

Section 1

Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is the mission of the City of Shelby Parks and Recreation Department to “provide a variety of quality leisure services in a clean, safe environment for citizens of all ages”.

The City of Shelby is located along the southern border of North Carolina in the piedmont region, less than 50 miles west of Charlotte. It incorporates approximately 18.2 square miles within the city limits. With over 21,000 residents, it has a low population density of 1168 people per square mile. The City has an elevation of just over 850 feet above sea level. Shelby is the political and economic center for Cleveland County.

Shelby was incorporated in 1843 to serve as the county seat for the newly formed Cleveland County (1841). Shelby was named for Colonel Isaac Shelby, a Revolutionary War hero that fought in the nearby Battle of Kings Mountain in 1780. The town remained a small, rural county seat until the 1870’s when industry and transportation began to make inroads into the local economy. The 1880’s saw the rise of the “Shelby dynasty”, a political movement that exerted influence both state-wide and nationally. Shelby’s population boom of the 1920’s coincided with a late boom in cotton farming and cotton mills in Cleveland County. By 1948, cotton production peaked at 83,000 bales. Production has declined and today the Shelby and Cleveland County economies depend upon farming, a more diversified industry and retail sales.

Shelby has been at the forefront of the historic preservation movement in North Carolina. The Uptown Shelby Association in 1980, implemented one of the first Main Street programs in the United States to revitalize the commercial district by combining historic preservation of the buildings with economic development. The Historic Shelby Foundation has worked to develop two National Historic Districts, the Central Shelby Historic District and the East Marion/Belvedere Park Historic District, a residential area that was designed following the tenants of the City Beautiful Movement

Shelby is also home to two unique remnants of traditional town park recreation: the 1919 Herschell-Spillman Carrousel and a miniature train. Located in Shelby City Park, the carrousel was restored by the City and the Shelby City Park Carrousel Friends. The train was restored to working order by the City of Shelby and the Rotary club.



1.2 PURPOSES AND GOALS

The City of Shelby Parks and Recreation Department prides itself on providing public recreation to the Shelby and the Cleveland County area for nearly sixty years. Studies have shown that 'quality of life' issues are very important to residents and visitors and lively programs and events can have a major impact on community economic development.

With a staff of 19 full-time and 28 part-time, the City of Shelby's Parks and Recreation Department employs dedicated professionals, who understand the importance of offering structured programs that meet the needs and desires of its patrons. They also understand the value of maintaining some of the finest recreational facilities in the state of North Carolina. As a result of these philosophies, the Shelby City Council appointed a Steering Committee (Section 1.3) on June 4, 2007, for the creation of a new system-wide Comprehensive Master Plan – to include all existing park facilities and grounds as well as the newly donated Royster and Hannah properties. Subsequently, McGill Associates, P.A., was hired as the site and master plan consultants.

Typically, a master plan is written for a 20-year period of time. Because the City of Shelby Parks and Recreation Department is still in its infancy and in a stage of rapid growth and change, a 10-year plan, with an update in five years will be more practical and realistic.

The City of Shelby Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan 2008-2018 provides the framework for guiding the City Council and Staff in both its current evaluation of and long-range planning for the parks and recreation system for City of Shelby. The framework for this Master Plan is based upon conducting an inventory of the existing park system and recording the observations. The assessment of these facilities, or lack of facilities, will identify the immediate facility needs in the community and predict the future needs of residents.

Another purpose of the Master Plan is to recommend the addition or renovation of parks, programs and recreational facilities. Not only does the Master Plan include recommendations, but it also prioritizes specific projects, such as recommended park upgrades, expansion and land acquisition, taking into consideration the identification of user population and the development of recreation standards. The Master Plan is action-oriented and will provide the City of Shelby with a practical guide for its enhancement of the Parks and Recreation Department for the next ten years.

In preparing the Comprehensive Master Plan, McGill Associates, P.A., worked closely with City of Shelby's Parks and Recreation Department and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee.

A key objective in the development of the Comprehensive Master Plan was the solicitation of community input, thereby identifying additional needs for the City of Shelby, such as renovation, construction, land purchase, development and operational policies, for both now and in the future. Community input, along with the comparison to state and national standards, are the initial steps in the Master Plan process.

State and National Parks and Recreation and Recreation Standards were used as a guide to support the recommendations made for the parks and recreation facilities for the City of Shelby. Using these standard guidelines, McGill Associates, P.A., developed a plan, which applied specifically to the resident and non-resident users of parks and recreational facilities.

The Comprehensive Master Plan emphasizes the potential for ‘connectivity’ of proposed projects and existing sites, such as parks, recreational facilities, schools and other government-owned properties. It is not designed to be exclusive, but rather to enhance recreational opportunities in the community.

Of utmost intent, the Comprehensive Master Plan is intended to maintain the type of venue in the City of Shelby that fosters community spirit, activism and bonding between local citizens.

The study of the demographic profile of City residents’ population and ages, as related to areas of larger or smaller population, is a key factor in making specific and accurate recommendations.

Not only does the City of Shelby Parks and Recreation Master Plan make recommendations for a ten-year period of time (2008 - 2018), but it also suggests the means by which the identified objectives might be achieved. Opportunities for grants, partnerships and outside funding are recommended as aids in the establishment of a Capital Improvement Plan and an operating budget.

The Master Plan focuses on providing the City of Shelby with an accurate, usable guide for decision-making as the City begins to implement projects, such as:

- Renovating and developing new facilities for City Park
- Developing facilities and programming for Hanna Park
- Instituting a system of greenways/trails and linking them to the City’s Pedestrian Plan
- Improve signage for City parks and facilities



The Comprehensive Master Plan is divided into six major component sections, which are listed below:

- Section 1 - Introduction
- Section 2 – Population Trends and Projections
- Section 3 – Existing Park Facilities
- Section 4 – Recreation Needs Assessment
- Section 5 – Goals and Recommendations
- Section 6 – Action Implementation Plan

1.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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City of Shelby 2008 Parks and Recreation Masterplan Oversight Committee (2008-2018)

Chris Mabry, City Council Liaison to the Recreation Advisory Board 2008
Dicky Amaya, City Council Liaison to the Recreation Advisory Board 2007
Allen Langley, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Member 2008
Larry Ware, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Chairman 2007
Johnny Hatcher, Youth Council Chairman
Bill McCarter, Cleveland County Planning Director
Ed Yarboro, Cleveland County Soccer Association
Jay Bridges, Youth Baseball Advocate and Coach
Sally Royster, Cleveland County Tennis Association
Church Dellinger, Gastonia Parks and Recreation Director
Walter Scharer, City of Shelby Planning Services Director
Charlie Holtzclaw, City of Shelby Parks and Recreation Director

2007 City of Shelby City Council

Ted Alexander, Mayor
Christopher Mabry (Ward 1)
Robert Still (Ward 2)
Jeanette Patterson (Ward 3)
Michael Royster (Ward 4)
Joel Shores, Jr. (Ward 5)
Dicky Amaya (Ward 6)

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Christopher Mabry (Ward 1)
Larry Ware (Ward 2)
Jeanette Patterson (Ward 3)
Michael Royster (Ward 4)
Joel Shores, Jr. (Ward 5)
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