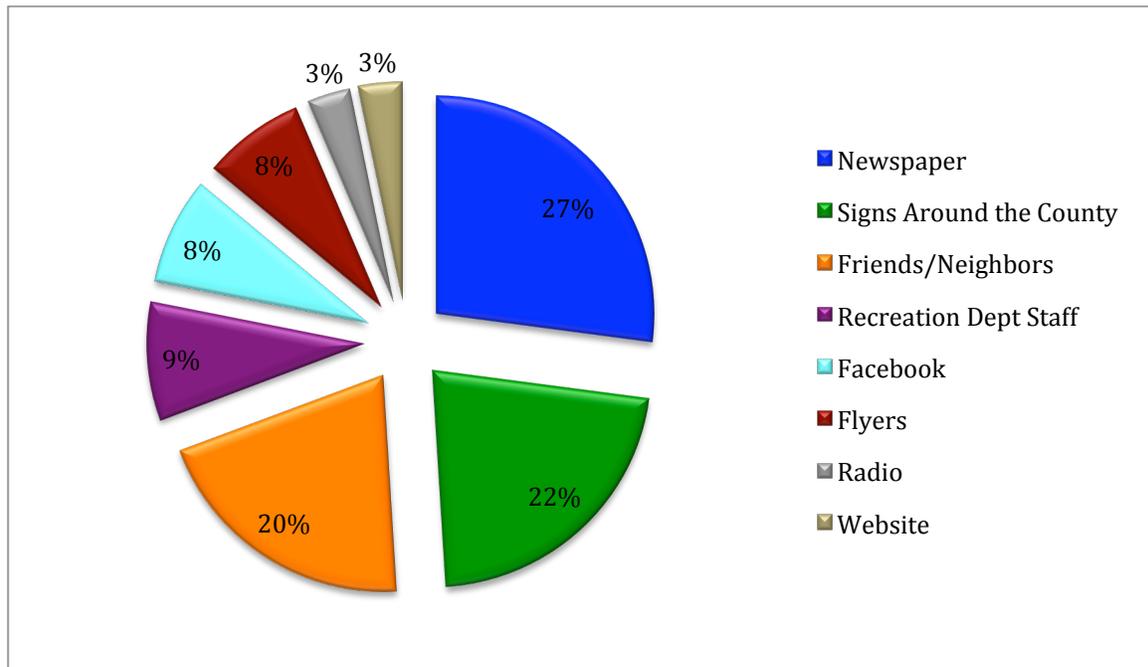
Hart County government. Dedicated volunteers have raised their own funds and devoted countless hours to developing the garden. The garden includes a pavilion that can be reserved by the public for special events, a memorial garden, shade garden, and children’s garden areas, sculptures, and a fountain.

### How People Learn About HCRD Programs & Activities

Understanding how people currently learn about recreation is important to planning how to communicate information most effectively. Survey respondents were asked to share all the ways that they learn or hear about Hart County Recreation Department programs and activities. The pie chart below shows which communication methods are succeeding at reaching potential participants.

**Figure 3.2**

Please check ALL the ways that you learn or hear about Recreation Department programs and activities:



The findings indicate that survey respondents primarily find out about HCRD programs by reading the *Hartwell Sun*, seeing signs about sports league registration posted on street corners in downtown Hartwell, through word of mouth from their friends and neighbors, and from Hart County Recreation Department staff. Facebook was noted by 8% of respondents, and 3% mentioned the Recreation Department’s page on the Hart County Government web site. Another 8% noted flyers and 3% heard the information on the radio.

Given these responses, the Recreation Department should continue working with the *Hartwell Sun* and using small temporary signs around town to promote programs. Hart Cable also runs public service ads and information on Channel 3. The ads run

at no cost to local government and Hart Cable serves a large percentage of Hart County cable customers. Advertising on Hart Cable is a no-cost, wide-reach way to share information.

HCRD should also continue building awareness of their existing Facebook page, especially among parents of youth sports participants, who are likely to have Facebook accounts and smartphones to access Facebook. Adults over age 55 are currently one of the most rapidly growing groups of Facebook users, so it is also effective for reaching older age groups. HCRD began actively using Facebook in late 2010 and currently has almost 175 “Likes.” The Department recently made banners to display during ball games that promote their Facebook page to spectators. To further promote the page, they should also include the Facebook icon/logo on sports league registration materials and in ads in the *Hartwell Sun* and Hart Cable.

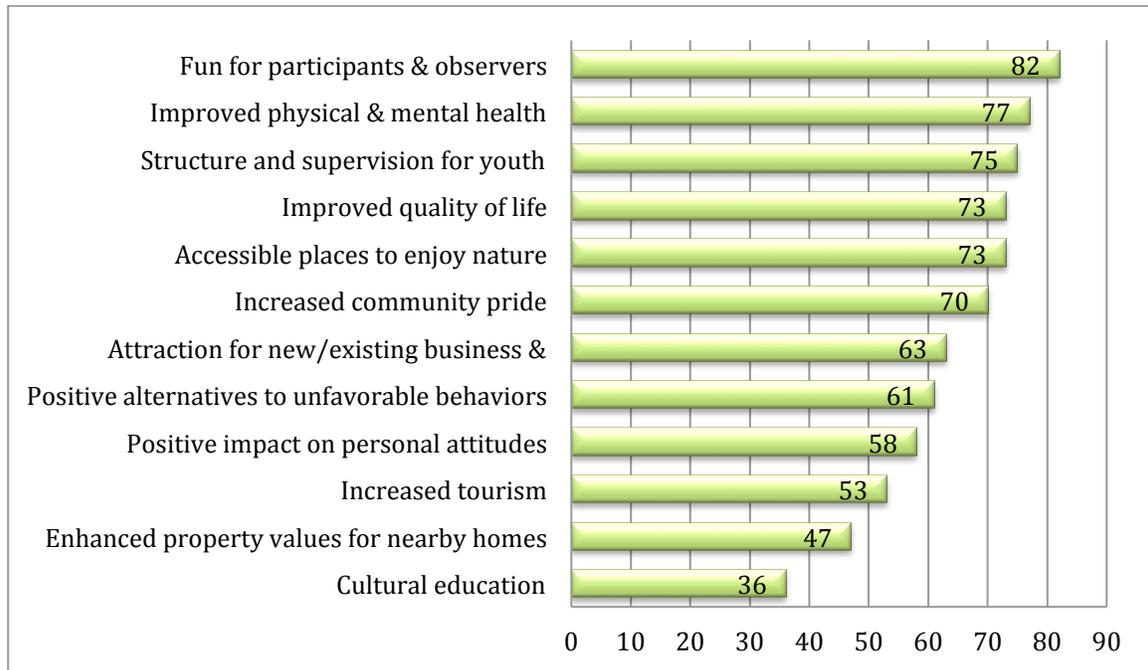
Social media platforms like Facebook have potential for sharing information and building public support. Facebook is a means to disseminate accurate information quickly to a potentially large audience who can further share information face-to-face with their friends and neighbors. Regular Facebook postings with sports program registration dates, game schedules, photos of activities at the parks, facilities available to the public, updates about improvements being made to the parks, and other relevant news can help the Hart County Recreation Department get the word out to the public. Having a well-known, go-to place online for residents to get up-to-date information and forms may also reduce the number of phone calls and emails to the Recreation Director and staff.

### **Expectations of Public Parks & Recreation**

Understanding what community members expect from public parks and recreation opportunities is a critical part of ensuring that planning efforts will address those expectations. Online survey respondents were asked to share their expectations for what they feel is important for Hart County’s public parks and recreation activities, programs, and events to provide. This question was intended to better understand the distinctions between how community members view and value public parks and recreation within the larger community context. What do residents believe is most important that parks provide? Figure 3.3 below depicts the responses in order of importance.

**Figure 3.3**

It is important to me that Hart County’s public parks and recreation activities, programs, and events provide (please check ALL that apply):



The most popular responses seem to suggest that survey respondents rate psycho-social benefits of parks and recreation as more important to them than economic development benefits. Psycho-social benefits include fun, personal health, youth development, access to nature, and better quality of life. Examples of economic development benefits are increased property values, enhanced ability to recruit new industry, and encouraging more tourism. The results indicate that fun for participants and observers is paramount. Improved physical and mental health, structure and supervision for youth, improved quality of life, accessible places to enjoy nature, and increased community pride were also important.

***“[It is important than we] keep Hart Countians in our own community to enjoy family time. Many families travel out of county to enjoy other facilities because we do not have the same amenities that surrounding counties have.”***

-Comment from online survey

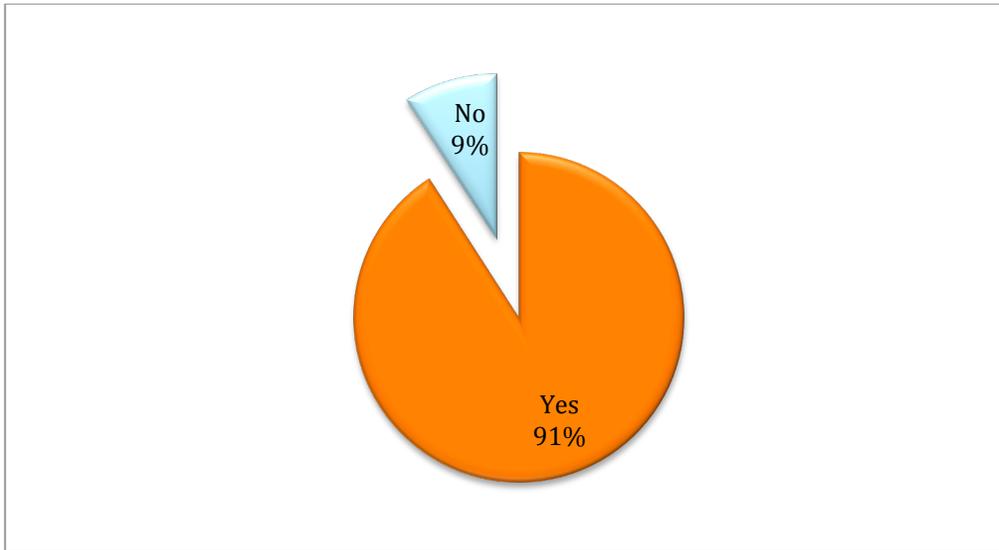
***“Our community NEEDS places for kids and families to go...Hart County is a wonderful place to raise a family, but safe, attractive places to play/ride bikes/etc. are sorely missed!!!”***

Several comments are included above. Comments for this question also noted the importance of providing safe and attractive places for children and families to

play, ride bikes, and enjoy family time together in Hart County. Several respondents suggested specific parks in other communities that they liked and felt could serve as models. While respondents indicated that the personal and social aspects of parks and recreation opportunities are most important to them, they also recognized the economic impact of parks and green spaces to the community. In fact, 90.9% of survey respondents said they believed that parks and green spaces provide economic benefit for Hart County.

**Figure 3.4**

Do you believe parks and green spaces provide economic benefit for Hart County?



### **Program or Activity Interests**

Survey respondents were also asked to indicate which activities, facilities, special events, classes and programs they or someone in their household would participate in or use if they were available in Hart County. This question was intended to give respondents an opportunity to share their desires for future facility and program development for the Hart County Recreation Department. Six items topped the list:

1. Walking trails
2. Concerts
3. Miniature golf
4. Movies in the park
5. Festivals
6. Nature Walk

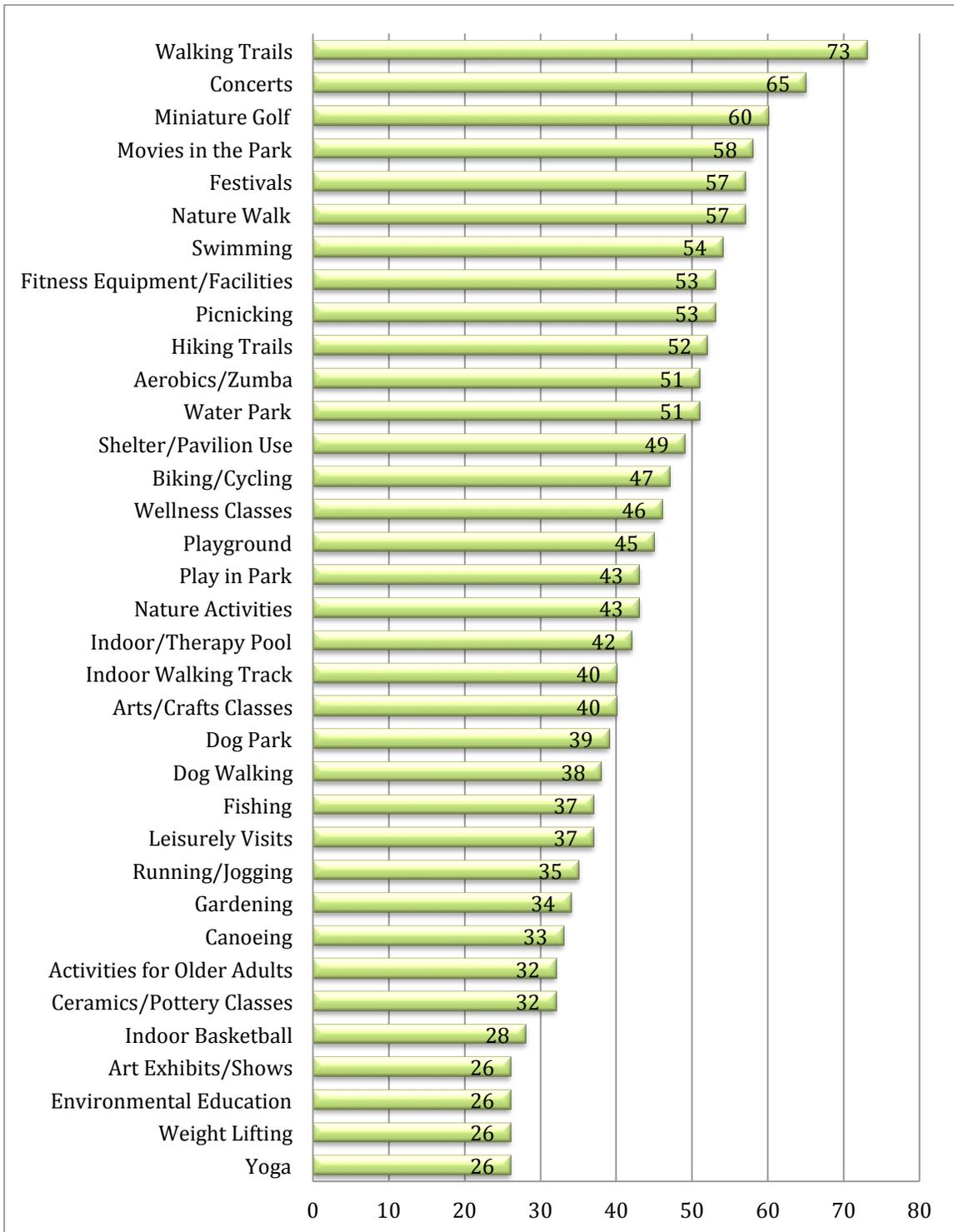
The activities reflect a strong preference among survey respondents for social and family-oriented events as well as facilities for recreation, like trails and miniature golf, for older adults and others who are not involved in sports leagues. The programs and activities that were mentioned more than 25 times by respondents are shown in Figure 3.5, on the next page.

Respondents also wrote in a number of other programs that were not listed in the survey. Some other programs that were suggested in the comments were:

- special fun (non-sport) events
- sport tournaments
- a vita course
- a wider variety of dance opportunities
- bocce
- kickball
- wrestling
- dog park
- walking track
- chili cook-off
- bowling alley
- dog training
- foreign language classes
- fee-based technical classes
- fishing pond

**Figure 3.5**

*If they were available in Hart County, in which of the following would you or members of your household participate?*

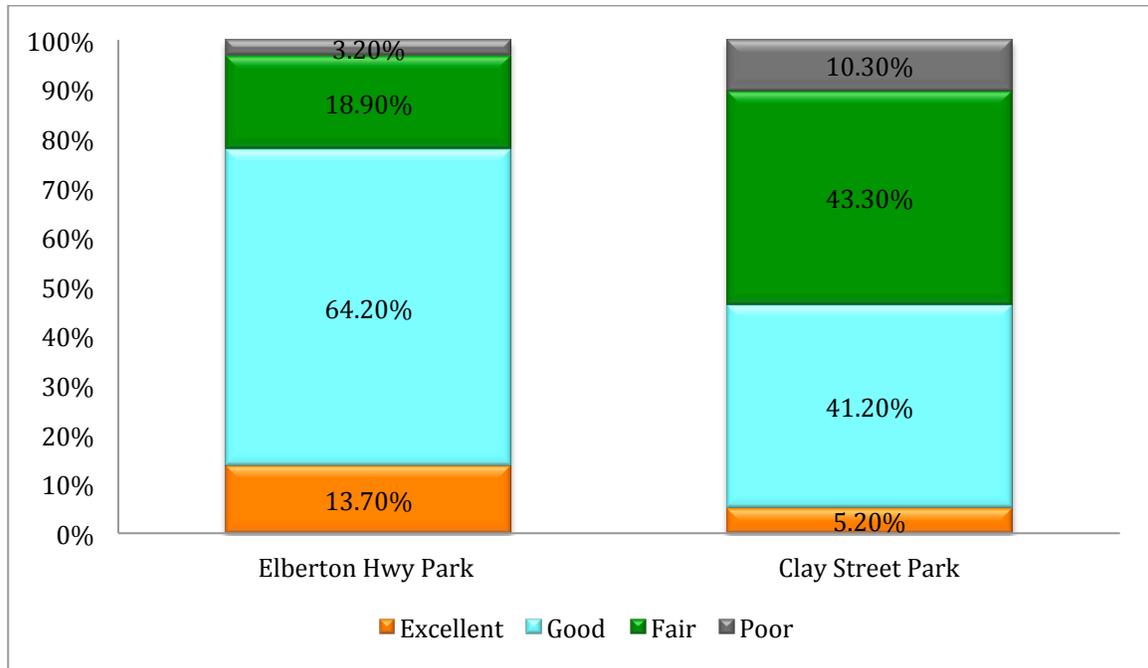


### Perceived Physical Condition of Parks

Survey respondents were asked to rate the overall physical condition of Clay Street Park (Old Park) and Elberton Highway Park (New Park). The ratings and comments given by respondents indicate that the condition of the parks has room for improvement. Ratings are shown in Figure 3.6 below.

**Figure 3.6**

How would you rate the overall physical condition of Hart County Parks?



Commenters made several positive comments. The Hart County Botanical Garden was noted as an asset. The garden is maintained by the Northeast Georgia Master Gardeners, a separate non-profit organization that leases land within Elberton Highway Park from Hart County government. Another respondent noted that Elberton Highway Park “looks good.” Elberton Highway Park received 77.9% “excellent” or “good” ratings.

Clay Street Park had lower ratings than Elberton Highway Park, with only 46.4% of respondents rating its physical condition as “excellent” or “good.” It was rated “poor” by 10.3% of respondents. It is called “Old Park” locally, a name that may help create and reinforce low expectations. One commenter observed: “Old Park is scattered and not organized.” These ratings and the comments suggest that the public wants to see some improvements made to the park. Specific maintenance-related comments for Clay Street Park suggested resurfacing existing tennis courts, sprucing up the recreation building, improving parking, keeping the bathrooms clean, and expanding the playgrounds. Requests for Elberton Highway Park were to build new tennis courts and develop more things to do there. General comments

for both parks included expanding non-sports options at both parks and devoting greater attention to keeping restrooms clean and supplied.

***“New Park, not enough things to do there. Old Park, no parking.”***

***“[The parks are] not nearly as good as those in our surrounding area.”***

***“Recreation Center building on Clay Street, while much improved, could still use some sprucing up - especially the entry area.”***

***“Restrooms need to be cleaned/updated and supplied with toilet paper, soap, soap dispensers, paper towels, towel dispensers.”***

A third of the comments made by survey respondents about the parks pertained to Little League, a separate non-profit organization with its own Board of Directors that coordinates baseball and softball leagues using Hart County Recreation Department facilities. Half of the Little League comments were related to game scheduling, which is coordinated by Little League volunteers. The other comments were related to baseball and softball field maintenance and improvements. Two comments are below.

***“We still need to do some work to the new fields as far as some holes and the old fields need to be looked at about drainage and holes on a regular basis.”***

***“Need to add black tarp all the way around from dugout to dugout on the current minor league field to keep distractions to ball players to a minimum...especially when hitting, catching and pitching. Too many distractions with parents right on top of you.”***

The number of comments in the survey related to Little League baseball and softball suggest that the public does not understand the partnership between HCRD and Hart County Little League. All Little League-related comments and feedback collected through the survey will be shared with both the Little League Board of Directors and HCRD. This may help both organizations be aware of the feedback, understand the concerns of parents and other citizens, and foster an opportunity to work together to make needed improvements.



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Section 4:

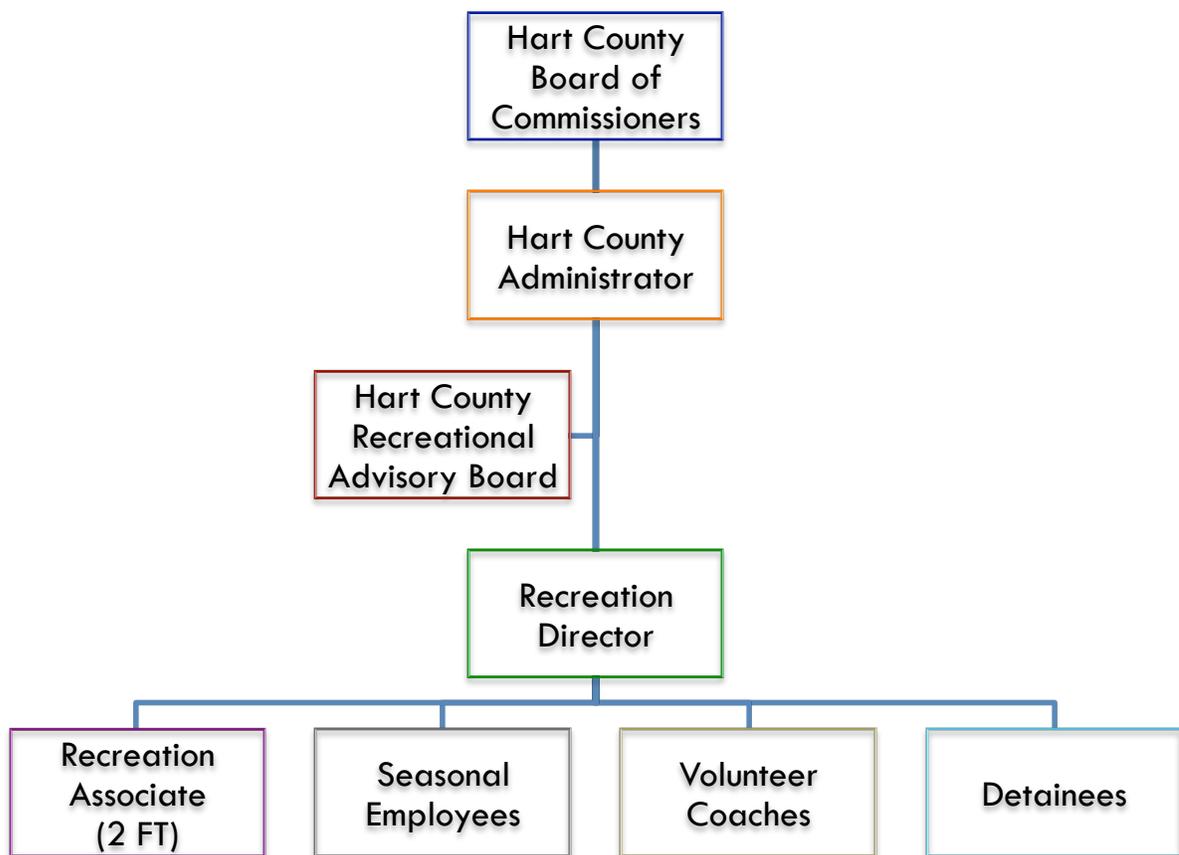
# DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION & ANALYSIS

## Organizational Structure

Figure 4.1 depicts the organizational structure for the HCRD. As a department head, the Recreation Director reports directly to the Hart County Administrator. The Recreation Advisory Board is comprised of seven volunteer, appointed members and serves in an advisory role, providing input to the Recreation Director and recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. The Recreation Director manages 2 full-time employees as well as a number of part-time seasonal employees, coordinates volunteers, and supervises detainees from the Whitworth Detention Center who work in the parks several days per week.

**Figure 4**

Hart County Recreation Department Organizational Chart



## Staffing Levels

The staffing levels of a recreation department have a direct relationship to the level of service, maintenance, and programs that the department can provide. The HCRD is extremely lean, and current staffing levels are a limiting factor for providing the number and quality of programs and the level of maintenance of the parks for the community. The Hart County Recreation Department has three full-time, permanent employees. These include the Recreation Director and two Recreation Associates. During the year, HCRD also employs a number of part-time,

seasonal employees such as referees, umpires, scorekeepers, gate attendants, and concessionaires to help support the football, cheerleading, basketball, and adult softball leagues. Volunteers play an essential role as coaches for the youth teams. Detainees from the Whitworth Detention Center also assist with maintenance activities in the parks. The table below provides some comparison data for full and part-time staffing levels from the benchmarked recreation departments.

**Table 4**  
Recreation Department Staffing Levels

Department Staffing Levels	County Recreation Department				
	Hart	Dawson	Franklin	Madison	Stephens
Full-Time Director?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
# Full-Time Staff	3	10	4	6	7
# Seasonal/ Part-Time Staff	25	13	20	30	36

Hart County has the least number of full-time staff of all the benchmarked communities. With so few staff, the Hart County Recreation Director is involved in a hands-on capacity in all of the department’s activities, including sports leagues, facilities maintenance, and administration. The Recreation Director also oversees maintenance for all Hart County government facilities. This includes maintenance tasks ranging from changing light bulbs to unclogging toilets to coordinating with various contractors for repairs and construction. The Recreation Director routinely works on evenings and weekends, far beyond the hours of a full-time position. He spends much of his time on tasks that could potentially be handled by a lower-paid program coordinator, freeing up his time to focus on administrative and strategic managerial duties.

Training is one aspect of the HCRD that is positive. The Recreation Director is an active member of both the Georgia Parks and Recreation Association (GPRA) and the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) and attends training meetings, programs, conferences, and online trainings to stay up-to-date in the field. The two full-time Recreation Associates do not receive any training related to the functions of their jobs. However, there are plans for them to attend pesticide training in the future.

**Office Space and Equipment**

The recreation office is located in the recreation building at Clay Street Park. The building includes a recreation room, two storage rooms for recreational equipment, and an office with two desks. HYDRA, a nonprofit organization serving youth, operates its programs out of a large room at the back of the recreation room. The building was originally an outdoor, open-sided pavilion that was later walled in, resulting in space and structural constraints. It is cold in the winter and hot in the summer because it was not originally designed to be a closed space. The electrical system does not comply with code requirements.

The HCRD office is well-worn, does not have windows or personal work spaces, and often smells musty. The room is air-conditioned by a noisy wall unit that makes conversation extremely difficult when it is running. Internet access is unreliable due to the metal building structure, which disrupts Internet and radio signals within the building. The office room and the recreation building do not comply with ADA access requirements and do not have ADA-compliant restrooms. Addressing ADA issues is critical because the building not only serves the Recreation Department, but is also used as a polling location during elections, and the other restrooms in the park are also not ADA compliant because there are no sidewalks leading to the restroom/concessions building.

On a positive note, the Recreation Director's desktop computer is up to date and there is also a laptop and a printer. The office furniture is used, but was recently purchased and is in good shape.

### **Organizational and Staffing Needs**

Several key recommendations will help the Hart County Recreation Department better serve the needs of the community. These recommendations will help support the HCRD as it implements this comprehensive plan and enhances its operations in response to community feedback that has been provided during this planning process. The recommendations have been categorized as either immediate needs, to be addressed in the next 5 years, or longer-term needs, to be implemented over the longer term.

#### **Immediate Needs**

A *Recreation Program Coordinator* position is needed to coordinate existing sports leagues and begin developing new programs and activities as requested by the community during this planning process. This staff member would relieve some of the Recreation Director's workload by attending ball games, coordinating volunteer coaches, working with the football concessionaire, and supervising seasonal employees such as scorekeepers, officials, and gate attendants. These duties occupy a key portion of the Recreation Director's time, preventing him from engaging in more strategic activities. This position would also help the Recreation Director to develop and implement new, non-sport programs to meet the needs and wishes of the community, and possibly also partner with the Senior Center Director to collaboratively develop new programs and activities for older adults. Requirements for this position would include experience in recreation programming and sports league coordination. **This position should be hired in the next 12 months.**

A *Parks Superintendent* with a strong background in landscape and turf care as well as facilities maintenance is needed to maintain the parks and county government facilities. Many of the comments made by community members during the planning process were related to the appearance or maintenance of the parks, ball fields, and facilities such as the recreation building and restrooms. This position would help

ensure that the parks are well-maintained and safe for the public to use and enjoy. The Parks Superintendent would have training in turf management, chemical applications, facilities maintenance, and ADA requirements. This position would also work with other county government departments and skilled trade contractors to organize routine maintenance schedules and make repairs to ensure county facilities are well-maintained, inside and out. **This position should be hired in the next 12 months.**

#### Marketing and Communication

Marketing and communication is an organizational function that needs improvement. Community input collected through the planning process highlights the need for improved marketing and communication regarding HCRD facilities and activities.

The lack of park signage is a communication-related issue that was identified through the community input meetings and discussions with HCRD staff. They cited a need for entryway signage for the parks, and also for ball field signage so spectators and players can find the correct field. The Recreation Department recently developed a new logo to be used for signage, marketing/branding for parks, programs, uniforms, and activities. The logo received positive feedback from the public during community input meetings.

Related to the need for signage and the development of the new logo, HCRD should strongly consider naming the parks, as they are currently known locally by either their location (Clay Street Park and Elberton Highway Park) or their age (Old Rec Park and New Rec Park). Naming the parks would be a way to publicly promote the parks, strengthen their identities, and celebrate the new energy that is building in the Recreation Department. It might also provide the community with a naming opportunity to honor local leaders, donors, or sponsors. If the parks are to be named, it must be done prior to designing and installing entryway and directional signage.

There seems to be a lack of awareness in the community of the variety of facilities and programs available at the parks. For example, online survey comments indicated that some respondents do not know that there are 2 playgrounds and several picnic areas/pavilions at Clay Street Park. Some do not know about the current programs offered, as illustrated by one online survey comment: "Other than Little League, which is not done by the Recreation Department, I have not heard about any recreation programs." Other comments indicate some confusion about Little League game scheduling, which could be alleviated by joint communications from Little League and the HCRD to better spread information among players, parents, and family members.

As new programs and activities are developed by HCRD in response to this comprehensive plan, consistent, clear communication and marketing will become

increasingly important. It is critical that the department develop a standard process for sharing information with the public and for marketing its programs, parks, and facilities. This process might include developing a basic press release template, creating standard newspaper ads or flyers that can be quickly updated with specific program or event details, or setting a schedule for posting updates to the department's Facebook or web site pages. This will streamline the process, improving communication of key information to the public, simplifying efforts to promote the department, and decreasing the number of incoming phone calls to the Recreation Director from the public.

## **Longer-Term Needs**

### Landscape & Facilities Maintenance Standards

HCRD staff is stretched very thin with regular turf, ball field, and facilities maintenance, and are not able to proactively provide preventive maintenance. Developing documented standards and checklists for landscape and facilities maintenance can help operationalize ongoing, routine activities. Standards and checklists for common activities and facilities can help staff and detainees more efficiently devote maintenance-related time and resources and be more proactive regarding maintenance.

Documented standards and checklists can also help ensure that maintenance operations continue smoothly regardless of staff changes or the involvement of volunteers or contractors. Below are some suggestions for developing standards. Templates for many of these can be acquired from the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) web site or from other Recreation Departments and adapted to meet specific local needs.

### **Grass/Turf**

Field preparation checklist, including preferred types of grass for various locations  
Fertilizer/Chemical application schedule  
Mowing schedules  
Grass/turf inspection checklist

### **Ball Fields/Tennis Courts**

Striping/lining procedures  
Preventive maintenance schedule  
Court resurfacing schedule  
Safety checklist  
Irrigation checklist

### **Buildings**

Cleaning duties checklist  
Concessions operations checklist  
Regular maintenance checklist  
Preventive maintenance checklist

Inspections checklist

**Playgrounds**

Playground surface maintenance checklist

Inspections checklist

Playground design standards

**Special Events**

Set-up and teardown checklists, including trash collection procedures

**Equipment and vehicles**

Daily, monthly, & annual service checklists

Replacement schedules



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Section 5:

# FACILITIES INVENTORY & PLANNING

Maintaining and improving existing parks and recreation facilities accounts for a large portion of funds budgeted to recreation in Hart County. It is important that parks and recreational facilities are safe, well-maintained, and accessible to residents who are interested in using them. This section will compare, inventory, assess, and make recommendations for the existing parks and facilities managed and maintained by the Hart County Recreation Department. Recommendations for each facility are based on existing plans that have been developed, community input collected through this planning process, and information from staff.

HCRD currently manages three recreation facilities: Clay Street Park, Elberton Highway Park, and the Gum Branch Mega Ramp Recreation & Tournament Facility. Each of these facilities includes recreation assets for public usage. The table below provides an inventory of facilities/assets and comparison data for facilities currently managed by the benchmarked recreation departments.

**Table 5**  
Facilities Managed by Benchmarking Departments

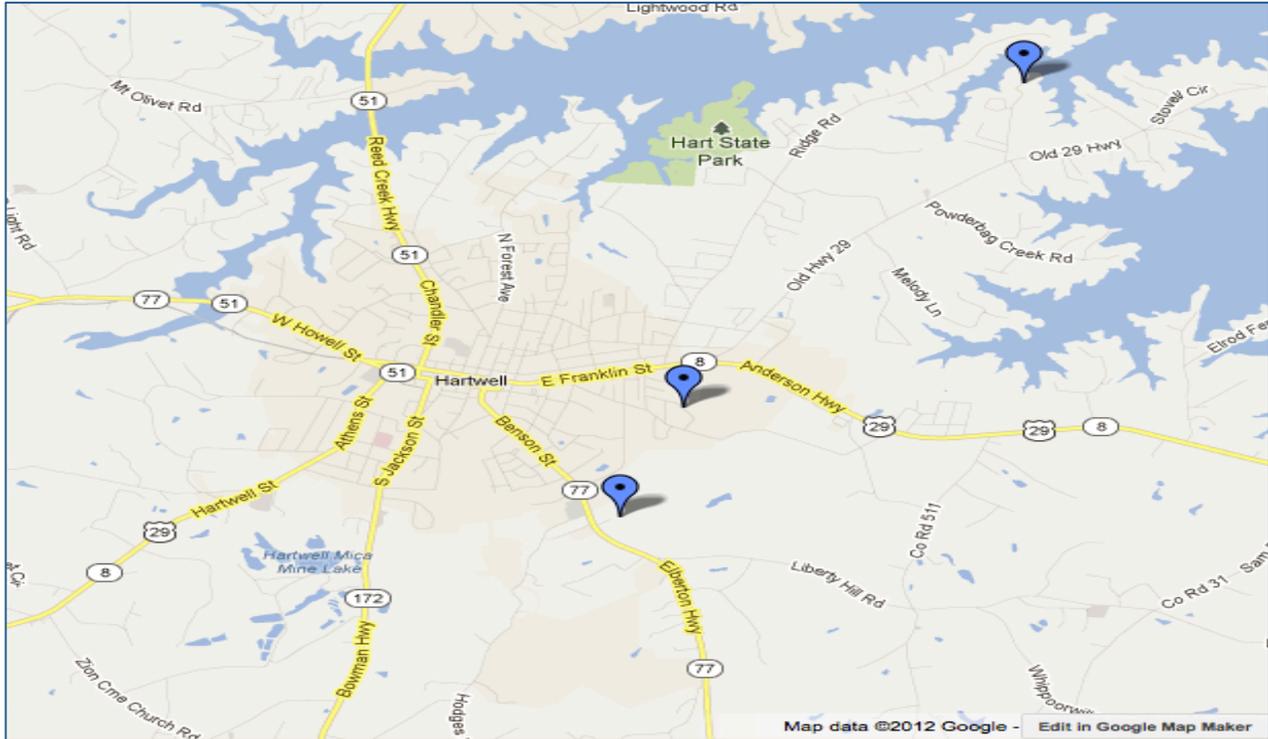
Facilities Managed by the Department	County Recreation Department				
	Hart	Dawson	Franklin	Madison	Stephens
Total Acres	115	204	79	95	112
# Parks	3	4	2	5	2
# Baseball/Softball Fields	8	15	10	12	8
# Football/Soccer Fields	1	4	3	12	1
# Tennis Courts	6	6	0	4	3
# Basketball Courts	2	5	2	0	2
# Swimming Pools	0	1	0	0	1
# Playgrounds	2	3	0	3	1
# Recreation/Community Centers	0	1	1	0	1
# Miles of Trails	0	1.9	0	2	2.75

The benchmark data indicates that of all the benchmarked communities, Stephens County is the most similar to Hart County in terms of comparable facilities and acreage managed by the Recreation/Parks Department. Dawson County has the most extensive acreage and variety of facilities of all the departments that responded to the benchmark survey. Franklin has the smallest number of acres and the least variety of facilities. Hart County Recreation Department has the lowest ratio of full-time staff to acres managed of all of the benchmarked communities, with 3 full-time staff for 115 acres. Madison County (6 FT staff for 95 acres) and Stephens County (7 FT staff for 112 acres) have the highest ratios of staff to acres managed.

### Geographic Distribution of Recreation Facilities

Location within the county is an important factor related to residents' access to parks. The two parks managed by HCRD are both located within the city limits of Hartwell, not surprising because it is a population center. Clay Street Park and

Elberton Highway Park are located within 1.5 road miles of each other, and Gum Branch Mega Ramp is roughly 3 miles from Clay Street Park. Gum Branch Mega Ramp's location was purposefully selected to be convenient to Hartwell and Hart County's main retail corridor along U.S. Highway 29, to benefit from potential retail and lodging revenues resulting from tournaments and other events. The map below shows the proximity of the three facilities.



**Map 5**  
Hart County Recreation Department Parks & Facilities

As the county's system of parks and green spaces develops and Hart County's population grows, location will be a key consideration. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Hart County's population is 25,213, including 4,549 people living in the City of Hartwell. Providing recreation facilities and activities to residents in more rural areas outside of Hartwell will be important to ensure balanced delivery without long drives.

One recommendation is for the county to develop passive recreational uses in the northern part of the county where there are a number of homes close to Lake Hartwell, such as multi-purpose trails within the three phases of Gateway Industrial Park (See Appendix A). Such trails would not only provide industries and their employees with wellness amenities, but also local residents who live in that area of Hart County and want a safe place to ride bikes, walk, rollerblade, and walk their dogs. Trails at Gateway would also be an opportunity for public-private partnerships to enhance the area and benefit economic development, local industry, and the community.

## Clay Street Park

**Location:** 200 Clay Street, Hartwell, GA 30643

**Acreage:** 25.76 acres

**Amenities:**

4 baseball/softball fields (lighted)

3 batting cages

1 football field (lighted)

6 tennis courts (lighted)

2 playground areas

2 covered picnic pavilions

1 concession/restroom building with offices above, by ball fields

1 concession building by football field

1 restroom building by football field

1 restroom building by tennis courts

1 recreation building, including Recreation Department office

2 maintenance sheds

This park has 4 ball fields that are used for softball and baseball. Three are 200-foot fields, and one is a 320-foot field. The fields have aluminum bleachers that are in good condition but are not ADA accessible. There are score towers at each ball field, and a small building which houses concessions, restrooms, and offices used by Little League. The field lighting is aging, the poles are warped, the lighting technology is outdated, and they will need to be replaced in the next 5 years. Newer lighting with better technology would be more efficient by allowing the HCRD to better manage the “on” timing of the lights and associated electricity costs. The fields are not irrigated, which makes turf maintenance a challenge. One issue raised in the community input meetings is that the fields should be named/numbered and have improved signage to distinguish them and make it easier for players and spectators to find the correct field when coming to games.

There is an 80-yard youth football field with bleachers, a restroom facility, concession stand, and score tower. The field is irrigated, with good turf. The field has poor drainage due to having been constructed on a backfilled low-lying/swamp area. The lighting is of the same age as the baseball field lighting, and has similar issues. It will need to be replaced in the next 5 years.

There are two playground areas that were recently renovated in 2011-2012. The ground was excavated, drainage was installed, and the mulch was replaced. However, the playground equipment is over 15 years old and will need to be replaced within the next 5-10 years due to fatigue from sun exposure and usage. Both playgrounds have ADA accessibility issues due to slope of the land between nearby parking and the playground as well as the lack of paved paths to reach the play equipment from parking areas.

Two maintenance sheds are located in the park. One is used by HCRD to store materials such as chalk, paint, fertilizer, and lumber. The other is used for storing grounds-keeping equipment and also as an equipment repair shop. HCRD is experiencing a shortage of storage space due to recently acquired equipment and increased countywide facilities and maintenance responsibilities. A new, larger maintenance building is needed as soon as possible.

The park has six tennis courts, with the lower 4 courts sharing one set of lighting and the two upper courts sharing another set. They were last resurfaced in approximately 2006. Two of the lower courts currently require crack renovation due to their location on an unstable backfill area on a hill. A retaining wall might need to be installed to stabilize these two tennis courts. The position of the lighting poles for the lower four courts is inaccessible to lift trucks, making maintenance and bulb replacement virtually impossible. As a result, a number of bulbs are burned out. This lighting should be repositioned for better access. The lighting for the two upper courts is of the same vintage as the ball field lighting, and is on rusting metal poles. They should be replaced in the next 5 years for improved efficiency and lower lighting costs. Per the Recreation Director and community input meeting comments, player benches should be installed.

Signage is desperately needed to direct visitors to the park and within the park. It will help people to find the park and the amenities within it more quickly and easily. It is also important to improve marketing and communication of recreation facilities and services. Including the Recreation Department's new logo on signage will also help strengthen the identity of recreation within Hart County.

As previously discussed in the section on office space, the Recreation Building is in need of renovations. A list of recommendations is included below.

**Recommendations:**

- Lighting: Replace/update the lighting throughout the park (4 ball fields, 1 football field, and 6 tennis courts).
- Irrigation: Install an irrigation system for the 4 ball fields
- Rehabilitate the Recreation Building: Address the drainage issues on the side of the building facing the tennis courts so the storage room no longer floods. Upgrade electrical systems so they meet code requirements. Improve environmental systems and controls and add insulation for improved energy efficiency. Remediate building entrance and restrooms so they are ADA compliant.
- Maintenance Shop: Construct a maintenance shop to be used to store equipment and supplies and to provide space for staff to service equipment
- Trails: Develop multipurpose trails throughout the park and connecting to Elberton Highway Park to give residents an opportunity to walk for recreation and health. Parents currently walk on the road around the park while their children attend practice, creating safety concerns with traffic. The

trails should be ADA compliant and provide a safe route away from traffic hazards. Create a gathering plaza by the concession/restroom building to serve as a trailhead area and meeting place.

- **Playgrounds:** Upgrade the existing playground equipment to ensure it complies with safety standards.
- **Signage:** Install signage at the entryways, at ball fields, and throughout the park to direct visitors. Install signage at the intersection of U.S. Hwy 29 and Randall Street and at both entrances to Clay Street to direct people to the park.
- **Tennis courts:** Lighting should be repositioned and upgraded. Cracks on courts should be repaired. Player benches should be installed.

### **Existing Plans**

The next several pages include plans that have been developed for Clay Street Park by landscape architecture interns from the University of Georgia's College of Environment and Design, through the Hart County Archway Partnership. These include conceptual designs for signage and landscape designs for the entryway into the park along Clay Street, as well as drought-tolerant, low maintenance plant selections. There are also designs for multipurpose trails within the park to provide a safe, accessible place for people to walk, run, bike, and move through the park.

# Clay Street Park

Hartwell, Georgia Design by: Carmen Miranda

View II: Building Screen  
Proposed



The park is adjacent to an unsightly textiles processing warehouse. My design proposes a mural, an evergreen screen, as well as a re-paved multi-use trail.

View I: Entryway  
Proposed



The clients asked for an aesthetically pleasing sign to match the new Parks Department logo. The design also proposes an allee of flowering shrubs, deciduous trees with attractive fall color and large evergreen shrubs to give the park entrance a more formal and attractive look.

Parking Lot Design  
Scale: 1" = 20'



Upright Plum Yew  
Sweetbay Magnolia

Purple Coneflower  
Blackeyed Susan  
Spreading Plum Yew

Wax Myrtle  
Spreading Plum Yew  
Hopseed Bush

Red Maple  
Forsythia  
Sweetbay Magnolia  
Gold Dust Plant

Wax Myrtle

- NOTES:
- Plants listed as ornamental in schedule can be cut down to the ground after they flower.
  - For best results plant trees in fall.
  - For best results water regularly after installation.
  - All plants chosen are expected to live an average of 15 years.
  - Space all plants as shown on the plan.

Park Entrance Design  
Scale: 1" = 20'



Gold Dust Plant

Red Maple

Hopseed Bush

Purple Fountain Grass  
St. John's Wort  
Entry Sign

Forsythia



Quantity	Height	Spread	Hardiness Zone	Sun/Shade Tolerance	Form	Texture
<b>Trees</b>						
7	50 - 60 ft	30 - 50 ft	three to nine	full sun to light shade	rounded	medium
14	15 - 40 ft	10 - 30 ft	five to nine	full sun to part shade	conical upright	medium coarse
5	20 - 30 ft	10 - 12 ft	seven to ten	full sun to part shade	rounded	medium
<b>Shrubs</b>						
9	6 - 10 ft	10 - 15 ft	six to ten	part sun to full shade	rounded	coarse
10	2 - 3 ft	1 - 4 ft	six to nine	full sun to full shade	spreading	medium fine
6	20 - 25 ft	15 - 20 ft	five to nine	part sun to part shade	upright/conical	medium fine
2	10 - 20 ft	8 - 10 ft	seven to eleven	sun to light shade	rounded oval	medium
51	5 ft	6 ft	five to eight	full sun to part shade	rounded	fine
<b>Grasses</b>						
13	1 ft	2 ft	six to ten	full sun to shade	spreading	fine
10	1 ft	2 ft	two to ten	full sun to part shade	rounded	fine
8	1 ft	2 ft	five to nine	full sun to part sun	spreading	fine
8	1 - 2 ft	1 ft	nine to eleven	full sun to part shade	upright	fine
10	1 - 2 ft	1 - 3 ft	four to ten	full sun to part shade	rounded	fine



# Clay Street Park- Walking/ Multi- Purpose Trail



Designer: Snow Plao University of Georgia Summer 2012

Hart County's Clay Street Park is a versatile public recreation center featuring baseball and football fields, basketball and tennis courts, as well as multiple playgrounds, picnic and grilling areas. Centrally located between downtown and lake Hartwell, the park is a great candidate for renovation in order to provide a space for active and passive recreation for all members of the community. The proposed renovations focus on re-establishing vegetation within the park, as well as promoting pedestrian circulation amongst the existing areas of the site. By establishing vegetation, the overall quality of the site is enhanced by increasing total shaded area, a feature which makes the park more hospitable during warm weather. Proposed walking trails will provide organization for pedestrian circulation throughout the site as well as establish pathways for community members to effectively travel from one point to another within the park. There are three types of trails within the park with different length and material. The Red Trail is 0.45 mile long, covered by mulch. Blue Trail is half a mile long, built with concrete. And the Orange Trail is 0.4 mile long, in crushed granite. Community members may utilize these trails for walking, biking, or running, further extending the number of uses for the site.

Central Gathering Area



Before



This Before picture shows the existing condition of the site. One of the main existing issues is that most part of this park is exposed under direct sunshine. Also the condition of the existing turf grass needs some improvement.

After



To address that issue, as you can see from the After picture, the design proposed plenty tall canopy trees along the walking trail as well as near the seating area. This way, people can enjoy some shade while doing exercise or watching the game on a warm day.



## **Elberton Highway Park**

**Location:** 1277 Elberton Highway, Hartwell, GA 30643

**Acreage:** 54.761 acres

**Amenities:**

4 baseball/softball fields (lighted)

1 central concession/restroom building with score tower

1 maintenance shed

This park has 4 ball fields and a moveable pitcher's mound so the fields can be used for either softball or baseball. The fields and lighting are in very good condition, and the fields are irrigated. The complex has a central concession/restroom facility with score tower above, and ADA compliant restrooms. However, despite the inside of the restrooms being ADA compliant, they are not ADA accessible because the 'lip' into the door of the restrooms cannot be navigated by a wheelchair. This needs to be corrected by resurfacing the asphalt around the "lip" of the restroom doorways. There are some drainage issues around the central area where the concessions/restroom building is located. When it rains, water comes off the roof of the building and pools on the asphalt, consequently draining onto the 4 ball fields and washing away infield material. This cause ruts on the infield. This should be remediated by installing gutters on the building and proper drainage in the asphalt.

Signage is urgently needed in the park. The park does not have an entryway sign on Elberton Highway entrance and needs one. The only way to know there is a park there is to spot the ball field lighting from the road. This creates confusion when trying to find the park for activities and events held there. For consistency, signage should be coordinated so that it includes both the name of the park as well as the Hart County Botanical Garden. This will prevent having two different signs in different locations at the entrance, each with aesthetically competing sizing, construction materials, fonts, and logos. One issue raised in the community input meetings is that the fields should be named/numbered to distinguish them and make it easier for players and spectators to find the correct field when coming to games.

There is much potential in the park. It was originally master planned by Robert and Company in Fall 2000. Phase one with the ball fields and central concessions building has been mostly completed, with the exception of installing signage, developing multi-purpose trails, and building a picnic shelter. Phases two and three will include expansion of the access road and parking, and building a community multi-purpose recreation center, family picnic and play area, two football/soccer fields, additional restroom and concessions facilities, relocated maintenance building, and picnic shelters. Infrastructure such as water lines, electricity, lighting, irrigation, well-lit parking, and roads to support these developments must also be installed.

## Recommendations:

- **Complete Phase 1 of original master plan:**
  - **Signage:** Install signage at the entryway on Elberton Highway and within the parkways to direct visitors. Install signage on each ball field so spectators and players can more easily find specific fields.
  - **Improve Drainage:** Address the drainage issues in the area around the concession/restroom building in the center of the ball fields.
  - **Begin Developing Multi-Purpose Trails:** Develop multipurpose trails throughout the park and connecting to Clay Street Park to give residents an opportunity to walk for recreation and health. The trails should be ADA compliant and provide a safe route away from traffic hazards. Create a gathering plaza to serve as a trailhead area and meeting place.
  - **Build Picnic Shelter**
- **Complete Phase 2:**
  - **Develop 2 Football/Soccer Fields:** Develop 2 lighted football/soccer fields, including drainage, irrigation, bleachers, concessions and restroom facilities, and adequate parking.
  - **Continue Developing Multi-Purpose Trails**
  - **Build a Picnic Shelter/Pavilion**
- **Complete Phase 3:**
  - **Build Community Multi-Purpose Recreation Center:** Develop supporting infrastructure, including parking area. Construct a new multi-purpose recreation center with indoor basketball courts, an indoor walking track, program and meeting rooms, and administrative offices for the Recreation Department. Construct a gated splash pad water play area next to the Recreation Center.
  - **Build Family Picnic and Play Area:** Build a covered pavilion with picnic tables and install playground equipment to create a play and picnic area for children and families to enjoy.

## Existing Plans

The next several pages include plans that have been developed for Elberton Highway Park. The first is the original master plan developed for the park in 2000 by the engineering, architecture, and planning and planning firm Robert and Company. The park plan has evolved over the past 12 years with the development of the Recreation Department, observed participation in programs and usage of existing facilities, and the creation of the Hart County Botanical Garden by the Northeast Georgia Master Gardeners in the southeastern portion of the park. The feedback gathered during this overall department master plan will also inform the future development of the park. The Recreation Department would also like to locate the parking lots for the future football/soccer fields on the outside/far side of the fields for safety reasons.

The other park plans included in this section were created by landscape architecture interns from the University of Georgia's College of Environment and Design, through the Hart County Archway Partnership. These include conceptual designs for signage and landscape designs for the entryway into the park off of Elberton Highway and for creating a landscape buffer between the entry drive and parking lot to prevent headlights from blinding batters playing on the field that faces the drive. The landscape plans incorporate drought-tolerant, low-maintenance plant selections. There are also designs for multipurpose trails and a play area within the park to provide a safe, accessible place for people to picnic, play, walk, run, bike, and move through the park.





# Elberton Highway Athletic Fields Hart County, Georgia

Design by Colin Owen, University of Georgia

An effort of the  
Hart County  
Archway Partnership



**PLANTING NOTES:**

1. FOLLOW A REGULAR WATERING SCHEDULE DURING THE FIRST GROWING SEASON TO PROVIDE PLANTS WITH A DEEP, EXTENSIVE ROOT SYSTEM.
2. PURPLE FOUNTAIN GRASS SHOULD BE ANNUALLY CUT BACK TO GROUND LEVEL EVERY WINTER OR EARLY SPRING.
3. LANTANA CAN BE TRIMMED BACK TO 1/3 OF ITS ORIGINAL HEIGHT AND SPREAD IF IT SUFFERS FROM DEAD GROWTH OR BEGINS TO OVERTAKE OTHER PLANTS TO STIMULATE NEW GROWTH AND FLOWERING. TRIM APPROX. 1 TO 3 INCHES FROM TIPS TO SHOOTS.
4. BAYLEA CLUMPS SHOULD BE DIVIDED EVERY 2 TO 3 YEARS IN EARLY SPRING. OLD PLANTAGE SHOULD BE REMOVED BEFORE NEW LEAVES EMERGE.



**PLANT SELECTION**



Botanical Name	Common Name	Quantity	Height	Spread	Hardiness Zones	Exposure	Form	Texture
<i>Forsythia x intermedia</i>	Forsythia	176	4-6'	4-8'	4-8	Full Sun - Part Shade	Rounded	Medium-Fine
<i>Alnus incana</i> 'Red Rain'	Red Gum Daylily	220	18-30"	18-30"	4-11	Full Sun	Clumping	Medium-Coarse
<i>Alnus incana</i> 'Pendula'	Weeping Yucca Holly	54	15-20'	7-10'	8-10	Full Sun - Part Shade	Upright Irregular	Fine
<i>Lantana camara</i> 'Miss Huff'	Miss Huff Lantana	120	3-5'	3-5'	7-11	Full Sun	Rounded	Fine
<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i> 'Rubrum'	Purple Fountain Grass	117	24-48"	24-48"	8-11	Full Sun	Upright Arching	Medium-Fine
<i>Quercus phillyraea</i>	Willow Oak	68	30-50'	30-50'	3-9	Full Sun	Pyramidal Broad	Medium-Fine
<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Littleleaf Linden	49	40-60'	30-40'	3-7	Full Sun	Oval	Medium
<i>Terstroemia gymnanthera</i>	Cleystera	52	8-10'	6-10'	7-10	Full Sun - Part Shade	Rounded	Medium

# Elberton Street Park- Walking/ Multi- Purpose Trail

Designer: Snow Piao University of Georgia Summer 2012



This design of Elberton Street Park focus on re-establishing vegetation within the park, as well as promoting pedestrian circulation amongst the existing areas of the site. The proposed driveway is a two ways drive way with perpendicular parking on one sides. This drive way is also accessible for emergency vehicles such as fire trucks and ambulance. The drive way leads to the top of the site, where you can begin your trail experience. The rail system provides easy access to any part of the park, as well as organization for pedestrian/ wheelchair circulation throughout the site. There are three trails in total. The red mulch trail is mostly in the wood area with a length of 0.8 mile. The orange crashed granite trail goes around the baseball/ softball with a length of 0.6 mile. The blue brick trail goes around the soccer/ football field with a length of 0.4 mile. There are also proposed shaded seating area for people to watch the game or rest.

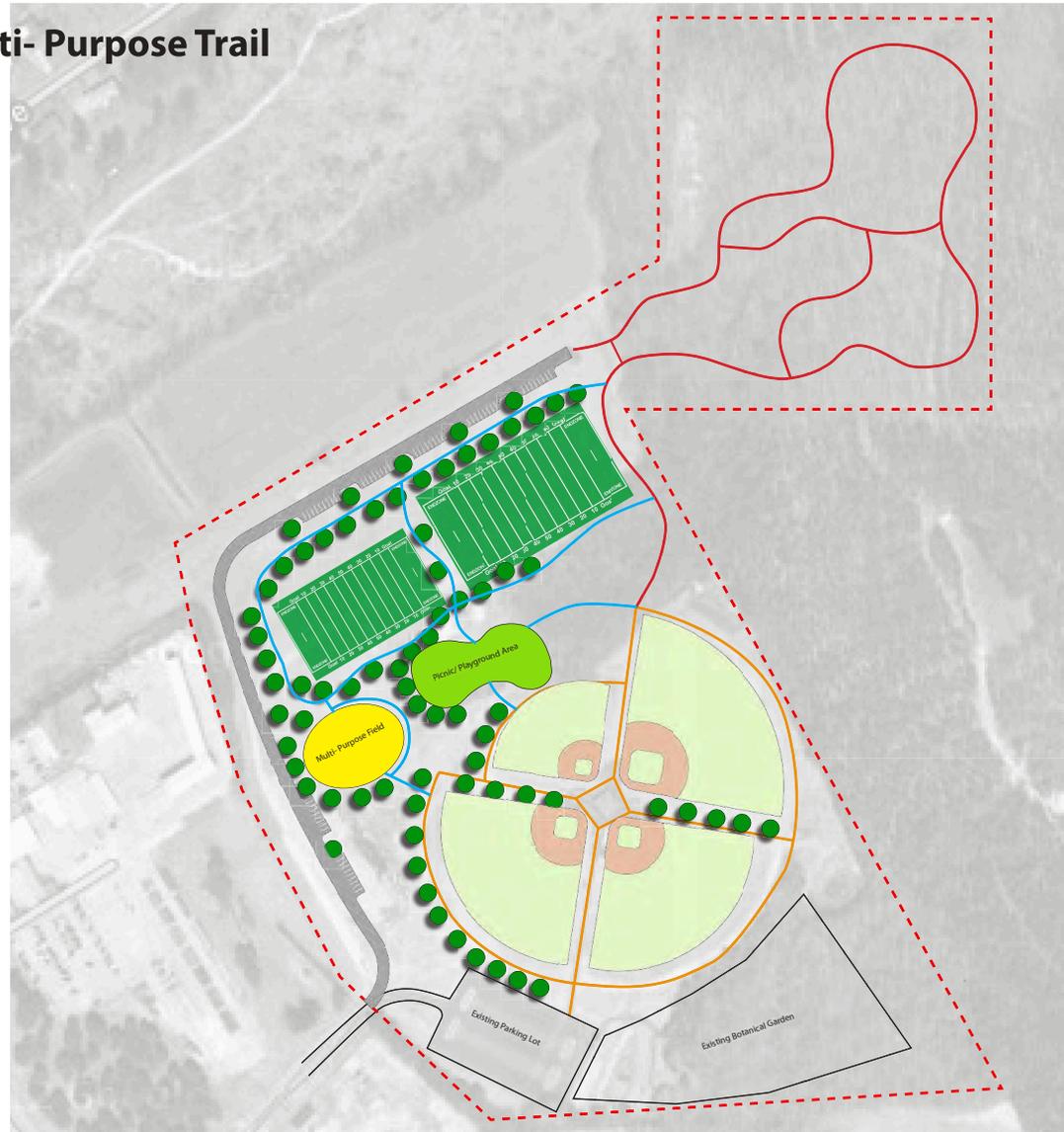
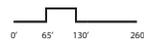
### Legend

- Mulch Trail, 0.8 mile
- Brick Trail, 0.4 mile
- Crashed Granite Trail, 0.6 mile



Picnic/ Playground Area

This picnic/ playground area is located on the west-north side of the park; right next to the proposed drive way. This area is mainly served for family activities. There are benches and shading area for picnic, as well as a playground area, which is not far away from the picnic area for parents to monitor their children easily.

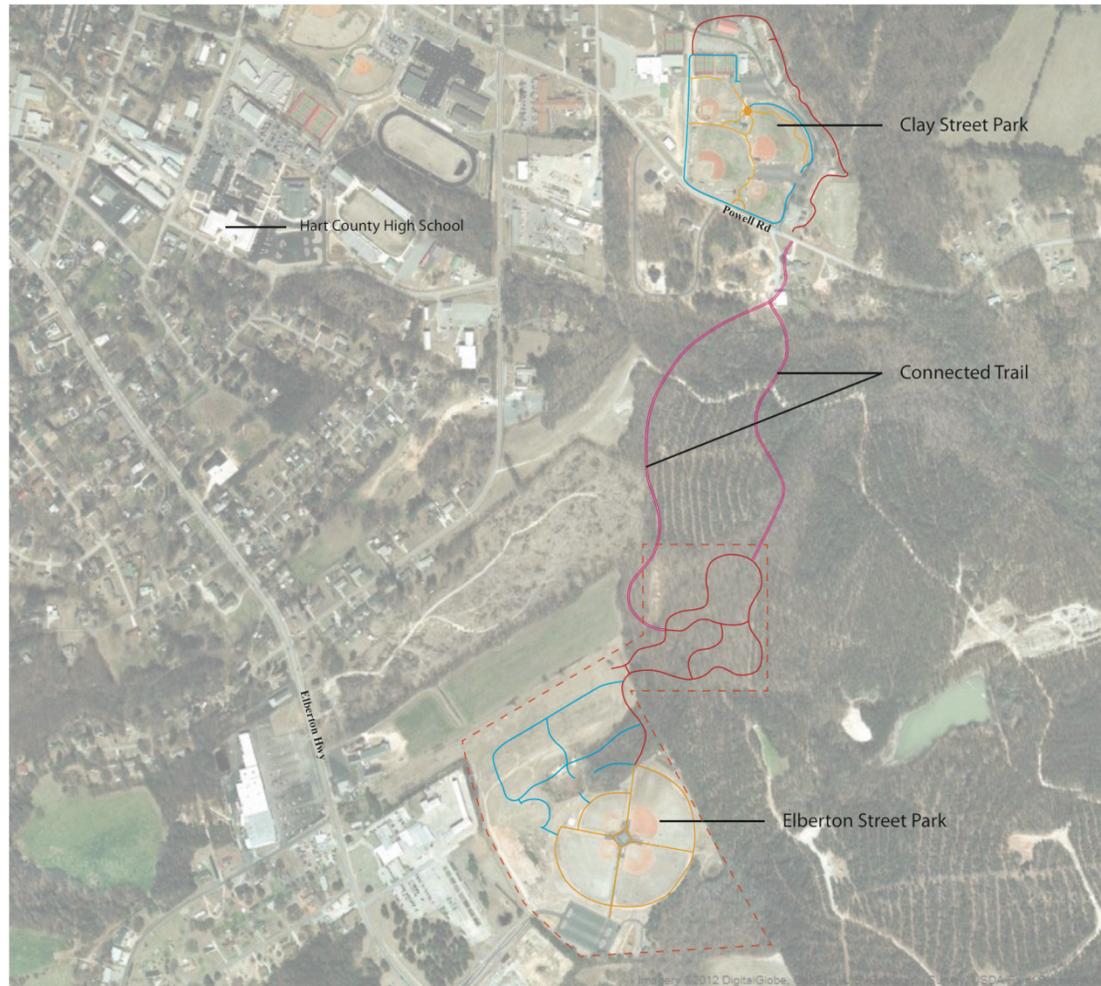


# Elberton Street Park & Clay Street Park Trail Connection

Designer: Snow Piao University of Georgia Summer 2012



This trail connects Clay Street Park and Elberton Street Park, which mainly serves the nearby residential neighborhoods. The design proposes two alternatives for the connection. One is ¼ mile long and the other branch is half mile long. The majority of the walking trail is in shaded woods, with seating along the trail. This walking/ multi- purpose trail would provide a very pleasant walking/ running/ biking experience for people from all kinds of age groups.



## **Gum Branch Mega Ramp Recreation & Tournament Facility**

**Location:** Janna Waller Road, Hartwell, GA 30643

**Acreage:** approx. 35 acres

**Amenities:**

6 boat ramps

1 T-dock

1 covered 50 x 50 pavilion

Restroom facilities

This facility was developed as part of former Governor Sonny Perdue's Go Fish Georgia initiative. The property is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is jointly managed by the Hart County Recreation Department, City of Hartwell, and Hart County Chamber of Commerce. HCRD provides ongoing landscape maintenance and the Recreation Director has managed the construction of the covered pavilion and restroom facilities, which have been completed by a construction crew of state prisoners. The Hart County Chamber of Commerce is responsible for marketing the facility and working with tournament directors to ensure smooth events. The City of Hartwell has installed trees and will provide water service to the restroom facilities. The three groups contributed to funding a t-dock to help attract fishing tournaments. The County and the City will split the costs of water, electricity, and supplies for the restrooms. The funds come from designated local hotel/motel taxes that are designated to be spent for tourism purposes.

Signage is needed at the entryway to direct visitors to the ramps, t-dock, pavilion, and restrooms. Directional signage to help visitors find the facility as they drive in from U.S. Highway 29 and Old Highway 29 is very limited and is desperately needed. The site is currently wired for electrical service, but lighting has not yet been installed in the parking lots. This must be done to allow the facility to be used for events in the evening, for safety purposes, and as a deterrent to vandals.

The perimeter of the site was unfortunately mistakenly cleared of trees during construction. A landscape site plan has been designed, and some trees have already been installed by the City of Hartwell. However, the rest of the landscape site plan needs to be implemented to provide shade for activities and also to prevent erosion resulting from earthmoving and deforestation during construction.

Two rented portable restrooms are currently located next to the boat ramps so that fishermen and boaters have convenient access and do not need to dock their boats and walk across the site to use the restroom. These portable restrooms should be replaced by a small (1-2 toilet), non-plumbed permanent restroom facility.

Part of the original master site plan that was developed for the facility was an outdoor amphitheater that could be used for fishing tournament ceremonies,

outdoor shows, concerts, and other events. The amphitheater should be built as a venue to attract other non-fishing tourism and community events. Another part of the original master plan was an ADA accessible fishing pier.

### **Recommendations:**

- Lighting: Install parking lot lighting.
- Signage: Install more visible signage at the intersection of U.S. Hwy 29 and Old Hwy 29 as well as the intersection of Old Hwy 29 and Vann Waller Road. Add directional signage at the entryway of Gum Branch to direct visitors to the ramps, restrooms, t-dock, and covered pavilion.
- Landscape: Finish implementing landscape site plan.
- Build amphitheater.
- Install small restroom facility next to boat docks.
- Fishing pier: Construct ADA accessible fishing pier.

### **Existing Plans**

The next several pages include plans that have been developed for Gum Branch Mega Ramp Recreation & Tournament Facility by landscape architecture interns from the University of Georgia's College of Environment and Design, through the Hart County Archway Partnership. These include conceptual designs for signage and landscape designs for the entryway into the park, for creating a landscape buffer along the lakeshore edge of the facility and the parking lot to replace trees and plants that were removed during grading and construction. The designs incorporate drought-tolerant, low maintenance plant and tree selections.

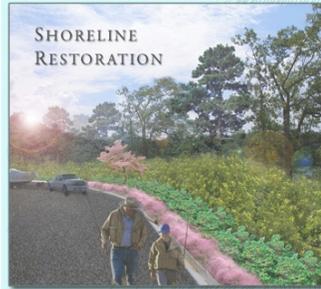
The designs developed for the entryway sign have already been implemented. Drafting and construction students from Hart County High School partnered with 2009-2010 Leadership Hart class members to install the sign in Fall 2010. Some trees have also been installed in the parking lot medians by the City of Hartwell through a federal Recovery Act grant.

An effort of the  
Hart County  
Archway Partnership



# "Go Fish" Boat Ramp Facility Hart County, Georgia

Design by Colin Owen + Carmen Miranda



NEW 8' X 180' FLOATING DOCK

660' MEL FULL POOL ELEVATION

LOADING/UNLOADING AND WEIGH-IN STAGE AREA

110' X 95' BOAT SHELTER

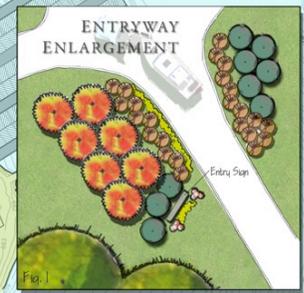
660' MEL FULL POOL ELEVATION

RESTROOM

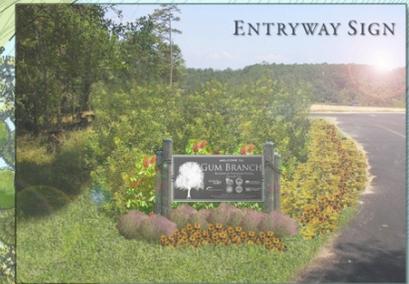
SPECTATOR SEATING

HOST SITE

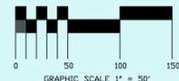
PROPOSED POOL



ENTRYWAY SIGN



PLANT SELECTION



Archway Partnership



Section 6:

# BUDGET ANALYSIS

The Hart County Recreation Department's budget funding allocated from Hart County government's general fund has decreased for the past several years. The budget figures for HCRD and other benchmarked Parks/Recreation Departments for 2011-2013 are shown below. The HCRD operation budget has remained fairly static over the past three years. The Hart County Board of Commissioners approved the HCRD 2013 budget for \$225,093. The department's capital funding comes from special local option sales tax (SPLOST) funds, which are dependent on sales tax revenue generated within the county.

Compared to the other parks/recreation departments that provided benchmark data, Hart County Recreation Department has consistently had the smallest operations budget over the past 3 fiscal years. HCRD spent some limited funds on capital improvements last year, unlike Dawson County and Madison County, which did not plan to do any capital spending in 2012. However, HCRD's capital expenditures for 2012 were much lower than Franklin County and Stephens County. This ongoing lack of capital spending means that parks and recreation facilities in Hart County are aging at the same time that they are not being as actively maintained or as further developed as they could be. It has resulted in a parks system that does not have the facilities or space to provide programs and infrastructure at the level that the community is now requesting, and that can potentially generate revenue for the department to help support itself.

**Table 6.1**  
2011 – 2013 Budget Information

Recreation/Parks Department Budget	County Recreation Department				
	Hart	Dawson	Franklin	Madison	Stephens
<b>2011 ACTUAL</b>	<b>\$222,431</b>	\$837,606	\$400,283		\$617,865
Operations	<b>222,431</b>	837,606	354,121		454,123
Capital	<b>0</b>	0	46,162		163,742
<b>2012 ACTUAL</b>	<b>236,005</b>	780,544	574,588	509,920	571,432
Operations	<b>226,985</b>	780,544	310,380	509,920	459,914
Capital	<b>9,020</b>	0	264,208	0	111,518
<b>2013 APPROVED</b>	<b>225,093</b>	824,341	441,303	512,920	663,574
Operations	<b>225,093</b>	824,341	357,970	512,920	438,524
Capital	<b>0</b>	0	83,333	0	225,050

### Revenue Generation

The ability for a recreation department to generate revenue to support its programs is becoming more and more important as budgets shrink due to economic realities and the mantra to provide more services with less funding. Looking at the benchmark figures for 2011, Hart County Recreation Department is generating the least revenue of the respondent departments. The department has made great strides in identifying ways to generate new revenue over the past three years, instituting gate fees for recreational sports leagues and improving concession stand operations.

**Table 6.3**

2011 Revenue Generation by Parks/Recreation Department

County Recreation Department

	Hart	Dawson	Franklin	Madison	Stephens
2011 Revenue Generated	\$45,000	\$216,026	\$118,644	\$103,332	\$69,602

There are some key limitations on HCRD's ability to generate revenue compared to neighboring county parks/recreation departments. One is the department's smaller operations and capital budgets compared to the other benchmarked parks/recreation departments. Another is their lean staff and the lack of space to develop new non-sports programming. Finally, there is an important balance to be found between developing new ways to generate revenue and ensuring that the departments programs and facilities are accessible and costs are not a barrier to those who want to participate and enjoy them. Nevertheless, this benchmark data reveals an opportunity for HCRD to consult with the other communities to learn new or creative strategies for how they have been able to generate revenue.

## **Recommendations**

### **Program User Fees**

One method of generating revenue to offset expenses for providing services for the department's football, cheerleading, and basketball programs, is to examine the league registration fees. Rising utility costs for ball field lighting and restrooms, inflation, increased cost of gasoline to fuel mowers, and aging facilities should all be factored into decisions regarding user fees. With the growing number of participants in these programs, even a very modest fee adjustment (\$2-\$3 per participant) could help HCRD with cost recovery.

### **Sponsorships**

HCRD sports leagues currently have the support of a variety of businesses and organizations in the community. Due to the popularity of youth leagues for family and friends who come to watch games, there is high impact for sponsors who want to advertise their businesses or organizations. Sponsorship opportunities can include field naming rights, outfield sponsor signs, or team sponsorship with the benefit of advertising on team jerseys.

The City of Jefferson, Georgia's recreation department offers a variety of sponsorship levels and benefits that are designated with sports-related titles that correspond to the level of support: opening day sponsor, playoff-level sponsor, title-contending sponsor, championship sponsor. Oglethorpe County, Georgia has a financial assistance fund through which donors can sponsor a child to participate in youth sports. The Recreation Department should review current sponsorship levels and determine if there are new and creative ways to involve local sponsors and help them spread the word about their businesses while also supporting youth recreation.

## **Naming Rights**

Naming rights are another form of sponsorship that can provide funding for recreation departments. Parks or individual facilities within a park, or rooms within a community recreation center could potentially be named in exchange for a significant donation to the recreation department. Public governmental organizations are understandably hesitant to allow private sector naming for a public park. However, a local family might be interesting in providing support to a park as a way to establish their legacy or recognize a family member. Other governmental agencies have used naming rights as a revenue source, governed by guidelines for the process.

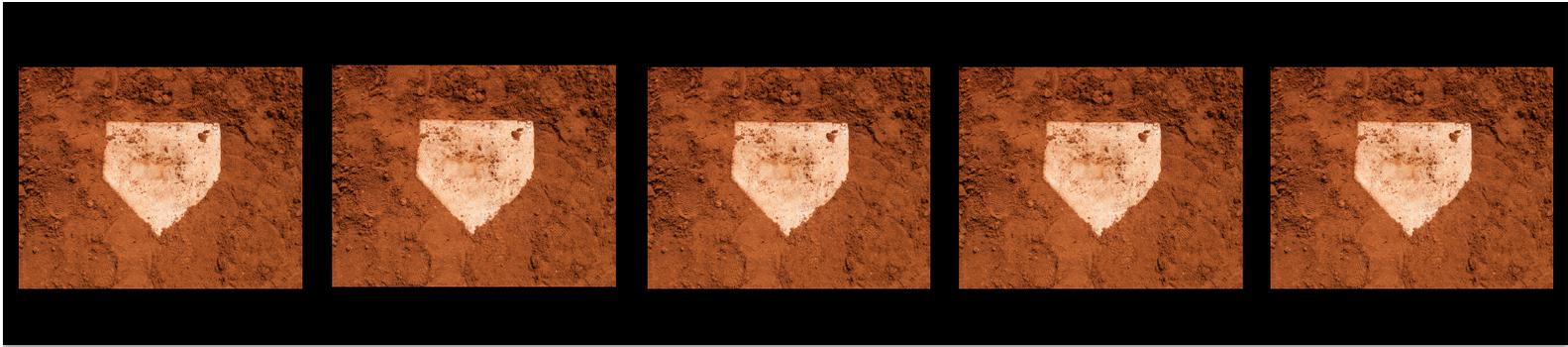
Naming rights could potentially be a revenue source for the Hart County Recreation Department. The baseball/softball fields, tennis courts, and neither Clay Street Park nor Elberton Highway Park currently have official names. The Jimmy Bell, Jr. Multi-Purpose Field is home to HCRD's youth football and cheerleading programs and was named in honor of a local resident. Naming rights could also be used to help develop future facilities such as a recreation center. Sponsors could support specific program rooms or indoor facilities.

## **Community Support to Help Fund Specific Projects**

Some recreation departments have used community campaigns to solicit community member and business support for specific projects. For example, the Hartwell Downtown Development Agency solicited funds from local families to purchase black metal benches in downtown Hartwell as part of streetscape improvements. Each bench bears a small memorial plaque that recognizes the donor and the individual(s) being honored by the bench. This approach could be taken by HCRD to place benches in the parks or along future trails.

The Oconee County, Georgia Recreation Department offers commemorative trees for businesses, organizations, families, and individuals to sponsor in honor or in memory of loved ones. The trees are selected from a list developed by the department, planted in a park, and marked with a standard metal plaque. HCRD could establish a memorial tree program for sponsors to plant trees around the ball fields or at the Gum Branch Mega Ramp in honor of local individuals.

Other communities have helped fund trails projects with "Fund-a Foot" programs where supporters contributed to fund the construction of one linear foot of greenway or walking trails. Donors received a t-shirt and a certificate. The same concept could be applied to other projects as well. The WOW trail in Laconia, New Hampshire helped fund and extend their trail by selling 4" x 8" engraved bricks, which were installed at one of the trail entryways. The sponsor donation for each brick covered the cost of the brick and engraving and also helped fund the trail.



Appendix A:

# RECREATION PLAN APPROVAL

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The Hart County Recreation Advisory Board approved the Recreation Plan on Monday, June 17, 2013. The plan was approved with the exception of the walking trail plans for Gateway Industrial Park due to concerns for funding the trails with recreation funds rather than economic development funds.

Please find plans and designs for Gateway Walking Trails in Supplement 1.



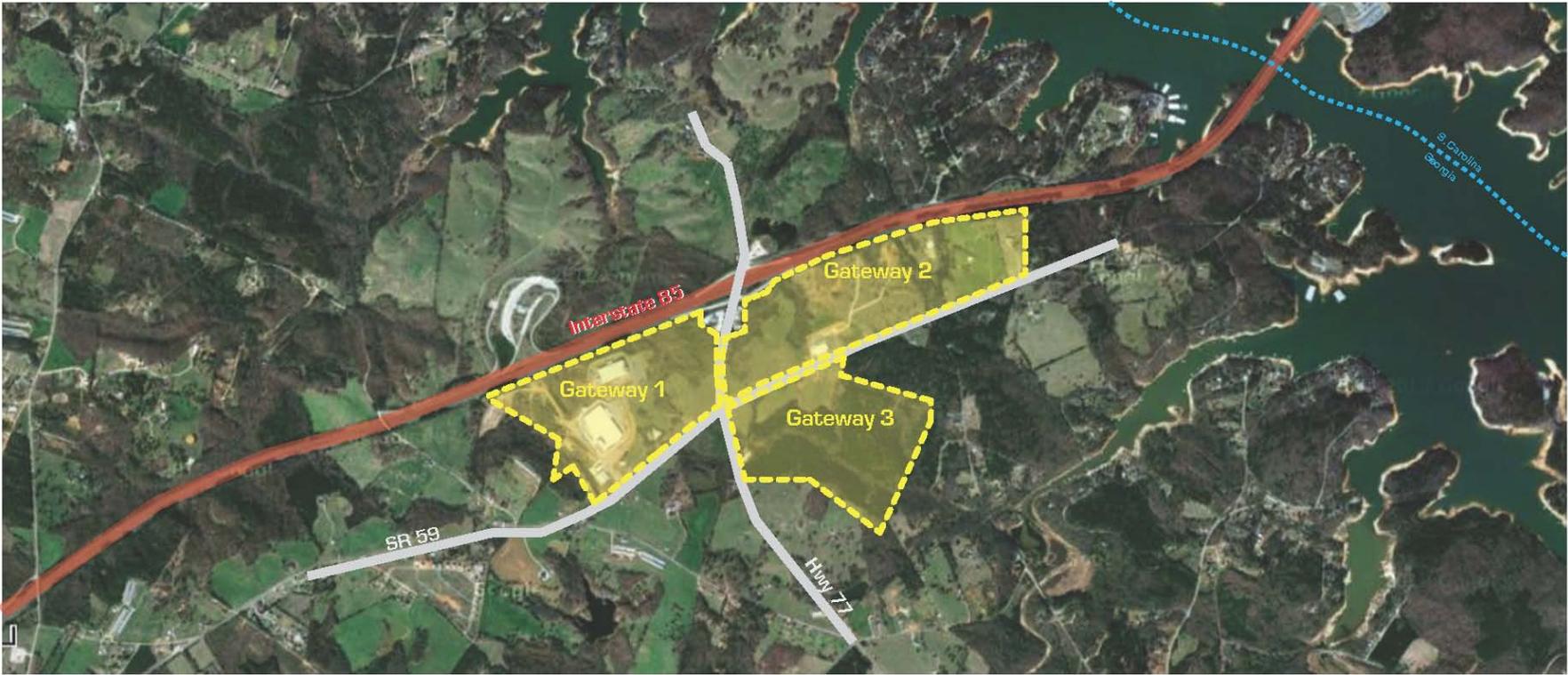
Supplement 1:

# WALKING TRAILS AT GATEWAY INDUSTRIAL PARK

# IDENTITY (master plan)



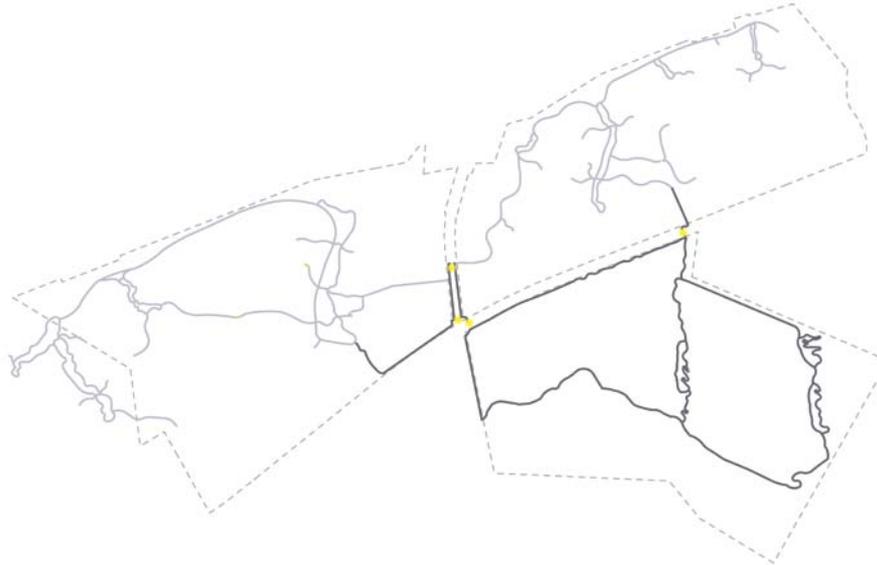
# LOCATION



# TRAILS [gateway 3]



# TRAILS [connectivity]



**Painted Cross walks** and **pedestrian islands** help to connect walking trails between campuses

# SIGNAGE [trails]

Design: Clean  
Modern  
Interpretive  
Navigational

Materials: Stamped Metal  
Wood  
Paint



# SIGNAGE [trails]

Where road meets trail...



## Gateway:

Decorative Signs inform pedestrians they have crossed to new campus

## Refuge:

The signs act as bollards and provide sanctuary from traffic



Appendix B:

# SHORT- AND MID-TERM RECREATION PRIORITIES

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## Hart County Recreation Advisory Board Priority Projects

As part of this master planning process, the Hart County Recreation Advisory Board has identified several short- and mid-term priority projects. These projects are listed here in no particular order.

1. Begin building the first phase of a community recreation and wellness center at Elberton Highway Park, with indoor basketball facilities. Such a facility was included in the original master plan for the park.
2. Develop a multipurpose trail for walking, biking, and outdoor recreation that loops around each of the county parks, with a proposed connector greenway to connect the two parks. These trails will provide outdoor recreation opportunities for people of all ages to exercise and enjoy the outdoors.
3. Construct multipurpose fields at Elberton Highway Park for football and soccer. These fields were included in the original master plan for Elberton Highway Park.
4. Replace/update the ball field lighting at Clay Street Park.



Supplement 2:

# COE PARKS



## **Recreation Plan Supplement #2** **COE PARKS**

Jon Caime, Hart County Administrator

### **Introduction:**

With 225 miles of lakeshore on Lake Hartwell, there are numerous recreational areas set aside on Lake Hartwell in Hart County. Most of these facilities and lands are currently maintained by the Army COE. Some of these facilities have been closed for several years. With the budget cuts at the Federal level, the COE has indicated that additional access closures may take place in the near future. This part of the recreation plan identifies existing recreation areas on Lake Hartwell.

Areas of Lake access are important to our tourism efforts in Hart County. If the County were to take a proactive stance in taking over maintenance of these Federal parks then COE would probably want to transfer that cost and liability to the County. If the Federal parks are closed, the county may choose to take over the maintenance of these facilities but this will require local funding. Those facilities in close proximity to the City of Hartwell may be of a higher priority due to the fact that these facilities are closer to the population center and to commercial sites. Closer proximity to commercial sites may result in increased local sales tax revenues.

### **County Maintained:**

The County currently maintains three Lake Hartwell boat access points. These require minor annual maintenance of litter pickup and cutting back of vegetation (little O&M). When the lake is low (around 645) these access points are out of the water. Extending the ramps would be about \$30,000 each. Repaving of the parking lots and access roads may be needed in the next 10 years at a current cost of about \$75,000 each.

1. Rocky Ford Access at the end of Rocky Ford road (Northern Hart County not in close proximity to City of Hartwell), small parking lot and access road, concrete boat ramp.
2. Reed Creek Access at the end of Sarijon Road (NE Hart County not in close proximity to City of Hartwell), small parking lot and access road, concrete boat ramp.
3. Bradberry Access on Highway 51 near the gas station on the double bridges in close proximity to the City of Hartwell, small parking lot and access road, concrete boat ramp.

### **City of Harwell and Hart County Maintained:**

The City of Hartwell and Hart County currently maintain the recently constructed "Mega Ramp" facility (2012) also known as the Gum Branch Access. This City and County currently budget \$15,000 each annually in O&M and marketing for this facility. This facility is newly constructed and replacement capital should not be needed for at least 20 years. There are a few additional capital improvements planned for this facility including additional bathrooms near the boat launch area (\$50,000), an amphitheater (cost tbd), an additional dock and walkway on the west side (cost tbd), and a host camp site area (cost tbd). Currently amenities include restrooms, pavilion, ample parking (150 plus), access roads, multiple multi-launch boat ramps and a courtesy dock (handicap accessible).

**State Maintained:**

The State of Georgia currently has the former Hart State Park which has been decommissioned by the State into a Recreation Area. Local parties including the City of Hartwell are exploring options with this facility.

**State/COE Maintained:**

The Georgia River Access Point is located below the Hartwell Dam on the Savannah River. This scenic area is only remaining trout habitat on the Savannah River. A recently constructed fishing pier is located here.

**COE Maintained Facilities Currently Closed or in Threat of Closure:**

There are 10 COE maintained Recreation Areas the COE has identified as a threat for closure and 1 facility that has been closed. These are divided into three categories due to the O&M required.

If the County was to have to take over maintaining these facilities, priorities should include visitation numbers (how much the facility is currently being utilized), proximity to the City of Hartwell (to promote commerce and sales tax revenue in Hartwell), annual O&M costs, capital improvement costs, and potential for other joint uses (trails for hiking, running, and mountain biking).

**A.1 Milltown Campground:** (see map enclosed). This 43 acre site was closed by the COE in 2011. This site is not located in close proximity to the City of Hartwell. The condition of the current amenities has not been evaluated to determine capital life and capital replacement costs however the facilities currently appear to be in very good condition. Annual O&M would be costly due to the routine O&M required to maintain this facility as a campground. The potential to convert this into a day use facility is possible which would reduce the O&M costs. Further evaluation can be conducted on this facility if needed. Visitation is reported by COE at 2,159 annually.

The roads are starting to have vegetation growth in the roads which will result in rapid pavement degradation if not controlled in the next few years. In addition the existing buildings and other capital improvements should be regularly

monitored and maintained to ensure they remain stable. For example if a tree falls on a roof and the damage is not repaired, the subsequent damage over the next year or two may result in a total loss of the facility. The COE has indicated that this facility will remain closed and that no maintenance will be performed on this facility. If the COE abandons this facility they will most likely remove the improvements at a significant loss in Federal taxpayer investment.

A regatta called the Spring Fever Regatta is proposed for this facility by the Spring Fever Group LLC held around late March early April.

Current Amenities include:

1. 1 Dump Station
2. 3 Restrooms (2 with showers)
3. 1 Entrance Station
4. 25 non electric campsites
5. 2 Host site concrete pads
6. 3 Group camp areas with 26 campsites
7. 2 Group Shelters
8. 1 Boat launch area
9. 1 Courtesy Dock
10. 43 Car Parking spaces and 15 trailer spaces
11. 1 Playground
12. 1.6 miles of paved roads

**A.2 Chandlers Ferry Campground:** (see map enclosed). This 48 acre site was closed by the COE in 1984. This site is not located in close proximity to the City of Hartwell. The COE has removed all the structures from this facility and the only remaining amenities are a few miles of paved roads. These roads are in poor condition with vegetation growth taking over. This facility could be converted into a day use facility which would require capital improvements to be installed including restrooms, docks, road improvement. Capital costs would be extensive (over \$100,000) and annual O&M would also be required to maintain this facility as a day use park. It may be possible in the future to have a private party improve this site as a commercial site if the COE would permit such a reuse. .

**B.1 Long Point Day Use Area:** (see map enclosed). This 37 acre site is very popular and is close proximity to the City of Hartwell. The condition of the current amenities (buildings, playgrounds etc.. are in very good condition, roads would not need resurfacing for 15 years at a cost of \$115,000. Annual O&M is estimated to be about \$15,000 to include routine O&M (cut grass once per week, empty trash, clean restroom and clean up of park required to maintain this facility). Visitation is reported by COE at 23,022 annually.

Current Amenities include:

1. 1 Restroom
2. 1 Boat launch area (ramp)
3. 1 Courtesy Dock
4. 2 Group Picnic Shelters
5. 1 Parking lot, 182 Car Parking spaces and 17 trailer spaces
6. 22 Picnic sites
9. 2 Playgrounds
10. 0.9 miles of paved roads

**C.1 Carters Ferry Access Point:** This 20 acre site is not in close proximity to the City of Hartwell. The condition of the current amenities is in excellent condition and would not need replacement for 20 years. Annual O&M would be \$2,000 with routine O&M to include general trash pickup and cut the grass area required to maintain this facility. . Visitation is reported by COE at 7,390 annually.

Current Amenities include:

1. 1 Boat launch area (ramp)
2. 1 Courtesy Dock
3. 1 Parking lot, 16 trailer spaces
4. 0.1 miles of paved road

**C.2 Cleveland Access Point:** This 2 acre site is in close proximity to the City of Hartwell. The condition of the current amenities is in excellent condition and would not need replacement for 20 years. Annually O&M would be \$2,000 with routine O&M to include general trash pickup and cut the grass area required to maintain this facility. Visitation is reported by COE at 12,315 annually. Visitation is reported by COE at 12,315 annually.

Current Amenities include:

1. 1 Boat launch area (ramp)
2. 1 Parking lot, 10 trailer spaces
3. 0.1 miles of paved road

**C.3 Crawfords Ferry Access Point:** This 36 acre site is not in close proximity to the City of Hartwell. The condition of the current amenities is in fair condition. Roads and parking lots would need to be repaved in the next 10 years at a cost of approximately \$30,000. Annually O&M would be \$2,000 with routine O&M to include general trash pickup and cut the grass area required to maintain this facility. Visitation is reported by COE at 11,521 annually. The extra land could be developed for trails.

Current Amenities include:

1. 1 Boat launch area (ramp)
2. 1 Parking lot, 10 car parking spaces, 20 trailer spaces

3. 0.2 miles of paved road
4. 1 Courtesy Dock

**C.4 Mary Ann Branch Access Point:** This 18 acre site is not in close proximity to the City of Hartwell. The condition of the current amenities is in fair condition. Roads and parking lots would need to be repaved in the next 10 years at a cost of approximately \$30,000. Annually O&M would be \$2,000 with routine O&M to include general trash pickup and cut the grass area required to maintain this facility. Visitation is reported by COE at 8,167 annually.

Current Amenities include:

1. 1 Boat launch area (ramp)
2. 1 Parking lot, 10 car parking spaces, 15 trailer spaces
3. 0.1 miles of paved road
4. 1 Courtesy Dock
5. 1 Restroom Vault (currently closed)

**C.5 New Prospect Access Point:** This 34 acre site is not in close proximity to the City of Hartwell. The condition of the current amenities is in excellent condition and would not need replacement for 20 years. Annually O&M would be \$2,000 with routine O&M to include general trash pickup and cut the grass area required to maintain this facility. Visitation is reported by COE at 12,315 annually. The extra land could be developed for trails.

Current Amenities include:

1. 1 Boat launch area (ramp)
2. 1 Parking lot, 16 trailer spaces
3. 0.2 miles of paved road
4. 1 Courtesy Dock

**C.6 Powderbag Creek Access Point:** This 12 acre site is in close proximity to the City of Hartwell. The condition of the current amenities is fair condition. Roads and parking lots would need to be repaved in the next 10 years at a cost of approximately \$36,000. Annually O&M would be \$2,000 with routine O&M to include general trash pickup and cut the grass area required to maintain this facility. Visitation is reported by COE at 10,675 annually

Current Amenities include:

1. 1 Boat launch area (ramp)
2. 1 Parking lot, 5 car spaces, 23 trailer spaces
3. 0.3 miles of paved road

**C.7 Rock Springs Access Point:** This 59 acre site is not in close proximity to the City of Hartwell. The condition of the current amenities are in good condition. Roads and parking lots would need to be repaved in the next 10 years at a cost

of approximately \$42,000. Annually O&M would be \$2,000 with routine O&M to include general trash pickup and cut the grass area required to maintain this facility. Visitation is reported by COE at 23,331 annually This site could be developed to include a trail system similar to the Paynes Creek SORBA mountain bike trails.

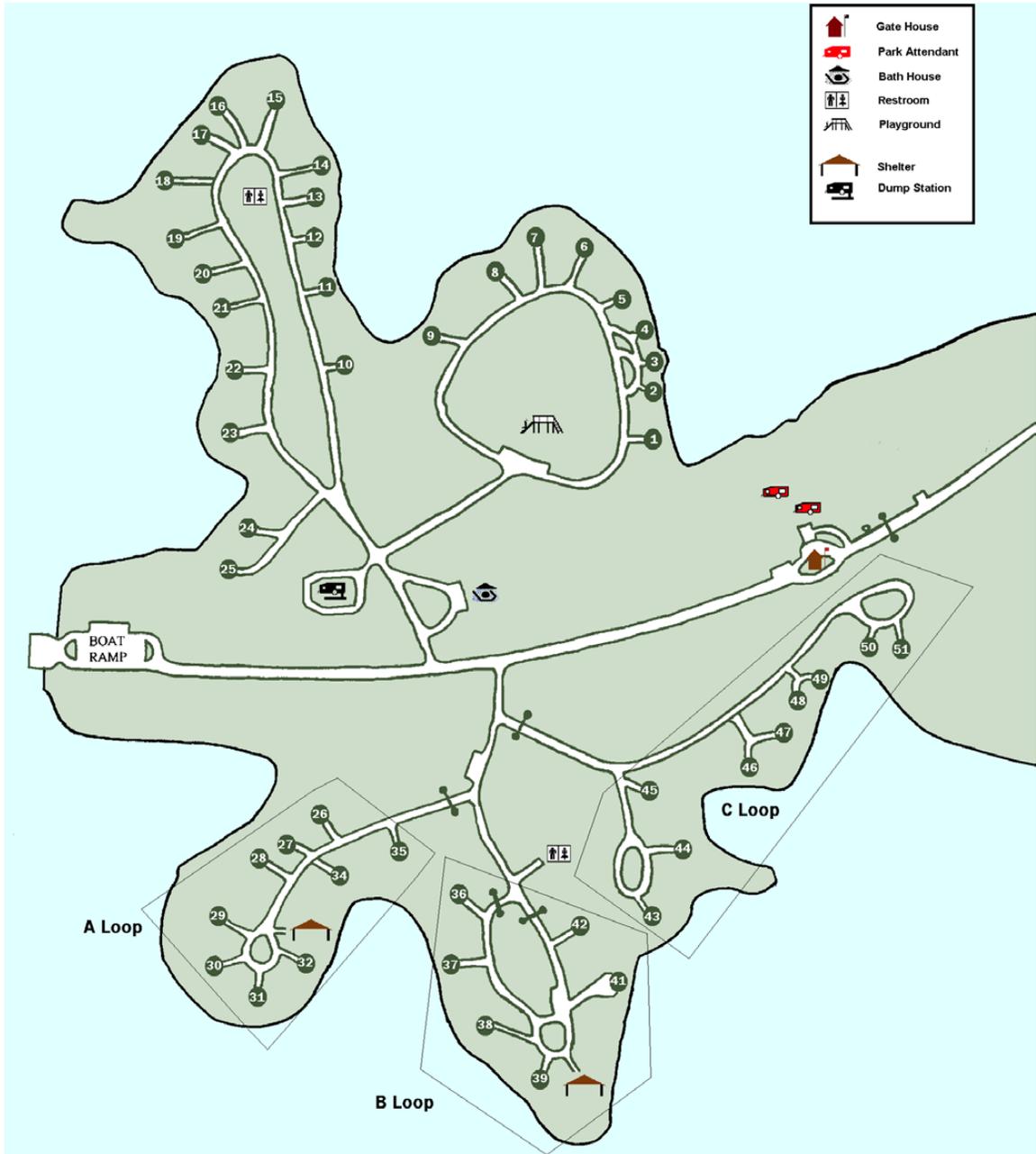
Current Amenities include:

1. 1 Boat launch area (ramp)
2. 1 Parking lot, 14 car spaces, 18 trailer spaces
3. 0.4 miles of paved road

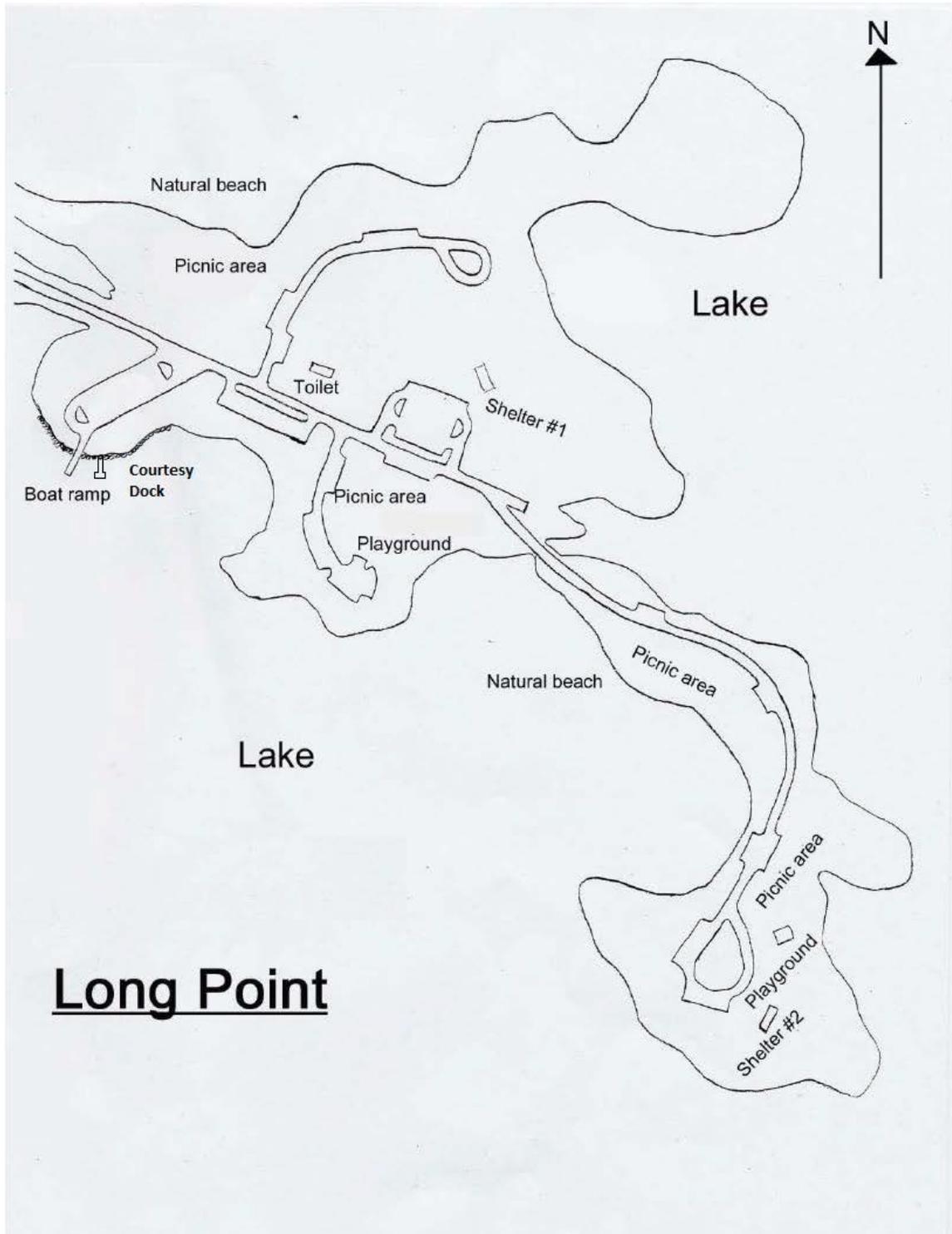
**C.8 Duncan Branch Access Point:** This 12 acre site is in close proximity to the City of Hartwell. The condition of the current amenities are good condition. Roads and parking lots would need to be repaved in the next 15 years at a cost of approximately \$25,000. Annually O&M would be \$2,000 with routine O&M to include general trash pickup and cut the grass area required to maintain this facility. Visitation is reported by COE at 10,680 annually

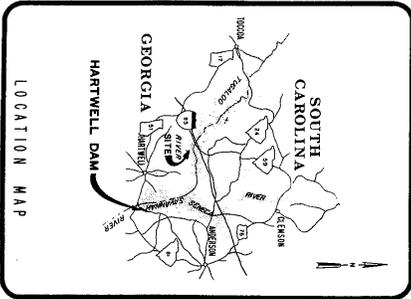
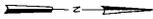
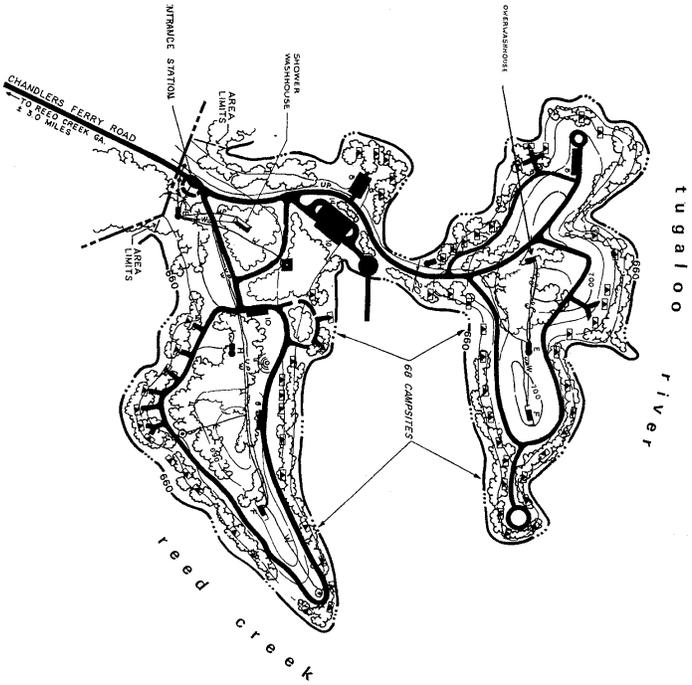
Current Amenities include:

1. 1 Boat launch area (ramp)
2. 1 Parking lot, 10 car spaces, 23 trailer spaces
3. 0.1 miles of paved road



**Milltown Campground Facility**





LOCATION MAP

- LEGEND**
- FEDERAL STATE COUNTY INTENSIVE
  - GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY LINE
  - RECREATION POOL ELEVATION
  - PAVED ROAD
  - GRAVEL ROAD
  - FOREST CANOPY
  - OVERHEAD POWER LINE
  - UNDERGROUND POWER LINE
  - UNDERGROUND WATER LINE
  - RESTROOM (1/2" x 8" or 1/4" x 8")
  - INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFIED PORTALET
  - CAMPSITES
  - PLAYGROUND
  - WELL (ELEVATING or H-HEAD)
  - DUMP STATION
  - DRINKING FOUNTAIN
  - GATE
  - AMPHITHEATER

**NOTES**

THE COVERAGE IS APPROXIMATELY 60% PINE  
EXISTING CAMPERS 68  
CARRYING CAPACITY 78